

## The Soul of Sultan Hassan Mosque



The Sultan Hassan Mosque and Madrasa (School) is one of the masterpieces of Mamluk architecture and the most compact and unified of all Cairo Islamic monuments. Just outside the north-western walls of the Citadel, the construction started in 1356 AD and ended 7 years later in 1363 AD.

It was designed to be a mosque and religious school the four main Sunni schools of thoughts (Shafi, Maliki, Hanafi and Hanbali) with their dormitories, a tomb intended to be for Sultan Hassan, and also a mustashfa, a small hospital, on its western side at one time.

It is needless to talk about the marvelous Mamluk architecture design with its great domes, minarets, corridors

and courtyards. Or even mention the lavish decorations seen in the breath taking marble, the colored mosaic decoration, motifs, great bronze doors with their mediaeval craftsmanship, or elegant Kufic and Thuluth scripts engravings all over the place, as it many people have done this over and over again.

In my opinion, this place uniqueness is due a fact overlooked by many people. About five years into its construction, one of the minaret collapsed killing more than three hundred people. This incident was referred to as the Black Death. Meanwhile, Sultan Hassan was facing financial problems completing the project he and his fa-

ther Sultan Mohammad bin Qala'oun dreamt about. His only way out was to confiscate the heritages and estates left behind by the victims of the Black Death which was devastating for the people of Egypt at that time.

Now after all of these centuries, and after the great history making events where Sultan Hassan Mosque has been the hero, I think the souls of the 300 victims can rest in peace knowing that their death served a great cause. May be that's why the French Oriental Scholar Gaston Wiet said that this is the only mosque that display strength and great architecture, elegance or beauty and of strong effect on the soul.

*Written by  
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