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# **SPAIN'S ISLAMIC LEGACY: A MUSLIM'S TRAVELOGUE**

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## SPAIN'S ISLAMIC LEGACY: A MUSLIM'S TRAVELOGUE

This paper originally appeared in a number of publications and websites to describe a journey in December 1998. It has now been modified by the author especially for [www.MuslimHeritage.com](http://www.MuslimHeritage.com)

This article is a travelogue of impressions from a recent visit to Spain by Professor Ghazanfar<sup>1</sup>. For a Muslim who has some familiarity with Islamic history in the Iberian Peninsula, a visit to Spain is almost like a pilgrimage. However, unlike the pilgrimage to Mecca, such a visit can be spiritually and emotionally agonizing, for one is overwhelmed by manifestations of European Islam in Spain (Al-Andalus, as it was then known). That was the era of the Golden Age of Islam, from early eighth to late fifteenth century, coincidental with Dark Ages in the rest of Europe, when Al-Andalus was the centre of global civilisation. Its capital Cordoba was Europe's largest city--the city of books, of patrons of great literary men, scholars and explorers. There existed no separation between science, wisdom, and faith; nor was East separated from the West, nor the Muslim from the Jew or the Christian. It was here that the European Renaissance began and flourished beyond.

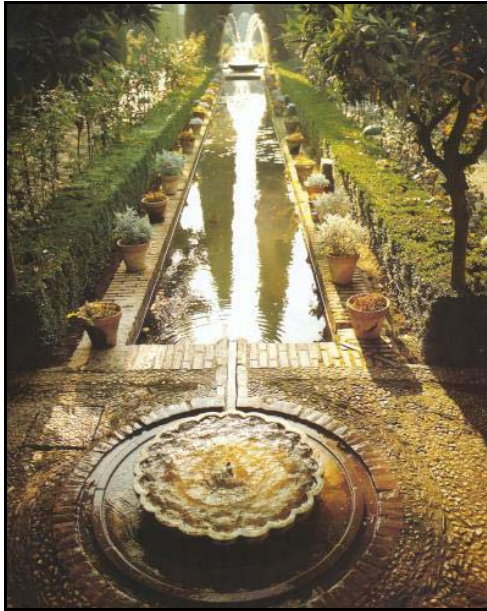
For decades I had longed to visit Spain, not only for its legendary charm and picturesque beauty but, more importantly, to witness the heritage of almost 800 years of Islamic presence. In December 1998, I travelled to Spain as a participant in a colloquium, sponsored by the Paris-based International Society for the Study of Arab and Islamic History and Science (in conjunction with Spanish universities). The conference theme pertained to the contributions of Cordoba's most distinguished intellectual, Ibn Rushd (1126-1198; known as Averroes in the West) in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of his death. The trip also provided me with an opportunity to experience Spain's Islamic heritage. That heritage, indeed, has reminders in every nook and cranny of contemporary Spain, especially in the province of Andalucia. That is where the two most prominent cities of Islam's legacy are located: Granada (Arabic *Gharnata*) and Cordoba (Arabic *Qurtaba*); both are United Nations' monuments of "Heritage of Humanity". Conveniently these cities are well-maintained by the Spanish Government for, among other things, their huge significance for tourism, notwithstanding the many attempts in times past by Catholic fanaticism to eliminate any remnants of Islamic past. Soon after landing in Madrid (Arabic *Majrit*, a kind of a breeze), I took a night train to Granada, arriving there the next morning.

### Grandeur of Granada

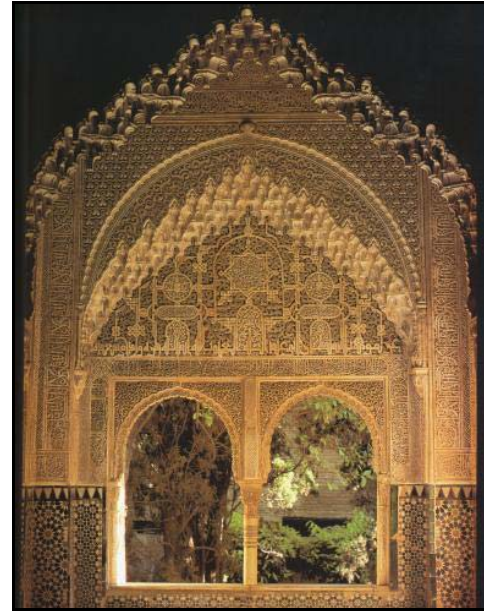
When Muslims (Arabs and Berbers) arrived in Spain, during early eighth century, they thought they had discovered heaven on earth. Water, which had been somewhat of a luxury for them, was found in abundance in the snowy mountain peaks. By a series of intricate channels, they transported it into the palace grounds and onto the plains below. Still today in Granada one gets a glimpse of paradise (so described by many visitors and travellers before) in the majesty of Alhambra Palace and adjacent Generalife Gardens (Arabic *Janna Al- Rafia'a*, the Garden of the Architect).

