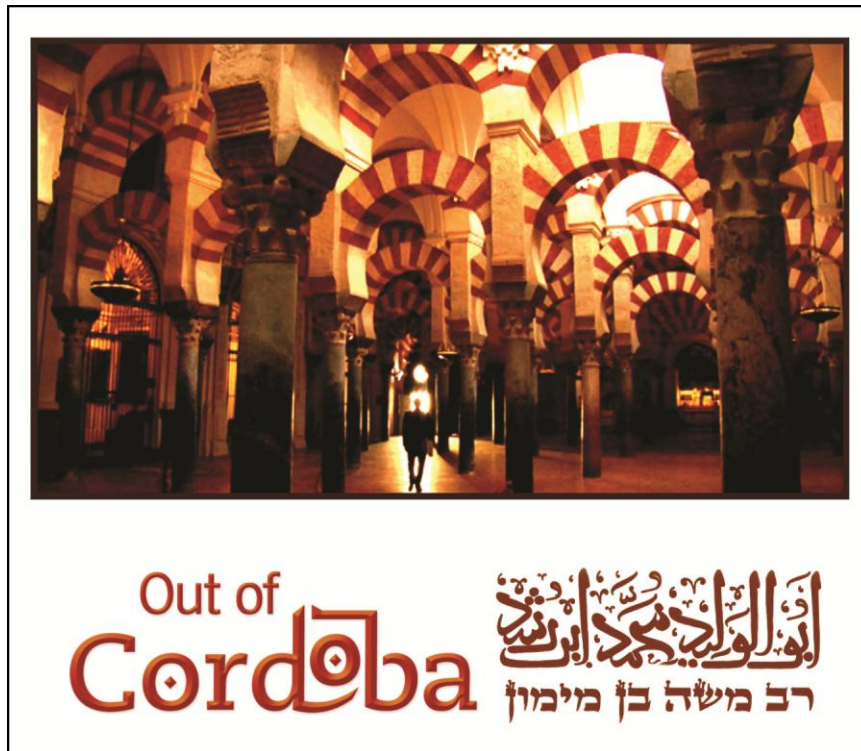


A Proposal for the Distribution of the Documentary Film



An Application for the Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue for 2013

Submitted by

Jacob Bender

and the Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances of the Islamic
Society of North America (ISNA)

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INTRODUCTION

Jacob Bender, a documentary filmmaker and interfaith consultant in New York City, and the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington DC, are honored to be submitting this application to the Doha International Center for Interreligious Dialogue for the Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue for 2013.

Our proposal concerns our plans for the North American and international distribution of Mr. Bender's documentary film [*Out of Cordoba*](#). This proposal includes the following sections:

- 1) FILM SYNOPSIS**
- 2) GOALS OF THE FILM**
- 3) DISTRIBUTION PLAN AND BUDGET** (based upon Jacob Bender and ISNA receiving The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue for 2013)
- 4) THE MAKING OF *OUT OF CORDOBA***
- 5) ADVISORY BOARD**
- 6) LIST OF DONORS**
- 7) SCREENING HISTORY**
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- 10) JACOB BENDER BIOGRAPHY**
- 11) ISNA BACKGROUND MATERIAL**

1) FILM SYNOPSIS

Out of Cordoba is a documentary film about the two greatest thinkers to emerge from Al-Andalus, Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1128-1198 CE), and Musa ibn Maymun (Rabbi Moses Maimonides, 1135-1204 CE), his Jewish counterpart.

The film examines the dramatic life stories and writings of these two geniuses, their influence upon later generations of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and the immense influence of Arab and Muslim thinkers in the creation of Western Civilization. Consequently, *Out of Cordoba* is not solely a documentary film about the distant Middle Ages, but explores some of the most vexing issues of our own time: the debate over the so-called “Clash of Civilizations” thesis; the relationship between the West and Islam; the conflict between faith and reason; the battle against religious extremism and xenophobia; and the struggle for a just resolution of the conflict in Israel/Palestine.

Out of Cordoba is also the story of the film’s director, Jacob Bender, an American Jew and interfaith activist, as he undertakes a journey around the Mediterranean world after the attacks of 9/11 — in Spain, Morocco, France, Egypt, Palestine, and Israel — following in the footsteps of these two “wise men of Cordoba” in search of Muslims, Jews, and Christians committed to utilizing their religious traditions as sources of tolerance, democracy, and human rights.

