

The Status of Reason in the Thought of Abdelkader Chereiet

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Abstract

This study examines the status of reason in the thought of Abdallah Cheriet, one of the leading Algerian philosophers who contributed significantly to the development of contemporary Arab philosophy. It analyzes his conception of reason as a critical instrument for understanding reality, renewing philosophical inquiry, and addressing the intellectual and cultural challenges facing Arab societies. The paper explores the philosophical foundations of his rational vision, highlighting the relationship between reason, heritage, and modernity, as well as his efforts to reconcile authenticity with openness to universal human thought. By adopting an analytical and descriptive approach, the study demonstrates that Cheriet viewed reason as the cornerstone of intellectual progress and civilizational renewal, advocating a balanced philosophy that combines critical reflection with cultural identity. The findings underscore the enduring relevance of his ideas to contemporary philosophical and cultural debates.

Keywords: Abdallah Cheriet; Reason; Arab Philosophy; Rational Thought; Intellectual Renewal.

Introduction

During the early 1960s, the Algerian University played a major role in Arab philosophy. Through it, an elite group of thinkers emerged who excelled during that period and worked to develop philosophy, each according to his specialization and field. Among those who contributed greatly to the advancement of the Algerian University, and among the early pioneers of philosophy at the Algerian University, was the Algerian thinker Abdelkader Chereiet, who took the lead in enlightening the Algerian mind in particular and the Arab mind in general. This enlightenment is reflected in most of his writings and intellectual output both inside Algeria and abroad, particularly in Tunisia.

The objective of this scientific paper is to examine the intellectual output left by the dean of philosophers and thinkers, Professor Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet, especially his philosophical works, and to investigate the critical rational dimension of this Algerian thinker, which manifested in his early writings. Accordingly, we pose the following problem:

Where does the enlightening rationality manifest in the thought of the Algerian thinker Abdelkader Chereiet? And can scientificity be considered an indicator of rationality for the thinker Abdelkader Chereiet?

To answer these questions, we will address the following elements in this research paper:

First: Biography and academic trajectory of the dean of Algerian philosophers, Dr.

Abdelkader Chereiet.

Second: The problem of reason and rationality in modern Arab thought.

Third: The degrees of reason among Muslims.

Fourth: Empirical science and reason.

Fifth: The philosophy of Abdelkader Chereiet.

Sixth: The enlightening rational path.

Seventh: Scientificity as an indicator of rationality according to Abdelkader Chereiet.

Eighth: The issue of experimentation according to Abdelkader Chereiet.

Ninth: From the reality of Algerian culture.

First: Biography and Academic Trajectory of the Dean of Algerian Philosophers, Dr.

Abdelkader Chereiet

Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet is a well-known Algerian professor, writer, scholar, and intellectual in the fields of thought, philosophy, literature, and history.

Birth and Upbringing:

Abdelkader Chereiet was born in the municipality of Meskiana, Oum El Bouaghi Province, in eastern Algeria in 1921. In his childhood, he joined the village Quranic school (Kuttab) to memorize the Holy Quran, as was custom for children of his era. He began his primary education at a French school in Meskiana in 1927. He moved to Tebessa in 1932, where he studied at the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema school (Tahdhib Al-Banin) under Sheikh Larbi Tebessi for two years (1932–1934).

He went to Tunisia in 1938 and studied there for one year, but stopped due to World War II. He returned to Constantine and joined some of its schools. When the war ended in 1945, he returned once again to Tunisia, completed his studies at Al-Zaytouna Mosque, and obtained the Tatwi degree in 1946. He traveled to the Levant via France in 1947 using a forged passport with assistance from Algerian deputies in Paris, led by Mohamed Khider, representative of the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties in the French National Assembly. From there, he traveled to Damascus and Beirut, where he joined the Syrian University in 1947. He entered the first year of Arabic Literature but transferred to the Philosophy Department at the same university, graduating with a Bachelor's degree (Political Philosophy) in 1951. He returned to Algeria between 1951 and 1952, and finding no employment, he moved to Tunisia in 1952, where he worked as a teacher at Al-Zaytouna Mosque after a new institute specializing in modern sciences was established.

He joined the political mission of the National Liberation Front (FLN), which was formed after the outbreak of the revolution. His mission in this delegation was translation from foreign languages into Arabic. Following the publication of the 'Resistance' newspaper and 'El Moudjahid' newspaper, the mouthpiece of the National Liberation Front, he was tasked with drafting editorials and commentaries, as well as translating articles published in the international press regarding the Algerian Revolution into Arabic. He continued in this role until the dawn of independence in 1962. Through this work, his output was exceptionally prolific both inside and outside the homeland.

He returned to Algeria with the returnees in August of the same year, when Mohamed Khider was responsible for the party. Khider invited him to join the National Liberation Front party to handle information duties, but he was dismissed from the party after the dispute between Ben Bella and Mohamed Khider, as he was a friend of the latter. He subsequently joined the University of Algiers. He earned a State Doctorate on the subject of 'Moral Thought in Ibn Khaldun' in 1972. He wrote across all intellectual domains—literature, poetry, philosophy, politics, and general thought. Professor and thinker Abdelkader Chereiet was also assigned several prestigious positions and tasks in the state after Algerian independence, and he served as a prominent professor in the Philosophy Department at the University of Algiers.

He contributed immensely to spreading philosophical, educational, and socio-psychological culture through national radio, seminars, and numerous symposia. He engaged in an argumentative debate with former Minister of Education Mostefa Lacheraf in 1980 regarding the importance of the Arabic language in scientific and administrative fields, after Lacheraf wrote three articles attacking the Arabic language, accusing it of incapacity and deficiency in keeping pace with the era and global developments. Dr. Chereiet responded with seven articles published in 'El Chaab' newspaper, clarifying the Arabic language's capacity for rapid evolution in every era. The problem, as he stated, is not in the language itself, but in its speakers, because language evolves with the evolution of inventions, innovations, and general cultural and scientific richness. The Arabic language is completely innocent of the scientific lag and backwardness occurring; rather, the cause is 'us'—that is, those who use and employ the language incorrectly and without knowledge of its laws.

Taught Courses:

Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet taught a number of literary, philosophical, and political courses at the Algerian University, including: Arabic Literature in the Literature Department since 1964, Psychology, Metaphysics, Islamic Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, Political Philosophy, and Ethics in the Philosophy Department at the University of Algiers. He was an undisputed genius professor and thinker.

Supervised Theses:

Alongside undergraduate teaching, he was the supervisor for dozens of students in Master's theses, State Doctorate dissertations, and Doctorate of Science dissertations.

Teaching Locations:

Regarding the departments where he worked longest in teaching, they were the Philosophy Department at the University of Algiers and the Cherchell Military Academy for Various Arms, where he taught a single philosophical course: Politics and Ethics.

Radio and Television Activity:

Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet actively participated in television and radio programs presented by Mostefa Badie and Othmane Chebboub for a long period during the 1970s and 1980s. He was an active member of the Arabization Committee chaired by Mr. Abdelkader Hadjar. He also worked at the Algerian Ministry of Culture.

International Activity:

Dr. Chereiet participated in several Arab and international conferences and delivered political and intellectual lectures at various Arab universities, including:

First: He delivered a political lecture at Damascus University in June 1965, explaining the reasons for the Revolutionary Correction carried out by Houari Boumediene and his comrades on June 19 against former President Ahmed Ben Bella. That lecture lasted four full hours, during which he attempted, through a methodical dialogical style, to convince the left-wing Arab group that had raised a storm at the time following the Revolutionary Correction out of fear that socialism in Algeria would perish with the departure of President Ahmed Ben Bella, unaware that Houari Boumediene's thought regarding scientific socialism was deeper and more comprehensive than that of former President Ahmed Ben Bella.

Second: He delivered a lecture on Arab and Islamic Nationalism at Damascus University, in which he attempted to emphasize the link between Islam and Arab nationalism as inseparable twins. He also delivered a full one-hour lecture in Paris about Algeria at an international symposium during the 1970s. Furthermore, Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet was a teacher at Al-Zaytouna Mosque in Tunisia after receiving his License in Philosophy from Damascus University, serving from 1952 to 1955, when he joined the liberation ranks in Tunis, becoming a translator for international press regarding writings on the Algerian Revolution. His work was highly fruitful and diverse, combining several demanding and difficult tasks simultaneously.

As Dr. Chereiet participated in the educational and intellectual fields, he also actively contributed to international organizations, serving as:

- Member of the Conference of Arab Sociologists: Algiers, Baghdad, Cairo.
- Member of the Afro-Asian Writers' Union: under the supervision of the Soviet Union during sessions in Berlin and Baghdad.

Awards and Honors:

- Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet was honored by the late President Houari Boumediene in the late 1970s, winning the First Prize jointly with the fiction writer Tahar Ouettar.
- He was honored during the era of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika by the Prime Minister for his distinguished encyclopedia on the Algerian Revolution in the International Press.

• The Director of the Laboratory of Historical and Philosophical Studies, Dr. Abdelkrim Bousefsaf, at Mentouri University in Constantine, organized an honorary scientific symposium to study his written philosophical, literary, and historical works in May 2004. Thirty-four scientific lectures were presented, dealing with various fields of his thought—philosophical, historical, literary, etc.—attended by professors from Constantine University, Guelma University, Batna University, University of Algiers, Mostaganem University, Oran University, Sidi Bel Abbès University, Adrar University, Nouakchott University (Mauritania), and Paris.

His Works:

Dr. Chereiet authored books and articles in philosophy, history, literature, politics, ideology, and general thought, totaling 16 books. As for articles, they are too numerous to enumerate in this biography. Among the most important newspapers where he published his articles were: Resistance newspaper, El Moudjahid newspaper, the Algerian El Chaab newspaper since independence, El Moudjahid Hebdo, and other national Algerian and Tunisian newspapers.

Published books include:

1. Literary Figures, published in Tunisia (1958).
2. Algeria in the Mirror of History, co-authored with Mr. Mohamed El Mili, published in the 1960s by the National Publishing and Distribution Company (SNED), Algiers.
3. Ashes, a poetry collection, SNED, Algiers.
4. Arab Ethics in Algeria, SNED, Algiers.
5. Ideological Dialogue on the Sahrawi Issue and the Palestinian Cause, SNED, Algiers.
6. The Algerian Revolution in the International Press, in 18 volumes, SNED, Algiers.
7. Battle of Concepts, SNED, Algiers.
8. Philosophical Sources of Socialist Thought in Algeria, SNED, Algiers.
9. The Ideological Problem in Algeria, SNED, Algiers.
10. Collection of Poems and Verses, SNED, Algiers.
11. Moral Thought in Ibn Khaldun, SNED, Algiers.
12. From the Reality of Algerian Culture, SNED, Algiers.
13. History of Culture in the Mashriq, SNED, Algiers.
14. Ideology and Development, SNED, Algiers.
15. With Modern Political Thought and the Ideological Effort in Algeria, Reghaïa Press.

Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet also had works published in Tunisia, including:

1. The Deprived Poet, 2. Burning Hope, 3. Prayer of Love, 4. Lost Regret, 5. A Pause on the Shore of Mahdia (Part 1), 6. A Pause on the Shore of Mahdia (Part 2), 7. Crying, 8–17. Arab Nationalism (Parts 1 to 10), 18–22. People's Culture (Parts 1 to 5), 23. Between Abu Hayyan and Charlie Chaplin, 24. A Girl for Marriage, 25. Our Literary Renaissance, 26. Chebbi and This Life, 27. From Behind the Veil, 28–29. Zaytouna Education (Parts 1 and 2), 30. Ibn Khaldun, 31–32. Letter to Ahmed the Minister (Parts 1 and 2), 33. The Concept of National Culture, 34.

Ibn Badis and Sacrifice, 35. The Future of the Arab Maghreb, 36. On the Revolution and Its Concepts.

Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet was characterized by the soundness of his methodology, the depth of his thought, and the encyclopedic nature of his culture, as evident to anyone reflecting on his diverse works. It is worth noting that his complete works were published in a luxurious edition of seven massive volumes by the Algerian Ministry of Culture on the occasion of 'Algiers, Capital of Arab Culture' in 2007, containing all his intellectual works and philosophical writings addressing the major issues of Algeria and the Arab nation.

Abdelkader Hamdaoui notes in one of his articles about the thinker Abdelkader Chereiet that our professor used to wear the wool Qashabiya and descend to a café near the university, where students gathered around him like honeycomb rings to drink knowledge from its blossoms. He continued his journey with the Renaissance without interruption, finding comfort in graduating and encouraging students. With this iron determination, he carved a path for himself despite the difficult road, which was not paved with roses. He presented a collection of research paper articles published in the esteemed newspaper 'El Chaab' ('Mother of Newspapers') in response to Mostefa Lacheraf regarding Arabization and education policy at the time, as well as 'The Algerian Revolution in the International Press' consisting of 18 volumes covering 1955 to 1962, and a concise political history of Algeria. The personality of Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet is among those countable on the fingers of one hand in this era; he is one of the giants of philosophy who managed with his pen to carry a mission no less vital—namely, continuity and perseverance on the path forged by master writers and thinkers. He passed away on July 9, 2010. May God have mercy on him and grant him vast paradise.

Second: The Problem of Reason and Rationality in Modern Arab Thought

The critique of reason and examination of its foundations became an urgent necessity with the crisis of Arab culture. This crisis manifests in a form of skepticism and doubt regarding the conceptual apparatus possessed by the nation, revealing its inability to provide an adequate and convincing answer to pressing contemporary issues. Questioning is a civilizational need masking a passionate desire to discover the validity of Western rationality as a magical conceptual solution to modernity's theoretical and practical issues. This trend began in the late 20th century and intensified today. Arab-Islamic society has come to need a review of certain dominant traditional ideas. However, the concept of reason and rationality was treated in a simplified and sometimes naive manner. At times, it was treated as an implicit matter through calls by reformist and liberated secular movements for comprehensive borrowing from Western systems. This constitutes one of the greatest flaws affecting modern Arab thought, leading to fascination with everything Western, where intellectual importation suffocates remaining elements of the authentic Arab mind.

However, this reliance on Western trends has today become laden with ideology, as secularism failed to align with Arab societal culture and failed to plant seeds of long-term rationalization

and progress. The transformation of Western rationality into a mere reference frame rendered it an ineffective ideology. This created a dogmatic void requiring an urgent revision of the knowledge production apparatus and a quest to establish roots for rational critique, forging local mechanisms for mature critique, examination, and scrutiny of Western concepts.

Arab society did not experience the same development as Europe due to the disruption of its economic, social, and epistemic structures during the decline from the 11th to the 19th century—the latter being when the 'shock of modernity' occurred. This forced Arabs and Muslims to rethink their conditions and review their axioms and foundational values. However, the collective project as imagined was a 'utopia,' imparting an emotional, romantic character to their call for rationality and secularism because it did not bear the identity of its own production, was governed by replication, and sought to discuss issues under the pressure of the Other's model and the urgent need to keep pace with changes leading to the Renaissance.

Third: The Degrees of Reason Among Muslims

Rationalism (Intellectualisme) posits that everything in existence is reducible to rational principles... It refers specifically to the theory that reduces judgment to the intellect and will, leaving no room for emotional or involuntary phenomena.

