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Q7 ISL

Describe, in detail, the basic characteristics of Islamic Civilization.

INTRODUCTION:-

Man kind has always lived in societies; societies are the embodiment of civilizations. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle said about man and society.

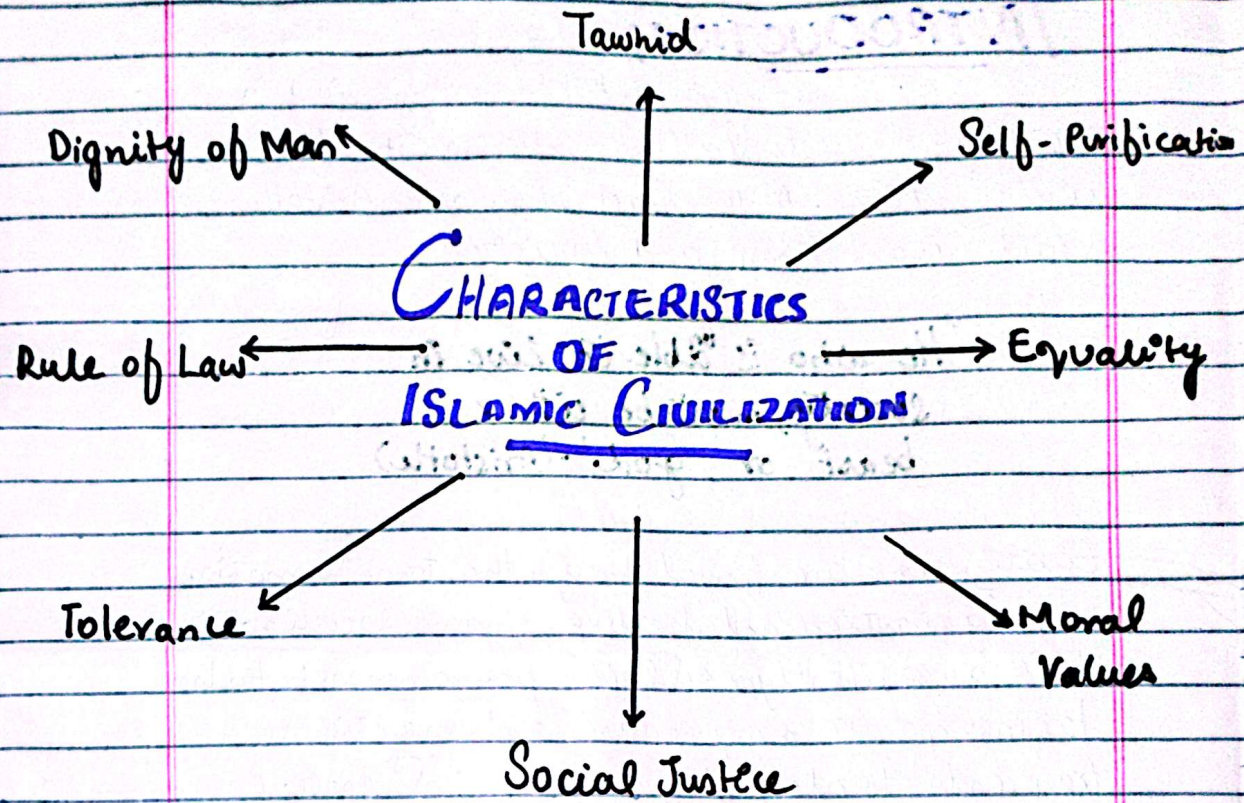
'He who is able to live in society, must be either beast or god' - (Aristotle)

Civilizations are formed through the transformation and amalgamation and death of many societies. It is a constantly evolving phenomenon. It tends to incorporate many cultures and sometimes transcends borders and geographical space.
Civilization ^{is derived} is a Latin words



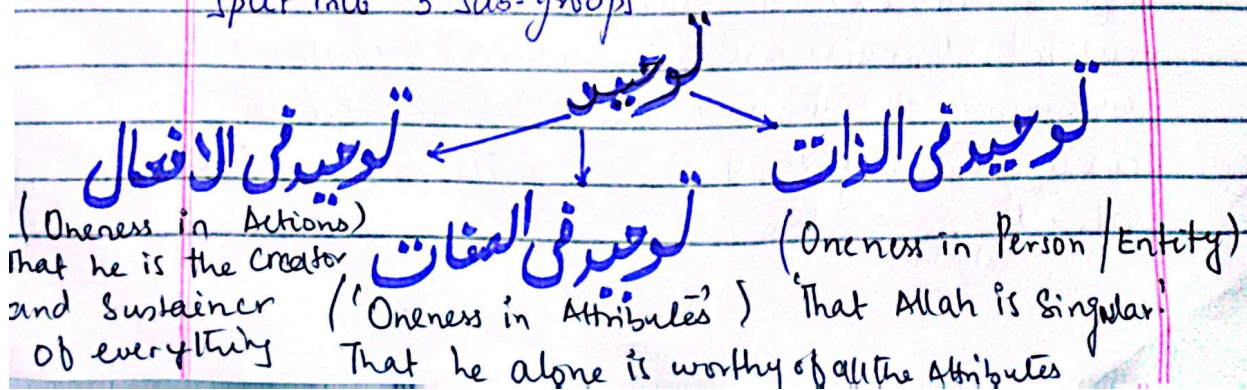
It is defined as "Any society which has developed a writing system, government, production of surplus food, division of labour and urbanization."

