

## NAMING CIVILIZATION: METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TERMINOLOGY IN THE STUDY OF ISLAM

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**Abstract:** This study explores the conceptual and methodological complexity in the term Islamic Civilization and its related designations, Muslim Civilization and Civilization in the Islamic World. It argues that differences in terminology are not only semantic discourse but reflect distinct epistemological orientations and methodological frameworks for understanding the historical and intellectual trajectory of Islam and its adherents. Methodologically, this research employs a descriptive literature review centered on Christian Sahner's formulation in "What is Islamic History?" Through a close textual reading of Sahner's work, the study critically examines its conceptual foundations and historiographical implications, while placing it in dialogue with Marshall Hodgson's notion of "Islamicate Civilization" and Shahab Ahmed's interpretive approach to the importance of being Islamic. This comparative approach enables the study to identify convergences, divergences, and underlying epistemological assumptions in contemporary discussions of Islamic civilization. The discussion reveals that the term

Islamic Civilization emphasizes normative ideals derived from al-wahy; Muslim Civilization, on the other hand, represents the historical embodiment of these ideals in human experience. At the same time, Civilization in the Islamic World captures the broader intercultural and transregional synthesis of ideas that shaped Islamic societies. By situating these frameworks in dialogue, the study seeks to demonstrate how terminological precision shapes the methodological direction of civilizational studies and calls for a more integrative paradigm, one that acknowledges Islam's spiritual core while embracing the diversity and dynamism of its historical manifestations.

**Keywords:** Islamicate, Civilization, Intercultural Dialogue, Terminology.

## Introduction

Who would have thought that a simple and popular term such as Islamic Civilization could change the way we understand the entire course of humanity? What may look like a mere difference in nomenclature actually reflects distinct methodological orientations, perspectives, priorities, boundaries of knowledge, and epistemologies about what is considered central or peripheral (if we do not say it marginal) in the study of civilization. This study seeks to reshape the existing paradigm, both modern and classical paradigms, not by deconstructing it, but by expanding its scope and refining its conceptual clarity. The aim is to render the vast notion of civilization clearer and more accessible, allowing it to be examined as a subject through detailed and contextualized analysis.

In modern Arabic usage, the term civilization is commonly used as a synonym for "*hadharah*". Classical sources such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Manzur, 1990) define it as presence in contrast to absence, and associate it with settled life as opposed to Bedouin nomadism. It is closely linked to

hadirah, meaning city or large community, and refers to urban dwellers rather than tribal populations. Edward Lane's Arabic-English *Lexicon* (Lane, 1984) further associates the term with inhabited and flourishing lands, cultivated territories, and settled communities. This understanding suggests that hadharah encompasses not only permanence of settlement but also the development of social, cultural, and material life. Contemporary Arabic linguistic scholarship similarly employs the term to denote cultural refinement, urban development, and collective human achievement, thereby extending its meaning beyond mere geographical settlement (Abu-'Uksa, 2022; Benlahcene, 2017). Thus, civilization is understood not only as spatial and social stability but also as a state of cultural and material richness. Beyond the Arabic linguistic tradition, various scholars have offered broader definitions of civilization, often focusing on its historical, technological, and cultural dimensions.

First, according to Koentjaraningrat (Koentjaraningrat, 1992), is the refined, advanced, and beautiful aspect of culture, encompassing art, science, manners, literacy, governance, technological systems, and complex urban societies, each representing the sophisticated expressions of human life beyond mere survival. Civilization, in this view, is not simply a collection of cultural traits but a manifestation of progress and aesthetic achievement—where knowledge, ethics, and innovation converge to shape harmonious and organized communities. As an Indonesian anthropologist, Koentjaraningrat further elaborates that civilization is rooted in seven core cultural elements: social organization, religion, livelihood systems, knowledge systems, technology and tools, language, and the arts (Subchi et al., 2018). These elements, when integrated into the fabric of society, form the basis of civilizational life, emphasizing processes of learning, cultural transmission, and adaptation across generations (Kistanto, 2017).