Small streams carry water to various fountains and ponds, even rushing over a stone stairway. One observes and hears water splashing and gushing, under the conifers, roses, lilies, jasmines, etc with great displays of

colour. Aside from the luxury of the Palace itself, there are the courtyards shaded by a variety of exotic trees and cooled by fountains and underground water channels.



**Figure 1.** The Generalife garden (Janna al Rafia'a) meaning "the garden of lofty paradise" imitating that described in the Qur'an containing wonderful orchards, pastures, and flower beds. It is part of a Nasrid palace built in the 13th century.

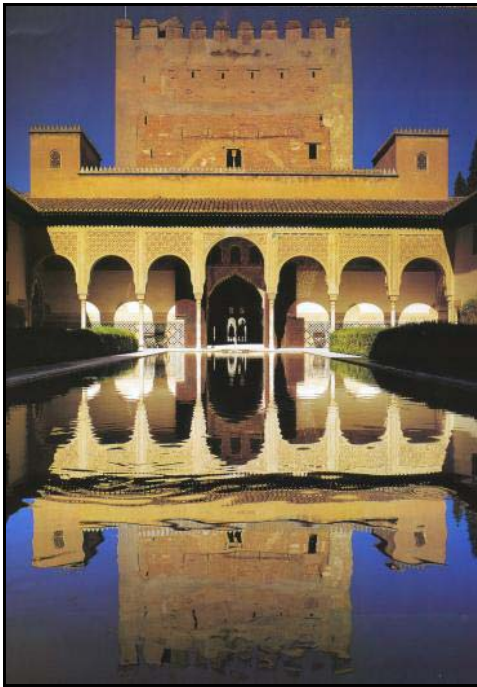


**Figure 2.** A beautifully golden decorated arched window from the interior of the Torre de las Infantas opening into a paradise garden

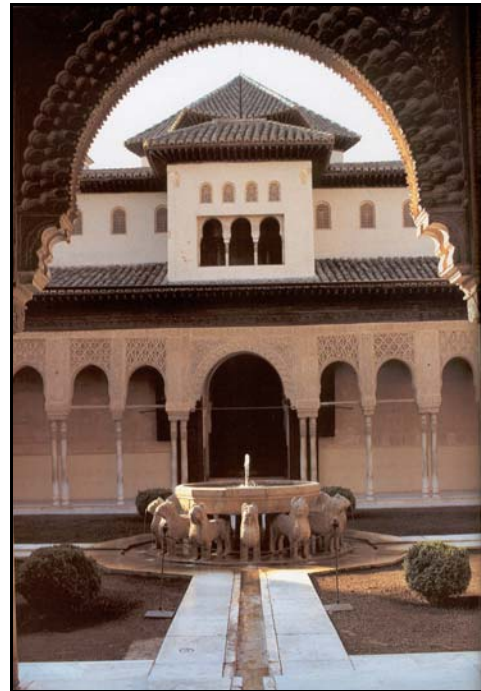
All through one feels the presence of God Almighty, for there are Qur'anic verses inscribed on the walls, the most prominent and ubiquitous being: "*Wa la ghalib illa Allah*" (There is no victor but Allah).

As one walks through Alhambra and the Gardens, one vicariously absorbs into the past and begins to experience an enormous sense of pride and awe at the glory that was Islam. But as I walked through the Palace, the tour-guide pointed out, among others, the "Ambassador's Hall," where the Muslim ruler, Abu Abdallah ("Boabdil," as the guide referred to him) had signed the treaty on November 25, 1491 for the eventual surrender of Granada in January 1492 to the Catholic King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel. I recalled the painful scene I read about sometime ago when Abu Abdallah shed tears and cried out, "Allah O'Akbar," his mother said to him, "Cry you like a woman over a lost kingdom that you could not defend like a man." Thus one feels the pain of an inglorious end to a glorious past, intensified further by one's knowledge of a divided and impoverished present world of Islam, subject to Western hegemony almost since the Crusades.

There are numerous other reminders of historic Islam in Granada. There are several smaller palaces and there is the historic Albaican quarter (the Muslim quarter, where some Muslims still live and where the former mosque stands as Church of El-Salvador). Many churches whose roofs were decorated with domes, crosses and bell-towers instead of the former crescent and the Muezzin's Ada'n, clearly revealed their former status. There is the Gothic Cathedral, which once was the Great Mosque of Granada and where the two Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, are buried. As I visited the Cathedral, I saw a multitude of statues and paintings of Catholic icons, reminding me of at least one of the reasons for the 16th century Protestant split in Christianity.



**Figure 3.** Court of Myrtles in the Comars Palace



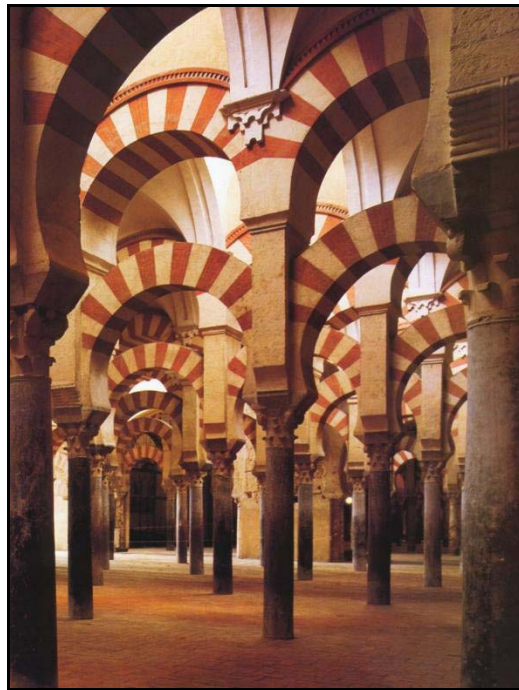
**Figure 4.** The court of the Lions showing the famous fountain and the slender marble columns of the galleries of the courtyard.

One giant painting/sculpture that covered a large wall was most painful to absorb. It depicted a warrior on a horse and a dead man with his neck crushed, lying under the horse's feet. The guide explained, "It is Santiago and his horse, slaying a Muslim." When I asked further, she said, "It is the Apostle Santiago who helped in the Christian victory over Islam." When I pointed out the implied hate-message, she was slightly taken aback and wondered if I was a Muslim, and when I affirmed, she apologetically replied, "well, it is just a painting." Since that experience, I have learnt a little about the legend of St. James ("Santiago" in Spanish). Under continuous infiltration of Christian warriors from Leon (North of Spain) causing destruction and insecurity in neighbouring Muslim provinces, the Muslim commander, Ibn Abi Amir (also known as "Al-Mansur bi Allah," meaning "victorious through God's grace;" and "Almanzor" in the West), decided to fight them to bring back security and

peace to these provinces. He captured Leon in the tenth century and his troops reached the Church of Santiago de Compostela. Christian claims of the wide destruction Almansur's army caused, including the demolition of St. James, need to be taken with great caution as neither the Islamic teaching which forbid destroying life and killing innocents nor the good character of this Caliph allow such brutality. Instead, Al-Mansur is known to have preserved the shrine of the Christian apostle St. James in that structure. Later, as the Muslims lost ground, the myth of St. James was cultivated, and Santiago "Matamoros" ("Santiago the Moor-slayer") became known as the inspiration for the Christian victory; thus becoming Spain's patron-saint.

## Cordoba's Grand Mosque and Surroundings

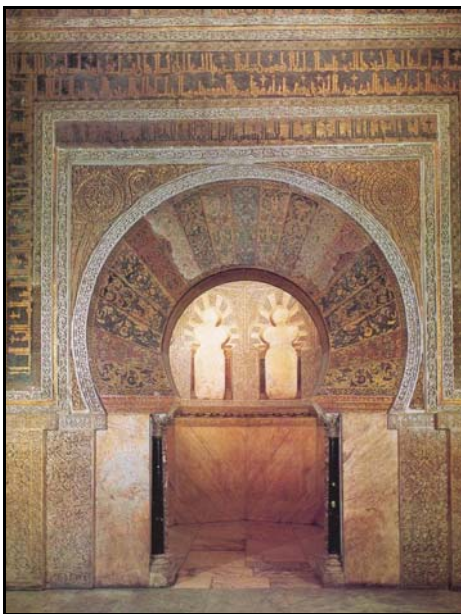
From Granada, I proceeded by bus to Cordoba. Through the journey I could sense the conspicuous presence of Muslims, former mosques in every little town we passed, and forts and castles standing pretentiously on almost every mountain top, though displaying Christian symbols I could see flashbacks of Muslims tending to their olive groves, developing new crops and agriculture technology, and living peacefully side-by-side with their non-Muslim neighbours. Yet I could also imagine them hiding behind the hills and mountains, trying to escape the wrath of the 16th century Inquisition, when they had to choose between forced "baptized" (and thus, be "saved") expulsion (but children to be left behind), or risk brutal death.



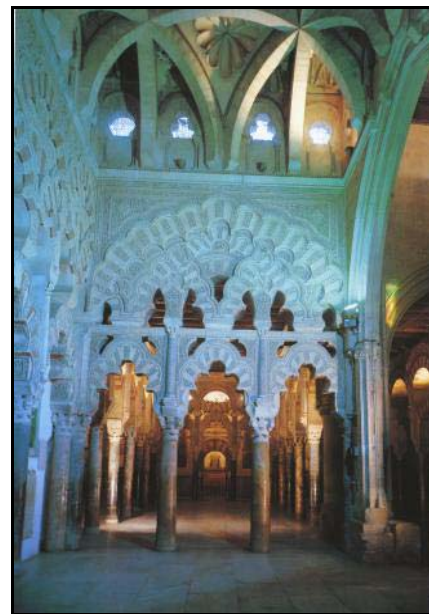
**Figure 5.** The genius of Muslim architecture appears in this strange but functional arcade. The imposition of one arcade on top of another not only gave the space a greater height but also added to its majesty. The polychrome colouring added another decorative quality to this Great building.

Among the various monuments of Islamic Spain, the most intense yearning of my soul was the Grand Mosque (Le Mezquita) of Cordoba, built in the 8th century by Emir Abdul Rehman I, but now called The Holy Cathedral. Immediately after arriving at my hotel in Cordoba, on December 8th, I was able to join a guided tour that included a visit to the Mosque. As a Muslim, visiting this landmark was an overwhelmingly therapeutic, as I could witness the great achievements of Islam with a sense of pride and admiration for its majestically enlightening message. In the open compound, there were ornate rows of orange trees, with the Cathedral's bell-tower on one side, once the muezzin's minaret.

As we entered the Mosque, I noticed the sixteenth century Cathedral standing in the heart of the Mosque clearly symbolising the Christian victory. While the construction of the Cathedral was controversial, it helped to preserve the Grand Mosque from complete destruction at the hands of the new rulers. While standing in the Mosque, I felt spiritually immersed in its serenity and grandeur of its majestic arches and columns and by the symmetry of chandeliers in all directions, abruptly interrupted by the presence of the Cathedral.



**Figure 6.** The Mihrab of the Great Mosque of Cordoba built by Al-Hakem II between 966-969. Notice the use of the "great" horseshoe arch and the Ijmiz which denotes the square frame around the arch. Both features were imitated by medieval Europe.



**Figure 7.** AL-Maqsura at the great Mosque of Cordoba is located in front of the Mihrab and was built by the Caliph Al-Hakem II as part of his extension of the Mosque between 962 and 966.

The Mihrab was the masterpiece which attracted my soul amidst intensely spiritual emotions. A metal fence enclosed it, but I could see several Qur'anic verses on the walls, beautifully inscribed in Arabic calligraphy, intertwined with coloured tiles. Such beautifully inspiring mosaic was painfully disturbed by the imposing

presence of Christian statues and crosses above. Again, it was easy to flashback--and I could see myself standing in prayers, shoulder to shoulder, along side such Muslim intellectual giants of Cordoba as Ibn Hazam, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Maqqari, Al-Ghafiqi, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Al-Arabi, and others who once made Cordoba the supreme intellectual centre of the world.

On the architectural merits of the Mosque the tour guide, to my surprise and dismay, was painstakingly linking the beauty of the Mosque more to the Romans than the centuries of Muslim presence. During interactions with the guide, someone inquired about the origins of bullfights in Spain. The tour guide, either by ignorance or perjury, linked this violent sport to Muslims (Arabs), confidently stating, "Oh, the Arabs brought that sport here." This fabrication bothered me considerably, as I had heard several explanations of the origins of bullfighting, but that was not one of them. So I politely interjected and referred to some Catholic legends as to the origins. The story dates back to the time when the Virgin Mariam (Mary puh) was pregnant with Prophet Issa (Jesus Christ; puh), there was an incident in which a bull was indignant to Mariam (puh), so the bull became a beast to be fought back. The tour guide denied any knowledge of such a story. However, to my surprise and satisfaction, a Catholic couple from the group confirmed my story. I do not know how authentically this explanation is but, certainly contemporary bull fighting did not originate with the Muslims (Arabs).

After this incident I encountered a most painful experience in Cordoba's Grand Mosque. As the tour was in progress, I felt the urge to perform *tahiyat al-masjid* prayer which is a Suna, voluntary prayer practised by Prophet Mohammed (puh), consisting of two short Rak'at So I chose a remote corner away from the group and began my prayers. However, as I was ecstatically engaged in my prayers, during the second raka'at, an angry man, trembling with rage, approached me, literally breathing into my face, screaming in Spanish, "No Muslim prayers...No Muslim... prayers" (so I understood). At first I resisted the pressure of the security guard; but I had to break my prayers. . Despite my protests (and the protest of the guide and other members of the group), the guard tightly held my arm and escorted me out of the Mosque. Once outside the Mosque, I could not escape feeling the pain of this hate and intolerance. The agony of my defeat added to my sadness provoked by memories of the downfall of the Muslim Caliphate in this land; I could not restrain my tears. Then I recalled the late Allama Iqbal (1873-1938) of the Indian sub-continent who visited this Mosque in 1932 (with special permission from England, for until not long ago, Muslims and Jews were forbidden to enter Spain). Having encountered similar experiences, he expressed his anguish in his epic poem, "The Mosque of Qurtaba," where he bemoaned:

Oh Holy Mosque of Qurtaba, the shrine for all admirers of art  
Pearl of the one true faith, sanctifying Andalusia's soil  
Like Holy Mecca itself, such a glorious beauty  
Will be found on earth, only in a true Muslim's heart

These verses and his other poems provided me with some comfort as I recollected the legendary tolerance and protection that Islam has historically extended to other faiths. During the next day or so, I returned to the Mosque, accompanied by a Muslim colleague from France; and cautiously, I was able to absorb its quiet spirituality more thoroughly.

Besides the Great Mosque, Islam's legacy in Cordoba has more to offer. Guided by a city map, I decided to explore more by walking. Echoes of Cordoba's grandeur remain strong in the area, especially around the Mosque. Like other Muslim towns, Cordoba contains small palaces built around watered courtyards, and to explore these streets is to encounter ecstatic bliss: glimpses through open doors reveal beautiful tiled and flower-filled patios. The use of Arabic names for streets, buildings and places is still much in common use, such as "Alfaros," the name of the hotel where I stayed, with some of its luxurious rooms also named in Arabic (e.g., "*Salon Al-Zahra*"). Buildings such as churches, castles, and fortresses still testify to their Islamic past, either by their design or by their inscriptions. As I walked along the banks of Guadalquivir (derived from *Al-Wadi Al-Kabir*, or Great River, in Arabic), I saw the picturesque ruins of three Muslim flour-mills, with a Roman bridge standing in the background. On the other side of the bridge stood an historic fort, the Tower of Calahorra (Arabic *Qalah Al-Horrah*, or The Fort of the Freed Lady), which houses a small but excellent Arab-funded Islamic Museum, that provides a good introduction to Islamic legacy. The most spectacular sight, however, was that of a ninth century waterwheel (Spanish *noira*, from Arabic *Al-Na'urah*) still standing in the river. For many centuries, under Islam, this wheel was the main water machine supplying the Great Mosque and the whole Cordoba city with drinking water. Near the Mosque is the Alcazar (*A-Qasr* in Arabic), built in the eighth century, the residence of the first Umayyad emir, Abdur Rehman. Also, nearby there was the statue of Ibn Rushd whom I paid homage before leaving this area.



