

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Makkah: The Most Beloved Land to Allaah and His Messenger ﷺ

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This article appeared in the first edition of *Ma‘aad* magazine in Sha‘baan, 1426h. The magazine subsequently changed its name to *Makkah*, and an incomplete, inconsistent translation of the article previously appeared in Issue 3, 1430h (2009), of the annually published English translation of the *Makkah* magazine. The following is a full translation of the article as it originally appeared in the initial Sha‘baan 1426h edition of *Ma‘aad* magazine.

Al-Imaam al-Bukhaaree reported from ‘Aa’ishah ؓ that she said: When the Prophet ﷺ came to al-Madeenah, fever befell both Aboo Bakr and Bilaal. Whenever Aboo Bakr’s fever became severe, he would recite the following verses of poetry:

كُلُّ امْرِيٍّ مُصَبِّحٌ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَالْمَوْتُ أَدْنَى مِنْ شِرَاكِ نَعْلِهِ

Each person reaches morning alive amongst his people,
yet death looms nearer to him than his own shoe strap.

And whenever Bilaal’s fever subsided he would weepingly recite verses of poetry saying,

أَلَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي هَلْ أُبَيْتَنَ لَيْلَةً بِوَادٍ وَحَوْلِي إِذْ خَرُّ وَجَلِيلُ
وَهَلْ أَرْدَنُ يَوْمًا مِيَاهَ مَجَنَّةٍ وَهَلْ يَبْدُونَ لِي شَامَةً وَطَفِيلُ

If I could only just spend a single night
in a valley while surrounded by *Ithkibir* and *Jaleel* (types of plants).
Will there come the day when I can drink the water of Majannah¹?
And will I ever again see Shaamah and Tafeel²?

And He further said, “O Allaah, curse Shaybah ibn Rabee‘ah, ‘Utbah ibn Rabee‘ah, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf as they have expelled us from our land to land of disease.” The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ then said, “O Allaah make al-Madeenah as beloved to us as Makkah, or even more. O Allaah, bless us in our *saa’* and our *mudd* (units of measurement), make this place liveable for us, and divert its fever towards al-Juhfah.” ‘Aa’ishah added, “When we came to al-Madeenah it was the most diseased of Allaah’s Earth, and But-haan (the valley of al-Madeenah) used to flow with putrid, dirty water.”³

Ibn ‘Abbaas ؓ said that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said to Makkah, “What a fine land you are, and how beloved you are to me! Had my people not expelled me, I would not have settled anywhere but you.” Reported by at-Tirmithee, ibn Hibbaan in his *Saheeh*, and at-Tabaraanee in *al-Kabeer*. At-Tirmithee commented, “It is a *hasan ghaareeb hadeeth* from this route of narration.” Al-Haakim said in *al-Mustadrak*, “It has a *saheeh* chain,” and ath-Thahabee agreed.

Ibn Jareer reported from ibn ‘Abbaas ؓ also that when the Prophet ﷺ left Makkah and headed to the cave, he turned back facing Makkah and said, “You are the most beloved land of Allaah to Allaah, and you are the most beloved land to me. Had the idolaters not expelled me, I would not have departed from you. Furthermore, the fiercest of enemies are those who would remorselessly violate the limits of Allaah within His sanctuary, murder an innocent person, or seek revenge for crimes perpetrated in the days of *Jaahiliyyah*.” Allaah then revealed, “**And many a town stronger than your town which expelled you We have destroyed, and they had none to come to their aid.**” [Soorah Muhammad (47):13]. Al-Qurtubee said, “It is a *saheeh hadeeth*.”

¹ The name of a spot some distance from Makkah. There was a market located there.

² Two mountains near Makkah. Al-Khattaabee said, “I used to think they were two mountains, until I later found that they were springs.”

³ *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree* (1889).

At-Tirmitheeh, Ahmad – from three routes – and ‘Abd ibn Humayd all reported that ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Adee ibn al-Hamraa’ said, “I saw the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ standing at al-Hazwarah⁴ saying, ‘By Allaah, you are the best spot upon the Earth of Allaah, and the most beloved of the Earth to Allaah. Had I not been expelled from you I would not have left.’” In one of the routes collected by Ahmad, ‘Abdur-Razzaaq said, “Al-Hazwarah is at the entrance of the Hannaateen (i.e. wheat sellers).”

Al-Faakihee reported in *Akbbaar Makkah* from ‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb from his father, from his grandfather that the Prophet ﷺ appointed ‘Attaab ibn Usayd over the people of Makkah and said to him, “Do you know where I am sending you? I am sending you to govern the people of Allaah. There is no land more beloved to Allaah ﷻ, or myself, than it. However, my people expelled me, so I left. Had they not expelled me, I would not have left.”

The Encouragement to Reside in Makkah

Al-Azraquee reported from ibn Abee Najeeh from ‘Aa’ishah that she said, “If it were not for the *Hijrah*, I would have settled in Makkah. I have never seen any other place where the heavens are closer to the ground than in Makkah; my heart has never felt tranquil in any place the tranquility it felt in Makkah; and I have never seen the moon in any place looking as beautiful as it does in Makkah.”

Al-Jundee reported in *Faada’il Makkah* – with a *hasan* chain of narration – from Abut-Tufayl that ibn ‘Abbaas said, “Reside in Makkah even if you only had thorny shrubs to eat.”

The scholars have commented on residing in Makkah; some have discouraged it while others recommended it.

Al-Faasee said, “Residing in Makkah is recommended according to most scholars, among them are: ash-Shaafi‘ee; Aboo Yoosuf and Muḥammad ibn al-Hasan, the two companions of Aboo Haneefah; and ibn al-Qaasim, the companion of Maalik. Ahmad ibn Hanbal also considered it recommended as it was reported that he said, ‘If I could only now reside in Makkah.’” Among those who discouraged residence in Makkah was Aboo Haneefah. Ibn Rushd al-Maaliikee concluded that from a statement which was made by Maalik.

The reason for its discouragement, according to those who hold that view, is fear of becoming disinterested and having less reverence due to being accustomed to the place, as well as fear of committing sins there since they are not those committed anywhere else. Those who did not discourage it said that it is something honorable, and whatever fear there is of sinning is viewed in light of the multiplied reward earned by those who do good.

An-Nawawee said in *al-Eedaah*, “The chosen view is the recommendation of residing in Makkah due to the multiplied reward for good deeds and acts of obedience. Countless individuals among the former and later generations of the *Ummah* – those whose example is to be emulated – resided in Makkah.”

⁴ A small hill at the bottom of which the marketplace of Makkah used to be located – in the vicinity of the *Ka‘bah* – at the minaret of al-Masjid al-Haraam in the direction towards al-Ajyaad.

One of the strongest proofs supporting residing in Makkah is the desire of the Prophet ﷺ to live there and the longing of Bilaal to return to Makkah as mentioned in his poetry:

أَلَا كَيْتَ شِعْرِي هَلْ أَيْتَنَّ كَيْلَةً بِوَادٍ وَحَوْلِي إِذْخِرُ وَجَلِيلُ
وَهَلْ أَرْدَنُ يَوْمًا مِيَاهَ مَجَنَّةٍ وَهَلْ يَبْدُونَ لِي شَامَةً وَطَفِيلُ

If I could only just spend a single night
in a valley while surrounded by *Ithkibir* and *Jaleel*.
Will there come the day when I can drink the water of Majannah?
and will I ever again see Shaamah and Tafeel?

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ encouraged residing in al-Madeenah, and since Makkah is better than it, it follows that residing there is better and more desirable. Al-Muhibb at-Tabaree listed fifty four Companions of the Prophet ﷺ who resided in Makkah for some time or settled there, and most of them died there.

However, anyone honored by Allaah to reside close to His house must conduct himself fittingly and keep himself in check so as to not commit in this land any act which contravenes the noble *Sharee'ah*. If Allaah has promised anyone who merely intends to carry out any evil in it that He shall make him taste a painful punishment, then what can be said about someone who persists in evil and sinning while there?

The Inhabitants of Makkah are called “the People of Allaah”

Al-Mahaamilee reported from Anas ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ appointed ‘Attaab ibn Usayd over Makkah and he was stern with the dubious, but gentle with the people of *Eemaan*. He used to say, “I swear by Allaah! I do not know anyone who deliberately stays away from this prayer in congregation except that I would strike his neck, because no one stays back from it except a *Munaafiq*.” The people of Makkah said, “O Messenger of Allaah, you have appointed over the people of Allaah a crude desert-dwelling nomad.” He replied, “Truly, in my sleep, I saw that he approached the gate of *Jannah*, took hold of a ring on the gate, knocked until it was opened for him and he entered.”⁵

Al-Azraqee reported from ibn Abee Mulaykah and Mu’aath ibn Abil-Haarith – with a *mursal* chain from each of them – that when the Prophet ﷺ appointed ‘Attaab ibn Usayd over Makkah he said, “Do you know whom I have appointed you over? I have appointed you over the people of Allaah.”⁶ Al-Faakihee also reported it from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb, from his father, from his grandfather from the Prophet ﷺ, but its chain contains Naṣr ibn Baab who is a weak narrator.

Al-Azraqee and al-Faakihee reported that ibn Abee Mulaykah said, “In the past, when people from Makkah were encountered they would be addressed, ‘O people of Allaah,’ or ‘this is one of the people of Allaah.’”⁷

⁵ *Al-Iyaabah* (2/456).

⁶ *Akhbaar Makkah* of al-Azraqee (2/151, 153).

⁷ *Akhbaar Makkah* of al-Azraqee (2/151).

Al-Faakihee added: ‘Abdul-Muttalib said the following about the people of Allaah:

وَوَحْنُ آلِ اللَّهِ فِي بَلَدِهِ لَمْ يَزَلْ ذَلِكَ عَلَى عَهْدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

And we are the people of Allaah in His land,
which has continued that way since the time of Ibraaheem.

Al-Hasan ibn Muslim narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab appointed Naafi’ ibn ‘Abdil-Haarith al-Khuzaa’ee over Makkah. When Naafi’ came to ‘Umar he greeted him and ‘Umar said to him, “Who have you left behind over the people of Makkah?” He replied, “ibn Abzaa.” ‘Umar said, “You appointed an ex-slave over the people of Allaah?” ‘Umar became upset and he stood from the saddle of his mount. Naafi’ said, “I found him to most certainly be the best among them in reciting the Book of Allaah and the most knowledgeable among them about the religion of Allaah.” At that, ‘Umar lowered himself until he sat upon his mount he then said, “If that is what you say, then I have heard the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ saying, ‘Verily Allaah raises people by this religion and lowers others by it.’”

It was also reported from another route, stronger than the first, from Naafi’ ibn al-Haarith that he met ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab ؓ who asked him, “Who have you left over the people of Makkah?” He responded, “ibn Abzaa.” ‘Umar said, “A slave?!” He replied, “Yes. He most certainly recites the Book of Allaah proficiently.” ‘Umar ؓ then said, “Verily, Allaah raises people by this Qur’aan and lowers others by it.”

‘Abdur-Razzaaq reported – and al-Faakihee, Ishaq ibn Raahooyah, al-Azraquee, and al-Khattaabee all narrated through him – that Asmaa’ bint ‘Umays said: a man from the *Muhaajireen* came to Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq ؓ while he was ill and said, “You appointed ‘Umar as *Khaleefah* over us and he has dealt with us harshly prior to being in authority. Once he has full authority over us he would be even harsher. What will you say to Allaah when you meet Him?” Aboo Bakr said, “Sit me up,” so they sat him up and he then said, “Is there anything you can frighten me with other than Allaah ﷻ? I will certainly say to Him when I meet Him: I appointed over them the best of Your people.” Ma’mar said, “I asked az-Zuhree what does his statement ‘the best of Your people’ mean?” He replied, “The best of the people of Makkah.” Its chain of narration is *sahheeh*.

Referring to them as the people of Allaah is holding them in high esteem and honoring them. Al-Khattaabee explained the statement of Aboo Bakr “I have appointed over them the best of Your people” to mean the best of the *Muhaajireen*. They used to call the people of Makkah “people of Allaah” as a form of honoring them. Other expressions of a similar nature are “the house of Allaah,” and also as has been narrated, “Indeed, there are people of Allaah, and they are the carriers of the Qur’aan.”⁸ The hadeeth mentioned by al-Khattaabee – “Indeed, there are people of Allaah...” – is *sahheeh* and collected by Ahmad, ibn Maajah, and ad-Daarimee with a *sahheeh* chain from Anas ؓ who said that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said, “Indeed, there are people of Allaah among mankind.” They asked, “Who are they, Messenger of Allaah?” He replied, “The people of the Qur’aan; they are the people of Allaah and His chosen ones.”⁹

⁸ *Ghareeb al-Hadeeth* (2/38).

⁹ *Musnad Ahmad* (1/127,128,143), *Sunan ibn Maajah* (1/78), *Sunan ad-Daarimee* (2/422).