

Debunking Myths About the Khilafah

Myth One: “It’s a Backward State!”

Carly Fiorina, Previous CEO of Hewlett-Packard, commenting on the Islamic Civilization created by the unique leadership of the Islamic Caliphate state, said:

“There was once a civilization that was the greatest in the world.

It was able to create a continental super-state that stretched from ocean to ocean, and from northern climes to tropics and deserts. Within its dominion lived hundreds of millions of people, of different creeds and ethnic origins.

One of its languages became the universal language of much of the world, the bridge between the peoples of a hundred lands. Its armies were made up of people of many nationalities, and its military protection allowed a degree of peace and prosperity that had never been known. The reach of this civilization’s commerce extended from Latin America to China, and everywhere in between.

And this civilization was driven more than anything, by invention. Its architects designed buildings that defied gravity. Its mathematicians created the algebra and algorithms that would enable the building of computers, and the creation of encryption. Its doctors examined the human body, and found new cures for disease. Its astronomers looked into the heavens, named the stars, and paved the way for space travel and exploration...

...When other nations were afraid of ideas, this civilization thrived on them, and kept them alive. When censors threatened to wipe out knowledge from past civilizations, this civilization kept the knowledge alive, and passed it on to others.

While modern Western civilization shares many of these traits, the civilization I’m talking about was the Islamic world from the year 800 to 1600, which included the Ottoman Empire and the courts of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, and enlightened rulers like Suleiman the Magnificent.

Although we are often unaware of our indebtedness to this other civilization, its gifts are very much a part of our heritage. The technology industry would not exist without the contributions of Arab mathematicians...Leaders like Suleiman contributed to our notions of tolerance and civic leadership.

And perhaps we can learn a lesson from his example: It was leadership based on meritocracy, not inheritance. It was leadership that harnessed the full capabilities of a very diverse population...

...This kind of enlightened leadership — leadership that nurtured culture, sustainability, diversity and courage — led to 800 years of invention and prosperity.

In dark and serious times like this, we must affirm our commitment to building societies and institutions that aspire to this kind of greatness.”

- It is Islam’s high regard for the pursuit of Islamic and other forms of knowledge that lay the foundation for the Khilafah’s (Caliphate) appreciation of the importance of education. The Prophet (saw) said, «وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ» **“Allah makes the way to Jannah easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge.”** [Muslim] Islam also encourages men and women to study the world around them and bring benefit to humanity in all fields – including science, medicine, industry and technology.

- The Khilafah views education as a basic right of every individual as well as pivotal to the social wellbeing and material progress of any society. It is obliged to provide free education at primary and secondary levels to both boys and girls. This includes subjects such as the Islamic disciplines, Arabic, mathematics, and the experimental sciences such as biology, chemistry and physics. The state will also strive to fund free higher-level education for men and women to the best of its ability.

“It is an obligation upon the State to teach every individual, male or female, those things which are necessary for the mainstream of life. This should be obligatory and provided freely in the primary and secondary levels of education.” [Article 178, Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of Al-Khilafah]

- The Khilafah views heavy investment in specialization, and research and development as integral to the vitality and health of the state and will provide a multitude of vocational, industrial and technical institutes as well as universities and research centres across its provinces to achieve this aim.

“The State ought to provide the means of developing knowledge, such as libraries and laboratories, in addition to schools and universities, to enable those who want to continue their research in the various fields of knowledge, like fiqh, Hadith and tafseer of Qur’an, thought, medicine, engineering and chemistry, inventions and discoveries etc. This is done to create an abundance of mujtahideen, outstanding scientists and inventors.” [Article 179, Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of Al-Khilafah]

