

UMAYYAD ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS

Simple buildings were used to be constructed before Umayyad era. In Umayyad times, when relations with Persian and Roman cultures were established, attention was paid to construct masterpiece buildings. The natural demonstration of this glory was made in the form of the construction of great mosques. When the cantonment of Kufa was constructed in the period of Hazrat Ameer Mu'avia (RadhiAllahu Anhu), a marvelous mosque was constructed in the centre of it. Besides this, the buildings of Umayyad dynasty are as under:

THE QUBA-TUS-SAKHRA MOSQUE: Islamic architecture witnessed more development in the times of Abdul Malik. Quba-tus-Sakhra is one of the most important buildings of that period in terms of architecture and elegance. Sakhra is that top of the mountain from where Prophet (*SallAllahu Alaihi Wasallam*) ascended to the heavens on the night of *Meraj* (Prophet's ascension to heaven). Abdul Malik constructed a dome at this place. In terms of skilled excellence and beauty, floral designs, patterns, elegance, attraction and durability, this is a great masterpiece of Islamic architecture. In this construction, some raw material and precious gems taken from the old ruins were also used, which shows that from here a new period of Islamic architecture started in which floral designs, patterns were specifically used.

Afterwards, the Basra mosques were reconstructed. For this purpose, services of Sāsani architects were obtained. In both of these buildings, Sāsani-style pillars were constructed. It was the first time when a Minatare was constructed in the mosque of Basra, which later was considered as a distinctive feature of Islamic architecture. A new series of construction of residential palaces started with the construction of the Khizr Palace in the period of Hazrat Ameer Mu'avia (*RadhiaAllahu Anhu*).

JAME-MOSQUE DAMASCUS: This is an excellent achievement of Islamic architecture. It was constructed by Waleed Bin Abdul Malik between 88 to 96 Hijrah. A lot of money was spent on the Jame Mosque Damascus. All the walls were decorated with marble and '*pichi kaari*' of gems (gem studded). This mosque is an excellent example in terms of its decoration and beauty.

THE PALACES OF Umayyads: Apart from the religious buildings, there are other memorable buildings of Umayyads too in the fields of construction, for example, the desert palaces, in which the people of the royal family used to stay. In these palaces, Khizr Palace and Umaira Palace etc. are famous. Such types of ruins of desert palaces are still present.

In the Caliphate of Banu Umayyads, the period of Waleed Bin Abdul Malik is very famous for the structures. In that period, the contacts with the other cultures increased and the worldly decoration was acquired which was not Haraam or unlawful in Islam. Side by side, the Muslims did not ignore the decoration of the Hereafter; instead they specifically conducted the religious matters.

ABBASID ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS

In the Abbasid dynasty, contacts with the other cultures increased. Therefore the use of structures and floral work was also increased. In this period, palaces were specifically constructed and several cities were settled.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF BAGHDAD: A great achievement of Caliph Mansoor is the construction of Baghdad. The capital of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (May Allah be pleased with them) was Madina. The Umayyad Dynasty has Damascus as their capital. In order to build the capital of Bani Abbas, Caliph Mansoor settled a new city by the bank of River Tigris, which became famous with the name of Baghdad. Caliph Mansoor first got this city mapped before its settlement. The map of the city of Baghdad was circular-shaped. There were four important ways for its entrance. The construction work of this city continued from 145 Hijrah to 148 Hijrah. There were two external fortresses of this city. The internal fortress was very wide and high. There was 6 metre wide trench surrounding the external fortress of the city from all the four sides.

In the heart of the city was the palace of Mansoor. It was called the Golden Palace.

It was a very magnificent palace which the Muslims had never seen before. Next to the castle was the mosque. There were houses of the governors and official buildings around the palace. There was public residence in the centre of the four important ways. This city had eight iron gates.

Later Baghdad developed so much that it became the biggest city of the world. Its population increased to more than 2 million people. It is said that at its peak time

there were seventeen thousand baths, mosques more in number, ten thousand roads and lanes in Baghdad.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY OF SAMARRA : It was known as **سُرَّ مَنْ رَأَى** (who sees it becomes fascinated). Before the foundation of this city, this was the prayer place of the Christians which was later bought by Caliph Mu'tasim. The Caliph settled this city along the bank of River Tigris at a distance of seventy five miles North of Baghdad. The Caliph made it the capital. This city prospered a lot competed with Baghdad by its magnificent buildings and beauty.

This city has immense importance in terms of Islamic architecture, because during that time period this skill was developed greatly. Cities had been started settling with planning. Simplicity had been replaced by floral and gems work. A lot of money had been spent in the construction of the buildings which was against the Islamic teachings.

THE JAME MOSQUE OF SAMARRA : This is the biggest mosque among the ancient mosques of Islamic world. Its area is undoubtedly one and the half of the Toluni Mosque of Egypt. Its construction was started in the period of Caliph Mu'tasim and was completed in the times of Caliph Mutawakkil. Its area is rectangular in shape. Its length is 260 metres and breadth is 180 metres. There was a capacity of more than one lakh worshippers to offer *salat* (prayer) in it. The minaret of this mosque was 175 feet high; it holds a distinctive position due to its unique way of construction.

THE FOUNDATION OF MADINA-TUL-AL-QATĀ'I: Ahmed Bin Tolun founded this city in Egypt in the style of the city of Samarra . He chose a spacious place in the North East of the city of Askar (The Askar city was founded by

Abbasids near the city of Fustaat). Ibn Tolun built a magnificent palace in 256 Hijrah. He made a spacious ground in front of it where he used to do exercise. Later, he allowed the public to construct their houses as a result of which Askar city and Fustaat city were connected. There is a mountain range in the centre of this city which is known as 'Koh-e-Bashkar'. At this very place, Ibn Tolun built a very grand mosque. In this city were markets, baths and flour mills. Ibn Tolun built a bridge which is known as 'Imam Bridge' nowadays.

The palace which Ibn Tolun built is beyond our imagination. A lot of money was spent on its construction. After the death of Ibn Tolun, his son Khumarvia spent extravagantly in the construction of this palace because of which he became so weak economically and that is what became the source of downfall of his government.

IBN TOLUN MOSQUE: Ibn Tolun built this mosque in Madina Al-Qata'i which was situated at the mountain range of Koh-e-Bashkar. The mosque was adjacent to the ground which he built in front of his palace. That is why this mosque is also called 'The Mosque with the ground'. There is an open courtyard in the centre of the mosque.

THE PALACES OF ABBASIDS: Abbasids built excellent and magnificent palaces like the Mu'tasim Palace in Samarra , The Mamoon Palace and several other palaces.

With this, we get to know that in the Abbasid dynasty, the skill of architecture was influenced by other cultures, especially in terms of the designs and patterns and floral work, and a lot of money was spent extravagantly in the construction of magnificent palaces which is totally against the Islamic spirit.

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