Reason is the soul's power through which concepts are formed and propositions and syllogisms are assembled. The difference between reason and sense perception is that reason can abstract form from matter and its accoutrements, whereas sense perception cannot. Thus, reason is a power of abstraction that extracts form from matter and perceives universal meanings such as substance and accident. According to philosophers, this power has several degrees:

a/ Material Intellect: a/ Degree of Material Intellect (Intellectus Materialis / Hylic Reason): It is the pure readiness to perceive intelligibles, named material because the soul at this stage resembles primary matter (hyle), devoid of forms. Material intellect is synonymous with potential intellect, resembling a blank slate on which nothing has been inscribed.

b/ Intellect in Habit: b/ Degree of Intellect in Habit (Intellectus in Habitu): It is the knowledge of self-evident axioms and the soul's readiness thereby to acquire theoretical sciences.

c/ Actual Intellect: c/ Degree of Actual Intellect (Intellectus in Actu): It occurs when theoretical concepts become stored in the rational faculty through repetitive acquisition, granting it the habit of recall whenever desired without new effort, though not actively contemplating them.

d/ Acquired Intellect: d/ Degree of Acquired Intellect (Intellectus Adeptus): It occurs when theoretical concepts are actively present before the mind without absence. Above human intellect, philosophers posit a separate intellect—the Active Intellect—from which forms emanate unto the realm of generation and corruption. In our world, the human mind functions receptively; when the human intellect achieves direct communion with the Active Intellect as if knowing everything intrinsically, it is termed the Sacred Intellect. This reminds us that the active intellect abstracts universal meanings from sensory particulars, whereas the passive intellect receives and prints those forms.

In another sense, reason is the power of sound judgment—distinguishing truth from falsehood, good from evil, and beauty from ugliness. This distinction does not stem from syllogism or meditation, but occurs directly and naturally, as if reason were an instinct requiring knowledge of universal and self-evident matters. They referenced this by stating that the first rule of method is never to accept anything as true unless clearly perceived by self-evident reason to be so. Thus, reason in this sense stands opposed to passion, as passion prevents sound judgment; reason is the sole means to separate truth from falsehood and good from evil.

Another meaning of reason is that it is a natural power of the soul prepared to acquire scientific knowledge, which differs from religious knowledge based on revelation and faith. Reason's function is confined to acquiring scientific knowledge, which is among the most beneficial human endeavors.

Fourth: Empirical Science and Reason

The sciences pursued and taught by humans in various regions fall into two categories: a natural category guided by human thought, and a transmitted category taken from its founder. The former comprises philosophical and wisdom sciences, accessible through human thought and cognitive faculties to comprehend subjects, problems, demonstrations, and teaching methods until inquiry discerns right from wrong. The second comprises transmitted, positive sciences, based on reports from the Lawgiver, where reason functions only to attach subsidiary issues to fundamental principles.

This means science encompasses truths obtainable through natural reason without external aid. For Ibn Khaldun, natural reason has three degrees: Discriminating Reason, Empirical Reason, and Theoretical Reason. Hence, reason is divided into two parts: that reached by human intellect (wisdom, philosophy, acquired through human experience), and that dependent on divine law (to which one returns and relies upon for foundational matters).

Chereiet quotes Al-Ghazali stating that rational science alone cannot accomplish everything, after which he diverges from them completely. Returning to emphasize this view, Chereiet notes he was not involved in Marxist doctrine and considers Al-Ghazali a Sufi. What reason could one have to confine this Sufi to the realms of atheism? Yet, one sees how he meets them at a single point before diverging forever—a crucial point enabling the understanding of materialism and Marxism: Al-Ghazali holds that our minds are incapable of perceiving the reality of God, and there is no way to search for Him through limited intellects. He advises not to be deceived by our minds simply because they grasp sensory items, mistaking them as capable of grasping what exceeds their capacity. He compared this delusion to someone owning a scale meant for weighing gold grams attempting to weigh mountains. Reason has a boundary where it stops; grasping the divine reality is beyond its capacity.

Fifth: The Philosophy of Abdelkader Chereiet

Discussing Abdelkader Chereiet's philosophy requires addressing it from two premises: the methodological premise (defining analytical methods, concepts, tools, terminology, and

philosophical sources) and the epistemic premise (analyzing and critiquing the substantive content regarding heritage and socialist references).

Regarding methodology, Chereiet employed a dialectical method starting not from identity and static balance, but from contradiction and opposition. He was influenced by Hegel, particularly regarding practical application being preceded by theorization. He notes that Hegel considers conceptual existence as true existence; was he wrong? He implies that any practical existence unguided by prior theoretical study is ephemeral and fails to enter eternal civilization. We also observe a practical orientation (praxis) advocated by socialism, where practical application is fundamental—more vital than theory, which is viewed as a means rather than an end in itself. The dialectical method in Chereiet stems from Hegelian influence and practical action.

