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Q₁ "The Characteristics of Islamic Civilization"

1- Introduction:

Islamic civilization is more than 14 centuries old, serving as an epitome of ideal system in all domains i.e. moral, religious, political, social, cultural and economic. It is due to the characteristic features which distinguish it from all other civilizations. It is founded on the principle of sovereignty of Allah, with man serving as the vicegerent of Allah. It is inherently unique as it cherishes dignity of mankind, its equality, social justice, adherence to welfare of mankind. The moral values, alongwith elements of bravery, courage, patience and perseverance serve as its characteristic features. Moreover, the principle of rule of law and accountability strengthen its foundations.

2- Major Characteristics of Islamic Civilization:

Following are the major characteristics of Islamic civilization discussed in detail:

1) Sovereignty belongs to Allah and man as vicegerent of God:

The principle of sovereignty of Allah lays the foundation of Islamic civilization. It propagates and enables the belief of mankind in the primary Islamic faith "Tawheed". Mankind by upholding this notion achieves a purpose and sense of life. People only turn to Allah to seek assistance and express gratitude. As the Quran mentions, "Had there been other gods in the heaven or the Earth, both realms should have surely been corrupted"

- Al-Quran

Man is the vicegerent of God, created to lead the world according to the principles of the Quran and Hadith. This element creates a sense of responsibility in mankind to uphold the Islamic civilizations' inherent worth when many other creations besides man exists. That is why, the man is called the "Crown of Creation" in the Holy Quran. Moreover, following verses enables man to nourish the Islamic civilization in best possible ways,

"Lo! I am about to place a vicegerent in the Earth".

"Indeed, We have created man in best possible way (الاحسن تقويم)"

- Al-Quran

ii) Dignity of Man : Inherent principle of Islamic civilization :

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

"We bestowed dignity on the children of Adam (R.A)"

- Al-Quran

Another characteristic feature of Islamic civilization as explained in the aforementioned verse is the dignity of mankind. In Islamic civilization, every man is respected independent of his religion, cast, creed or colour, making it tolerant and diverse in nature upheld by peaceful coexistence.

iii) Public welfare must be a priority :

Islamic civilization upholds the public welfare as a priority following the Holy commandments of the last and final prophet, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) :

“The best among you is the one who benefits people the most”

Hence, social, economic and moral welfare of the people is valued more than anything.

iv) Islamic Governance : Principles of the Quran, Sunnah and Sharia : Islamic civilization works

on the principles of the Quran, Hadith and overall concepts of Sharia derived from these domains/sources.

In this way, the foundation of Islamic governance is laid addressing the needs of public. For example, Pakistan, through Islamic Ideological Council and Majlis-e-Shoora with religious scholars ensure the governance is in accordance with the principles of the Quran and Sunnah. This makes Islamic civilization a guiding light in political, economic, social and judicial system.

v) Social Justice and Rule of Law :

Islamic civilization serves as an epitome of social justice and rule of law. It ensures the welfare of people by discouraging every sort of discriminatory practices in political, social or economic system.

It is centered on the principle:

“Stand firm for justice” (Al-Quran).

In this regard, it looks after the weak and oppressed while, encourages deterrence by enforcing strict laws against tyrants and oppressors.

vij) Equality ; The Golden Feature :

Equality of mankind is the notion held in Islamic civilization which serves as the golden feature of it. It is based on the divine teaching that :

"And we created you from a single soul." (Al-Quran).

Moreover, it upholds the advice of the Holy Prophet given in Last Sermon:

"All of you are children of Adam and Adam was created from dust. Hence, no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor a white is superior to black except piety."

(Last Sermon)

vij) Bravery and Courage ; The Bedrock of Islamic Civilization:

In Islamic civilization, bravery

and courage serve as the bedrock of the civilization. It not only encourages physical bravery, but also appreciates moral bravery and courage. It can be understood from the incident when Hazrat Umar (RA) accepted his mistake publicly in the matter of dower explained by a woman. He courageously said,

"That woman is right and Umar is wrong." (Hazrat Umar)

viii) Patience and Perseverance in the face of adversity in Islamic civilization:

In Islamic civilization, patience and perseverance are the most important characteristic features. They create and expands the level of iman (belief); thus, making people determined in the face of adversity.

It is considered a prophetic feature, following the pathway of Hazrat Yaqoob, Hazrat Yousaf, Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and

many more, highlighting that indeed, Allah is with those who are patient.

ix) Optimism and Hope as features of Islamic civilization:

Optimism and hope serve as the brightest features of Islamic civilization. They create a sense of positivity in mankind, enabling the Islamic civilization to flourish. It is centered on the Hadith that "Do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah".

x) Moral Values in Islamic civilization:

In Islamic civilization, moral values like humility, modesty, simplicity etc. serve as the core of it along with moral conduct. The notion of humility and modesty are evident from the lives of Prophets and Pious Caliphate. They firmly stuck themselves with the Quranic notion of, "Those who walk upon earth modestly". In this way,

Islamic civilization is purged from moral evils.

xi) The Characteristic Feature of Accountability:

In Islamic civilization, accountability serves as the core, rooted in:

a) Individual accountability:

Individuals held themselves accountable guided by inner morality and staying away from evil.

b) Accountability of Rulers:

Rulers i.e. government officials and leaders face dual accountability i.e. by public and by government, to keep the governance fair and transparent.

c) Accountability by Allah:

On the day of Judgement, people will be held accountable for their deeds by Allah.

