

Tracing the footsteps of Tariq Ibn Ziyad– Last part

By Nadia Shabir

In a loving memory of my great uncle Zahir Kalim, Thank you so much for planting a seed of love for Moorish Spain in my head at the age 11. We will always miss you.



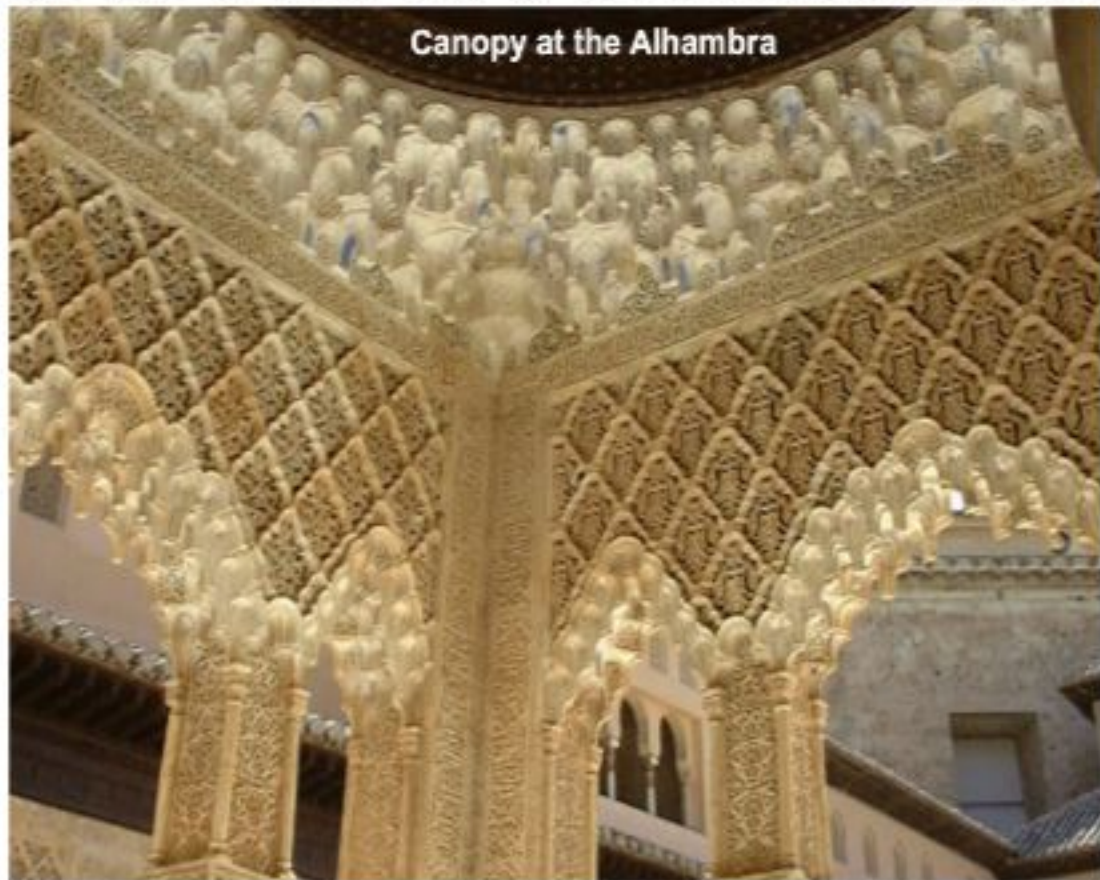
General Tariq Ibn Ziyad and his army left Tangier to embark on a historical conquest through Spain. Their journey marked a first entry of Muslims and Islam into heartland of Europe. They crossed the narrow straits of Gibraltar and paved their way through charming cities of Ecija, Cordoba and Toledo establishing garrisons and Islamic legacy. Below is a final part of remarkable journey. Historian Stanley Lane Poole famously asserted: «Mathematics, astronomy, botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. Whatever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Muslim Spain...» to read other parts, please refer to previous editions of ITM magazine.