Abdelkader Chereiet believed in dialectics in all things; concepts were not fixed, final molds, but driven by conflict and change. Change remains the only constant. We also detect Khaldunian influence in studying societal realities, both in terminology and analysis of underdeveloped Arab society. However, the question arises: how can one bridge two contradictory methods—intellectual dialectics and material dialectics? Is this not a negative aspect of Chereiet's stance?

Regarding the epistemic premise, we examine Chereiet's idea on assessing Algerian reality by launching a cultural revolution to transform mindsets before altering reality. What are the contours of his cultural revolution? The epistemic starting point centers on evaluating the Algerian human condition.

The cultural revolution he advocated rested on two primary factors as heritage references: Islam and the thought developed on its periphery. Chereiet debated these factors. The question here is: can the renaissance project he proposed be considered coherent, given that elements of these two factors differ or contradict? Is this project a product of its era whose practical application expired like socialism, or does it remain capable of effecting change if given the chance today?

Chereiet was selective in choosing references capable of transforming reality. He viewed socialism as the solution for economic affairs and mass organization. He criticized the failure to benefit from other nations' experiences, including former colonizers: 'Today, in our post-independence renaissance phase—I mean Mashriq and Maghreb—we did not benefit from colonial domination, intermixing, or imitating their diligence, organization, and sense of responsibility. When traveling to Europe, universities, museums, artistic structures, and literary/philosophical heritage capable of improving our reality do not attract our interest. Even with colonialism, we failed to leverage its scientific and technical advancements. Socialism is what ought to be adopted from the West because it achieves justice and eliminates disparities better than other systems.' Thus, Chereiet welcomed socialism as a solution to economic problems and social inequality.

Sixth: The Enlightening Rational Path

Professor Abdelkader Chereiet stands as one of the most prominent Algerian intellectuals of the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century, alongside Mostefa Lacheraf, Malek

Bennabi, and Mohamed Cherif Sahli—figures distinguished by modern rationality and an enlightening national orientation. Attention given to Professor Chereiet by the Algerian University of Social Sciences and its sponsorship of this symposium demonstrate that Algeria is returning to the rational national spirit established by the National Movement and Reform Movement led by Imam Abdelhamid Ben Badis. Organizing this symposium is a clear tribute and indication of this return. Algeria needs this enlightening rationality to resume its national renaissance project, serving as a response to the dangerous regression of the past three decades, where conservative traditional culture and political mediocrity dominated. It stands against this savage regression.

The enlightening rational path characterized Dr. Chereiet's life from his early intellectual and political awareness. The initial seed was studying under the reformist revolutionary scholar Sheikh Larbi Tebessi. Tebessi's influence lay not only in radicalism, but in his strong, rebellious personality characterized by clarity, frankness, and steadfastness to principles unto death—a personality that remained vividly present in Chereiet's mind. Various backgrounds and references contributed to shaping Chereiet's enlightening rational thought.

Chereiet's trajectory was marked by self-reliance, ambition, openness to the era, dialogue, and reliance on logical proof. Self-reliance pushed him to venture in pursuit of knowledge, traveling as a youth to Tunisia's Al-Zaytouna Mosque. Even at that age, he exhibited a rebellious spirit, nearly facing expulsion had Professor Bourouiba—a Zaytouna professor—not defended his rebellious disposition. Sheikh Bourouiba represented Zaytouna scholars whose culture was marked by rational openness. This formed the initial phase of rebellion for this self-assured youth, followed by intellectual maturity after completing academic studies at Damascus University in Syria. All characteristics of rationality were present in Chereiet through his use of reason, abstraction, and logical demonstration, advocating rational openness while rejecting anything contrary to reason and logic.

The Syrian path was a decisive station. The emerging Syrian University was at its peak, with eager students and highly competent professors, maintaining this standard until the end of the 1967 war, after which politics interfered with academia. When authority and politics interfere in universities, scientific and intellectual rigor pay the price. Chereiet's time in Damascus was marked by the fervor of freedom, national independence values, and the necessity of comprehensive renaissance. The political atmosphere in the Mashriq—Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt—was boiling following the occupation of Palestine and the establishment of the Hebrew state (the Nakba described by Walid Qamhawi and Constantine Zureiq). Alongside this, the intellectual front was vibrant; renaissance thought remained alive with Al-Tahtawi, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Shibli Shumayyil, Jurji Zaydan, Ahmad Amin, Al-Zayyat, Lutfi Al-Sayyid, Salama Moussa, Amin al-Khuli, Taha Hussein, Al-Aqqad, and poets like Ahmad Shawqi, Khalil Mutran, and Mahjar literature pioneers Mikhail Naimy and Gibran Khalil Gibran.

Dr. Chereiet drew from these sources, maturing his intellectual personality before his Tunisian phase upon returning from Syria with intellectual maturity and mental openness.

Sadiki College in Tunisia lacked the linguistic dualism of colonial Algerian counterparts; its students and faculty faced no language or identity crisis. It was a balanced modernist school that profoundly influenced Chereiet—more so than Zaytouna. He connected with intellectuals like Mohamed Saadi Bezali, media figures, and Tunisian state cadres. Additionally, he was influenced by rational Arab-Islamic culture, notably Ibn Khaldun, to whom he dedicated his academic life. Regardless of influences, his journalistic writings, radio, and television broadcasts remained purely Algerian; even his academic works on Ibn Khaldun and Greek philosophy served Algerian affairs. For him, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Ghazali, or the Mu'tazila were resources supporting ideas on complex Algerian issues.

