

The Components of Islamic Civilization; A Lasting Heritage and Evolving Visions.

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Abstract

This study examines Islamic civilization and its fundamental principles through illustrative examples from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It highlights the core values upon which this civilization is built—mercy, peace, knowledge, and progress—aiming to establish the best approach to balancing worldly pursuits with the mission of developing and sustaining the earth. Using a descriptive methodology, the study analyzes the pioneering role of Islamic civilization in comparison to other civilizations. It explores the foundational aspects of Islamic civilization, how its principles are reflected across different domains and stages of progress, and practical ways to implement these values in contemporary life. This ensures that Islam remains adaptable to emerging global challenges and modern developments .

Keywords : Qur'an; Sunnah; Islamic civilization; religion and worldly life; knowledge and ethics; sustainable development .

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Introduction

At its inception, Islamic civilization was strong and managed to spread across vast regions of the world within just a quarter of a century. However, over time, it experienced decline and weakness, mainly due to its followers abandoning the foundational faith-based values and religious duties that Allah set as prerequisites for their empowerment on Earth. Allah says:

"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me." (Surah An-Nur, 55). When the people of Islam abandoned true worship and the pure monotheism of Allah, their enemies took advantage of the situation and ruled over their lands with military, scientific, and cultural strength.

Islamic civilization has had a significant influence on various human civilizations, thanks to the valuable contributions it has made—and continues to make—today. It provided monumental services and original scientific gifts that illuminated the dark ages of Europe. The Western world will never forget its debt to Islamic scholars, whose work developed their discoveries and laid the foundation for their research. Even today, fair-minded scholars acknowledge the contributions of Islamic civilization. However, some historians and writers still limit their view of civilization to the Greek and Roman empires.

For Islamic civilization to continue progressing, it is essential to highlight several key truths that Muslims must fully comprehend. The aim is to inspire ambition and restore self-confidence in dealing with all aspects of life and all sciences. There should be no distinction between religious sciences and those of medicine, engineering, chemistry, physics, and beyond. All sciences belong to Allah, and humans learn them through the knowledge that Allah has scattered throughout this vast universe. By utilizing these sciences, humans can achieve monotheism and thrive on Earth.

Achieving this goal requires extensive study and high-level academic research to uncover the secret behind the resilience and longevity of Islamic civilization. This will highlight its final message to humanity—a message Allah intended for Islam to be the guiding

force responsible for ensuring life's stability and security. If people grasp this divine purpose, they will strive to uphold it. However, if they suffer from psychological defeat and abandon their civilizational identity, they will inevitably fall behind other nations. Emotional engagement alone is insufficient for understanding life's complexities; reason must accompany emotion. Since the nourishment for the intellect is knowledge, it is no surprise that the first revelation in the Qur'an calls for reading and learning with the pen. Allah says: *"Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clot. Read, and your Lord is the most generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not."* (Surah Al-Alaq, 1-5).

As a rational and scientific community, the Muslim Ummah has diligently combined knowledge and intellect with Qur'anic revelation and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad, both of which emphasize reason and the pursuit of knowledge. This stands in stark contrast to medieval Christian civilization, which for centuries resisted both science and reason. Humanity is naturally inclined to acquire knowledge, and this knowledge has its origin in the Creator. The best evidence of this is the divine gift of education before creation, as mentioned at the beginning of Surah Ar-Rahman. Similarly, in Surah Al-Baqarah, the command to read precedes the command to believe, for a person cannot truly comprehend the essence of belief without knowledge. The first thing that distinguished Adam, peace be upon him, was knowledge. Allah says:

"And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.'" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 31).

This distinction was shown to the angels, signifying that knowledge is one of the key pillars of this Ummah.

Problem of the Study

Discussing Islamic civilization and its components is a complex and multifaceted topic, one that requires specialized studies and academic research. In order for Muslims to feel connected to their deep-rooted civilization and recognize that they are its rightful heirs—responsible for its continuation, strength, and progress—it is essential to examine the factors that contributed to the rise and fall of civilizations.

The fundamental goal is to enhance a Muslim's confidence in their faith and the doctrine of monotheism. This study attempts to restore confidence in Islam and its civilization by revealing its foundations in mercy, peace, knowledge, and progress.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

- What is the concept of civilization?
- What are the meanings of civilization in the Qur'an?
- What are the foundations and characteristics of Islamic civilization?
- What is the relationship between the mission of the Prophets and the establishment of civilization?
- What is the best way to balance the development of the Earth and the pursuit of worldly success?

Importance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its effort to strengthen the position of Islamic civilization in the hearts of Muslims. It also aims to :

- Highlight the key components of Islamic civilization that enabled its expansion across the world.
- Prove that the roots of Islamic civilization are deeply embedded in the Qur'an, and that its radiance stems from the divine light of its guidance.

Additionally, this study seeks to refute the negative stereotypes attributed to Islamic civilization by the Western world—such as the claim that it is unfit to lead humanity or incapable of driving progress. Therefore, it is essential to encourage every Muslim to embrace their Islamic civilization, preserve this divine heritage, and defend its existence and continuity. Islamic civilization is the last civilization to remain on Earth until the Day of Judgment, carrying a noble and virtuous message: calling humanity to worship Allah alone and follow His straight path, as exemplified by His Prophet. Hence, it is essential to define Islamic civilization, highlight its significance in life, and emphasize the necessity of its presence on Earth.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring Islamic civilization, particularly its rise and fall. Given that the civilization of the Qur'an is characterized by permanence and stability, Allah has willed it to be the final message for humanity, responsible for ensuring peace and security. If people

grasp this divine purpose, they will strive to uphold it. However, if they suffer from psychological defeat and abandon their civilizational identity, they will inevitably fall behind other nations.

To establish the direction of this study, clarify its objectives, and define its scope, it is necessary to examine key concepts related to the topic, such as the Qur'an, Islamic civilization, knowledge, and action. By analyzing these foundations, the study will address ongoing global discussions on the origins, development, and sustainability of civilizations while recognizing the lasting significance of Islamic civilization in the past, present, and future.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive approach, focusing on analyzing the pioneering role of Islamic civilization compared to other civilizations. Through this methodology, the study explores the roots of Islamic civilization by reflecting on Qur'anic verses that address the concept of civilization. It then examines the various dimensions of civilization in relation to different aspects of progress and development. The goal is to construct a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'anic foundation for civilization, explore how it can be applied in contemporary contexts, and identify methods to sustain its influence and radiance in the modern world.

Terminology of the Study

To answer the key questions raised in this study, it is essential to first clarify the key terms and concepts, outlined as follows:

Islam is the religion that Allah has chosen for all of humanity, and He has accepted no other. Given this, it is only natural that Islam provides humanity with the foundations of civilization and offers everything needed for building and sustaining life on Earth—both spiritually and materially, including technological advancements. Islam has demonstrated its ability to adapt to changes, challenges, and developments across the world.

Islam introduced moral, material, and scientific principles that enabled Muslims to build a rich and flourishing civilization. This civilization was founded on a balance between religion and worldly affairs, achieving the justice prescribed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It produced knowledge and sciences that encompassed all areas of life. Islamic civilization was never passive nor lacking influence.

