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[Back](#)

[Opinion](#) - [Letters to the Editor](#)

On Arabic science

I have read with great interest and appreciation Professor Jim Al-Khalili's article "Appreciating Arabic science that predates Newton" (Feb. 1). It is a rare piece which considerably reduces my pessimism about the future of the great religion of Islam. Dispassionate students of religious history must fully concur in the claim that Islam is not a weak doctrine. It is built on rock not sand. Muslims must be prepared to face a hostile attack in words by superior language, an attack by intellect by a superior intellect, and an attack by argument must be countered by a more persuasive one and not a fatwa or an international incitement to murder.

Islam rose from glory to greater glory when it followed the teaching of its Prophet that 'he who walks in search of knowledge walks in the path of God.' I wish Prof. Al-Khalili had informed his readers that in the 12th century, the books of Avicenna were ordered to be burnt and the study of philosophy became a crime. Muslim intellectuals have to account for the rise of the Wahabi form.

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