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## ISLAMIC HISTORY--WHERE THE LIGHT SHONE THROUGHOUT THE DARK AGES OF WESTERN EUROPE, i.e. from 7th Century Onwards

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By **Kevin Stoda**

As the main character, played by [Ben Kingsly](#), in the new film, **1001 INVENTIONS AND THE LIBRARY OF SECRETS** [for the "blockbuster" at the Science Museum in London this winter] stated "The Dark Ages were misnamed".

Meanwhile, "Salim Al-Hassani, who is emeritus professor of Mechanical Engineering and currently a professorial fellow in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, University of Manchester" was honored just last autumn for his historical research. The award came from the British Science Association. The Association noted that "He [Dr. Hassani] has spent the last two decades debunking the myth of "The Dark Ages" by raising awareness of the scientific achievements that took place in India, China, Muslim Spain and the Middle East between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries."

**NOTE:** "Every year the BSA bestows Honorary Fellowship upon individuals who have "promoted openness about science in society" and "engaged and inspired adults and young people with science and technology".

The stories and myths Hassani has been debunking are of the Dark Ages era. He aimed first at European scientific training and students of history. However, now the Science Museums in Europe want the masses to know more. This new short film with Ben Kingsly is only one part of this drive to write a more balanced global and European history of science and culture in recent decades.

### 1001 INVENTIONS AND THE LIBRARY OF SECRETS

See the film here, **1001 INVENTIONS AND THE LIBRARY OF SECRETS**.

The character Kingsly plays in the film states that "*Never has an Era of History been so poorly named*" when he thinks of those words: "*The Dark Ages*." Hassani has also clearly noted and persuaded Historians of Science to agree: "'How true was Isaac Newton when he remarked that if he had seen more than others it was because he was standing on the shoulders of giants. I'm grateful for the opportunity to bring this message to the public, and humbled that the BSA has recognised my work in this way".

While for some in the Western European world the ages between the Fall of Rome and the Rise of the Renaissance in Italy were dark, especially in comparison to what the Islamic Civilizations and its scientists and doctors rolled forth in the same millennia. This is why the "interactive exhibition [currently in London] is packed with discoveries and inventions made in Muslim civilisation for a thousand years. With automatic machines and medical marvels, astronomical observations and inspiring architecture, find out about a period of history you might never have explored before."

Listed here are the themes of the exhibition on Islamic science and how their inventions and creations spread across both Northern African & Middle East, i.e. to eventually the farthest reaches of Western and Northern Europe during the final centuries of the Middle Ages:

- (1) 2010: The thousand-year-old inventions that still shape everyday life
- (2) Market: How influential ideas spread through travel and trade
- (3) School: Learning, libraries and their links with the past.
- (4) Hospital: How ancient approaches to health have influenced today's medicine.
- (5) Town: Why East and West share so much architectural heritage.
- (6) World: The explorers of a thousand years ago.
  
- (7) Universe: How ancient astronomers expanded our view of the universe.

Here is [the trailer to the film and exhibition](#). [Click here to read of the background to the film from the Jameel Foundation.]