

The Alhambra by Robert Irwin.
Profile Books 2004

The Alhambra in Granada represents for many the quintessence of Islamic architecture from the days of Al Andalus, when Muslims ruled over southern Spain for a period of centuries known to Jews as the 'Golden Age'.

Robert Irwin's analysis of the buildings that comprise the Alhambra, room by room, aspect by aspect, makes very clear that the image is belied by the reality, and debunks a number of myths the poetry and lyricism of which have sustained visitors to the site for generations.

The Alhambra, part of a series on Wonders of the World that will include the Parthenon, the Colosseum and Westminster Abbey, is a short and highly entertaining read, meticulously researched and well written. It explores in detail the real history of the Alhambra, the people who created it and lived in it, and particularly its influence, architectural and artistic, over Western civilisation.

This is a book that all who have visited the Alhambra will enjoy, and essential reading for those who are planning to visit one of the most romantic buildings in the world.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh