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Story of the Great Expansion



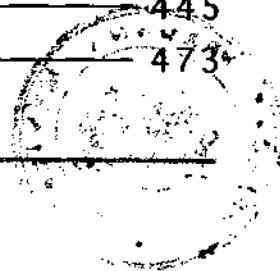
HAMID ABBAS

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The Summary

(1)

His Majesty, King Al Hassan the second of Morocco summarised the total achievement he observed in the two blessed expansions of the Two Holy Mosques by saying: Congratulation to my brother, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz on this step by which Allah has distinguished him, and should be thanked for what he had offered of service to his religion and that of his Muslim brothers, in all over the world."(1)

The admirable work of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz is not only for the citizens of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the residents, but also, as confirmed by King Al Hassan the second, a service to all Muslims everywhere.

Those two expansions were the dream of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for so many years. Some considered this dream as a sort of phantom. But years proved, that by the insistence and determination of this faithful leader, who saw in that phantom the basis of the future-making, he challenged the obstacles and stepped forward to realise his dream, which was not a personal or parochial dream but one of great men who think for their nations more than thinking in personal terms. Hence, the achievements come as a remarkable milestone in his era

(2)

Makkah and Madinah were a continuous obsession of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. No idea he implemented but to be followed by another and no work was completed but a new was started. To the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, these Two Holy cities represent a great symbol, embracing in its depth values of no resemblance around which millions of Muslims gather. This unique symbol of faith has been the principal objective of the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, so that the Two Holy cities fit in form and content the eminence of the creed and the loftiness of the faith symbol.

(3)

The inheritance (legacy) that has been passed down to the Custodian of the Two Holy

Mosques has never been simple. The trust that he shouldered has equally been uneasy. Both were forms of struggle and sacrifices in the process of nation formation. Allah assisted King Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the founder of this entity and guided him to unite the scattered parts into one, modern united polity, embracing the Holy Mosque - the symbol of the Islamic Ummah, and the Mosque of Prophet Muhammad and the other holy sites. He, thus, lived up to the standard of responsibility, and eventually delivered it to his sons, who preserved the country until the trust reached to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz, who is a great man from a greater father.

(4)

The Holy sites in Arafat, Mina and Muzdalifa, the miqat zones for the Haj and Umrah, in addition to the historic mosques were never out of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosque's sight. All were from a common source and served the same purpose. All are Houses of Allah. They were sites that were distinguished by Allah as meeting places for his Ummah, wearing the same dress, showing no difference between the rich and the poor, the high and low. All are equal in front of Allah, no difference between them but by piety. These holy places deserve but all required care from a King who believed in Allah, and so it happened.

(5)

The excellent network of roads, bridges and tunnels that connect the different parts of the Kingdom, and the two holy cities with each other and to the rest of the holy sites are not only means of internal transportation, but also a great civilisation leap. They made the performance of Haj and Umrah as well as praying in the Two Holy Mosques easy and inexpensive. Therefore, they were a real step of salvation from prolonged sufferings during which many Muslims had been victimised, to a safe means of transportation that encourage people to come close to Allah by fulfilling their religious obligation of Haj and Umrah and by visiting Makkah and Madinah.

(6)

The Ka'aba has a long story that no one but Allah knows. He has helped and guided those who built and maintained it. Who were they? How its buildings reached to what we see today? What are the elements of the Ka'aba, its Kiswa and how it came during the Saudi era? The well of Zam Zam, the station of Ibrahim and the yard around the Ka'aba which was always crowded with people for centuries, without interruption.

(7)

The Two Holy Mosque also have their story across history. We will start it with the Mosque in Islam, as a introduction to the concept of Mosque, its elements and developments until it reached to its present forms. We will also see what the Two Holy Mosques had passed through in the way of maintenance and enlargements through' the Islamic history and even before.

We will also touch upon the first Saudi expansion, showing the full care that late King Abdul Aziz had for the Two Holy Mosques and the maintenance they had undergone and their huge expansion compared to the period in which they were completed.

(8)

The two expansions and constructions that have been achieved in the Two Holy Mosques, by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz are considered, by all standards a unique architectural achievement designed according to the most modern basis of architecture, construction and beauty. s Modern equipment and technology as well as talented engineers, artisans and craftsmen were involved, to make this achievement in the Two Holy Mosques a unique Islamic technical architecture and a new prelude to the art of Islamic architecture for the twenty-first century.

(9)

The foundation stone of the expansion and development of the Holy Mosque in Makkah had been laid by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz, in Safar 1409H (1989) and the work started in Jamad Al Thani of the same year and officially completed in Zul Qaida 1413H. This expansion added a new part to the building of the Haram on the Western side, in the area of the small market at Bab Al Umrah and Bab Al Malik. its area was (76,000 square meters) shared by the basement, ground floor, first floor and the roof. This space accommodates about (152,000) worshippers. The outside yards were prepared and paved by white marble (see table 1).

The expansion and maintenance in the Prophet's Mosque was a miracle in beauty and an architectural masterpiece of premium quality. That phenomena/expansion exceeded all imagination. In addition to the roofs and yards around, an area of (384,000 square meters) was added to the area of the mosque, so that it became enough for more than 700,000 worshippers, to reach one million at the peak time. The foundation stone was laid by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Safar 1405H (1985) and the last brick was placed on 5/11/1414H.

The expansion and construction of the Prophet's Mosque was a very huge project that took eight consecutive years of round-the-clock work. If we measure the years spent at work against the advanced equipment and technology utilised, we would really appreciate the size of the work that had been accomplished. Suffice it to realise that the Prophet's Mosque today, after the expansion and construction of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, i covers an area of (400,327 square meters) see table 2). This area is equal to that of the whole of Madinah in the time of Prophet Muhammad.

(10)

We though it worthwhile to include testimonies by Kings, presidents, princes, sheikhs as well as prime ministers, ministers, ambassadors and other dignitaries from different Arab and Islamic countries, rather than confining the content to our own account only. All of those personalities said nothing but the truth about the expansion and construction of the Two Holy Mosques, achieved during the flourishing Saudi era. By what they said, they only confirmed the utmost care rendered the holy places by the government of the Saudi Kingdom. They also confirmed the role and care of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to keep all holy places in such a way that services that facilitate the performance of Haj and Umrah are guaranteed ad that worshippers enjoy comfort, tranquillity, serenity, safety and security never experienced in history.