He held a strong interest in the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema and its rational reformist orientation, focusing on Abdelhamid Ben Badis, his radical reformism, scientific methodology, and emphasis on popular, enlightened Islam. He often preferred Ben Badis over Imam Muhammad Abduh: while Abduh focused on elite formation (viewing the masses as fickle), Ben Badis focused on the general public, believing elites are meaningless unless society develops into an enlightened, superstition-free foundation for true renaissance. Hence, whenever a student excelled, Ben Badis directed them to educate the public through lectures, press articles, and nationwide travel. Ben Badis and the Association significantly shaped Chereiet's rational enlightening direction.

In his ideas, writings, and dialogues, Professor Chereiet was authentically modern, exhibiting genuine modesty. He addressed complex issues, including the ongoing battle of socialist-Marxist concepts—one of the major dilemmas facing the Arab world.

Seventh: Scientificity as an Indicator of Rationality According to Abdelkader Chereiet

As a pioneer of philosophical thought in Algeria and the Arab world, Chereiet focused on contemporary Arab philosophy and established enlightening rational discourse in Algeria, adopting Khaldunian methodology to analyze social phenomena. Thus, he stands as a symbol of rationality in Algeria.

The difference between an underdeveloped society and a civilized society lies in their degree of rationality: while underdeveloped societies possess immense emotional charge when approaching complex past and future problems, advanced societies possess rationality, balance, self-control, and the rule of reasoned opinion. Advanced societies, through centuries of practicing reason, examination, experimentation, and objectivity, act naturally civilized—discussing politics, ethics, religion, science, and art rationally, judging correctness with mutual respect. This mark of civilization, recognized since Aristotle, requires continuous educational effort to curb subjective individualism so it serves artistic, social, and political creativity under public order. Thus, rationality serves as the metric determining whether a society is underdeveloped or civilized.

From Chereiet's perspective, the issue centers on the philosopher's awareness of his societal role—a consciousness reflected in his ability to instill rationalization and activation so individuals transcend conceptual paradoxes, such as expressing passion in speech or writing but acting entirely contrary in practice. Chereiet addressed the elite, urging them to maintain awareness of societal concerns, examining them through constructive rational critique to enlighten the public.

Chereiet summarized social wisdom from Ibn Khaldun, reformist spirit from Ben Badis, and social change objectives from Malek Bennabi, exposing our laziness, reliance on fate, ignorance, material greed, intellectual neglect, ideological extremism, and reluctance to sacrifice. He reminded us that the goal of Ibn Khaldun, Ben Badis, and Bennabi was social change—an objective achievable through freedom, religion, literature, art, structured schooling, and active social institutions. Ben Badis targeted the public using schools, clubs, mosques, lectures, and press articles to achieve social change. Social change remains the primary goal for Algerian rationalist thinkers.

Chereiet staked on scientificity as the guarantor for establishing a rational society, demonstrating its features from basic levels: 'No farmer can contribute to his nation's renaissance or support his offspring without a minimum share of scientific knowledge regarding his work. Scientific knowledge requires a simplified, adaptable, and accessible scientific language.' Rationality is the measure of progress; its absence causes underdevelopment. Scientific rationality is the sole key to societal development.

Thus, Chereiet viewed science as inherent to philosophy and necessary for its progress, just as philosophy is necessary for scientific dominance as an indicator of civilization. Civilized societies, advancing in science, discover philosophy's role in scientific and human development. Philosophy is indispensable as the driver of science and knowledge.

Chereiet's call for scientificity defined a decisive role for philosophy in altering our condition, linking its role in underdeveloped worlds to 'combating superstitious and emotional obstacles... What facilitates philosophy's mission today in educated industrial societies is the prevalent rational spirit derived from scientific thought surrounding family, social, cultural, political, and economic environments built on industry, technology, precision, and rigor—all accessible through reason alone.' A rational spirit is essential for human and national life.

However, this scientificity does not mean strict adherence to post-Renaissance European science, which rigorously separated empirical science from theological and humanistic concepts, confining science to nature while excluding metaphysics as 'study of infinite being.' European science retreated into philosophies detached from civilizational needs.

For Chereiet, scientificity remains tied to human civilization (Umran). True Ijtihad relates to civilization, as occurred during the Abbasid era, whereas civilizational decline in the Hejaz and Maghreb led to Bedouinism. Chereiet held the Maliki school responsible for scientific stagnation (the true expression of Ijtihad) and the resulting imitation (Taqlid) and rigidity in the Maghreb,

whereas Hanafi jurists and theologians encouraged Ijtihad, turning jurisprudential disagreement into an independent science. Maghrebi Malikis lagged in authoring comparative jurisprudence because civilizational development was deficient; flourishing civilization enables jurisprudence to become an art and science.

Chereiet aligned with Averroes (Averroism) in establishing critical rationality to address societal issues and philosophy's relationship with divine law. Averroes represents a rare leap in Islamic philosophy, offering a critical rational method that discards superstitious literature and seeks definitive reconciliation between divine law and wisdom. This Averroes-style rationality, emerging from historical struggle, is precisely what Chereiet sought.

