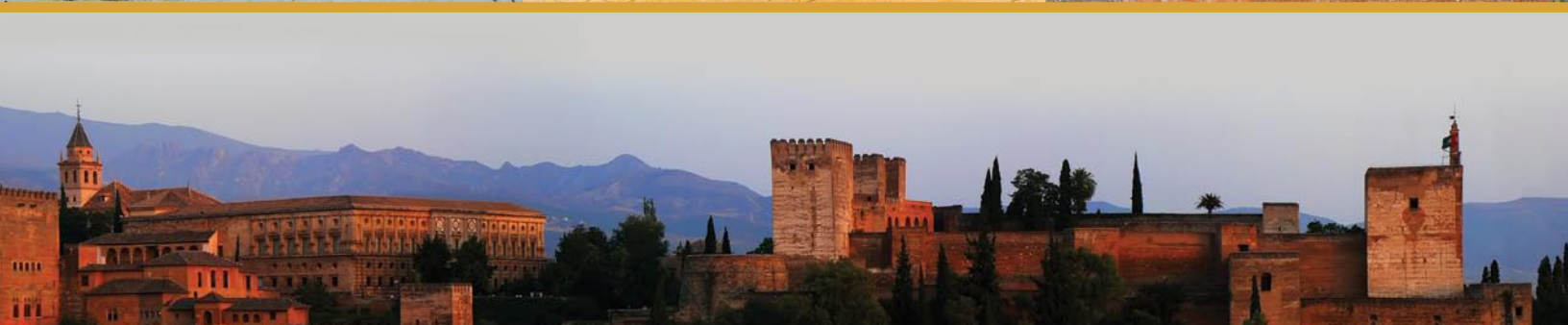


NEW YORK OPEN CENTER AND LAPIS MAGAZINE ONLINE

Present

An Esoteric Quest for THE GOLDEN AGE OF ANDALUSIA

SUFIS, KABBALISTS AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS
IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN



Granada, September 15th to 20th, 2007

CO-SPONSORED WITH THE IBN 'ARABI SOCIETY, CENTRO ABIERTO TOMILLO, THE LUMEN FOUNDATION

www.EsotericQuest.org

Join us on a Quest...

ANDALUSIA, OR AL-ANDALUS, developed an extraordinary culture of religious tolerance in medieval Spain that produced works of enduring spiritual and artistic genius. Today, when the world seems to teeter on the edge of major religious conflict, this enlightened period when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived in relative amity serves as a powerful reminder of the achievements of co-existence or '*convivencia*'.

This was the time when the Zohar, the seminal kabbalistic work, was compiled by Moses de Leon. It was also the period of Ibn 'Arabi, the Sheik Al-Akbar, the greatest of Sufi teachers, while further north in Majorca the Christian philosopher, Ramon Llull, developed a form of wisdom that drew from the deepest esoteric teachings of all three cultures.

Join us on a quest for the beauty and spiritual philosophy of this largely forgotten age, a time when the magical city of Cordoba contained a library of scores of thousands of books while the largest collection elsewhere in Europe had no more than 400. The Islamic culture that conquered Spain went on to translate the works of the ancient Greek philosophers and was familiar with the secrets of alchemy. In this vibrant world, Kabbalists intermingled with Sufis, and streams of wisdom flowed into Spain from both the far East and the North.

This sixth in the Open Center's series of conferences on the Western Esoteric Tradition will take place in Granada, the evocative and beautiful city lying below the snowy Sierra Nevada that, alone on the Iberian Peninsula, remained under Muslim control until the fateful year of 1492. Outstanding faculty from Spain, France, Britain and the United States will address such topics as: the Zohar, the Sufis of Andalusia, Arabic alchemy, Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi, the knowledge system of Ramon Llull, the troubadours, and the place of Spain and Islam in the Grail stories. Evenings will be filled with poetry, flamenco and music that emerged from the blending of '*Las Tres Culturas*'.

CONTACT:

For more information please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101 or write quest@opencenter.org. Please see our website at www.esotericquest.org for more information and program updates.



PLENARY SESSIONS

ARABIC ALCHEMY AND GNOSTICISM

Pierre Lory, Ph.D.



Arabic alchemy developed from the 8th century as the heir of the Alexandrine hermetic tradition. The huge alchemical literature in Arabic (several thousands of titles) spread from Iraq and Iran to the Maghreb and Spain. The first translations of such texts into Latin and/or

Hebrew were carried out in Spain during the 11th century. The very aim of alchemy—the disclosure of God’s wisdom and spirit concealed in the laws of mineral life—was not specifically pagan, but could be adapted as well by Muslims, Christians and Jews. Alchemy stands here as a form of wisdom (*hikma*) beyond religion.

BEACON OF LIGHT:

Ibn ‘Arabi and the Sufi Tradition of Al-Andalus

Stephen Hirtenstein, M.A.