Granada

Wrap up your trip by making a final stop in Granada, jewel of Moorish Spain, in which Alhambra palace is the most intelligible and magnificent creation of mankind. Tariq Ibn Ziyad sent a squadron to Granada, another well defended city in Sierra Nevada, where general of Andalucia, Theodomir had rallied his troops. Theodomir had tried to defeat Tariq in

Algeciars, and later at Guadelete. After succession of defeats, he made a full and final attempt in Granada, but soon realized a distinct advantage opposition force had over him. With skilled horsemen, expert mounted archers, deadly lances and zeal of passion for victory; Ziyad bin Qasida manoeuvred his army skilfully into capturing the city of Granada. Theodomir surrendered in return of good terms and peace

Canopy at the Alhambra





treaty in favour of his people. With the treaty signed, a war of attrition came to end providing both sides with a much needed relief.

Discover the magic of Alhambra

Give him alms, woman, for life holds no greater affliction, than that of being blind in Granada. F.A. de Icaza

Allow at least two full days in this

enchanted city. The Alhambra of Granada is a unique creation of genius mind and exceptional Islamic architect. Rising upon the hills of La Sabika, Alhambra stands proudly like a gallant King, weaving its magic on by passers and luring travellers with its enchanted spells and tales. The beauty of Alhambra is beyond words, no wonder 14th Century poet Ibn Zamrak was besotted by

this bewitching monument.

"Pause on the esplanade of La Sabika and gaze upon your surroundings.

"The city is a lady whose husband is the hill.

"She is clasped by the belt of the river.

"And flowers smell like jewels at her throat...

"La Sabika is a crown upon the brow of Granada,

"In which the stars yearn to be studded.

"And the alhmabara- God watch over it!

"Is a ruby at the crest of that crown."

The name Alhambara is derived from Arabic language which



wine gateway which was built by Muhammad V, pass through the gateway and visit Alcazba, oldest part of the Alhambra with its defensive walls.

Spend some quality nature time in Alhambra's Generalife, Yannat al arif, meaning most nobles of the gardens with its terraced gardens, cypress trees and running waters. In afternoon, visit other parts of Alhambra, such as: Cathedral quarters, former Islamic university the Madraza, Chapel royal,

Museums, Centro de Arte Guerrero, Curia, Iglesia del Sagrario, Plaza bib Rambla, restored area of Moorish silk market 'Alcaiceria', 14C Moorish store house Corral del Carbon, and Casa de los Tiros.

In evening, experience the marvels of colours as setting sun turns Alhambra from crimson to burnished gold and in starlight into silver mist. Mark an end to your productive evening with a fine meal in famous Andalusian



Alhambra Generalife fountains



restaurant and sit back and enjoy some classic flamenco.

Spend next day walking around the city, looking at small villas, Moorish residences and caves. Granada in recent years has become a cultural melting point, with its growing Moroccan population and international visitors. Do not forget to visit Granada Mosque, first to be built after expulsion of Muslims in 1492, overlooking the Alhambra palace, located on the high point of Albicin,

with its steep and twisting alleyways.

