

Zain Africa Challenge 2010 – Ask Mwalimu

Episode 5, Show 13 – Scientific Discoveries by Africans.

On the programme, we ask many questions about noted scientists from Europe and the Americas. Taalim wants to know, “What scientific discoveries have been made by Africans?”

Let’s begin with the ancient Egyptians, such as Imhotep, who developed many of the scientific principles that the Greeks, Romans, and later civilisations built upon. He designed the Step Pyramid in Saqqara, and is also credited with being the founder of modern medicine.

Other North Africans contributed to Islam’s “Golden Age” of science during the Middle Ages, especially in maths, astronomy, chemistry, physics and medicine. They set up the earliest dedicated hospitals and medical schools, and helped lay the foundations for modern surgery by inventing numerous surgical instruments.

More recently, South Africa’s Christiaan Barnard gained world-wide fame when he performed the first heart transplant in Cape Town in 1967.

Perhaps Africa’s most overlooked scientist is Kenyan palaeontologist Kamoya Kimeu, who, with little formal education, through his work with another Kenyan Richard Leakey and others discovered an early *Homo habilis* skeleton in the 1960s and also the Turkana Boy fossils in 1984 near Lake Turkana, adding greatly to our knowledge of man’s ancestors.

NASA’s Dr. Ave Kodzo Kludze, a rocket scientist is the first Ghanaian, if not the first African, to command a spacecraft in orbit. Earlier this year he called on African students to focus on maths and science. Do that, and your future could be in the stars.

If you’re starstruck by another question, email me: Mwalimu@ZainAfricaChallenge.com. or submit your query on our website at www.ZainAfricaChallenge.com

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