

The Mosque of Rome (Italian: Moschea di Roma), situated in Parioli, Rome, Italy, is the largest mosque in the western world in terms of land area.[1] It has an area of 30,000 m² (320,000 sq ft) and can accommodate more than 12,000 people. The building is located in the Acqua Acetosa area, at the foot of the Monti Parioli, north of the city.[2] It is also the seat of the Italian Islamic Cultural Centre (Italian: Centro Culturale Islamico d'Italia).

In addition to being a meeting place for religious activities, it provides cultural and social services variously connecting Muslims together. It also holds teachings, wedding ceremonies, funeral services, exegesis, exhibitions, conventions, and other events, despite the location of the mosque is a relatively small percentage of Muslim zone.

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Construction[edit]

The mosque was jointly founded by the exiled Prince Muhammad Hasan of Afghanistan and his wife, Princess Razia[3] and was financed by Faisal of Saudi Arabia, head of the Saudi royal family and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques as well as by some other states of the Muslim world, including Bangladesh ruled by President Hussain Muhammad Ershad. The project was designed and directed by Paolo Portoghesi, Vittorio Gigliotti and Sami Mousawi. The opening ceremony was led by Pope John Paul II.

Its planning took more than ten years: the Roman City Council donated the land in 1974, but the first stone was laid only in 1984, in the presence of then President of the Italian Republic Sandro Pertini, with its inauguration on 21 June 1995.

There was some opposition to the building of a mosque but much of this dissipated when Pope John Paul II gave his blessing for the project. One issue that had to be agreed was the height of the minaret and its effect on the Rome skyline. In the end the issue was resolved by shortening slightly the height of the minaret to be below that of the dome of St Peter's by approximately one meter.

Architecture[edit]

The structure is intended to be integrated into the surrounding green area, with a mix of modern structural design and omnipresent curves. Lights and shades are blended in a manner intended to create a meditative climate, and the choice of materials, like travertino and cotto, evoke traditional Roman architectural styles. The interior decor is mainly made of glazed tiles with light colors, with the recurrent Qur'anic theme "God is Light", which has been subject of controversy.

The interiors are decorated with mosaics creating more optical effects and the floor is covered by a Persian carpet with geometrical patterns as well. The main prayer area can accommodate up to 2,500 worshipers. Above this are galleries that are reserved for female worshipers. The main prayer hall is topped by a central dome over 20 metres in diameter,

which is surrounded by 16 smaller domes. The complex also includes an educational area with classroom and a library, a conference centre with a large auditorium, and an area where exhibitions are held.

The outcome is an architecture made of repetitious designs and geometric patterns, where an important role is played by the light aimed to create a meditative atmosphere and various tricks of light as well.

The mosque contains several palm-shaped columns, which represent the connection between Allah and the single devotee.

Organisation[edit]

The current Imam of the mosque is the Sheikh Salah Ramadan Elsayed; Al-Azhar University graduate and former Democratic Party deputy Khalid Chaouki is in charge of the Cultural Centre, to which the management of the complex is entrusted. Former Imams include:

1983–1993: Muhammad Nur al-Din Isma'il

1993–2006: Mahmud Hammad Shwayta

2007–2010: Ala' al-Din Muhammad Isma'il al-Ghobashi

2010–2013: Ahmed Al-Saqqa

2013–2016: Muhammad Hassan Abdulghaffar

See also[edit]

Italy portal

Islam portal

Islam in Italy