ISLAM

KNOWLEDGE AND CIVILIZATION

Munawar Haque
Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman
Bachir Soualhi
Syamsuddin Arif

IIUM Press
CONTENT

Key to Transliteration v

Introduction 1
Munawar Haque

Chapter One
Concept of Knowledge from the Western and Islamic Perspectives 5
Bachir Soualhi

Chapter Two
Research Methodology from the Western and Islamic Perspectives 35
Munawar Haque

Chapter Three
Islamic Civilization: Meaning, Origin and Distinctive Characteristics 57
Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman

Chapter Four
Contribution of Muslim Scholars to the Sciences 127
Munawar Haque

Chapter Five
Western Civilization: Its Origin, Basis and Features 179
Munawar Haque
Chapter Six
Ancient Culture and Civilizations of Mesopotamia,
Egypt, India and China
Syamsuddin Arif

Concluding Remarks

Bibliography

Suggested Readings

About the Contributors

Index
CHAPTER SIX

ANCIENT CULTURE AND CIVILISATIONS OF MESOPOTAMIA, EGYPT, INDIA AND CHINA

Syamsuddin Arif

Ancient, pre-Islamic civilisations flourished in North Africa and West as well as East Asia. Some of these early civilisations are still real foundations of contemporary civilisations, while some others now have little or no influence except on our imaginations and emotions when they are mentioned. The earliest known civilisations in history are believed to take place between 3500 and 500 BCE, that is, about 5500 years ago. Before we discuss them in detail, it is worthwhile to explain the meaning and definition of culture and civilisation.

The Concept of Culture and Civilisation

The word “culture,” from Latin cultura, originally means the cultivation of the soil or land, whereas the word “civilisation,” also from Latin civis, refers to the status of (Roman) citizenship and its supposed superiority over the primitive condition of the foreigner or barbarian. Later on, however, the word ‘culture’ came to denote philosophy or learning in general, such as in the expression cultura animi (“culture of the soul”). Although ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’ are often distinguished, the former being identified as man's spiritual development, and the latter signifying man's control over nature and the improvement of his material conditions or refinements of social manners, some scholars have regarded culture as a particular component or stage of civilisation, a sort of subculture within a