Islam, brought along with a new way of life which later on culminated into an entire culture and civilization, spanning from Modern-day Spain to the plains of the sub-continent. That civilization hinged on 8 basic traits as illustrated ahead.



a) Tawhid - The Basic Pillar of an Islamic Civilization

It is the belief that the Almighty is alone and One. There is no entity like him and only he is worthy of worship & praise. Tawhid is further split into 3 sub-groups



As Allah (SWT) says in the Quran,

"Say, 'O Prophet, He is Allah - One and Indivisible'.
He is eternal and absolute. None is born of him
and nor was he born. And there is none like him!"

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (Surah-Ikhlās)

Without Tawhid, there can be no Islamic civilization.

As it is the building block of a Muslim's faith. Tawhid and the belief on the singularity of Allah distinguishes a Muslim from others. Similarly, an Islamic society from others.

b) Self-Purification - The 2nd Pillar of an Islamic Civilization

Self-Purification or (Tazkiyah (to Nafs) تزكية النفس) is formed from two words.

نفس
(Soul)

تزكية
(Purification)

It is the process of purifying the soul from all kinds of evils (thoughts/deeds). The primary purpose of Muslim is to worship Allah (SWT). Those worships can only be performed and further accepted when one is pure. Impure thoughts and deeds risk and harm those deeds. As Allah says,

"Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul, and doomed is the one who corrupts it." (Al-Quran)

In any sphere of an Islamic Civilization, members/citizens constantly keep their actions in check and turn to

if they have gone astray. The society and members keep themselves in check and constantly perform Tazkiyah.

c) Dignity of Man is respected and Upheld in this Civilization

The Almighty has called mankind as his most superior creation. He himself created every one in the most unique way possible. Furthermore, unlike other creations, the Almighty himself taught Adam (A.S) and imparted knowledge on Him. Furthermore, Allah (M.W.T) has made man his representative / delegate on this Earth. In an Islamic society, the dignity of man is the highest as the Almighty himself says so,

"Verily we have dignified the children of Adam. we carry them on the land and the sea, have made provisions of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom we created with a marked preference."

(Al-Quran)

d) Equality - All are equal in the Sight of Allah

Equality is a trait that is ^{found} equally all over the Islamic civilization. In the last sermon, the Holy Prophet laid down the principle that

'Piety / good deeds beset superiority in front of Allah and ~~nothing else~~ not race/language.'

Moreover, the worships that muslim dispell the sense of superiority, due to caste, wealth, race etc. Salaat and Hajj are two prominent examples. As Allah (swt) himself said,

'The best among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most righteous' - (Al Quran)

e) Rule of Law is Upheld in the Islamic Civilization

The most important factor in any civilization is upholding the rule of law. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) described the absence of the rule of law as the declining factor of previous nations. The law should be applied equally on everyone. From here the now famous legal maxim also arises

'Equality before the law'

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) enforced the law and the particular case where a Makkan committed theft he remarked and used the following words:

"By Allah, if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad (S.A.W), were to steal, I would have her hand cut off." (Hadith)

These words show the level of emphasis the Holy Prophet had on maintaining the supremacy of the law.

f-) Social Justice - An Element of the Islamic Civilization

An Islamic civilization values itself on the social justice found in itself. The element of equality ensures social justice. Moreover, the state also steps up and through various administrative tools tries to ensure that justice, equality and rule of law prevail within society.

Elements like wealth and power, are distributed throughout society and officials respectively.

Similarly, a ruler who enforces justice and lets it prevail has been promised a great reward. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said,

"On the Day of Judgement, I people will be given shade when there will be no shade other than the Lord's throne; one which is a just ruler..." (Al-hadith)

g) Tolerance - Ensured both at the Civilizational and Individual Level

Muslims are taught and emphasized the lesson of tolerance. The life of the Holy Prophet is before everyone. The treatment by the Makkans people, then the pelting by the hooligans of Taif and such other hardships. Yet he did not utter any words against them. He tolerated them and prayed for them. Muslims are told to tolerate inconveniences and hardships. For this the reward is not given by any human, but the

Creator himself. As Allah (SWT) says,

'The repayment of one bad action is one equivalent to it. But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward lies with Allah. He does not love the unjust.' - (Al-Quran)

h) High Moral values - Definition of Islamic Civilization

One of the pre-requisites of an Islamic civilization, that it must contain members of high moral values and must be led by people of the highest values. The ideal Muslim was Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as he was praised by the Creator for his character. As Allah says about the Holy Prophet;

"And you are of great character." - (Al-Quran)

Similarly, Hazrat Aisha once remarked about the character of the Prophet

"The character of the Prophet was of the Quran." (Muslim)

Muslims should strive to embody the character and life of the Prophet; in order to achieve a better society and individual lives.

CONCLUSION

An Islamic civilization contains aspects that benefit every citizen. It ensures the rule of law is upheld, justice prevails, that society is a tolerable one, that the life and dignity of man always be upheld and members who are part of this civilization have a firm belief in Allah and are people who turn to Allah if they have gone astray.