In 1190, at the age of 25, Ibn ‘Arabi had his sublime vision in the Great Mosque in Cordoba, in which he met all the prophets and saints, from Adam to Muhammad. This event not only presaged his own crucial role within the Islamic spiritual tradition, but also integrated the esoteric teachings that had preceded him. One of the most remarkable figures of world spirituality, Ibn ‘Arabi penned writings which left an indelible mark on following centuries, becoming a beacon of light, tolerance and compassion. This talk will focus on his life and writings, including his famous meeting with Averroes, and explore the milieu of remarkable men and women he described.

Above: an alchemical-mystical commentary on an allegorical poem titled *Shudhr al-dhahab* (*Nuggets of Gold*)

THE ESOTERIC INTERPRETATION OF WORDS IN ANDALUSIAN SUFISM:

Exploring the Roots

Pablo Beneito, Ph.D.

The idea of a common original meaning permeating words with interrelated roots is a fundamental key to the understanding of many esoteric interpretations. To understand Sufi interpretations of revealed texts in Arabic, it is necessary to know how they conceived of certain words as sharing the same grammatical root, and thus created a highly relevant framework for contemplation and gnosis. This talk examines the special features of the Arabic language concerning the grammatical forms and roots of words—generally three letters—that are the base of a word’s composition. We will look at writings, including poetry and the Koranic commentaries of the Sufis, that reveal some of the secrets of esoteric Arabic semantics.

SUFIS AND KABBALISTS IN ANDALUSIA

Paul Fenton, Ph.D.

Medieval Spain has been a rich terrain for mystics of the three monotheistic faiths. For over a century, historians of religion have speculated on the possible connections between the spiritual masters of different traditions. Paul Fenton proposes to demonstrate in the light of literary works, such as the Jewish Sufi Bahya Ibn Paquda’s *Duties of the Hearts*, but also in light of personal testimonies, like that of the great Muslim mystic Ibn Arabi’s *Meccan Revelations*, that inter-confessional contacts did indeed take place. He traces some of these works through Muslim and Christian Spain and even North Africa, bringing out some of the mystical themes they hold in common.



The Troubadour, Werner von Teufen, Maness Codex

FRUITS OF AL-ANDALUS:

Troubadours, Kabbalists and Cathars
Christopher Bamford

Influences and esoteric streams of all kinds flowed from Mozarabic Spain through the South of France during the centuries leading up to what has been called “the 12th-century Renaissance.” We shall focus on the initiatory Sophianic path of love practiced by the Troubadours who arose in the context of a vibrant, evolutionarily significant spiritual vortex that also produced the *Zohar* and the little-known, maligned, misunderstood, and much persecuted Cathar religion. Doing so, we shall discover a profound cross-pollination between Sufism, mystical Judaism and esoteric Christianity, in which we can find the growing tip of a truly future-oriented ecumenical spirituality.



The Zohar

BLACK FIRE AND WHITE FIRE IN THE ZOHAR:

Written and Oral Kabbalistic Traditions

Mario Satz

According to *The Zohar, The Book of Splendor* (the 13th-century Spanish Kabbalah text), the *Torah* or *The Teachings* were taught in the two ways: that of the black fire (the written tradition) and that of the white fire (the oral tradition). The relationship between biblical wisdom and fire began with the burning bush and Moses on the mount. In the 19th century, the Hasidim of Central Europe took this theme further with much more fervor, and focused on how one would experience these teachings within one's own heart. These two traditions can be compared to the ancient proverb which says, "The Teachings of the Creator are like that of the iris in the eye of man," where light and darkness reside.

TERESA OF AVILA AND JOHN OF THE CROSS:

Jewish Roots, Sufi Soil

Mirabai Starr

In this talk, Mirabai Starr will offer an overview of the lives of the two great Spanish mystics of the Early Renaissance, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, paying special attention to how the esoteric teachings of Judaism and Sufism influenced each of them,

not only by virtue of the spiritual legacy that still lingered from the Golden Age of Spain, but also in their own family heritage. Mirabai will illustrate her talk with brief readings from her new translations of *Dark Night of the Soul*, by John of the Cross, and *The Interior Castle* and *The Book of My Life*, by Teresa of Avila.

THE FRAGRANCE OF YEMEN: The Shared Symbology of Spanish Mysticism and Sufism

Luce López-Baralt, Ph.D.

Strange as it may seem, some of the most important mystical symbols used by St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila are of Islamic origin. Miguel Asín Palacios, Spain's foremost Arabist, began researched the parallels between these Spanish mystics and their Sufi predecessors until his death in 1944. He was able to trace St. John's dark night of the soul to the Shadilite school of mysticism, as well as St. Theresa's seven concentric castles to an anonymous 16th-century treatise called the *Nawadir*. This talk updates these theories. What the critics have deemed extremely mysterious and "original" in Spanish mysticism is, in many ways, just the adaptation of Islamic mystical symbols.