This study emphasizes a crucial factor that shaped Islamic civilization: its integration of worldly work with excellence in worship and religious devotion, without prioritizing one over the other. It seeks to answer fundamental questions: What are the core foundations upon which Islamic civilization was built? What led to its decline? And what factors contributed to its eventual downfall?

Based on the above, the key concepts explored in this study revolve around the following themes:

- The relationship between religion and worldly life, as well as the principles of moderation and justice.
- The language of the Qur'an and how it shaped Islamic civilization.
- The call for knowledge and learning from previous civilizations.
- The importance of ethics and the obligation to uphold moral values in various academic and scientific fields.

Linguistic and Conceptual Understanding of Civilization

1.1. Linguistic Concept of Civilization

Linguistically, "civilization" refers to the settlement of urban populations, contrasting with nomadic (Bedouin) life. In Arabic dictionaries such as *Lisan al-Arab*, it is defined as follows: "Al-Hadar (urban life) is the opposite of al-badāwah (nomadism). The term 'Hadar' refers to those residing in cities and villages, while 'Badi' refers to those living in the desert. Civilization (Hadar) thus signifies residing in urban areas."²

Similarly, *Qamus al-Muhit* defines civilization as: "Residing in settled areas... and 'Hadar' contrasts with 'Badi'."³

The term originates from "presence," signifying that desert dwellers gradually formed social structures, which evolved into political systems, later recognized as "civilized societies."

There is a fundamental distinction between badāwah (nomadism) and ḥaḍārah (civilization). One defining characteristic of Bedouins is their lack of permanent settlement, which limits their familiarity with urban affairs and developments. For this reason, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade city dwellers from selling to nomads to protect them from exploitation, as they were often unfamiliar with urban market trends.

The Qur'an also distinguishes between civilization and nomadism. Allah says:

² Ibn Manzur, *Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram. Lisan al-‘Arab*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, (1990):906-907.

³ Al-Firūzābādī, *Abū al-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm. Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, (1990):pp. 373-374.

"And among those around you of the Bedouins are hypocrites, and [also] from the people of Madinah. They have become accustomed to hypocrisy. You do not know them; We know them. We will punish them twice, then they will be returned to a great punishment."

(Surah At-Tawbah, 101)

Here, "Bedouins" refers to Arabs living on the outskirts of Medina, constantly moving from place to place.

Additionally, in Surah Yusuf, Allah says:

"And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they fell down to him in prostration. And he said, 'O my father, this is the interpretation of my vision of old. My Lord has made it come true, and He was indeed kind to me when He took me out of prison and brought you here from the Bedouin life after Satan had caused dispute between me and my brothers. Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, He is the Knowing, the Wise.'"

(Surah Yusuf, 100)

In this verse, *badw* (desert) is interpreted as referring to people of the desert who live among livestock, as mentioned by Imam Al-Tabari in *Jāmi' al-Bayān fi Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*.

To further illustrate the concept of urban life (Hadar), consider the verse:

"And ask them about the town that was by the sea, when they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them openly on their Sabbath day, and on the day when they did not observe the Sabbath, they did not come to them." (Surah Al-A'raf, 163)

This refers to a town by the sea, where people established homes and a stable community. Unlike the nomadic life, those in settled areas formed villages or cities, which will be further explored in this study.

1.2. Concept of Civilization (Term Usage)

Despite varying definitions, common elements emerge: way of life, environment, cultural and scientific achievements, social structures, and geographical context.

Civilization is also defined as: "The sum of human achievements across all domains, including intellect, ethics, material and spiritual pursuits, and religious practices."⁴

There is a specific geographical scope in which human civilizations gather and settle. The Qur'an references Egypt as the center of the Pharaonic civilization, the 'Aad civilization in the Aḥqaf region, and the Thamud civilization in their territory. These human settlements gave rise to a social life governed by systems that regulated individual relationships, requiring

⁴ *Islam and Western Civilization* by Muhammad Hussain, (2003). 6.

legislation, rules, and legal frameworks. This ultimately led to the establishment of states and governance. When security and stability were maintained under a just ruler, scientific and artistic advancements flourished.

This understanding of civilization aligns with various formal definitions. Ibn Khaldun describes civilization as: "*A stable way of life that creates villages and cities, providing its people with systematic forms of living, working, socializing, learning, industry, governance, arranging the means of comfort, and ensuring well-being.*"⁵

His perspective closely parallels that of British historian Arnold Toynbee, who was influenced by Ibn Khaldun's ideas, particularly on the growth, prosperity, decline, and collapse of civilizations.

Ibn Khaldun further elaborates on civilization, distinguishing it from nomadic life, explaining how luxury and craftsmanship contribute to societal advancement: "*Civilization is the refinement of luxury and the mastery of crafts, including those used in kitchens, clothing, architecture, furniture, and all other aspects of daily life.*"⁶

Similarly, Malik Bennabi defines civilization as: "*The totality of both material and spiritual factors that allow a society to provide each member with all the social guarantees needed for development.*"⁷

In Bennabi's view, civilization arises when humans, land, time, and a guiding religious idea work together to foster progress.

All peoples have contributed to a shared human civilization, though cultural and religious differences led to divisions. As a result, civilizations have followed distinct paths, each shaped by its unique religious and cultural framework.

A comprehensive definition of civilization encompasses both material and spiritual advancements, aimed at developing human society and fulfilling the divine mandate of stewardship on Earth.

1.3. Concept of Islamic Civilization

Islamic civilization emerged with the revelation given to the final prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prior to this, its people engaged with other civilizations, absorbing and contributing to advancements in both material and spiritual domains.

⁵ Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. *Al-Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal, edited by N.J. Dawood, Bruce B. Lawrence, and Ibn Khaldun. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1969): 259.

⁶ Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1958). 338.

⁷ Bennabi, Malek. *The Problem of Ideas in the Islamic World*. Translated by Mohamed T. El-Mesawi. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, (2003): 42.

Through translation, Islamic civilization embraced foreign sciences, medicine, philosophy, and knowledge, leading to the emergence of scholars in various scientific and experimental fields. The Islamic state established urban centers across its vast territories, and over time, Muslim scholars excelled in disciplines such as medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. Their discoveries attracted foreign scholars, prompting translations from Arabic into other languages.

In its broadest sense, Islamic civilization encompasses everything produced by the followers of monotheism and Islam, from the time of Adam (peace be upon him) until the Day of Judgment. This includes cultural, linguistic, scientific, and material contributions, as well as divine revelations given to prophets regarding beliefs, laws, and social structures—so long as these contributions serve humanity and promote progress.

Since Islam is the final divine message, it laid the foundation for an eternal civilization through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, providing principles for the strength and well-being of humanity. This ensures both worldly success and eternal salvation through:

*"Divine principles that cover theological, social, and ethical foundations, elevating humanity above all that would degrade their lives and from what is forbidden."*⁸

1.2. Meanings of Civilization in the Qur'an

The Qur'an embodies Islamic civilization throughout its development, serving as its primary foundation and defining its core principles. Within its values, we find the driving forces behind the significant transformations that led to the rise of Islamic civilization and its global influence.

