Presentation topic:

Islamic Culture And Civilization
Islamic Culture

Introduction:

There are over a billion Muslims throughout the world, and though they speak hundreds of different languages and live in dozens of different countries, they still share a common Muslim culture. This culture is embedded in certain common beliefs that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger. Muslim customs and traditions include Islamic/Muslim clothing, food, wedding traditions and other aspects of Islamic life that Muslims have adopted in their respective countries.
Basic Concept 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. The original Muslim literature is in Arabic, the Prophet's language. Most of the literature is religious in nature. It comprises communication and documentation of the belief system from the Quran, *Sirat* and *Hadith*.

History Of Islamic Culture:

Secular Muslim literature developed in the Umayyad empire. It was taken by the Arabs to distant lands and became part of a popular culture. In due course of time, Persian became one of the main languages of the civilization. In the sub-continent, syncretistic poetry from the Sufis propagated the foundations of Muslim culture.
Characteristics Of *Islamic* Culture:

The Quran is considered to be the source of many aspects of Islamic culture. Certain acts or rituals that Muslims do almost subconsciously are actually encouraged, or allowed by Allah, or mandated, in the Quran.

*Festivals and Marriage:*

Festivals like Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha and Lailat al Miraj are classic examples of the influence of religion in the lives of Muslim people. According to Muslim culture, marriage is, in the words of Mohammed, 'half of religion'. The bonding of two souls in holy matrimony is looked upon as a legal bond and social contract.
Art and Architecture

Art is an important part of Muslim culture. The abstract, decorative and floral designs are unique to Islamic art and architecture. Muslim art is always devoid of depictions of the animate, especially human beings according to the dictates of Islam or Muslim religion. Islamic art focuses on the omnipresence of Allah, the 'One who cannot be represented by imagery'. Arabic calligraphy is a recognized art form used to write verses from the Qur'an. As Islam spread, the first mosques to be built outside Arabia were definitely influenced by the local houses of worship and churches. Though the architectural form and simplicity of the mosque remained, frequently, materials for columns and beams were taken from other edifices of previous cultures.
Islamic architecture is common in the following features:

- Large courtyards
- Central prayer halls
- Minarets
- A wall niche indicating the direction to Mecca
- Domes
- Iwans to separate sections
- Repetitive art forms
- Arabic calligraphy
- Fountains
- Bright color
Music
Islamic music is mostly played in public services. Devotional music is enjoyed by contemporary Muslims all over the world. The common music forms include Arab classical and North Indian classical music. The musical preferences of Muslim people have traversed the trade routes. The Sufis are credited with taking the music of the mystics far and wide.

Muslim Customs and Traditions

The Quran does not mention many practices that are prevalent in the Muslim world today. Instead, the traditions, sayings, and stories of Prophet Muhammad and his companions provided basis for today's traditions and practices that are called the Hadith. The term Muslim means 'submission to God'. Islam is now recognized as the second-largest world religion. Muslims believe that the Quran is the outcome of dialogs between the God and the Prophet.
Islam propagates the five laws that are fundamental duties to unite Muslims in spirit. These are:

- *Shahadah* or the worship of one God only.
- *Salah* or prayer, at least five times a day.
- *Zakat*, or donation of alms.
- *Sawm*, or fasting during Ramadan.
- *Haj*, the pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca.

In today's troubled world, it is important to differentiate between what is truly Islamic and what is just culture as Muslim culture covers a wide variety of subjects. Many Islamic customs or traditions that are practiced today are not supported by the Word of Allah in the *Quran* or the teachings of Prophet Muhammad in the *Hadith*, but are simply local customs assumed to be Muslim culture.
Islamic Civilization

Introduction:

Some of those who have written about the history of civilization define civilization as “a social system which helps man to increase his cultural output.”