THE ROYAL CITY OF THE ALHAMBRA:

A Paradise of Water, Light and Poetry

Antonio Orihuela, Ph.D.

The Alhambra occupies a hill which rises steeply into the old Islamic City of Granada. The walls once enclosed seven palaces, plus dwelling houses for officials and the nobility, as well as mosques, baths, workshops and gardens. The Nasrid sultans founded their Royal City at the beginning of 13th century with courtyards and gardens, and pools that reflected the architecture in water mirrors producing beautiful effects. Wooden and stucco lattices controlled the light and created a magical atmosphere along the walls, which were fully decorated with religious and poetic Arabic inscriptions.

Alhambra Palace



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

THE TEMPLARS AND ISLAM

Paul Bembridge, M.Phil.

Despite their historic role as a military Christian order in a frontier battle against Islam, both in the Near East and in the Iberian peninsula, the Knights Templar of the 12th and 13th centuries were instrumental in creating a climate of respect for the learning and spirituality of the Muslim culture they encountered, especially in Spain. Here, at the furthest extremities of Christendom, it seems, they found common ground between the deepest layers of their own Angevin culture and the Arabic civilization to which they gave access.

THE ISLAMIC AND JEWISH BACKGROUND OF GRAIL CHRISTIANITY

Paul Bembridge, M.Phil.

In *Parzival*, Wolfram von Eschenback redirected the gaze of his readers away from the Celtic Arthurian world of Chretien de Troy's story of the Grail, *Perceval*. He pointed to what he called a truer lineage and transmission of the Grail material as it emerged from the ancient world and travelled via Jewish-Muslim adepts in early medieval Spain through the Aragonese-Catalan corridor to Provence and then to his native German lands. The new era of Grail Christianity to which European initiates now looked, he indicated, would be one of Muslim, Jewish and Christian reconciliation.



The Sword in the Stone



Rumi

RUMI AND IBN 'ARABI:

The Meeting-Place of Two Seas

Stephen Hirtenstein, M.A.

It is remarkable that two such great mystical figures as Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi should have overlapped in time and space, and yet apparently had little to do with each other. Did they actually meet physically? Did Ibn 'Arabi influence his younger contemporary in any way? Is it accurate to characterize their teachings as markedly different? Or did they express the same fundamental message? What is the essence of their appeal today? In this workshop we will explore these questions and compare texts from their works with the aim of finding some answers.

GUARDIANS OF THE TREASURE

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil.

and Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.

Some of our most cherished Hermetic literature, such as the famous *Emerald Tablet*, has come down to us only through Arabic texts. In this workshop we will examine the transmission of ideas between Alexandria and the medieval Latin West through the portal of Islamic Spain. This workshop will examine some examples of the literature, preserved by Arab culture and embellished by the new learning, which was to play such a significant role in the 12th-century Renaissance.

THE ELABORATION OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Pierre Lory, Ph.D.

Alchemical texts may be interpreted as metaphorical descriptions of the transformation of the individual self through initiatory knowledge. Material operations did, however, take place. The purpose of this workshop is the evocation of this concrete work, in the laboratory of the alchemist, on the basis of Arabic texts used in medieval Spain. The questions raised are: what is the *materia prima* used? What is the "Stone" obtained in the laboratory meant to be? What are the relations between this precise material work and the quest of the mysterious perfect Master called "Imam"? Are 'matter' and 'spirit' evoked in those texts really different substances?

DOCTOR ILLUMINATUS: RAMON LLULL

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil.
and Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.

Catalan poet, novelist, scientist, linguist and mystic, Ramon Llull's (c. 1232–c. 1316) shining intelligence, sensitivity and breadth of learning remained a beacon well into the Renaissance and beyond. The *Ars Brevis* is an

introduction to Llull's Art, his most original and ambitious work of systemising knowledge. His most cherished work, *The Book of the Lover & the Beloved*, weaves together Llull's literary inheritance as a troubadour poet with Sufi and Franciscan mysticism. *The Book of the Gentile & the Three Wise Men*, based on the model of an earlier Arabic text, demonstrates the gracious way in which Llull sought to draw together men of goodwill from Christian, Jewish and Muslim persuasions.



Ramon Llull

THE MYSTICAL HEART OF ABRAHAM

Interpenetrating Perspectives in Judaism, Christianity and Islam
Christopher Bamford

We will explore the multiple inner connections between the three religions of the One God and ask how these could manifest in relatively peaceful coexistence in Al-Andalus. We will examine ways in which the three Revelations mysteriously seem to be each within the other, in endless conversation, forever echoing and referring to each other like magic, multidimensional Chinese Boxes. Against the still fluid background of their evolving theologies and practices, we will see what we can learn today of the virtues of the heart that unite them: love of God, neighbor, stranger and the Earth, and all that follows from these.

