



THE BEST CITY IN THE WORLD

MUFTI FARAZ ADAM



DARUL FIQH

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Preface



I commence with expressions of reverence and praise for the Supreme Sovereign, the Almighty King, the Creator and Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth, who is singular in His essence, devoid of partners, offspring, or lineage, and holds supreme command over all aspects of existence. I beseech Almighty Allah to perpetually bestow His blessings, grace, and affection upon our beloved master ﷺ and messenger ﷺ, and to convey our heartfelt love, admiration and *Salām* to him ﷺ.

Al-Madīnah is the wish of every believer. Al-Madīnah is the dream of every lover of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Al-Madīnah is source of excitement for every traveller. Departing al-Madīnah leaves a lasting ache in the hearts of its visitors, manifesting in cries and sighs of longing. Al-Madīnah is indeed everything - one could wish for nothing more in this existence than to be within its blessed confines.

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is a city without parallel, it has Rasūlullah ﷺ. Its allure, beauty and pull are intrinsically tied with the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ. *Sayyidunā* Anas (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) remarked that the people would know the exact streets of al-Madīnah in which Rasūlullah ﷺ walked through as his mere presence in an area would leave a trail of a sweet and unique fragrance [al-Bazzār]. Imam al-Bukhārī (d.256 AH) in his *Tārīkh* narrates from *Sayyidunā* Jābir (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) that people could find Rasūlullah ﷺ by merely following the sweet scent and trail left by the noble body and being of Rasūlullah ﷺ. For a decade, the blessed

being of Rasūlullah ﷺ perfumed and illuminated the streets, the sand, the soil, the trees, and the houses of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and now, until the Final Hour, his blessed being and body fragrances the Earth, land, and soil of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The power and strength of his scent is such that there are several reports of people inhaling the fragrance of Rasūlullah ﷺ emanating from his blessed resting chamber. For instance, Ibn ‘Asākir (d.686 AH) reports how ‘Abdullah b. Muhammad b. ‘Aqīl could smell a unique fragrance coming from the chamber of Rasūlullah ﷺ in the time of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Azīz (d.101 AH) when a wall of the blessed chamber had collapsed [Ithāf al-Zā’ir].

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is a city that is overfilled with the righteous, angels, and the pious jinn. It is a city that has *Barakah* embedded in everything, double than that of Makkah al-Mukarramah. It is a fortress from *Dajjāl* and *Fitan*. Indeed, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is the place where the Quran was frequently revealed. It is the city which was visited by *Sayyidunā* Jibrīl (‘*alayhi al-Salām*) excessively. It is the stronghold of ‘*Imān*, the meeting point of the best of this ‘*Ummah*, the *Muhājirūn* and the ‘*Anṣār*. It is the first capital of Islam and the Muslims; Islam spread across the four corners of the world from this very city. It is the first blueprint of a successful and productive civilisation for the modern world. It cradled the first economic system in recent times that fulfilled the needs of all its members, and safeguarded the assets and wealth of owners. It is from this very city that the light of the Quran and the light of the *Sunnah* illuminated the dark world. It is the home of Rasūlullah ﷺ and his selected place for migration. This is where he ﷺ lived his final decade of his life, where he ﷺ passed away, where he ﷺ is resting now, and where he ﷺ will be resurrected from. It is this part of the Earth that will be the first to open on the Day of Judgement, and it will be those resting in al-Baqī‘ who will be the first to be awakened with Rasūlullah ﷺ on that Day.

How blessed and fortunate are the mountains of al-Madīnah! How about the stones, the trees, the sand, the walls, and the leaves. What about the animals, the birds, or the cats that roam the streets! What can be said about the very sand, trees and nature that were in existence at the same time as that of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ whilst he walked in those streets. They were all favoured with the companionship, proximity, and physical connection with our Master ﷺ. The love and excitement within these inanimate beings was so overwhelming when getting connection and closeness to Rasūlullah ﷺ, that they sought Allah's permission to express their love and admiration to Rasūlullah ﷺ. That deep love within them for Rasūlullah ﷺ brought them to life, and Allah allowed them to express their love and affection in miraculous ways: the pebbles spoke, the trees communicated, the animals expressed themselves, shades shifted to receive blessings from Rasūlullah ﷺ, branches walked and presented themselves to Rasūlullah ﷺ, walls would say 'Āmīn to his *du'as*', clouds would hover over the blessed being of Rasūlullah ﷺ to just share the same airspace as Rasūlullah ﷺ.

The inanimate beings in al-Madīnah were so alive in love for Rasūlullah ﷺ that Imam al-Nawawī (*Raḥimahullah*) asserts in the commentary of the famous *Ḥadīth* regarding Uḥūd 'this mountain loves us, and we love it' [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim], that this expression is literal, not metaphorical; it is real and a reality. Almighty Allah has endowed these inanimate beings in al-Madīnah with the capacity to love and perceive [Sharḥ al-Nawawī 'alā Muslim]. Furthermore, Imam al-Suyūṭī recounts how various other inanimate beings communicated their love to Rasūlullah ﷺ in his commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.

Imagine how fortunate we would be if we were a mere grain of sand in al-Madīnah, a stone, or a leaf, drawing close to Rasūlullah ﷺ and having the privilege to serve him without the fear of causing him any pain or

discomfort, for causing him any pain or discomfort is truly unbearable. How wonderful it would be to be a drop of perfume he applied to his blessed hands and body. How extraordinary it would be to be the bedding that provided comfort to Rasūlullah, or merely a part of the pillow that supported his blessed, beautiful head. Or to be the slipper that graced the most beloved and sacred feet to ever tread the Earth. Or even a thread in the *Imāmah* that encircled his soft, fragrant hair, or the kohl stick used to enhance his most beautiful and striking eyes.

The mere opportunity to serve him once, bringing him comfort without causing any pain, would mean everything. His comfort is our comfort; his happiness is our happiness; his peace is our peace. He is everything to us.

Every inch and every step in al-Madīnah is imbued with blessings. It is as though al-Madīnah has been created from *Barakah*; Rasūlullah ﷺ has walked, sat there, passed by, performed *Wuḍū'*, rested, or perhaps just spoken there that his sweet voice just echoed and reverberated once. Every part of al-Madīnah has the signature of Rasūlullah ﷺ on it. Every inch has the *Barakah* and connection with Rasūlullah ﷺ. It is this deep association, attachment, and connection of every part of al-Madīnah with Rasūlullah ﷺ that transformed al-Madīnah to the palace and Paradise that it is today.

There is no place or city like al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah; no matter how advanced, how upmarket, or how luxurious some destinations feel, *al-Madīnah is al-Madīnah*. Al-Madīnah has Rasūlullah ﷺ, that suffices as a virtue. There is no advancement, no luxury greater than being near Rasūlullah ﷺ. The depth of love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah stems from the intensity of love one has for Rasūlullah ﷺ. When the love of Rasūlullah ﷺ overwhelms the heart, everything and anything attached to Rasūlullah ﷺ becomes beloved. Everything that connects one to Rasūlullah ﷺ becomes cherished. The lover seeks to be in unison and

harmony with Rasūlullah ﷺ in every moment. Hence, *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) would sleep, stop, and pass by the very places which Rasūlullah ﷺ had passed by, seeking that unison and harmony with the beloved. *Sayyidah* ‘Asmā (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā*) would pause at *al-Ḥajūn*, remember Rasūlullah ﷺ and recite *Ṣalawāt* every time she passed by. This cannot be understood without being in love. The heart’s rest, peace, and nourishment are in giving it some connection with the beloved. It is like a Wi-Fi connection, once connected, the smartphone comes to life.

If a person cannot see Rasūlullah ﷺ, they read the *Shamā’il* and take solace in the beautiful features of Rasūlullah ﷺ narrated to us from the very eyes that saw Rasūlullah ﷺ. If they cannot be with him ﷺ physically, they spend their days and nights in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, tracing every place that came into physical proximity with Rasūlullah ﷺ. If they cannot smell his ﷺ fragrance, they pause and inhale the most fragrant of scents, knowing that Rasūlullah ﷺ has a fragrance far superior and comforting. If they were not selected to live with him ﷺ in his era, they seek to live with his ﷺ *Sunnah*. If they live on the other side of the world, they yearn to live near him ﷺ in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. If they cannot directly speak with him ﷺ, they send *Ṣalawāt* and communicate with him ﷺ via angels. If they miss him ﷺ dearly and cannot bear the separation, they seek to be with him ﷺ in their dreams.

This book is written as a *Wasilah* (an offering in the court of Almighty Allah) with a *du‘ā’* from the depths of the heart, that he permits and facilitates me to frequently visit, live, and pass away in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. I humbly request every reader who reads these words to just pause for a moment and ask Allah to grant me this. I will be eternally indebted to you for such a *du‘ā’*. May Almighty Allah grant you the best of this world and the Hereafter. *‘Amīn*.

Truly, despite my sinful self and severe shortfalls in all areas, Almighty Allah favoured me with writing and completing this book in the thirty days of Ramaḍān. I am not worthy, but Allah is Allah, so loving, so kind, so forgiving; He always showers His love and blessings on us without being worthy. I ask Almighty Allah to make this small offering a gift that pleases our beloved master ﷺ, brings a smile to his noble and beautiful face, and becomes a means of gaining his ﷺ special love and very, very close attention in this life. May Allah allow us to spend our lives in bringing a smile to that handsome face of our beloved master ﷺ. May Allah grant us a special bond and companionship of Rasūlullah ﷺ for eternity in al-Firdaws. *‘Amīn.*

Faraz Adam

30th Ramadan 1445/9th April 2024

Foreword – Shaykh Mufti Abdur Raheem Limbada (*Hafizahullah*)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. We praise Him and send blessings upon His noble Messenger. As for what follows:

What is it that brings an abundance of virtue to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah? Why does al-Masjid al-Nabawī have so much reward attached to it? Why is being buried in the graveyard of al-Madīnah the aspiration and wish of every believer? And why is there so much *Barakah* in al-Madīnah and everything connected to it? The answer to all these questions lies in one fundamental reason and reality: the blessed presence of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. Before the arrival of Rasūlullah ﷺ, it was just Yathrib, a place that Arabs would complain about its climate. However, the moment Rasūlullah ﷺ stepped foot in this city, everything changed; Yathrib, and everything associated with Yathrib disappeared; al-Madīnah was born. This land became al-Madīnah, The City. It became al-Munawwarah, The Illuminated and The Radiated Dwelling. The entire landscape, environment, and atmosphere changed. The world in between the mountains of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah completely transformed. ‘Anas b. Mālik (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) captures this transformation the moment Rasūlullah ﷺ entered al-Madīnah by saying,

“The day that Rasūlullah ﷺ entered al-Madīnah, everything in it became illuminated” [Sunan al-Timidhī].

With the arrival of Rasūlullah ﷺ, al-Madīnah became a *Haram*, a sacred sanctuary. He ﷺ said, “I have made al-Madīnah a sanctuary (*Haram*) between its two (*Harrat*) mountains” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah became a haven of safety and refuge, even extending to the animals within its bounds, as described by Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) who refrained from even chasing any deer in in al-Madīnah due to it being a sanctuary to all [al-Bayhaqī].

How beautiful a city is al-Madīnah, that it is beautified and guarded by angels at all its gates and entrances. With the coming of Rasūlullah ﷺ to this blessed city, angels descended to guard the entire city until the Day of Judgement. Rasūlullah ﷺ said “There are angels guarding the entrances of al-Madīnah, neither plague nor *Dajjāl* will be able to enter it” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Upon Rasūlullah’s ﷺ arrival, the benefits and blessings of everything in al-Madīnah increased, more than any other place on Earth. He ﷺ made *du‘ā* to Almighty Allah to bestow twice the blessings on al-Madīnah as He had bestowed upon Makkah [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. Hence, al-Madīnah is al-Madīnah because of the blessed presence and being of Rasūlullah ﷺ.

Whenever travelling with colleagues and friends to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, I tell them to have the intention that we are going to visit our beloved master, *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ is alive in his resting place, and whenever going to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, we should first intend to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ. This was clearly stated by the classical ‘*Ulamā*’, such as Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (*Raḥimahullah*), Imam al-Nawawī (*Raḥimahullah*), Imam Ibn al-Humām (*Raḥimahullah*), and others.

Shaykh Abdul Haqq Dihlawī (*Raḥimahullah*) once asked his Shaykh regarding the best action one can do on the way to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah and whilst in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah? Shaykh Abdul Wahhab Muttaqi (*Raḥimahullah*) replied that after the obligatory acts, the most rewarding act is *Ṣalawāt*. He added that one should recite so much *Ṣalawāt* that their tongue is moist with *Ṣalawāt*.

On one occasion, we were with *Haḍrat* Shaykh Yunus *Ṣāhib* (*Raḥmatullah ‘alayh*) in Makkah al-Mukarramah. A person came to Shaykh (*Raḥmatullah ‘alayh*) saying that he works in Riyadh but is originally from Islamabad, and that he had come for Hajj, and was now returning to Islamabad. However, he was unable to visit al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah and was wanting to know if there was any issue with not going to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. *Haḍrat* Shaykh Yunus *Ṣāhib* (*Raḥmatullah ‘alayh*) immediately replied, “How can you go without visiting al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah?” Thereafter, the person elaborated and said his flight was soon. Shaykh (*Raḥmatullah ‘alayh*) instructed him to make up for not visiting al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah by continuously reciting *Ṣalawāt* from the moment he leaves Makkah, all the way until he returns to his house. This was the love that our *Akābir* had for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and more specifically, Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ.

I have looked through this book compiled by my dear Mufti Faraz *Ṣāhib* and found it to be a very beneficial and nice book written on al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. I make *du‘ā’* that it increases the love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in all our hearts. Amīn.

(Shaykh) Abdul Raheem Limbada (*Hafīzahullah*)

Sunday 5th May 2024

Foreword – Shaykh Maulana Anwar Narma (*Hafīzahullah*)

Senior Teacher and Lecturer of *Ḥadīth*



All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of all worlds, and may blessings and salutations be upon the leader of all prophets and messengers, Muhammad ﷺ, and upon all of his family, all of his companions and all of those who righteously follow them until the final day.

The book we have before us is an extraordinary rendition of love that the author has manifested in the form of his words in praise and ode of the greatest of all cities, Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. It cannot be overstated how magnificent and alluring the city truly is. Surely, none can envisage, let alone behold, the true beauty of this astounding city. Had there been nothing worthy of credit about the city besides the fact that the blessed feet of the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ had frequently walked upon it, it would still maintain the title of the greatest of all cities. Yet, it is more than just the settling place of the blessed feet of the Messenger ﷺ; it was his home, his final resting place, his place of migration and of course the place of the second holiest site in Islam, Al-Masjid al-Nabawi.

The practice and manner of visiting and presenting oneself in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah varies among our *Akābir*, each emanating their own attachment, and unique manifestation of love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Once, someone asked Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (*Raḥimahullah*) if he had any wishes. He responded that he longed for

even an atom's worth of love that the Ṣaḥābah (Raḍiallahu 'anhum) held for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Our *Haḍrat* (*Nawwara Allah Marqadahu*) deeply loved al-Madīnah. His talks frequently echoed this theme of love for the Prophet ﷺ. I was blessed with the opportunity to spend several Ramadans in the *Haramayn* with *Haḍrat*, observing his practices and noting them diligently. On one occasion, he told us, "Like army cadets who chant a slogan to prime their minds during training, we should recite *Ṣalāt* and *Salām* with passion and enthusiasm."

Once, *Haḍrat* purchased flat sandals in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and directed me precisely to the shop where he purchased them. I realised that he had selected this specific pair for one sole objective: He wanted the sand and dust of al-Madīnah to touch his body and feet as much as possible.

During *Itikāf* in al-Masjid al-Nabawī with *Haḍrat* (*Nawwara Allah Marqadahu*), I sometimes saw him turn onto his left side, as though he is pressing his heart against the blessed land of al-Madīnah. In *Sajdah*, it seemed as if his hands were grasping the sacred soil, his body language radiating his profound love for the land and Earth of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

It is well known that the great Imam, Imam Abū Ḥanīfah (*Raḥimahullah*) would not stay too long in al-Madīnah out of respect and awe of al-Madīnah.

When Maulana Qāsim Nanotwī (*Raḥimahullah*) would see the green dome, his slippers would come off, and he would be overwhelmed in a state of his own, completely oblivious of the hot sand and heat. The intensity of love for Rasūlullah ﷺ and for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah overpowered everything else.

In the life of *Ḥaḍrat Shaykh (Raḥmatullahi ‘alayh)*, he only ever went twice in front of the *Muwājahah Sharīfah*. His normal practice was to convey *Salām* from the *Aqdām ‘Āliyah* side. One of those two occasions, he went with Maulana Yusuf Binnuri (*Raḥimahullah*) and Maulana As’ad Madanī (*Raḥimahullah*). *Ḥaḍrat Shaykh (Raḥmatullahi ‘alayh)* held their shoulders and proceeded slowly to the *Muwājahah Sharīfah*, using the fact that he was behind a sayyid as an excuse, hoping that through them, his *Salām* would also be accepted.

I once instructed my students to shake hands with a policeman near *Bāb Jibrīl*. When asked who he was, they said 'a policeman'. I corrected them: "No, this is a policeman of al-Madīnah." The association with Rasūlullah ﷺ lends dignity to everything connected to him.

I was reading discourses of Mufti Shafi Ṣāhib (*Raḥimahullah*), and came across that he could never raise his gaze near the *Muwājahah Sharīfah*. He would convey *Salām* from either behind the pillar or a person. He lamented his perceived unworthiness, that others could approach closer, yet he could not. He would stay well back from the blessed gates at the *Muwājahah Sharīfah*. However, while standing there, it was as if he heard a voice emanating from the blessed chamber: "Whoever practices upon our *Sunnah* is close to us, no matter the physical distance. And those who do not, are far from us, no matter how near they may physically be."

It is well known about the mother (*Raḥimahallah*) of *Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Jalil Ṣāhib (Ḥafīzahullah)* – who is the grandson of the great scholar Maulana Badr ‘Ālam Mirithī (*Raḥmatullah ‘alayh*) - that she would hear the reply of her *Salām* directly when approaching the *Muwājahah Sharīfah*. I personally asked him, and he confirmed this to me.

I once bought a perfume in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. A friend bought the exact same perfume in another city. Upon comparison, we both

agreed that the one from al-Madīnah was far superior and sweeter. The association and connection al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah gives excellence and virtue to everything.

The work produced by Mufti Faraz is a brief yet comprehensive overview of the history, description and virtues of Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah. It is a guide for anyone who is yet unaware of the merits of this majestic city or the enamoured lover who wishes to rekindle his longing or maintain his undying infatuation for the city of the Prophet ﷺ. Undoubtedly, a person cannot build love for something until he familiarises himself with the excellence of his object of love, and this book will In shā' Allah fulfil this very purpose.

This humble servant has had the good fortune and honour of being intimately acquainted with Mufti Faraz since the days Mufti Faraz had been a student at Darul Uloom Leicester. He has been one of the gems our seminary has produced, and has studied tirelessly and worked arduously for the sake of *Dīn* on various fronts. After completing the Iftaa course under the tutelage of the late esteemed Mufti Ebrahim Desai (*Raḥimahullah*) along with other notable scholars, and receiving *Ijāzah* (authorisation in the science of *Tasawwuf*) from Mufti Ebrahim himself in 2013, Mufti Faraz gained further qualifications, such as a master's degree in Islamic Finance and Banking, ACCA Accounting and Business qualification, all the while specialising in Islamic Finance, and eventually becoming a leading lecturer on the same topic around the globe. At present, he is pursuing his PhD in Shariah governance for Artificial Intelligence. He currently chairs the Darul Iftaa located in Masjid Muadh ibn Jabal, Leicester, which not only provides a hub for Islamic guidance for the local community and beyond, but serves as an institute for specialisation in the field of Iftaa. Following the above acceptance and success from Allah the Almighty, it gives me great joy and privilege to see

this work before us being produced by a meritorious, achieved, and righteous scholar as Mufti Faraz himself.

Mufti Faraz had previously written a collection of salutations on the beloved Messenger ﷺ composed entirely of the blessed *Shamā'il* (characteristics and descriptions) of the beloved Messenger ﷺ. It is evident that it is nothing but the pure love of the beloved Messenger ﷺ that served as the motivation behind a book about his blessed city and final resting place. Furthermore, as he writes in the preface of this book, this book was completed by Mufti Faraz entirely in the month of Ramadan. All of this indicates nothing but the divine will and acceptance of Allah the Almighty for this book.

Is it my heartfelt wish that Allah the Almighty instils the yearning and love of Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in everyone who reads this book. It is befitting for every reader to commence this book with salutations upon the greatest of Messengers ﷺ and supplication to Allah the Almighty to bestow His grace and favour by granting His love, love for His Messenger ﷺ and love for the blessed city of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

May Allah the Almighty accept this tremendous and much-needed work of Mufti Faraz and benefit the masses large and far with not only this book of his, but every project he has undertaken. May Allah the Almighty grant him and his loved one's success in this world and the next world and save him from all evils.

O' Allah, bless us with undying love and frequent abundant visits of the city of Your beloved. O' Allah, grant us endless moments and our final breath on the pure Earth of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Amīn Yā Rabba 'l-'Ālamīn.

(Shaykh Maulana) Anwar Narma (*Hafizahullah*)

Leicester

17th Shawwal 1445 AH

Friday 26th April 2024 CE

Foreword – Shaykh Maulana Imran Ibn Shaykh Adam (*Hafizahullah*)

Principal of Jame'ah Uloomul Qur'an and Senior
Teacher and *Hadith* Lecturer



*In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most
Merciful; and may peace and blessings be upon our
Rasulullah ﷺ*

بعد از خدا بزرگ تو ہی قصہ مختصر

“In short, after Allah, it is you (Messenger of Allah ﷺ)
who is the greatest.”

چھاؤں تو بر جگہ کی ٹھنڈی مگر
دُھوپ بھی دلڑیا مدینہ کی

My beloved brother in Islam, Shaykh Faraz Adam (may Allah preserve him) has asked me to write a foreword for his book titled ‘The Best City in the World’, adding to his flourishing written works. And how can this city not be the best when it is the city of our beloved ﷺ.

The book has been written with love and spirituality. May Allah make my beloved brother Shaykh Faraz (may Allah preserve him) prosper in his talents and give him the ability to keep on writing. *Āmīn*.

Alhamdulillah, writing up this foreword brings back bittersweet memories. Since my first visit in 1983 till 2023 (40 years), this servant of Allah Ta'ālā has had the honour of travelling to Madīnah al-Munawwarah every year, taking groups of youngsters and occasionally by himself.

I call the memories bittersweet because, although I felt immense joy when the time came to visit the city of our Beloved Prophet ﷺ, I was always struck with heartache when it came to depart from the best city, the true city that never sleeps.

Every time we approached the city of our Beloved Prophet ﷺ, I felt contentment in my heart; words fail to describe the feeling of the first glimpse of al-Masjid al-Nabawī ﷺ, where he ﷺ lived and is resting.

Whenever it was time for us to leave the blessed city and bid farewell to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah (may Allah allow us all the opportunity to come back year upon year), tears would roll down my cheeks as I uttered my last prayers. My heart ached at the thought of my time there coming to an end; every second spent in the *Ḥaram*, every prostration in the Masjid and every step taken there for His pleasure would now cease. May He always accept all our efforts, prayers, and worship. *Āmīn*. Shaykh Faraz has brought all these memories and more flooding back; may Allah bless him. *Āmīn*.

Muslims feel an indescribable, natural love and inclination for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The only explanation for that is the realisation of the Prophet's ﷺ supplication for the blessed city:

اللهم حبب إلينا المدينة

“O Allah, make Madīnah beloved to us” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Peace and calm envelopes every street and alley, as light shines down on the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ. If al-Madīnah is this beautiful when the Prophet ﷺ has passed, imagine the splendour when he was alive in the world! *Sayyidunā* ‘Anas recalled: “Everything in the city lit up the day the Prophet ﷺ entered al-Madīnah. And when he passed away, everything in the city fell into darkness.” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

May Allah satisfy our hearts desire to be in al-Madīnah in this world and to be with Ṣāhib al-Madīnah ﷺ in the next. *Āmīn*.

(Shaykh Maulana) Imran bin Adam (*Hafīzahullah*),

Jame’ Masjid, Leicester,

11 Shawwāl 1445/20th April 2024

Foreword – Shaykh Maulana Yusuf Lorgat (*Hafīzahullah*)



الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين الذي أضاءت المدينة المنورة وكل شيء في المدينة المنورة بمجيئه وقدمه وهجرته إليها، ولما توفي أظلم بوفاته كل شيء في المدينة المنورة. صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى أصحابه وأزواجه، أما بعد:

Over the centuries, ‘*Ulamā*’ have written and compiled books on the virtues of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. One of the earliest works is *Tārīkh al-Madīnah* by Abū Zayd ‘Umar b. Shabbah (d.262 AH). Another well-known book is *Wafā’ al-Wafā’ bi-Akhhbār Dar al-Muṣṭafā*, written by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allah al-Samhūdī (d.911 AH). Recently, *Faḍā’il al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* was authored by Dr Shaykh Khalīl Mullā Khatir (*Raḥimahullah*), who passed away not long ago.

We see this pattern of writing continue regarding al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah throughout the centuries. Every writer has a passion to write about al-Madīnah, and every writer has their own unique style and relationship with al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The reality behind all of this is that this city is none other than the city of the beloved of Allah ﷺ.

The famous saying states ‘loving one’s hometown is from ‘*Īmān*’. What can be said about loving the city and the permanent abode of Rasūlullah ﷺ! After the conquest of Makkah, the *Ṣahābah* feared that Rasūlullah ﷺ would stay and reside in Makkah, and not return to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. He said to the *Ṣahābah*, “my life and death is with you” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. Thereafter, Rasūlullah ﷺ instructed the *Muhājirīn* that

they remain only for three days in Makkah. The reason for this was so that their hearts do not become inclined back towards Makkah. Then Rasūlullah ﷺ made *du‘ā’* to Allah that He makes al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah as beloved to them as Makkah, and in fact, even more than that [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

What can be said about the place which is chosen for Rasūlullah ﷺ to rest in until the Day of Judgement! This love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is manifest as we see people flocking to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, throughout the year, in millions, paying their respects, presenting themselves in front of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, conveying *Salām*, in hope of a reply. Whoever receives that reply is indeed fortunate. When we recite *Ṣalāt* and *Salām*, we believe and know that there are angels that convey our *Salām*, and that Rasūlullah ﷺ replies, and makes *du‘ā’* for us.

The place and city of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was chosen for the *Hijrah* of Rasūlullah ﷺ. It was inhabited by different tribes and followers of different faiths, including the Jews of the time. There were four famous tribes that resided in al-Madīnah, including Banū Ḥārithah, Banū Qurayzah, Banu al-Naḍīr, and Banū Qaynuqā‘. All these tribes were anticipating and waiting for the coming of the final prophet, who they were certain was to emerge in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. However, when he ﷺ finally came, they rejected the truth.

