

The Great Mosque of Khurmali

The history of this mosque dates back to the arrival of Islam in Kurdistan, making it the oldest mosque in Kurdistan and the surrounding region. The Great Mosque of Khurmali is located opposite the ancient citadel of Khurmali, in the eastern part of the city. In ancient times, this mosque was a major cultural and religious center. It served as the region's second religious school after the Barzja Madrasa (Barznja School) and surpassed the Byara Madrasa (Byara School). This prominence was largely due to Mawlana Xalid Nagshbandi and Shex Husammadin, who lived and worked at the mosque, inspiring and educating dozens of prominent Kurdish religious figures. Many famous Kurdish scholars, poets, and mystics, including Mawlawi, Mahwi, Nali, Ahmadi Mufti Zade, Dr. Mustafa Zalmi, and others, studied at this mosque.

Beyond its religious significance, the mosque has held a great social, scientific, and cultural position in the region. In 1933, when King Faisal I of Iraq visited Shex Husamaddin, he requested their meeting take place in the Great Mosque of Khurmali, honoring the mosque's esteemed status. Later, in 1940, Shagr Fatah, then-governor of the Khurmali district, opened the first public school within the mosque. Such was the importance of this mosque that whenever an official visited the region, they would often arrange for its refurbishment by official government decree. The mosque underwent its first renovation during the Hasnawi dynasty between 959 AD and 1015 AD and has been refurbished eight times since. It is currently undergoing its ninth renovation. The mosque covers a total area of about 400 square meters and originally had a 12-meter-tall octagonal minaret, offering a stunning view of the mosque. Its walls are constructed from red bricks and clay, while the doors and windows are made from walnut and berry trees native to the Hawraman region.

The mosque also includes a courtyard, three meters wide, and three small rooms: one for the mullah, one for the faqe (student), and one for the mosque guardian. Adding to its charm is a natural source of clean water in the courtyard and a 400-year-old "Palk" tree, which was planted 400 years after the mosque was built, creating another point of attraction. Today, the Great Mosque of Khurmali stands as a renowned religious and historical monument in Kurdistan. Thousands of visitors from across Kurdistan, Iraq, and beyond come every year to appreciate its cultural heritage and historical significance.