Arnold Toynbee viewed civilization as a historical entity that undergoes a cyclical process of birth, growth, decline, and collapse. He emphasized that a civilization rises when it can respond creatively to external challenges and falls when its elite fails to innovate (Kumar, 2014). Complementing this, civilization can also be understood as a culture that has reached a higher level of technological development, encompassing the totality of human achievements—both material and non-material—within a comprehensive civilizational framework. This perspective highlights ‘progress’ as a defining trait, where technological sophistication serves as a marker of civilizational maturity (Toynbee, 1934). Unlike Koentjaraningrat’s view, which suggests civilization emerges when a culture bypasses its basic functions and begins to innovate systematically. His inclusion of both elements like architecture, tools, and infrastructure, and intangible aspects such as philosophy, ethics, and spirituality, reflects a holistic understanding of human advancement.

Ibn Khaldun (Ibn Khaldun, 1986) conceptualized civilization as a dynamic product of social, economic, and political forces, driven primarily by ‘*asabiyyah*’ (group solidarity) as the engine of collective strength (Arenas et al., 2023). ‘*Asabiyyah*’ although often translated as “group solidarity” but more accurately understood as a combination of collective cohesion, political legitimacy, and shared moral commitment (Alwagdani, 2020; Augusto Alexandre, 2025). For Ibn Khaldun, ‘*asabiyyah*’ functions as the driving force behind the formation of states, the expansion of political authority, and the rise of civilizations. He outlined a pattern in which civilizations rise from tribal societies, reform into prosperous urban centers, and eventually decline due to the erosion of solidarity, only to be replaced by more vigorous groups. At the same time, he viewed civilization as the human mastery over worldly (*dunyawi*) crafts and innovations, reflected in the

construction of grand structures, institutions, and technical achievements. Thus, for Ibn Khaldun, civilization is both a moral-social organism sustained by solidarity and religion, and a tangible manifestation of human ingenuity, where progress is measured by a society's ability to organize, build, and innovate. Compared to Koentjaraningrat's focus on cultural refinement and Toynbee's emphasis on progress and response (Zhilwan Tahir & Abdulwahed Jalal Nuri, 2024), Ibn Khaldun offers a sociological and historical lens rooted in real-world achievements. He tries to connect civilization to the rise of *'asabiyyah*, political stability, and economic prosperity, which together enable the developing of arts, sciences, and institutions.

Amid this diversity of concepts surrounding civilization, the prior study reveals numerous examples of how terminology can shape, distort, or constrain perception. The choice of words used to describe civilizational phenomena often carries implicit assumptions, framing the scope, values, and interpretive boundaries of scholarly inquiry. This article will examine with various conceptualizations of civilization, including the concepts that surround the term itself. It will explore the theoretical frameworks and terminological nuances proposed by scholars such as Marshall Hodgson, Christian Sahner, and Ahmad Shahab, highlighting their contributions to civilizational discourse and interpretive models.

In our view, these terminological differences are more than linguistic variations. The term "Islamic Civilization" is a widely used one, emphasizing that divine revelation forms the principal foundation for civilizational development. In Al-Farabi's conception of the virtuous city, society is guided toward *al-sa'adah* (true happiness) through a political and moral order established by a ruler whose intellect is connected to the Active Intellect (Al-Farabi, 2002). This framework highlights the central role of

prophetic guidance and revealed truth in shaping a just and virtuous civilization (Al-Farabi, 2014). Meanwhile, the term Muslim Civilization highlights the historical expression of the Muslim community with all its strengths and weaknesses—as Malik Bennabi (Bennabi, 2005; Subhani et al., 2020) argued, seeing Muslim society as a living manifestation of faith and culture. The third term, Civilization in the Islamic World, emerges from contemporary scholarship seeking to emphasize the breadth of interactions among Islamic values, Muslim societies, and other civilizations that shaped their achievements. Al-Attas (Al-Attas, 1978) and especially Marshall Hodgson (Hodgson, 1974) affirmed that these interactions produced a dynamic cultural experience, an expression of Muslim societies that, while not always directly rooted in religion, remain within the broader orbit of Islamic civilization.

Thus, the terminology chosen to describe civilization related to Islam is not a matter of semantics but of methodology. Each term carries distinct conceptual implications in how civilization, Islam, and Muslim societies are positioned within the broader historical and intellectual narrative (Benlahcene, 2017). The act of naming, therefore, determines not only the title but also the conceptual boundaries, scope, and methodological orientation of scholarly inquiry. There are, in fact, serious implications that arise from the use of these terminologies. The ambiguity in distinguishing between terms leads to conceptual confusion, blurring the analytical borders between revelation-based ideals and the historical realities of Muslim societies. This lack of precision affects how scholars analyze and interpret the relationship between Islam as a system of values and the diverse civilizational expressions. Hence, the discussion on terminology is central, as it shapes the framework through which we

understand and analyze the trajectory of Islamic civilization.