Rasūlullah ﷺ and the *Ṣaḥābah* remained in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah became the stronghold of ‘*Īmān*. The *Ḥadīth* states:

“Verily, ‘*Īmān* returns to al-Madīnah just as a snake returns to its hole (when in danger)” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah will always remain the stronghold of ‘*Īmān* and the cradle of Islam. This is the Sunnah of Allah on the Earth.

Sayyidunā ‘Alī (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu) moved the *Dār al-Khilafah* from al-Madīnah to Iraq. *Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu)* moved it to *Shām*. Thereafter, it moved to Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate. Thereafter, it spread to distant lands to Africa and Andalus, and finally, to the Turkish region. Despite all the movement, every Dar al-Khilafah had its connections and roots attached to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was the example to be followed in governance and the implementation of the Shari‘ah.

Several books have been written on the rulings, virtues, names, and history of the *Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn*. What we have in front of us is a unique book written in the thirty days of Ramadan 1445 AH/2024 CE, compiled by our dear respected Mufti Faraz Adam Ṣāḥib (*Hafīzahullah*). When I was approached to write a foreword, without any hesitation, I agreed, because of two reasons:

1. It is very disrespectful to turn down a request for something attached to a book that is connected to Rasūlullah ﷺ, *Ḥadīth*, the *Sīrah* or al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.
2. It is the good fortune of a person who is chosen through the decree of Allah *Ta’ālā* to write a book or a foreword or say something about Rasūlullah ﷺ, the *Sīrah*, *Ḥadīth*, or al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. All of these things are attached directly to the being and great personality of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Therefore, I considered this my good fortune, and willingly wrote a foreword to this book.

May Allah *Ta’ālā* increase our love and respect for all the *Sha‘ā’ir* (signs) of Islam, including the *Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn*. We are not lacking resources. We have plenty. Many are visiting the *Ḥaramayn* despite the increasing costs. What is truly lacking is the respect that we ought to have

for these blessed places. When we look at the lives of the elders and *Salaf*, we can gauge the level of respect that we should have. Imam Abū Ḥanīfah (*Raḥimahullah*) considered it to be *Makrūh* to reside in al-Madīnah. Imam Mālik (*Raḥimahullah*) would leave al-Madīnah and go to the outskirts to relieve himself. Imam al-Bukhārī (*Raḥimahullah*) lived and resided in al-Madīnah for years, writing his al-Tārikh al-Kabīr, and compiling Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. He spent time, in the moonlit nights, arranging the chapter headings next to the blessed resting place of Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ. This was the respect that they had.

Every step that a visitor takes in al-Masjid al-Nabawī ﷺ, or in al-Baqīʿ, or in and around al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, every inch, every place, and every spot is priceless. Every place and every inch are to be revered; this is where the feet of the beloved ﷺ stepped, and where his noble companions walked. May Allah give us the respect, reverence and etiquettes that are mentioned for the visitors of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and may Allah increase our love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

When Rasūlullah ﷺ would be returning to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, the moment his eyes would fall on al-Madīnah or Mount Uḥud, he would make his conveyance move faster. He would become so happy and overjoyed, and would say, "This is Ṭābah, this is Ṭaybah, this is Mount Uḥud, a mountain that loves us, and we love it" [Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān].

When we read books and narrations regarding al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, or any book on the history of al-Madīnah, we should read it with the intention and focus that we want to increase our respect and love for Rasūlullah ﷺ. If we read these books with this intention, our love will increase, and we will derive benefit from these works.

May Allah accept this work, and may Allah grant us what *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar (*Raḍiallahu ‘anhu*) asked for, “O Allah grant me *Shahādah* in your path, and make my passing in the city of your Messenger ﷺ.”

So much can be said about al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, but I will leave it for the reader to read and increase their love for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Every traveller to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah should take a copy of this book and read it before travelling to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and whilst in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. May it become a part of our journey to *Ḥaramayn Sharifayn*.

Amīn

(Shaykh Maulana) Yusuf Lorgat Ṣāhib (*Hafīzahullah*)

Night of Jumu‘ah

Madinatul Uloom

18th April 2024

Foreword – Ustadh Khalid Patel (*Hafizahullah*)

FCPM



In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; and may peace and blessings be upon our Rasulullah ﷺ

Just like the mention of Rasulullah ﷺ brings immense joy and ecstasy, in the same manner, everything affiliated to Rasulullah ﷺ has the same effect, especially the resting place of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah. The manner in which this book describes al-Madinah al-Munawwarah is very enlightening. The reality is, al-Madinah is only al-Madinah because of Rasulullah ﷺ.

This book is an excellent resource to understand the importance and virtues of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, emphasising the deep yearning one feels for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, which is, in essence, a yearning for Rasulullah ﷺ. Our *Haḍrat* (*Nawarra Allah Marqadahū*) had such an attachment with al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, that for years on years, he would frequently visit al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

One is gaining closeness to Rasūlullah ﷺ through *Ṣalawāt*, another is gaining closeness through adopting Rasūlullah's ﷺ lifestyle, but gaining physical proximity to Rasūlullah ﷺ is something else altogether, and it is something which everybody wishes.

I remember *Haḍrat (Nawarra Allah Marqadah)* telling me that in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah whilst in the maṣjid, one should initially sit on the side, close one's eyes, and make *Du'ā'* in the depths of one's heart that 'O Allah, make Rasūlullah ﷺ happy with me.' Thereafter, one should go and proceed to convey one's Salām. If a person does this, then as they get closer and closer to the *Rawḍah*, and then, when they finally approach the blessed chamber and in the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ, a person is in a state of ecstasy and melts.

Alhamdulillah, there are many people now downloading and using the FCPM app, using it to recite *Ṣalawāt*. Similarly, there are many who, whilst queuing up to perform *Ṣalāh* in the *Rawḍah*, they are reciting *Hadiyyah al-Haramayn*. May Allah grant us attachment to Rasūlullah ﷺ. May Allah grant us the attachment to al-Madinah al-Munawwarah.

Everybody is recommended to read this book which gives deep insights into al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and more importantly, this book opens up to us the spiritual connection we ought to have with al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. May Allah accept this work and make it a means of bringing the true love of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Upon reading, when a person closes their eyes, they will think of and see al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and as a result, they will, in reality, think of Rasūlullah ﷺ.

May Allah grant us the *Nazar Karam* of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Āmīn.

(Ustadh) Khalid Patel (*Ḥafīzahullah*)

Chapter One:

A Brief History of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah



Introduction to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Almighty Allah has designed al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah perfectly. The unique geographical and natural environment of al-Madīnah, situated 2,050 feet above sea level within a fertile oasis and surrounded by an extensive lava field on one side and the arid hills of the Hejaz Mountain range on the other three, presents a myriad of benefits from environmental, economic, cultural, and health perspectives.

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah lies on a flat mountain plateau, at the junction of the three valleys of al-Aql, al-Aqiq, and al-Himdh, standing 620 metres above sea level, and covering an area of about 700 square kilometres. A hot, continental climate characterises the area. The temperature ranges between 36-46 degrees Celsius during the summer and between 15-20 degrees Celsius during winter, while the average temperature is 30C° in summer and 15C° in winter. Rains mainly fall between November and January, but overall, the area receives little rainfall, with an average of 94mm.

Trade is one of the key sectors in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah because of the various vital economic and productive activities present in the city and spreading throughout the region. Another key aspect influencing the city's economy is the large volume of consumer markets due to the large

numbers of visitors. The mining and quarrying sectors significantly contribute to the mining and use of natural resources in the region and serve the needs of the construction and industrial sectors with raw materials. The agricultural sector has major importance in the region, thanks to the fertile soil around al-Madīnah. In 2011, the total crop area amounted to 27,500 hectares, representing 3.5% of the total crop area in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was 788,000 hectares in the same year. In the last decade, al-Madīnah was the most vegetated area in comparison to the region, showcasing its potential as an oasis in an arid region [UN Habitat Report – Madinah City Profile 2019].

The Natural Wonders of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

The distinctive setting is not only a defining characteristic of the city's physical landscape but also a source of significant advantages. From an environmental perspective, the oasis environment of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah serves as a vital habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, thereby playing a crucial role in biodiversity conservation in an otherwise arid region. The presence of water and vegetation attracts various species of birds, insects, and small mammals, creating a vibrant micro-ecosystem. The greenery and water bodies within the oasis help regulate the local climate, offering a cooling effect that is especially beneficial in a desert region, thus contributing to a more comfortable living environment for the city's inhabitants.

Economically, the fertile oasis underpins agricultural productivity, enabling the cultivation of dates, fruits, vegetables, and other crops that support local food supply and contribute to food security. This productivity also opens up opportunities for trade and export, enhancing the local economy.

The distinctive natural surroundings of al-Madīnah contribute significantly to the city's identity and heritage. The lava fields and Hejaz mountains are not merely natural landmarks but also offer a plethora of educational opportunities in fields such as geography, biology, environmental science, and history, serving as a living laboratory for educational activities and research.

The health and well-being benefits of al-Madīnah's natural setting are manifold. The oasis and surrounding natural areas provide recreational spaces for residents and visitors, promoting mental and physical health through various activities. Additionally, the vegetation in the oasis area enhances air quality by filtering pollutants and producing oxygen, which is vital for healthier living conditions in urban environments where air pollution can be a concern.

The geographical features surrounding al-Madīnah, including the lava fields and mountain ranges, may harbour potential for renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. Exploring these resources could lead to sustainable energy solutions, contributing to reduced reliance on fossil fuels and lower carbon emissions, aligning with goals for sustainable development.

The distinctive topographical and hydrological conditions that define al-Madīnah have historically endowed the city with a rich agricultural hinterland, making it a vital component of the region's economic and cultural fabric. The presence of valleys around the city facilitates a natural irrigation system, channelling water to the arable lands and ensuring the availability of moisture for crops throughout the year. This, coupled with the highly fertile soil characteristic of the oasis, has fostered an environment conducive to agriculture. As a result, al-Madīnah has been able to sustain a variety of crops, contributing not only to the local food supply but also to the prosperity of the community.

The existing natural drainage patterns have played a pivotal role in this agricultural success story, underpinning the irrigation strategies that allow for efficient water use and crop cultivation. Over the centuries, the agricultural practices developed in this fertile oasis have become deeply intertwined with the heritage of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, symbolising the harmonious interaction between nature and human ingenuity. The cultivation of dates, in particular, stands out as a testament to the agricultural legacy of the area, with al-Madīnah's dates renowned for their quality. This agricultural heritage, supported by the advantageous natural conditions of the region, continues to be a cornerstone of al-Madīnah's identity, reflecting the city's resilience and the sustainable relationship between its inhabitants and the environment.

The interplay between al-Madīnah's natural elements and human settlement underscores the immense value of preserving and integrating natural landscapes within urban development. The city's environment is not just a scenic backdrop but a dynamic ecosystem that provides a wide array of benefits, from enhancing biodiversity and supporting agriculture to enriching cultural heritage and fostering recreational and educational activities.

Al-Madīnah's unique geographical setting not only contributes to its environmental, economic, cultural, and health advantages but also fortifies its status as a natural fortress, offering strategic defence capabilities against potential ground forces. This aspect of al-Madīnah's location is historically and strategically significant, embedding an additional layer of value to its distinctive natural environment.

The extensive lava field to the east of al-Madīnah presents a formidable natural barrier that is difficult to traverse. This rugged terrain can act as a deterrent to any ground forces attempting an approach from that

direction, providing the city with a level of protection against invasions. On the other three sides, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is encircled by the arid hills of the Hejaz Mountain range. These hills not only contribute to the city's scenic beauty but also serve as a strategic defence mechanism. The elevations and rough landscapes of the Hejaz mountains complicate any direct assault, requiring potential aggressors to navigate challenging terrains, thereby slowing progress, and exposing them to defensive actions.

This natural fortification has historical precedents where the topography of the surrounding area has been utilised for defensive purposes, reflecting the strategic importance of al-Madīnah's location. The city's natural defences likely influenced settlement patterns, military strategies, and the historical development of the region. In times of conflict, these natural barriers provided residents with a sense of security and stability, allowing the city to flourish both as a capital of Islam and the hub for the Muslims.

In addition to its defensive advantages, the natural fortress-like characteristics of al-Madīnah have influenced the city's urban planning and architecture. The layout of the city and the construction of its buildings have historically considered the protective embrace of its natural surroundings. This symbiosis between the city's infrastructure and its natural environment underscores the deep connection between al-Madīnah and its geographical context.

Thus, al-Madīnah's natural environment, with its fertile oasis, volcanic fields, mountainous terrains, and strategic positioning, collectively bestows upon the city a multitude of benefits. From serving as a biodiverse sanctuary and agricultural hub to acting as a cultural landmark and natural fortress, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah exemplifies the multifaceted advantages of its unique geographical setting, weaving

together aspects of environmental richness, historical significance, and strategic defence into the fabric of its identity.

Natural Resources of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Al-Madīnah is endowed with a wealth of mineral riches, highlighted by substantial reserves of base metals like copper, alongside a significant sector dedicated to mineral processing and metal manufacturing. This region is also known for its robust industry in extracting precious metals, boasting considerable reserves of gold, silver, copper ores, basalt, and feldspar, marking it as a pivotal location in the mining sector.

It is in the province of al-Madīnah that the 'Mahd Ad-Dahab' (Cradle of Gold) lies, a gold mine that has produced over 150,000 tons of gold, a testament to the region's rich mineral foundation. Copper deposits that have been discovered recently are estimated at seven million tons, and are projected to grow in the foreseeable future, underscoring the area's potential for further mineral exploration and development [Invest in al-Madinah]. In March 2024, the Saudi Geological Survey announced the discoveries of gold ore that were within the boundaries of Aba al-Raha, in the al-Madīnah region. Copper ore was also discovered at four sites in the al-Madiq area in the Wadi al-Faraa region in al-Madīnah.

Beyond its mineral wealth, al-Madīnah's economy is significantly bolstered by its agricultural sector, a critical component thanks to the region's fertile lands surrounding al-Madīnah. The area's agricultural abundance is showcased by over 4 million palm trees, yielding 18 distinct varieties of dates. Among these, the Ajwa dates stand out for their renown and quality, illustrative of the region's agricultural prowess.

Additionally, the al-Madīnah region is home to one of the world's largest oil refineries, which processes an impressive 1.2 million barrels of oil each

day and producing 2.25 million tons of ethylene per year. This facility not only underscores the region's industrial capacity but also its strategic importance in the global energy market. With 1.2 million tons of ore reserves, al-Madīnah's abundant precious mineral resources further cement its status as a key economic hub, offering a diverse array of opportunities for growth and investment in both the mining and agricultural sectors.

With abundant natural resources, access to the Red Sea and advanced infrastructure, the region also has a world-class petrochemical sector and an expanding mining and metals industry. Al-Madīnah is home to Yanbu Industrial City Located on the Red Sea coast and covering an area of 606 million square meters, the Yanbu Industrial City is one of Saudi Arabia's main petrochemical and industrial hubs. The city features the King Fahd Industrial Port, the largest oil-shipping complex on the Red Sea. Al-Madīnah's two main ports handled almost USD 1.1 billion in non-oil exports and over USD 1.4 billion in imports in 2021. Furthermore, strategic projects such as the Knowledge Economic City & the Pilgrim Experience Program offer opportunities in diversified industries.

The Earliest Generations That Settled in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Decades after the Great Flood, Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) writes that the first person to settle in this land was Yathrib b. Qāniyah, who was from the children of Iram b. Sām b. Nūḥ (*'alayhi al-salām*) [Fatḥ al-Bārī]. Others mention that it was in fact the ancestor of Yathrib who settled there initially, called 'Abīl. Others add that the Amalekites, who initially resided in Yemen, travelled to Yathrib, and expelled the children of 'Abīl [ʿUmdat al-Qārī]. The progeny of Nūḥ (*'alayhi al-salām*) had scattered in

the lands looking for a new home that was productive, resourceful, and secure. They all headed in different directions.

Imam al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) writes it was Fāligh b. ‘Ābir b. ‘Arfakhshad b. Sām b. Nūḥ who divided the Earth between the children of Nūḥ (*‘alayhi al-salām*). The progeny of Sām settled at the centre of the (known) Earth at the time, which is what lies between Yemen and the Levant. Almighty Allah placed prophethood, scripture among them. The sons of Ḥām descended along the course of the south and west winds, that region being called Ad-Dārūm (which is Africa according to some, and Egypt in particular). Allah made their lands and skies sustainable, removed the plague from them, and placed in their lands the tamarisk, tragacanth, laurel and date-palm.

The sons of Yāfith (Japheth) descended upon the barrenness along the course of the north and east winds (Caucasus region and Eurasia). Allah emptied their land so its cold intensified.

The children of Yaḳṭun b. ‘Ābir went to Yemen, so Yemen was named such as they went to the right (*yamīn*). Some from the children of Canaan went to the Levant so it was called *al-Shām* as they went to the left (*sha'am*). The Levant used to be called the land of the children of Canaan. Banū Isrā’īl came and expelled them from it. Then the Romans attacked Banū Isrā’īl, and expelled them to Iraq except for a few of them. Then the Arabs came and dominated the Levant.

Almighty Allah made ‘Ād, ‘Abīl, Thamūd, Judais, ‘Amlīq, Ṭasm, Umaym and the sons of Yaḳṭun understand Arabic. Then ‘Ād went to Shaḥr and perished there in a valley called Mughīth. ‘Abīl went to the location of Yathrib. ‘Amlīq and his children went to Sanaa before it was called Sanaa, then some of them descended to Yathrib and expelled ‘Abīl from it. ‘Abīl then settled in the place of al-Juḥfah, after which a flood came and swept

them away, so it was named al-Juḥfah. Thamūd went to al-Ḥijr and its surroundings and perished there. Ṭasm and Judais went to al-Yamāmah and perished. Umaym went to the land of Abar and perished there, which is between al-Yamāmah and Shaḥr [Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī].

Banū Isrā'īl's Descent into al-Madīnah

Taqīyy al-Dīn al-Fāsī (d.832 AH) writes that after Mūsā (*'alayhi al-salām*) was granted victory over Fir'awn, some of the Banū Isrā'īl headed towards Ḥijāz, whilst others went towards the Levant. The Banū Isrā'īl that went to Ḥijāz went to deal with the Amalekites, who had previously harmed Mūsā (*'alayhi al-salām*) and his people. After defeating the Amalekites, a dispute erupted on what precisely was commanded, so the returning soldiers of Banū Isrā'īl decided not to return to the Levant, and instead settled in the north of Ḥijāz, which was verdant, lush green, with tress and flowing water.

In addition, others from Banū Isrā'īl knew that a prophet will soon emerge from the Arabs to a land with date palms between two lava fields, as per the revelation in the Torah. Hence, they came from the Levant seeking the description of that land. A group settled in Tayma and resided in date palms. Another group proceeded until they saw Khaybar and thought it was the town to which Rasūlullah ﷺ would emerge, so some of them stayed there. Most of them, the noblest, continued until they saw Yathrib with its barren land, lava field and date palms. They said, "This is the land to which the Prophet will emigrate." So they settled therein [Shifā' al-Gharām].

Ibn al-Ḍiyā' (d.854 AH) writes that al-Naḍīr and those with him settled in Baṭḥān, residing wherever they wished, near Zahrah, which is an area between the lava field and the lower side near the hillside. Their properties were on the lower side. Most of them settled in a place called

Yathrib where the valleys of Baṭḥān, al-‘Aqīq and the valley of Qanāt meet near Zughābah.

Quraizah and their brothers from Banu Hadhl, Hadl, and ‘Amr settled in the upper side by two valleys called Mudhaynib and Mahrūr. Banū an-Naḍīr settled by Mudhaynib and established properties there, while Quraizah and Hadhl settled by Mahrūr and established properties there. They were the first to dig wells, resurrect properties, build fortresses and houses there. The total number of fortresses that were built were fifty-nine [Tarīkh Makkah al-Musharrafah wa al-Madīnah al-Sharīfah].

The Arab Tribes’ Descent into al-Madīnah

Whilst the Banū Isrā’īl had settled in al-Madīnah with a few villages and markets, a few Arab tribes had also settled therein with them. They built their fortresses and houses before the arrival of the al-‘Aws and al-Khazraj tribes. These Arab tribes that were there were Banū ‘Anīf, a tribe of Balā - it is said they were a remnant of the Amalekites - Banū Marthad, Banū Mu’āwiyah, and Banū al-Judhamī that was originally from Yemen. They occupied thirteen fortresses in al-Madīnah.

Banū Isrā’īl were the majority of the population in the earlier time until the event of the Flood of ‘Arim occurred. Almighty Allah discusses the Flood of ‘Arim in the Quran as follows:

Indeed, there was a sign for Saba in their dwelling place: two gardens on the right and on the left. (And it was said to them), “Eat from the provision of your Lord and be grateful to Him. (You have) a good land and a Forgiving Lord”. But they turned away, so We sent upon them the Flood of the Dam and We replaced their two gardens with gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and something of sparse Lote trees. Like this, We requited them

because they disbelieved. And We never requite (in this way) except those who are ungrateful' [Quran 34:15-17].

Upon the people of Saba's defiance, they faced divine retribution when the Great Dam of Ma'rib failed, leading to catastrophic floods that ravaged the land. The engineered marvels of walls and canals nestled between mountains, alongside the meticulously developed irrigation systems, were obliterated. Centuries of agricultural labour on vineyards, orchards, and fields were erased.

Ibn Kathīr (d.774 AH) recounts how Saba' once thrived in a pest-free environment, blessed with favourable weather and robust health among its people, underlining Allah's favour with, '(You have) a good land and a Forgiving Lord'. Their fortune reversed following their divergence from faith, marked by desert rats undermining the dam's integrity. Consequently, floodwaters breached the weakened structure, annihilating everything in their wake. The aftermath saw the land stripped of its fertile trees, supplanted by barren shrubs and sparse lote trees, bearing scant fruit amidst formidable thorns.

The people of Saba' scattered upon this major, life-changing event, and their story becoming a tale for the world. This dispersion was such that it became proverbial among Arabs to describe dispersed groups as having been "scattered like Saba'."

Historically, it's noted that Saba's descendants split post-flood, with four tribes heading north towards the Levant (Lakhm, Judham, Amilah, Ghassan) and six venturing south (Kindah, Al-Ashariyyun, Al-Azd, Madhhij, Himyar, Anmar). A man once asked Rasūlullah ﷺ regarding Saba'. He ﷺ replied that Saba' was a man that had ten sons, six of them went further south, and four of them travelled north [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

The northern journey of the Yemeni tribe Ghassān, deriving its name from the waters near which they settled, is highlighted by Ḥassān b. Thābit (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*), ‘If you inquire, we hail from the noble lineage of al-Azd, by the waters of Ghassān’. Hence, Ibn Kathīr (d.774 AH) writes that al-Aws and al-Khazraj have their roots to Yemen, from the people of Saba’ [Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr].

The Emergence of Al-Aws and al-Khazraj

Al-Aws and al-Khazraj form the *Anṣār* (Helpers) of al-Madīnah, who received Rasūlullah ﷺ, and supported him when the people of Makkah were against him.

Al-Aws and al-Khazraj were the children of Ḥarithah b. Tha‘labah, and their mother was Qaylah bint Kāhil. Hence, they were frequently known as Banū Qaylah and Banū ‘Amr b. Tha‘labah [al-‘Iqd al-Farīd]. Al-Aws and al-Khazraj are from the progeny of Qaḥṭān, which number a total of twenty-seven tribes.

They settled in al-Madīnah, bought, and built properties, fortresses, and owned date-palms alongside the Banū Isrā’īl tribes. They then sought to make a treaty of protection and alliance with the Jewish tribes, which was agreed and formalised. They continued like that for a long time and al-Aws and al-Khazraj multiplied and gained wealth and numbers.

Ibn al-Ḍiyā’ (d.854 AH) writes that when the tribes of Quraizah and al-Naḍīr observed their precarious situation of being outnumbered, their fears escalated over the potential of being overwhelmed and dispossessed of their homes and wealth. Consequently, they initiated hostilities, severing the pact that once bound them. Notably, Quraizah and al-Naḍīr were superior in both numbers and strength. Meanwhile, al-Aws and al-Khazraj, apprehensive of subterfuge, stayed put in their

abodes until Mālik b. al-‘Ajlān, a brother from the Banū Sālim b. Awf b. al-Khazraj lineage, rose to prominence among them. Upon Mālik b. al-‘Ajlān’s ascent, he was unanimously appointed leader of the two tribes. He dispatched emissaries to their kin in the Levant, detailing their plight and expressing grievances over the Banū Isrā’īl hegemony.

However, according to Ibn al-‘Athīr’s (d.630 AH) account, an issue rose when al-Fityūn became the leader of Banū Isrā’īl in al-Madīnah. He began to engage in immodesty and immorality and would interfere with the women of al-Aws and al-Khazraj. Al-Fityūn attempted to interfere with the sister of Mālik b. al-‘Ajlān, and it was a result of this that he went to the Levant to meet Abū Jubailah, a Ghassānid king of noble descent from Banū Jushum b. al-Khazraj.

In response, Abū Jubailah marshalled a formidable force to aid al-Aws and al-Khazraj, swearing by Allah to either expel Banū Isrā’īl or subdue them under the tribes’ dominion. He cautioned, however, that a direct approach might drive the Banū Isrā’īl into their fortifications, rendering them unassailable. Instead, he proposed a strategy of hospitality and guile to disarm them [al-Kāmil Fī al-Tārīkh].

Ibn al-Najjār (d.643 AH) writes that Abū Jubailah organised a banquet, inviting the leaders of Banū Isrā’īl, ensuring that no notable was absent. They arrived, each accompanied by their closest allies, hopeful for royal favour. Unbeknownst to them, Abū Jubailah had prepared a trap, instructing his men to eliminate all the dignitaries of Banū Isrā’īl who entered the designated area, effectively decimating their leadership.

This decisive action enabled al-Aws and al-Khazraj to establish dominion over al-Madīnah, appropriating residences and wealth. Following this victory, Abū Jubailah returned to the Levant, while al-Aws and al-Khazraj expanded throughout al-Madīnah, inhabiting both its developed areas

and untamed lands, and taking possession of the properties and fortresses, eventually constructing one hundred twenty-seven fortresses [al-Durrat al-Thamīnah].

Ibn al-‘Athīr (d.630 AH) writes that al-Aws and al-Khazraj remained in a state of agreement and unity until the first conflict and war occurred among them, the War of Sumayr. The cause was that a man from Banū Tha‘labah named Ka‘b b. al-‘Ajlān had settled with Mālik b. al-‘Ajlān, and formed an alliance with him, staying by his side. One day, Ka‘b went to the market of Banū Qaynuqā‘ and saw a man from Ghaṭafān with a horse, proclaiming, “Let this horse be taken by the most noble of the people of Yathrib.” One man said: "So-and-so." Another said: "Uḥayḥah b. al-Julāḥ Al-Awsī." And another said: "So-and-so from Banū Isrā‘īl is the best of its people." The Ghaṭafānī then handed the horse to Mālik. Ka‘b said: "Did I not tell you that my ally Mālik is the best among you?" This angered a man from al-Aws of Banū ‘Amr b. ‘Awf, named Sumayr, who insulted him, and they parted ways.

