

**NEW FILM: "GOD AND ALLAH NEED TO TALK"
PREMIERES AT CITYWIDE INTERFAITH EVENT**

Time dated Press Release

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A billboard at the corner of Sunset and Hollywood inspired the provocative title of a documentary that will premiere at the Fairfax Laemmle on September 14. "GOD AND ALLAH NEED TO TALK" will lead off a citywide interfaith event and artistic program of local and international artists. Individuals dedicated to interfaith dialogue and outreach will be recognized and honored at the event, and interfaith organizations will have an opportunity to network and offer unaffiliated audience members the opportunity to sign up for future interfaith activities.

Producer/director of the film, and organizer of the event, Ruth Broyde-Sharone, literally stopped her car when she saw the original billboard. "God and Allah talking would be like God talking to Himself," Broyde-Sharone comments in the film, "but after 9/11 it perfectly sums up how frustrated and fragmented we feel. We even view God as having multiple personalities."

To get permission to use the title for her project, the filmmaker tracked down the billboard's author, Rush Riddle, a private citizen who wanted to vent his frustrations at the religious discord that has characterized the post 9/11 world. The 18-minute documentary, endorsed by the Human Relations Commission of the City of Los Angeles, points out the new approach of the Islamic Center of Southern California to welcome individuals of other faiths to celebrate Muslim holidays with them in their Center's mosque. The film also documents a Muslim-Jewish "Seder of Reconciliation" held last Passover at Temple Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills. The brainchild of Rabbi Steven Jacobs and Dr. Nazir Khaja, director of the Islamic Information Service (a local Muslim Cable Network), the seder brought together some 150 participants, primarily Jews and Muslims, with some Christian guests, to symbolically reunite Isaac and Ishmael, the estranged sons of Abraham.

Rabbi Jacobs and Dr. Khaja decided that the universal message of freedom of the Passover Seder, with its retelling of the Exodus story, could provide a meaningful environment for interfaith discourse. Rev. Ed Bacon of All Saints Church of Pasadena agreed, saying that he believes God's desire is to advance the agenda of peace through true community in the broadest sense.

The September 14 artistic program will include performances by Nabil Azzam, a Palestinian violinist and founder of the Mesto Orchestra, Alula Tzadik, a Beit Israel musician from Ethiopia, Mitra Rahbar, a singer/entertainer from Iran, LA musician/composer Stephen Longfellow Fiske, singer Stefani Valdez, who specializes in Ladino melodies from Spain, a group of teenage Muslim ethnic dancers, and the Yuval Ron trio with percussionist Jamie Papish, who perform sacred music of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Filmmaker Broyde-Sharone, who has been an interfaith activist for more than a decade, saw the film as a vehicle for healing and reconciliation. "The separation between God and Allah in the film's title underscores how in our minds we have created a separation between the non-Muslim and Muslim communities, when in truth God and Allah are one. He is always talking to us" she maintains, "but are we talking to one another?" She believes the film demonstrates and encourages "a new consciousness and a new conscientiousness" about transcending stereotypes that religious communities and individuals hold about each other.

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