The concept of civilization appears in the Qur'an in various forms, expressed through multiple terms, including:

1.2.1. The Term "Generations" (Qurūn)

Allah says: *"He said, 'I have been given it only because of knowledge I have.' Did he not know that Allah had destroyed from before him many generations who were greater than him in strength and greater in accumulation? And no question will be asked about their sins."* (Surah Al-Qasas, 78).

The term "*generations*" here refers to the civilizations that preceded Qarun, including the ancient Egyptian civilization, that serve as a notable example. The Greek historian Herodotus documented that Greek civilization was heavily influenced by Egyptian advancements. The Greeks gained prominence only after connecting with Eastern civilizations—particularly

⁸ *Islamic Civilization from the Qur'an and Sunnah* by Shawqi Dayf, p. 3.

Egypt—through scholars who introduced them to its vast knowledge and achievements. Among these scholars were Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus, who was deeply impressed by Egyptian civilization⁹. This exchange of knowledge between Egypt and Greece continued through successive generations and remains influential to this day.

Martin Bernal, in *Black Athena*, similarly argues that Greek civilization was significantly shaped by Eastern, especially Egyptian, contributions. He contends that both the Greeks and Romans acknowledged Egypt as a primary source of civilization.¹⁰ Likewise, Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad, in *The Impact of the Arabs on European Civilization*, provides evidence that Western civilization traces its origins to earlier Eastern civilizations—including Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian—emerging from Mesopotamia. He also examines how European civilization, in turn, influenced the modern Arab world.¹¹

Allah states:

"And how many generations We have destroyed after Noah. And sufficient is your Lord, concerning the sins of His servants, as Acquainted and Seeing." (Surah Al-Isra, 17).

Here, "*generations*" refers to civilizations that flourished within specific historical periods, each contributing distinct cultural, scientific, and architectural achievements. Scholars debate the precise length of a "*generation*" but linguistically, it represents a span in which a civilization emerges and thrives.

The civilizations that preceded Qarun, destroyed by divine decree, each had their own prophets, some of whom are mentioned in the Qur'an, while others remain unknown to us. These civilizations were renowned for their grand architectural feats, such as palaces, water canals, and mountain-carved dwellings. Allah describes their mastery of stonework, saying:

"And they used to carve from the mountains homes, feeling secure." (Surah Al-Hijr, 82).

The ancient city of Petra in Jordan stands as a remarkable example of such craftsmanship, with entire structures intricately carved into the mountains—an enduring testament to their architectural and artistic expertise.

1.2.2. The Term "Villages" (Qur'an)

Allah says: *"And We placed between them and the villages which We had blessed, visible villages, and We determined the journey between them, 'Travel between them by night and day in safety.'"* (Surah Saba, 18)

⁹ See: *Archaeological Discoveries and Their Impact on Writing Ancient History*, Abdul Moneim Abu Bakr, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Black Athena*, Martin Bernal, p. 29.

¹¹ See: *The Influence of Arabs on European Civilization*, Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, pp. 10-13.

This verse refers to the established trade routes between Yemen and Palestine, regions that have long been home to advanced civilizations and continue to be sites of cultural and political conflict. For instance, the Kingdom of Saba in Yemen was known for its impressive architecture, economic prosperity, and powerful military strength. Allah highlights this strength:

“They said, 'We are people of strength and of great might, and the matter is yours, so consider what you will command.’” (Surah An-Naml, 33)

Economically, the land of Saba was described as fertile and prosperous:

“Indeed, for the people of Saba was a sign in their homeland: two gardens of grapes, one on the right and one on the left. 'Eat from the provision of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land and a forgiving Lord.’” (Surah Saba, 15)

The villages along the route between Yemen and Palestine were not merely rural outposts, but well-developed settlements that provided essential resources for travelers. Their strategic location along trade routes ensured safe passage and economic exchange. Allah states:

“And We placed between them and the villages which We had blessed, visible villages, and We determined the journey between them, 'Travel between them by night and day in safety.’” (Surah Saba, 18)

This verse underscores the importance of stability, security, and economic infrastructure in the formation of civilizations. As historian Arnold Toynbee asserts in *A Study of History*, no civilization can thrive without peace and stability.

Today, many nations affected by the Arab Spring revolutions have regained relative peace, but external influences, particularly from Western powers, continue to shape their stability. Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya—once secure and prosperous—have suffered from conflict and instability. This reflects a broader historical pattern in which powerful civilizations face internal and external challenges that threaten their continuity.

Security and tranquillity are fundamental to the establishment of any civilization, and they are its essential components, alongside economic revival and prosperity reflected in the abundance of living standards, including exports and imports. However, everything was lost for the people of the village due to their denial of Allah's blessings.

Allah warns of the consequences of ingratitude and instability:

“And Allah presents the example of a village that was secure and at ease. Its provision came to it in abundance from every place, but it denied the favors of Allah, so Allah made it taste hunger and fear because of what they had been doing.” (Surah An-Nahl, 112).

1.2.3. The Term "City" (Madīnah)

The Qur'an also frequently mentions "city" as follows:

- "And a woman in the city said, 'The wife of the 'Aziz is seeking to seduce her servant.'" (Surah Yusuf, 30).
- "*Send one of you with this silver coin to the city.*" (Surah Al-Kahf, 19).
- "*And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city.*" (Surah Al-Kahf, 82).
- "*And a man came from the farthest part of the city, running.*" (Surah Al-Qasas, 20).

While both "village" and "city" appear in the Qur'an, scholars have debated the distinction between them. Some argue that the Qur'anic differentiation is an example of linguistic precision and scientific foresight.

For instance, in Surah Al-Kahf, the settlement where Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Al-Khidr sought food is initially described as a "village", yet later, when the same settlement is referenced in a different context, it is called a "city":

"And when they came to the people of a town, they asked for food, but the people refused to host them." (Surah Al-Kahf, 77).

"And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city." (Surah Al-Kahf, 82).

Some scholars suggest that this shift in terminology reflects the moral character of the inhabitants. Initially, the people's refusal to offer hospitality aligned with the roughness and isolation typically associated with villages. However, when discussing urban infrastructure, the term "city" is used instead.

Another perspective is that the term "village" in the Qur'an refers to the community itself, while "city" refers to the built environment. This interpretation aligns with Allah's words:

"And ask the village in which we were, and the caravan in which we arrived." (Surah Yusuf, 82).

Here, "village" clearly refers to its residents, as the intended meaning is "ask the people of the village."

In contrast, when referring to urban infrastructure, the Qur'an employs the term "city" instead. This distinction is reflected in the story of the People of the Cave:

"Send one of you with this silver coin to the city." (Surah Al-Kahf, 19).

Here, the travelers did not say "to the people of the city," but rather "to the city" itself. This suggests that their focus was on the marketplaces, buildings, and urban structures rather than the inhabitants. Since they were in hiding and feared persecution, they aimed to conduct their affairs discreetly without directly interacting with the city's residents.

1.3.The Establishment of Civilization and the Mission of the Prophets

The Qur'an presents a noble and elevated image of civilization, recounting the stories of the prophets and their communities. It highlights what they established in terms of civilizational foundations, whether through the advancement of human thought or divine miracles. What is divinely established is always worthy of reverence and encouragement.