Then, aiming for their market in Qubā’, Sumayr targeted him and followed him until the market emptied and then killed him. Mālik b. al-‘Ajlān was informed of his murder, so he sent a message to Banū ‘Amr b. ‘Awf demanding his killer. They responded: “We do not know who killed him.” The messengers went back and forth, with him demanding Sumayr and them denying the murder, they then offered blood money, which he accepted. The blood money for an ally among them was half of that for a relative. Mālik refused except to receive the full blood money, they refused this and said: “We will give the blood money for an ally, which is half.” The matter escalated between them until it led to warfare; they gathered, met, and fought fiercely until they parted. All the clans joined, then they met again and fought until nightfall intervened, with victory that day for al-Aws.

After they parted, al-Aws called for Mālik, inviting him to let al-Mundhir b. Ḥarām al-Najjārī al-Khazrajī, the grandfather of Ḥassān b. Thābit b. al-Mundhir, arbitrate between them. He agreed to this, and they went to al-Mundhir, who ruled that they give Ka‘b, Mālik’s ally, the full blood money of a relative and then return to their old ways. They were satisfied with this, carried out the blood money, and parted ways, though hatred had ignited in their hearts and enmity firmly established between them [al-Kāmil Fī al-Tārikh].

Rasūlullah’s ﷺ Connection with al-Madīnah Prior to *Hijrah*

The first ever visit and experience of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah for Rasūlullah ﷺ was when he went with his noble mother ‘Āminah bint ‘Abd Wahb at the age of six, although others report that he was between four and six years’ old. She had taken him to al-Madīnah to meet his maternal relatives from Banū ‘Adī b. al-Najjār. The Banū Isrā’īl noticed him at the very young age and began to visit him and observe him. ‘Umm Ayman says that she heard one of them saying that *this is* the prophet of this nation, and *this* place is his abode of migration. In another report by Abū Nu‘aym, a Jewish man came and asked him his name, upon which Rasūlullah ﷺ replied, ‘Aḥmad’. Thereafter, the Jewish man peeped at his back (perhaps looking for the seal of prophethood), and thereafter, he exclaimed, ‘This is the prophet of this nation’. The man then went to the relatives of Rasūlullah ﷺ and began to attract a lot of attention, causing unnecessary and worrying commotion. Fearing the safety of her child, the noble mother of Rasūlullah ﷺ decided to leave al-Madīnah. On the return trip, at a place called Abwa, she became really ill and departed from this world [Subul al-Hudā wa al-Rashād].

In the Night Journey and Ascension (*al-Isrā’ wa al-Mi‘rāj*), Rasūlullah ﷺ related that en route, they passed by a land with numerous date-palms.

Jibrīl (*‘alayhi al-salām*) asked him to descend and perform *Nafl Ṣalāh*. He dismounted and performed *Ṣalāh*. Jibrīl (*‘alayhi al-salām*) then enquired: ‘Do you have any idea where you performed *Ṣalāh*?’ Rasūlullah ﷺ replied: ‘I do not know.’ Jibrīl (*‘alayhi al-salām*) replied, ‘You performed *Ṣalāh* in Yathrib where you are going to migrate’ [al-Ṭabarānī].

In the eleventh year of his prophethood, during the Ḥajj season, a few members from al-Khazraj made their way to Makkah. It was then that Rasūlullah ﷺ approached them, presented the message of Islam and recited verses from the Quran. Upon seeing him, they immediately recognised him as the prophet often spoken of by the Banū Isrā’īl in al-Madīnah. Addressing one another they exclaimed: “By Allah! This is the very same prophet whom the Jews longingly talk about. Take heed! Let not the Jews beat you to this good fortune and virtue.”

The six individuals from the al-Khazraj tribe who were present during this initial meeting were As‘ad b. Zurārah, ‘Awf b. Ḥārith, Rāfi‘ b. Mālik, Qutbah b. ‘Āmir, ‘Uqbah b. ‘Āmir, and Jābir b. ‘Abdullah. After their encounter with Rasūlullah ﷺ, they returned to al-Madīnah, constantly speaking of him to everyone they met. Consequently, there was hardly a home or gathering in al-Madīnah where Rasūlullah’s ﷺ name was not mentioned.

The following year, marking the twelfth year of prophethood, saw a delegation of twelve individuals traveling to Makkah to meet Rasūlullah ﷺ. This group included five of the six men from the previous year, joined by seven new members: Mu‘ādh b. Ḥārith, Dhakwān b. ‘Abd Qays, ‘Ubādah b. Ṣāmit, Yazīd b. Tha‘labah, ‘Abbās b. ‘Ubādah, Abū al-Haytham, and ‘Uwaym b. Sā‘idah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhum*).

These twelve individuals pledged their allegiance to Rasūlullah ﷺ in Minā, near a location called ‘Aqabah, leading to the pledge being named

Bay'at al-'Aqabah. They vowed their commitment to *Tawhīd*, and to refrain from theft, adultery, infanticide, and slander, marking the first major pledge of allegiance from the 'Anṣār.

Upon their return to al-Madīnah after the pledge, Rasūlullah ﷺ sent 'Abdullah b. Umm Maktūm and Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhumā*) with the group to educate the residents of al-Madīnah about the Quran and Islam. They were hosted by As'ad b. Zurārah. Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr was engaged in *Da'wah*, leading the people in *Ṣalāh*, and teaching them the fundamentals of Islam.

In the thirteenth year of his prophethood, Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr, accompanied by a group of Muslims, journeyed to Makkah intending to perform Ḥajj. This group included Muslims as well as non-Muslim members from the al-Aws and al-Khazraj tribes who had yet to embrace to Islam. The contingent, numbering over four hundred, was predominantly non-Muslim, with seventy-five Muslims among them, including seventy-three men and two women. They all embraced Islam, pledged their allegiance to Rasūlullah ﷺ in the same valley as the first group, marking the second significant pledge of allegiance.

Maulana 'Idrīs al-Khandelwī (d.1394 AH) writes that just as the beginnings of prophethood were marked by sacred visions and true dreams, similarly the foundation of *Hijrah* (migration) was also laid through sacred visions and true dreams. Initially, Rasūlullah ﷺ was given visions that hinted at the location of his future migration, characterised by an abundance of date palms, without revealing the exact place. He speculated that it might be Yamāmah or Hajar based on these visions. However, it was through divine revelation that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was identified as the destined place for migration. Guided by this revelation, Rasūlullah ﷺ instructed his companions to make their way to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

In a narration reported by Imam al-Tirmidhī, it is mentioned that Almighty Allah informed Rasūlullah ﷺ that his destined place of migration could be any city among al-Madīnah, Bahrain, or Qinnasrīn, according to where his heart was drawn. This choice, akin to the way an honoured guest is offered several dwellings from which to choose, signified the honour bestowed upon Rasūlullah ﷺ, with al-Madīnah being the final choice for *Hijrah*.

Following the *Bay'ah*, Rasūlullah ﷺ ordered his companions to commence their migration to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Upon receiving this sacred mandate, they began their preparations in a hurried yet covert manner. Leading the way in this monumental migration was Rasūlullah's ﷺ milk-brother Abū Salamah al-Makhzūmī (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhu*), along with his wife and son, becoming the first to undertake the journey towards this new beginning.

Chapter Two: The Names of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah



One of the Arabic language's most fascinating aspects is the tradition of attributing multiple names to a single entity, concept, or place. Multiple names for a single entity in Arabic often reflect the diverse aspects and deep connections that the named has with history, culture, and the physical or metaphysical world. Each name is a window into a different attribute, a different story, or a different significance that the entity holds.

Many names are either proper nouns or adjectives, each carrying a distinct facet of the entity's essence and attributes. This dual role enriches the language, allowing for a nuanced expression of characteristics.

Imam al-Qaṣṭallānī (d.923 AH) writes that the abundance of names and adjectives reflects the wholesomeness and multiplicity of virtues and benefits of the named entity [Irshād al-Sārī]. It acknowledges that a single name cannot fully encompass all the dimensions and influences of the named.

In Akhbār al-Madīnah, it has been reported from ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Darāwardī that al-Madīnah has forty names [‘Umdat al-Qārī]. Maulana ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (d.1304 AH) writes that al-Madīnah has forty-nine names [Muqaddimat al-Hidāyah]. Thereafter, Maulana ‘Abd al-

Ḥayy writes that it suffices as the ultimate virtue that Rasūlullah ﷺ lived in al-Madīnah and is resting in al-Madīnah.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah has numerous names, in the thousands, as al-Madīnah has numerous virtues and praiseworthy traits, and whatever can be an adjective and an appropriate description of al-Madīnah, can become a name of al-Madīnah [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

1. Al-Madīnah (The City) – المدينة

The name al-Madīnah is cited in the Quran and *Sunnah*. The word al-Madīnah has been mentioned approximately fourteen times in the Quran. In four of those instances, al-Madīnah refers to the city of the Prophet ﷺ, as follows:

“They say, ‘Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak,’ but power belongs to God, to His Messenger, and to the believers, though the hypocrites do not know this” [Quran 63:8].

“If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease and those who spread rumours in al-Madīnah do not cease, We will surely incite you against them; then they will not remain your neighbours therein except for a little” [Quran 33:60].

And among those around you of the Bedouins are hypocrites, and [also] from the people of Madīnah. They have persisted in hypocrisy. You, [O Muḥammad], do not know them, [but] We know them. We will punish them twice [in this world]; then they will be returned to a great punishment” [Quran 9:101].

It was not [proper] for the people of Madīnah and those surrounding them of the bedouins that they remain behind after [the departure of] the Messenger of Allāh or that they prefer themselves over his self. That is

because they are not afflicted by thirst or fatigue or hunger in the cause of Allāh, nor do they tread on any ground that enrages the disbelievers, nor do they inflict upon an enemy any infliction but that it is registered for them as a righteous deed. Indeed, Allāh does not allow to be lost the reward of the doers of good” [Quran 9:120].

The word "al-Madīnah" stems either from the word “*madana*” meaning “to settle” or “*dāna*” meaning to “obey”. If we consider the first root of *madana*, then al-Madīnah refers to being the place that accommodated and settled people within it. If we consider the second root of *dāna*, then al-Madīnah refers to that place where the authority is respected, revered, and obeyed. It's said that every metropolis can be called a "*Madīnah*," and the word has been used for many other places. The term "al-Madīnah" also refers to a fortress built on a high or central part of the land. It denotes a collection of many dwellings surpassing the number in villages but not quite a metropolis.

"Al-Madīnah" is specifically the name and title for the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, where if mentioned, it refers to no other. It is a proper noun for this city alone. This name is exclusive because Rasūlullah ﷺ resided there, and it submitted to his guidance. Scholars write that al-Madīnah was also used to describe sixteen cities, including Isfahan, Anbar, Baghdad, Bukhara, Samarkand, Kazerun, Merv, Egypt, Nasaf, Neyshabur, a city in Andalus some refer to as Madīnat Qubra, areas near Bahrain, regions in Qazvin, and some other regions. Nevertheless, as a proper noun, the word al-Madīnah refers solely to the city of Rasūlullah ﷺ.

Thus, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is named al-Madīnah because it is the city that is blessed to accommodate Rasūlullah ﷺ, considering the meaning from *madana*. It is also the city where the guidance of

Rasūlullah ﷺ prevailed, capturing the meaning from *dāna*. Further, if we consider the word in its meaning of ‘city’, then this is *the city*, which was honoured with the presence of the Rasūlullah ﷺ. It was *The City*. When the word ‘city’ or al-Madīnah is ever used, the first thing that can only come to mind is The City, for is the most blessed, favoured, and fortunate place as it houses and accommodates our noble Master ﷺ.

2. Al-Munawwarah (The Illuminated) - المُنَوَّرَة

Al-Munawwarah means illuminated and enlightened. Al-Madīnah became illuminated literally and figuratively. This reality was captured in the following cry of *Sayyidunā* ‘Anas b. Mālik (*Raḍiallahu ‘anhu*), who said, “On the day when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered al-Madīnah, everything lit up, and on the day he passed away, everything went dark, and no sooner had we dusted off our hands (after burying him), we felt that our hearts had changed” [Sunan Ibn Mājah].

The Prophet ﷺ possessed the most illuminated countenance and presence. *Umm Ma‘bad* (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā*), when describing our Master ﷺ said, “He possessed a luminous face [al-Ṭabarānī].

Sayyidunā Jābir (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) gazed at Rasūlullah ﷺ on a full-moon night whilst the Prophet ﷺ was wearing clothing with some redness in it. With the moon vividly apparent in the landscape, *Sayyidunā* Jābir sat comparing the suspended moon and the noble countenance of the Prophet ﷺ. He was quick to affirm that the beauty of Rasūlullah ﷺ far surpassed that of the moon [al-Tirmidhī].

Sayyidunā al-Barā’ (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) also described the noble countenance as moon-like, in that it was something which the eyes could bear and see, it was not piercing or painful like the sun, but pleasant and enjoyable. His face has a unique glow which emanated from beneath his noble skin. It is as if a layer of light had been placed between his skin and

flesh. This layer of light just gave his beautiful face a backlight and natural illumination. Hence, *Sayyidunā Ka'b (Raḍiallāhu 'anhu)* said, "When he ﷺ was pleased, his face would shine so brightly that you would easily think that it was a portion of the moon" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Once a female companion was asked to describe the beauty of Rasūlullah ﷺ, she said to the young children who had not seen him, "Had you seen him, you would exclaim that the sun is rising" [al-Dārimī]. His beauty and noble countenance were so striking, that it gave light to everything else. His light gave light, it gave meaning and gave vision to the eyes.

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (Raḍiallāhu 'anhu) said something amazing. He said, "I have never seen anything more beautiful and pleasant than Rasūlullah ﷺ, it was as if the sun was orbiting and moving in his face" [Musnad Aḥmad]. This description tells us something even more startling; not only was beauty engrained and embedded in Rasūlullah ﷺ, rather it was alive in him. Beauty moves, evolves, and is ever-growing and manifesting itself constantly in different features of Rasūlullah ﷺ. The peak of beauty is not static in his noble features, rather it is dynamic, vibrant, and energetic.

Considering all of the above, it is of no surprise that al-Madīnah became known as al-Munawwarah, as it forever has a natural source of light in the Prophet ﷺ. Figuratively, al-Madīnah was the city in which the *Nūr* (light), the Quran, was revealed in abundance. In addition, the illuminated guidance of Rasūlullah ﷺ was taught, practiced, and manifested in al-Madīnah, hence it became Munawwarah.

3. Yathrib - يَثْرِبُ

Al-Madīnah was initially known as Yathrib. It was said to be named after a person who lived there when Nūḥ's (*'alayhi al-salām*) descendants dispersed in the lands. This person was Yathrib b. Qāniyah. There is a

difference of opinion on what exactly was named Yathrib. One view is that Yathrib was the entire region. Another view was that Yathrib was initially the city that became al-Madīnah. This view is ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) and preferred by al-Zamakhsharī (d.538 AH). A third view states that Yathrib was an area within al-Madīnah. This third view was narrated by Ibn Zubālah al-Makhzūmī (c.200 AH).

The Quran quotes the hypocrites who used the word Yathrib when addressing the Muslims. Imam al-‘Ālūsī (d.1270 AH) states that these hypocrites intentionally used the word Yathrib as they knew it displeases Rasūlullah ﷺ.

Imam al-Biqā‘ī (d.885 AH) writes that the word Yathrib has its roots in the word ‘*Tharb*’, which is translated as blame, reprimand, and reproach [Nazm al-Durar].

Rasūlullah ﷺ renamed the city himself. *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “I have been commanded (to migrate) to a town which will dominate other cities. They (the people) call it Yathrib; its correct name is (in fact) al-Madīnah. It eliminates (bad) people just as a furnace removes alloy from iron” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

4. Arḍ Allah (The Land of Allah) – أَرْضُ اللَّهِ

This name stems from the verse, “Was not the land of Allah spacious to migrate therein?” [Quran 4:97] Ibn ‘Āshūr (d.1393 AH) and others state that this ‘Land of Allah’ in this verse refers to al-Madīnah.

5. Dār al-Hijrah (The Land of Migration) – دَارُ الْهِجْرَةِ

This name stems from the narration, “Indeed Allah has revealed to me that: Whichever of these three places you go to will be the place of your emigration: al-Madīnah, Bahrain, or Qinnasrīn” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said, “May Allah have mercy upon Abū Bakr, he married his daughter to me, and he arranged travel for me to *Dār al-Hijrah* (The Land of Migration), and he freed Bilāl with his wealth. May Allah have mercy upon ‘Umar, he says the truth even if it is sour. The truth caused him to be left without a friend. May Allah have mercy upon ‘Uthmān, the angels are shy of him. May Allah have mercy upon ‘Alī. O Allah! Place the truth with him wherever he turns” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

Additionally, Imam Mālik (d.179 AH) was famously referred to and known as ‘*Imam Dār al-Hijrah*’. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d.463 AH) records this title of Imam Mālik in *al-Istighnā’ Fī Ma’rifat al-Mashhūrīn*, Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) records this title of Imam Mālik in *Tahdhīb al-‘Asmā’ wa al-Lughāt*, as well as other great scholars of Islam in their works.

One of the secrets of this name is that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was not just *Dār al-Hijrah* in the time of Rasūlullah ﷺ; it continuously serves as *Dār al-Hijrah* for all the lovers of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Thousands have set their hearts on migrating and moving to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Many fortunate scholars migrated to al-Madīnah with the hope that their souls depart this transient world whilst they are physically in the blessed land, inhaling the fragrant air of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, feeling the soothing breeze of this noble city. Thus, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah remains as *Dār al-Hijrah* and serves as the ultimate destination for every believer.

This is further strengthened with the following narration where Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "Verily, *‘Imān* returns to al-Madīnah just as a snake returns to its hole (when in danger)" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that this narration is in reference to the end of times. Maulana Aḥmad ‘Alī al-Sahāranpūrī (d.1297AH) writes

in the commentary of this narration that the *‘Imān* and love for Rasūlullah ﷺ will drive the believers to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

6. Qubbat al-Islam (The Dome of Islam) – قُبَّةُ الْإِسْلَامِ

Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “al-Madīnah is the dome of Islam, the centre of *‘Imān*, the land of *Hijrah*, the place where the laws of *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* were established” [al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ].

Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) reports that this narration is sound (*Ḥasan*) [al-Taysīr Bi-Sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr]. Imam al-Mundhirī (d.656 AH) writes that this chain (*Sanad*) is acceptable (*Lā Ba’sa bihi*) [al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb]. Imam al-Haythamī (d.807 AH) records that ‘Īsā b. Mīnā Qālūn’s narrations are sound (*Ḥasan*), and the remaining narrators are reliable (*Thiqāt*).

The description of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah as the “dome of Islam” in the *Ḥadīth* metaphorically highlights the city’s profound significance and virtue. This analogy encapsulates how al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, much like a dome in Islamic architecture, is a standout feature on the Islamic map. Much like a dome stands out as a prominent architectural feature, commanding attention, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah captures the heart of every believer. Just as a dome often serves as the focal point within a *masjid*, guiding the eye towards the central congregational space, al-Madīnah is the spiritual and emotional heart of Islam.

The dome typically surmounts the main prayer space, signifying the centrality of worship and the place of gathering, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah houses the most noble personality to ever walk this Earth, Rasūlullah ﷺ. He is the focal point of creation, and behind whom the entire creation will gather in the Hereafter.

Just as a dome often captures the eye and interest with its prominence and architectural beauty, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah has a natural magnetic pull towards it. This magnetic pull is akin to the spiritual draw al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah has, engulfing the hearts of all believers across the world.

A dome gives a building an identity. Similarly, Islam's identity was formed in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. It is as though the correct identity of the 'building' of Islam is that which is crowned by the Medinan way.

7. Akkālat al-Buldān/Akkālat al-'Arḍ (The Consumer of Lands) – أَكَاةُ الْبُلْدَانِ/أَكَاةُ الْأَرْضِ

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "I was ordered to migrate to a town which will consume (dominate) other towns, known as Yathrib, but now it is called al-Madīnah, and it drives away (evil) people just as a furnace removes the impurities of iron" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Imam Aḥmad (d.241 AH) explained this name of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah as the conquest of the villages, the conquest of Makkah by al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and what surrounds al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah by it, not that it consumes them literally; rather, it means the villages are conquered by al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) says that the people of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah will dominate the people of other cities and lands. Another explanation he provides is that the word *Akkālah* is used to explain the dominance in virtue. It is as though the supremacy of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah over all other cities is being conveyed [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Imam al-Kawrānī (d.893 AH) writes that *Akkālah* is used to express total dominance; just as a person consumes something and it ceases to exist,

al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah will dominate other places in a way that they will seem non-existent in comparison to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah [al-Kawthar al-Jārī].

Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) writes that this is glad tidings for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in that whichever tribe or people reside in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, they will naturally dominate other tribes. He then cites the example of the *‘Amāliqah*, who dominated the lands after settling in that area. Thereafter, the Banū Isrā’īl tribes settled here, and they dominated the *‘Amāliqah*. Then the *Anṣār* came before the Prophet ﷺ migrated, they dominated the other tribes. Thereafter, the Prophet ﷺ migrated, and the Muslims dominated everyone else [Lama‘at al-Tanqīh].

Ibn Ḥibbān (d.354 AH) mentions that this refers to the conquests that were to follow, as Islam in its true form commenced from al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and then spread across the lands. Imam al-Baghawī (d.516 AH) writes that this is a prophecy and glad tidings of the dominance of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and that the foodstuff and provisions of other cities will be brought to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and that the inhabitants of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah will be presented with the provisions of all other cities.

None of these are contradictory, and in fact, all of these reasons and explanations are valid. The power of *Ḥadīth* and the Prophetic sayings is that the meanings of it manifest in multiple ways. It is not that just one explanation is ‘correct’ or ‘valid’, and the rest are ‘invalid’, rather all of the meanings are valid expressions and manifestations of the meaning of a Prophetic saying. The words of the Prophet ﷺ are meaningful, and full of depth that manifest in multiple ways.

8. Al-‘Īmān (Faith) - الإيمان

Some scholars have given the name *al-‘Īmān* to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, based on the following verse:

“Those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge” [Quran 59:9].

As per one reading of the verse, Imam al-Bayḍāwī (d.685 AH) writes that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is called al-‘Īmān because it was the place where faith and belief manifested, and it is the place where faith naturally belongs [Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī].

Imam Mālik (d.179 AH) states that this verse shows the virtue of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, in that ‘Īmān and Hijrah were the means of it becoming an Islamic settlement, whereas other cities were conquered [al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr].

It comes as no surprise that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is also known as al-‘Īmān or Dār al-‘Īmān. This city served as the epicentre for the teaching, spreading, reinforcing, and understanding of faith. Faith infused every corner of the city, acting as the foundation for all its activities. This city was the blueprint for a faith-powered city and a faith-powered community.

9. Al-Bārrah and Al-Barrah (The City of Abundant Goodness) – البَارَّة/البَرَّة

Imam al-Ḥalabī (d.1044 AH) writes that among the names of al-Madīnah is *al-Bārrah* [al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah].

The city is named with these titles due to its abundance of benefits to its inhabitants specifically, and towards the whole world generally. Its goodness to its people comes in many forms, including: The abundance

of water in its aqueducts, wells, streambeds, and rivers, followed by the sweetness of its water, the proximity of its pastures, the beauty of its construction, the freshness of its breezes, the purity of its air, the spaciousness of its courtyards, and its blessed soil's ability to replace medicine in treating ailments, along with the orderly arrangement of its gardens and orchards, coupled with the blessing that descends in all its affairs, especially in its palm trees and fruits, and the sweetness of its grapes and figs, the greenness of its vegetables and the freshness of its gardens. All of this is considered a part of the land's goodness.

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is naturally a green city; a city of natural wonders and resources. Despite its location on a desert peninsula, it emerges as a vibrant oasis.

10. Al-Buḥayrah (The Expansive City) - البَحَيْرَة

This description was mentioned by *Sayyidunā* Sa'd b. 'Ubādah (*Raḍīallāhu 'anhu*) in a *Ḥadīth* narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. This description was considered a name by Imam al-Zarkashī (d.794 AH) in *I'lām al-Masājīd*. Imam al-'Aynī (d.855 AH) writes that the Arabs would call towns and cities *al-Biḥār* [Nukhab al-'Afkār]. Murtadā al-Zabīdī (d.1205 AH) has also described this as a name for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah [Tāj al-'Arūs].

Ibn Fāris (d. 395 AH) elaborates on the root of this term, indicating it signifies something possessing both breadth and depth, capable of encompassing and accommodating various entities. Consequently, a city is referred to as *al-Baḥrah* and *al-Buḥayrah*, because it acts as a vessel that gathers and hosts many lives and activities within its expansive and deep-reaching boundaries. Al-Madīnah houses the most noble of lives that are the most expansive spiritually and in character [Maqāyīs al-Lughah].

Hence, al-Madīnah was also described as *al-Buḥayrah* due to its most expansive nature in spirituality and values.

Another reason for al-Madīnah to be referred to as *al-Buḥayrah* was because it was in a spacious and expansive set of flat land, not dodged by hills or mountains in between. It was like an open palm, accessible, smooth, and accommodating. Hence, this root is also used for the ocean and seas due to its expansive and flat nature, allowing it to accommodate everything on it.

11. Balad al-Rasūl ﷺ (The City of The Messenger ﷺ) – بَلَدُ الرَّسُولِ ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ described al-Madīnah as '*Baladī*', which translates as 'my city' in a narration cited by al-Bazzār. It has been reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily the *Shayāṭīn* have become despondent from being worshipped in my city" [Musnad al-Bazzār].

There is no prophet or person on the entire Earth who has an entire city dedicated to them. It is unusual for a city to be so deeply connected to one person. Few cities in the world, if any, are as profoundly focused on a single figure as al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The city's streets, the population, the landmarks, the landscapes, the sounds, the mountains, the trees, and all other aspects consistently revolve around and call to mind the cherished being who illuminated this city with their presence. It all orbits and syncs so completely around one personality, our beloved and noble Master ﷺ.

Among the numerous manifestations of Allah's love for Rasūlullah ﷺ, one such example is the Allah dedicating an entire city to His beloved that echoes his name, life, and beauty constantly. Hence, the name *Balad al-Rasūl* persuasively captures this reality.

12. Al-Jābirah (The Remedying City) - الْجَابِرَة

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d.852 AH) narrates a report from Zayd b. Aslam that al-Madīnah has ten names: it is al-Madīnah, Ṭābah, Ṭaybah, al-Muṭayyibah, al-Miskīnah, al-Dār, Jābirah, Majbūrah, Munīrah, and (was also previously known as) Yathrib. Ibn Ḥajar then narrates another report, and mentions the following names: al-Madīnah, Ṭābah, Ṭaybah, al-Muṭayyabah, al-Miskīnah, al-al-Midrā, al-Jābirah, al-Majbūrah, al-Muḥabbabah, and al-Maḥbūbah [Fatḥ al-Bārī].

The name al-Jābirah is derived from the root *Jabr*, which refers to remedying and treating a bone. Hence, a bandage is known as *al-Jabīrah*, as it is used to repair injuries. Al-Madīnah is known as al-Jābirah, as it heals the broken hearted, and brings comfort to the needy with the generosity and kindness of its people. This is truly a miracle that is experienced by many. Whoever feels sadness or has a worry, and thereafter visits al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, Almighty Allah heals the heart and strengthens the person.

