

## Biography of Professor Jim Al-Khalili OBE

Born in Baghdad in 1962 to an Iraqi father and English mother, Jim Al-Khalili is a professor of theoretical physics at the University of Surrey where he also holds a chair in the Public Engagement in Science. He gained his PhD from Surrey in 1989 and then, following two years at University College London, returned to Surrey and was appointed lecturer in 1992.

He held a five-year EPSRC Advanced Research Fellowship (1994-99) after which he reverted to a full-time lecturer and was undergraduate admissions tutor for four years. His research interests lie in the field of nuclear reaction theory and quantum mechanics where he has collaborated with physicists across the world and has published over 60 papers in international scientific journals.

While still fully active as a lecturer, Jim spends half of his time as a science communicator, particularly as a broadcaster and author and currently holds an EPSRC Senior Media Fellowship. He has written and contributed to many popular science books, which between them have been translated into thirteen languages. His books include *Black Holes, Wormholes and Time Machines* (1999), *Nucleus: A Trip into the Heart of Matter* (2001), *Quantum: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2004) and *The House of Wisdom and the Legacy of Arabic Science* (Penguin Press, due for publication in Spring, 2010).

He is also a regular presenter of TV and radio science documentaries including:

- *The Riddle of Einstein's Brain*, 60 min documentary for Channel 4 (Icon Films, 2004)
- *Atom*, three-part series for BBC4/BBC2 (Oxford Scientific Films, 2007)
- *Lost Horizons: The Big Bang*, 60 min TV documentary for BBC Science Unit, 2008
- *Science and Islam*, three-part series for BBC4 (Oxford Scientific Films, 2009)
- *Secret Scientists*, three-part radio series for BBC World Service on Islamic science (Whistledown), aired April 2009
- *The Story of Chaos*, 60 min documentary for BBC4 (Furnace TV), to be screened in Autumn/Winter 2009/10
- *Genius of Britain*, five-part TV series for Channel 4 (IWC), to be shown in 2010, jointly presented with Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins, Robert Winston and David Attenborough
- *Elements*, three-part TV series for BBC4 (BBC Science Unit) on the history of chemistry, to be shown in 2010

For his science popularizing work Jim was awarded the 2007 Royal Society Michael Faraday medal and prize, the youngest recipient in the Prize's history. He is a trustee and vice president of the British Science Association and a senior adviser to the British Council on science and technology. His other interests include philosophy, oil painting and, for some strange reason, following Leeds United.

He was honoured with an OBE for his contributions to Physics in the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours List.