At the world-famous Alhambra in Granada, Spain, Jacob interviews (the late) Prof. Maria Rosa Menocal, author of the best-selling book *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. The groundbreaking work was first post-9/11 book to offer up the legacy of Al-Andalus as an inspiration for interfaith relations in the 21st Century.

In Morocco, where both Ibn Rushd and Maimonides spent many years, Jacob meets with Andre Azoulay, an important advisor King Mohammed VI and a Moroccan Jew. In arguing against the so-called “Clash of Civilizations” thesis, Mr. Azoulay says: “There is no ‘Clash of Civilizations.’ There is only a clash of ignorance.”

In Paris, Jacob meets with (the late) Islamic scholar Prof. Mohammed Arkoun, who speaks about how the translated writings of Ibn Rushd had an immense influence on Christian thinkers in medieval France. When the writings of Ibn Rushd were finally banned by the Church in 1277, the influence of the Muslim philosopher from Cordoba next resurfaced in the city of Venice. And it is here that Jacob meets with Islamic Art scholar Prof. Michael Barry, who identifies numerous imaginary images of Ibn Rushd painted by Christian artists in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and points out the immense influence of the Muslim world upon Venice.

Travelling to Cairo, Jacob discovers how contemporary human rights activists have found their inspiration in the biography and writings of Ibn Rushd. Also in Cairo, Jacob visits an old synagogue, where, in 1897, hundreds of thousands of medieval Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts were discovered, many in Maimonides' own handwriting.

In Israel/Palestine and the sacred city of Jerusalem, Jacob comes face to face with the brutal realities of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the struggle of the Palestinian people for their freedom. Here he meets with Rabbi Arik Ascherman, a leader of Rabbis for Human Rights, who, inspired by Maimonides, is actively defying Israel's national consensus by supporting Palestinian rights and protecting their homes from destruction by extremist Israeli settlers. Finally, Jacob meets with his mentor Rev. David Burrell—a Catholic priest and religious scholar—who offers hope for interfaith reconciliation, even in our own violent and often hate-filled time.

2) GOALS OF THE FILM

- 1) To educate audiences around the world about the dramatic lives and important writings of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Musa ibn Maymun (Maimonides), and to reveal their influence upon medieval Christian thinkers in the West.
- 2) To demonstrate the influence of medieval Arab and Muslim intellectuals in the creation of Western Civilization.
- 3) To explore the contemporary influence of Ibn Rushd and Musa ibn Maymun as symbols of the struggle for human rights and Muslim-Jewish-Christian understanding.
- 4) To counter the mainstream media in the West by presenting Jewish voices opposed to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian People, and Muslim voices opposed to extremism, xenophobia, and violence.
- 5) To present an alternative to the “clash of civilizations” thesis by highlighting the voices of dialogue and tolerance.

3) DISTRIBUTION PLAN AND BUDGET (based upon Jacob Bender and ISNA receiving The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue)

In the great majority of the more than one hundred public screenings of *Out of Cordoba* around the world, Jacob has accompanied the film, leading a post-screening “Director’s Q & A” with the audience, exploring the film’s themes and issues, and answering questions posed by the audience. Jacob’s normal fee for the film screening and discussion is \$2,500, plus transportation from his home in New York City. However, dozens of other institutions, including universities, colleges, high schools, mosques, churches, and synagogues, have not been able to afford a screening of *Out of Cordoba* due to their budget limitations resulting from the economic recession in North America and Europe.

The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue for 2013 (in the amount of \$100,000) will enable *Out of Cordoba* to be seen by tens of thousands of additional viewers, bringing the film’s message of interfaith understanding to new audiences around the world. Following are details of this Distribution Plan submitted to the DICID by Jacob Bender and ISNA.

- 1) The money generously awarded by the DICID will be administered by the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances in Washington DC.
- 2) An internet, mail, and phone publicity campaign will be launched to advertise and promote the film to universities, colleges, high schools, mosques, churches, and synagogues in North and South America (there already is a Spanish-language version of the film), Europe, and the Middle East, South and South East Asia.
- 3) Explicit in the promotional material will be the important fact that due to the generosity of the DICID (in the form of the 2013 Award), the screening of *Out of Cordoba*, and Jacob’s leading of the post-film discussion, will be provided at a greatly reduced fee, or even free of charge where necessary to arrange a screening, to these new venues.
- 4) The 2013 Award will be utilized to produce French and German language versions of *Out of Cordoba* (the cost of which is \$10,000 each; see budget in the next section). These translations are crucially important, as both France and Germany (as well as Austria and Switzerland) are struggling with the question of how to integrate millions of Muslims into their societies; all these

countries have seen the rise of often violent Islamophobia.

