

Describe, in detail, the basic characteristics of Islamic civilization (2018)

1- Introduction

The light of the Islamic civilization disseminated across the globe with the prophethood of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The foundation of Islamic civilization, unlike all other civilizations, rested on Kalima-e-Tayyaba.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

2- Meaning of civilization

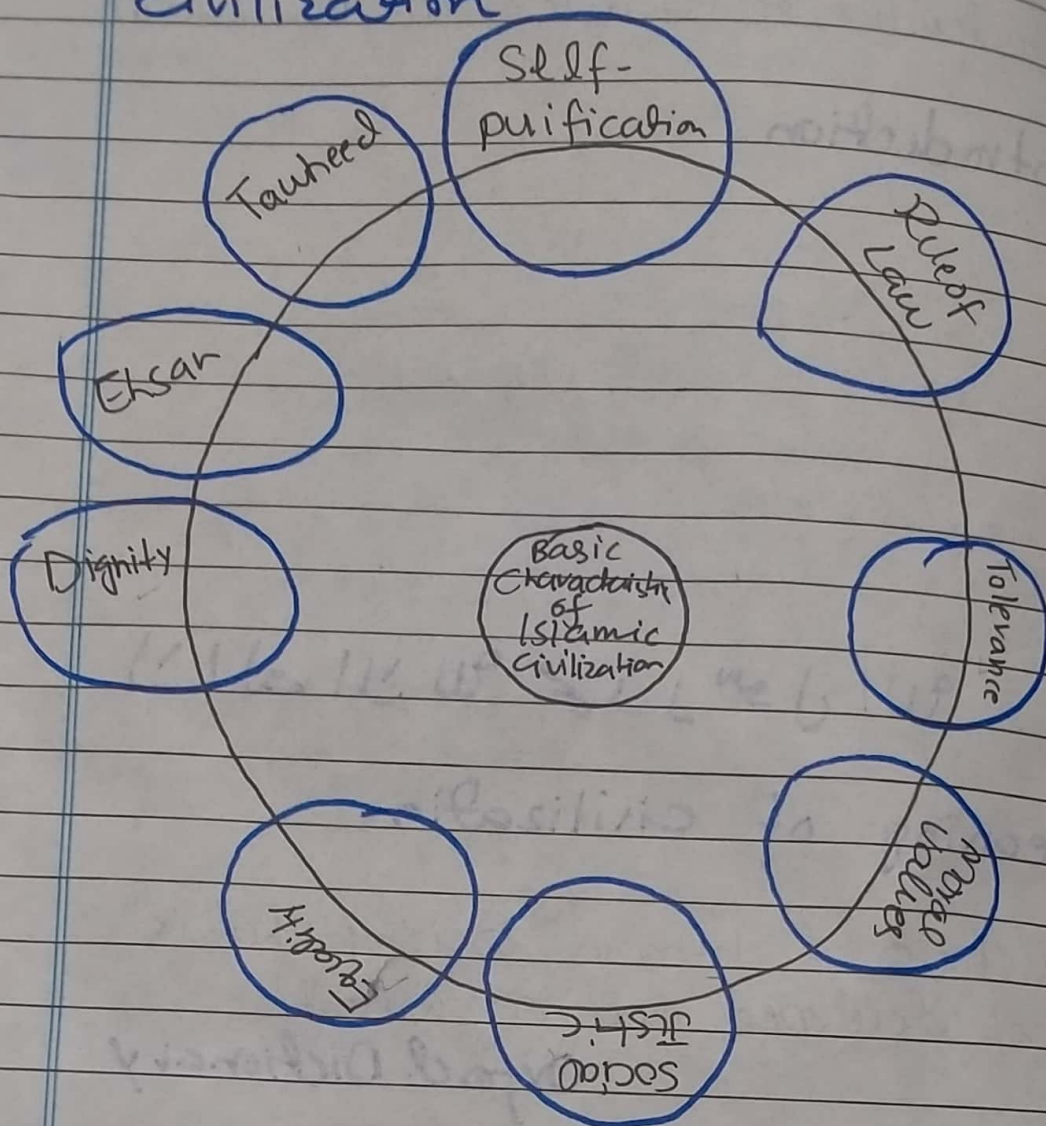
"A state of human society that is very developed and organized"

Oxford Dictionary

Civilization is an advanced state of intellectual, cultural and material development in human society. It is marked by progress in arts and sciences, language, knowledge, and complex social, economic and political institutions.

As Will Durant puts it, four elements constitute a civilization: economic provision, political organization, moral tradition, and the pursuit of knowledge and arts.

3- Characteristics of Islamic civilization



3.1. Belief in Tawheed: the essence of Islamic civilization

Tawheed is the foundation and essence of Islamic culture. This belief affects not only to the ~~Oneness~~ Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah, but also signifies the Oneness of Lordship, the Sovereignty and the Authority of Allah over everything that exists in this world and beyond. Suah Ikhtlas beautifully encapsulates

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the concept of Tauheed:

قل هو الله احد ①
لم يلد ولم يولد ② ولم يكن
له كفوا احد ③

Say, "He is Allah, [who is]

One ① Allah, the Eternal

Refuge ② He neither begets

nor is born ③ Nor is there

to Him any equivalent ④

Suak Ikhlas

3.2 Self purification (Tazkiyah al-Nafs)

In literal sense, Tazkiyah Al-Nafs means 'purification of the soul'. According to Al-Ghazali, it means completing the perfection of one's soul (nafs) by cutting down its evil desires, and allowing its noble characteristics to evolve. Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi has argued that the constant struggle against nafs is jihad-al-akbar.