- The Khilafah’s high regard for education, research and development is reflected in its heavy investment in the building of schools, colleges, madrassahs, universities, libraries, and observatories as well as in its training of teachers during its centuries of Islamic rule. Many ‘Houses of Knowledge’ (Dar al-Ilm) were founded in the 9th and 10th century in the Eastern and Western provinces of the state. Khalifah Harun al-Rashid, one of the early Abbasid rulers ordered that to every mosque, a school should be attached. Vizier Nizam al-Mulk in the 11th century established a system of schools of higher education across the Muslim world, including in cities such as Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and Herat. Khalifah Nur al-Din in the 12th century followed in his footsteps by founding many such institutes in Damascus and other large cities. By the 10th century, under Islamic rule, Cordoba alone had 70 libraries, the largest of which had 600,000 books, while as many as 60,000 treatises, poems, polemics and compilations were published each year in Al-Andalus. The library of Cairo had more than 100,000 books, while the library of Tripoli is said to have had as many as 3 million books, before it was burnt down during the Crusades.

“It was this great liberality which they [Muslims] displayed in educating their people in the schools which was one of the most potent factors in the brilliant and rapid growth of their civilization. Education was so universally diffused that it was said to be difficult to find a Muslim who could not read or write.” E. H. Wilds, Educator, **“The Foundation of Modern Education”**

- Under the Khilafah, a host of prestigious universities, renowned internationally for their academic excellence, were established across the state and became centres of learning for the intellectual elite of the world and institutions to which students from across the globe flocked. These included the University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco built in 859 CE, Al-Azhar University in Egypt established in 975 CE, Mustansiriya University in Baghdad founded in 1233 CE, Sankore University in Timbuktu, Mali constructed in 1327 CE, and Istanbul University in Turkey established in 1453 CE. Khalifahs allocated educational subsidiary funds from the state treasury for the running of these schools and institutions. They were also funded by private donations from citizens, due to the high regard of Muslims for education. All this made the Khilafah the leading centre for education in the world and the foremost state during its time in discoveries, inventions, and developments in physics, chemistry,

technology, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, architecture, geography, agriculture, literature, and many other fields.

“At one of the most southerly points of the Muslim lands was the University of Sankore, in Timbuktu, and it was the intellectual institution of Mali, Ghana, and Songhay. It developed out of the Sankore Mosque, founded in 989 by the erudite chief judge of Timbuktu, Al-Qadi Aqib ibn Mahmud ibn Umar.... It prospered and by the 12th century, student numbers were at 25,000, an enormous amount in a city of 100,000 people. The university had several independent colleges, each run by a single master. Subjects included the Quran, Islamic studies, law, literature, medicine and surgery, astronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, philosophy, language and linguistics, geography, history, and art...The highest “superior” degree, equivalent to a Ph.D., took about ten years, and produced world-class scholars who were recognized by their publications and for their erudition.” **From ‘1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in our World’**

- *“The heyday of Baghdad was 1,200 years ago when it was the thriving capital of the Muslim civilisation. For about 500 years the city boasted the cream of intellectuals and culture, a reputation gained during the reigns of some of its most famous Caliphs (Al-Rashid, Al-Ma'mun, Al-Mu'tadhid and Al-Muktafi). As one of the world's biggest and richest cities at the time, Baghdad had wealth that went far beyond money. For more than two centuries, it was home to the House of Wisdom, an academy of knowledge that attracted brains from far and wide. From mathematics and astronomy to zoology, the academy was a major centre of research, thought and debate in Muslim Civilisation.”* **(1001Inventions.com)**

- **House of Wisdom in Baghdad:** Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid founded the House of Wisdom in Baghdad during his rule (786-809). It was a research and educational center where leading scholars from various fields came to share their knowledge. The House of Wisdom was the largest repository of books in the whole world already by the middle of the ninth century. It was the leading center for the study of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, alchemy, chemistry, zoology, geography and cartography. Unluckily the Mongols destroyed the House of Wisdom when they attacked Baghdad in 1258. In the House of Wisdom, translators, scientists, scribes, authors, men of letters, writers, authors, copyists and others used to meet every day for translation, reading, writing, scribing, discourse, dialogue and discussion. Many manuscripts and books in various scientific subjects and philosophical concepts and ideas, and in different languages were translated there. People from all over the Muslim civilisation flocked to the House of Wisdom – both male and female of many faiths and ethnicities. **(From Muslimheritage.com cited by 1001Inventions.com)**