- 5) Finally, the publicity generated by the film and our distribution plan — and the fact that the largest Muslim organization in the USA is helping to distribute a film by an American Jew — will help to undercut the Islamophobic argument that Islam is inherently anti-Jewish, and the Muslims and Jew cannot cooperate.

Budget

Jacob Bender's fee per screening (\$2,500 x approximately 26 screenings)	\$65,000
Estimated travel budget for Jacob Bender for the above screenings	\$15,000
Publicity campaign in North America, Europe, and Asia (internet, mail, phone)	\$10,000
German-language version	\$5,000*
French-language version	\$5,000*
Total	\$100,000

*The cost of each new language version of the film is \$10,000. However, we will attempt to find local partners in Germany and France who will contribute \$5,000, or 50%, of the cost of the translated film.

4) THE MAKING OF *OUT OF CORDOBA*

Jacob Bender conceived of the idea for *Out of Cordoba* in the months following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Having studied the history of Jewish-Muslim-Christian relations as an undergraduate at UCLA—especially the interfaith cross-fertilization of Al-Andalus—Jacob felt compelled to produce a documentary film that would respond both to Al Qaeda’s terror, nihilism, and its distortion of Muslim history, but also to those in the West who argued for a “clash of civilizations” between the West and the Muslim world and an incompatibility between Islam and democracy.

In 2002 and 2003, Jacob began a series of appearances at many mosques, in addition to local and national Muslim conferences, organized by ISNA, the largest Muslim umbrella organization in the country, literally speaking before tens of thousands of American Muslims about his vision for a film that would explore the unfortunately unknown history of Jewish-Muslim coexistence. This was at a time when many established Jewish leaders and organizations eschewed any contact with American Muslims. Indeed, Rev. David Burrell, Chair of the Philosophy and Theology Department at the University of Notre Dame, has written elsewhere that:

“Jacob virtually pioneered Jewish outreach to the Muslim community after 9/11, doubtless drawing on his background in Jewish-Christian relations. In this way, the three-way interchange, whether overt or implicit, transforms face-to-face relations into more of a circular dance.”

In 2004, Jacob assembled an Advisory Board of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars and community leaders to consult during production.

Filming for *Out of Cordoba* began in late 2005 after the receipt of major grants from the United States Institute for Peace and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In 2006, Jacob made the first of four annual trips to Qatar to participate and speak at the annual conference of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, giving him and the *Out of Cordoba* film project its first international exposure. During the 2006 trip, Jacob was interviewed on the Aljazeera program “Min

Washington” together with Prof. Aisha Yousef Al-Mannai, Dean of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Qatar University.

In 2007, the *Out of Cordoba* film project received a donation of \$200,000 from the Alwaleed bin Talal Foundation of Saudi Arabia. Filming commenced in Spain, Morocco, France, Italy, Egypt, and Israel-Palestine. Also in 2007, spoke at an international conference of the World Muslim Call Society in Cordoba, Spain.

In January 2009, Jacob was the only American Jew invited to Egypt to attend and speak at a conference on Muslim-West relations at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. His speech at Al-Azhar, openly critical of the ongoing Israeli attack on Gaza, was widely covered by the Egyptian broadcast and print media.

Out of Cordoba was completed in March 2010, and the film had its world premiere in April 2010 at the Amnesty International Arts Festival in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA. (See the below section “Screening History” for a complete list of screenings.)

5) ADVISORY BOARD

Akbar S. Ahmed, Professor of Islamic Studies, American University.

Karen Armstrong, author.

Michael Barry, Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.

David B. Burrell, C.S.C., Professor of Philosophy and Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Charles Butterworth, Professor of Islamic Philosophy, University of Maryland.

Mark R. Cohen, Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.

Jacob I. Dienstag, Librarian Emeritus, Yeshiva University.

John L. Esposito, Director, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University.

Majid Fakhry, Professor of Islamic Philosophy, George Washington University.

Reuven Firestone, Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam, Hebrew Union College.