For example, the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) demonstrates his remarkable political and administrative skills. He saved an entire nation from imminent economic disaster, preserving not only Egypt but also the surrounding regions, including the Levant, which was the homeland of his brothers and father. This single prophet, an expert in economics, was sent by Allah as a savior for Egypt and its neighboring areas. This shows that the care of humanity is one of the most important religious principles; it forms the foundation of human life.

Turning to Prophet Dawood (David), Allah granted him a unique miracle: when he praised Allah among the mountains, birds gathered around him, forming a canopy and praising Allah with him. Allah says: *“O mountains, repeat with him [his praise], and [the] birds gathered. And We made iron soft for him.”* (Surah Saba, 11). Additionally, Allah gave him the ability to extract molten iron from the earth, which he could mold with his hands as he wished.

Scholars mention that all the prophets to whom Allah sent revelations were from urban centers, not from nomadic tribes. All the prophets chosen by Allah were from villages and towns. The lack of stability among nomads suggests that they lacked the peace required to establish a societal system. This instability prevents the development of civilization. Thus, nomads, constantly on the move and bound by tradition, cannot establish a lasting civilization, as they do not settle in one place to thrive and innovate.

The Qur'an emphasizes this key matter, indicating that the sending of prophets from urban centers was intentional. Allah desires civilizations to persist, as they are the product of human effort and the use of reason. Civilizations represent a transformation in life. Allah commands human beings to cultivate the earth, and once human communities reach a civilizational level, they build palaces, roads, and establish systems that govern their lives and interactions.

This development is what Allah intends for humanity to enjoy. Therefore, Allah sent prophets to remind people of these blessings, urging them to follow His laws in their civilizations. This is evident in the words of Prophet Saleh (peace be upon him), who said:

“And remember when He made you successors after ‘Aad and settled you in the land, you take for yourselves palaces from its plains and carve from the mountains homes. Then

remember the favor of Allah and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”
(Surah Al-A'raf, 74).

When nations follow Allah’s laws, their civilizations will thrive, leading them to leadership in civilization and life. The longevity and success of Islamic civilization will continue until the Day of Judgment because it follows the commands of Allah. This continuity is a result of the actions of its people, who extend the legacy of the prophets. Therefore, Muslims today continue the legacy of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who, in turn, was a link in the chain of prophets. Allah says: *“Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so follow their guidance.”* (Surah Al-An'am, 90).

The followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) understood this mission. Rabee' ibn Aamir, when standing before the Persian general Rustam, said:

*"Allah sent us to bring people from the worship of other human beings to the worship of Allah alone, from the narrowness of this world to its vastness, and from the oppression of other religions to the justice of Islam. We were sent with His religion to call people to it."*¹²

This truth is emphasized by the Qur'an, which assures that the Islamic Ummah will endure as long as Allah wills. Prophet Saleh (peace be upon him) also said:

“And to Thamud [We sent] their brother Salih. He said, 'O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it, so ask forgiveness of Him and repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive.’” (Surah Hud, 61).

Allah granted them His blessings, and they prospered by developing the land—building, planting, and cultivating it. This was the wealth they were to enjoy, but they forsook gratitude to Allah, leading to their downfall.¹³

1.4. The Cultivation of the Earth and the Perspective on the World

Allah has commanded us to cultivate the earth—which He entrusted to us—in a way that ensures both our worldly and spiritual benefits. It is impossible for religion to be reformed without a righteous world. When this concept was abandoned by many in the Islamic Ummah, and its existence faltered, the Muslim nations fell behind, often becoming a source of fitnah (tribulation), leading others away from the truth. This happened because they failed to maintain a balance between life on earth and preparation for the Hereafter. They lagged behind due to ignorance, backwardness, and their dependency on stronger nations, even in the minutiae of daily life.

¹² Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya, Imad al-Din Ismail Ibn Kathir, Vol. 1, p. 1046.

¹³ Tafsir Al-Karim Al-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalam Al-Mannan, Abdul Rahman bin Nasir Al-Sa'di, p. 265.

This, of course, was not the case during the time of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who spread the guidance in a remarkably short period of time—a record never before achieved and never to be matched. Through history, the light of their message spread, and people entered into the religion of Allah in large numbers.

One of the key principles Allah has outlined for the Islamic Ummah is the balanced perspective on the world. Some people have an unjust view of the world that causes them to turn away from its cultivation and from taking the necessary steps for progress that Allah has made instrumental in fulfilling the goals of religion. This narrow view hampers knowledge, work, and productivity in both religious and worldly affairs. It holds people back from life's reform and advancement, preventing them from moving toward broader horizons and a prosperous civilization. This view fails to acknowledge that the world cannot be righteous without a righteous religion, and likewise, religion cannot be righteous without a righteous world. Both are interconnected and mutually dependent; as the world improves, so does religion, and as religion improves, so does the world. The righteousness of both is ensured through the worship of Allah alone and avoiding polytheism. If this balance is disturbed, it leads to tyranny and loss.

A balanced, insightful perspective requires that the world be cultivated and improved in order to support what we believe in and uphold the commands of religion. The reality is disgraceful: on one hand, most people are attached to the world for its pleasures, comforts, and consumables, but on the other hand, they fail to see it positively in terms of building, progressing, and elevating it. This limited view has been a major factor in the decline of the Muslim Ummah, preventing them from keeping pace with the ever-evolving civilization that serves both religion and the world.

Hence, it becomes clear that the term "moderation" is not just about balance—it refers to what is best and most noble. The term "*wasat*" (middle) carries several meanings, including "*choice*," "*best*," and "*justice*," representing what lies between good and bad, right and wrong, and it may refer to something between two opposing extremes.¹⁴ The first meaning of moderation is the most common in the opinions of scholars, and it distinguishes Islamic civilization from others. It is defined by a strong and firm belief in Islam, and the establishment of its principles of justice, morality, and moderation.

In this context, we must discard the common notion accepted by many Muslims that the backwardness of the Muslim Ummah in various fields of life and sciences is the result of their

¹⁴ Islamic Civilization: Its Moderation and Its Stance Toward Others, *Sayyid Ahmed Al-Makhzangi*, pp. 35-36.

attachment to their Islam and faith. On the contrary, the Prophet ﷺ called for strength, encouraged beneficial knowledge, and urged the Ummah to strive for all that is good, both in this world and the Hereafter. Strength in religion can only be achieved by attaining strength in the world as well. Allah says:

"And prepare for them whatever you are able of force and of mounted troops, by which you may terrorize the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides them whom you do not know, but whom Allah knows." (Surah Al-Anfal, 60).

Part of preparing for strength includes combat in the way of Allah, but it also means signaling that Muslims have the ability and resources to defend themselves, their religion, civilization, and sovereignty.

The world should be viewed as a means to the Hereafter, by establishing the religion in it and reforming it through obedience to Allah and monotheism. It serves as a tool to support the truth and call others to Allah. When we act according to His commands, it is one of the reasons for maintaining balance and uprightness. In Islam, there is a call to production, benefiting from the world, and striving for what life requires. The Hadith regarding the planting of a tree just before the Day of Judgment is a clear indication of the value of work and its completion with perfection and dedication. This is what builds civilization and cultivates the earth. The thought of planting a tree moments before the end of the world may seem strange, but it is a call to invest the fleeting moments of time in productive endeavors that benefit both religion and the world.

