

# Golden Age Of Islam Presents World With 1001 Inventions

by Ron Callari

If *1001 Arabian Nights* provided us with a romanticized and idealized version of the Arab world, 9/11 was certainly a stark wake-up call to a harsher view of Muslim life. Over the last 10 years, processing these two extremes has been difficult for many of us. With that said, an exhibit like the one featured at the London Museum of Science and Industry is sure to open our eyes to the great contributions made by Islamic civilizations over the course of the last millennium.



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The *1001 Inventions Exhibition* launched on January 21, 2010 is a global educational initiative that promotes awareness of the scientific and cultural achievements of Muslim civilization, during the thousand year period from the 7th century forward, and how those inventions helped build the foundations of our modern world. In association with the *Jameel Foundation*, the exhibit will remain in London until June 30, 2010.



A model of **Zheng He's** junk ship seems, at first glance, like so many one encounters in maritime museums across the world. But a closer inspection reveals the insightful story behind the 14th-century vessel that the Muslim admiral used on several exploration voyages. It was, by the standards of the time, a superstructure. Legend has it He's treasure ship was more than 100 meters long with nine masts and four decks – considered the largest wooden ship ever in the history of man.

Working with the world's leading academics, *1001 Inventions* engages with the public through educational media and interactive global exhibitions, in an effort to highlight the shared cultural and technological inheritance of humanity. An average of 3,000 visitors a day are visiting the exhibition, and the feedback from the audience has been overwhelmingly positive to date.

The discoveries made by men and women emanating from Islamic civilizations over the years has left its mark on the way the rest of the world lives today. *1001 Inventions* uncovers a thousand years of science and technology that had a huge but sometimes hidden impact on the modern world. For those that want to learn more about the exhibition through social media, check out the exhibition's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

The exhibition features displays detailing well-known Islamic innovations in the fields of science, mathematics and astronomy, but there are also interesting contributions from a number of unsung heroines as well. For example, **Fatima al Fihri**, a ninth-century Muslim woman inherited money from her merchant father and then reinvested it to architecturally design and build the *University of Qarawiyyin* in Fez, Morocco, considered to be the oldest university in the world, not just the Islamic world.



Ben Kingsley

Oscar-winning actor **Sir Ben Kingsley** lends his services to a short film about the scientific advances of Muslim civilization. In the film, a group of British school children are led on an intriguing journey through the Golden Age of Muslim civilization by the actor, who transforms into the famed engineer **Al-Jazari**. The movie provides an eye-opening introduction to the *1001 Inventions* initiative that will be the centerpiece for the global touring exhibition.



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