According to Islam, attainment of falah in this life and the next is connected to tazkiyah:

قد افلح من ركبها وقد خاب
من دساها

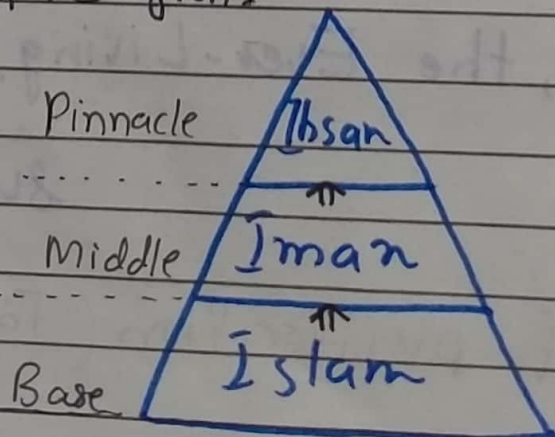
"He will indeed be successful who purifies it and he will indeed fail whoever pollutes and corrupts it"

Surah as-Shams

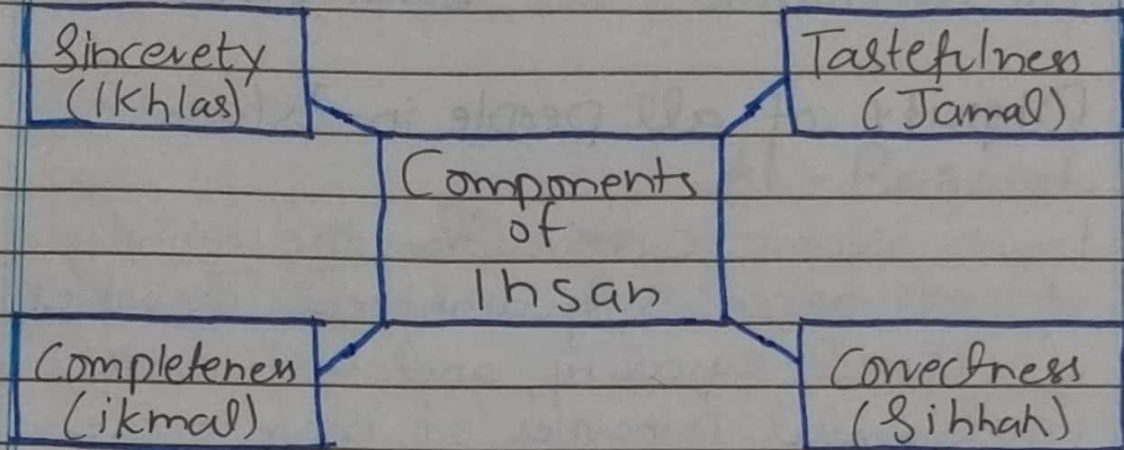
3.3

Ehsan (Excellence in faith)

Holy Prophet (PBUH) designated three degrees of religion:



The level, Islam, denotes professing the faith by tongue. Iman, refers to the intensity of belief that reaches to heart. The highest of the three levels, Ihsan, urges the believers to opt excellence as a way of life and do things beautifully and nobly.



Regarding Ihsan, Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"It is to worship Allah as if you are seeing Him. While you do not see Him, He truly sees you."

3.4 Rule of Law in Islamic civilization

In the Islamic ~~civilization~~, all people, irrespective of race, color, creed and nationality, are equal ~~before~~ ^{before} the law. It is ensured that there is independent judiciary, and impartial and incorruptible law enforcement agencies that maintain

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the law and order of the Islamic society
Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"O you who believe, be upholders
of justice ..."

Surah Nisa

3.5 Dignity of all people in Islam

In an Islamic civilization, the dignity of all people is guaranteed. The values of respect, equality, and justice are fundamental principles of Islam ensure that rights and roles of all individuals are protected within its society.

Holy Quran, itself, gives humans the dignity and honor, as Allah says:

"Certainly We created man in the best form"

Surah At-Tin

3.6 Tolerance as a basic characteristic of Islamic civilization

Muslims are commanded by Allah Almighty to be tolerant towards others, whether they be Muslims or non-Muslims. Islam preaches the acceptance for diverse religions, and

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do not allow the forced conversion or imposition of Islamic faith on others. As Allah says,

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ...

Let there be no compulsion in religion.

Even, Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of United Kingdom once said:

1. "Tolerance is the defining characteristic of Islam."

3.7 Social Justice as a basic characteristic of Islamic civilization

As Islam is a torch-bearer of human equality and brotherhood, therefore social justice has a special place in the Islamic civilization. Social justice ~~implies~~ refers to equity and fair play for everyone in the Islamic society with respect to political and socio-economic rights and opportunities.

Allah has commanded:

... لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ...

"... that mankind may keep up equity ..."

Surah Al-Hadid

At another place, Allah Almighty has said:

"O you who believe, be upholders of justice ..."

Surah Nisa

3.8 Moral values in Islamic civilization

Islamic civilization is deeply moralistic, emphasizing ethical behaviour and adherence to principles laid down by Quran and Sunnah. It promotes honesty, compassion, justice, and truthfulness. Adultery, fornication, gambling, homosexuality and intoxicants are forbidden in Islam.

Allah says:

"Do not spread corruption in the land."

Surah Baqarah

3.9 Islamic civilization is based on equality

Medina Accord, the first Constitution of the world comprehensively explains the concept of equality in an Islamic civilization. In such a society, there shall be complete freedom of religion, expression, movement, and other socio-political, and economic rights for all individuals of the society. Islam does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion or gender.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) in his last sermon, clearly said:

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve..."

He also said:

"An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white..."

Hajjat-ul-wida

4- Conclusion

Before the advent of Islam, the civilizations, such as of Arabia, were full of ignorance and mischief. With the introduction of Islamic civilization, a message of peace and enlightenment was spread, first in Arabia, and then to the rest of the world; the truth had prevailed.