Lenn Goodman, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University.

Wael B. Hallaq, Professor of Islamic Law, McGill University.

Joel Kraemer, Professor of Jewish Studies, University of Chicago Divinity School.

Oliver Leaman, Professor of Judaic Studies, University of Kentucky.

Rev. Francis Martin, Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, DC.

J. Rolando Matalon, Senior Rabbi, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, NYC.

María Rosa Menocal, Professor of Spanish, Yale University.

Richard Murphy, former US Assistant Secretary of State; former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, University Professor of Islamic Studies, George Washington University.

F. E. Peters, Professor of Religion, New York University,

Feisal Abdul Rauf, President, American Sufi Muslim Association.

Richard Rubenstein, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.

Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, Fidq Council of North America.

Dr. Sayyid Syeed, Islamic Society of North America.

Dr. William Vendley, World Conference on Religion and Peace.

6) LIST OF MAJOR DONORS

Alwaleed bin Talal Foundation
Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, Spain
Canal Sur TV, Spain
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Casa Sefarad, Foreign Ministry of Spain
Consejería de Cultura, Junta de Andalucía, Spain
Diputación Provincial de Córdoba, Spain
Empresa Pública de Gestión de Programas Culturales, Spain
Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo, Spain
Hebrew Union College, New York
International Institute of Islamic Thought
Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Communal Fund of New York
Owsley Brown Charitable Foundation
Sabell Bender Trust
Stanely Sheinbaum Trust
United States Institute of Peace
William and Mary Greve Foundation

7) SCREENING HISTORY

April 24, 2010

World Premiere, Amnesty International Human Rights Art Festival
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

May 3, 2010

Spanish-language premiere
Cinemateque, Cordoba, Spain

June 9, 2010

Fez Festival of Sacred Music
Fez, Morocco

July 4, 2010

Islamic Film Festival
National Convention of Islamic Society of North America
Chicago, Illinois, USA

July 5, 2010

Barcelona Jewish Film Festival
Barcelona, Spain

August 22, 2010

Tulsa Interfaith Alliance
Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

September, 2010

Festival Internacional de Cine de San Sebastián
San Sebastián, Spain

September 18, 2010

Global Peace Film Festival
Orlando, Florida, USA

October 1, 2010

Intercultural International Film Festival
Lempaut, France

October 1, 2010

Annual Conference of the Orthodox Christian Peace Fellowship
Irvine, California, USA

October 6, 2010

New York University Symposium
Juan Carlos I Center. Sponsored by the NYU Center for Religion and Media, and the NYU Center for Dialogues.
New York, New York, USA

October 8, 2010

International Festival of Cinema and Religion
Awarded the "Dialogue and Peace Award" for Best Documentaries
Rome, Italy

October 11, 2010

University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

October 25, 2010 / 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Interfaith Screening cosponsored by the Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew and Congregation B'nai Jeshurun
New York, New York, USA

November, 2010

Imagenera, Concurso de creación contemporánea sobre la memoria de Andalucía

Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de Estudios Andaluces, Sevilla, Spain

November, 2010

SEFF, Seville European Film Festival
Sevilla, Spain

November, 2010

Festival de Cine Iberoamericano
Huelva, Spain

November, 2011

Euro Film Festival, "Mención Especial"
Fundación Mundo Ciudad
Marbella, Málaga, Spain

November 22, 2010 / 7:00 – 9:00 PM

New York State University Stony Brook
Co-sponsored by Stony Brook Hillel and the Islamic Society of North America
Stony Brook, New York, USA

December 1, 2010

Ion Film Festival
Istanbul, Turkey

December 5, 2010 / 2:30 – 5:00 PM
Islamic Center of Rockland (ICR)
Valley Cottage, New York, USA

December 6, 2010 / 7:00pm

Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival
The Cinematheque, Jerusalem, Israel

December 19, 2010 / 5:30 PM

Long Island Muslim Society
Levittown Community Hall
Hicksville, New York, USA

December 29, 2010 / 7:30 PM

Church of the Good Shepherd
Beverly Hills, California, USA

January 31, 2011

Iban Arabi Film Festival
2nd IBAFF international Film Festival
Murcia, Spain

January 31, 2011 / 6:30 pm

Hartford Seminary
Hartford, Connecticut, USA

February, 2011

European Film Market
Berlinale
Berlin, Germany

February 3, 2011 / 6:00 pm

United Nations Headquarters
New York, New York, USA

February 5, 2011 / evening

Islamic Association of Greater Detroit
Rochester Hills, Michigan, USA

February 6, 2011
University of Otago
Otago, Australia

February 8, 2011
Georgian Court University
Lakewood Township, NJ, USA

February 21, 2011
II Muestra International Cine y Patrimonio.
Filmoteca Regional Francisco Rabal & Caja Mediterránea, Murcia, Spain