The absence of rationality in underdeveloped societies led to excessive emotionalism in individual, societal, and state behavior, widening the gap with advanced nations. Chereiet explained: 'Advanced societies, through centuries of practicing reason, examination, experimentation, and objectivity, act naturally civilized—discussing politics, ethics, religion, science, and art rationally, judging correctness with mutual respect. Their debates, whether calm or intense, maintain respect and reason—the hallmark of civilization since Aristotle.' Rational thinkers exhibit wisdom, courteous dialogue, and constructive critique devoid of insults.

Addressing rationality's value, he stated: 'The difference between civilized and underdeveloped societies lies in their degree of rationality: while underdeveloped societies possess immense emotional charge when viewing complex past and future issues, advanced societies possess rationality, poise, self-control, and reasoned opinion.' Arab society lacks this rational poise when solving complex issues.

Regarding philosophy's role in shaping societal destiny, Chereiet praised Western philosophers from Plato to Sartre for adopting societal causes, establishing knowledge and existence: 'Their philosophers, from Plato to Bertrand Russell and Sartre, always attempted to instil ethical principles into public policy, politicians, teachers, and educators—shaping politics with enduring ethics rather than coloring ethics with transient politics.' Chereiet admired Western philosophers for actively transforming society through philosophy.

An intellectual's relationship with reality must be positive and active; otherwise, they suffer schizophrenia, neurosis, and utopianism—forms of irrationality affecting Arab thinkers. Georges Tarabichi noted: 'The common denominator between irrationality and neurosis is that both represent a sin against reality... Expiating this sin requires Arab intelligentsias to reproduce this reality rationally.' Intellectuals must maintain continuous, positive engagement with reality to drive progress.

Elaborating speech through dialogue and debate on scientific issues must replace rote memorization. Ibn Khaldun demonstrated this by comparing the Maghreb and Tunisia in his era: study residence in Maghrebi madrasas lasted 16 years compared to 5 years in Tunisia. Mastering scientific research methods, deduction, and debate is essential for building rational thought.

Chereiet emphasized ethics in society and politics: 'What shocks us today is the disappointment of philosophers in modern governance systems, which utilized unprecedented oppression. How did the widespread enslavement of peoples escape their vision and conscience? They realized that past political literature on democracy or dictatorship led to two world wars... Returning to seek help not from political philosophy, but from moral philosophy, realizing that intellectual progress without protective ethics yields only evil.' When causes of crises and wars are understood scientifically, they are addressed through calm, precise analysis rather than political rhetoric. Thus, Chereiet saw the necessity of removing ethics from metaphysics, as advocated by Ibn Khaldun, because metaphysics does not constitute verifiable knowledge. Reason's boundaries must focus on human utility; ethics connects directly to human boundaries, where the human being is an end, not a means.

Thinker Abdelkader Chereiet adopted a rational outlook, examining issues comprehensively, rejecting emotion or subjectivity as judgment sources, and accepting critique and opposing views—a methodology vital for contemporary intellectual life, demonstrating reason's supreme status in Chereiet's thought.

Chereiet agreed with Malek Bennabi on prioritizing the realm of ideas and concepts in society-building, stating in the introduction to 'Battle of Concepts': 'The battle begins in concepts. However, our Eastern brothers perceive us as purely practical people who ignore theoretical and conceptual levels. If true, its positive side brings us closer to advanced societies, but its negative side leads to action without thought. True action begins in thought; as Hegel stated: "We cannot build a stone house unless preceded by a conceptual house built in our minds." I fear we build stone houses without mental concepts.' Concepts must precede implementation; ideas guarantee genuine transformation.

Referencing the traditional proverb, 'The Arab's path is between his eyes,' he stressed concepts in practical, cultural, and political life. In emerging societies, concepts assume battle-like intensity. Crucially, no action should occur without prior or accompanying exercise of reason, because an unthinking hand cannot distinguish construction from destruction.

Abdelkader Chereiet was a distinguished figure with a national orientation who prioritized the Algerian University, proving Algeria's return to the national spirit established by Ben Badis. Marked by ambition, openness, and logical persuasion, he ventured to Tunisia's Al-Zaytouna Mosque, where his rebellious spirit was defended by Professor Bourouiba. He lived as a student and disseminator of knowledge, investigating literature, environment, religion, politics, and social factors shaping society, earning recognition locally and internationally as a pioneer of rational enlightening thought.

Choosing university teaching allowed various facets of his personality to manifest, studying societal aspects extensively to formulate deep life theories. Following years of academic service over other professions, he chose the noble profession of building individuals and nurturing souls,

engaging with humanity's supreme gift: reason—the divine endowment elevating humans above other creatures.

Eighth: The Issue of Arabization According to Abdelkader Chereiet

Investigating Arabization—a core component of national identity—Chereiet linked it to culture, a fundamental pillar in human existence, thought, and history. Identity itself is a comprehensive cultural concept, and culture is a tool for creativity, creation, and progress. After defining cultural patterns and intellectual categories in Algeria since Ben Badis into three types—two bearing the Other's culture and a third seeking to employ culture for national development—Dr. Chereiet defended the Arabic language through his collected articles against two opposing currents: the Francophile current advocating French in administration/education, and the current promoting colloquial dialects. He insisted on expanding Arabization as a prerequisite for establishing the Algerian state.