“During all of the first part of the Middle Ages, no other people made as important a contribution to human progress as did the Arabs....for centuries, Arabic was the language of learning, culture and intellectual progress for the whole of the civilized world, with the exception of the Far East...” **“Short History of the Arabs” by Philip K. Hitti, 20th Century Professor of Arab culture**

- The ideas and system of Islam had a great impact on the development of the most fundamental pillars of health care. The Prophet (saw) established through his words and actions the basis of health and medical care. The first century of Islamic rule witnessed the establishment of Bimaristan (public hospitals) and clinics of various types. *“In conclusion, the Prophet's health and medical directives represent the main pillars of the medical and health renaissance witnessed by the world later. These directives are considered the spring from which doctors have consumed generation after generation, and which served as the keys that facilitated the research and investigation in the health and medical fields, as science proves every day the greatness of these directives and their scientific credibility.”* **Health and Medical Care in the First Century AH: Thesis of Professor Asma Yousef Ahmed Al Diab**

• Hospitals under the Khilafah served as models for the hospitals established in different parts of Europe, particularly in Italy and France during the 14th century. The Crusaders were inspired by the magnificent hospitals of the Seljuq ruler Nur al-Din in Damascus and those of the Mamluk Sultan al-Mansur Qala'unin in Cairo. In 1284, al-Mansuri was built with four entrances, each having a fountain in the centre. The Khalifah made sure it was properly staffed with physicians and fully equipped for the care of the sick. He appointed male and female attendants to serve male and female patients who were housed in separate wards. Beds had mattresses and specialized areas were maintained. Running water was provided in all areas of the hospital. In one part of the building, the physician-in-chief was given a room for teaching and lecturing. There were no limits to the number of patients that could be treated, and the in-house dispensary provided medicines for patients to take home (1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World)

"Islam led the whole world in creating good hospitals and supplying them with their needs." **Will Durant, American philosopher, historian and writer**

• **A description of the al-Qayrawan Hospital built in Tunisia in the 9th century under the Khilafah:** *"The 9th-century al-Qayrawan hospital was a state-of-the-art institute, with well organised halls including waiting rooms for visitors, female nurses from Sudan, and mosque for patients to pray and study, regular physicians, and teams of Fuqaha al-Badan, a group of imams that practised medicine and whose medical services included bloodletting, bone setting and cauterization. It also had a special ward for lepers called Dar al-Judhama, built near the al-Qayrawan hospital, at a time when elsewhere leprosy was deemed an untreatable sign of evil. It was financed by the state treasury, and by other people who gave generously to boost hospital income so that the best care could be provided."* (1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World)

• **Origins of the use of "Vaccination" for preventing the spread of infectious diseases:** *"The Anatolian Ottoman Turks knew about methods of inoculation. They called it Ashi, or engrafting, and they had inherited it from older Turkish tribes.... The Turks inoculated with bits of the smallpox disease, which produced a mild form of the disease, but protected from more serious forms of smallpox. This kind of inoculation, called variolation, from the variola virus that produces smallpox, was introduced into England by Lady Montagu, a famous English letter writer and wife of the English ambassador at Istanbul between 1716 and 1718. She became greatly interested in smallpox inoculation after consenting to have her son inoculated by the embassy surgeon, Charles Maitland. While in Istanbul, Lady Montagu sent a series of letters to England in which she described the process in detail.... The breakthrough came when a scientific description of the inoculation process was submitted to the Royal Society in 1724 by Dr. Emmanuel Timoni, who had been the Montagus' family physician in Istanbul.^[5] This was further augmented by Cassem Aga, the ambassador of Tripoli, who provided a firsthand account of inoculation and its safety record in Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers, which gave valuable reassurance about the long safety record of the practice in Muslim countries..."* (Inoculation from East to West, 1001Inventions.com)

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Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Dr. Nazreen Nawaz

Director of the Women's Section in The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir