



Stories from the Hijaz

THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



Al-Khaif Masjid, where 70 prophets prayed



A close up of one of the four minarets of Al-Khaif Masjid, which are brilliantly illuminated at night during the days of Hajj. Photo SALIM PARKER

SALIM PARKER

YOUMUL Tarwiyah, the first day of Hajj, means 'the day of fetching water and quenching the thirst'. The first day of Hajj is spent in Mina, a valley just outside Makkah, where Al-Khaif Masjid, the most important mosque in Mina, is situated.

'Al-Khaif', in Arabic, means 'what has risen above the stream of water and inclined the width of the mountain'. 'Khaif' also refers to the feet of the mountain, the land between two mountains or the land higher than its neighbouring lands. Therefore, the mosque built at the foot of Al-Dhib'a mountain in Mina is called Al-

Khaif Masjid.

Most hujjaaj are aware of the existence of this mosque due to its size and impressive facade but the vast majority have never set foot in it as moving from their camps in Mina to the mosque and back can be quite a mission.

Al-Khaif Masjid has a noteworthy history and important events are associated either where the current mosque is or in its immediate vicinity. It is only open during the days of Hajj.

Abu-Bukhari recorded that Abdullah Ibn Masud said: "While we were with the Messenger of Allah in a cave on Mina, the 77th surah of the Holy Quran, Surah Mursalat, was revealed to the Prophet



Al-Khaif Masjid, which is only open during the days of Hajj, is situated very close to the jamarata, in Mina.

Photo SALIM PARKER

(SAW). He was reciting it and I was learning it from his mouth.

"Verily, his mouth was moist with it when a snake leaped out at us. The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Kill it!' So we quickly went after it but it got away. Then the Prophet (SAW) said: 'It was saved from your harm just as you all were saved from its harm.' The snake was not found."

Most authorities contend that this was one of the early Makkan revelations before the Hijra. In the fifth year after the Hijra (migration to Madinah, about 636/7), the polytheists of Makkah were invoked by the Jews and signed a pact of allegiance with some Arab tribes to attack Madinah and uproot Islam.

This attack became known as the Battle of Khandaq (Battle of the Trench).

The place they chose for signing the pact was where Al-Khaif Masjid is currently situated.

It is known that the Prophet (SAW) prayed in Al-Khaif Masjid and also gave a sermon there during his one and only Hajj. Yazeed bin Aswad reported that when he performed Hajj with the Prophet (SAW) it was at Al-Khaif Masjid that he performed Fajr Salaah with the Prophet (SAW).

Abu Dawood reported that Abdur-Rahman bin Muadh said that when the Prophet (SAW) delivered a sermon in Mina, he instructed the muhajireen (the immigrants from Makkah to Madinah) to set up camp in front of Al-Khaif Masjid and the Ansar (the Helpers of Madinah, who welcomed the prosecuted Muslims) to set up camp behind it. The rest of the Muslims were to camp behind them.

Abdullah bin Abbas narrated that it was in Al-Khaif Masjid that the Prophet (SAW) addressed them. After praising Allah, Nabi Muhammad (SAW) said: 'Allah will set right the affairs of the person whose prime concern is the akhirah (hereafter), Allah will also grant him self-sufficiency and the world will humble itself before him.'

'As for the person whose prime concern is this world, Allah will scatter his affairs, place poverty in front of him and all he will get of this world will be what has been predestined for him.' It is reported that seventy prophets, including Nabi Musa, prayed in the area of this masjid.

A few scholars proposed that Nabi Adam (AS) and some other prophets may have been buried in Al-Khaif Masjid but this is not widely accepted. Some others have suggested that it was at Mina that Nabi Adam said that his wish was to re-enter from where he was expelled but, again, this is not widely accepted. In 1987, Al-Khaif Masjid was expanded and reconstructed at a cost estimated at 90

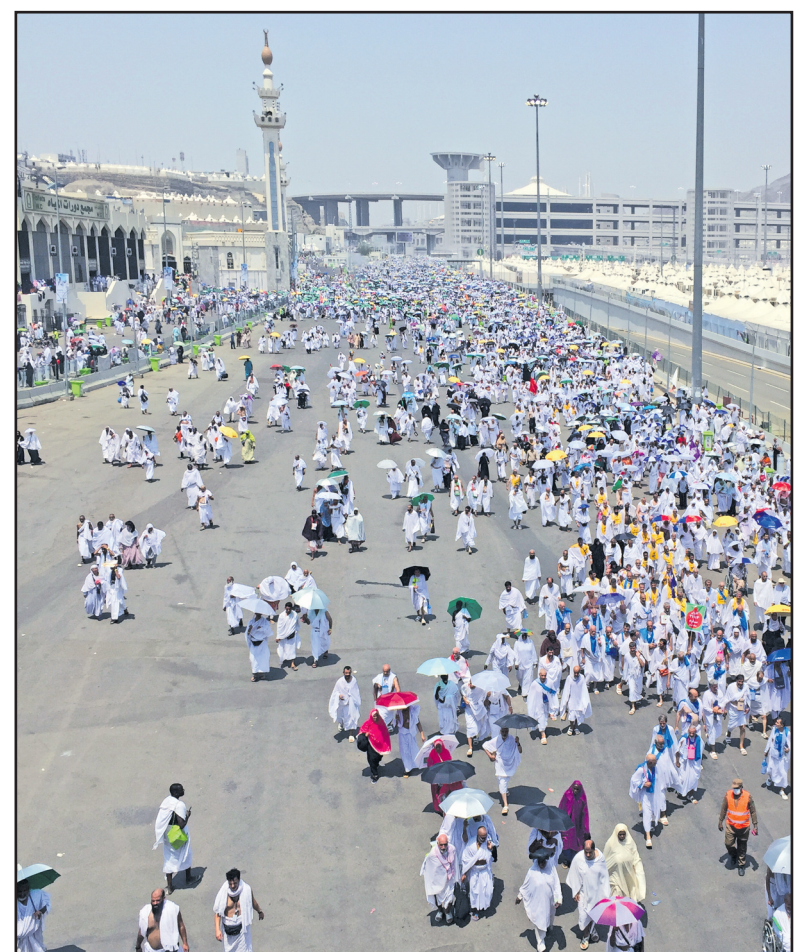
million Saudi Riyals (\$24 million). Four towers were built, 410 air-conditioning units were installed, as well as 1 100 fans. A toilet complex was constructed behind the mosque with more than 1 000 toilets and 3 000 taps.

The masjid is situated very close to the small jamarat and adjacent to the large Mina hospital. Numerous lectures are delivered there during the five days of Hajj and the compulsory prayers that consist of four rakaats (Dhuhr, Asr and Isha) are reduced to the qasr number of two rakaats each, as was the practice during the Hajj of our beloved Prophet (SAW).

It is worthwhile, if possible, to make some prayers in this very large and important masjid.



During the days of Tashreeq, pilgrims stream past Al-Khaif Masjid (on the left of the photograph) on their way to pelt the jamarata, throughout the day and into the night. Photo SALIM PARKER



Pilgrims enter Mina on the first day of Hajj, referred to as Youmul Tarwiyah. One of the minarets of Al-Khaif Masjid can be seen in the left of the photograph, and the jamarat area can be seen in the background. Photo SALIM PARKER