All segments of the Muslim Ummah should understand the reality of the world—it is a field for cultivation, and renouncing it does not impede one's path to Allah. True asceticism is not about completely turning away from the world, but about not allowing it to be a distraction from what will help us in reaching Allah and preparing for the Hereafter.

The Islamic Ummah must learn from the examples of nations that rejected their prophets. They failed to respond to Allah's commands, and thus His punishment befell them, wiping them out from the earth. Why were they destroyed? Because they reached a point of corruption, where their existence could no longer contribute to the happiness and well-being of humanity.

1.5. The Components and Characteristics of Islamic Civilization

Faith and Belief

A defining feature of Islamic civilization, distinguishing it from other nations and cultures, is its firm belief in monotheism and the Abrahamic faith. This belief was embraced by diverse

peoples, including Arabs, Abyssinians, Berbers, Persians, Turks, and Romans, all of whom contributed to its growth through scholarship, science, and the arts.

Unlike ancient civilizations that were largely confined to their own peoples—such as the Pharaonic civilization in Egypt, the Roman civilization in Rome, and the Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia—Islamic civilization was global in nature. It transcended ethnic and geographic boundaries, incorporating human potential from various nations and disciplines.

Moreover, it is the only civilization that elevated faith above all else, uniting people beyond race, tribe, nationality, or social status. In Islam, true distinction is based on devotion to God: the most righteous are the closest to Him.

Monotheism is the greatest gift Islam has bestowed upon humanity—an empowering, transformative belief that eradicates falsehood and instills strength and purpose. No other belief system has provided such a revolutionary and enduring spiritual foundation. Nations that failed to embrace monotheism often struggled to grasp the true essence of human dignity, enslaving themselves to various forms of power and control.¹⁵

Islam assigns humanity a vital role in life. Allah has entrusted people with the responsibility of cultivating the earth—not just through worship, but also by fostering progress in science, the arts, industry, and all aspects of civilization. This stewardship is a divine mandate, ensuring that human contributions enrich the world while maintaining harmony with spiritual values.

Islamic civilization is rooted in faith, offering a comprehensive framework for life that remains incorruptible. While steadfast and enduring, it embraces innovation, drawing from diverse sciences and modern advancements. This balance—preserving core religious principles while incorporating beneficial knowledge—has allowed Islamic civilization to thrive across centuries.

Thus, Islamic civilization stands as a universal model—embracing all of humanity, transcending cultural and intellectual differences, and accommodating diverse levels of understanding and faith. It is a civilization built on justice, wisdom, and inclusivity, welcoming people from all backgrounds into a shared vision of progress and moral integrity.

¹⁵ Characteristics of Islamic Civilization and Future Prospects, *Abdul Aziz Al-Tuwaijri*, pp. 11-18.

2. Knowledge and the Value of the Mind

Muslims agree that the source of their knowledge is divine, and the first of its essentials is knowing Allah, the Almighty. The eradication of ignorance from Islamic civilization was only possible through the sending of the prophets and messengers, from Adam (peace be upon him) to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), followed by the revelation of the final and most complete book, the Qur'an. The first verse to be revealed in Surah Al-Alaq urges reading. The establishment of Islamic civilization was based on knowledge; hence, "the Qur'an frequently speaks of knowledge through reason, intellect, understanding, and deduction... Islam's view of the world is that Allah created it from nothing and sustains it in existence and order. Without this, the world would cease to exist."¹⁶ The closer one adheres to the Qur'an, the greater its brilliance and triumph, never deviating from the truth.

Knowledge embodies civilization across all nations and drives them toward beneficial and fruitful outcomes for all of humanity. When the Qur'an was revealed with its profound verses and eloquent words, it initiated the eradication of illiteracy and ignorance, guiding the people to learn language, then expanding into other fields of knowledge and exploring the building blocks of civilization—from starting fire from green trees to the modern era of digital technology. The Qur'an contains numerous references to past civilizations and their foundations. These examples serve as encouragement to inspire the Islamic nation to join the ranks of civilizations, competing in the pursuit of benefits and the prevention of harm.

Ancient civilizations spoke of knowledge and its role, but they mixed it with many superstitions, which created exhausting distances between humanity and true knowledge. For example, Roman scholars faced opposition from the church, such as Galileo Galilei, who was sentenced to house arrest for challenging the church's teachings. Similarly, astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus faced penalties for publishing works that challenged the church's view. They began to step beyond the confines of science dictated by Christian doctrine and sought open-ended scientific inquiry.

Allah, the Almighty, taught humans what they did not know, and though the knowledge He gave was little, it was distributed in different proportions. Allah taught His creations, and He taught the angels knowledge that they could not surpass. He taught the jinn, but they could not uncover the unseen. When Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) passed away, the jinn did not realize his death until a creature of the earth consumed his staff, causing his body to fall. This shows that knowledge in Islamic civilization is the knowledge of Allah, and that man is

¹⁶ The Arabs in Their Civilization and Culture Until the End of the Umayyad Era, *Omar Farrukh*, p. 135.

born ignorant, but he is endowed with faculties—hearing, sight, understanding, and senses—that allow him to acquire knowledge and discover new sciences.

Allah guarantees the right to knowledge for everyone, not bound by religion, race, or nationality. Knowledge is free of any affiliation, and it is no surprise that knowledge is granted even to non-believers, especially in the natural and experimental sciences. Allah's creation of the universe operates on a consistent, recurring natural law, where knowledge is passed from one generation to the next. For example, Isaac Newton based his theory of motion on the work of Muslim scholars. Knowledge belongs to all people, and anyone can become a scholar with the capacities Allah has given them, provided they follow the necessary steps and do not deviate from the teachings of the revealed scriptures.

However, those who try to use the Qur'an or the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as evidence for certain theories or events—especially when the texts do not explicitly support them—are not correct. The facts should stand on their own, proven by reality and witnessed by people. What has occurred and is observed does not require further proof from the Qur'an or hadith. There may be attempts to use the Qur'an or hadith to support a certain event, theory, or experiment, only to later discover that it is false. This could cast doubt on the Qur'an and hadith, especially among the enemies of Islam.

We must validate natural sciences in the real world, but what is clearly indicated by revelation or has a sound interpretation can be used as evidence, as long as it relates to observable facts. This reflects the essence of Islamic civilization “it is a civilization that sanctifies the mind and science. It is a rational and scientific civilization to the utmost extent. Contrary to the claims of Islam's adversaries, it does not call Muslims to fatalism or resignation to destiny”.¹⁷

Islamic civilization is based on the principle of integration, having evolved through stages of growth and development. The achievements of the Assyrians, Sumerians, and Babylonians were small compared to what the Greeks contributed, and then Islamic civilization emerged, achieving many groundbreaking accomplishments. It refined Greek sciences and laid the foundation for Western civilization, which followed its predecessors' path. Thus, knowledge is cumulative, with each stage building upon the previous one. Unfortunately, Western civilization today attempts to deceive Muslims into believing that they alone are the creators of civilization, science, and technology. The truth is that the progression of civilization is cumulative, and Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates learned from the Babylonian civilization, as Herodotus attests in his history.

