

**ISLAM**  
**KNOWLEDGE AND CIVILIZATION**

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE FROM THE WESTERN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES**

*Bachir Soualhi*

#### **DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE FROM THE WESTERN PERSPECTIVE**

If we were to look at any standard dictionary in the English language for the word “knowledge,” we would come across the following expressions to understand the meaning of this word:

- Acquaintance with facts
- Familiarity with a particular subject
- Acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, report or investigation.
- The body of truths or facts accumulated by mankind in the course of time.

Knowledge generally means and includes learning, scholarship, education, acquaintance, familiarity, awareness, cognition, perception and conception.

#### **DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

Literally, the Arabic term *ma'rifah* meaning knowledge is derived from the root word *'arafa* and the Arabic term *'ilm*, meaning science and also indicative of knowledge is derived from the root word *'alima*. Both these root words mean to know, to be aware of, to be familiar with, to find out, to perceive, to understand, to realise, and to