This study employs an descriptive and comparative approach to examine the theoretical frameworks developed by several figures in the study of Islamic societies. Rather than merely summarizing their ideas, this research seeks to understand the deeper logic and assumptions behind each scholar's model—how they conceptualize the nature of Islamic civilization, the relationship between religion and culture, and the dynamics of social transformation within Muslim history (Hatina, 2021).

The analytical component of this study is centered on a close textual reading of Christian Sahner's "What is Islamic History?" as the primary object of investigation. The analysis examines how Sahner conceptualizes the relationship between Islamic Civilization, Muslim Civilization, and Civilization in the Islamic World, with particular attention to the terminological choices, epistemological assumptions, and historiographical implications embedded in his framework. To contextualize and evaluate Sahner's formulation, his arguments are placed in dialogue with Marshall Hodgson's concept of "Islamicate Civilization" and Shahab Ahmed's interpretive approach to the importance of being Islamic. Through this review, the study systematically examines convergences and divergences among these perspectives, focusing on how each framework understands the relationship between revelation, historical experience, and cultural expression in the study of Islamic civilization.

The next stage of the study involves placing comparative assessment frameworks in dialogue. This discussion focuses on how each framework conceptualizes continuity and changes in Islamic history, the balance between faith and material structures, and the way their terminologies shape our understanding of civilization. The study attempts to identify the strengths, limitations, and

possible intersections between them. This comparative process also opens space for critical reflection on the terminological issue itself. The terms used by these scholars are not merely descriptive; they frame how Islamic civilization is understood in academic discourse (Rock-Singer, 2022). Essentially, the method integrates analytical reading, conceptual comparison, and critical reflection.

### **Islamic and Muslim Civilization**

The term Islamic Civilization is commonly heard in modern academic discourse. It refers not merely to historical achievements of Muslims but to an entire system of life rooted in divine revelation and moral values. In this view, civilization is seen as the concrete realization of Islam's teachings in every dimension of human existence: spiritual, intellectual, social, political, and cultural.

Islamic Civilization places revelation as the supreme source of values. The Qur'an provides the guiding principles for social, legal, and intellectual order, while the Sunnah of the Prophet serves as its practical embodiment. Thus, this concept envisions harmony between faith, knowledge, and action a just, moral, and enlightened society oriented toward the common good and devotion to God (Jani & Yasin, 2019). Its strength lies in its universality: Islamic values such as justice, balance, honesty, and compassion transcend time and place *ṣāliḥun li-kulli zamān wa-makān* (relevant for all times and places) (Rohmatika, 2019). Consequently, Islamic Civilization is often seen as an ideal model of moral and spiritual perfection (Şemşek, 2020).

However, viewing civilization solely through this normative lens has its limits. Historically, Muslims lived as human beings shaped not only by revelation but also by geography, politics, and cultural interactions. To see Islamic civilization merely as a flawless reflection of revelation risks neglecting the human and historical dimensions that are

intrinsic to it (Anas, 2019). Awareness of this complexity allows for a more balanced understanding: Islamic civilization as both an ideal vision and a lived reality, forged through the interplay between divine values and human experience (Schielke, 2023).

From this point, the discussion moves to Muslim Civilization, which describes how Muslims historically sought to embody these values within concrete social and cultural contexts. The term Muslim Civilization refers to the historical and cultural expressions of Muslim communities throughout history. Unlike Islamic Civilization, which emphasizes divine norms, Muslim Civilization focuses on how Muslim societies, as human communities, translated their faith into politics, science, art, economy, and culture (Javeed Iqbal & Dr. Rabia Sarfraz, 2022). It highlights human creativity with all its imperfections in realizing Islamic ideals in particular historical contexts.