¹⁷ Islamic Civilization from the Qur'an and Sunnah, Shawqi Daif / 5

There are numerous Qur'anic references that encourage people to work and worship Allah through the perfection of their deeds. These verses carry meanings that urge us to benefit from all the gifts of civilization and to draw from them in all aspects of life.

3. Justice as the Foundation of Rule

One of the fundamental pillars of a thriving civilization and a stable system of governance is the establishment of justice and the equitable distribution of rights across society. Justice, in Islam, is not confined to specific aspects of life but extends comprehensively to personal affairs, social dealings, and governance. It is a divine, all-encompassing principle, as emphasized in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin; He forbids all shameful deeds, injustice, and rebellion; He instructs you, that you may receive admonition." (Surah An-Nahl: 90)

Here, Allah establishes the concept of justice in all aspects of life—both on a personal level and in dealings with others. “The strength of Islam lies in its justice”¹⁸. “It is a comprehensive justice that promotes unity, encourages obedience, fosters prosperity, increases wealth, enhances population growth, and ensures the stability of leadership.”¹⁹

Justice is at the heart of sustaining life and civilization. When justice is upheld, people's rights are protected, their lives are secured, and their endeavors flourish, leading to advancements in science, architecture, technology, and industry. Thus, justice is not just a legal principle but a civilizational necessity that upholds morality and human dignity. Islam's emphasis on taqwa (piety) calls for fairness and excellence in all actions. The divine laws were revealed to create balance and prevent oppression and corruption.

By implementing justice, nations prosper, compete in progress, and establish a legacy of development. However, Islamic justice is not limited to legal systems, regulations, or courts; it extends to instilling a sense of divine accountability within individuals. When people recognize that Allah observes their actions, they become self-regulating, ensuring that their choices lead to benefits rather than harm. This internalized sense of justice shapes ethical individuals and responsible citizens, forming the backbone of a flourishing civilization.

A just society guarantees security, alleviates fear, and provides for its people, allowing them to channel their potential toward progress. Civilizations that uphold justice endure, even in

¹⁸ Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal, edited by N.J. Dawood. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1969) :284

¹⁹ Al-Mawardi, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad. *Kitab Adab al-Dunya wa al-Din (The Ethics of Religion and of this World)*. Translated by Youssef Safiljil. (2011).153

times of hardship, because justice serves as their stabilizing force. Conversely, the absence of justice leads to decline and eventual collapse.

The establishment of justice is a key indicator of a civilization's strength, success, and advancement. Without justice, a nation crumbles. Islam has commanded justice not only in religious and spiritual matters but in all aspects of life—between rulers and their people, in governance, in economic transactions, within families, and in judicial rulings. This comprehensive approach to justice ensures the longevity and stability of a civilization. It is a principle that defines the methodology of the prophets and represents the divine message from the heavens.

4. Exploring Other Civilizations

One of the characteristics of Islamic civilization is that it was knowledgeable about the sciences of other civilizations. It acknowledged their merits and then developed those sciences through the knowledge Allah granted it. "With the rise of Islam and the development of life, Islamic production increased and expanded in areas related to culture, knowledge, and science. The number of scholars and thinkers grew, and they played a significant role in establishing Arab civilization and other civilizations."²⁰

The sciences of Islamic civilization were distinguished by their adherence to Sharia texts that open horizons. It implemented the commands of the Qur'an: "*Say, travel through the land and observe how the creation began. Then Allah will bring about the creation of the final creation. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.*" (Al-Ankabut: 20). This is a call to travel the earth and observe how creation began, how it grew and formed, and how it has reached its current state. This involves two aspects: the historical progress of human civilization and Allah's immense power over creation. This can only be realized through traveling and exploring the earth and discovering the marvelous creations of Allah. This has both a scientific and spiritual dimension. Meanwhile, other civilizations were confined to the words of their philosophers, not stepping beyond them, as instructed by their churches and places of worship.

Regarding the material and civilizational aspect, Allah says: "*Say, travel through the land and observe how the end of those who denied was.*" (Al-An'am: 11), and "*Say, travel through the land and observe how the end of the criminals was.*" (An-Naml: 69). Many civilizations arose and flourished on the earth but disappeared due to their corruption, tyranny, and disbelief.

²⁰ Research on the History of Arab-Islamic Civilization, Anis Al-Abyad (1994):23.

They distanced themselves from Allah, and Allah sent prophets and messengers to strengthen them and make them endure. However, they failed to endure because they turned away and denied, causing their downfall.

Allah calls on us to reflect on those who came before us and the outcomes of their affairs, so we may take lessons and learn from the punishment they endured. He says: "*Have they not traveled through the earth and seen the fate of those before them? They were greater than them in strength, and they tilled the earth and populated it more than they did. And their messengers came to them with clear proofs. But Allah would not have wronged them, but they wronged themselves.*" (Ar-Rum: 9). Those who came before us had power, strength, and authority on earth, but they ended and vanished because of corruption and distancing from Allah. Therefore, Allah urges us to use our hearts to understand and our ears to listen. He says: "*Have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which they understand or ears by which they hear? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests that are blind.*" (Al-Hajj: 46).

Allah commands us to use our intellect and knowledge, which He has granted us, for the advancement of civilization through manufacturing and invention, and to learn from the knowledge of the past. Here, Ibn Khaldun mentions that Islamic civilization relied on skilled Persians who possessed architectural and industrial knowledge. Or, Allah granted knowledge directly, as He taught David the craft of making armor to protect soldiers in battle: "*And We taught him the making of coats of mail to protect you in your wars. Will you then be grateful?*" (Al-Anbiya: 80). This is direct knowledge from Allah, not based on the experiences of previous civilizations. From this, it is clear that the Arabs "*placed Europe, which was living on the remnants of Greek knowledge, on the path of modern civilizational progress, equipping it with tools for success in achieving civilizational goals.*"²¹

This does not mean that Islamic civilization denies the contributions of those before it. The names of Greek scholars, such as Euclid and Archimedes, are still mentioned in Islamic writings. In contrast, Western authors today rarely mention Islamic scholars in their histories of civilization. While Roman and Greek civilizations were closed off to themselves, relying solely on their heritage and culture, Islamic civilization moved forward toward prosperity and advancement, benefiting from others and being open to the sciences, knowledge, and technology they had. The translation movement in the Abbasid era flourished as it opened up to Persian, Indian, and other civilizations.

²¹ Research on the History of Arab-Islamic Civilization, Anis Al-Abyad (1994):25.

Ibn Rushd set the criteria for openness and called for considering: "*What they have said and what they have proven in their books: What aligns with the truth, we accept and rejoice in it, and what does not align with the truth, we warn against and explain.*"²²

However, today, unfortunately, we do not live in a true civilization in the fullest sense. Our civilization remains stagnant, relying on the advancements of others, adopting their culture, and functioning within their framework. There are clear indicators that we are not yet true producers of civilization.

Throughout history, numerous civilizations have risen to prominence, excelling in both material aspects, through architectural and infrastructural achievements, and in intellectual and ideological spheres by spreading various beliefs and ideas. When Islam emerged, its role was not confined to mosques or solely to spiritual and ethical matters. Rather, it also encompassed material aspects related to the external manifestations of civilization. For this reason, Allah commanded His servants in the Qur'an to adopt measures that ensure the preservation and continuity of Islamic civilization in both its spiritual and material dimensions. Islam does not neglect either aspect, as both are essential for its endurance.

