



e-Newsletter

HONORARY CONSULATE GENERAL OF SYRIA
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"Syria, the cradle of civilization and the gateway to history."

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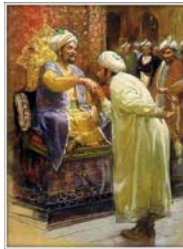
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Bridges to the Middle East have their piers in Detroit: Ibn Battuta in Dearborn!



It was one of the coldest nights in this Michigan winter, nevertheless a sizable crowd of community leaders and representatives gathered few days ago at the Henry Ford Imax Theatre in Dearborn for a reception and a special screening of the film: ***Journey to Mecca, in the footsteps of Ibn Battuta***. For those of my generation from Syria Ibn Battuta is reminiscent of middle school where the stories and adventures of this world traveler were part of the curriculum. Actually I learned at the reception that in India also they study Ibn Battuta in school, and used his record as important source for the history of their nation.



In 1325, Ibn Battuta was a young man from a good family in Morocco when he had an inner call to fulfill the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). It was a daring adventure for a young man to travel across the North African desert by himself to reach his destination to the sacred land in Arabia. Upon completing his Hajj, Ibn Battuta spent the next thirty years traveling around the world, and most importantly keeping written record of his adventures and discoveries, later his diary became a valuable source for historians.

The imax documentary focuses on the journey of Ibn Battuta to Mecca and his fulfillment of the Hajj requirements. The projection on one of the largest imax screen in the US, combined with impressive sound system makes this movie experience the closest a non-Muslim can get to discover what Hajj is about.

In his eloquent remarks at the reception, Mr. Jonathan Barker, producer of the film, said his motive in producing the film was "building bridges of understanding with the Muslim world". He said he was inspired by Ibn Battuta who traveled around the world and struck friendship with every group or nation he visited. He added that the selection of Detroit to launch the screening of the film in North America is a natural choice for the role Detroit plays as the heart of the Arab community in the US.



Henry Ford Theatre is graciously cooperating in that endeavor and will be screening the documentary for several months. For more information about the film, tickets, and schedule please click [here](#). It is an opportunity you should not miss if you live in South East Michigan, or if you have any travel plan to Detroit in the near future.

Dr. Naji Arwashan
Honorary Consul General

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