Chereiet concluded that Arabic and Arabization in Algeria do not constitute a mere communication problem, but a problem of thought and civilization—a question of existence versus non-existence, exempt from ideological distortion. In 'From the Reality of Algerian Culture,' he analyzed educational curricula across primary, secondary, and university levels. Arabization commanded his primary attention as a civilizational issue.

Stating that 'the university was part of the homeland and could not remain an island in a sea of emptiness,' he noted that Arabic's perceived backwardness stemmed not from inherent linguistic flaws or pedagogical methods, but from Arab societal backwardness facing colonialism and modernity. To elevate Arabic to global standards, teachers, politicians, scholars, and society must protect and implement it, defining national identity not merely by lineage, but by language, thought, pride in civilizational history, and sound rational thinking. Arabic, the language of the Holy Quran, represents a supreme divine blessing.

Ninth: From the Reality of Algerian Culture

In this book, Abdelkader Chereiet posits that cultural identity expresses the need for human recognition, acceptance, and appreciation. Cultural identity involves a dialectic between self and Other, where human groups reinterpret culture through cultural contact—transforming internally through changing values/behaviors and externally through environmental interaction. Cultural identity is an evolving entity, expanding or contracting, reflecting societal experiences, victories, aspirations, and interactions with other cultural identities. It contributes to human history and civilizational development.

Diagnosing cultural ailments to provide effective solutions, Chereiet cited an analysis of Arab cultural crisis—which Algeria shares in manifestation if not essence. Culture, afflicted by aging and paralysis, suffers from three contradictions: between written and read language, aristocratic and popular culture, and rigid hierarchical concepts versus scientific/technical progress. Eliminating these contradictions is essential to overcome cultural crises.

Exposing flaws in intellectuals and cultural production to effect reform, he warned against imitation, falsification, and intellectual stagnation: 'The mindset of contentment crippling our spirits for centuries destroyed ambition, replacing it with blind imitation. Our ambition turned toward acquiring others' possessions rather than creative production. Civilizational value lies in production, transformation, and action—not imitation or minimal effort.' Thus, Chereiet deeply analyzed Algeria's cultural crisis.

Proposing solutions, Chereiet offered guidance for intellectuals: to mobilize masses, intellectuals require not only academic data, but awareness of national conditions, remaining free from foreign cultural worship or superiority complexes toward their people. Differentiating between two flawed groups—those obsessed with fossilized heritage and those obsessed with foreign culture—he advocated an ideological and critical mindset to evaluate cultural values, addressing brain drain by emphasizing ideological commitment.

Finally, Chereiet affirmed that Algerian culture lacks ideological grounding ensuring survival and production. Political and media intellectuals fail to diagnose societal ills accurately, committing analytical errors that even illiterates avoid. While culture achieved gains, it fell short of overcoming societal crises. He insisted on ideological orientation as the remedy for major dilemmas.

Tenth: Conclusion

Professor Yahiaoui Mohamed stated that Dr. Abdelkader Chereiet was a critic exercising critical action across all fields, possessing liberated ideas and advocating freedom and intellectual openness. He emphasized that true ideology in economic, social, or political spheres entails transferring knowledge rather than factories—developing human capital. I share Dr. Chereiet's view that cultivating intellect precedes technology transfer. Dr. Chereiet maintained a conscious, rigorous, and critical stance toward ideological issues—a committed, analytical philosopher interpreting observed phenomena objectively, advocating mental freedom and knowledge for national liberation. His opposition was principled and purposeful, carrying a liberation struggle's cause. Thus, the thinker placed supreme value on reason, subjecting issues to rational evaluation. Abdelkader Chereiet and Abdelkader Djeghloul agreed that the educated Arab elite must break free from stagnation and fear, confronting social problems with objective critical vision. Society cannot change through boasting about past glory or humiliating dependence on the West. The thinker's critical vision stemmed from profound intellectual openness.

Philosophy, according to Dr. Chereiet, is the torch illuminating the future. Societies lacking philosophers or viewing philosophy as an obstacle stumble continuously, lacking an illuminating beacon. The most backward nations prohibit philosophy. The philosophy referenced here does not mean detached fantasy or asceticism; philosophy is organized mental power analyzing life, universe, and social relations. The Algerian thinker's thought was dominated by a rational character, reflective of his position as a philosophy professor.

Finally, Algerian thinker Abdelkader Chereiet stands among luminaries who wrote their names in gold—a giant of philosophy known for rigorous intellectual works and profound philosophical writings in Algeria and abroad, particularly Tunisia. His rational orientation developed during his teaching tenure at Al-Zaytouna Mosque, where early critical practice emerged through critiquing Zaytouna education, suffering from its limitations. Armed with rational methodological principles, he became a model active intellectual devoted to his nation's issues, leaving a lasting legacy as a symbol of rational enlightenment in the Arab world.

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