February 25, 2011
New Jersey City University
Jersey City, NJ, USA

February 26, 2011 / 7:30 pm
Peace on Earth Film Festival
Chicago, Illinois, USA

March 1, 2011 / 3:00 pm
Fordham University
New York, New York, USA

March 18, 2011
University of Milwaukee Wisconsin
Milwaukee, WI, USA

March 21, 2011
Loyala Marymount University
Los Angeles, CA, USA

March 22, 2011
New York State University Syracuse
Syracuse, NY, USA

March 23, 2011
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, Virginia, USA

March 25, 2011
Westfield State University
Westfield, MA, USA

March 28, 2011
Dickinson College
Carlisle, PA, USA

March 30, 2011
Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, VA, USA

March 30, 2011
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo, ON, Canada

April 5, 2011
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA

April 15, 2011 / 7:00 pm
Connecticut College
New London, Connecticut, USA

April 15, 2011
Kunsthochschule Berlin
Berlin, Germany

April 20, 2011
Emory University
Atlanta, GA, USA

April, 2010
Festival de Cine de Málaga
Málaga, Spain

April 22, 2011 / 7:30 pm
Islamic Center of San Gabriel Valley
Rowland Heights, California, USA

May 3, 2011
XVII Jornadas de Historia de Jerez
(Seminar on History)
Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), Spain

May 5, 2011
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI, USA

May 20, 2011
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA, USA

May 25, 2011
Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, CA, USA

June, 2011
Sunny Side of the Doc
La Rochelle, France

July 3, 2011 / 5:00 pm
Islamic Center of San Diego
San Diego, California

July 7, 2011
Islamic Society of Orange County
Garden Grove, California, USA

July 9, 2011 / 7:00 pm
Our Lady Queen of Angels Catholic Church
Newport Beach, California, USA

July 10, 2011 / 6:00 pm
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Laguna Beach, California, USA

August 9, 2011
St. Joseph's College
Patchogue, NY, USA

August 10, 2011
University of Saskatoon
Saskatoon, Canada

September 9, 2011 / 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Salt Lake City Public Library
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

September 11, 2011
Instituto Cervantes Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo, Brazil

September 11, 2011 / 2:00 p.m.
Interfaith 9/11 Memorial
Sponsored by Temple Beth El and First United Methodist Church
Eureka, California, USA

September 15, 2011 / 6:00 p.m.
Fresno Art Museum
Fresno, California, USA

September 15, 2011
University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL, USA

September 16, 2011
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN, USA

September 16, 2011
University of British Columbia
Okanagan, BC, Canada

September 16, 2011 / 5:30 p.m.
California State University Fresno
Fresno, California, USA

September 18, 2011 / 5:30 p.m.
Zaytuna College
Berkeley, California, USA

September 22, 2011 / 6:00 p.m.
Islamic Center of Yuba City
Yuba City Community College
Marysville, California, USA

September 24, 2011 / 7:00 p.m.
Portland State University and Muslim Educational Trust
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon, USA

October 2, 2011
American Muslim Women's Association
Scarsdale Public Library
Scarsdale, New York, USA

October 4, 2011
Creighton University
Omaha, Nebraska, USA

October 16, 2011 / 2:00 pm
Muslim Community Center of Maryland
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

October 17, 2011
Spanish Film Festival
Instituto Interamericano de Tubingan
Tübingen, Germany

October 31, 2011 / 5:00 pm
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas, USA

November 10, 2011
Zinebi, Festival Internacional de Documental
Bilbao, Spain

November 17, 2011 / 6:30 pm
University of Indiana
Bloomington, Indiana, USA

November 18, 2011
Cornell University
Ithaca NY, USA

November 25, 2011
Euro Film Festival, "Special Mention"
Fundación Mundo Ciudad
Marbella, Málaga, Spain