The richness and diversity of Muslim civilization from Baghdad to Andalusia, Istanbul to the Malay Archipelago demonstrate the vitality and adaptability of Muslim societies. Their scientific, artistic, and institutional achievements reflect Islam as a living and evolving civilization (Renima et al., 2016). Yet, if the focus remains solely on human achievements, there is a risk of severing civilization from its moral compass, leading to grandeur without spirituality. Thus, Muslim Civilization should be understood as the historical manifestation of Muslims' efforts to actualize Islamic values while acknowledging that history does not always align with ideals.

While the concept of Muslim Civilization successfully highlights the historical achievements and cultural expressions of Muslim societies, it also raises an important conceptual question: to what extent can the products of Muslim societies be identified with Islam itself? If Muslim Civilization refers to the historical manifestations of Muslims, where should the boundary be drawn between

Islamic norms and the diverse cultural practices that emerged within Islamic societies? It is precisely this question that Shahab Ahmed seeks to address through his influential reinterpretation of Islam as a civilizational phenomenon.

### **The Contemporary Idea**

Shahab Ahmed's efforts to accommodate this limitation in his work "What Is Islam?" present a bold rethinking of what the term "Islam" actually means. He rejects the narrow view that confines Islam to theology, law, or ritual, and instead envisions it as a vast civilizational space that includes every form of intellectual, cultural, and even aesthetic expression that emerged within Muslim societies. In this sense, Islam is not limited to what Muslims believe or practice but becomes a pluri-religious phenomenon — a shared world that also encompasses the contributions and experiences of non-Muslims who lived under Islamic rule. Yet this radical inclusivity is also where Ahmed's idea becomes problematic. While he insists that anything produced within Islamic civilization can be considered part of Islam, he rarely discusses non-Muslim communities directly. His assumption that Jewish, Christian, or Zoroastrian populations who lived in Islamic lands were somehow participating in "Islam" raises questions. Did these communities ever see themselves as part of an "Islamic" world in the way Ahmed imagines? By blurring the boundary between Islam as a faith and Islam as a civilizational setting, his model risks dissolving the distinct spiritual and ethical content that gives Islam its coherence (Ahmed, 2015).

In contrast, Christian Sahner argues that several traditional narratives of history are unjustly narrow because they fail to give proper spotlight to religious minorities and non-Muslims who lived within Islamic societies. For Sahner, a fair understanding of Islamic civilization must

include these groups as participants in its historical development, not merely as peripheral figures. To reshape this imbalance, he proposes studying Islamic history through the framework of empires rather than just through *Islamic History*. By focusing on the empire as a unit of analysis, Sahner highlights how Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others coexisted within shared Intellectual and cultural systems, influencing one another eliminating boundaries of faith and ethnicity. This perspective allows for a more proper portrayal of Islamic civilization as a multi-layered social formation shaped by administration, economy, and intercultural exchange. In doing so, Sahner invites historians to rethink Islamic history as part of a wider, interconnected world, where power, belief, and coexistence evolved together within the imperial context (Sahner, 2023).

This view resonates with Lev Weitz's call to "get around the distorting allure of religion" by placing Islam within the frameworks of empires and regional histories. Studying the political, administrative, and cultural mechanisms of empires, or exploring trans-confessional histories, enables historians to show Muslims and non-Muslims as participants in shared social worlds rather than opposing civilizations (Weitz, 2018). This approach could help to reconstruct the cosmopolitan realities of Islamic history, where interreligious and intercultural exchange was the norm rather than the exception. In parallel, models like Peter Brown's *Late Antiquity* (Brown, 1971) have similarly sought to reimagine world history as a continuum of transformation and continuity across cultures, languages, and belief systems—from Rome to Persia to the Caliphate.

In this broader landscape, Sahner's contribution can be seen as part of an effort to reposition Islamic history within a global framework. By decentering the exclusive focus on religion, he opens the possibility for a more balanced and integrated understanding of how Islamic societies evolved. Islam, in this sense, is not merely a set of doctrines but a

civilizational project shaped by human experience, institutions, and knowledge systems.

However, the weakness of the current approach lies in its tendency to reduce Islam to the ideology of empire. By framing Islamic civilization primarily within imperial structures, there is a risk of overlooking Islam's role as a lived worldview and moral system that transcended political formations. The experience of a Jewish scholar in Djerba during the Aghlabid period or a Zoroastrian resident in Bukhara and Samarkand, for instance, cannot be fully explained through imperial logic alone (*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2012). Both lived within an intellectual and social universe shaped by Islamic norms – a world where non-Muslims could participate in shared intellectual, cultural, and economic life under the moral canopy of Islam. The opportunities offered by rulers of the time – in education, administration, and scholarship – all contributed, in varying ways, to the flourishing of what was broadly recognized as the *Islamic world*. As the Coptic nationalist Makram 'Ubayd once expressed, "Christianity was my religion, but Islam was my homeland," capturing how Islam, beyond its theological identity, functioned as a civilizational framework that embraced diverse communities within a common moral and cultural order (Carter, 2017).