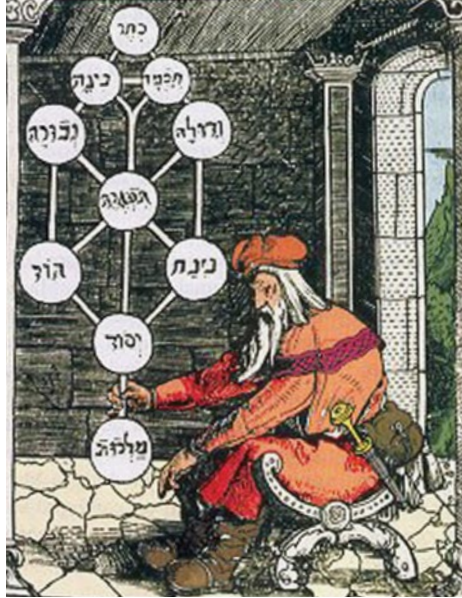


Abraham surrounded by flames, detail from manuscript Anthology of Iskandar, Iran, 1410

ALCHEMY OF CREATION

Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.

This talk takes us imaginatively into the alchemical drama of creation, where we can begin to explore the transformational journey of the mind and heart that is initiated by the alchemical process. By working creatively with the timeless symbols arising from the archetypal world of the psyche, we can discover the insights and special spiritual gifts that the alchemical quest still offers to the contemporary world.



The Tree of Life

THE CUP OF RECEPTIVITY

Tarot, Perennial Philosophy and Intuition

Ellen Goldberg, M.A.

The Tarot is a superb example of the perennial philosophy. Streams of wisdom from both east and west meet in this visual template of the path to Self-realization. Working with the Archetypal images of the Tarot cultivates receptivity and intuition. The Tarot is more than an oracle; it allows you to become your own oracle by connecting to the Inner Voice. The aim of this workshop is two-fold; we will look at some of the dominant philosophical precepts embodied in the Tarot which are shared by esoteric Christianity, Kabbalah and Sufism, and we will use the cards to open intuition.

TAROT AND THE KABBALAH

Ellen Goldberg, M.A.

We will look at the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 10 numbers of the Sefirot of the Tree of Life, and see how they breathe life and meaning into the Tarot. We will also consider some of the themes held in highest regard by both the kabbalah and the tarot, such as the healing of the world through the restoration of balance between the masculine and feminine, and the recovering of cosmic consciousness without renouncing the world.

LETTERS AND NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS OF SPIRITUAL REALITIES

Esoteric Systems of the Sufis
Pablo Beneito, Ph.D.

According to Islamic tradition, the root of all things is speech and words. Thus, letters are the principles of existence and knowledge. Letters in Hebrew and Arabic correspond to numbers. In respect to divine revelation in particular, numbers and letters are interpreted in terms of their qualitative meaning as symbols of spiritual realities. In the realm of spiritual geometry, numbers are proportions and the symbolic foundation for all relationships. In this workshop we will discuss the significance of the Sciences of Letters and Numbers and explain the different numerical systems used in their esoteric works by major Sufi writers.



Alchemical Tree from the Treatises of Ramon Llull

RABBI ABRAHAM ABULAFIA'S METHOD OF KABBALISTIC MEDITATION:

An Experiential Workshop
Paul Fenton, Ph.D.

Rabbi Abulafia developed a curious contemplative method called *hazkara*, involving meditation on Divine Names, a method which comes close to the Sufi practice of *dhikr*. This workshop proposes an introduction to this method, explaining the connection between the two traditions—the Hebrew and the Arabic—as well as a meditative exercise, involving spiritual music and breathing control.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE ZOHAR AND THE BAHIR

Mario Satz

The Zohar suggests that the tree of knowledge was actually what we know today as the fig tree. The fig tree has long had mystical significance and was highly revered during ancient Hebrew times. It is recognized throughout the *Bible* as both sacred and cursed, just as the tree in the Garden of Eden. An even more ancient source, the Hebrew book of *The Bahir* (The Book of Brightness), identifies the tree of life as the palm tree. The symbolism of these trees has inspired great works of poetry and architecture over the centuries. They represent humankind's dual nature: one which says we are confined by our physical bodies to the limits of time and space; and another that speaks of our more profound and limitless essence.



BEAUTIFUL WOUND: THE WISDOM OF THE SPANISH MYSTICS

Mirabai Starr

We will explore how the Spanish mystics, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, offer contemplative practice as a way of transforming deep sorrow into heightened spiritual aliveness. We will weave short periods of contemplative silence with readings from Mirabai's translations of *Dark Night of the Soul*, *The Interior Castle* and *The Book of My Life*. We will include ample time for discussion of how these teachings connect with participants' own lives, losses and transformations.

ISLAM IN SPANISH LITERATURE

Luce Lopez-Baralt, Ph.D.