December 9, 2011
Columban Mission Institute
Strathfield, NSW, Australia

January 9, 2012
Congregation Beth Am
Los Altos Hills, USA

January 23, 2012
Loyola University
Chicago, IL, USA

February 28, 2012
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY, USA

March 2, 2012
Jaffari Islamic Center
Toronto, ON, Canada

March 3, 2012
Beit Zatoun
Toronto, ON, Canada

March 24, 2012
Or Shalom Synagogue
San Francisco, California, US

March 25, 2012
Islamic Center of Newark, CA
Newark, CA, USA

March 26, 2012
California State University Chico
Chico, CA, USA

March 29, 2012
Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY, USA

March 30, 2012
Islamic Center of Seattle
Seattle, WA, USA

April 26, 2012
Oberlin College
Oberlin, OH, USA

June 16, 2012
Islamic Association of Dallas
Dallas, TX, USA

July 2, 2012
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Berlin, Germany

July 16, 2012
Suffolk County Jewish Community Center
Suffolk, NY, USA

August 28, 2012
Ismaili Islamic Center
Houston, TX, USA

September 9, 2012
Milwaukee Art Museum
Milwaukee, WI, USA

September 11, 2012
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID, USA

September 20, 2012
Xavier University
Cincinnati, OH, USA

Wednesday, November 7, 2012, 5:30 pm
Brandies University
Waltham, MA

Monday, November 26, 2012
King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
Vienna, Austria

8) AWARDS AND ENDORSEMENTS

AWARDS

November 2010

Religion Today Festival

Segundo premio al mejor documental/Second prize “best documentary”

Italy

November 2010

Imagenera, Concurso de creación contemporánea sobre la memoria de Andalucía.

(Contemporary creative approach to the memory of Andalusia)

Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de Estudios Andaluces

Sevilla, Spain

November 2011

Euro Film Festival, “Mención Especial”

Fundación Mundo Ciudad

Marbella, Málaga, Spain

November 2012

Jacob Bender was a Finalist for the **Goldziher Prize for Jewish-Muslim**

Relations, awarded by Merrimack University (MA), and its Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations

ENDORSEMENTS

Out of Cordoba is a masterpiece.

Hossam AlJabri

Executive Director, Muslim American Society

Out of Cordoba sets out to examine two great lights of the past and place their extraordinary lives and contribution in relation to contemporary history. A veritable tour de force, this film by Jacob Bender documents the lives of the great Muslim and Jewish philosophers, Averroes and Moses Maimonides in their resolve to speak the truth when power found truth threatening. Born only a few years apart in the city of Cordoba, they did not know one another personally. Yet they shared common experience as brilliant thinkers who pursued the truth and justice at all costs, for which they were harassed and exiled by the regent power and continued to suffer from the small-mindedness of their own religious communities. This film is more than a standard documentary because it builds from the past to draw lessons for the present and future. Like a Midrash or Jewish interpretive discourse, Bender reads the past mindful of George Santayana as he critiques those in the Muslim and Jewish communities today who ignore and discount their own sins and violent excesses. This is a must-see, a rich prophetic voice in a noisy world.

Reuven Firestone, Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College and Co-Director of the Center for Muslim-

Out of Cordoba updates us on the thought of Averroes and Maimonides and encourages us to reflect on the past with the goal of broadening our respect and tolerance as we face the challenges of the 21st Century.

Miguel Angel Moratinos, Foreign Minister of Spain

Out of Cordoba will help Americans think of their religious traditions as consistent with democratic values, science, tolerance, and human rights. We urge you to support this crucially important film project. For our part, we commit to helping to distribute *Out of Cordoba* to our member communities throughout North America.

**National Council of Churches of Christ USA; United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism; Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Engagement at the University of Southern California**

Out of Cordoba is a very useful and powerful means of conveying the message of understanding, love and peace among different cultures, religions, and nations. The film will contribute to solving the problem of misunderstanding between the Islamic world and the West.

Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General, Organization of the Islamic Conference

Out of Cordoba has the power to recreate a world and bring it to the present. It will not only offer a fresh perspective on the medieval period, but could by that very fact awaken us to the potential of greater interfaith understanding in our world today, which we so desperately need.

Rev. David Burrell, C.S.C., Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame

Bender's film has the potential to educate Americans about this extremely important subject, thereby greatly contributing to interfaith understanding.

