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Arabic science

This refers to the article “Appreciating Arabic science that predates Newton” (Feb. 1). Many Muslims do not even know about the outstanding scientists of their community, thanks to Americans and Europeans who have taken up all their name and fame. It was not until a few months ago that I came to know about Avicenna (also known as Ibn-Sena), a great physician of the Middle Ages.

The writer has rightly said that the Islamic world should see itself through new eyes and take pride in its heritage. But it should not stop at that. It should produce another Avicenna, which will be possible only through proper education and, more importantly, awareness on the need for education among Muslims.

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Historically interested people are well aware of the large contributions of medieval Islamic scholars on European thought. Even the teachings of Aristotle and Ptolemy would not have reached Europe in the Middle Ages had it not been for Islamic scholars who preserved their writings. Indeed, the Islamic world can rightfully take pride in this time of flourishing scientific thought that dates back about a thousand years.

But if the Islamic world goes no further than taking pride in this heritage, it cannot expect the West to see it through new eyes. This it can only achieve by again allowing scientific and critical thought to flourish on its soil.

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