Spanish literature showed evidence of a decisive Islamic influence as late as the Renaissance. The dialogue among Christians, Arabs and Jews that lasted more than eight centuries deeply influenced the hybrid, immensely original literary works produced in Spain from the Middle Ages to the present. The *kharijas*, considered the first "Spanish" poetry, were written in Mozarabic but were transliterated in both Arabic and Hebrew characters; Ramon Llull wrote his esoteric treatises in both Catalan and Arabic; Cervantes playfully proposed that the author of *Don Quixote* was an Islamic chronicler. And the last Muslims of Spain or *moriscos* wrote a secret literature in Spanish in which they explored how it felt to be forced to abandon their religion and their cultural identity.

NATURAL CHANT PART 1 AND PART 2

Catherine Braslavsky and Joseph Rowe

In all cultures and in all ages, the human voice has been honored as the most precious of all musical instruments, and it has always been sustained by rhythm. Practices which make use of voice and rhythms together, especially with movement, have always been a powerful means of raising and deepening consciousness beyond the habitual. They allow us to play, to dance, to commune with each other, to purify and renew ourselves, and to heal. In our civilization, we have mostly lost this art. We rarely sing together and have lost a true sense of our natural rhythm. This workshop is an intensive approach to rediscovering the authentic, natural roots of music in our own bodies and souls.

ALCHEMICAL WISDOM IN THE AGE OF ALFONSO THE WISE

Leigh J. McCloskey

This workshop is a visual inquiry into and overview of the transmission of alchemical wisdom to the West during the age of Alfonso the Wise. Author, actor and visual philosopher, Leigh J. McCloskey, will present an illustrated journey through books, ideas, art and architecture that captures the creative spirit alive and vibrant in the philosophical openness and religious tolerance enjoyed in significant periods of Medieval Andalusia. He is creating this presentation in collaboration with his colleague and friend, author and Hermetic Scholar, Stanislas Klossoswki de Rola.

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

Each afternoon there will be a guided tour of rarely visited parts of the celebrated Alhambra Palace, a marvelous complex of Moorish buildings that include a fortress, palaces and the Generalife gardens. These tours will be conducted by some of the most knowledgeable scholars, architects and historians in the city of Granada.

One afternoon there will also be a showing of the dramatic film *Destiny* directed by the celebrated Egyptian film maker, Youssef Chahine. It tells the story of Averroes, the great 12th-century Islamic philosopher and interpreter of Aristotle, and his struggle against fundamentalism. Once protected by the ruling Caliph of Cordoba, Averroes finds his life in jeopardy when the Caliph succumbs to fundamentalist influence and orders all of Averroes' books to be burned. His students unite in a frantic race to ensure that the enlightened impressions of the philosopher endure.

On certain afternoons there will be an opportunity for informal group discussion to explore the relevance of the contents of this conference to the current world situation. There will also be free time each afternoon to enjoy this beautiful and intriguing city.

Each of the districts of Granada offers something different. The old town is full of churches and monasteries, and quaint, charming little squares. Parts of the Albayzín have the sleepy, timeless feel of a Moroccan hill town, and some gypsy families still live in caves in the primitive hillside of Sacromonte. Historical sights are to be found on all sides, including the murals inside the Red Towers, which were built immediately after the Arabs and their Berber soldiers took control of Granada in the eighth century.



EVENING ACTIVITIES

AN EVENING OF SUFI AND SPANISH POETRY

Robert Bly

The American poet, Robert Bly, is widely known for his translations and readings of the work of Rumi and Hafiz. Few artists have done as much to bring the great Sufi poets to the attention of the English-speaking world. This evening, he will also read his translations of the great Spanish poets Antonio Machado, Juan Ramon Jimenez and Federico Garcia Lorca.

AN EVENING OF FLAMENCO

The passionate, dramatic dancing of Flamenco emerged from a mix of the Gypsy, Arabic and Iberian cultures. This evening will feature some of the most gripping and intense performers of this ancient art form that brings alive the soul of Andalusia.

AN EVENING OF MUSIC FROM JERUSALEM TO CORDOBA:

*A Voyage in Time, Space and Religions Through Chant, Music and Texts
with Catherine Braslavsky and Joseph Rowe*

This evening is a celebration of the musical and mystical traditions in and around the Mediterranean, from ancient Judaism and Paganism to medieval Christianity and Islam. We will hear ancient and original music sung in Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, Greek, Occitan and Arabic. The performance includes quotations from Ibn 'Arabi, Yehuda Halevi, Hildegard of Bingen and others, and evokes a rarely-perceived common ground and alternative view of sacred traditions which have so often been in conflict.



POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEYS

Participants will have the option of two post-conference journeys. One will travel through the sacred sites of Andalusia. The other will venture to Marrakech, Morocco.

JOURNEY TO MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

September 21-25

Marrakech was the starting point of the ancient caravan routes across the Sahara and remains one of the most magical cities in North Africa. Here we will meet Sufis, visit places of spiritual significance and absorb the exotic ambience of this legendary place. This journey will take us into the heart of the medina of Marrakech, an ancient world of storytellers, snake charmers and musicians.

We will also visit the verdant valley of Ourika, home to indigenous Berber villages of the high Atlas Mountains. Participants can then choose between a trip to the beautiful, refreshing Atlantic town of Essaouira, or a visit to the shrines of seven Sufi saints around Marrakech. This extraordinary journey will occur at one of the most sacred times of the year in both the Jewish and Islamic calendars, as Ramadan and Yom Kippur will be converging during this period. Yom Kippur services will be arranged for those who wish to observe the High Holy Days.

This post-conference journey will begin Friday, September 21st, and will conclude after breakfast on Tuesday, September 25th. Participants will stay at The Hotel Alixares in Granada on the evening of September 20th before departure for Morocco.

Price: \$1195 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1455 for a single room. This cost includes accommodations from September 20-24, all meals in Morocco (participants are responsible for their own dinner on September 20), English-speaking tour guides, bus travel in Morocco and entrance fees to sites and one-way air fare between Granada and Marrakech.

Please note: In order to travel with The Open Center as a group, registration must be received by Wednesday, July 18th.

A JOURNEY TO THE SACRED PLACES OF ANDALUSIA

Two options: *4 days (September 20-24) or 9 days (September 20-29)*

We will begin this journey immediately after lunch on the last day of the conference, with faculty member Stephen Hirstenstein as our guide. Our adventure begins with a private tour of the olive oil mill of the Nunez de Prado Family set in the countryside of Baena. From there we will continue to the capital of the western world in the 11th century, Cordoba, where we will see the magnificent Mosque-Cathedral, the old Jewish quarter and the Alcazar Palace.

Outside of Cordoba we will visit the moving ruins of Medinat al-Zahra, the forgotten Versailles of the Middle Ages where nightingales sang in perfumed gardens at the apex of Islamic Spain. From there we cross the fertile countryside to Seville, the orange blossom city and one of the most beautiful cities in the world. In Seville we will explore Santa Cruz (the old Jewish Quarter), visit the Royal Fortress and see the huge Gothic Cathedral which was the original site of Seville's 12th-century Mosque. The journey will end after breakfast on the 24th in Seville for those only traveling with us for four days.

Those continuing on the longer journey will travel "The Route of the White Villages," making stops at Arcos de la Frontera, situated on a mountain range 500 feet above the Guadalete river; Zahara de la Sierra, built on Moorish foundations and located on a mountainside; and Ronda, the jewel of Andalusia. We will then head to Costa de la Luz "The Coast of Light" and visit the town of Tarifa as well as the ancient Roman town of Baelo Claudia. Our path will include the seaside town of Vejer de la Frontera, a perfectly preserved example of what many Andalusian towns were like during five centuries of Islamic occupation. We will also travel to Medina-Sidonia, considered by some to be the oldest city in Europe, and return to Seville via the ancient city of Moron and Marchena, "The Unknown Beauty." Our last night will be spent in Seville and after breakfast on the 29th everyone can depart from the Seville airport.

Price: \$795 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1050 for a single room for the four-day tour; \$1495 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1950 for a single room for the nine-day tour.

These prices include all accommodations, all breakfasts and dinners (participants will be free to explore on their own for lunch, suggestions will be made by our guide), all entrance fees, and travel in a luxury coach.

For a full itinerary, please see www.esotericquest.org.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Christopher Bamford is editorial director of Lindisfarne/Steiner books and the author of *An Endless Trace: The Passionate Pursuit of Wisdom in the West*. Two of his essays have been recognized in *Best Spiritual Writing* (2000 and 2005).

Paul Bembridge, M.Phil., a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, has a life-long interest in the alternative spiritual traditions of the West developed over a long career teaching literature in UK universities.

Pablo Beneito, Ph.D., is professor in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Seville. He has been visiting professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne), and the Escuela de Traductores de Toledo. He has edited and translated several of Ibn 'Arabi's works and recently published the anthology *La Taberna de Las Luces* on Sufi poetry. He is director of the research group El Saber en Al-Andalus.

Robert Bly is one of America's best-known poets and the author of many books, including: *My Sentence Was a Thousand Years of Joy*, *Eating the Honey of Words* and *The Light Around the Body*, for which he won the National Book Award. He is also the author of *Iron John* and *The Sibling Society*.

Catherine Braslavsky is a former member of the Harmonic Choir, with whom she performed all over the world. Since 1995 she has recorded five albums, including *Alma Anima*, and performed in major concerts throughout Europe. Based in Paris, she also directs the musical group Credo, representing Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions.

Paul Fenton, Ph.D., is professor of Hebrew Language and Literature at the Sorbonne. He has published extensively on Jewish civilization in the Islamic world, especially on the mystical tradition. His recent publications include work on the Golden Age of Spain and on Maimonides.