Steve Riskin, Program Officer, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC

Out of Cordoba tells the spectacular story of a profound time in human history. Averroes and Maimonides, a Muslim and a Jew, two eminent scholars living in Islamic Spain during Medieval times show us how a highly tolerant, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-racial society can create a tremendously prosperous, intellectually stimulating, and artistically beautiful time in history. Jacob Bender has created a deeply inspiring and visually stunning film. *Out of Cordoba* should be required viewing for all those that believe real peace and understanding is possible in this world, and it should be an even greater requirement for all those cynics that think it can't be done.

Janan Najeeb, President, Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition

Many thanks for this wonderful film and the opportunity to share it with the interfaith community in Tulsa.

Brian Cross, President, Tulsa (OK) Interfaith Alliance

Out of Cordoba is an excellent stimulant to give perspective to those who intuitively know that intelligence and wisdom are universal, that the idea that civilizations clash is absurd, and that there is a history of wise people working on parallel and often mutually supportive tracks on understanding the human condition. By taking the audience on a journey to another time and place Jacob Bender helps us see today in a clearer light. I recommend this film as a great ice breaker to begin meaningful dialogue on the concordance of relevant inquiry in both the Jewish and Islamic traditions. I only ask, Where are the wise of today? Maybe Jacob is one of them.
Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute, New York, NY

Dear Jacob, I enjoyed watching the film even more the second time. You have created a beautiful piece. I am grateful that you could be with us and share this part of your heart with us.

Rev. Elizabeth Rechter, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Laguna Beach, CA

Dear Rev. Rechter, Thank you for hosting the film screening at St. Mary's Church. It was wonderful to see you, meet Jacob Bender, and see our communities interact and share the message of this great film.

Mohannad Malas, President of the Muslim Community or Orange County

I just finished viewing *Out of Cordoba* and I am really speechless. This is the most visually stimulating, thoughtful and well told documentary I have ever seen.

Sarah Hart, Founder/Director of SARAH (The Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope)

Thank you for honoring our community with the screening of your wonderful film on the tenth anniversary of 9/11.

Rabbi Naomi Steinberg, Temple Beth El, Eureka, CA

I am a Syrian-American teenager and I am part of OCIF. I attended the showing of your movie on Sunday. I just wanted to thank you for making such a beautiful honest documentary on the history of interfaith between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. I did not have much knowledge on medieval Muslim Spain or about the great Maimonides before this film and I am happy to have learned about such a unique time period in history in contrast to the the religious divisions that we are surrounded by today.

D.A., Laguna Beach, CA

It was really wonderful to host your film at Portland State University, and to contribute to our outreach and interfaith efforts.

Rania Ayoub, Muslim Educational Trust, Portland, OR

9) PRESS COVERAGE

Radio and TV Interviews:

[Voice of America](#) interview with Jacob Bender

[Radio Islam Interview \(1450 AM, Chicago\)](#) with Jacob Bender
(Click above link and go to program for Dec. 2, 2010)

[Radio France](#) interview with Jacob Bender

English-language press:

[Portland State University Vanguard](#), Oct. 4, 2011

[The New York Times, Letter-to-the-Editor](#), Aug. 8, 2011

[Common Ground News Service](#), July 19, 2011

[Quaker Universalist Fellowship Blog](#), Dec. 28, 2010

[The Arab News](#), Dec. 15, 2002

[Gulf News](#), Aug. 25, 2007

[The Daily Star](#), May 22, 2003

[The View from Fez](#), June 9, 2010

[The Jewish Daily Forward](#), July 24, 2009

Spanish-language press:

[El-Pais](#), May 4, 2010

[Presidencia del Gobierno de Andalucía](#), Apr. 22, 2010

[Diputacion de Cordoba](#), May 3, 2010

[WebIslam](#), May 3, 2010

[Diario Cordoba](#), May 4, 2010

[El Digital de Madrid](#), May 3, 2010

[Diario Cabra](#), May 4, 2010

10) JACOB BENDER BIOGRAPHY

Jacob Bender is a documentary film director and interfaith consultant based in New York City. He has produced dozens of productions for a wide range of museums, educational institutions, and major corporations throughout the world.

Out of Cordoba, Mr. Bender's film about Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Musa ibn Maymun (Maimonides), and the legacy of Al-Andalus, has been screened over 100 times around the world at film festivals, conferences, universities, mosques, churches, and synagogues, including at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Mr. Bender, an American Jew, was one of the initiators of dialogue with the American Muslim community. He has spoken dozens of times at mosques and at large gatherings of Muslims in the United States, particularly at the conventions of the Islamic Society of North America, the largest Muslim organization in the USA.