Another meaning of al-Jābirah is the one that compels; al-Madīnah compels people to surrender and submit to the beauty and love of the Prophet ﷺ. A person cannot remain in al-Madīnah without falling in love with Rasūlullah ﷺ and al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Whoever visits al-Madīnah, eventually leaves being totally overawed and mesmerised. It is a city like no other. Not a single person that leaves al-Madīnah fails to testify to its energy and its power in overwhelming the heart.

13. Ṭābah - طَابَة

Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d.502 AH) writes that the word Ṭābah has its roots in the word *Ṭayb* and *Ṭayyib*, which refers to anything that is enjoyable, pleasant, and pleasing to one's senses and oneself [al-Mufradāt].

Abū Ḥumayd (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that when they were returning from Tabūk, and neared al-Madīnah, Rasūlullah ﷺ pointed towards al-Madīnah saying, “This is Ṭābah, this is ‘Uḥud, a mountain that loves us, and we love it!” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Verily, Almighty Allah has named al-Madīnah as Ṭābah” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. al-Barā’ b. ‘Āzib (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Whoever calls al-Madīnah Yathirb, then they should seek Allah’s forgiveness. In reality, al-Madīnah is Ṭābah, it is Ṭābah” [Musnad Aḥmad]. Imam al-Haythamī (d.807 AH) deemed the narrators as trustworthy and reliable (*Thiqāt*). However, Shaykh Shu‘ayb al-Arna’ūt (d.1438 AH) deemed the chain of narration as weak due to the presence of Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād.

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that either Almighty Allah has named this city Ṭābah in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*, or he commanded Rasūlullah ﷺ to name it Ṭābah [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Ibn Malak (d.854 AH) writes that it is pure due to the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ and the companions, its absence of *Shirk*, and free from trials, including the trial of *Dajjāl* [Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ].

Shaykh Zakariyyā al-Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) writes that in the pleasant and fragrant soil and breeze of al-Madīnah is clear evidence and a support for the name Ṭābah. Ibn Baṭṭāl (d.449 AH) writes that whoever resides in al-Madīnah will notice a very pleasant fragrance emanating from its soil and walls [al-Abwāb wa al-Tarājīm Li Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Imam al-‘Aynī (d.855 AH) narrates that it was called Ṭābah due to its pleasant residents, and pleasant life therein. He thereafter comments himself saying that what could be more pleasurable than having the ability to witness the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ! He then says, ‘can there be any soil more pleasant and fragrant than the soil next

to him? Not forgetting that from his grave to his pulpit is a garden of Paradise. In addition to all of that, imagine the pleasant soil in proximity to the blessed body of Rasūlullah ﷺ! [‘Umdat al-Qārī].

Ibn al-Mulaqqin (d.804 AH) writes that al-Madīnah’s soil is astonishing, for it is a witnessing proof and evidence for the narration of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Indeed, al-Madīnah is like a kiln, it expels its impurity, and its goodness becomes vividly clear”; because whoever enters it and resides there finds from its soil and walls a pleasant fragrance unlike any other in scents. The mixtures of perfumes of al-Madīnah have a unique scent, and likewise, the fragrance of all incenses becomes even more enjoyable multiplied in that town over any other town that used that very incense in it [al-Tawḍīḥ].

Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dīhlawī (d.1052 AH) writes it is Ṭābah and Ṭaybah because of it being pleasant and in conformity with every sound and pure being. Then he writes that al-Madīnah is not named with these names just because of its pure scent, rather due to the pleasant nature of everything connected to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Thereafter, he writes that some friends of Allah have said, “From its soil, doors, and walls, pleasant fragrances emanate, found by those whose inner sense of smell is not congested with the cold of disbelief and hypocrisy” [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ].

14. Ṭaybah - طَيْبَة

Zayd b. Thābit (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “This (city) is Ṭaybah! It eradicates impurity just like a fire removes the impurity from silver” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

In terms of the meaning of Ṭaybah, it has the same root of Ṭābah, and therefore has the same meanings. Perhaps al-Madīnah has been named with all the different derivatives derived from *Ṭayyib*, and is known as

Ṭābah, Ṭaybah, Ṭayyibah Ṭā'ib, Ṭūbā, Muṭayyabah due to the multiple and manifold pleasant, pure, fragrant, purifying nature of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

Al-Fayrūzābādī (d.817 AH) notes that the soil of al-Madīnah, renowned for its inherent purity, wholesomeness, cleanliness, and immaculate nature, reveals this intrinsic quality visibly. Its lanes and spaces are filled with a refreshing breeze, a phenomenon apparent to those who reflect upon it, both externally and internally. This natural state allows it to repel all impurities, leaving behind nothing but sheer goodness. This is supported by the narration of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Indeed, al-Madīnah is like a kiln, it expels its impurity, and its goodness becomes vividly clear". This *Ḥadīth* is a clear proof of the purity and sanctity of this sacred place. This is always the state of luminous, virtuous places, and sacred realms. From this, it is understood that when a believer is graced with residing in al-Madīnah, they are aided in performing acts of obedience, various forms of worship become facilitated for them, and it becomes easy for them to achieve their goals, their spiritual state and spiritual strength are empowered, their faith increases and their *Dīn* is supported, their disobedience decreases and their certainty becomes firm. All of this is among the special qualities of just the land and pure soil, so how much more so when it is accompanied by the proximity to those who have settled in it! [al-Maghānim al-Muṭābah].

15. Al-ʿĀṣimah (The Refuge) - العاصمة

The root letters of this word refer to the meaning of protection and granting refuge and sanctuary. The Quran also mentions the word *ʿĀṣim* in the following verse:

"But he replied, I will seek refuge on a mountain to save me from the water." Nūḥ said, "Today there is no refuge from Allah's command, except

for those on whom He has mercy.’ The waves cut them off from each other and he was among the drowned” [Quran 11:43].

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was a refuge, sanctuary, and protector for all the companions that migrated to it. Al-Madīnah shielded all those who sought to harm the companions. Similarly, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah remains a sanctuary and refuge for all believers today.

16. Al-Qāṣimah (The Breaker) - الْقَاصِمَة

Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) writes that this is among the ten names of al-Madīnah that has been reported in the Torah, along with Ṭaybah, Ṭābah, Jābirah, al-Majbūrah, al-Madīnah, al-Marḥūmah, al-‘Adhrā’, al-Maḥbūbah, al-Sakīnah [Fayḍ al-Qadīr].

Al-Qāṣimah comes from the root meaning of breaking. Al-Madīnah is known as al-Qāṣimah because it broke and decimated every enemy. Al-Madīnah was the place where *Kufr* and *Shirk* were wiped out. Al-Madīnah is also called al-Qāṣimah, because it humbles and breaks the pride of every leader when it enters this city.

17. Al-Shāfiyah (The Means of Cure) – الشَّافِيَة

This name is traced back to reports, the soundness of which are heavily disputed, in which it is narrated that the soil of al-Madīnah is a cure. Imam al-Suyūṭī (d.911 AH) has narrated this report in al-Ḥujaj al-Mabniyyah. Regardless of the soundness of this narration, this property and quality of al-Madīnah has been accepted by numerous scholars. Imam al-Zurqānī (d.1122 AH) records that al-Madīnah has a unique healing property to it [Sharḥ ‘alā al-Mawāhib].

Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) narrates an incident of a scholar who had a skin disorder. He visited al-Madīnah and applied the soil of al-Baqī‘ on

his body. Almighty Allah cured him through this soil. Imam al-Munāwī narrates a similar incident for Ibn al-Muraḥḥil (*Raḥimahullah*), who had vitiligo the size of a dirham on his hand. He made *du‘ā’* to Almighty Allah, and thereafter went to al-Baqī‘, and applied the soil of al-Madīnah onto his hand. Almighty Allah cured him as a result. Imam al-Samhūdī (d.911 AH) also writes that he is aware of numerous accounts of people that were cured through the blessed soil of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah [‘Wafā’ al-Wafā’].

This name is further supported by the authentic narration that Rasūlullah ﷺ used to say to the patient, “In the Name of Allah, the Earth of our land and the saliva of some of us, cure our patient” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that Rasūlullah ﷺ would take his own saliva on his index finger, thereafter, would stroke his finger on the soil, and thereafter rub the paste onto the wounded or ill area of the patient. He would be reciting the above words as he would do this [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Mullā ‘Alī mentions that one opinion is that this can be specific to al-Madīnah due to its blessings. Shāḥ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq (d.1052 AH) writes that the soil in this narration refers to the *Fiṭrah* of humans as they are made from soil [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ]. Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) mentions that this could refer to the Earth in general.

Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) mentions that this is *Tabarruk* (seeking blessings) through the name of Almighty Allah, and that the soil was used due to its coolness and dryness, it would cool any fever and strengthen the wound [Ikṃāl al-Mu‘lim].

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d.852 AH) discusses that if this narration is interpreted as a specific practice of Rasūlullah ﷺ and specifically with al-Madīnah, then this practice becomes restricted and specific to Rasūlullah

ﷺ and al-Madīnah. If this narration is understood in a generic manner, then it is more of a reference of the properties of soil and saliva, and more importantly, seeking cure through the name of Almighty Allah [Fatḥ al-Bārī].

18. Madkhal al-Ṣidq (The Honourable Entrance) – مَدْخَلُ الصِّدْقِ

This name stems from the following verse:

And say, "My Lord! Grant me an honourable entrance and an honourable exit' and grant me Yourself a supporting authority" [Quran 17:80].

There are several interpretations of Madkhal al-Ṣidq, one of them being the honourable entrance of al-Madīnah. Imam al-Rāzī (d.606 AH) preferred this interpretation. Hence, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is also described and named as 'The Honourable Entrance'. After thirteen years of patience and struggles, it was in this city that Rasūlullah ﷺ was honoured and received with the warmest of receptions. Every adult and child yearned to catch a glimpse of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Even non-Muslims were eager to see Rasūlullah ﷺ. The reality is, once they saw him one time, they wished to continue seeing him ﷺ. Once they experienced a gathering with him ﷺ, they longed for another gathering. His companionship was something they had never experienced before; it was the most empowering, uplifting, the most dignified, the most enriching, and the most peaceful.

Ibn 'Āshūr (d.1393 AH) writes that *al-Ṣidq* refers to a praiseworthy place, and that is because something which is not praiseworthy is false and a façade. Al-Madīnah was praiseworthy in every sense, and entering al-Madīnah opened the door to all praiseworthy features and benefits.

19. Al-‘Adhrā’ (The Untrodden Land) - الأَعْدْرَاءُ

Linguistically, this refers to sand that has never been trodden on. A virgin is also called al-‘adhrā’ due to a similar meaning. A pearl that has not been pierced is also called al-‘Adhrā’. Al-Madīnah has been named al-‘Adhrā’ because it has never been conquered or trampled upon by any enemy or conqueror.

20. Al-Gharrah’ (The Notable Place) - الغَرَاءُ

This comes from the root word *al-Ghurrah*, which refers to the most notable part of anything. Hence, any whiteness of anything is also known as *al-Ghurrah*, as the white patch or mark is clearly visible. A horse is described as *Gharrah’* when it has a white forehead. A very pleasant and sweet-scented flower is also called *Gharrah’*, due to its distinguished presence among flowers.

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was named al-Gharrah’ for several reasons:

- It has numerous landmarks within where the best of creation ﷺ left an everlasting mark and memory. This gave this city several marks and patches of light.
- The moon of al-Madīnah has a different whiteness and light, something appreciated by its inhabitants only.
- Al-Madīnah has unique and pure mountains when compared to other areas in Arabia.
- The whiteness of the soil of al-Madīnah is clearly visible and striking.
- Al-Madīnah was unique in Arabia due its abundance of palm trees and lushness of its surroundings, this made it remarkable and noticeable from other places.

- The breeze of al-Madīnah has a pureness and scent that is not found in other places. A deep inhalation of the blessed air of al-Madīnah is the most soothing experience.
- Al-Madīnah had a leadership over the villages, and its prominence over the lands of the people.
- It being the most prominent of lands in terms of its natural roads and routes.
- Its inhabitants are the most noble in nature, and the most generous. The people of al-Madīnah were the most welcoming, the most generous in giving, and their homes were spacious for everyone.

If you look at satellite imagery, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is a white mark on the map, similar to Makkah al-Mukarramah. It is al-Gharrā' in every sense.

21. Al-Marḥūmah (The Embodiment of Mercy) - المَرْحُومَةُ

This name is traced back to reports from previous revelations. Al-Marḥūmah refers to that which has been showered with mercy. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is the place where Allah's mercy is constantly descending. Al-Madīnah was the place where the most merciful of Almighty Allah's creation lived. It is where people from all parts of the world show mercy to one another. The city is naturally enveloped in mercy and encourages people to be merciful.

22. Al-Maḥfūfah (The Encircled City) - المَحْفُوفَة

This name is based on the reality that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is encircled and guarded by angels. The *Ḥadīth* states:

“*Dajjāl* will come to al-Madīnah and find the angels guarding it. So Allah willing, neither *Dajjāl*, nor plague will be able to come near it” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

In a narration reported by Imam al-Ḥākim, Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Know that al-Madīnah is immersed and intertwined with angels. Every entrance has two angels guarding the entrance to al-Madīnah. No plague can enter al-Madīnah, nor will *Dajjāl* be able to enter al-Madīnah. Whoever intends harm for the people of al-Madīnah, Allah will disintegrate them just as salt is dissolved in water” [al-Mustadrak]. Imam al-Dhahabī (d.748 AH) writes that this narration is in conformity to the conditions of Imam Muslim [al-Talkhīṣ].

Considering the above, al-Madīnah is really the city of angels. The number of angels in al-Madīnah is unprecedented. Angels are celestial creations formed of light, that naturally add to the light of al-Madīnah. Further, the inhabitants of al-Madīnah are blessed with the noble companionship of angels, who are of complete obedience to Almighty Allah. The angelic nature of this creation rubs off onto the inhabitants of al-Madīnah.

In addition to the hundreds and thousands of angels in permanent residence in al-Madīnah, al-Madīnah is blessed with hundreds of millions of visiting angels on a daily basis. Rasūlullah ﷺ informed us that Almighty Allah has angels whose only duty is to travel around the Earth to convey the *Salām* of the ‘*Ummah* to Rasūlullah ﷺ [Sunan al-Nasa’ī].

23. Al-Mubārahah (The Very Blessed City) - الْمُبَارَكَة

Al-Madīnah is named al-Mubārahah due to its immense blessings. *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) mentioned that when the people saw the first fruit (of the season or of plantation) they would bring it to Rasūlullah ﷺ. He would say, “O Allah, bless us in our fruits; and bless us in our city; and bless us in our *Ṣā‘* and bless us in our *Mudd*. O Allah, Ibrāhīm is your servant, your close friend, and your messenger; and I too am your servant and your messenger. He (Ibrāhīm) made supplication to You for (the showering of blessings upon) Makkah, and I am making supplication to You for al-Madīnah to (grant whatever you gave) as he made supplication to You for Makkah, and double of that” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "O Allah! Make us love al-Madīnah as You made us love Makkah, in fact, make us love al-Madīnah more, and transfer the fever that is in it, to al-Juḥfah. O Allah! Bless our *Mudd* and our *Ṣā‘*" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. On another occasion, Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Allah! bless them in their measurements, bless them in their *Ṣā‘* and bless them in their *Mudd*” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. The Prophet ﷺ also said, “O Allah! Bestow on al-Madīnah twice the blessings You bestowed on Makkah” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Based on the above narrations, as well as the fact that Rasūlullah ﷺ made supplications for al-Madīnah on numerous occasions, many were of the view that al-Madīnah is the most virtuous city in the world. This is the opinion ascribed to *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*), Imam Mālik, and majority of the companions of al-Madīnah [al-Shifā].

Barakah linguistically means increase, growth, continuity, and establishment. *Barakah* is a metaphysical energy which is embedded into

activities, resources, and abstract concepts like time. It is a divine blessing from Allah and solely granted by Allah to those who seek Him and His pleasure. When something has *Barakah*, it will:

- Have a prolonged use and a longer life.
- Be relatively more beneficial.
- Have increased output in reduced time periods.
- Have a stronger layer of protection.

Everything in al-Madīnah is blessed with the above meanings. Time in al-Madīnah is just so much more productive than other cities. Goods in al-Madīnah are just so much more useful than goods in other places. The sleep and rest in al-Madīnah is just so much more satisfying than other places. The food of al-Madīnah is so much more nourishing and filling than other places.

24. Al-Mahfūzah (The Guarded Sanctuary) – المَحْفُوظَة

Al-Madīnah is known as the Guarded Sanctuary, a city divinely preserved since the dawn of its creation by Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah has placed angels around the entire city to stand guard twenty-four hours a day. These guards never tire, are combat ready, and are perpetually alert. The city's most profound safeguard is manifested in the divine decree that forbids the entry of *Dajjāl*, the false messiah, into its precincts.

A *Ḥadīth* documented in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī elaborates on this divine protection, stating that neither *Dajjāl* nor plagues can penetrate the sanctity of al-Madīnah. This shows that al-Madīnah is not only protected from harmful people, but also harmful non-human entities.

25. Al-Marzūqah (The Providential City) - الْمَرْزُوقَة

Rizq refers to any grant, resource, and provision from Almighty Allah. It encompasses consumables and non-consumables. Others have defined *Rizq* as everything of benefit.

Al-Madīnah has the greatest resource ever to be revealed to the Earth, *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ is the key to all of Almighty Allah's treasures. Hence, when there was a drought, a companion came running to *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. Thereafter, Rasūlullah ﷺ made *du'ā* to Almighty Allah, and the clouds showered the blessed land of al-Madīnah.

All spiritual *Rizq* descends in al-Madīnah and is gained in al-Madīnah. Besides spiritual *Rizq*, al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is the destination for all forms of beneficial resources, grants, and provisions. Whoever goes to al-Madīnah will see the produce of the entire world brought to it. The blessed inhabitants of al-Madīnah have been granted all the resources and provisions of the world. Allah has made the system of al-Madīnah unique in that the world's goods and produce are supplied to al-Madīnah and its inhabitants.

26. Al-Ḥaram (The Sanctuary) - الْحَرَم

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “al-Madīnah is a sanctuary from this place to its borders. Its trees should not be cut. No heresy should be innovated, or any sin should be committed in it. Whoever innovates a heresy within it or commits sins, he will invoke the curse of Allah, the angels, and the people altogether” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. In another narration, the words are, “al-Madīnah is a sanctuary from the mountain unto the end” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

On another occasion, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Ibrāhīm made Makkah a sanctuary, and asked for Allah's blessing in it. I have made al-Madīnah a sanctuary as Ibrāhīm made Makkah a sanctuary, and I have asked for Allah's blessing in its *Mudd* and *Ṣā‘* as Ibrāhīm did for Makkah” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

The word *Ḥaram* comes from the root meaning of being prohibited and restricted. A prohibition can come due to several reasons, either for something being harmful in and of itself, or for the dignity and honour of that thing. Hence, alcohol is prohibited because of it being harmful and negative. However, the consumption of human flesh is prohibited because of the status and honour of humans.

According to all the scholars, Makkah is a *Ḥaram* – a protected sanctuary. Almighty Allah declared Makkah as a *Ḥaram* in the following verses:

Have they not seen that We made [Makkah] a safe sanctuary, while people are being taken away all around them? Then in falsehood do they believe, and in the favor of Allāh they disbelieve?” [Quran 29:67].

They say, ‘If we were to follow guidance with you [Prophet], we would be swept from our land.’ Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary where every kind of produce is brought, as a provision from Us? But most of them do not comprehend” [Quran 28:57].

Makkah is designated as a *Ḥaram*, signifying its immense reverence and sanctity. As a *Ḥaram*, scholars have outlined specific rules to maintain its sacred status:

- Anyone entering from afar must do so whilst in the state of *Iḥrām*.

- Those coming from a distance must perform *Umrah* or *Ḥajj* as a fulfilment of the rights and obligations owed to the House of Allah and this holy city.
- Residency and living in Makkah are restricted to Muslims only.
- Acts of violence and aggression are strictly forbidden.
- It is prohibited to cut naturally growing plants and trees in Makkah.
- Hunting within the sacred boundaries is not allowed.
- According to Shāfiʿī scholars, even relocating the sand and soil of Makkah is forbidden.

There are differing opinions among jurists regarding whether al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah qualifies as a *Ḥaram*. Most believe that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is also a *Ḥaram*, thus applying similar sacred guidelines and rules. Conversely, the Ḥanafī jurists view al-Madīnah as not being a *Ḥaram* in the technical sense.

Those jurists who consider al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah as a technical *Ḥaram* give it the following rules:

- Beyond what is a necessity and needed by the people, it is not permitted to cut the trees of al-Madīnah.
- The grass of al-Madīnah can only be harvested due to necessity.

The Ḥanafī jurists consider al-Madīnah as a *Ḥaram* from a spiritual standpoint, meriting utmost respect and reverence. The reverence in al-Madīnah should mirror that of Makkah, motivated by love rather than the fear of penalties. Makkah is recognised as a *Ḥaram*, where violence is banned, and weapons must not be unsheathed. Any aggression, exploitation of land, or harm to wildlife incurs penalties.

A List of Names Narrated by Scholars

1. Al-Madīnah al-Musharrafah (المُدِينَةُ الْمُشْرِفَةُ): The Honoured City.
2. 'Athārib and 'Athrab (أَثْرِبٌ وَأَثْرَبٌ) is derived from *Tharb* which means land with stones like those of lava fields but white.
3. Jazīrat al-'Arab (جَزِيرَةُ الْعَرَبِ): The Arabian Peninsula. There is a report ascribed to Ibn Shihāb that he used to say, 'The Arabian Peninsula is al-Madīnah'.
4. Al-Junnah (الْجُنَّةُ): The Shield.
5. Al-Junnat al-Ḥaṣīnah (الْجُنَّةُ الْحَصِينَةُ): The Fortified Shield. This name is derived from a narration wherein Rasūlullah ﷺ said during the Battle of 'Uḥud, "I am in a fortified shield, so let them enter and we will fight them" [Wafā' al-Wafā].
6. Al-Ḥubāb and al-Ḥabībah (الْحُبَابُ وَالْحَبِيبَةُ): The Beloved. Al-Madīnah is known with these names due to the love Rasūlullah ﷺ has for al-Madīnah. Al-Madīnah is beloved to the believers due to the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ therein.
7. Al-Dār (الدَّارُ): The Abode. This name is derived from the verse, "And those who had settled in the abode and in faith before them love those who emigrated to them" [Quran 59:10].
8. Dār al-'Abrār (دَارُ الْأَبْرَارِ): The Abode of the Righteous. Al-Madīnah is known as Dār al-'Abrār due it being the abode of the *Muhājirūn* and the '*Anṣār*.
9. Dār al-'Akhyār (دَارُ الْأَخْيَارِ): The Abode of the Chosen Ones. The best of the people and chosen ones are residing in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

10. Dār al-‘Īmān (دَارُ الْإِيمَانِ): The Abode of Faith. *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “al-Madīnah is the dome of Islam, Dār al-‘Īmān, the land of *Hijrah*, the place where the laws of *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* were established” [al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat].
11. Dār al-Salāmah (دَارُ السَّلَامَةِ): Safe Haven. Al-Madīnah is known as the Safe Haven as described by *Sayyidunā* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) in a conversation with ‘Amīr al-Mu‘minīn *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*), “al-Madīnah is the abode of migration, *Sunnah*, and Safe Haven” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].
12. Dār al-Sunnah (دَارُ السُّنَّةِ): The Abode of the *Sunnah*. This is also based on the description of *Sayyidunā* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*).
13. Dār al-Faṭḥ (دَارُ الْفَتْحِ): The Station of Victory. Al-Madīnah was the station and launchpad from which all other cities were conquered.
14. Al-Dir‘ al-Ḥaṣīnah (الدِّرْعُ الْحَصِينَةُ): The Fortified Fortress. This name stems from the interpretation of a dream that Rasūlullah ﷺ saw, that he was in a fortified fortress, which he interpreted as al-Madīnah [Musnad Aḥmad].
15. Dhāt al-Ḥujar (ذَاتُ الْحُجَرِ): The City of Chambers. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was a city with many dwellings and chambers belonging to the *Anṣār* that were welcoming for the al-*Muhājirūn*.
16. Dhāt al-Ḥirār (ذَاتُ الْحِرَارِ): The City with Lava Fields. This name was given based on a narration where al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah was described with lava fields that are present on the outskirts of al-Madīnah.

17. Dhāt al-Nakhl (ذَاتُ النَّخْلِ): The City with Palm Trees. This name is based on a dream wherein Rasūlullah ﷺ said that he was shown the destination of *Hijrah* by seeing a place abundant with palm trees [‘Umdat al-Qārī].
18. Al-Saliqah (السَّلِقَةُ). This name is ascribed to previous revelations. Scholars have explained that al-Madīnah was called al-Saliqah due to its vastness and distance from its mountains, or the severity of its heat, or because Allah made its people prevail over all other places.
19. Sayyidat al-Buldān (سَيِّدَةُ الْبُلْدَانِ): The Master of Cities. This name is derived from a narration reported by Abū Nu‘aym wherein *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Radīallāhu ‘anhumā*), upon nearing al-Madīnah, called out, "O Ṭaybah, O Master of Cities!" [Hilyat al-‘Awliyā’].
20. Al-‘Arūd (العُرُوضُ): This is more of a geographical description of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah and can refer to a road that is on one side of a mountain. Al-Madīnah is called this because it has mountains to its side. Another explanation of this name is due to the vastness and openness of its plateau.
21. Ghalabah (غَلَبَةُ): The Dominant City. Al-Madīnah has this title to its prevalence and domination over all other cities. Some scholars mention that Yathrib, in the pre-Islamic era, was called Ghalabah because whoever settled in al-Madīnah eventually overcame and dominated others.
22. Al-Fāḍiḥah (الْفَاضِحَةُ): The Exposer. Al-Madīnah has this description because it identifies and expels wickedness. No one harbours a corrupt belief or conceals a matter in it except that it becomes evident and exposed.

23. Al-Qaryah (الْقَرْيَةُ): The Village. Imam al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH), in his interpretation of the verse: "And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favours of Allah," [Quran 16:112] indicated that what is meant by the city is Makkah, but he added: "And others said: Rather, the city that Allah mentioned in this place is the city of the Messenger" [Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī]. Ibn al-Jawzī (d.597 AH) and al-Māwardī (d.450 AH) both record this opinion too. This name also has its roots in the following *Ḥadīth*: "I was ordered to migrate to a town which will consume (dominate) other towns, known as Yathrib, but now it is called al-Madīnah, and it drives away (evil) people just as a furnace removes the impurities of iron" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].
24. Qaryat al-Anṣār (قَرْيَةُ الْأَنْصَارِ): The Village of the Helpers. Arabs have a tradition of naming even cities with the word Qaryah, 'a village'. Just as villages are organised places of residences, cities are also organised locations for residency. The *Anṣār* are the al-Aws and al-Khazraj tribes, who supported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so Allah Almighty praised them saying, "Those who gave shelter and aided, they are the believers truly" [Quran 9:74]. Rasūlullah ﷺ would previously call them al-Aws and al-Khazraj, but after the revelation of this verse, he began calling them *Anṣār* [Wafā' al-Wafā'].
25. Qaryat Rasūl Allah ﷺ (قَرْيَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ): The Village of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This name is drawn from a narration that describes how *Dajjāl* will not be able to enter al-Madīnah. The *Ḥadīth* describes his words at that instance as: "This is the village of that man" [Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah].

