Islamic lands brought three aspects of human civilization: Religion, Community and Politics

Sources to understand the History of central Islamic land

1. Semi-historical works, such as biographies, records of the sayings and doings of the Prophet (hadith) and commentaries on the Quran (tafsir) are available.

2. Large collection of eyewitness reports (akhbar) transmitted over a period of time either orally or on paper. The authenticity of each report was tested by a critical method called isnad.

3. Christian chronicles, written in Syriac are fewer but they throw interesting light on the history of early Islam.

4. Besides chronicles, we have legal texts, geographies, travelogues and literary works, such as stories and poems.

The Rise of Islam in Arabia:

Arabs before Muhammad (Bedouins)

- Before the Prophet Muhammad, the Arabs were divided into tribes (qabila).
- A chief was chosen on the basis of his family as well as his personal courage, wisdom and generosity.
- Many Arab tribes were nomadic (Bedouins), moving from dry to green areas (oases) in the desert in search of food. Some settled in cities and practised trade or agriculture.

Importance of Mecca

- It was in this city that Muhammad lived and controlled the main shrine, a cube-like structure, known as Kaba in which idols were placed.
- Tribes outside Mecca also considered the Kaba holy and placed their idols in it and annual pilgrimage there.
- Mecca was located on the crossroad of a trade route between Yemen and Syria which added to the importance of the city.

Principles and Messages of Prophet Muhammad

- Muhammad was an Arab by language and culture and a merchant by profession.
- He declared himself to be a messenger of God (rasul) and commanded to preach that Allah alone should be worshipped.
- He preached that worship should involve simple rituals such as daily prayers (salat).
- His followers should follow moral principles such as:
  - a. abstain from theft,
  - b. distribute alms, and
  - c. be bound together through common religious beliefs.
- He preached to found a single community of believers (umma).
- His followers were called Muslims.
- They were promised salvation on the Day of Judgment (qiyama) and a share of the resources of the community while on earth.

Islamic Calendar

- The Muslims and their new religion had faced considerable opposition from the Meccans.
- In 622, Muhammad was forced to migrate with his followers to Medina.
- The year of his journey marked the beginning of the Muslim calendar (Hijri era).

The Caliphate and its Objectives

- After the death of Muhammad in 632 AD, no one remained there to succeed him as prophet.