



Masjid - Selected Mosques From The Islamic World

Azim A. Aziz

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A prerequisite for mosque design is that the style of architecture should reflect its purpose, and incorporate both the tangible and intangible features. The former includes the main prayer hall, the mihrab (a semicircular niche), mimbar (pulpit), dikka (muezzin's platform), water troughs and various embellishments like arabesque geometric ornaments, colourful tiles and Quranic verses; the latter covers what is regarded as the seven principles of Islamic architecture: unity, respect, sincerity, knowledge, balance, modesty and remembrance. An archetype model usually features a rectangular compound with minarets and a central dome topping a main prayer hall facing the direction of the Ka'aba. The shape and size of a mosque is also, inevitably, determined by the limitations of building materials and architectural knowledge. The colossal Masjid - Selected Mosques from the Islamic World is a celebration of the evolution and the refinement of mosque architecture throughout history and the world. The most apparent function of a mosque is as a place of prayer for Muslims, in addition to other multiple functions such as a centre of learning, a school to teach children about the Quran, a library and a place where local people got together and exchanged information, and a sanctuary where weary wayfarers may rest. The early mosques also served as a stronghold for Muslim political power. The word mosque, according to the book's author Azim Aziz, is derived from the French mosque which in turn is derived from the Spanish mezquita. The Spanish term is a translation of the Arabic masjid which originated from the Aramaic masjedha. As its title would indicate, Masjid - Selected Mosques from the Islamic World, compiles within its 800-plus pages, the various mosques from around the world, accompanied by hundreds of sumptuous exterior and interior photographs, architectural drawings (including original 3D and CAD drawings), floor plans, satellite maps, histories and architectural descriptions. Many of the mosques were chosen to be featured due to their design relevance in history and their various architectural styles: Arabian, West Africa/Sahara, Fatimid, Moorish, Mamluk, Iran & Central Asia, Timurid, Indian or Mughal, Anatolia and Ottoman, Chinese, Southeast Asia, Early Modern, Post Modern, Late Modernist and Sustainable Green. A total of 112 mosques from around the world are featured, beginning with the earliest, the Al-Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah (Mecca) and concluding with several interesting futuristic models.

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