
فضائل المدينة

The SUPERIORITY *of*
AL-MADĪNA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Praise be to Allāh, the Creator of the Universe. Peace and blessings, upon the liegelord of all messengers, the seal of prophets, our master Muhammad ﷺ; and upon his descendants and his Companions.

QUR'AN

Allāh ﷻ himself affirmed the superiority of the Prophet's ﷺ mosque in the Qur'an,

لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ

“A Mosque that was founded on taqwā from the first day is better for you to stand in.”

When the Prophet ﷺ was once asked which mosque the Qur'an was referring to in this verse, he replied ‘My mosque’.¹

The scholars have suggested it could also be Qubā' Mosque, but like Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852) explains,

“Both mosques are built on *taqwā* from the very first day. Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr (d. 774) indicates this when he said, ‘If *Qubā'* Mosque finds its foundation on *taqwā* from its onset, then the mosque of Allāh's Messenger certainly shall too.’”

ḤADĪTH 1

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

In an authentic saying narrated by Abū Hurayra and recorded by Muslim (d. 261) in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the Prophet ﷺ said,

“One prayer in this mosque² is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except for *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*.”^{3,4}

Al-Nawawī (d. 676) reminds us that the ḥadīth states that one *ṣalāh* is better than a thousand prayers elsewhere, not equal to.

It is mentioned in the *Iḥyā’* (1:243) in which al-Ghazzālī (d. 505) said, “Deeds in al-Madīna are multiplied; the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘A prayer in this, my mosque, is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque.’ Then he said, ‘Likewise, every deed in al-Madīna is multiplied by a thousand.’”

Al-Ghazzālī’s ruling that all deeds are multiplied was reiterated by al-Ṣāliḥī in his *Faḍā’il al-Madīna* (pg. 120) and al-Zabīdī in *Ithāf al-Sādat al-Muttaqīn* (4:285), his massive commentary on the *Iḥyā’*.⁵

ḤADĪTH 2

Abū Hurayra reports from the Prophet ﷺ that he said,

“Travel is not undertaken except for the sake of three mosques; *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*, the Mosque of the Messenger ﷺ and al-Aqṣā Mosque.”

ḤADĪTH 3

In a famous saying recorded by both Muslim and al-Bukhārī (d. 256), the Prophet ﷺ said,

“What is between my house and my *minbar* (“pulpit”) is a garden from among the gardens of paradise.”

‘*My house*’ refers to the blessed *rawḍa* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as it is today; at the time it was the room of Lady ‘Ā’isha. Today the entire area is clearly marked with a different (lighter) carpet and pillars.

² *al-Masjid al-Nabawī*, the Prophet’s ﷺ Mosque in Madīna al-Munawwara.

³ *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* (“The Sacred Mosque”), in Makka al-Mukarrama.

⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

⁵ Access at: https://www.livingislam.org/k/vm_e.html.

Al-Nawawī states that there are two opinions regarding this ḥadīth. One is that this place itself will be transferred to paradise. Though the entire world is nothing compared to the hereafter, Allāh ﷻ deemed it valuable and worthwhile to transfer this place to the next life. The second opinion is that performing worship here leads to paradise.

Why is this place special? It is because of the prolonged period the Prophet ﷺ spent in this particular area. On the same analogy, we respect and visit Cave Hira (where the Prophet ﷺ would seclude himself) and the birthplace of the Prophet ﷺ in Makka.

ḤADĪTH 4

Anas b. Mālīk reports from the Prophet ﷺ, who said,

“Whosoever performs forty prayers in my mosque without missing any, then he will be decreed as free from the Fire, saved from the punishment and immune from hypocrisy.”

ḤADĪTH 5

Abū Hurayra reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“When one of you leaves from his house for my Mosque, every step equates to one virtue (*ḥasana*) and every step removes one sin (*sayyiʾa*).”

ḤADĪTH 6

The city is often referred to as al-Madīna al-Munawwara, or the Enlightened City. The reason for this is the ḥadīth of Anas b. Mālīk, who said,

“The very day the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ entered al-Madīna, every single thing therein became enlightened.”

ḤADĪTH 7

Abū Hurayra reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“This *minbar* of mine is on a gate (*tur‘a*) from the gates of Paradise.”

ḤADĪTH 8

Abū Hurayra reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“Verily, faith returns to al-Madīna similar to how a snake returns to its hole.”

ḤADĪTH 9

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would supplicate thus,

“O Allāh! Make al-Madīna beloved to us just like you have made Makka beloved to us...”

ḤADĪTH 10

Abū Bakra reports from the Prophet ﷺ who said,

“The *Dajjāl* (“antichrist”) will not enter al-Madīna. On that day, there will be two angels guarding the seven gates to the city.”

ḤADĪTH 11

The Prophet ﷺ warned,

“Whosoever intends evil upon the inhabitants of al-Madīna, Allāh ﷻ will dissolve them similar to how salt dissolves in water.”

ḤADĪTH 12

Jābir b. Samura said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

“Indeed Allāh Almighty has named al-Madīna, *Ṭāba*.”

Al-Nawawī writes in the commentary of this ḥadīth,

Ṭāba and *Ṭayba* comes from *Ṭiyb* which means a beautiful fragrance. *Al-Ṭāb* and *al-Ṭayyib* are two readings. It is also said it comes from *Ṭayyib*, meaning clean/purified. Al-Madīna is so called because it is clean/purified from *shirk* (“polytheism”).

ḤADĪTH 13

Al-Barrā b. ‘Āzib reports in a *marfū’* ḥadīth that,

“Whosoever refers to al-Madīna as *Yathrib* should seek forgiveness from Allāh; it is *Ṭāba*, it is *Ṭāba*.”

ḤADĪTH 14

Even the people related to the city were given superiority by the Prophet ﷺ. Abū Hurayra reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“Soon people will embark on camels [in travel]. But they will not find a scholar more learned than the scholar of al-Madīna.”

Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279) is of the opinion that this is referring to Imām Mālik (d. 179), who lived in al-Madīna. He was a great beloved of the Messenger ﷺ and his sayings and actions reflected this fact; he was also the founder of the Mālikī School of law. Once, he decreed the lashing of anyone thirty times who dared criticise even the soil of al-Madīna.

ḤADĪTH 15

There is cure in al-Madīna, even in its soil. Lady Ā'isha reports,

“When any person fell ill with a disease or he had any ailment or he had any injury, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would place his forefinger upon the ground and would then lift it, and having recited the *basmala*, ‘The dust of our ground with the spittle of any one of us, would serve as a means of cure of illness, with the permission of Allāh ﷻ.’”

Al-Nawawī writes that it is said this is specific to the land of al-Madīna only.

ḤADĪTH 16

In short, al-Madīna is a beautiful place to not just live in, but it is also a perfect place to die in. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“Whoever among you can die in Madīna, let him do so, for I will intercede for those who die therein.”⁶

ḤADĪTH 17

‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar narrates that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will be guaranteed for him.”⁷

This is just a small selection of tradition on the virtues of al-Madīna and the Prophet’s ﷺ Mosque. The great scholars like al-Bukhārī have included separate chapters on the city in their respective collections.

Ḥafiz Ather Ḥussain al-Azhari

⁶ Al-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad and others.

⁷ Al-Dāraquṭnī in his *Sunan*; Abu Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*; al-Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa al-Asmā*; al-Khatīb, *Talkhīs al-Mutashābih fī al-Rasm*.