Ellen Goldberg, M.A., is a psychotherapist, artist and mystic working within the Hermetic Tradition. She has been teaching Tarot at the New York Open Center for twenty years. Ellen is the director of the 'School of Oracles,' and writes on both these subjects. She has taught at four previous Open Center esoteric conferences.

Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A., is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Exeter where she teaches The Hermetic Art of Alchemy in the master's course in Western Esotericism. Her book examining the Gnostic inspiration of many of C. G. Jung's most powerful ideas, *G. R. S. Mead & the Gnostic Quest*, was published last year by North Atlantic Books.

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil., is professor of western esotericism at the University of Exeter and the author of many books on the Western esoteric tradition including works on the visionary savant, Emanuel Swedenborg; *Paracelsus: Essential Readings*; and *The Rosicrucian Prelude: John Dee's Mission in Central Europe* in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited*, edited by Ralph White.

Stephen Hirtenstein, M.A., is the author of *The Unlimited Mercifier, a spiritual biography of Ibn 'Arabi*, and co-translator of two treatises by Ibn 'Arabi, *Divine Sayings* and *The Seven Days of the Heart*. He has been the editor of the *Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society's Journal* since its inception in 1982 and director of Anqa Publishing.

Luce López-Baralt, Ph.D., is professor of Spanish and Comparative Literatures at the University of Puerto Rico. The author of over twenty books, she has lectured worldwide on Spanish and Arabic literature and mysticism. She has been a visiting scholar at Harvard and Yale and a recipient of Guggenheim and Fulbright fellowships, and is currently finishing *La Literatura Secreta de los Ultimos Musulmanes de España*.

Pierre Lory, Ph.D., is professor of Islamic mysticism at the Sorbonne and a specialist in Islamic spirituality and esotericism. His works include *La Science de Lettres de Islam* on Islamic qabbala, *Alchimie et Mystique en Terre d'Islam* and *On the Religious Interpretations of Dreams in Islam*.

Leigh J. McCloskey is an author, visual philosopher and actor. His first book, *Tarot Revisited*, has been reviewed as one of the most important books on the Tarot in many years. He is currently working with Stanislas Kossowski De Rola on a television program dealing with esoteric themes.

Antonio Orihuela, Ph.D., is a researcher and head of the department of the School of Arabic Studies (Granada). He holds a doctorate in Islamic Architecture. He has directed the restoration projects of twenty historical buildings (palaces, houses, castles and city walls) and is the author of four books, including *Casas y Palacios Nazaries* and *En Busca de la Granada Andalusí*.

Joseph Rowe studied Middle Eastern music with the late Nubian Sufi musician and world-music pioneer Hamza El Din. After years of playing classical and flamenco guitar, he turned to the oud (the Arab ancestor of the lute) and to traditional percussion. He has appeared in numerous major festivals with Catherine Braslavsky, and also composes music for theater, television and film.

Mario Satz is a poet, novelist, essayist and translator who teaches seminars on kabbala internationally. His novel-essay, *Azahar*, portrays the city of Granada in the Fourteenth Century. A recipient of the Italian government's Fellowship Award for his work on Pico della Mirandola's approach to kabbalah, his books include *Pathways in the Garden of the Heart* and *The Most Splendid Fruit of the Tree of Kabala*.

Mirabai Starr is an adjunct professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of New Mexico-Taos. She is the author of several critically acclaimed translations of the Spanish mystics, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, including *Dark Night of the Soul*, *The Interior Castle* and *Teresa of Avila: Book of My Life*.

Ralph White is co-founder and creative director of the New York Open Center, one of America's leading institutions of holistic learning, and editor of *Lapis* magazine on-line. He has directed and organized a series of six international conferences on Western Esotericism, of which this is the latest. He edited and introduced *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited* and writes on holistic, social and spiritual topics.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

CONFERENCE FEE

Course Code: 07SQUEST

Registration by June 14: \$1675

July 12: \$1825

August 15: \$1975

The conference fee includes the full conference program, all meals and evening entertainment.

ACCOMMODATIONS FEE

Accommodations are provided for the nights of Saturday, September 15 through Wednesday, September 19.

For single rooms, prices range from \$95-\$240 a night.

For double rooms, prices range from \$125-\$270 a night per room. Please specify if you will be attending as a couple or wish to share a room with a friend.

For details about the hotels, please see our website at www.esotericquest.org or contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527, ext. 101, or at quest@opencenter.org.

PAYMENT

All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Spain. An affordable

payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527, ext. 101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Registrants must make their own travel arrangements to (and from) Granada (or your final destination if you are joining us for a post-conference trip).

ARRIVAL IN GRANADA

Both taxis and airport buses are available at Granada's Federico Lorca Airport for the 16km drive into the city. Travel information from the airport and from Malaga are on our website, www.esotericquest.org. You will receive a letter confirming the location of your hotel upon registration.