From 2006-2009, Mr. Bender was a featured speaker at the annual Doha Conferences on Religious Dialogue, organized by the DICID. In 2007, Mr. Bender spoke at a conference of the World Muslim Call Society in Cordoba, Spain, and in Summer 2008, he was invited to participate in the historic interfaith conference in Madrid initiated by King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia. In January of 2009, Mr. Bender spoke at an interfaith conference organized by Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, where his speech condemning the Israeli war on Gaza was widely covered in the Egyptian media. Mr. Bender also spoke at the 2011 UN Alliance of Civilizations Forum in Doha and, most recently, at the Opening Ceremony of the King Abdullah Interreligious Center in Vienna, Austria.

Mr. Bender was recently selected as a Finalist for the prestigious 2012 Goldziher Prize for Jewish-Muslim Relations, named after Ignac Goldziher (1850-1921), one of the first serious European scholars of Islam in the 20th Century.

Mr. Bender has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Jordan Times*, *The Gulf News*, *El Pais*, and *The Daily Star* of Beirut.

He has been a leading voice in the American Jewish community for a just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the rights of the Palestinian people. In 1995, Mr. Bender led delegations of peace activists that met with Chairman Yassir Arafat in Gaza and King Hussein in Amman.

Mr. Bender has a degree in Religious Studies from the University of California at Los Angeles, and studied film and television at New York University's Graduate School of Film.

11) ISNA BACKGROUND MATERIAL

About ISNA

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was originally founded in 1963 and is one of the largest and oldest Islamic umbrella associations in North America. Based out of Plainfield, Indiana, its mission is to provide Muslim organizations and individuals with a common platform for presenting Islam, supporting Muslim communities, developing educational, social and outreach programs and fostering good relations with other religious communities, and civic and service organizations.

About the IOICA

ISNA's Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA), located in Washington, DC, runs its community outreach and interfaith programs, strengthening ties with local grassroots organizations and engaging in joint initiatives with other mainstream religious organizations. These inter-religious projects have helped break down barriers of misunderstanding, form genuine partnerships of faith and ethics, and establish a platform to advocate for social justice issues for the common good. IOICA also fosters strong relationships with congressional staff and Administration officials, serving as an outreach resource to the American Muslim community and promoting a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the nation's political leaders.

The IOICA serves as a resource to Muslim communities across the country, assisting and enhancing ongoing efforts in interfaith and government relations. We listen to your stories about what is already working and share these best practices. Then we work to develop additional tools and resources to help further your work.

IOICA Goals

1. To continue strengthening interfaith partnerships and cooperation among multi-religious communities.
2. To provide models of interfaith partnership to local Muslim communities across the nation.
3. To partner with the federal government to increase the access of Muslim communities to federal programs.
4. To bring issues of concern to the American Muslim community to the attention of the federal government.
5. To reach out and establish partnership with critical interfaith partners who have not traditionally engaged in dialogue with Muslims.
6. To be the interfaith voice for the American Muslim community at a national level.
7. To be the voice for the American Muslim community at a global level, particularly to enhance international interfaith relations and to share the American Muslim experience with other Muslim minorities in the West.

8. To develop and provide resources and tools for training local Muslim communities in the area of interfaith and government relations.

IOICA Initiatives

Muslim-Jewish Relations

- Children of Abraham: Jews and Muslims in Conversation
- Annual Weekend of Twinning
- Judaism and Islam in America Workshop

Muslim-Christian Relations

- Midwest Muslim-Catholic Dialogue
- National Muslim-Christian Initiative
- Annual Baptist-Muslim Conference

Interfaith Coalitions

- Faithful Budget Campaign
- Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition
- Faiths United Against Tobacco
- Faiths United Against Gun Violence
- Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty

About the Director

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed is the National Director of the IOICA. He previously served for 12 years as ISNA's Secretary General. He has been actively involved in fostering understanding among world religions and has participated in interfaith dialogues both locally and internationally.

Dr. Syeed co-founded and later led the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, and Chairman of the Editorial Board of ISNA's Islamic Horizons magazine for 12 years. He has also led the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, and the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada. He pioneered the latter's transformation into ISNA from 1981 to 1982.

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