**Figure 8.** The Statute of Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198) stands in pride as a reminder of the contribution of the Muslims not only to Spain but to the whole of Europe.



Friday approached quickly and I needed to locate a mosque where Friday prayer takes place. Upon some investigation I located the newly-founded Ibn Rushd Islamic University in the vicinity of the Great Mosque. The University has a mosque within it; and I went there for Friday prayers, on December 11th. It was such a moving experience to hear the sound of adhan on the Spanish soil, where once the hostility to Islam could have resulted in a dreadful death. . A further irony is this: the university and its mosque are located at the site almost exactly where so much of the Islamic past was destroyed-- religious scriptures and thousands of books written by Islamic scholars. This was also one of the sites where Muslims who refused to convert to Christianity were burnt at the stake. Those who thus converted, by force, became known as Moriscos. Most inhabitants of today's Andalusia region are believed to hold that Morisco past, though over the centuries their identity is thoroughly lost amidst the new Spanish Christian society. The Jews, though a minority, had suffered similar fate, and those "baptized" were known as Conversos.

In the University's mosque, I met some native young Spaniards (including three women) who, having discovered their roots and/or having formally studied comparative religion, had embraced Islam. In fact, it was most moving to hear the Friday Khutba (lecture ceremony) from a young Spanish Muslim, who spoke fluent Arabic, and even provided translation in Spanish and English.

Then, at the University, I met the Rector of the University, Dr. Ali M. Kettani, a well-known Moroccan scholar. And it was a pleasant surprise, for he and I had briefly known each other in the 1980s when we were both located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. I have not met many people with the dedication and enthusiasm to the cause of Islam that I observed in Dr. Kettani. With his strenuous commitment and efforts, he founded, almost single-handed, this small university in an environment which, though officially tolerant, still exudes Catholic fanaticism; I was told the university and mosque doors have to be locked all the time, for there have been instances of violence and vandalism. The University currently enrolls a number of Muslim and non-Muslim students with ambitious plans for expansion. However, there is also a desperate need for financial resources (anyone willing to contribute may contact the author or the University Rector—information available on the internet).

I also learnt at the University of a most gruesome tragedy that a prominent Muslim lady, Sabora Uribe, had suffered. Professionally a psychiatrist, wife of the President of the Federation of Spanish Muslim Entities and mother of five children, Sabora had embraced Islam twenty years ago. She was the founder of the Women's Spanish Muslim Association (called "Al-Nisa"). This noble lady was brutally murdered in a town near Cordoba on October 28, 1998. Some fanatics entered the house at night and stabbed her to death, the apparent motive being hatred for her Islamic faith and activities. The University has named one of its classrooms in her memory. One of her children attends the Islamic University in Cordoba.

## **Seville: A Detour**

At the end of the Ibn Rushd colloquium and having absorbed as much of Cordoba as I could within the time available, a colleague and I decided to make a quick visit to Seville. Seville, pronounced "Sevellyá" in Spanish, is a derivation from the original Arabic, Ishibiliya, 'arabised' from the Roman name "Hispalis". Incidentally, one of Ishibiliya's famous twelfth century scholars was the Muslim botanist, Abu Zakariyah al-Ishibili, who had identified nearly 600 plants and developed methods of grafting in order to grow improved varieties. In the

usual Arabic fashion, he is named "Ishibili," after the city of his residence. But there is more of Islamic past in Seville, submerged in the famous relics of the Alcazar and the Cathedral/La Giralda.

