

## ARCHITECTURE & BUILDINGS OF ANDALUSIAN DYNASTY AND WEST

**The** time period of Muslim architecture in Andalusia (Spain) is consisted of seven hundred years approximately. This time is spread from the beginning of the construction of Jame Qurtaba (Cordoba Mosque) in 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. till the completion of Alhambra Palace in Granada in the 15<sup>th</sup> centry A.D. During this time period, hundreds of buildings such as baths, palaces, mosques, tombs, educational institutes and bridges etc. were built. A detailed description of these construction works requires a voluminous book.

While studying the Andalusian architecture, it is important to remember that here the Muslim emperors and the majority of people were not convinced of following the old culture blindly. Instead, a new culture was born and as a result of which a new society came into being. The signs of this new culture are reflected from every style of their buildings. Some of the memorable buildings of Andalusia are:

**JAME MOSQUE OF CORDOBA:** For the first time, the idea of building of this mosque conceived by Ameer Abdul Rahman Awwal (The First) Known as "Ad-Dakhil' (756-788) when he controlled the internal insurgencies on one side and managed to solve the external risks on the other. He started this work just two years before his death. The Ameer wanted to make this mosque equivalent to the Umayyad Jame Mosque, Damascus and to grant a new position to the people of Andalusia and West. This is the reason that he supervised over its construction on his own.

The external walls of the mosque were so high that they seemed to be the fortress of the city. The roof of the mosque is consisted of multiple pillars which are arranged in a way that their intersection has created many parallel ways on both sides. There are very sumptuous Horseshoe Arches erected on these pillars. These Horseshoe Arches are not only the reason of distinction of this great mosque but they have also been the symbol of Spanish Architecture. There are double arches made on these pillars of Jame Cordoba. It means one arch is overlapped on the other arch and hence been connected to the roof. Domes are constructed at some places of these arches, out of which some of them are existing even today. The roof was 30 feet high from the ground, because of which the wind and light could easily

pass through the mosque. Two hundred twinkling stars were formed on the roof, some of which in the internal courtyard were made of pure silver. Also, the roof was also decorated with different woodworked panels. There was a different design on every panel. There was a huge copper chandelier hanging in the centre of the mosque in which thousands of lamps burned simultaneously. There was gold work on the gate of special courtyard, whereas the arch and its adjacent wall were made up of gold. The pillars of marbles were beautifully designed with gold.

After Abdul Rahman Al Dakhil, Ameer Hasham Awwal (the First) (788-796) became the Ameer. He also continued the construction and expansion of this mosque. During his seven years of government, he spent one-fifth of the whole spoils of war in the construction of the mosque. The great minaret of this mosque, which was four-sided, was constructed in his time period. This tower was considered among the wonders of the world.

The reality is, the completion of this magnificent and unique mosque took not months and years but centuries. Every Ameer spent a lot on it according to his capacity and taste. Thousands of labourers under the supervision of hundreds of architects participated with all their might in the construction and decoration of this mosque then it got this position which is acquired by very few buildings.

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF MADINA-TUZ-ZOHRA:** Abdul Rahman Bin Nasir constructed it in 325 Hijrah. He asked for marbles from Africa, Rome and Constantinople for its construction. He built the Monis Palace in it, whose fountain was made of marble and a picture of living creature was made in it which is totally forbidden in Islam.

Thus, he spent a lot of money in its construction. It continued for forty years, twenty-five years in his life and fifteen years after his death. Daily, ten thousand labourers worked. There were magnificent palaces for members of the royal family, houses for the employees and government office in it. There was also a zoo in it where different animals wandered around and the people of the city came here for enjoyment.

After the completion of the palaces of Madina-Tuz-Zohra, people congratulated the Caliph. It was the day of Friday. All the people gathered in the mosque for prayer. Qazi Munzar addressed the Sermon and in this Sermon, he condemned this extravagance of Abdul Rahman. Qazi Munzar was a very brave Qazi. He never

refrained from speaking the truth. Abdul Rahman was also a very just ruler and he had appointed a person like Qazi Munzar for the same purpose that he would never get afraid of making his decisions with equity and justice. That is why he listened to Qazi's talking patiently, confessed his mistake and started crying.

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALHAMBRA PALACE:** The most memorable building in architecture of the emperors and craftsmen of Granada is Alhambra. The palace and its gardens are called 'Jannat-ul-Ma'arif' which are the excellent models of the architecture of Andalusian Muslims. The position that 'Taj Mahal' of India has among the ancient buildings, the same position Alhambra has in Andalusia. Tourists from all around the world come to Granada to see this and they return praising its architects and craftsmen.

The important constructive centres of the western cities are Ishbilia, Morocco, Granada and Fez. Other than these, there are several memorable historical buildings of Islamic culture in the western cities.

### **THE FATIMID ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS:**

Fatimids also left several architectural masterpieces, some of which are as follows:

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF CAIRO:** When Jauhar-us-Saqi captured the city of Fustaat in 385 Hijrah, he planned to settle the city of Cairo. In the beginning, its map was square-shaped and its area was 1340 acres. The fortresses of the city were made of solid bricks. In the heart of the city were two palaces, one of which was the eastern grand palace and the other was western small palace. There was a big ground in the centre of these two palaces for the army parade. This was the capital of the Fatimid Dynasty. There were multiple iron gates in the fortresses of the city, out of which two gates still exist today. This city is an important memorable one in the architecture of the Fatimid Dynasty.

**JAME AZHAR:** This mosque of Cairo was constructed in between 263-265 Hijrah but its minaret is the construction of 696 Hijrah. This mosque is an important memorable structure in the early architecture of Muslims and the Islamic world.

**THE FATIMID PALACES:** Fatimids built lots of palaces; the important ones are as follows:

1. **THE EASTERN PALACE:** Jauhar-us-Saqli built this palace for the Fatimid ruler Al-Muiz. That is why this palace is also called the 'Muizzi Palace'. It is said that it had four thousand rooms and multiple doors.

2. **THE WESTERN PALACE:** It was built by ruler Al-Aziz Billah.

In this way, we realise that the Fatimids spent a lot in the construction of the palaces.

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