

## ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

**Islamic** architecture has passed through different eras. In the early days of Islam, it was a model of simplicity, and then gradually this skill became famous till the time came when it reached its peak. Architecture is one of the most important reflections of any culture, because this is a mirror which reflects the development, taste and philosophy of nations and this is also a confirmed reality that architecture represents the true picture of growth and development of human culture.

There are different types of Islamic architecture like construction of mosques—which is the most marvelous way of construction near Muslims—construction of castles, homes and schools etc. Muslims have complete expertise in this skill because they had the knowledge of the buildings of the early cultures. Thereafter, they developed it more according to their religion and belief. Then they presented it in a special form in front of the world.

In the next pages, we will present some examples of Islamic architecture in different Islamic eras so that we know that how much the Muslims have considered about the Islamic principle of architecture.

### **ARCHITECTURE OF THE TIME OF PROPHET (SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam) AND THE RIGHTLY-GUIDED CALIPHS:**

Muslims completely adapted the constructing rules and regulations during the time of Prophet (SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the Rightly-guided Caliphs.

**THE MOSQUE OF PROPHET** (SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam): The Prophet (SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam) constructed this mosque in Al-Madinah Al Munawwarah. This mosque was the model of simplicity because simplicity has a deep relation with the Islamic spirit. It was square-shaped with an open courtyard in the middle and roof constructed around it. The wall adjacent to the Qiblah was bigger than the other walls. It is important to consider here that there was open courtyard in the middle of the mosque for light and air.

This mosque was expanded after the era of prophethood. Hazrat Umar Bin Khattab (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) expanded the mosque, because of which all those walls were demolished, which were constructed by Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*), except the eastern wall, which was adjacent to the house of Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*). Thereafter, the expansion continued in different eras. The current expansion was made during the time of late King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz, under which the whole city during the time of Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*) was included in the mosque. Due to this great expansion plan, the mosque became a great masterpiece of structures.

**THE AQSA MOSQUE:** When Muslims conquered the Bait-ul-Maqdas during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar Farooq (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*), Hazrat Umar (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*), before leaving the city, ordered for the construction of a mosque near *Sakhra* and the place where *Burraq* was tied along. At this place, Hazrat Umar (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) had offered the prayers along with his companions. During this time period, many Companions got settled in Bait-ul-Maqdas for the preaching of Islam and promotion of religion. Caliph Abdul Malik Bin Marwan started the construction of the Aqsa Mosque and Caliph Waleed Bin Abdul Malik completed its construction and decorated it. The Abbasid Caliph Abu Jafar Mansoor repaired this mosque. After the first Crusade, when the Christians conquered Bait-ul-Maqdas, they did so many changes in the Aqsa Mosque. They constructed several rooms inside the mosque and named it as the Sulaiman Temple. In addition, they added other buildings which were used as residential places and for stocking grains. They created a church inside the mosque as well as along with it. Emperor Salah-uddin Ayubi conquered Bait-ul-Maqdas in 1187 A.D and then cleared out the mosque from all traces of the Christians. He reconstructed the Mihraab and the mosque.

**HOUSES:** The way in which the mosques were models of simplicity during the time period of Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs; in the same way their houses were also simple. The Holy Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*) had nine rooms, out of which four were made of sand and palm leaves and the rest of the five were made of bricks. The roofs were

very low. The hand could easily reach the roofs. The Companions (*RadhiAllahu Anhum*) had the similar kind of houses.

**CITY:** Muslims settled several cities in both of these eras. Some of the examples are as follows:

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF FUSTAAT:** Hazrat AMR Bin Aas (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) constructed this city in Egypt according to the order of Hazrat Umar Bin Khattab (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*). Initially, this city was constructed without any specific planning. The houses were smaller and the windows were also small because the main objective was to take shelter. An open courtyard was made in the centre of the house through which the light and wind could pass through. In the beginning, the house was single-storied. Then in the last time period of Hazrat Umar Bin Khattab (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*), multiple-storied buildings were constructed.

Nowadays, Fustaat is the part of the district ‘Old Egypt’ of Cairo. In Arabic language, Fustaat means ‘tent’. This city was named as Fustaat because Hazrat AMR Bin Aas (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) decided the construction of this city on the same place where the *Mujahideen* stayed and placed the tent of Hazrat AMR Bin Aas (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*). This is why this city was named as Fustaat.

**AMR BIN AAS MOSQUE:** This is the first mosque constructed in Egypt and in the whole region of Africa. This mosque was constructed in the city of Fustaat after the conquest of Egypt by Muslims. This mosque is also called Fatah Mosque, Ateeq Mosque and Taaj-ul-Jawame. Jaame AMR Bin Al Aas is situated in the eastern part of River Nile.

On its initial construction, this mosque was built at an area measuring 50 x 30. It had six gates. AMR Bin Al Aas Mosque retained its initial construction till 53 Hijrah/672 A.D. On the order of Hazrat Ameer Mu’avia (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*), Hazrat Maslama bin Mukhlid Al-Ansari added four pulpits to call the Azaan. Thereafter the expansion work and continuous reforms continued in different eras.

Today, AMR Bin Al Aas Mosque stands at an area measuring 110 metres length and 120 metres breadth. In 564 Hijrah, due to the invasions of crusaders, when the minister Shawar feared the capture of the city of Fustaat by the crusaders, he due to the lack of defensive force, deliberately fired up the city of Fustaat. As a result the whole city of Fustaat was burned, including AMR Bin Al Aas Mosque which was also affected due to this fire.

When Salah-uddin included Egypt in his government, he ordered the reconstruction of AMR Bin Aas Mosque in 568 Hijrah. Therefore the front side of the mosque and the biggest Mihraab was reconstructed. Marble was used in it and different patterns were designed on it.

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