The cultural, intellectual, and scientific advancements that distinguish other civilizations but seem absent in ours can be attained if the right conditions are met, obstacles are removed, and barriers preventing progress are dismantled. Allah has guided humanity in His Book through numerous verses that emphasize the importance of preserving and sustaining civilizational achievements. Civilization, as some define it, is the product of human intellect and labor in both the intellectual and material realms. Allah says:

"Say, travel through the land and observe how creation began. Then Allah will bring about the final creation. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent." (Al-Ankabut: 20).

This verse calls for traveling the earth and contemplating the origins of creation—how it began, developed, and evolved into what it is today. It opens two key avenues of exploration: first, reflecting on the historical development of human civilization, and second, recognizing Allah's limitless power in creation. These insights can only be fully realized through exploration, travel, and discovering the wonders of Allah's creation.

Regarding the material and civilizational aspects, Allah says:

"Say, travel through the land and observe how the end of those who denied was." (Al-An'am: 11), and: *"Say, travel through the land and observe how the end of the criminals was."* (An-

²² Ibn Rushd, Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad. *Fasl al-Maqal fi ma bayn al-Hikma wa al-Shariah min Ittisal* (The Decisive Treatise: Determining the Nature of the Connection between Religion and Philosophy). Translated by George F. Hourani, with introduction and notes. London: Luzac & Co., (1961):33.

Naml: 69). Many civilizations have risen and thrived on this earth, only to eventually collapse and disappear. What led to their downfall? The primary cause was corruption. When they distanced themselves from Allah, He sent them prophets and messengers to guide them and sustain their civilizations. However, when they rejected the truth, their conditions deteriorated, leading to their downfall.

Allah commands us to reflect on the past civilizations and their fate so that we may take heed and learn from their destruction. He says:

"Have they not traveled through the earth and seen the fate of those before them? They were greater than them in strength, and they tilled the earth and populated it more than they did. And their messengers came to them with clear proofs. But Allah would not have wronged them, but they wronged themselves." (Ar-Rum: 9).

These past civilizations possessed power, dominance, and authority over the earth, yet they ultimately perished due to their corruption and their turning away from Allah. Thus, Allah directs us to use our intellect and senses to grasp these lessons. He says:

"Have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which they understand or ears by which they hear? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts within the chests that are blind." (Al-Hajj: 46).

A person does not reach the truth merely by traveling for leisure, scientific research, or geographical, geological, or historical study. The true lesson lies in recognizing that those civilizations had once been granted strength and prosperity by Allah, yet they ultimately perished due to their corruption and rejection of divine guidance.

Thus, all civilizations that have existed throughout history, from ancient times until today, have ended due to three main reasons:

- Corruption, distancing from Allah, and rejecting the call of His messengers.
- A widespread epidemic, such as the plague, whether as a punishment or a test.
- A natural disaster decreed by Allah.

Each of these scenarios signifies that Allah willed for those civilizations to come to an end. This is a universal law that governs history and human societies.

In the previously mentioned verse, Allah commands us—within the framework of Islamic civilization—to use our intellect and knowledge to advance in industry, invention, and scientific progress. This can be achieved either by reflecting on the scientific achievements of previous nations or through direct divine instruction. This concept is not surprising. When Allah commanded Prophet Dawood (David) to make protective armor, He said:

"And We taught him the making of coats of mail to protect you in your wars. Will you then be grateful?" (Al-Anbiya: 80).

Before Dawood (peace be upon him), armor was made of leather—sometimes thin, sometimes thick—but it remained rigid, covering only the chest and limiting mobility. However, by Allah's command and direct teaching, Dawood created a new type of armor using interwoven metal rings. This innovation allowed for better flexibility and full-body coverage, rather than just protecting the chest. Allah says:

"Make full coats of mail, and make the rings of appropriate size." (Saba: 11).

Mujahid, a renowned early Islamic scholar, explained: "Do not make the rivet too small, lest it loosen in the rings, nor too large, lest it break. Make it just the right size."²³ Dawood's invention of linked metal rings in armor was a direct revelation from Allah, not a development based on past civilizations' knowledge. Historians note that Dawood was the first to invent this form of armor, which later influenced European military advancements.

During the time of Prophet Sulayman (Solomon), the Assyrian civilization prided itself on its grand architecture and statues. However, Allah willed that Sulayman's civilization surpass all others in both quality and quantity. He commanded the jinn to build for him magnificent structures, statues, vast basins, and immovable cauldrons, ensuring that his civilization was the most advanced of its time. This highlights that faith-based Islamic civilizations are not inferior to other civilizations in terms of architecture, infrastructure, and various fields of life.

One of the unique aspects of Sulayman's kingdom was the use of glass in the construction of statues and palatial structures. Allah says:

"They made for him whatever he desired of palaces, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and fixed cauldrons." (Saba: 13).

*"As for the mihrabs, they refer to grand and well-constructed buildings, considered the most distinguished part of a residence and its centerpiece. Al-Dhahhak interpreted them as mosques, while Qatadah stated that they refer to both palaces and mosques. As for the statues, Atiyah al-Awfi, Al-Dhahhak, and Al-Suddi explained them as sculpted images, the large bowls (jawab) are the plural of jabiya, which refers to a large basin used for collecting water, and The immovable cauldrons (qudur rāsiyāt) are massive pots that remain fixed in place, neither shifting nor moving due to their enormous size."*²⁴

This demonstrates the remarkable architectural and technological advancements achieved during Sulayman's time—developments that contributed significantly to human civilization.

²³ Ibn Kathir, Ismail ibn Umar. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, vol. 6, p. 439. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, (2000): 493.

²⁴ bn Kathir, Ismail ibn Umar. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, vol. 6, p. 439. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, (2000): 441

Muslims have historically introduced numerous industries and inventions that laid the foundation for what later became European civilization. Many of the fundamental concepts that structured modern societal life were established by Islamic civilization. As humanity continues to advance, prosper, and evolve, knowledge is no longer exclusive to one group or nation.

However, today, the Islamic world suffers from stagnation in terms of civilizational progress on a state and regional level. While individual Muslim scientists and inventors continue to make significant contributions in various fields—including chemistry, physics, and nuclear energy—most of them find opportunities and recognition in Western countries rather than in their own homelands. These brilliant minds are embraced and supported abroad, benefiting other nations instead of contributing to the advancement of their own civilization.

5. The Value of the Moral Foundation in Building Civilization

The Qur'an contains everything necessary for the prosperity of human life—governing its systems, interactions, and worship of the Lord. It serves as the ultimate constitution, offering comprehensive guidance for purification and education, both for individuals and society. The moral dimension is fundamental, as Allah sent His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to perfect noble character. When we examine the world today, we find a near-total absence of the moral foundation in the advancement of civilization, its sciences, inventions, and ever-evolving discoveries.

