



Press Release

**AFTER IBNE KHALDUN MUSLIMS NEVER ENGAGED WITH SCIENCE
RELIGION AND SCIENCE CAN EXIST IN THEIR DOMAINS-Hoodbhoy speaks at ITU**

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Ibne Khaldun was the last great Muslim scientist 700 years ago and after him the Muslims never engaged with science as with the beginning of fourteenth century the Islamic world came under the sway of religious scholars who disregard and disparage science, said Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy while speaking on, 'Science and Reason in the Age of Unreason' at the Centre for Governance and Policy of Information Technology University (ITU), the Punjab, here today.

Hoodbhoy gave a broad historical overview of the development of science in the world and said that Muslims were world leaders in science. 'It was led initially by translation efforts, but soon enlightened Caliphs made the Islamic world the Centre for the world's knowledge,' he exclaimed.

He charted the development of science in South Asia by noting that despite the fact that the Mughals were very rich and made magnificent building, they did not promote the study of science. 'The King liked the telescope and used it, but never wondered how it was made,' underscoring the need for curiosity and learning. Hindus in South Asia excelled in science and especially mathematics was that the Muslims, who were the rulers, were not interested in it, and therefore left to others. 'The fault is our own, we never wanted to engage with science,' he said.

Speaking about the vision and work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh movement Professor Hoodbhoy said that 'Sir Syed showed that one could both be a good Muslim and still be rational as he emphasized that if the realms of religion and science were kept separately then there was no clash between the two.

Discussing the present scenario, he decried the state of science research, learning and teaching in Pakistan and added that 'it was not that we never engaged with science as in 1973 our institutions had an excellent group of scientists,' but later on science was relegated to the background and pseudo-science and religiously oriented science was promoted. 'The mixing of science and religion under General Zia Ul Haq was the death-knell for the discipline in Pakistan,' he argued. 'We need to change our approach to science for it to develop and flourish in Pakistan,' he emphasized.

Professor Hoodbhoy further elaborated the rise of anti-science moments all around the world, especially in the United States and India. 'In the US the number of people who believe in evolution is decreasing, while in India people now believe that there was plastic surgery in the Vedic age,' he exclaimed. This lack of scientific approach and rationality, he argued, was the result of rapid sociological and technological change which has led to a certain kind of group think and herd mentality. 'There is no danger to religion from science, and therefore both can exist in their own domains without clashing,' he concluded.