26. Al-Mu'minah (المؤمنَة): The Believer. This title for al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah reflects its profound faith in Almighty Allah, echoing the belief of the intellect. This name might derive from the pebbles in the palm of Rasūlullah ﷺ praising Almighty Allah, or symbolically because its residents embody this belief, spreading faith and embodying the traits of a true believer—benefit, blessing, and safety from adversaries, including protection from the Antichrist and plagues.
27. Ma'raz al-Īmān (مَأْرَازُ الْإِيمَانِ): The Retreat of Faith. This designation comes from a narration in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī describing faith retreating to al-Madīnah as a snake withdraws to its hole.
28. Mubawwa' al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām (مُبَوَّأُ الْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ): The Establishment of the Lawful and Prohibited. This name originates from the following description by Rasūlullah ﷺ, "al-Madīnah is the dome of Islam, the abode of faith, the land of *Hijrah*, the place where the laws of *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* were established" [al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ].
29. Mubayyin al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām (مُبَيِّنُ الْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ): The Clarifier of the Lawful and Prohibited. Majority of the laws of Shari'ah were revealed during the Medinan period in the life of Rasūlullah ﷺ, and therefore al-Madīnah was the location for the revelation of the lawful and prohibited.
30. Al-Majbūrah (المَجْبُورَة): The Mended. Scholars have noted that any previous deficiencies in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah were rectified and mended by Almighty Allah upon the arrival of Rasūlullah ﷺ.

31. Al-Maḥbūbah (المَحْبُوبَةُ): The Beloved. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is cherished and loved by Almighty Allah, chosen as the migration destination and final resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ until the Day of Judgement.
32. Al-Mukhtārah (المُخْتَارَةُ): The Chosen. This name reflects that Almighty Allah selected this city for the best of His creation, Muhammad ﷺ, as both his migration destination and final resting place for his noble body ﷺ.
33. Al-Miskīnah (المِسْكِينَةُ): The Humble City. This name is found in previous revelations. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is home to the humble, submissive, and modest people. Others add that Almighty Allah has naturally embedded humbleness and humility in this city, such that whoever visits this city embraces humbleness and humility.
34. Maḍja‘ Rasūl Allah ﷺ (مَضْجَعُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ): The Resting Place of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. There is a very weak and unreliable narration which describes al-Madīnah in this manner. The narration has been declared weak by Ibn Ḥibbān (d.354 AH), al-Dāraquṭnī (d.385 AH), Ibn ‘Adīyy (d.365 AH), as well as al-Haythamī (d.807 AH). Although the narration is extremely weak, the name is factual; al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is the resting place and resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ.
35. Al-Muqaddasah (المُقَدَّسَةُ): The Sacred. This name for Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah reflects its sanctity, free from polytheism, sins, and impurities, highlighting its pure essence.
36. Al-Maqarr (المَقَرُّ): The Headquarters. Al-Madīnah served as the pivotal centre for faith, Islam, and Rasūlullah ﷺ, functioning as the spiritual and operational base.

37. Al-Muwaffiyah (المُؤَفِّیَّةُ): The Fulfiller. Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah is recognised for fulfilling the rights of its visitors and treating all who come with respect and care.

Chapter Three:

The Virtues of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah



Introduction

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is a city brimming with virtues. Every landmark, street, and step hold memories and traces of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. Not only is the city overly populated by angels, angels from across the globe continuously fly in to convey the *Salām* of the Muslims to Rasūlullah ﷺ. Considering the angelic flights to and from al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, then it could be considered the busiest aerial hub and have the most air traffic than any other destination in the world.

Maulana ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (d.1304 AH) declares that the primary virtue of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah lies in it being the residence and the final resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ. This distinction alone is enough for its lofty status and virtue [Muqaddimat al-Hidāyah].

Is Makkah or Madīnah more virtuous?

There is a well-known discussion among the *‘Ulamā’* regarding which city of the world holds the greatest virtue. Makkah is distinguished by the presence of the primary House of Allah, the first *masjid* on the Earth, and it hosts the Ḥajj rites. It also embodies the dedication of Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl (*‘alayhimā al-salām*), and it is the birthplace and hometown of the Prophet ﷺ. Imam al-Juwaynī (d.478 AH) in *Nihāyat al-Maṭlab*, Ibn Ḥajar

al-Haytamī (d. 974 AH) in al-Fatāwā al-Fiqhīyah, Ibn Ishāq (d.151 AH) in his Sirah, as well as Ibn Kathīr (d.774 AH) in al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah write that every prophet performed Ḥajj and visited the land of Makkah. They further add that ‘Īsā (*‘alayhi al-salām*) will perform Ḥajj when he descends on the Earth again. The rewards for good deeds are multiplied most in Makkah, and it is the only place on Earth which demands that a person entering does so in the state of *‘Iḥrām*. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah has *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ, that alone is sufficient.

Despite the differing views on which city is the most virtuous, there is a consensus that the soil surrounding the blessed body of our beloved master Rasūlullah ﷺ is more virtuous than the entire Earth and all the places within. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that this soil is even more virtuous than the *Ka‘bah* [al-Maslak al-Mutaqassit]. Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) has narrated a consensus (*‘Ijmā‘*) on this [al-Shifā]. It has been reported from Abū al-Wafā’ b. ‘Aqīl al-Ḥanbalī (d.513 AH) that the Earth which cradles the blessed being of Rasūlullah ﷺ is even more virtuous than the *‘Arsh*. Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā al-Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) narrates that Maulana Qāsim Nānotwī was of the opinion that the Earth is more virtuous than the Heavens due to the presence of the Prophet ﷺ in the Earth [al-Abwāb wa al-Tarājim]. The Mālikī commentator ‘Abū ‘Abdullah al-Mālikī (d.1299 AH), who authored *Minaḥ al-Jalīl*, the commentary on Mukhtaṣar al-Khalīl, writes that the Earth that carries the blessed being of the Prophet ﷺ is more virtuous than the *Ka‘bah*, the skies, the *‘Arsh*, the *Kursī*, the *Lawḥ*, the *Qalam*, and *al-Bayt al-Ma‘mūr* [Minaḥ al-Jalīl]. Imam al-Ḥaṣkafī (d.1088 AH) writes that this particular part of the Earth is more virtuous than the *Ka‘bah*, *‘Arsh*, and *al-Kursī* [al-Durr al-Mukhtār]. Some scholars are of the view that the Earth, in general, is more virtuous than the Heavens because of the physical presence of the Prophet ﷺ in this realm. However, Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes that the majority are of the view that the Heavens are

more virtuous than the Earth. ‘Allāmah Ḥusayn al-Makkī (d.1366 AH) reconciles the two different views by deeming the soil around the blessed bodies of all the prophets being greater than the Heavens, and that the Heavens being more virtuous than the rest of the Earth [Ḥāshiyah Irshād al-Sārī].

Imam al-Zarkashī (d.794 AH) writes that the reason for the virtue and loftiness of the soil and Earth that is in proximity with Rasūlullah ﷺ is simply because of the physical proximity to Rasūlullah ﷺ [I‘lām al-Sājid bi Aḥkām al-Masājid]. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d.852 AH) writes that the reason for this virtue is that Rasūlullah ﷺ was created from that very soil, and he is the best of creation, and therefore, it follows that this soil is the best of all soil [Fath al-Bārī]. Thereafter, he quotes Ibn ‘Aqīl’s view from al-Funūn, that the blessed chamber in which *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ rests is more virtuous than even *Jannah*. Thereafter, he testifies that if the entirety of creation was to be weighed and compared to this blessed place, this place with Rasūlullah ﷺ would outweigh and excel the entirety of creation.

According to the majority of the scholars, Makkah is more virtuous than al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. ‘Allāmah Shaykhī Zādah (d.1078 AH) writes that the city of Makkah is more virtuous than al-Madīnah [Majma‘ al-‘Anhur]. The same is recorded by Ibn al-Humām (d.861 AH) in Fath al-Qadīr, Imam al-Ḥaṣḥafī (d.1088 AH), as well as Imam al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d.1231 AH). This is also the position of the Shāfi‘ī school as recorded by Imam al-Nawawī in al-Majmū‘, and Imam Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d.926 AH) in ‘Asnā al-Maṭālib. Imam al-Buhūti (d.1051 AH) narrates the same position for the Ḥanbalī school [Kashshāf al-Qinā‘]. Imam al-Buhūti records a position of Imam Aḥmad that to reside in al-Madīnah was more rewarding and more desirable.

Imam Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d.463 AH) writes that the Mālikī scholars are of the view that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is more virtuous than Makkah al-Mukarramah. This was the view of Imam Mālik and all the great scholars of al-Madīnah [al-Tamhīd]. This view is also ascribed to some companions, such as *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) [al-Ḥujaj al-Mabniyyah].

Imam al-Sarakhsī (d.483 AH) writes that performing one *Ṣalāh* in Makkah is more virtuous than any other place, as has been narrated in the following *Ḥadīth*:

“Prayer in this masjid of mine is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque, except *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*. Prayer in *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* is one hundred times better than prayer in this masjid of mine” [Musnad Aḥmad]. In another narration, it is reported, “A prayer in *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* is akin to a hundred thousand prayers, a prayer in my *masjid* equivalent to a thousand prayers, and a prayer in *Bayt al-Maqdis* is equal to five hundred prayers” [Musnad al-Bazzār]. Imam al-Bazzār records this *Ḥadīth* as sound (*Ḥasan*).

Considering the above, the first reason for the dominance of Makkah al-Mukarramah is that good deeds are multiplied the most in Makkah, indicating it to be the most virtuous. A second reason cited by scholars is the following narration, wherein the Prophet ﷺ, whilst addressing Makkah, said, “I swear by Allah that you are the best land of Allah on Earth, and the dearest to Him. Had I not been expelled from you I would have never left” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

Regardless of the above debate, the discussion is not a matter of one over the other. Each city has its unique benefits and virtues. Makkah has something which al-Madīnah does not have, and al-Madīnah has something which Makkah does not have. Makkah has the House of Allah,

which is the first *masjid* in the world. Moreover, Makkah is the centre of the Earth, and the *Ka'bah* is the centre of Makkah. Al-Madīnah has *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ, the most virtuous and beloved creation of Almighty Allah.

The visit to Makkah is akin to visiting the palace of The Sovereign King of the entire universe. It is a place of awe and absolute surrender, where the essence of Islam—total submission to the Divine Majesty of Almighty Allah—is vividly experienced. Entering Makkah, shrouded in *Ihrām*, symbolises a state of profound humility and dependence. The grandeur and greatness of Almighty Allah is visible to all that enter this blessed sanctuary. Within the sacred bounds of The Holy Sanctuary and House, no one dares to lift their gaze. The might and power of The King overpowers every atom in one's being. We are just beggars with an empty bowl, going to the doors of the Almighty King for grace.

At its heart, Makkah reflects *Tawhūd*, the Oneness of Almighty Allah. The presence of the *Qiblah*, one direction which the entire Earth faces for acts of righteousness, symbolises oneness. *Ṭawāf*, the circling of the *Ka'bah* in one motion, which is one pivot, also manifests oneness. These are lessons of *Tawhūd*.

The *Adhān's* resonance across the valleys of Makkah offers an immersive spiritual experience as the *Adhān* echoes in every chamber of the heart. Standing at the threshold of The House of Almighty Allah, one is enveloped by His magnificence, leading to an overwhelming sense of awe, humility, and devotion. Makkah engrains *Lā ilāha illā Allah* into the depths of the hearts.

Scholars describe Makkah's aura as '*Jalāl*' (awe-inspiring majesty), enhanced by its location in a desolate valley surrounded by stark mountains. In addition to the above blast of *Tawhūd*, Makkah is located

in a barren valley among rocky mountains, in the middle of nowhere. It is dry and hot, with the ground emanating heat and the sky pouring with heat. This adds to the *Jalāl* and experience in Makkah. Sociologists and demographers assert that geography has an impact on the behaviour of its inhabitants: desert dwellers have traits different from those living in green fields, mountain dwellers differ from those in plains, and coastal residents have distinctive features compared to those far from them. Despite all these challenging circumstances, the residents of Makkah serve millions of people, and welcome the guests of Almighty Allah round the clock. May Allah grant them the best of rewards. Furthermore, the dynamism of worship in Makkah, with rituals like *Ṭawāf*, *Sa‘ī*, and the *Ḥajj*, necessitate constant movement, adding to the city’s vibrant and humbling experience.

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is akin to visiting your beloved father, teacher, and benefactor. Al-Madīnah is like going *home*. The excitement and happiness experienced when returning home after a long journey is what is experienced when going to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. This home is not just any home, but the home wherein your greatest benefactor and carer, Rasūlullah ﷺ is present and awaits you. There is natural familiarity with the roads, trees, and mountains of al-Madīnah; it just feels like they *know* you and you *know* them. The heart is at complete ease and peace when entering al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

Our scholars capture the sentiment felt and witnessed in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah as a manifestation of *Jamāl*’ (sheer elegance and pleasantness). Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is the manifestation of the love of Almighty Allah, which He has for His beloved ﷺ. Al-Madīnah is a manifestation of the mercy of Almighty Allah, whilst Makkah is a manifestation of the majesty of Allah. Al-Madīnah is the city of love; everything drips with love. Everything reminds you of the beloved ﷺ. His

ﷺ reflection is witnessed in every corner, it is as though his scent can be inhaled in every walkway, the light of his ﷺ handsome face can be cherished in every night, the warmth of his ﷺ love can be felt every moment, the coolness of his ﷺ blessed palms can be felt on one's cheeks with every breeze, his gentleness and elegance beautify every inch of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. The nature and blessed being of Rasūlullah ﷺ have been infused into al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Everything is about him ﷺ in this city.

It was the divine wisdom of Almighty Allah to separate the *Jalāl* and *Jamāl*. Humans need both. Makkah is like having dates, whilst al-Madīnah is like eating cucumbers. Each complement the other. The combination of dates and cucumbers bring a balance. The Prophet ﷺ would eat fresh dates with cucumbers [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. The Prophet ﷺ used to eat melon with fresh dates, and he used to say: "The heat of the one is broken by the coolness of the other, and the coolness of the one by the heat of the other" [Sunan Abū Dāwūd].

Dates are known for their high energy content, natural sugars, and nutrients, including potassium and magnesium. They are "hot" in nature according to traditional medicinal paradigms, meaning they can increase body heat, which is beneficial for energy but might be overwhelming in hot climates or for people with certain bodily constitutions. Cucumbers and melons, on the other hand, are high in water content and provide a cooling effect on the body. They are considered "cold" in the same traditional medicinal frameworks, making them ideal for counteracting the warmth of dates. This cooling property is not only physically refreshing but also helps to balance the metabolism, preventing the overheating that might occur with consuming dates alone. Eating cucumbers with dates, or melons with dates, is thus seen as a way to enjoy the benefits of both foods while mitigating any potential discomfort from

their individual characteristics. The sweet richness of dates is complemented by the crisp freshness of cucumbers, providing a satisfying sensory experience. Furthermore, this combination ensures a balanced energy intake—dates provide a quick energy boost, while cucumbers and melons help to sustain hydration and prevent the body from becoming too heated.

Makkah, with its awe and intensity of *Tawhīd*, is akin to the experience of having dates; it's rich, intensely sweet, and deeply nourishing to the soul. The moment you step into this holy city, you're enveloped in the overwhelming perception, much like the rich taste of dates that instantly floods your senses with sweetness and warmth. Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, on the other hand, offers a contrasting yet complementary experience, akin to eating cucumbers or melons. Its spiritual ambiance is refreshing, soft, gentle, and rejuvenating, echoing the coolness and comfort cucumbers and melons bring on a hot day. Al-Madīnah is spiritually hydrating. Al-Madīnah nurtures the soul with serenity and a peaceful sense of belonging. It's a place where the Prophet's ﷺ presence is felt most intimately, offering a soothing balm to the heart, much like the refreshing nature of cucumbers that cleanse and revive.

Despite the discussion on virtues, Makkah and al-Madīnah both present a complimentary experience and together provide a wholesome spiritual nourishment. Each city has something which the other does not. Each city has its own particular and specific (*juz'ī*) virtues. Regardless of the academic debate on which is most virtuous, just being able to present oneself and enter even one of them is a sacred pass and permit, and an invitation from *al-Raḥmān*. How fortunate is the one who is called and given entry into these blessed lands!

Almighty Allah has discussed the *Ka'bah* and Rasūlullah ﷺ one after the other in the Quran, indicating that both are blessings that play a unique but complimentary role. Almighty Allah says:

“Just as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own to recite Our revelations to you, purify you and teach you the Scripture, wisdom, and [other] things you did not know” [Quran 2:151].

Imam Abū al-Su‘ūd (d.982 AH), Imam al-Kirmānī (d.531 AH) among others, explore the meaning of the words 'just as' in the above verse, and describe how Almighty Allah has made a parallel between the *Qiblah* and Rasūlullah ﷺ, in that they are both significant blessings to the believers. This verse highlights the blessings associated with the *Ka'bah* and Rasūlullah ﷺ, serving as guidance and direction. Thus, the emphasis is not on choosing one over the other; rather, both hold unique roles and advantages.

Once, on a journey to the *al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn*, a question came into my mind: Why did Almighty Allah make the final resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ in al-Madīnah and not Makkah? Why is everything not centralised in one city, knowing that Makkah was the hometown and birthplace of the Prophet ﷺ, and that he loved Makkah dearly? The following reflections came to mind:

1. Perhaps, if the *Ka'bah* and the Prophet ﷺ were in one city, it could lead to people making the grave of the Prophet ﷺ a part of the Ḥajj and *Umrah* rituals knowingly or unknowingly. This would be a violation of *Tawḥīd* and utmost disrespect to the Prophet ﷺ.
2. Perhaps, if the *Ka'bah* and the Prophet ﷺ were in same city, people would not be able to give due right to either or focus their attention on one wholeheartedly.

3. It's possible that Allah intended for us to honour and fulfil our obligations to the Prophet ﷺ, hence dedicating an entire city to his memory with his final resting place in that very city. This city serves as a focal point where everything revolves around celebrating and praising him ﷺ.

4. It may be that the presence of both Makkah and al-Madīnah serves unique purposes: Makkah as the cornerstone of *Tawhīd*, building the foundation of Islam, and al-Madīnah as the model for civilisational development. These cities represent essential elements needed for the prosperity of a community. Designed to last until the end of time, they offer us opportunities for reflection and strength. From Makkah, we learn the principles of *Tawhīd*, and from al-Madīnah, we understand the dynamics of emerging civilisations. Each city acts as a foundational blueprint for achieving everlasting success.

5. It's conceivable that Makkah was chosen for us to seek Allah's forgiveness, and to honour the sacred House of Allah, a place of immense respect. Meanwhile, al-Madīnah was gifted to the Prophet ﷺ, providing a space where we can direct our attention towards him, offering our heartfelt greetings and love. Such is Allah's love for the Prophet ﷺ that He bestowed an entire city in his honour. This allows the faithful from around the world to praise, greet, salute, and pray for the beloved Prophet ﷺ with all their hearts, that is also another command of Almighty Allah.

The Virtues of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

1. Al-Madīnah is the Final Resting Place of Rasūlullah ﷺ

عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ "مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ بُعْعَةٌ هِيَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَبْرِي بِهَا مِنْهَا" ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ يَعْنِي الْمَدِينَةَ. (موطأ مالك)

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "There is no place on the Earth which I would prefer my grave to be than here (meaning al-Madīnah). He repeated it three times" [Muwaṭṭa' Mālik].

If there was no other virtue to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah except that Rasūlullah ﷺ is resting there, that would be enough of a virtue. His ﷺ presence is everything. His ﷺ being is everything. He ﷺ brings virtue and is virtue. His ﷺ presence is the heartbeat of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. He is the centre of al-Madīnah. Al-Madīnah became the centre of the universe and known across the entire creation because of the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ. The city became synonymous with him ﷺ, and now reflects his beauty, his generosity, his humility, his gentleness, his love, and his warmth. Being in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah reminds one of Rasūlullah ﷺ at every step. It is the closest one can be if a person wants to experience being with Rasūlullah ﷺ.

There is no companionship like that of Rasūlullah ﷺ. If a person wanted help, they could go and take hold of his ﷺ hand and ask for support, and he ﷺ would willingly and happily help. If a person was hungry, he ﷺ would take them to his house and feed them with his own blessed hands, as we know the occurrence with *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah. If a person had nowhere to sit, he ﷺ would take of his own cloak and ask the person to sit on his cloak, as we know from the story of *Sayyidunā* Jarīr. If a person was feeling hot, they would go to Rasūlullah ﷺ, take his cool and soothing palm, and place it on them to cool down, as we know from the practice

of *Sayyidunā* Abū Juḥaifah. If people were scared, they would know Rasūlullah ﷺ would be the first to address the fear and threat, as we know that he himself went to investigate an unusual noise that occurred in al-Madīnah in the night. If someone wanted consoling, they would be no better person to empty one's heart to than Rasūlullah ﷺ. He was ever attentive, the best listener, and would comfort a person like none other. The companionship of Rasūlullah ﷺ was and is everything. It has everything a person needs in this world, and it is sufficient for safety and success in the Hereafter.

2. Al-Madīnah has a Garden of Paradise Within it

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ " مَا بَيْنَ بَيْتِي وَمَنْبَرِي رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَنْبَرِي عَلَى حَوْضِي." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "The area between my house and pulpit is a garden from the gardens of Paradise. My pulpit will also be next to my fountain" [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*].

Imam al-‘Aynī (d.855 AH) writes that the majority of the narrations reporting this have the word 'my house', however, a similar narration of *Sayyidunā* Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) reported by Imam al-Ṭabarānī (d.360 AH) with a sound chain of narration has the words 'my grave'. Similarly, *Sayyidunā* Sa’d b. Waqqāṣ (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates 'my grave' in a report found in *Musnad al-Bazzār*, again with an authentic chain of narration [*‘Umdat al-Qārī*]. In fact, Imam al-Bukhārī's (d.256 AH) chapter heading is: "The Virtue of the Area Between the Grave and Pulpit". As we known, Imam Muslim (d.261 AH) did not have chapter headings in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, desiring that only the words of Rasūlullah ﷺ are narrated in his compilation, along with the chain of narrators. It is the commentators of

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, such as Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) and others, that added chapter headings. The chapter headings selected by these elite scholars of *Ḥadīth* is also ‘The Area Between My Grave and My Pulpit’. Imam al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) writes that ‘house’ here means grave since his grave is in his house, and therefore all the narrations are coherent and not conflicting [Ikmal al-Mu‘lim].

Where else in the world is there a garden of Paradise? It is because of this *Ḥadīth* that poets recite the couplet:

*“In Jannah there is everything but al-Madīnah, and in al-Madīnah there is
Jannah as well.”*

Imam Zakariyyā al-‘Anṣārī (d.926 AH) writes that similar to *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad* that was descended from Paradise to the Earth, this area too has its origins in Paradise and descended therefrom. Another explanation that he provides is that this specific part of the Earth will eventually be added to Paradise, similar to how the trunk against which Rasūlullah ﷺ would lean when delivering a sermon. A third opinion is that whoever worships Almighty Allah in this area will eventually go to Paradise [Minḥat al-Bārī]. Ibn Malak (d.854 AH) writes that another reason why this has been called a ‘garden of Paradise’ is that this area is a unique place of *Dhikr* (remembering Almighty Allah). This place is continuously visited by the angels, humans, and jinn who are engaged in *Dhikr* and worship. The gatherings of *Dhikr* have been called ‘gardens of Paradise’ in *Ḥadīth* literature [Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ].

Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) writes that according to the research scholars (*Muḥaqqiqīn*), this narration is taken literally and holds one of two interpretations:

1. This land will physically become part of Paradise and that it will not be destroyed like the rest of the Earth on the Day of Judgement. This was the view of Imam Mālīk, with many other scholars following and agreeing with this interpretation. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d.852 AH) also favoured this view.
2. This land has literally descended from Paradise into the *masjid*, and that after the Day of Judgement, this land will ascend back to Paradise. The continuous descent of mercy onto this land and the divine promise of Paradise for those who pray here are attributed to its celestial origins.

Thereafter, he writes that due to the rank of Ibrāhīm (‘*alayhi al-salām*), Almighty Allah blessed him with the *Maqām* that he stood upon when building the *Ka’bah*, as well as *al-Ḥajar al-Aswad* from Paradise. The esteemed status of Rasūlullah ﷺ is superior, which led Almighty Allah to bestow upon him an entire garden of Paradise. However, to those observing with worldly eyes, it may appear to be an ordinary place. This perception is due to the fact that many people are shielded from true understanding by the dense veils of their human nature and worldly concerns [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ].

3. Al-Madīnah is a Retreat for Faith

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ " إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ لِيَأْرُزُ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ، كَمَا تَأْرُزُ الْحَيَّةُ إِلَى جُحْرِهَا." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "Verily, *‘Īmān* will retreat back to al-Madīnah just as a snake retreats to its hole" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) explains that the comparison to a snake signifies how it swiftly coils into its hole without turning when it senses danger. Secondly, a snake was mentioned as it is very fast and defensive when it senses threats. The meaning of this narration is that people with faith will flee and retreat to al-Madīnah to seek protection and refuge. There is another narration which states that refuge will be sought in *Hijāz*, and that seems to be more appropriate as it includes Makkah al-Mukarramah [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ]. Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) writes that this is in reference to the end of times [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ].

There is no better place than al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah to retreat to for one’s *‘Īmān*. The best protection of *‘Īmān* is in the proximity of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ, in the city of angels, and where all the pious gather.

4. Al-Madīnah is a *Ḥaram*

عَنْ أَنَسٍ ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ " الْمَدِينَةُ حَرَمٌ مِنْ كَذَا إِلَى كَذَا، لَا يُقَطَّعُ شَجَرُهَا، وَلَا يُحَدَّثُ فِيهَا حَدَثٌ، مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ حَدَثًا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā ‘Anas b. Mālīk (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "Al-Madīnah is a sanctuary from this place to its borders. Its trees should not be cut. No heresy should be innovated or any sin should be

committed in it. Whoever innovates a heresy within it or commits sins, he will invoke the curse of Allah, the angels, and the people altogether” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

We have discussed the details on the meaning of *al-Ḥaram* in the previous chapter. The landscape, nature, and environment of al-Madīnah is to be honoured and revered. In addition, al-Madīnah must not be littered, polluted, vandalised, destroyed, or damaged in any way, shape, or form. The boundaries of *Ḥaram* have explicitly been mentioned in another narration as being from ‘Ayr, also called ‘Ā’ir [Fatḥ al-Bārī]. A narration in Muslim records the other boundary, called Thawr, however, the residents of al-Madīnah were not aware of a mountain called Thawr in the environs of al-Madīnah. Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) narrates that the boundaries are from ‘Ayr to ‘Uḥud, as has been narrated by Imam Aḥmad and Imam al-Ṭabarānī. An alternative opinion regarding Thawr is that Rasūlullah ﷺ literally meant from ‘Ayr to the actual mountain of Thawr in Makkah. Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes that Thawr could be one of the names for ‘Uḥud or another mountain in that area. Ibn Ḥajar narrates that scholars were aware of a smaller mountain on the left side of ‘Uḥud that was called Thawr.

