

# 17th Death Anniversary of World Famous Humanitarian: Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan

## A Tribute by Nasim Yousaf

*To rise in the world, the Muslims need men like Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, who innovate and contribute to humanity.*

October 9th marked the 17th death anniversary of Nobel Prize Nominee Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, one of the great social scientists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Khan was a selfless statesman who dedicated his life to serving humanity and changing the lives of the poor. In pursuit of this endeavor, Dr. Khan founded two monumental projects: the Pakistan (later Bangladesh) Academy for Rural Development (BARD, Comilla) in 1959 and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP, Karachi) in 1980. Through these projects, Dr. Khan pioneered many innovative methods for poverty alleviation. Bangladesh Finance Minister, AMA Muhith, stated at a Microcredit and Development Conference, "...Dr. Akhtar Hamid [Hameed] Khan officially initiated the saving and microcredit system [at Pakistan Academy for Rural Development]" (*The Daily Ittefaq*, August 26, 2013). The World Bank's publication entitled *Ending Poverty in South Asia* also describes Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan as the "Originator of the RSP [Rural Support Program] Approach in South Asia." According to the publication, Dr. Khan "inspired and motivated thousands of development professionals in South Asia...[and other parts of the world]" Dr. Khan's methods around rural development, microfinance, female empowerment, and participatory development led to a worldwide movement.

Along with Dr. Khan's revolutionary

projects, people were inspired by his outstanding character and life of simplicity. With his upbringing, Dr. Khan could have easily led a wealthy and luxurious lifestyle, yet he chose to live plainly and work on behalf of the common man. Dr. Khan frequently interacted with powerful or well-known individuals around the world, but did not ask for any favors. For instance, he did not misuse his close relationships with the President of Pakistan (Mohammad Ayub Khan), Prime Minister Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suharawardy, or his powerful and well-respected politician father-in-law (Allama Mashriqi). In fact, President Ayub Khan offered Dr. Khan several highly desired positions (Governor of East Pakistan, Advisor to the President, and Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University), but Dr. Khan declined all these offers. Dr. Khan's outstanding character was evident, even in the small occurrences of everyday life. For instance, in 1969, Dr. Khan and I were in Dhaka. Dr. Khan was to take a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight from the Dhaka Airport, but his flight was canceled. When PIA offered Dr. Khan a free room at the Intercontinental Hotel (Dhaka), he politely declined and instead came back to where we were staying in Dhaka. When asked why he didn't take the room, Dr. Khan explained, "The flight was canceled and the airline offered me a complimentary stay, but I did not take it as it would cause unnecessary expense to PIA when I can stay here." Based on Dr. Khan's outstanding actions, it is not surprising that President Ayub once said, "Akhter Hameed Khan is the only man in Pakistan who has never come to me for anything."

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## A tribute to the famous humanitarian: Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan

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Dr. Khan was an inspiration for many who have followed in his footsteps. He was a pioneer in the field of rural development and microfinance. His work has inspired many to work for the betterment of the poor and the underprivileged.

## The Financial Express

### Remembering the founder of BARD

Dr. Khan's life and work provide a valuable lesson for all: those who seek worldly possessions may be recognised in the short-term, but those who serve humanity are remembered forever, writes Nasim Yousaf in a tribute to the memory of Dr Akhter Hameed Khan

TODAY, October 09 marks the 17th death anniversary of Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, one of the great social scientists of the 20th century. Dr. Khan dedicated his life to serving humanity and changing the lives of the poor. In pursuit of this endeavor, he founded two monumental projects: the Pakistan (later Bangladesh) Academy for Rural Development (BARD, Comilla) in 1959 and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP, Karachi) in 1980. Through these projects, Dr. Khan pioneered many innovative methods for poverty alleviation.



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Along with Dr. Khan's revolutionary projects, people were inspired by his outstanding character and life of simplicity. With his upbringing, he could have easily led a wealthy and luxurious lifestyle, yet he chose to live plainly and work on behalf of the common man.

Dr. Khan was an inspirational figure who, through his works, brought Pakistan and Bangladesh world recognition. Among the famous figures who have learned from Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan and applied his methods of poverty alleviation are Shoaib Sultan Khan, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. Their success is indeed a magnificent tribute to Khan sahib. In Pakistan, his methods are widely applied through the National Rural Support Programme, Agha Khan Rural Support Programme, and other initiatives. Dr. Khan is revered as a national hero in South Asia.

Dr. Khan's life and work provide a valuable lesson for others: those who seek worldly possessions may be recognized in the short-term, but those who serve humanity are remembered forever.

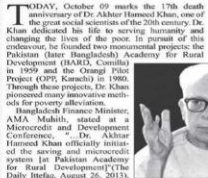
*For more information on Dr. Khan, visit the Facebook pages and YouTube channel dedicated to him.*

*Nasim Yousaf, a nephew of Dr. Khan, is a researcher based in the USA. He has been featured in various American publications including Who's Who in the World/America. He has written 15 books and digitized files of rare documents related to South Asian history. His articles have been published in many countries around the world and in peer-reviewed publications (Harvard Asia Quarterly, Pakistaniaat, World History Encyclopedia, and Education About Asia) in the US.*



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Dr Akhter Hameed Khan (July 15, 1914 - October 09, 2016)

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#### SUBJECT OF THE DAY

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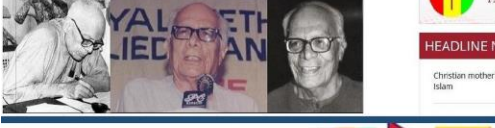


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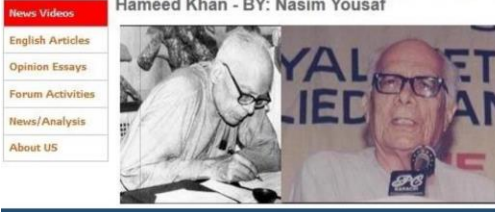


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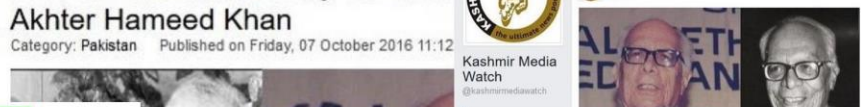
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