We recommend that all participants check into their hotels on the afternoon of Saturday, September 15th where they will also pick up their conference packet, which will include maps, conference schedules, locations and directions.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The conference will begin on the evening of September 15th as we meet for an Orientation followed by dinner at the Carmen de San Miguel restaurant. Each day that follows, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch at the Hotel Alixares.

After lunch there will be an afternoon break allowing participants to explore Granada. Later in the afternoon there will be a choice of workshops to attend followed by dinner, and after dinner we will gather for an evening of culture and celebration at the Biblioteca. The conference will end after lunch on Thursday, September 20th.

REFUNDS

A full refund, less a \$200 processing fee, will be offered for cancellations made through July 31, 2007. Travel insurance is recommended in the event that you need to cancel or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control. You can purchase it online or from your own travel agent. Travel insurance options are available at www.myinsurance.com.

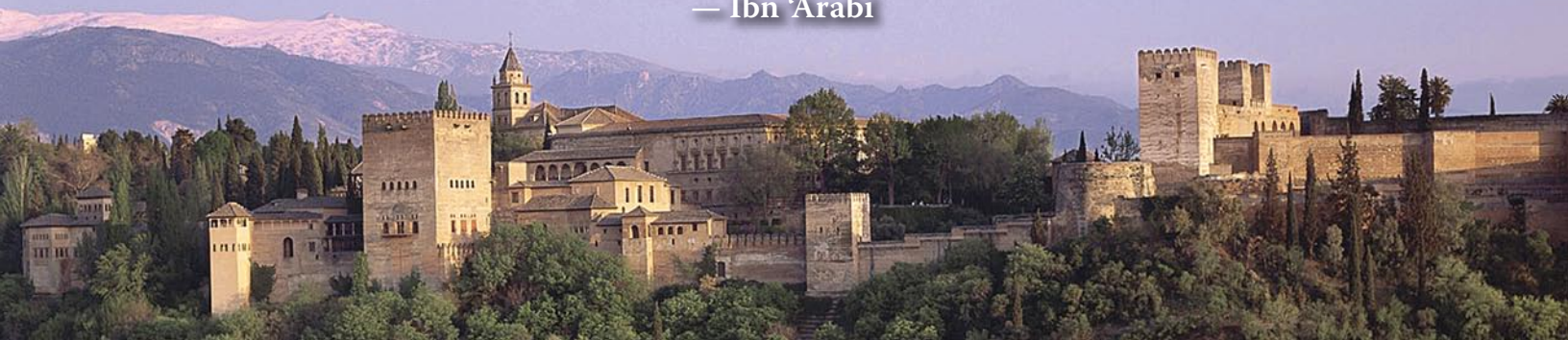
TAKING CARE OF THE PLANET

Our Esoteric Quests take us to many wonderful places around the world. We here at the Open Center are committed to caring for the planet. As always, our brochure is printed on recycled paper and this year we will be neutralizing the effect our staff air travel has on climate change. We invite you to join us in this commitment by visiting www.sustainabletravelinternational.org so you can find out how many greenhouse gases are generated by your journey and then purchase Green Tags which make your travel 100% climate neutral.

"My heart has become capable of all forms. It is a meadow for gazelles and a monastery for Christian monks, a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'aba, the Tables of the Law and the book of the Koran.

*I profess the religion of Love, and whatever direction Its steed may take,
Love is my religion and my faith."*

— Ibn 'Arabi



CONFERENCE PROGRAMS INCLUDE

AN EVENING OF SUFI AND SPANISH POETRY

Robert Bly

SUFIS AND KABBALISTS

Contemplative Meditation in the Mystical Method of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia

Paul Fenton

THE MYSTICAL HEART OF ABRAHAM

Interpenetrating Perspectives in Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Christopher Bamford

ARABIC ALCHEMY AND GNOSTICISM

Pierre Lory

BEACON OF LIGHT:

Ibn 'Arabi and the Sufi Tradition of Al-Andalus

Stephen Hirtenstein, M.A.

THE ROYAL CITY OF THE ALHAMBRA:

A Paradise of Water, Light and Poetry

Antonio Orihuela

THE TEMPLARS AND ISLAM

Paul Bembridge

DOCTOR ILLUMINATUS: RAMON LLULL

Nicholas and Clare Goodrick-Clarke

BLACK FIRE AND WHITE FIRE IN THE ZOHAR:

Written and Oral Kabbalistic Traditions

Mario Satz

THE ESOTERIC INTERPRETATION OF WORDS IN ANDALUSIAN SUFISM:

Exploring the Roots

Pablo Beneito

TERESA OF AVILA AND JOHN OF THE CROSS: JEWISH ROOTS, SUFI SOIL

The Shared Symbology of Spanish Mysticism and Sufism

Luce López-Baralt

FROM JERUSALEM TO CORDOBA

Catherine Braslavsky and Joseph Rowe



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An Esoteric Quest for THE GOLDEN AGE OF ANDALUSIA

SUFIS, KABBALISTS AND CHRISTIAN
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