In a narration of Muslim, the word *Lābatayn* is used to describe the boundaries of al-Madīnah. *Lābat* refers to land with dark-colour stones. This refers to the two mountainous lands on the either side of al-Madīnah [Sharḥ al-Nawawī]. Mount ‘Ayr is on the south side of al-Madīnah, whilst ‘Uḥud is on the north side of al-Madīnah.

Several scholars, including Imam Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161 AH), Imam Abdullah b. al-Mubārak (d.181 AH), Imam Abū Ḥanīfah (d.150 AH), Imam Abū Yūsuf (d.182 AH), and Imam Muhammad (d.189 AH), did not view the term "*Ḥaram*" as used in the *Ḥadīth* about al-Madīnah in the same

technical sense that it applies to Makkah. They argued that unlike Makkah, it is permissible to hunt game and cut trees in al-Madīnah. They believed that the Prophet ﷺ intended not to impose a ban on such activities but rather to preserve the city's beauty so that its residents would enjoy and become accustomed to it. This is similar to the Prophet's ﷺ prohibition against demolishing the city's high grounds to maintain its aesthetic, saying, "They are part of the city's beauty," as reported by Imam al-Ṭahāwī (d.321 AH) through his chain of narration to Ibn 'Umar (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhumā*), who said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prohibited demolishing the high grounds of al-Madīnah." Another narration states, "The high grounds should not be demolished; for they are part of the city's beauty." This narration is authentic [al-Badhī al-Majhūd].

In relation to the second part of the *Ḥadīth* which invokes a curse, Imam al-Qaṣṣālānī (d.923 AH) writes that this curse is targeted towards those who practice things which are against the *Sunnah* and Prophetic way in the very city of Rasūlullah ﷺ [Irsād al-Sārī].

Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) notes that the subjects of this curse are those who engage in any evil or *Bid'ah* [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ]. Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) elaborates that this curse specifically targets oppression and the oppressor but can broadly apply to any form of wrongdoing or innovation. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) argues that engaging in wrongdoing and *Bid'ah* in al-Madīnah constitutes one of the major sins (*Kabā'ir*), with the curse implying exclusion from Almighty Allah's mercy and the immediate imputation of guilt without delay [Faṭḥ al-Bārī].

5. Al-Madīnah is Embedded with *Barakah*

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ بِالْمَدِينَةِ ضِعْفِي مَا بِمَكَّةَ مِنَ الْبَرَكَاتِ" (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Anas b. Mālik (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "O Allah, double the blessings of al-Madīnah in comparison to what You showered on Makkah" [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) explains this as double in provision and resources. Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) states that *Barakah* means growth and increase, and it also means stability and permanence. The *Barakah* in this narration can be spiritual and religious (*Dīnī*), related to the obligatory payments such as Zakat and expiations, implying stability and permanence for them. It is also possible that the *Barakah* is worldly, which involves *Barakah* in goods that are measured, so that what suffices with these goods in al-Madīnah does not suffice elsewhere. Alternatively, *Barakah* can also refer to the blessing in trade and profits in al-Madīnah [Ikmal al-Mu‘lim]. Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH), after quoting al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s statement, said, "It is apparent from all of this that the *Barakah* is inherent in the provisions in al-Madīnah, such that the provisions there suffice for those for whom it does not suffice elsewhere" [Sharḥ al-Nawawī]. Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) writes that this *Barakah* refers to worldly blessings, as indicated by his statement in another *Ḥadīth*, "O Allah, bless us in our Ṣā‘ and our *Mudd*."

The narration above has been left unrestricted without specifying the type of *Barakah* and the subject of *Barakah*. In fact, in another narration in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ would supplicate saying, "O Allah, grant us *Barakah* in our Madīnah." This includes everything in al-Madīnah. Hence, *Barakah* is not just specific to that which is sold,

weighed, measured, and exchanged, rather *Barakah* encompasses everything in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

Imam al-Bājī (d.474 AH) writes that the *du‘ā’* of *Barakah* encompasses all things attached to al-Madīnah and all of the amenities and facilities in al-Madīnah [al-Muntaqā Sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭa’]. Everything in al-Madīnah is full of *Barakah*; the goods, services, the resources, wealth, and even abstract concepts such as time, happiness, peace, health etc.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d.463 AH) writes that all of the supplications that *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ made for al-Madīnah were accepted. The beneficiaries of these supplications were all those alive in his time, as well as all those that are to come after him, believe in him and stay in al-Madīnah [al-Istidhkār].

6. Al-Madīnah is the Best Place to Live

عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ أَبِي زُهَيْرٍ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: "تُفْتَحُ الْيَمَنُ فَيَأْتِي قَوْمٌ يُبْسُونَ فَيَتَحَمَّلُونَ بِأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَنْ أَطَاعَهُمْ، وَالْمَدِينَةُ خَيْرٌ لَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ، وَتُفْتَحُ الشَّامُ فَيَأْتِي قَوْمٌ يُبْسُونَ فَيَتَحَمَّلُونَ بِأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَنْ أَطَاعَهُمْ، وَالْمَدِينَةُ خَيْرٌ لَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ، وَتُفْتَحُ الْعِرَاقُ فَيَأْتِي قَوْمٌ يُبْسُونَ فَيَتَحَمَّلُونَ بِأَهْلِيهِمْ، وَمَنْ أَطَاعَهُمْ وَالْمَدِينَةُ خَيْرٌ لَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ." (موطأ مالك)

Sufyān b. Abī Zuhayr (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'Yemen will be conquered, and the people will be attracted to it, taking their families and whoever obeys them. Al-Madīnah would have been better for them, had they but known. *Al-Shām* will be conquered, and people will be attracted to it, taking their families and whoever obeys them. Al-Madīnah would have been better for them, had they but known. Iraq will be conquered, and people will be attracted to it, taking their families and whoever obeys them. Al-Madīnah would have been better for them, had they but known'" [Muwaṭṭa’ Mālik].

On expounding why al-Madīnah is better for the people, Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is where revelation descended, a place where enormous blessings are pouring constantly, worldly, and spiritual [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ]. Ibn Malak (d.854 AH) writes that it is the *Haram* of Rasūlullah ﷺ [Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ].

Imam al-Zurqānī (d.1122 AH) writes that al-Madīnah is better because it is protected from tests and trials, neither *Dajjāl* nor plagues can enter al-Madīnah. Further, it has a virtuous *masjid*, and one gets to be close to the final resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ and the blessed chamber. Being in al-Madīnah enables many, many spiritual benefits and blessings not gained elsewhere [Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ‘alā Muwaṭṭa’].

Imam al-Bayḍāwī (d.685 AH) writes that al-Madīnah is best because being there makes one a neighbour to and in proximity with *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ [al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ al-Thajjāj].

Imam Abū al-‘Abbās al-Qurṭubī (d.656 AH) writes, “Al-Madīnah is superior because being there naturally protects against the extravagance and temptations of worldly life. Furthermore, residing in al-Madīnah offers the continuous benefit of being near the blessed chamber of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ, and being physically close to Rasūlullah ﷺ. During his lifetime, this proximity would have meant enjoying his blessed company, beholding his noble countenance, and after his passing, being close to his sacred resting place and observing the lasting marks and signs he left in al-Madīnah. Fortunate are those who experienced this, and may Allah console those who did not have such an opportunity” [al-Mufhim].

7. Al-Madīnah is Crowded with Angels

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْقُرَاطِيِّ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، وَأَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولَانِ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ فِي مَدِينَتِهِمْ وَفِي صَاعِيهِمْ، وَبَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي مَدِينَتِهِمْ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَبْدُكَ وَخَلِيلُكَ، وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَرَسُولُكَ، وَإِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ سَأَلَكَ مَكَّةَ وَإِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ لِلْمَدِينَةِ مِثْلَ مَا سَأَلَكَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ بِمَكَّةَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ، أَلَا إِنَّ الْمَدِينَةَ مُشْتَبِكَةٌ بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ، عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا مَلَكَانِ يَحْرُسَانَهَا، لَا يَدْخُلُهَا الطَّاعُونَ وَالِدَجَّالُ، مَنْ أَرَادَ أَهْلَهَا بِسُوءٍ أَذَابَهُ اللَّهُ كَمَا يَذُوبُ الْمَلْحُ فِي الْمَاءِ» هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ عَلَى شَرْطِ مُسْلِمٍ، وَلَمْ يُخْرِجَاهُ. (المستدرک للحاکم)

Sayyidunā Sa‘d b. Mālik and Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā) narrate that *Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ* said, “O Allah, bless the people of al-Madīnah in their *Mudd* and their *Ṣā‘*, and bless them in their city. O Allah, indeed, Ibrāhīm is Your servant and friend, and I am Your servant and messenger. And just as Ibrāhīm asked You for Makkah, I ask You for al-Madīnah the same as what Ibrāhīm asked for Makkah, and the same amount in addition to it. Indeed, al-Madīnah is filled with angels; at every entrance of it, there are two angels guarding it. Plague and *Dajjal* shall not enter it. Whoever intends harm to its people, Allah will dissolve him just as salt dissolves in water.” This *Ḥadīth* is authentic on the condition of Muslim, but he did not record it [al-Mustadrak].

In the narration above, the word in Arabic that describes the presence of angels in the city is ‘*Mushtabikah*’, which can be translated as filled, entwined or interlocking. This portrays another aspect of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, that it is brimming with the presence of angels. The presence of angels adds to the immense light and blessings already present due to *Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ*. Being in al-Madīnah is being in the companionship of angels that are residents of al-Madīnah. Companionship rubs off onto a person, as Rasūlullah ﷺ informed us:

“Verily, the parable of good and bad company is that of a seller of musk and a blacksmith. The seller of musk will give you perfume, you will buy

some, or you will notice a pleasant smell. As for the blacksmith, he will burn your clothes, or you will notice a bad smell” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

8. *Dajjāl* Cannot Breach the Territory of al-Madīnah

عن أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "لَيْسَ مِنْ بَلَدٍ إِلَّا سَيَطُوهُ الدَّجَالُ، إِلَّا مَكَّةَ وَالْمَدِينَةَ، لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ نِقَائِمَا نَقَبُ إِلَّا عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ صَافِينَ يَحْرُسُونَهَا، ثُمَّ تَرْجُفُ الْمَدِينَةُ بِأَهْلِهَا ثَلَاثَ رَجَفَاتٍ، فَيُخْرِجُ اللَّهُ كُلَّ كَافِرٍ وَمُنَافِقٍ." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Anas b. Mālik (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported that the Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “No land will be safe from the *Dajjāl* except for Makkah and al-Madīnah. No passage leads to them but that it will be guarded by angels arranged in ranks. *Dajjāl* will appear in a barren place next to al-Madīnah and the city will be shaken three times. Allah will expel from it every unbeliever and hypocrite” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "لَا يَدْخُلُ الْمَدِينَةَ رُغْبُ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ، لَهَا يَوْمَئِذٍ سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ، عَلَى كُلِّ بَابٍ مَلَكَانِ." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Abū Bakrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying, “The terror of the *Dajjāl* will not enter al-Madīnah. That day it will have seven gates with two angels at each gate” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

وَعَنْ أَنَسِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "لَيْسَ مِنْ بَلَدٍ إِلَّا سَيَطُوهُ الدَّجَالُ إِلَّا مَكَّةَ وَالْمَدِينَةَ لَيْسَ مِنْ نِقَائِمَا إِلَّا عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ صَافِينَ يَحْرُسُونَهَا فَيَنْزِلُ السَّبِيحَةُ فَتَرْجُفُ الْمَدِينَةُ بِأَهْلِهَا ثَلَاثَ رَجَفَاتٍ فَيُخْرِجُ إِلَيْهِ كُلَّ كَافِرٍ وَمُنَافِقٍ." (صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Anas b. Mālik (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported Allah’s Messenger ﷺ as saying, “There is no town in which *Dajjāl* will not tread, except Makkah and al-Madīnah. There is not a single mountain pass which does not have angels in it drawn up in rows and guarding al-Madīnah. *Dajjāl* will then go down to a marshy land, and al-Madīnah will shake three

times; then every infidel and hypocrite will go out to him” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "يَأْتِي الْمَسِيحُ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْمَشْرِقِ، هِمَّتُهُ الْمَدِينَةُ، حَتَّى يَتْرَلَ دُبُرَ أُحُدٍ، ثُمَّ تَصْرِفُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَجْهَهُ قِبَلَ الشَّامِ، وَهَذَا لِكَرْبَلِكُكَ." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “*Dajjāl* will come from the East with the intention of attacking al-Madīnah until he will take a position behind the Mountain of ‘Uḥūd. Then, the angels will repel him and turn his face towards *al-Shām*, and it will be there that he will perish” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Dajjāl is the greatest *Fitnah* to ever fall upon humanity. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Nothing between the creation of Adam until the establishment of the Hour is a greater tribulation than the affair of the False Messiah” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. The Prophet ﷺ warned us, “Whoever hears news of the False Messiah, let him flee from him. By Allah, a man will go to him considering himself a believer but will instead follow him because of doubts he will present” [Sunan Abū Dāwūd].

Being in the blessed cities of Makkah and al-Madīnah is a protection from the terror of *Dajjāl*. Allah has placed angels around the entire city of al-Madīnah to give comfort to the residents of al-Madīnah that *Dajjāl* will not be able to come near them.

The narration of *Sayyidunā* Tamīm al-Dārī (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) in which he describes a conversation he had with *Dajjāl*, includes the following remarks of *Dajjāl*, “Every time that I will attempt to enter Makkah or *Ṭaybah*, I will be confronted by an angel with a sword in his hand to stop me from entering. Indeed, in every mountain pass of these cities there is an angel to guard them” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Based on the above narration, Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) writes that let alone *Dajjāl* entering, not even his fear will penetrate the hearts of the residents of al-Madīnah [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) narrates from Abū Nu‘aym, who narrates a tradition in his Kitāb al-Fitan that *Sayyidunā* Jibrīl (*‘alayhi al-salām*) will personally be involved in guarding al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah when *Dajjāl* appears [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Sayyidunā Miḥjan b. al-Adra‘ (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ addressed the people and said, “The Day of *Khalāṣ*, and what is the Day of *Khalāṣ*?” three times. It was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is the Day of *Khalāṣ*?" He ﷺ said: “*Dajjāl* will come and ascend ‘Uḥud, look towards al-Madīnah, and say to his companions, 'Do you not see this white palace? This is the mosque of Aḥmad.' Then he will come to al-Madīnah and find at each of its entrances an angel wielding a sword. He will reach the sandy plain of *al-Jurf*, setup camp, and then al-Madīnah will tremble three times. No hypocrite, male or female, nor any wicked person, male or female, will remain except that they will go out to him. Thus, al-Madīnah will be purified, and that will be the Day of Purification” [al-Mustadrak lil Ḥākim].

9. Plague Cannot Penetrate al-Madīnah

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "عَلَى أَنْقَابِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَلَائِكَةٌ، لَا يَدْخُلُهَا الطَّاعُونَ وَلَا الدَّجَالُ."
(صحيح البخاري)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reports that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “There are angels at the mountain passes of al-Madīnah so that neither plague nor *Dajjāl* can enter it” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Ibn Malak (d.854 AH) writes that plagues will not impact al-Madīnah in the manner that it normally impacts other cities [Sharḥ al-Maṣābīḥ]. Imam al-Zurqānī (d.1122 AH) writes that plague that is driven by the disbelieving Jinn and *Shayāṭīn* will not impact as they are barred from entering al-Madīnah [Sharḥ al-Zurqānī]. Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) explains that sudden deaths from a widespread disease stirred by the Jinn will never impact al-Madīnah. Thereafter, he writes that up until his time, there has never been such a plague that has impacted al-Madīnah [Fayḍ al-Qadīr].

The word in the *Ḥadīth* is *Ṭāʿūn*, with some stating that it refers to death from an epidemic [Fath al-Bārī]. The author of al-Nihāyah writes that *Ṭāʿūn* is the general disease that corrupts the air, and with it, the bodies deteriorate. Ibn al-Arabī (d.543 AH) said that the *Ṭāʿūn* is the dominant pain that extinguishes the soul, like strangulation, and it is named so due to the generality of its affliction, and its rapid killing. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d.463 AH) writes that *Ṭāʿūn* refers to the impact on a gland that appears in the groins and the armpits, and it may also appear on the hands and fingers, and wherever Allah wills [al-Tamhīd].

Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes that *Ṭāʿūn* is the illness that involves pouring of blood into an organ, whilst others said that it is the boiling of the blood and its swelling [Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn]. In Tahdhīb al-ʿAsmāʾ wal-Lughāt, Imam al-Nawawī writes that *Ṭāʿūn* is like a blister, and a very painful swelling that emerges, and blackens or greens, or reddens with a severe purplish-red discoloration, and it is accompanied by palpitations, vomiting, and it mostly appears in the groins and the armpits, and may also appear on the hands and fingers, and the rest of the body. Al-Mutawallī said that it is similar to leprosy, whoever is afflicted by it, his organs disintegrate, and his flesh falls off [Fath al-Bārī]. Imam al-Ghazālī (d.505 AH) said that *Ṭāʿūn* is the swelling of the entire body from blood,

with fever, or the pouring of blood into some of the limbs, then it swells and turns red, and that limb may be lost [‘Umdat al-Qārī].

And a group of physicians, among them Ibn Sīnā (d.428 AH), said that plague is a poisonous substance that causes a deadly swelling in the soft and hollow parts of the body, mostly under the armpit, behind the ear, or near the nose. It causes bad blood to rot, turning into a poisonous essence that corrupts the organ and alters what is adjacent to it, and impacts the heart, causing vomiting, nausea, fainting, and palpitations. Due to its harm, it is accepted by the organs only if they are naturally the weakest, and the worst of it occurs in the principal organs, and from the dark [type] few are saved, and the safest is the red, then the yellow. And plagues increase during an epidemic in plague-stricken lands. Hence, the plague was named an epidemic, and vice versa. As for the epidemic, it is the corruption of the essence of the air which is the substance of the soul and its nourishment [al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt al-Thajjāj].

Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) comments on the above saying,

This is what has reached us from the words of the linguists, jurists, and physicians in the of definition of *Ṭāʿūn*, and the essence of it is a swelling that arises from the boiling of the blood, or the pouring of blood into an organ, corrupting it, and that other general diseases arising from the corruption of the air are metaphorically called *Ṭāʿūn* due to their sharing in the generality of the disease, or the abundance of death. However, the *Ṭāʿūn* narrated in the *Ḥadīth* is different to other plagues. The evidence that the other epidemics are different from the *Ṭāʿūn* mention in the *Ḥadīth* is: “The plague does not enter the city”, and it was narrated in the *Ḥadīth* narrated by *Sayyidah ʿĀʾishah*, “We entered al-Madīnah and it was the most plague-stricken land of Allah.” In a report attributed to *Sayyidunā Bilāl*, he said, “Take us to the land of the epidemic.” There are other such

narrations indicating that plagues existed in al-Madīnah. There is another narration of Abū al-Aswad, “I came to al-Madīnah during the *Khilāfah* of *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar, and they were dying a terrible death.” And it was previously mentioned in the *Ḥadīth* of the people of ‘*Uraynah* in 'the Book of Purification' that they did not want to come to al-Madīnah, and in another narration that they said it is “a plague-stricken land”. All of this indicates that other plagues existed before in the city, and it was explicitly stated in the *Ḥadīth* that the plague does not enter it, so this proves that the *Ṭā‘ūn* referenced in our *Ḥadīth* is not any generic plague.

What distinguishes the *Ṭā‘ūn* from other epidemics is the origin of the illness which was not addressed by the physicians, nor by most who spoke about the definition of plague, is that it is from the stings of the Jinn, and it does not contradict what the physicians said about the plague arising from the boiling of the blood, or its pouring; because it is possible that it happens due to the internal sting, causing the poisonous substance, and the blood boils because of it, or pours. The reason why physicians did not address it being from the stings of the Jinn is because it is a matter not comprehended by reason, but is known from the Lawgiver, so they spoke about it according to their principles.

In *Ma‘ānī al-Akḥbār*, it is written that it is conceivable that the *Ṭā‘ūn* is of two types: one resulting from the dominance of some bodily fluids, whether blood, or yellow bile burned, or otherwise, and a part that is from the pricking of the Jinn just as wounds from ulcers that emerge on the body from the dominance of some bodily fluids, even if there was no sting, and the wounds also occur from the stinging of humans.

And what supports that the plague can be from the stinging of the Jinn is its frequent occurrence in the fairest seasons, in the lands with the healthiest air, and the purest water, because if it was due to the corruption of the air, it would persist in the land; because the air becomes corrupted at times, and healthy at others, and this [plague] sometimes goes and comes unexpectedly, without any pattern or experience, sometimes it comes year after year, and sometimes it delays for years, and if it was so, it would affect both humans and animals, and what is observed is that it affects many, but does not affect those who are beside them, of similar temperament, and if it was so, it would affect the entire body, but this is specific to a place in the body, and does not go beyond it, and because the corruption of the air would necessitate the change of bodily fluids, and the increase of diseases, but this mostly kills without disease, thus indicating that it is from the stinging of the jinn as confirmed in the narrations that have come in this regard. Among them is the *Ḥadīth* of *Sayyidunā* Abū Mūsā, “The annihilation of my nation is by stabbing and *Ṭāʿūn*,’ it was said: O Messenger of Allah, we know what stabbing is, so what is the *Ṭāʿūn*? He said: “The pricks of your enemies from the Jinn, and in everything there is a testimony,” narrated by Imam Aḥmad.”

The truth is that the plague referred to in the *Ḥadīth*, which is denied entry to al-Madīnah, originates from the stings of the Jinn, stirring the blood in the body, causing death. Such plague has never entered al-Madīnah ever [Fatḥ al-Bārī].

10. Al-Madīnah is Defended by Almighty Allah

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ نُبَيْهِ ، أَخْبَرَنِي دِينَارُ الْقَرَظِيُّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ أَبِي وَقَاصٍ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَنْ أَرَادَ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ بِسُوءٍ أَذَابَهُ اللَّهُ كَمَا يَذُوبُ الْمَلْحُ فِي الْمَاءِ." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Sa'd (*Raḍīallāhu 'anhū*) reported that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, "Whoever intends to harm the people of al-Madīnah, Allah will destroy them just as salt melts in water" [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Imam al-Ṣanʿānī (d.1182 AH) writes that this warning includes anyone and everyone intending to harm the residents of al-Madīnah. Another understanding of this narration is that it refers to major threats like *Dajjāl* [al-Tanwīr].

Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d.544 AH) writes that it can refer to the Hereafter, where the enemies will be punished by the fire. He also mentions that during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims were shielded from their adversaries, with their malicious plans dissolving as lead melts in fire [Ikṃāl al-Muʿlim].

The presence of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ in al-Madīnah has afforded the city divine protection against the greatest tribulations, including the *Fītnah* of *Dajjāl*. This protective grace, attributed to Rasūlullah's ﷺ blessed presence, has continued through the centuries. Almighty Allah has assumed responsibility for safeguarding *al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn*; one harbours His House and the other, His beloved Messenger ﷺ.

11. The Prophetic Curse Against Those Who Oppress the Residents of al-Madīnah

عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: "اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ ظَلَمَ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ وَأَخَافَهُمْ فَأَخِفهْ وَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ لَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهُ صَرْفٌ وَلَا عَدْلٌ." (المعجم الأوسط للطبراني)

Sayyidunā ‘Ubādah b. al-Ṣāmit (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “O Allah, whoever oppresses the people of al-Madīnah and terrorises them, terrorise him. The curse of Allah, the angels, and the people altogether will be upon him. Allah will not accept his obligatory or voluntary good deeds” [al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ].

Imam al-Mundhirī (d.656 AH) records the reliability of the chain of the *Ḥadīth* as *Jayyid* (good). Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) writes that this refers to a major sin, as a curse can only come as a result of a major wrongdoing and crime.

In *Tartīb al-Madārik*, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ writes that Muhammad ibn Maslamah said: "I heard Imam Mālik say: 'I entered upon al-Mahdī, and he said: "Advise me," so I said: "I advise you to fear Allah alone, and to be kind to the people of the city of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his neighbours, for it has reached us that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "al-Madīnah is my refuge, from it is my mission, within it is my grave, and its inhabitants are my neighbours. It is incumbent upon my *‘Ummah* to preserve my neighbours. Whoever preserves them for my sake, I will be an intercessor or a witness for him on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever does not preserve my testament regarding my neighbours, Allah will give him to drink from the puss of the people of hellfire."

In another report, Mus‘ab said: "When al-Mahdī arrived in al-Madīnah, Imam Mālik and other notables from its people welcomed him miles away. When al-Mahdī saw Imam Mālik, he turned towards him,

embraced him, greeted him, and walked with him. Then Imam Mālik turned to him and said: 'O Commander of the Faithful, you are now entering al-Madīnah, and you will pass by people to your right and left, who are the descendants of the *Muhājirūn* and the 'Anṣār. Greet them, for there are no people better on the face of the Earth than the people of al-Madīnah, and there is no place better than al-Madīnah.' He asked: 'And why do you say that, O Abā Abdillāh?' Imam Mālik replied: 'Because today, there is no known grave of a prophet on the face of the Earth other than the grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. And since the grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ is among them, their virtue over others should be recognised.' Al-Mahdī did as he was instructed, which indicates the preference of being a neighbour to the grave of Allah's Messenger ﷺ [Subul a-Hudā wa al-Rashād].

12. Entitlement to the Intercession of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "لَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَى لَأْوَاءِ الْمَدِينَةِ، وَشِدَّتِهَا أَحَدٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي إِلَّا كُنْتُ لَهُ شَفِيعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، أَوْ شَهِيدًا." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “No one is patient with the rigors and hardship of al-Madīnah but that I will be an intercessor for some of them and a witness on behalf of others” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

This narration has been narrated by *Sayyidunā* Jābir, *Sayyidunā* Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar, *Sayyidunā* Abū Sa’īd, *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah, *Sayyidah* ‘Amsā bint. ‘Umays and others with the same words, May Allah be pleased with them all. Perhaps one of the secrets behind many *Ṣaḥābah* narrating this is the comfort and hope they had in these blessed and beloved words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, which they often remembered and hence, narrated to others.

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that this is either specific to the time of Rasūlullah ﷺ or generic to everyone [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ]. Shāh Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) comments that without a doubt, the challenges in the era of the Prophet ﷺ were the most. The sacrifices that the *Ṣaḥābah* gave for Allah, Rasūlullah ﷺ, and Islam are unparalleled.

Shah Waliullāh (d.1176 AH) writes that the secret of this virtue is that the development and populating of al-Madīnah is an elevation of the signs (*Sha‘āir*) of Islam. Thus, this benefits Islam and faith (thereby being entitled to special intercession). Further, being present in the places of al-Madīnah and being in the *masjid* naturally reminds a person of the era of the Prophet ﷺ, and these benefits return to the person himself [Hujjat Allah al-Bālighah].