Like Alhambra Palace, Seville's Alcazar (Al-Qasr) is another architectural jewel from the early days of Islam. It was built in the eighth century and expanded in the ninth. Later the Christian rulers made further additions mostly in Gothic style. The entire structure remains, however, essentially Islamic and follows the Islamic tradition of halls and open courts with water fountains. The walls are covered in painted stucco and glazed tiles. The blue and white inscription proclaims the same message seen in Alhambra above: "wa la ghalib ill Allah". Over the vestibule doors are elongated voussoirs which make a nice introduction to more fantasies. Multi-lobed arches support facades of a network of lace-like stone and foliage in which lurk human faces besides the shields of Castile (added under the Christian rule). The most prestigious rooms of the Alcazar are the "Hall of the Kings" and the "Hall of the Ambassadors". The Hall of the Kings is a wide room decorated with fine woodwork, a triple horseshoe-arched arcade and deep alcoves. The Hall of the Ambassadors, with its similar triple arcades, is sharply cut while the ornament is so lavish that it would numb the senses were it not for the vistas beyond. The dome is starlit above subdued muqarnas (stalactites) squinches which catch and reflect the light. One of the most elaborate plaster designs in one of the halls is a foliate lattice inset with pine cones, some of which seemed crushed into thistle heads and others conjured into three-dimensional shells.

After absorbing the interior wonders of the Alcazar Palace, I walked through the well-trimmed hedges in the exterior, sat on the tiled benches and enjoyed the beautiful flowers as the Muslim emirs and their entourage would have done. In the midst of this beauty I could not but wonder: If only Muslim architects would come here, to the land of their forefathers, to learn from this beautiful Andalusian architecture, then our Muslim cities would regain their identity, beauty and functionality and rid ourselves from the monotony and ugliness of modern concrete blocks imposed upon various Islamic environments by the so called "modern architects". I also wondered how the sons of the Arabian desert became such excellent gardeners and farmers, something that still mystifies historians and scholars. It was the civilization of Islam which transformed such people into those genius architects, designers, scientists, gardeners and politicians. The Qur'an established this as it declares:

*"Those who believe, and work righteousness,- their Lord will guide them because of their faith: beneath them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss. (This will be) their cry therein: "Glory to Thee, O Allah." And "Peace" will be their greeting therein! and the close of their cry will be: "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!" (The Qur'an: 10:9-10)*

That's how such people introduced to Spain and the whole Western world so many different types of plants, such as: lemons, oranges, apricots, artichokes, dates, rice, sugarcane and so on. And then we walked to Seville's famous Cathedral and its La Giralda (The Minaret)--the grandest of the minarets, rivalled only by its mother minaret, the *Kutubiyya* of Marrakesh. The Cathedral is now where the Great Mosque of Seville was built in 1172; and the original minaret was built in 1198. The mosque was first converted into a church in 1248, later it was demolished to give way to the Cathedral which was built during the fifteenth century. Only the dome and minaret of the original mosque escaped demolition. Apart from the visible dome and the minaret (both now "Christianised,"), an astute visitor can also see the Cathedral's Islamic past in two other

manifestations: The Arabic-inscription, disclosing the name of the name of the Caliph "*Abu Yusuf Ya'qub*" who financed and ordered the erection of the mosque, as one enters the minaret. The huge entry gate whose wooden doors not only have the Islamic design but also twelfth century Arabic inscriptions. There is nothing inside the Cathedral that would suggest its Islamic past. There is the thoroughly Gothic architecture inside, with dozens of statues and paintings of Christian icons and other symbols. Yet, I was impressed by the Cathedral's interior, not only for its grandeur and richness but also for the serene and solemn atmosphere and the religious sanctity that it conveyed, much more than I felt in Granada's Cathedral. In the Cathedral there is also the tomb of Christopher Columbus, who, after the fall of Islamic Granada in 1492, was charged by Isabella and Ferdinand to seek out India. But one factor that persuaded him to travel West was the Ottoman presence in the East. Guided by well-experienced Muslim navigators, he "discovered" the Americas in the same year (of course, many dispute and despise his adventures).

### Some Concluding Remarks

While such impressive monuments of Islamic history that one encounters in Spain represent a tangible legacy of this great civilisation, there are many others that are less tangible as they are part of daily life and therefore often taken for granted. Perhaps the most telling example of continuing Islamic influence is the survival of myriad Arabic words and phrases in the Spanish language, such as *Almirante (Al-Amir)*, *Al-Mohade (Al-Mohtasub)*, *arroz (Al-Ruz)*, *Guitarra (Al-Guitara)*, *aceituna (Al-Zaytuna)*, and many others. Further, famous words such as "Ole! Ole!" during the Flamenco dances and Spanish bullfights, are unwitting reference to "Allah! Allah!", while the Spanish/ Portuguese word "Oj'ala" (God willing) is uttering the distorted version of Arabic "Insha-Allah." This is to list only a few examples as there is so much more to describe, including many customs and traditions that are closely linked to the Islamic past, despite the attempts on the part of the Inquisition authorities to eradicate them.