Basic Concept Of Islamic Civilization:

Civilization consists of four main elements: economical resources, political systems, moral traditions and science and arts. The development and progress of a civilization requires many factors such as geographical and economic factors, and psychological factors such as religion, language and education. 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 and breakdown of social systems, the spread of oppression and poverty, the spread of pessimism and apathy and the lack of competent and sincere leaders.

History Of Islamic Civilization:
In the beginning the Muslims were both open and cautious. They borrowed and integrated elements of other cultures into their own. The new religion of Islam, which we will get to in a moment, adopted elements of Christian, Jewish, and pagan religious beliefs and practices. The Muslims tolerated religious minorities within territories they had conquered so long as these minorities recognized Islamic political rule, paid taxes, and did not proselytize among Muslims. Still, the Muslims were careful to protect the purity of their religion, language, and law from any foreign influence. With the passage of time, and with increased conflict with both eastern and western Christians, this protective instinct grew stronger. In the end, Islamic culture did not penetrate the west in the same way that Germanic culture did, but would remain strange as well as threatening to the West.
Fundamental to Islam was its religion -- this, of course, is true for the medieval west as well. However, we know more about early Christianity then we do about early Islam. And the reason is clear. Christianity was produced by a literate culture. Islamic religion, however, was formed largely in an illiterate, nomadic culture.

Characteristics of Islamic Civilization:

Like the human being, every civilization has a body and a soul. The body of a civilization is its material achievements in terms of buildings, industrial facilities, machinery and anything which reflects welfare and earthly advancement. Its soul is the set of creeds and concepts which condition the behaviors of individuals and groups, their mutual relationships and their worldview. These are the elements which constitute the characteristics of the Islamic civilization.
Five main characteristics do distinguish the Islamic civilization from other past and present successive human civilizations and place it at an outstanding position:

1. The first characteristic is the fact that it is a civilization based on Islamic faith, imbued with its values and principles. It is a monotheistic civilization based on the belief in the oneness of Allah Almighty, the Creator of men and all creatures. It is also partly a man-made civilization, built on sturdy religious background of faith.

2. The second characteristic is that Islamic civilization is predicated on the idea that Man has precedence over the rest of Allah's creatures, that all human activities should lead to the happiness and welfare of Man and that any action intended to serve this goal is a God-blessed action, indeed a human action in the first place.
3. The third characteristic is its being a generous civilization which drew on the human civilizations and cultures experienced by the peoples of the ancient world, but contributed copiously to the advancement of science, knowledge and the values of justice, equality, beauty and virtue. Its output benefited humanity at large, regardless of race, color or even religion.

4. The fourth characteristic is its being a well-balanced civilization which secures fair equilibrium between the materialistic and the spiritual sides with exemplary moderation that has always been a characteristic of Islamic thought and a distinctive feature of the Islamic civilization throughout its history.

5. The fifth characteristic is its being a perennial civilization which will last as long as Islam, because it is based on the very principles of Islam which Allah will preserve eternally. Thus, it is a civilization with unique characteristics, a civilization that never withers away since it is not a national or a racial civilization nor does it run counter to human nature.
The Islamic civilization had once headed the march of science and knowledge during the Middle Ages which are considered in Europe as the age of darkness while they are an age of enlightenment for our civilization.

Contemporary Issue:

Today’s progress in the modern world is increasingly challenging, and more so for Islamic civilization. The inaccurate image and misunderstanding of the teachings and practices of Islam, and of the lives of Muslims in the eyes of the world have generally affected the relationship of Muslims with the global community. The western economic model is not providing the expected stability to the world’s economy, and some scholars are now looking for alternative models including Islamic-based economics and finance.
In the geo-political sphere, international unrests and issues are increasingly focused on the Muslim world or Islamic countries, varying from terrorism to the daily lives of Muslims such as the wearing of headscarves. These issues may deteriorate if the Muslims themselves do not rectify the misunderstanding among the non-Muslims about the Islamic religion. It is thus the responsibility of Islamic scholars and experts to guide, debate and protect the image of the religion through research and publication in the international arena.
Thank You!!!