ISLAM

KNOWLEDGE AND CIVILIZATION

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE FROM THE WESTERN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

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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 ‘ilmi, 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