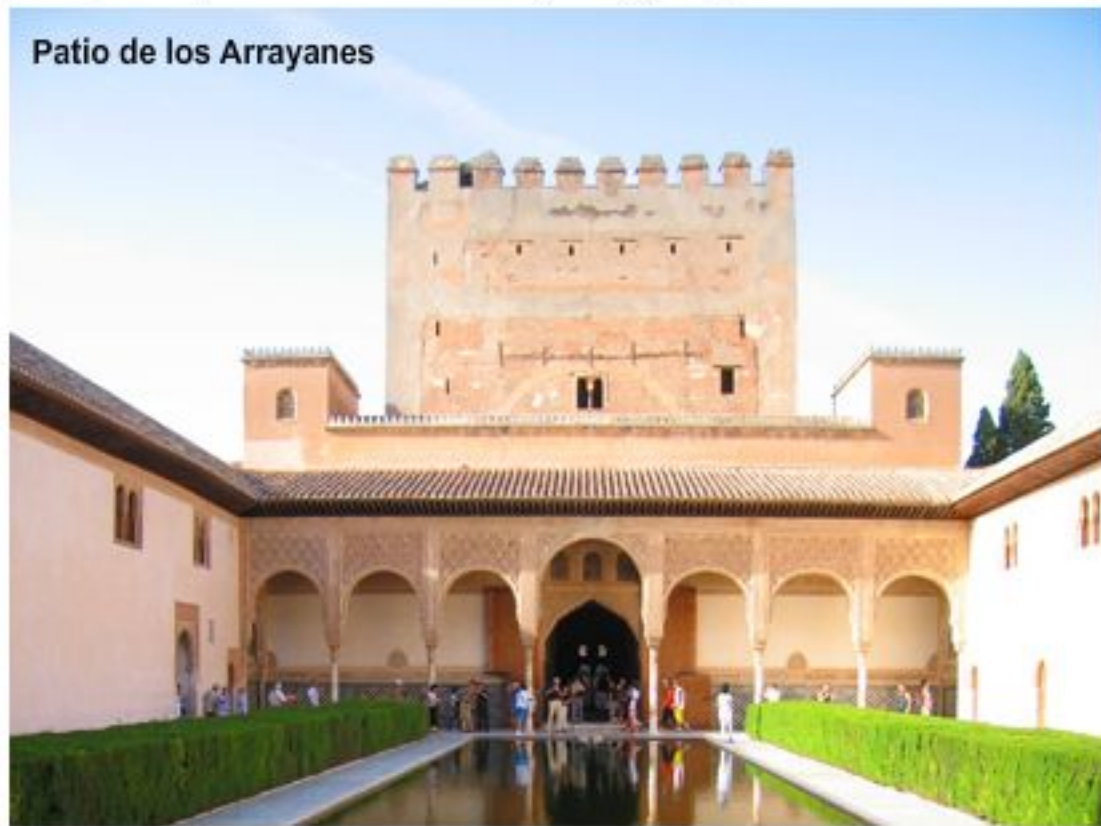
End of great Journey

After Toledo, Tariq continued with his military advances and as Irving writes "Tariq continued as far as Alcala de Henares and Guadalajara. He crossed the Sierra de Guadarrama by the Buitrago pass and pursued the Goths as far as Astorga in the approaches to Asturias".

Tariq left his conquered kingdom and post as a governor of estate and returned to Damascus on the orders of Ummayyad Caliph. He lived a quiet life and died in year 720. The mystery surrounding the whereabouts of Tariq Ibn Ziyad upon his return to Damascus may never be solved, but his name will live forever because it is not only for his military adroitness that Tariq is venerated. He is also remembered for his humility, compassion, and restraint. Tariq

was able to achieve great feats through skilful alliances, destabilizing raids and strategic thinking; keeping his enemies off balance and in array of confusions. He was a favourite son and beloved brother of Berber tribe and was admired by his Arab contemporaries. It is often argued that if Tariq had chosen to revolt against Musa Ibn Nasir's punishment in Toledo, the balance of war could have shifted, instigating a civil strife within the

Patio de los Arrayanes





compounds of Muslim camps. He displayed a remarkable amount of restraint, by not just keeping his silence, but also by forgiving Musa Ibn Nasir and rejoining the military camp.

Two millennia ago, Horace wrote: «The hero who is worthy of her praise / The muse will not let die». Tariq Ibn Ziyad is a hero, a charismatic figure of action, emerging inexorably in response to cataclysmic events of 7th century Hispania, thus dominating

the moment and achieving a lasting impact by the sheer force of his personality, vision, and cerebral power.

A street in Abu Dhabi UAE and a school in Minnesota USA have been named after him. His campaigns are studied at military academies in Pakistan and his famous speech is quoted to masses in the halls of Pakistan Defense. Thousand of year after his emergence, he stands firmly as a transcendent and triumphant figure in our history.

He was a chivalrous hero in 7th
Century

With fleeing centuries his moment
of glory forgotten

On the shore of a foreign island,

In a foreign battle upon a distant
hill

The shadows of memories still
linger on Gibraltar,

The country he conquered with

sheath of his sword

Nomads, masters, fair maidens
soon forgot him

Just another vagrant, they all cry

And soon nobody in lands of
Arabia, Africa reminisced

That they hailed him

As a hero, a ghazi, a victor that
day



Arcos en patio de los leones, la Alhambra



In order to preserve and celebrate our history, it is pivotal to learn and visit these world heritage sites. Trips to historical places immerse our present and future generations in authentic historical contents and help to build civic societies. We are privileged to be a part of world system, where UNESCO has taken greater steps towards conserving sites that are testimony to preceding civilisations. Tariq Ibn Ziyad route mentioned above is an idealistic route, inspired by this great man's military voyages and

taken from various historical books and contents. However, you can build your own custom multi-stop route for an experience as individual as you in the time you have available. You can travel by air, land or sea with public transport or private arrangements. A visit to Spain will enrich you with authentic historical contents, provide you with unforgettable taste of 800 year rule of Moorish epoch and will become an unforgettable learning experience.