

Islamic Engineering Ethics

Foundation Integration
and Practice



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Editors

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MUSLIM SCIENTISTS AND WORLD CIVILIZATION

Waleed F. Faris and Othman O. Khalifa

INTRODUCTION

Any Muslim with brief acquaintance in Islamic history should be aware of the fact that Islamic world-view of the first few centuries Hijra, provided powerful source of inspiration, especially for the Muslim people's quest for knowledge. There are several myths that reside in the minds of many people including Muslims in relation to the Muslim contribution to civilization. In this paper, a number of Myths will be discussed. First Myth "Muslims did not add to the Greek heritage but they kept it intact until the Europeans came to discover it later in the renaissance".

This myth was referred to as "the fridge theory" by Professor Abdul Hamid Sabra of Harvard University, because it implies that Muslims kept the Greek heritage intact in a "fridge". Though, this myth still flies in many "pseudo-scientific" books that are written by academicians, the truth is that this theory is scientifically debunked many years back. Just taking a look at the sciences that were completely initiated by Muslims we can know the truth.

Algebra, trigonometry, new theories in astronomy, surgery, chemistry are just examples of a long chain. This is beside the sharp criticism of all the ancient heritage of other civilizations that Muslims translated since very early ages. Second Myth "Muslims started their civilization after translating the Greek heritage in the Ma'mun era". This is one of the hard myths that is floating even on the tongue of Muslims and in their writing. In fact the scientific development started from the very first day of Islam i.e. during Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) time. The biography of the Prophet shows that he himself used the latest technology in the warfare.