Contemporary Spain vigorously promotes Alhambra and other monuments of Al-Andalus as major tourist attractions. Yet, the promoters, including the tour-guides, do not quite point out that these are legacies of nearly eight centuries of Islamic presence in Spain during which they planted the roots of European Renaissance through unparalleled transfer of knowledge in almost every known field. In other words, while Spain and the West are happy to inherit and benefit from the legacy of Islamic Spain (with its own assimilation, to be sure, of the rediscovered Greek reservoir of knowledge), there is the historic reluctance to acknowledging how that legacy contributed to Europe's awakening. The American traveller, Washington Irving, observed this paradox when he visited Spain during early 18th century. The Spanish, he remarked, considered Muslims only as "invaders and usurpers;" and that still seems to be the case today.

Following the new freedom of religion policy which was adopted recently in Spain, Islam was officially accepted as a religion in 1989. However, there are still occasions when fanaticism and racism resurface, such as the murder case of the Muslim woman mentioned earlier.

According to information available from the Islamic University of Cordoba, there is now about half a million Muslims living in Spain of whom only a fifth are citizens the rest are migrants. Of the citizens, about twenty thousand are converts, the rest are naturalised. The new Muslims live in various regions of Spain although the

majority is concentrated in the Andalucia region. There are about two hundred mosques in Spain today, fifty of them in the Andalucia region. At one time, of course, there were over 1600 mosques in Cordoba alone!

Finally, while I have had the good fortune of having done some travelling here and there, none--except my visits to Mecca and Medina--surpasses the spiritual and emotional experience that I felt upon being immersed for a few days into Spain's Islamic past. There is indeed a sense of pride and humility about the glorious age of my forbearers in faith. This personal exposure to Islamic legacy, as well as my other recent academic explorations into Islam's intellectual contributions and their impact in the making of the West, are in the nature of spiritual medicine, a sort of a therapy for the soul. Such encounters enable me to escape into history books and thus help me in overcoming the sense of grudging humiliation that haunts me as a Muslim; I suspect I am not alone. Again I am recalling a verse from Allama Iqbal's poem, Hispania:

Indeed, my eyes observed and absorbed Granada; but  
My soul is at peace neither from travelling, nor stopping  
Saw so much, absorbed so much; told so much, heard so much;  
Yet, solace to the heart is neither from seeing, nor from hearing

While one can seek solace in such lamentations of the late Allama, yet one also yearns for a brighter Islamic future, as visualized in the writings of such universal intellectual giants as Ibn Sina (980-1037), Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), and Ibn Rushd (1126-1998). The meaning of life and its goal in Al-Andalus during its Islamic apogee directed each act of daily living, as well as scientific explorations.

Such explorations were not set apart from wisdom and faith, and none can express this delicately-balanced bliss better than Ibn Rushd. Thus, during my visit to Cordoba's Islamic Museum, I noted this message from a recorded tape of Ibn Rushd's remarks from his book, *On the Harmony of Science and Religion*:

- (i) science, founded on experience and logic, to discover reason;
- (ii) wisdom, which reflects on the purpose of every scientific research so that it serves to make our life more beautiful;
- and (iii) revelation, that of our Qur'an, as it is only through revelation that we know the final purposes of our life and our history; Amen.

Indeed, it is the gift of "reason" that the then civilized Islam, through Ibn Rushd and others, gave to the then primitive Europe. And it was their impact that the late Allama mentions in his poem, "The Mosque of Qortaba:"

Those whose vision guided the East and the West;  
Who showed Dark Europe the path of Enlightenment.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ghazanfar is a long-time resident of the U.S.A, born in pre-partitioned India, migrated to Pakistan in 1947 and moved to the USA as a student in 1958; having served as Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83843 (USA). Presently, he is professor-emeritus (retired, 2002)