### **Civilization in The Islamic World**

This dialectical view between revelation and history leads naturally to the third framework: Civilization in the Islamic World. The term Civilization in the Islamic World (*Hadharah fi al-'Alam al-Islami*) offers a broader and more inclusive approach (Adamson, 2015). It encompasses not only Islamic ideals or Muslim achievements but the entire historical and cultural processes that unfolded in regions where Islam took root (Hodgson, 1974). It involves the interplay between Islam and its surrounding environments

Arab, Persian, Byzantine, Indian and African. Islam is thus understood as a living civilization that developed through time.

Methodologically, this approach is compelling because it allows for interdisciplinary analysis and transregional study. Civilization in the Islamic world is a vast mosaic of interconnected local experiences linked through all aspects. The intellectual synthesis of Arabic, Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian thought illustrate this openness and adaptability. This inclusive, dialogical perspective is therefore adopted in this article: it recognizes that the strength of civilization in Islamic World lies in its capacity to engage with, absorb, and transform external influences without losing its spiritual essence (Osman, 2020).

This view regards civilization contained diverse linguistic and cultural contributions. While Arabic served as the lingua franca, significant works were also produced in Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Hebrew, and Syriac. Cities, like Baghdad, Cordoba, Cairo, Kairouan, Fez, and Samarkand became intellectual and cultural centers surpassing religious boundaries (Majtoomy, 2019). The translation movement (*harakah tarjamiyyah*) from Greek, Indian, and Persian sources into Arabic laid the foundation for scientific and cultural progress. Yet its aims were not just religious; they were also political and pragmatic as stated by Gutas (1998) . Abbasid rulers, for example, support and funded translations to strengthen their legitimacy and display cultural superiority over powers. Through this process, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and technology flourished, becoming the shared heritage of humanity (Montgomery, 2018; Altayev, 2021; L Ismail, 2022).

The inspiration for this terminology comes from Peter Adamson's Philosophy in the Islamic World (Adamson, 2015). By using this phrase, Adamson subtly critiques the academic tendency to restrict Islamic philosophy to Muslim theologians, instead expanding it to include all intellectual

activity within Islamic civilization including translators and thinkers influenced by Persian and Greco-Roman traditions. Similarly, this article employs Civilization in the Islamic World to encompass the full scope of cultural, intellectual, and social phenomena shaped by Islam's presence. Al-Attas (al-Attas, 2011), in *Historical Fact and Fiction*, also emphasized a comparable vision. Although he retained the term Islamic Civilization, his definition highlights openness and synthesis the merging of divine, human, and transcultural dimensions into a dynamic civilizational spirit.

Civilization in the Islamic World should not be seen as a monolithic entity but as a complex network of interwoven communities and traditions (Afroni, 2019). This inclusive and contextual approach enables us to situate Islamic civilization within global history as part of, not apart from, humanity's shared intellectual heritage. This resonates with the prophetic saying: *"Al- hikmatu dhâllatu al-mu'min, fa haytsu wajadaha fahuwa ahaqqu biha"* "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer; wherever he finds it, he is most entitled to it." (تحفة الأوحدي بشرح جامع الترمذي - ج 7 رقم 2687, n.d.) Truth and wisdom, therefore, belong to all and must be sought wherever they are found.