Imam al-Zurqānī (d.1122 AH) and others describe the word *La’wā’* as severe hunger. He adds that the Arabic word لُ in the above narration is for *Taqṣīm* (separation), which also comes in the meaning ‘for some’. Hence, for those that excelled, Rasūlullah ﷺ will be a witness, and for those that had shortcomings, Rasūlullah ﷺ will be an intercessor. An alternative opinion is that Rasūlullah ﷺ will be a witness for those that lived in his lifetime, and an intercessor for those that came after his lifetime. Imam al-Zurqānī writes that this intercession can be an additional and specific intercession for the people of al-Madīnah, or it can refer to the generic and global intercession that Rasūlullah ﷺ will do on the Day of Judgement. If the latter is meant, then the reason for mentioning this specifically for al-Madīnah is to highlight the virtue, fortune, and status of the people of al-Madīnah. Another opinion is that this refers to a specific intercession, and the intercession is to increase the ranks, or easing the account for the people of al-Madīnah, or by honouring them on the Day of Resurrection with various honours; for

being on pulpits or in the shade of the Throne, or by hastening them to Paradise, or other specific honours [Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ‘alā al-Mawāhib].

Imam al-Zurqānī goes onto say,

"Why wouldn't someone be willing to face challenges in al-Madīnah who loves and seeks the companionship of the Master ﷺ of the Heavens and the Earth, seeking to attain the abundant rewards and significant bounties that Rasūlullah ﷺ promised, as well as the fulfilment of his pledge of intercession and testimony, and achieving his ultimate purpose in life and death?"

And how severe can the hardship of al-Madīnah and its trials be, and until when will its hardship and trials continue? If you contemplate, you will find in the other places severe hardship and austerity of life similar to al-Madīnah or even more so, and its people reside in it, and among them may be those who are capable of moving but do not move, and strong enough to travel but do not embark on a journey, and prefer their homeland despite the possibility of moving and having the ability to do so.

Despite some of the hardships of life there, Allah has granted a lot of provisions and resources to some of the residents, even among our companions who are not from its people, those who have settled there and whose condition has improved there, and enjoyed its comfort, unlike other lands. For if Allah grants a person such a favour there, then patience is more fitting for the believer. For whoever Allah enables to be patient in staying there, even if it is as uncomfortable as sitting on hot coals, should swallow the bitterness of its gulp, and endure a bit of its trials, as that will protect him from the calamities of the world and its trials [Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ‘alā al-Mawāhib].

13. Virtue of one *Ṣalāh* in al-Masjid al-Nabawī

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِي غَيْرِهِ مِنَ الْمَسَاجِدِ إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “*Ṣalāh* in this *masjid* of mine is better than a thousand prayers in any other *masjid*, except al-Masjid al-Ḥarām” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

Imam al-Suyūṭī (d.911 AH) writes that the reward mentioned here is perhaps specific to the prayer place that existed in the time of Rasūlullah ﷺ, and not any further expansions, whereas, in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, the reward is not specific to the original and initial *masjid*, rather it is for the entirety of *al-Ḥaram*. This is also narrated by Imam al-Nawawī and others. The increase in reward encompasses both obligatory and voluntary prayers [Qūt al-Mughṭadhī].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) narrates that the reward above is not specific to the actual *masjid* in the time of Rasūlullah ﷺ, rather it encompasses the entire *masjid*. The reason why Rasūlullah ﷺ said ‘*this*’ was because all the *masājid* were ascribed to him. Further, Imam Mālik was specifically asked regarding this, and said it is not specific to the initial prayer area. Further, he says that if this was not the case, then the Rightly-Guided Caliphs would never have sought to extend the *masjid* in the presence of the companions, however, they did, and nobody objected [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Since the Malikī scholars view al-Madīnah as the most virtuous place on the Earth, they interpreted this narration as meaning that *Ṣalāh* in al-Masjid al-Nabawī is better than one thousand *Ṣalāh* in every *masjid*, except al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, where the one thousand does not apply, but less [al-Masālik Fī Sharḥ Mutwaṭṭa’ Mālik].

14. Al-Madīnah Naturally Purifies Itself

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا بَايَعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَأَصَابَ الْأَعْرَابِيَّ وَعْكٌ بِالْمَدِينَةِ، فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، أَقْلِي بِيَعْتِي، فَأَبَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ، فَقَالَ: أَقْلِي بِيَعْتِي، فَأَبَى، ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ، فَقَالَ: أَقْلِي بِيَعْتِي، فَأَبَى، فَخَرَجَ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِنَّمَا الْمَدِينَةُ كَالْكَبِيرِ تَنْفِي خَبَثَهَا، وَيَنْصَعُ طَيِّبَهَا." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidunā Jābir (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu) narrated that a Bedouin came to the Rasūlullah ﷺ and gave the pledge of allegiance for embracing Islam. The next day he came with a fever, and he said, “Cancel my pledge.” The Prophet ﷺ refused three times and he said, “al-Madīnah is like a furnace. It expels its impurities and makes use of what is pure” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes that the reason why Rasūlullah ﷺ did not revoke his pledge is because it is not permitted to break the pledge once you have embraced it. Then he says that this narration means that those who are not sincere in their faith will naturally leave al-Madīnah, and only the sincere will remain in it [Sharḥ al-Nawawī]. Others write that Rasūlullah ﷺ did not want to assist the Bedouin in something that is wrong, and therefore did not approve or accept the revocation [al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ al-Thajjāj].

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that the Prophet ﷺ likened al-Madīnah and what afflicts its inhabitants of hardship and trial to a furnace and what is heated upon it in the fire, so that the impure is separated from the pure. Thus, the impurity goes away, and the pure remains in it, purer and more sincere than ever [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

Ibn al-Munayyir (d.683 AH) writes that although the apparent meaning of the Ḥadīth gives the indication that whoever exits al-Madīnah has a blemish, that is not the case, as many noble companions left al-Madīnah. The correct understanding of this narration is confined to those who

leave al-Madīnah due to disliking al-Madīnah and not wanting to be therein. Those who leave al-Madīnah for permissible and virtuous reasons like spreading Islam and knowledge are not ‘expelled’ from it. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d.463 AH) writes that this narration also teaches us that Rasūlullah ﷺ would take *Bay‘ah* and allegiance on practicing Islam.

This *Ḥadīth* shows that being able to stay in al-Madīnah is an indication of one’s goodness, and that Almighty Allah has chosen a person and blessed them with the companionship of Rasūlullah ﷺ [al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ al-Thajjāj].

Chapter Four: Visiting al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah



Introduction

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is like a magnet for the believers with such strong attraction, that no matter where the believer is in the world, their heart is pulled in that direction and yearns for an opportunity to be present in al-Madīnah. What makes al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah so special and what gives it that pull that it has? It is the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Rasūlullah ﷺ has a natural pull and magnetism about him, that in his lifetime, the trees would miss him and cry, animals would come to him, clouds would shelter him. He is the heart of al-Madīnah, and it his presence and existence that has fused and intertwined with al-Madīnah giving it a strong pull and attraction. Visiting al-Madīnah is in reality visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ. People go to al-Madīnah for an opportunity to be in the noble presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ, and to be honoured to step foot in his blessed *masjid*.

The Status of Visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ

Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d.544 AH) writes that visiting the resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ is a *Sunnah* from the *Sunnah* of the believers, a matter that has consensus, and a virtue that is highly desired and encouraged [al-Shifā].

Imam al-Shurunbulālī (d.1069 AH) writes that visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is from the best and most noble of actions, and from the greatest of *Mustahabb* (recommended) practices, in fact, it is close to being from the *Wājibāt* [Marāqī al-Falāh]. Ibn al-Mulaqqin (d.804 AH) writes that visiting the blessed resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ is from the most important acts of devotion [al-Tadhkirah].

Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes, “Know that it is appropriate for everyone who performs Ḥajj to head towards visiting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whether it is on their way or not, for visiting him ﷺ is among the most important acts of drawing near [to Allah], the most profitable of endeavours, and the best of requests. So, when heading for the visit, one should increase in sending prayers and peace upon him ﷺ on their way” [al-‘Adhkār]. Imam al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d.1231 AH) writes that one’s intention should be to visit the blessed resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ [Ḥashiyah al-Ṭaḥṭāwī].

Ibn ‘Allān (d.1057 AH) writes:

Imam Abū Dāwūd and others have narrated from *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said, “No one says *Salām* to me but that Allah returns my soul to me so that I may respond to him.” Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) said that this is a sound narration, and it was also narrated by Imam Aḥmad (d.241 AH), Imam al-Bayhaqī (d.458 AH) and others. Imam Taqīyy al-Dīn al-Subkī (d.756 AH) writes in *Shifā’ as-Siqām* that a group of Imams relied on this *Ḥadīth* for the desirability of visiting his ﷺ grave. Using this as evidence is correct and valid because when the visitor greets Rasūlullah ﷺ, the response is given to him from close proximity, and this is a sought-after virtue. I say, and the response to him is likewise personal and direct, even if the visitor's only benefit from the visit was this reply and *Salām*, it would be sufficient (for it to be among the most virtuous practices

and the desirability of visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ). How can this not be so, when it includes the greatest intercession and the multiplication of prayers in that most sacred sanctuary [al-Futūḥāt al-Rabbāniyyah].

Imam al-Qaṣṭallānī (d.923 AH) writes that visiting the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ is from the greatest of deeds, an action that has the most hope in being accepted, and the path to the highest stations and ranks [al-Mawāhib al-Ludunnīyyah Bi al-Minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyyah].

Ibn Ḥajar (d.852 AH) writes that some narrate that Imam Mālik disliked a person to say that ‘they visited the grave’ of Rasūlullah ﷺ. However, scholars have said that what he meant was that such a word was not respectful, not that he was discouraging visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ. In fact, visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is from the best of deeds and the most noble of devotions that take one close to The Majestic One [Fatḥ al-Bārī].

The author of *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* writes that visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is a *Sunnah Muʿakkadah*. Imam al-Dimyāṭī (d.1310 AH) writes in his commentary on *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* that visiting *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ is an emphasised right on every Muslim. And the right becomes more emphasised as one gets closer to al-Madīnah. It becomes reprehensible that a person does not visit when he has travelled from so far and is so close [Iʿānat al-Ṭālibīn].

The Benefits of Visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ

Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ cites Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm saying that it is a long-standing tradition for Ḥajj pilgrims to visit al-Madīnah. They perform *Ṣalāh* in the *masjid* of Rasūlullah ﷺ, gain blessings (*Tabarruk*) from witnessing his *Rawḍah*, his pulpit, his blessed resting station. They get to experience and benefit from the very places Rasūlullah ﷺ would sit, the places where his ﷺ blessed hands would touch, and his noble feet walked upon. They get to be in proximity to the pillar against which he ﷺ would lean, and where

Sayyidunā Jibrīl (*‘alayhi al-salām*) would descend with revelation to him [al-Shifā].

For a lover of Rasūlullah ﷺ, there is some energy and spiritual openings in being in contact and proximity to everything that he ﷺ touched. The heart experiences a joy that cannot be described in words, a power is felt flowing through one’s inner being, and the attachment and yearning for Rasūlullah ﷺ only increases. The intensity of love culminates with a strong desire to just have one glimpse of Rasūlullah ﷺ. It is as though the lover wanders around al-Madīnah, connecting with every inch that may have touched the noble being of Rasūlullah ﷺ and seeking proximity and comfort in Rasūlullah ﷺ. The desire to just see Rasūlullah ﷺ is intense for such lovers, and they are comforted by the following words:

“The people with the most intense love for me from my people will be those that will come after me, they will wish to just get one glimpse of me even if they had to sacrifice their family and wealth” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that whoever contemplates on the benefits of visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ will conclude that there are great benefits in this whereby a sincere person can reach the highest goals and objectives. From the greatest of blessings of visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is that when a person greets him next to his grave, he ﷺ literally hears it and he replies without any intermediary. What more can you ask for! He then goes onto write that Rasūlullah ﷺ has the same senses and auditory capacity that he had before passing away, and that his senses remain, just that Almighty Allah has sufficed them from needing physical food and nourishment [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

Sayyidunā Abū Dardā (*Raḍīallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Send a great deal of blessing upon me on Fridays, for it is witnessed by the angels. No one sends blessing upon me but his blessing will be

presented to me, until he finishes them.” A man said: “Even after death?” He said: “Even after death, for Allah has forbidden the Earth to consume the bodies of the prophets, so the Prophet of Allah is alive and receives provision” [Sunan Ibn Mājah].

A similar meaning is narrated by Abū Ya‘lā that the prophets are alive in their graves performing *Ṣalāh*. Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) said that the narration is sound. Imam al-Haythamī (d.807 AH) said the narrators of Abū Ya‘lā are authentic.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) mentions that we understand from the narrations regarding the life of the Prophet ﷺ in the grave that he has a special form of existence and life in the grave. Imam al-Bayhaqī writes that the meaning of returning the soul to the body of Rasūlullah ﷺ is that immediately after burial his soul was returned to him so that he can respond to whoever visits and greets him, and his soul has continuously remained in his body since. The soul does not keep moving back and forth whereby there is multiple soul movement and multiple life and death. Some have said that in the life of the Hereafter, all this is plausible and possible, even if it means multiple movements of his ﷺ soul. Imam al-Subkī writes that the return of the soul in the narration is figurative, in that his soul is immersed in the divine presence and the companionship of the highest assembly (*al-Mala’ al-‘alā*) in the Heavens, and when someone greets him ﷺ, his ﷺ attention turns towards this existence and the person greeting him ﷺ. Others have said the returning of the soul is metaphorical for happiness [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

Abū al-Baqā’ al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī (d.854 AH) also writes that the life of Rasūlullah ﷺ in the grave is a proper life and complete form of life in the truest sense, and that will remain until the Day of Judgement [al-Baḥr al-‘Amīq].

Visiting Rasūlullah's ﷺ Resting Station

Nāfi‘ narrates that he observed *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhuma*) more than a hundred times visiting the noble resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ and offering *Salām* [al-Shifā]. Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ narrates how *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhuma*) would place his hands where Rasūlullah ﷺ would sit on the pulpit and then wipe his face with it.

In another narration, Nāfi‘ describes how *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhuma*) would enter the *masjid*, and then go to the graves. *Sayyidunā* Ibn ‘Umar would say, “Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. Peace be upon you, O Abu Bakr. Peace be upon you, O my father” [Sunan al-Bayhaqī].

Ibn al-Qāsim (d.191 AH) says that he has seen the people of al-Madīnah, when they would leave or enter al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, they would come to the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ and greet him with *Salām* [al-Shifā].

Visiting al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is not something that a person wakes up and decides, rather a person is called. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) explains how he suddenly received the means, contrary to expectation and in an extraordinary manner, to travel to al-Madīnah. On receiving the resources, he says that he felt that this is a sign of approval and acceptance to visit al-Madīnah [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Azīz (d.101 AH) would send a special postal message which contained *Salām* and greetings to be read in front of the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ [Itḥāf al-Zā’ir].

It is narrated that when *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar entered Jerusalem, Ka‘b al-Aḥbār visited him and embraced Islam. Thereafter, *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar

(*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) instructed him to come back with him to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah and benefit from visiting the grave of the Prophet ﷺ [Wafā’ al-Wafā’]. The occurrence of this has not been rigorously authenticated nor established, but it is something that is narrated in the books of scholars.

Ka’b al-Aḥbār (*Raḥimahullah*) said, “Every dawn, seventy thousand angels descend and encircle the grave, flapping their wings and praying upon the Prophet ﷺ until the evening when they ascend, and seventy thousand angels descend to surround the grave, flapping their wings and praying for the Prophet ﷺ—seventy thousand at night and seventy thousand during the day. And when the Earth splits open for him, he will emerge among seventy thousand angels who honour him ﷺ [Ḥilyat al-‘Awliyā’].

Abū al-Baqā’ al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī (d.854 AH) writes that the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ is continuously occupied with the blessed presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ himself, the seventy thousand angels, and with the pious believers continuously visiting and greeting Rasūlullah ﷺ [al-Baḥr al-‘Amīq].

Etiquettes of visiting

Before travelling to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

1. Reading and studying the *Sīrah*

Before even travelling to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, one needs to understand and learn the sacrifices upon which al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah became the centre of Islam. This is done by reading and learning the *Sīrah* of Rasūlullah ﷺ. By reading the *Sīrah*, not only will the history of al-Madīnah will be gained, but more

importantly, an appreciation and awareness of Rasūlullah ﷺ will be achieved.

2. Read and contemplate on the *Shamā'il*

One of the most powerful methods to increase the love of Rasūlullah ﷺ in the hearts is to read and study the *Shamā'il*. The *Shamā'il* captures the qualities and attributes of Rasūlullah ﷺ. It is impossible that someone reads the *Shamā'il* properly and does not fall in love with the attractive look of Rasūlullah ﷺ, his gentleness and good character, and his overall approach and demeanour.

3. Practice on the *Sunnah*

To gain closeness to Rasūlullah ﷺ and Almighty Allah, practicing the *Sunnah* is the among most effective way. Practicing the *Sunnah* does not just mean doing physical actions like entering the bathroom with the left foot and eating with the right hand, in addition to these noble practices, the *Sunnah* includes all the motions, emotions, and conduct of Rasūlullah ﷺ. We must act, think, feel, do, plan, strategise, treat, work, have habits of, and carry ourselves, and behave like Rasūlullah ﷺ.

4. *Tawbah*

Tawbah is something we should be doing daily and continuously. Our weaknesses and shortcomings are always more. *Tawbah* is a great way to gain closeness to Almighty Allah, as we pin our hopes in His mercy over any action of ours. However, when visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ, we should acknowledge and realise that we are not even worthy of such an honour. Despite not being worthy, we have nowhere else to go to but the *al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn*.

We may not be worthy, but we present ourselves to Almighty Allah in His House as we are, repentant and with humility. Likewise, we visit *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ as we are, in a state of weakness and ashamed of our wrongdoings, knowing that he loves us more than our own parents.

5. *Ṣalawāt*

Among the most important practices to engage in before even travelling to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah is to increase one's recitation of *Ṣalawāt*. *Ṣalawāt* are messages and greetings to Rasūlullah ﷺ. This communication with Rasūlullah ﷺ builds an attachment and bond.

On the way to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

1. *Intention*

Intentions create focus and a vision. When doing any action, the intention that one has forms their vision and expected outcomes. Ibn al-Humām (d.861 AH) writes that when one is initially visiting al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, his only intention should be to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ, as that is honouring and respecting Rasūlullah ﷺ. Thereafter, if a person visits a second time, then he should intend visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ, and the *masjid* [Fath al-Qadīr].

Al-Fayrūzabādī (d.817 AH) writes that one should intend to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ, and to gain blessings by being in physical proximity to Rasūlullah ﷺ and his blessed body [al-Maghānim al-Muṭābah].

If one's intention is to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ, the strength, emotion, and eagerness that will be experienced will only aid and strengthen the bond with Rasūlullah ﷺ.

2. *Ṣalawāt*

The recitation of *Ṣalawāt* must increase excessively, such that with every step and with every breath one is reciting *Ṣalawāt*. A lover imagines that the recitation of *Ṣalawāt* helps in measuring the distance and closeness to Rasūlullah ﷺ, as the trip of the angel that takes your *Ṣalawāt* to Rasūlullah ﷺ becomes shorter and shorter. This thought of bridging the gap is extremely cherishing and exhilarating.

3. *Poetry and Anāshīd*

To ignite the yearning and love for Rasūlullah ﷺ, poetry, *Qaṣā'id*, and *Anāshīd* can be very helpful. Poetry and articulations of love can jolt the heart and replenish the soul. Therefore, listening to poetry in praise of Rasūlullah ﷺ is worthwhile.

4. *Charity*

Giving *Ṣadaqah* and charity is always recommended and desirable. However, based on the following verse, Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī (d.974 AH) states that it is a *Sunnah* to give *Ṣadaqah*, either after entering al-Madīnah or before entering the *masjid*:

“You who believe, when you come to speak privately with the Messenger, offer something in charity before your conversation: that is better for you and purer. If you do not have the means, God is most forgiving and merciful. Have you feared to present before your consultation charities? Then when you do not and Allah has forgiven you, then [at least] establish prayer and give Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is Aware of what you do”

[Quran 58:12-13].

The above was revealed to protect Rasūlullah ﷺ, in that anyone who wanted to have a private consultation or meeting with Rasūlullah ﷺ was required to give *Ṣadaqah*. The hypocrites and those intending to harm Rasūlullah ﷺ kept on requesting private meetings with Rasūlullah ﷺ. His nature was such that he would never say no. Thus, Almighty Allah mandated on those intending to speak to Rasūlullah ﷺ to give charity to the needy and poor before going to speak with Rasūlullah ﷺ. This would have been very difficult for the hypocrites, and therefore, would discourage them from unnecessarily causing inconvenience to Rasūlullah ﷺ. The exegetes mention that only *Sayyidunā ‘Alī (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu)* practiced on this particular verse, as the order was abrogated shortly after.

5. *Happiness*

Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) writes that one should travel to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah with immense happiness, enthusiasm and excitement. As al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah becomes nearer, the yearning should increase. As the hour of meeting dawns true to a promise; the fire of longing increases its intensity [Fadhā'il al-Ḥajj].

A person going to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ should genuinely be the happiest person on the Earth. What can be better than going to visit Rasūlullah ﷺ? He is the most beloved of creation and the gateway to all goodness. He loves us more than anything. He would make *Du‘ā'* for his *‘Ummah* and continues to do so.

Upon entering al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

1. Increasing *Ṣalawāt*

Imam Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that the moment the gaze falls upon the trees and buildings of al-Madīnah, then one should further increase in *Ṣalawāt* [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

2. Hastening to al-Madīnah

Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) writes that one should hasten out of happiness to reach inside al-Madīnah upon seeing al-Madīnah, just as Rasūlullah ﷺ would gallop faster to enter al-Madīnah out of love for al-Madīnah.

3. Focus

Do not be distracted by what is happening in terms of renovation, development, urban progression, and construction. One should be focused on nothing else than Rasūlullah ﷺ. Your heart's compass and pivot should be Rasūlullah ﷺ in every moment whilst in al-Madīnah. One should know exactly where the beloved is resting and where he is. That should be the only real focus and awareness. Hence, when entering al-Madīnah, the only thing on the mind should be where is the noble resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ? That is where you want to be and what you want to see.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that a person should be mindful and conscious that the reason why al-Madīnah has virtue is because of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Further, he says that a person should be overfilled with reverence and admiration for Rasūlullah ﷺ, to such an extent that whilst in al-Madīnah, they

should behave and act as though they can see *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ; that is the way a person can increase in *Khushūʿ*, *ʿIbādah*, and reduce wrongdoing and disobedience. That will enable one to increase in good character and virtue [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

4. Preparation

The moment one has checked into one's hotel, they should freshen up, have a shower, put on a fresh pair of clothes, apply perfume, and then head straight to the *masjid*. One should not be at rest until they have presented themselves in the blessed presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ and conveyed their heartfelt love and *Salām* to the best of creation. You are in his ﷺ city and his guest, and before anything, it is from gratefulness and good manners to acknowledge the host and greet the host.

When entering al-Masjid al-Nabawī

1. Reverence for the *masjid*

One should be fully aware of the place that he is stepping into. This is the place where hundreds of companions sat daily with Rasūlullah ﷺ. It is in these walls where the beautiful and sweet voice of Rasūlullah ﷺ echoed as he recited the Quran. It is in this place that *Sayyidunā* Jibrīl (*ʿalayhi al-salām*) descended with the revelation of the Quran.

2. Maintain all the etiquettes of entering a *masjid*

Enter with the right food and recite the *duʿāʾ* for entering the *masjid*. It is best to enter from *Bāb Jibrīl*, if possible. Thereafter, one should perform *Tahīyyat al-Masjid* as long as the time is

acceptable for this *Ṣalāh*. Thereafter, Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) writes that a person should make *du‘ā’* to Almighty Allah, thanking Allah for this immense blessing, asking for acceptance, and asking Almighty Allah that He pleases Rasūlullah ﷺ with one’s visit.

When standing in front of Rasūlullah ﷺ

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that Rasūlullah ﷺ is conscious and alive, and that he is fully aware of who is visiting him ﷺ. He further writes that the experience, response, and engagement with Rasūlullah ﷺ depends on a person’s status, rank, and heart [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

Imam al-Ṣāwī (d.1241 AH) writes the best approach in visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is to be close to the noble grave as the Prophet ﷺ hears your speech according to the usual manner. This necessitates that one be mindful of both external and internal etiquette to achieve the desired success [Ḥāshiyah a-Ṣāwī ‘alā Sharḥ al-Saghīr].

Imam al-Qaṣṭallānī (d.923 AH) writes that the respect accorded to Rasūlullah ﷺ should be the same today as it would have been during his lifetime, because he is indeed alive in his grave" [Sharḥ al-Mawāhib].

When walking towards the noble resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ, one’s mind and heart should be fully focused on Rasūlullah ﷺ. The eyes should not be wandering around, nor should one be raising one’s voice, talking to others, or using one’s phone. *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ is present and can see you. Only true love for Rasūlullah ﷺ can guide one on how to act, behave, and approach *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ. Hence, one’s actions and behaviour are a reflection of the condition of the heart.

It is normal that one’s heart would be racing and beating fast, being fused with excitement from one angle, but then overwhelmed with the awe of

Rasūlullah ﷺ. One is about to stand in front of the greatest creation ever, and the most beloved to Almighty Allah.

The lips should naturally be flowing with *Ṣalāt* and *Salām*, whilst the mind should be conscious that Rasūlullah ﷺ is a few metres away and watching. The heart should be captivated in reminiscing the beauty of Rasūlullah ﷺ, his status, his favours, and his love. The soul should be seeking a union with the beloved. His nature is so humble and loving, and he is so welcoming. He loves the believers and his followers.

Upon approaching Rasūlullah ﷺ, stand in front of his blessed and noble face. According to the majority of scholars, one should stand in front of the noble face of Rasūlullah ﷺ. One's eyes should be lowered out of respect. Ibn Ḥajar writes it is better to remain standing here, instead of sitting. One should not be worried or concerned with who is standing nearby, who is walking, or any of the decoration in the masjid. The only concern and only thought in the mind should be that 'I am in front of *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ and he can see me and hear me'. Al-Qāḍī Ḥusayn al-Makkī (d.1366 AH) writes that one should be fully aware and conscious that Rasūlullah ﷺ is aware of his presence, and it is as though he ﷺ is sitting right in front of you [Irshād al-Sārī].

One should then greet Rasūlullah ﷺ, praise him, thank him, and request him to make *du'ā'* and intercede. It is better not to read off a book at this instance, instead one should memorise a few expressions of greetings and love, whilst understanding the translation, and present those words and greetings in the blessed presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ. The conversation with Rasūlullah ﷺ at this moment is real and live, it is happening face-to-face. The focus should only be on him ﷺ. After greeting and conveying one's love to Rasūlullah ﷺ, one should also greet his two noble and beloved companions resting besides him, *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhu*) and *Sayyidunā* 'Umar (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhu*). Their favours are immense

upon us, and we can never fulfil their rights as we ought to. They are our masters, our leaders, and our tradition.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) explains that ‘Ulamā differed on whether it is better to remain in the presence of Rasūlullah ﷺ for a long time, or to remain for a short time. However, the majority, including the likes of Imam al-Nawawī and others have stated that it is better to stand for more time. Ibn Ḥajar concludes that one should remain for as long as one’s heart is focused and engaged with Rasūlullah ﷺ, and the moment one loses focus or his attention and awareness decreases, he should take leave and exit [al-Jawhar al-Munazzam].