All these three domains of accountability make Islamic civilization strong and transparent.

3 - Conclusion :

Islamic civilization is most powerful and distinguished civilization in the world till date. It is due to its characteristic features which are unique to it. It enables man to respect and serve humanity by adhering to the principle of sovereignty of Allah and man as His vicegerent. It creates in mankind a sense of responsibility strengthening the foundational principles of Islamic civilization - bravery, patience, social justice, rule of law - upheld by the element of accountability.

Q2 - "Measures to Improve the Public Administrative System of Pakistan"

1- Introduction :

Public administration of Pakistan works on the principles of Shari'a, illuminated by the Quran and Sunnah. However, the compromised

mechanism of these principles plague the efficiency of the administrative system. To improve the system, strengthening rule of law, ensuring transparency and accountability, independence of judiciary, participatory and consensus-oriented administration is required.

2- Measures to Improve Public Administrative System of Pakistan:

Although established on the Islamic ideology and the principles of Sharia, Pakistan's Public Administrative System suffers from weaknesses since independence. It is primarily due to the mere adoption of Islamic values without proper and strong enforcement mechanism. Hence, following measures are suggested to improve it:

i) Strengthening Rule of Law:

Pakistan is a multicultural and ethnic country with people of multiple cultures, religions and races

living in it. However, they do not enjoy equal values which the constitution of the country bestows upon them.

This weakens rule of law which needs to be strengthened in order to strengthen the system of the state. It can be done by strictly adhering to principles of Sharia guided by the light of the Quran and Sunnah. As Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said, "Stand firm for justice if even your close relative is concerned". It also highlights the fact that "your mutual jealousies should not prevent you from doing justice." Hence, the moral standards along with strengthening internal security i.e. police is suggested.

ii) Transparency in Policies and Element of Accountability:

Transparency in policies and the element of accountability are much needed to improve public administration. Government policies need to be transparent which can

be done through the adoption of principle of "Shura - mutual consultation".

In this regard, Masjid-e-Nabwi as a centre of communal relations and discussion serve as an outstanding example. Despite being a religious centre, it was cherished as a place where policies were discussed. Hence, government needs to maintain transparent communication system with the public. Moreover, the element of accountability deters all sorts of illegal, unlawful and corrupt activities. Therefore, accountability needs to be ensured.

iii) Participatory and Consensus-Oriented Administration:

To improve the public administration, it needs to be made participatory and consensus-oriented. In this regard, Hazrat Umar's words to the people of Egypt are of immense importance. He involved and directly addressed public through his letters

before appointing a governor upon them after conquest of the land.

"O people of Egypt! I am sending Abu Musab as governor to you so that he may struggle with you for the right of the poor and weak, and against your enemies."

Hazrat Umar (R.A)

This shows that Pakistan needs to adopt such a participatory and consensus-oriented approach to improve administration. It will also strengthen democracy, pushing the country forward in international race.

iv) Responsiveness and Efficacy:

Responsiveness and efficacy of the system are required to strengthen the administrative system. Hazrat Umar (R.A) letter serves as a source of guidance in this regard, when he advised Abu Musab before appointing him as governor:

"Donot remain in seclusion from people for a long time. This would

weaken your administration."

- Hazrat Umar (R.A) to Governor of Egypt.

This highlights that to improve the public administration, leaders should be responsive to the people by listening and addressing their issues. Thus, enhancing the efficacy of their performance. Pakistan needs to adopt the same.

v) Fair Resource Distribution Mechanisms:

Fair and equitable distribution of resources is essential in order to accelerate growth and improve governance. The mechanisms of Sadqat, Zakat, ^(Tax) Jizya, and the creation of Bait-ul-Maal (National Exchequer) by Hazrat Umar (R.A) serve as Islamic mechanisms to channelize resources, ensuring their fair distribution. Pakistan is suffering from poverty, unemployment and resource constraints which worsens the administration system performance.

Therefore, adoption of properly channelized aforementioned mechanisms need to be adopted to ensure resource distribution and fair governance.

vij) Independent Judicial System:

Judiciary is the backbone of public administrative system. Hence, it needs to be independent and efficient in decision-making and justice providing as it is widely upheld notion that justice delayed is justice denied. Unfortunately, the judicial system in Pakistan is suffering from chronic problems i.e. political influence, non-regulatory justice process, bias in decision-making, lack of chain of custody etc. All these issues need to be addressed which can only be done by making judiciary independent, providing them security and safety to improve administration.

3. Conclusion :

The public administrative system of Pakistan is plagued by some chronic problems i.e. non-participatory and non-transparent governance, biased judicial system, unequal resource distribution and ineffectiveness of government machinery. By addressing these issues, the administration system can be enhanced and improved.

For this purpose, government working and policies need to be transparent, fair, consensus-oriented, addressing the grievances of public. Moreover, fair allocation of resources and enhanced rule of law will strengthen the system.