In light of Sahner's, Shahab Ahmed's, and Hodgson's contrasting perspectives, this methodology seeks to offer a more integrative way of understanding Islamic civilization. Sahner's approach, which interprets Islam largely through the framework of empires, succeeds in capturing the political and institutional dimensions of Islamic history, but it risks reducing Islam to a geopolitical project, overlooking the inner moral and spiritual cohesion that bound diverse peoples—from the Jewish community in Djerba to the Zoroastrians of Bukhara—into a shared civilizational experience. Shahab Ahmed, on the other hand, expands the definition of Islam so widely that it becomes an umbrella

encompassing everything within the cultural orbit of Muslim societies. His “pluri-religious” vision rightly emphasizes Islam’s cultural inclusivity, yet it blurs the distinction between what constitutes the Islamic as a faith-based framework and what merely exists within its sociocultural space. Hodgson’s concept of the “Islamicate” sits between these poles, offering a useful distinction between religious and civilizational phenomena but still struggling to explain the organic unity of values and meaning that makes the civilization distinctly Islamic. Hodgson introduced the term Islamicate to refer to the broader cultural and civilizational sphere that developed under Muslim political and cultural influence, including the contributions of non-Muslim communities. By distinguishing between Islam as a religious tradition and the wider historical realities of societies shaped by it, he provided an important conceptual tool for understanding the diversity and complexity of Islamic civilization. Nevertheless, while the concept successfully broadens the scope of analysis beyond strictly religious phenomena, it tends to emphasize historical and cultural interconnectedness more than the normative foundations derived from revelation. As a result, the challenge remains how to account simultaneously for Islam’s religious core and the plural social realities that emerged around it (Tamari, 2015; Van Bladel, 2020).

The conceptual and methodological foundation of this study emerges from a necessity to reestablish coherence between Islam as an ethical-spiritual way of life and Islam as a dynamic civilizational force that has shaped the trajectory of human history. In contrast to frameworks that either reduce Islam to an imperial system or dissolve it into a vague cultural pluralism, this approach offers on viewing Islamic civilization as the unfolding of a unified worldview (*ru’yah kawuniyyah*) grounded in revelation, reason, and moral responsibility. Philosophically, it rests on the idea

that civilization is not only accumulation of political power, territorial expansion, or material progress, but also a moral and intellectual project that expresses how human beings, guided by divine principles, construct meaning and order in the world.

Rationally, this framework responds to the limitations of both readings of Islamic civilization. Against Sahner's perspective, this framework argues that Islam cannot be fully understood through political institutions alone, for its vitality was not confined to dynastic authority but animated by ethical consciousness that transcended empires. Not fully agree with Shahab's overly capacious definition, it maintains that Islam's inclusivity was not an unbounded pluralism devoid of spiritual center, but a disciplined openness governed by the moral grammar of revelation. And against Hodgson's Islamicate distinction, it advances that while separating the religious from the cultural is heuristically useful, it risks fragmenting the unity of meaning that made Civilization in the Islamic World more than a sum of its parts.

Methodologically, this entails privileging in our reading of history the vectors of ideas, values, and ethical sensibilities over geography or chronology. It requires us as scholars to trace how the Islamic worldview animated different communities, Muslim and non-Muslim, to take part in this civilizational conversation. It means reimagining and reconstructing the moral architecture that made coexistence not only possible in Islamic societies: an inclusive logic of recognition grounded in human dignity and divine purpose. Ultimately, this involves seeing civilization in the Islamic World as a living horizon of meaning, an unfolding moral cosmos in which different communities could flourish, coexist, and realize themselves together under a common conception of truth and beauty.

## Conclusion

In sum, there are multiple ways of understanding Islamic Civilization, and one's choice of terms is not a mere methodological matter, but a way to frame the field of inquiry, with important implications for how one conceptualizes and approaches the study of the historical development of Islamic societies. Islamic Civilization in its normative sense can be defined as the divine moral and spiritual order rooted in revelation and the normative epistemology that manifests itself in social life based on and governed by knowledge and justice. Muslim Civilization, by contrast, is the social and historical lived experience of Muslims, the ways in which Muslims made the ideal into a reality by giving historical form to Islam through politics, science, art, and institutions, limited by human creativity and fallibility. In that sense both are useful, but both are also limited if taken in isolation. To address this, the term Civilization in the Islamic World offers a more inclusive framework. It sets Islamic civilization within a global context, highlighting its openness to dialogue, synthesis, and cross-cultural interaction with other traditions, from Greece and Persia to India and Africa. This helps to understand Islam as both a moral system and a civilizational phenomenon. Ultimately, the study argues that the terminology we adopt shapes the contours of historical and intellectual interpretation. Recognizing this interplay between concepts and methods is essential for constructing a balanced vision of Islamic civilization as a dynamic, evolving, and universal contribution to human civilization itself.

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