

Q Culture and Civilization.....

Introduction; Civilization:

"Civilization begins where chaos and insecurity ends."

Will Durant
Civilization is generally defined as an advanced state of human society containing highly developed forms of government, culture, industry, and common social norms. The collapse of a civilization stems from factors which are the opposite of those which lead to its rise and development: the most important of these destructive factors include moral and intellectual decadence, lawlessness, the spread of oppression and poverty, and the lack of competent and sincere leaders.

Definitions of Civilization:

According to Oxford Dictionary, civilization is

"The process by which a society or place reaches an advanced stage of social development and organisation."

Webster Dictionary defines civilisation as,

"The process of becoming civilised is pleasant and comfortable".

An Overview of Islamic Civilization:

Islamic civilization refers to the totality of cultural, social, political, intellectual, and moral achievements of Muslims inspired by Islamic teachings. It is a civilization founded upon the principles of Tawhid, justice, knowledge, and universal brotherhood. Rooted in the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Holy Quran says:

"You are the best nation produced for mankind."

You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."

(Al-e-Imran 3:110)

Culture:

Culture is the totality of life shared by members of society. It includes people's beliefs, values, customs, traditions, language, art, religion, laws, and social behavior.

Culture is learned, not inherited, and it is passed from one generation to another through communication and social interaction. It shapes how individuals think, act, and relate to others.

An Overview of Islamic Culture:

Muslim culture represents the unification of all the cultures influenced by common beliefs and practices. The guiding religious phenomena and cultural aspects bind its people historically. The religious practices and beliefs of Muslims are centered around the religion of Islam. Most of the Islamic literature is religious in nature, comprises of the belief system from the Quran, Sirah and Hadiths.

Definition of Culture.

According to Robert Bierstedt's, "social order"

Culture is the complex whole of man's learned behavior which is socially transmitted from one generation to another.

Characteristics of Islamic Culture:

1- Islamic Culture is Based on Tawhid:

Islamic culture is founded on the belief in Tawhid, -the idea that Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the Universe. Every part of Muslims' life is centered on Allah's guidance revealed through the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Muslims follow divine laws that define what is Halal or Haram and prepare for the Hereafter.

"Say, indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds"

(Al-An'am: 6:162)

2- Islamic Culture Promotes Equality, Brotherhood, and Unity Among All:

Islamic culture teaches that all human beings are equal before Allah. No one has superiority based on wealth, color, or race. It encourages brotherhood, cooperation, and respect among all Muslims and good relations with non-Muslims.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"No Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab: no white person over a black person, nor a black over white."

(Musnad Ahmad)

3- Islamic Culture Gives High Importance to Dignity and Modesty in Personal and Social Life:

Islamic culture values the dignity of human beings and promotes a moral and disciplined life. It encourages truthfulness, modesty, cleanliness, and humility. Islam forbids immoral behavior such as adultery, fornication, gambling, homosexuality and intoxication. It stresses strong family bonds and care for all.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Modesty is part of faith."

(Sahih Muslim)

4- Islamic Culture Encourages Both Worldly Progress and Spiritual Growth:

Islamic culture does not deny the world or promote isolation. Instead, it encourages social justice, learning, and the pursuit of knowledge. Islam supports

progress in science, education, technology, and social development, as long as these serve moral and ethical goals. Muslims are urged to struggle against oppression and work for justice and reforms. The Holy Quran says:

"And say, 'My Lord,
increase me in knowledge'.
(Surah Ta-Ha 20:114)"

5. Islamic Culture is Not Exclusive it Promotes Peace and Dialogue with All

Islamic culture does not isolate itself from others. It is open, tolerant, and inviting. It emphasizes Da'wah, good manners, and peaceful dialogue. Muslims are taught to respect other faiths, listen with patience, and share the truth of Islam.

The Holy Quran Says:

"Invite to the
way of your Lord with
wisdom and good
instruction."

(Surah An-Nahl-125)

Conclusion:

Culture and Islamic civilization together represent the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social development

of humankind guided by divine principles. While culture is the way of life of people, Islamic civilization begins and elevates culture through the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. It provides a balanced framework that harmonizes faith and reason, material progress and spirituality, and individual rights and collective welfare.