The horizons of knowledge in Islamic civilization are limitless. A seeker of knowledge may explore living organisms, the earth, the sky, the planets, the stars, and celestial bodies. Scientific research is unrestricted, but there are ethical boundaries that must not be violated under any circumstances. The jinn once had the ability to eavesdrop on the angels as they received Allah's commands, but Allah later prevented them, striking them with meteors to stop their interference in human affairs. Similarly, Islam permits the pursuit of knowledge but within the framework of ethical principles. It does not allow any transgression in research, experimentation, or discovery that would compromise the five essential purposes that Islam commands to preserve: religion, life, intellect, honor, and wealth.

However, today, global power is concentrated in the hands of a few dominant nations that control the world's affairs and dictate its direction. These nations boast of democracy, freedom, and human rights, yet their political decisions lack an ethical foundation entirely.

For example, in the field of science, the cloning of the sheep Dolly was the first case of an animal being cloned from the cell of another, achieved at the Roslin Institute in Scotland in

1996. This experiment became a major global issue, sparking controversy in the Western world, and the Church—despite its declining influence—objected on ethical grounds. It feared that cloning would lead to the creation of a new human species that would not experience family life or natural reproduction. As a result, cloning research was halted, as it was seen as a moral violation that could lead to disastrous consequences. “Many people wondered whether this was a miracle for which they should praise Allah or an act of imitating God, forewarning of grave consequences.”²⁵

Experts in ethics raised concerns about the alarming developments in medicine, particularly in cloning cells, which became one of the most controversial issues of the early 1980s.²⁶

In a similar case, China announced the successful cloning of two monkeys, marking the first primates cloned using the same technique as Dolly. However, this development raised concerns among scientists and the public alike over the potential use of this technology to clone humans.²⁷

This new field of cloning does not mean that humans have mastered creation, but rather, it has crossed ethical boundaries to the extent of being a crime. Islam does not permit tampering with genes, cells, or human life. As for the pursuit of scientific, biological, and astronomical research, it is unlimited, except when it involves the soul, in which case it must remain within ethical boundaries.

At this point, a critical question arises—one that must be carefully considered and answered: To what extent can humanity ethically endure the rapid and alarming advancements in cloning, embryo research, and genetics, especially given the apparent weakness of the Islamic Ummah, which has been unable to assert global influence or authority? The next phase requires psychological, scientific, and civilizational preparation to regulate and restrain this rapid, unchecked scientific advancement that lacks ethical control.

Islamic civilization once imposed its presence upon other civilizations—a natural outcome of Muslims' commitment to their religion, beliefs, and ethics. But today, the situation is entirely different. We lament our weakness and complain to Allah of our helplessness. We have the religion, yet we lack the sciences. However, what distinguishes us from others is that we still possess the foundations of our civilization.

²⁵ The copy of *The Road to Internationalism and Foresight into the Future*, Gina Kolata /25.

²⁶ See: The copy of *The Road to Internationalism and Foresight into the Future*, Gina Kolata /27-28.

²⁷ *Monkey Cloning in China*: David Cyranoski, *Nature Arabic Edition* article, Published online: 5 Feb 2018 <https://arabicedition.nature.com/journal/2018/02/d41586-018-01027-z> *Monkey Cloning in China*: David Cyranoski, *Nature Arabic Edition* article, Published online: 5 Feb 2018 <https://arabicedition.nature.com/journal/2018/02/d41586-018-01027-z>

It is not far-fetched for us to rise again, and this is a promise from Allah. No civilization other than Islam will inherit the earth and sustain it, for this period of stagnation is self-inflicted. But soon, Allah will grant victory, and an opening will come on all fronts. As Allah, the Most Truthful, has said:

"And We have already written in the Psalms, after the Scripture, that the earth is inherited by My righteous servants." (Al-Anbiya: 105).

Conclusion

The research explored Islamic civilization, its concept, and the essential elements that enabled it to spread across the earth. While the topic certainly requires further study due to its complexity and numerous dimensions, we hope that we have succeeded in our objective: to instill the necessity for Muslims to recognize that they are part of a powerful civilization and are tasked with spreading it, ensuring its continuity, and maintaining its brilliance and radiance in the world.

At the conclusion of this study, we reached the following findings and recommendations: Islamic Sharia is the correct framework for life and for building civilization. No civilization can exist without fulfilling the commands of the true Owner and Founder of civilization—Allah—who created humanity to worship Him, appointed them as vicegerents on earth, and enabled them to construct and develop it in accordance with His wisdom. Islamic civilization is uniquely distinguished by its connection to religion; no other civilization shares its faith, morals, or concern for humanity as a whole. It seeks the welfare of all humankind, as its central focus is the human being—ensuring their dignity at every stage of life and providing the foundational guidelines for fulfilling their duty of constructing the earth and carrying out the vicegerency (Khilafah) that Allah has commanded.

The middle path of Islam is not merely a claim or slogan; rather, it is a balanced approach that continuously engages with emerging challenges and new realities. This approach originates from the inherent nature of Islam, which possesses strength, authenticity, and control, rooted in faith. Islam urges its followers to travel the earth, reflect, think, and contemplate, encouraging them to innovate and produce beneficial advancements in all aspects of life. The foundation of civilization is knowledge, and the noblest knowledge is that found in the verses of the Qur'an, the clear Book of guidance. From the Qur'an emerged the pillars of Islamic civilization, and the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which commanded "Read", marked the beginning of the civilization's intellectual movement. However, knowledge alone is not sufficient—it must be accompanied by faith in

Allah and followed by action. Acting upon knowledge is of paramount importance in the movement of civilization-building, for without it, there is no hope for life, let alone the establishment of a civilization. This action must encompass all fields of life—both material and spiritual, worldly and religious—to deepen Muslims' knowledge of their Lord, His existence, and His greatness. This knowledge is built upon two fundamental pillars: the innate (basic needs and natural disposition) and the rational (logical reasoning and evidence).

Morality is the foundation of civilization, and its source of inspiration stems from faith in Allah. It plays a crucial role in the advancement and prosperity of nations. No civilization has ever collapsed except after the downfall of its religion and morals, as these are the keys to constructing life and attaining strength. No civilization can progress or thrive without its moral values, which originate from Islam and its teachings.

Islamic civilization is independent in its vision and direction. It formulates its own perspectives and makes its own decisions, yet it does not reject learning from other civilizations—provided that such knowledge enhances its uniqueness while preserving its character and methodology. Throughout its history, Islamic civilization has carefully selected what benefits it and discarded what harms it. The divine laws governing the universe and life serve as guiding principles for civilizations: the more civilizations adhere to these principles, the higher they rise and flourish; but when they violate or neglect them, they decay and collapse. Islamic civilization has always maintained a balanced approach to human life, combining both the material and spiritual aspects, without prioritizing one over the other. It recognizes that if one aspect dominates excessively, it leads to decline and eventual downfall. The foundation of Islamic civilization is faith in Allah and knowledge of Him. The Qur'an serves as the herald of this civilization, with its verses and signs affirming Islam's dominion over the past, present, and future. However, this status is conditional upon taking the necessary means, working diligently, and striving to make it a reality, rather than merely an aspiration. The teachings of Islam and its wise guidance serve the best interests of humanity, life, and the universe, for civilization ultimately originates from its true Owner—Allah, who created, balanced, and perfected all things.

Humankind, as His vicegerents on earth, must live in accordance with the divine laws He has set for them, for Allah alone knows what is best for humanity and their well-being.

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