1. Respect for al-Madīnah

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d.974 AH) writes that as much as possible, one should not elevate himself above the sacred *masjid* out of respect for the *masjid* and Rasūlullah ﷺ. Of course, many a time hotel rooms are in higher floors, and this is beyond one’s control. However, one should maintain the reverence in the heart at all times.

Imam Mālik *Raḥimahullah*, in his profound devotion, exemplified this respect by choosing to walk rather than ride an animal within the confines of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. His actions were motivated by a desire not to allow an animal's hooves to touch the ground that was blessed by Rasūlullah ﷺ. In walking, he sought to connect directly with Rasūlullah ﷺ, tracing every footprint and motion of Rasūlullah ﷺ. He would say, “I am extremely shy from Almighty Allah that I ride an animal on the very Earth in which Rasūlullah ﷺ is resting” [al-Baḥr al-‘Amīq].

Avoid littering al-Madīnah, rather one should try their utmost to clean the blessed city. Honour the nature and landscape, do not harm any creature in al-Madīnah.

Imam Abū al-Baqā' al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī (d.854 AH) writes that whilst in al-Madīnah, one should contemplate that perhaps the very step they have taken is the precise place where the blessed feet and step of Rasūlullah ﷺ coincides [al-Baḥr al-‘Amīq]. Every step should be with admiration and composure.

2. Honour the people of Madīnah

The inhabitants of al-Madīnah hold a special place within the Islamic tradition, distinguished by their unique virtues as highlighted in numerous Prophetic narrations. The enduring connection of the people of al-Madīnah to their illustrious city and to Rasūlullah ﷺ affords them a distinct honour and respect within the Muslim ‘*Ummah*. In recognising their special status, it becomes incumbent upon visitors and fellow Muslims to extend to them due respect, support, and kindness. One should honour them, support them, ask them for *du‘ā*, and be charitable towards them.

3. Visit the places where Rasūlullah ﷺ visited

‘Abdullah, the servant of *Sayyidah* Asmā' bint Abū Bakr (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*), said that he used to hear *Sayyidah* Asmā', whenever she passed by *al-Ḥajūn*, saying, “*Ṣalallāhu ‘alā Muhammad*”. She would then recollect how they dismounted here with Rasūlullah ﷺ, and at the time how they were traveling with light luggage; with a few riding animals and little food rations [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī].

Nāfi‘ reported that *Sayyidunā* b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) would come to a tree between Makkah and al-Madīnah, and he would take a nap under it. He would tell the people that Rasūlullah ﷺ had rested in this place [Musnad al-Bazzār].

Mujāhid reported that he was with *Sayyidunā* ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) on a journey. He says, “We passed by a place, and he kept to the side away from it. He was asked, “Why did you do that?” He replied, “I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ do that, so I did that” [Musnad Aḥmad].

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) would trace the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ and would perform prayer in every place that the Prophet ﷺ performed prayer [Siyar ‘A‘lām al-Nubalā].

The *Ṣaḥābah* (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhum*) would seek to be in the very places where Rasūlullah ﷺ once was. This is a matter of true love; being in the same space, albeit in a different time, gives some togetherness with the beloved, it refreshes the memories, the love is nourished, and the good old times come to life again for a moment.

While in al-Madīnah, we should also make it a point to visit all the places that Rasūlullah ﷺ frequented. Take a moment to stop and breathe in the air of these sites, reflecting on the times Rasūlullah ﷺ stood where you now stand. Let your heart embrace these moments. Gaze at the trees, feeling a touch of envy for the shade they provided Rasūlullah ﷺ, and regard the ground, appreciating its fortune for having hosted the presence of

Rasūlullah ﷺ. Allow yourself a moment of closeness with Rasūlullah ﷺ. One should visit the following places:

- a. Al-Baqī': Al-Baqī' is home to around ten thousand *Ṣahābah*. Rasūlullah ﷺ often visited the residents of al-Baqī'. One should make *du'ā'* to Almighty Allah that He grants a burial in this blessed residence.
- b. Masjid al-Qubā': This holds the distinction of being the first *masjid* established in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. *Sayyidunā* 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (*Raḍiallāhu 'anhumā*) reports that Rasūlullah ﷺ regularly visited Masjid al-Qubā' every Saturday, either on foot or by mount [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. Rasūlullah ﷺ stated, "Anyone who visits this *masjid*, Masjid al-Qubā', and offers prayer there will receive a reward similar to performing an 'Umrah" [Sunan al-Nasa'i].
- c. The *Shuhadā* of 'Uḥud and the mountain of 'Uḥud: Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that one should visit the *Shuhadā* of 'Uḥud and the mountain of 'Uḥud. The mountain has its own virtues, and loves the believers.
- d. Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) mentions about thirty significant places worth visiting. Additionally, there are seven notable wells used by Rasūlullah ﷺ to perform *Wuḍū'* and *Ghusl*. Imam al-Ghazālī (d.505 AH) specifically recommends visiting the well of 'Arīs, near Masjid al-Qubā', where the blessed saliva of Rasūlullah ﷺ mingled with the well's water.

4. *Ṣalawāt*

Not a moment should pass whilst in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah without the lips reciting *Ṣalawāt* upon Rasūlullah ﷺ. A person should easily be able to recite thirty, forty thousand *Ṣalawāt* a day whilst in al-Madīnah.

Entire books have been written on the virtues of reciting *Ṣalawāt*, with hundreds of benefits mentioned of such a simple and enjoyable practice. There are innumerable virtues, blessings and benefits for this life and the Hereafter in *Ṣalawāt*. Some virtues include:

“The closest of people to me on the Day of Resurrection will be those who sent the most blessings upon me” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

When the companion *Sayyidunā* Ubayy b. Ka‘b (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) asked Rasūlullah ﷺ what would happen if he dedicated all of his supplication time towards *Ṣalawāt*, Rasūlullah ﷺ replied, “In that case, all your needs will be satisfied, and your sins will be forgiven” [Musnad Aḥmad].

In another narration, Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Whoever sends one *Ṣalāt* upon me, Allah will send ten *Ṣalāt* upon him” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

Reciting *Ṣalawāt* is actually a deep spiritual conversation and dialogue with Rasūlullah ﷺ through the intermediary of the angels designated to convey *Ṣalawāt* and *Salām* to Rasūlullah ﷺ. ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Allah has designated angels which travel around the Earth, they convey the *Salām* of my ‘*Ummah* to me” [Sunan al-Nasa‘ī].

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ actually replies to your *Salām*. Abū Hurayrah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “There is no one who sends *Salām* upon me, but Allah restore to me my soul so that I may reply to the *Salām*” [Sunan Abū Dāwūd].

If a person was to recite just ten thousand *Ṣalawāt* daily and punctually, then the beauty of reciting *Ṣalawāt* is that the name of Allah is mentioned therein too, and as such, ten thousand *Ṣalawāt* is ten thousand remembrances of the beautiful name of Allah. Ten thousand *Ṣalawāt* also means ten thousand replies from Rasūlullah ﷺ in a day! To add to all of that, if angels are coming and taking your *Ṣalawāt* to Rasūlullah ﷺ, then you will have ten thousand visits from these angels daily. And finally, something more extraordinary, with ten thousand *Ṣalawāt*, you will be showered with one hundred thousand blessings from Almighty Allah daily.

5. *Frequenting Salām*

Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā al-Khandelwī (d.1402 AH) writes that whenever one passes the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ, they should convey *Salām*. Some scholars have said that should one pass the *masjid* from the outside, even then they should convey *Salām*. Shaykh then writes that once a man was blessed with a dream of Rasūlullah ﷺ, wherein he told the man to convey to the noble companion Abū Ḥāzim (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*), that why does he not stop to say *Salām* when he passes the resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ? Thereafter, Abū Ḥāzim would pause every time he passed by the blessed resting place of Rasūlullah ﷺ, even from outside the *masjid* [Faḍhā’il Hajj].

According to the majority of the scholars, it is desirable to convey *Salām* frequently to Rasūlullah ﷺ. Imam al-Nawawī (d.676 AH) writes that it is *Mustahabb* (desirable) to frequent the blessed resting station of Rasūlullah ﷺ [al-Adhkār]. Imam Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī writes that the view according to the three *Madhāhib*, namely the Ḥanafī, Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī *Madhhab*, is that frequently visiting Rasūlullah ﷺ is desirable. He narrates that according to Imam Mālik, there is dislike for the people of al-Madīnah to this as it can reduce the etiquette and appropriate manners for people who always have access. This ruling was based on the Fiqh principle of *Sadd al-dharā’i’* (blocking the means) [al-Jahwar al-Munazzam].

6. Spend as much as time in the *masjid* near Rasūlullah ﷺ

Shaykh Maulana Zakariyyā al-Khandelwi (d.1402 AH) writes that whenever one is in the *masjid*, his eyes and heart should be focused on the blessed chamber. He says that there is a reward in this. If a person is outside the *masjid*, then his eyes and heart should be towards the green dome [Faḍā’il Ḥajj]. Shaykh Muhammad Ḥusayn Shāh (d.1346 AH) wrote the above in *Ghunyat al-Nāsik*.

An effort should be made to be as close to Rasūlullah ﷺ as possible. One should be fully aware that Rasūlullah ﷺ is present in his blessed chamber, and that this place is full of the *Raḥmah* and blessings of Almighty Allah. The spiritual light and power in this place are immense. This is the place of miracles, the place where all the greatest friends of Allah in this ‘*Ummah* have come and continuously come. This is the place where a person can

reach the loftiest heights and closeness to Almighty Allah with the smallest of efforts.

Chapter Five:

Dying in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah



Introduction

The ultimate wish for every lover of Rasūlullah ﷺ, and in fact every Muslim, is to pass away whilst in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. There is an unexplainable longing that burns deep within the heart of wanting to leave this world whilst inhaling the sweet air of al-Madīnah. In addition to the rewards of being from the residents of al-Baqīʿ, there is a natural pull and yearning to want to depart this world and be given a residence in al-Baqīʿ, close to Rasūlullah ﷺ.

Benefits of Dying in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

1. *Duʿāʾ* from Rasūlullah ﷺ

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: "كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ كُلَّمَا كَانَ لَيْلَتَهَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ آخِرِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَى الْبَقِيعِ فَيَقُولُ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ، وَأَتَاكُمْ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ، غَدًا مُؤَجَّلُونَ، وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِأَهْلِ بَقِيعِ الْغَرْقَدِ." (صحيح مسلم)

Sayyidah ʿĀʾishah (Raḍīallāhu ʿanhā) reported that whenever it was her turn for Rasūlullah ﷺ to spend the night with her, he would go out towards the end of the night to al-Baqīʿ and say: "Peace be upon you, abode of a people who are believers! What you were promised will come to pass tomorrow at a fixed time; and Allah willing we shall join you. Oh

Allah, grant forgiveness to the inhabitants of Baqī' al-Gharqad!" [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

The Prophet ﷺ would often rise in the last part of the night, and slip out in the darkness, leaving his wife and home, to go visit the people of al-Baqī' and make supplication specifically for them. There is hope that the future residents of al-Baqī' will also benefit from this generic prayer for the residents of al-Baqī'.

2. Encouragement to pass away in al-Madīnah

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ" فَلْيَمُتْ بِهَا، فَإِنِّي أَشْفَعُ لِمَنْ يَمُوتُ بِهَا. (سنن الترمذي)

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) narrates that *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Whosoever is able to pass away in al-Madīnah, then let him pass away there, for indeed, I will intercede for the one who passes away there” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

Imam al-Bayḍāwī (d.685 AH) writes that this encourages us to remain in al-Madīnah until death comes [Tuḥfat al-‘Abrār].

3. The intercession of Rasūlullah ﷺ

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَمُوتَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ" فَلْيَمُتْ بِهَا، فَإِنِّي أَشْفَعُ لِمَنْ يَمُوتُ بِهَا. (سنن الترمذي)

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Imam al-Ṣan‘ānī (d.1182 AH) explains that the intercession offered for the residents of al-Baqī‘ is an extra and special intercession due to the merit of being Rasūlullah’s ﷺ neighbour. He further notes that this provides a glad tidings of everyone who passes away in al-Madīnah of dying with ‘*Īmān*, as intercession can only be for the believers [al-Tanwīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr].

4. Being raised with Rasūlullah ﷺ on the Day of Judgement

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْأَرْضُ، ثُمَّ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، ثُمَّ عُمَرُ، ثُمَّ أَبِي أَهْلِ الْبَقِيعِ، فَيُحْشَرُونَ مَعِي، ثُمَّ أَنْتَظِرُ أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ، حَتَّى أُحْشَرَ بَيْنَ الْحَرَمَيْنِ." (سنن الترمذی)

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) narrates that *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “I am the first for whom the Earth will burst open [on the Day of Judgement], then Abū Bakr, and then ‘Umar. I shall then come to those who are buried in al-Baqī‘ and they will be gathered along with me. After that I shall wait for the people of Makkah so as to be gathered among the inhabitants of the two sacred cities” [Sunan al-Tirmidhī].

Imam al-Ṣan‘ānī (d.1182 AH) writes that this narration underscores the rank and virtue of *Shaykhayn*, *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr and *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*) [al-Tanwīr]. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) writes that Abū Bakr (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhū*) will be the second person to be resurrected, either from this ‘*Ummah*, or from all the friends of Allah [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ]. Imam al-Munāwī (d.1031 AH) writes that the apparent cannot be taken from this narration as the resurrection of Rasūlullah ﷺ will be with the prophets. Thereafter, he states that since this will happen in a very short time and that they will be near to one another, *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr has been mentioned as being next.

Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) writes that one possible meaning is that the believers that are resurrected from Makkah will meet with *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ and the people of al-Madīnah at a location in between *al-Ḥaramayn* [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ]. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī states that after they all unite, the believers of *al-Ḥaramayn* will then head towards *al-Shām*, which is the Land of Resurrection. It is in this place that the believers with Rasūlullah ﷺ will unite with the rest of the nations [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

5. Faces shining like the full moon

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: "لَتَرَيْنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَقَابِرَةَ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مِنْهَا سَبْعِينَ أَلْفًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى صُورَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبُدْرِ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ." (المعجم الكبير للطبراني)

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “You shall see that seventy thousand people will be resurrected from al-Baqī‘, their faces [shining] like the full moon. They will enter Paradise without any reckoning” [al-Ṭabarānī].

Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (d.852 AH) mentions this narration as evidence while commenting on similar but stronger narrations that mention the seventy thousand without indicating where they will come from, and he states that, “the seventy thousand are from those who will be assembled from the graveyard of al-Baqī‘ in al-Madīnah, and that is another special distinction [Fath al-Bārī].

Notable Residents of al-Baqī‘

Every resident of al-Baqī‘ is distinguished and commendable, having been chosen by Almighty Allah. They are neighbours of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Among them, certain luminaries stand out, having been specifically noted and highlighted, such as:

The children of Rasūlullah ﷺ:

- *Sayyidah Fāṭimah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Umm Kulthūm (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Ruqayyah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Zaynab (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu)*

The mothers of the believers and the dear wives of Rasūlullah ﷺ:

Besides *Sayyidah Khadījah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)* and *Sayyidah Maymūnah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*, all of the mothers of the believers are buried here, such as:

- *Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Sawdah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Hafṣah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Zaynab bint Khuzaymah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Umm Salamah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Juwayriyyah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Ṣafīyyah (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*
- *Sayyidah Zaynab (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā)*

The relatives and progeny of Rasūlullah ﷺ that are buried here include:

- *Sayyidunā al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu)*
- *Sayyidunā ‘Āqil b. Abi Ṭālib (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu)*
- *Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah b. Ja‘far (Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā)*

- *Sayyidunā* Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*)
- *Sayyidunā* ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Abidīn b. al-Ḥusayn (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhum*)
- *Sayyidunā* Muhammad al-Bāqir b. Zayn al-‘Abidīn (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhum*)
- *Sayyidunā* Ja‘far al-Šādiq, the son of Muhammad al-Bāqir (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhumā*)
- *Sayyidah* Šafiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā*)
- *Sayyidah* ‘Ātikah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā*)

In this vicinity, there are a number of companions, including:

- *Sayyidah* Ḥalimah al-Sa‘diyyah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhā*)
- *Sayyidunā* ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* ‘Uthman b. Maz‘ūn (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāš (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* As‘ad b. Zurārah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* Khunays b. Ḥudhāfah (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)
- *Sayyidunā* Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*)

Steps in becoming a resident of al-Baqī'

1. *Du'ā'*

The most important element in all of this is *Du'ā'*. Only Almighty Allah can do and only He ordains where a person passes away. Almighty Allah instructs us:

“Your Lord says, ‘Call on Me and I will answer you” [Quran 40:60].

Rasūlullah ﷺ informed us, “When one of you asks from his Lord, let him ask for even more. Verily, he is asking from his Lord Almighty” [Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān].

In another narration, he ﷺ told us, “There is no Muslim who calls upon Allah, without sin or cutting family ties, but that Allah will give him one of three answers: He will quickly fulfil his supplication, He will store it for him in the Hereafter, or He will divert an evil from him similar to it.” They said, “In that case we will ask for more.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah has even more” [Musnad Aḥmad].

Imam Ibn ‘Aṭā ‘illah al-Iskandarī (d.709 AH) writes that whenever Allah releases your tongue to ask, know that He wills to give you [al-Ḥikam].

Sayyidunā ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) would ask Almighty Allah specifically to die in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. He would say, “Oh Allah, make me a martyr in your path, and grant me death in the city of Your Messenger” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlawī (d.1052 AH) narrates the above *du'ā'* of *Sayyidunā* ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) and thereafter writes, “I also make this *du'ā'* with hope of acceptance, O Allah, grant me *Shahādah* in your path, and make my ending in the city of your Messenger” [Lama‘āt al-Tanqīḥ].

In following our predecessors, I pause here, and I also make *du‘ā’* to Almighty Allah, having full belief in His power, O my Allah, grant me *Shahādah* in your path, and grant me death in the city of Your Messenger. *‘Āmīn.*

One should make the above *du‘ā’* every day, and whenever one pauses to make *du‘ā’*, one should ask Allah for an ending of *Shahādah* in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

2. Deep love and attachment with Rasūlullah ﷺ

The desire to be in al-Madīnah and to pass away in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah stems from somewhere, and that is a deep love and attachment with Rasūlullah ﷺ. When you love someone deeply, you remember them continuously. Their thought brings happiness to the heart. Their memories make one young again, anything that belonged to them becomes ‘them’ in their absence. There is a deep satisfaction in just connecting with anything that once connected with the beloved. It is the deep and profound love that a person has for Rasūlullah ﷺ which beckons them towards al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Al-Madīnah became the city that it is because of Rasūlullah ﷺ. He ﷺ is the light of al-Madīnah, he is the host in al-Madīnah, he is the pivot of al-Madīnah; al-Madīnah revolves around him, his beauty, his excellence, and his being.

The focus should be on building this attachment and bond with Rasūlullah ﷺ, which will accelerate one to highest levels of Almighty Allah’s *Wilāyah Khāṣṣah* (special friendship). This bond is gained by practicing the following four, on what I call ‘*the four S’s for success*’, with consistency:

- ***Sunnah***: Emulate every *Sunnah* of Rasūlullah ﷺ, encompassing every motion, every emotion, every action, feeling, and aspect of conduct. We should mirror Rasūlullah ﷺ in our thoughts,

emotions, actions, planning, strategy, work habits, behaviour, and overall demeanour.

- **Shamā'il:** Engage with and reflect on the *Shamā'il* of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Implement the practices derived from the *Shamā'il* in your daily life and meditate on the exceptional qualities and beauty of Rasūlullah ﷺ daily.
- **Ṣalawāt:** Continuously recite *Ṣalawāt*, aiming to keep your tongue engaged with *Ṣalawāt* in the tens of thousands of times each day.
- **Sīrah:** Delve into the study of the *Sīrah* and utilise it as a framework for personal life, strategic planning, and community development. The *Sīrah* serves not merely as a historical narrative but as a blueprint for personal growth and societal enhancement.

3. An obsession to pass away in al-Madīnah

One must be obsessed about passing away in al-Madīnah. That has to be one's ultimate vision of life. When something is your ultimate vision and goal of life, you will plan for it meticulously and ensure that your life is focused and channelled towards achieving this vision. The exit of this life is the entry to the next. If one exits this life in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, then surely such a person is a recipient of the *du'ā'* that Rasūlullah ﷺ made for the residents of al-Baqī' and will be among those raised with Rasūlullah ﷺ on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidunā Rasūlullah ﷺ also expressed his longing and wish to pass away in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. He declared, "There is no place on Earth I would rather have my grave than in al-Madīnah." He underscored the

importance of this sentiment by repeating the statement three times [al-Muwatta’].

4. Savings and long-term investments

It's wise to prepare financially for living and passing away in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Planning should include living respectably without being dependent on others. Investments and savings should be directed towards facilitating a settlement in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

5. Frequently visit *al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn*

For those that have the means and no obstacles blocking them, visits to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah should take precedence over other holiday destinations. Al-Madīnah offers everything one could need and more.

6. Investing in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Sahl b. Sa’d (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) narrates that Rasūlullah ﷺ said, “Whoever has an asset in al-Madīnah should hold onto it. Whoever does not have any assets in al-Madīnah should seek to gain an asset in al-Madīnah. Verily, a time will come where those who will not have any assets will be like those leaving al-Madīnah, heading elsewhere” [al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr].

The above narration’s authenticity is debatable. Imam al-Haythamī records the above narration and does not critique the narrators. Further, he adds that Ibn Abī Ḥātim has enumerated the narrators in this chain and did not mention any critique (*Jarḥ*) regarding them [Majma’ al-Zawā’id]. In a similar narration reported by Ibn Abī Ḥathmah, it has the words ‘even if it is just a tree’.

Sayyidunā ‘Umar (*Raḍiallāhu ‘anhu*) said, “O People of al-Madīnah, do not have assets in Makkah, rather have your assets in al-Madīnah, for verily, a person’s heart is where their assets are” [al-Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-

Razzāq]. In another variant, the above was addressed specifically to the *Muhājirīn*.

These reports serve as a motivation for us to invest in assets within al-Madīnah. By having our assets in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, we not only ensure our financial ties to the blessed city but also bind our hearts and minds to it, adding another layer to the strategy to pass away in al-Madīnah.

7. Relocating to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d.1014 AH) suggests that it is advisable for the elderly or for those who have realised through *Kashf* (spiritual revelation) that their time of departing this world is near, to head to al-Madīnah and reside therein until death comes [Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ].

‘Allāmah Ṭībī (d.743 AH) notes that while individuals cannot choose where they will pass away, as this is determined by Almighty Allah alone, Rasūlullah ﷺ has encouraged residing in al-Madīnah without leaving, which may become a means to passing away there [‘Uqūd al-Zabarjad].

Imam al-Zabīdī (d.1205 AH) explains that Rasūlullah ﷺ advocated for settling in al-Madīnah until one's death as suggested by his statement, "whoever of you is able to pass away in al-Madīnah." This narration implies not just passing away there but taking proactive steps to make it possible. He supports this with the verse, "And do not die except that you are Muslims," which emphasises living one's entire life as a Muslim, rather than accepting Islam only at life's end, as the timing of death is uncertain [Itḥāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn].

‘Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (d.1353 AH) notes from his extensive reading and research that many *Ṣaḥābah*, who had initially dispersed across various lands, returned to al-Madīnah as they aged and were

nearing the end of their lives, ultimately passing away there [Fayḍ al-Bārī].

O Allah, grant me proximity and closeness to *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ in this world and the Hereafter,

O Allah, grant me *Shahādah* in your path,

O Allah, grant me a noble departure from this world whilst in al-Masjid al-Nabawī with *‘Īmān*,

O Allah, grant me permanent residence in al-Baqī‘.

All praise belongs to Almighty Allah. Peace, salutation, and love to the best of creation, our beloved, our guide *Sayyidunā* Rasūlullah ﷺ.

SYNOPSIS:

There is no place or city like al-Madinah al-Munawwarah; no matter how advanced, how upmarket, or how luxurious some destinations feel, al-Madīnah is al-Madīnah. This book is a spiritual exploration and brief expression of the history, the several names, the virtues, the etiquettes of visiting, and the rewards of passing away in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.

Shaykh Abdur Raheem Limbada (Ḥafīzahullah) writes, “The moment Rasūlullah ﷺ stepped foot in this city, everything changed; Yathrib, and everything associated with Yathrib disappeared; al-Madinah was born. The world in between the mountains of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah completely transformed.”

Shaykh Anwar Narma (Ḥafīzahullah) writes, “The book we have before us is an extraordinary rendition of love that the author has manifested in the form of his words in praise and ode of the greatest of all cities, Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah.”

Shaykh Imran Ibn Adam (Ḥafīzahullah) writes, “The book has been written with love and spirituality. May Allah make my beloved brother Shaykh Faraz (may Allah preserve him) prosper in his talents and give him the ability to keep on writing. Āmīn.”

Shaykh Yusuf Lorgat (Ḥafīzahullah) writes, “Every writer has a passion to write about al-Madinah, and every writer has their own unique style and relationship with al-Madinah al-Munawwarah. The reality behind all of this is that this city is none other than the city of the beloved of Allah ﷺ.”

Ustadh Khalid Patel (Ḥafīzahullah) writes, “May Allah accept this work and make it a means of bringing the true love of Rasūlullah ﷺ. Upon reading, when a person closes their eyes, they will think of and see al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and as a result, they will, in reality, think of Rasūlullah ﷺ.”

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY:

Mufti Faraz Adam completed a six-year Alimiyyah course in Darul Uloom Leicester, and thereafter studied Iftaa under the tutelage of Shaykh Mufti Ebrahim Desai (Rahimahullah). He went onto study a Master's Degree in Islamic Finance, Banking and Management from Newman University, UK. To add to this, he studied an MBA Diploma from the International Business Management Institute and completed a Fintech Specialisation course at the University of Michigan. Thereafter, he completed the ACCA Level 4 Qualification in Accounting and Business. His industry qualifications include the IFQ, CIFE, CIAE, in addition to the AAOIFI qualification of Certified Shariah Advisor and Auditor (CSAA). He is currently doing his PhD on developing a Shariah governance framework for Artificial Intelligence.

Mufti Faraz is the Founder and CEO of the internationally recognised Shariah advisory firm, Amanah Advisors. His role includes advising multiple Islamic financial institutions across the world, with financial firms in the UK, US, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, among others. He also oversees the Darul Iftaa Muadh ibn Jabal, where he teaches Iftaa and supports Ulama to specialise in Fiqh.

His fatwa website is www.darulfiqh.com, which is where his Fiqh research and Fatawa are published regularly. Mufti Faraz has authored several books and research papers, including Introduction to Islamic Fintech, Zakat Made and Easy, Prophetic Finance and Economics, and al-Salawat al-Shama'iliyyah.