

THE MUSK OF MADINAH MUNAWWARAH

By

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There are thousands of minute air vents in the Green Dome - the most attractive feature of Masjid al-Nabawi, beneath which the Best of Creation, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

) is entombed. From here, an invisible spray of an indescribable type of heavenly musk is being constantly showered upon the worshippers seated in Masjid an-Nabawi and upon those residing in the Illuminated City. This musk immediately puts you into a serene and tranquil mode, almost as if you were in a therapeutic spa. Aggressive people mysteriously become calm, edgy and restless people become confident, the weak and sickly suddenly become energetic and the lazy suddenly have an urge to exert themselves in prayers. Madinah brings out the best in you.

Those visitors who did not experience this feeling probably landed up in Manhattan, instead of Madinah. Those who did not return home with some of this "musk" probably frequented the Taiba Centre more than the blessed sanctuary (*raudah mubaarak*). Why shouldn't there be musk when the piece of earth directly touching the noble body of the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

) is more virtuous than even the Throne of the Almighty? Tradition tells us that the place between his (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

)'s resting place and his pulpit is from the gardens of Paradise. Thus, there is Paradise in Madinah, but there will be no Madinah in Paradise. Ultra-Prime property, which even kings and billionaires cannot buy or reserve, is a 5-minute respite in this place, marked by greenish carpets, called the

Raudatul Jannah

. This was the place most frequently stepped upon by the Leader of the Prophets (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

), upon whose body not a fly sat, whose sight was as sharp at night as in the day, who would be sheltered by clouds wherever he walked, for whom the tree stump upon which he (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

) took support, wept when being replaced by a pulpit, to whom animals complained of the

abuse of their owners, and whose body always emitted a fragrance of amber and musk which a passerby could smell for days thereafter.

It is this unexplainable feeling of peace and serenity, of finding a shoulder to lean on, of refreshing one's physical and spiritual self, that millions worldwide will make a trip to the Illuminated City, year after year. Madinah played host to Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) 1400 years ago, and today it still plays host to Muslims worldwide. Wherever you stay – in a five star hotel or in a modest apartment, - whatever you eat, and wherever you go in the Illuminated City, you are a guest of the Best of Creation.

Cost of the Trip

If anyone is in doubt on whether to make bookings for this holy trip due to the price, here are two reasons why a trip to Madinah is a super bargain, even if it costs R100 trillion. Firstly, every prayer in Masjid al-Nabawi is multiplied by 50 000. So if you stayed for eight days in the Illuminated City and performed 40 prayers, then this is equal to 2 million prayers. If a single return trip to your local Masjid would cost you R15-, this alone would amount to 30 million rands.

Secondly, Muslims visit Madinah to convey their greetings and salutations directly to the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*). It is the belief of every Muslim that the soul of the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) is physically returned to his noble body whenever an angel delivers their salutations to him from any far off land, or it is presented directly before him, without the medium of an angel. Every time we convey our greetings within earshot of his noble resting place, he (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) recognises our voice and replies to us. This is a physical meeting separated by only a wall, not a symbolic one. It is like conveying a gift to a beloved via a representative, or bringing it personally. The two can never be the same. Many of us cannot hear the answer just as we cannot hear the answer of the Almighty to our prayers, but some pious people were given the privilege of audibly hearing the answer of the Prophet (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*), in his own voice, from within the sanctuary. For the more elect, the blessed hand miraculously emerged to be greeted and kissed, which the people around witnessed.

Visiting the blessed mausoleum after the death of the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) is like visiting the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) in his lifetime. It is an act of supreme loyalty and allegiance to the unseen Prophet with whom we have an unbreakable bond. Do we only speak over the telephone to our long-time overseas friends, or do we also yearn to meet them in person? Understand your visit to the Illuminated City in this light, and no other way. The Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) is so appreciative of this visit that he has promised us his intercession and a drink from the Pond of Kauthar from his own blessed hands on the day of Judgement, in return for this visit. In fact, the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) has promised us that if anyone visited him after his demise with the sole reason of visiting him - not for shopping, holidaying or socialising, - then such person will have a right to approach him on the Day of Judgement and request for his intercession. Can any amount of money buy such a privilege, which translates in to a visa to Paradise itself? Never. So never calculate this trip in terms of human currency.

Let no one fool you in to believing that the intercession of the Best of Creations (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) as akin to *Shirk* (associating partners with the Almighty). Our concept of Intercession is not like the Christian concept of Atonement. Intercession is not a licence for anyone to sin at will and wish for salvation through intercession. Everyone is still answerable for their actions, but our repentance alone cannot cool the wrath of the Almighty and open the doors of Paradise for all. This needs a special intermediary who holds an elevated status in the eyes of the Almighty. All power lies only with the Almighty, and all our prayers are addressed solely to Him. If any right of intercession is to be granted to anyone at all, it will only happen through the permission of the Almighty.

Purpose of the Trip

A trip to Madinah is not only like making reservations for Paradise itself, but to reserve our place next to the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) himself therein. It's a noble journey, but this purpose is sometimes not realised by its visitors, and nor by some of those living in the City. I say this in all humility because in my recent trip to this extraordinary place, I seen beggars outside the Masjid al-Nabawi, when the limitless treasury of the Almighty was just a few meters away. I seen people anxious to stuff their luggage with as much Abayas as

possible in order to sell back home, when this trip can not be measured in terms of rands. I've smelt the fragrance of the blood of the martyrs at 'Uhud, and also the stench of the taxis who rip off their passengers. I've seen the grandeur of the buildings around the Masjid al-Nabawi, and the poverty and slums hidden within it. I've seen people fill up their plates like Table Mountain at the breakfast buffet, when children are dying of hunger in Syria. I've seen people approach the noble sanctuary of the Best of Creation (

Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam

) with utmost reverence, and also the attitude of those who think such people are idiots. I've felt the warmth and the hospitality of the Madinites, and the bitterness of the racism practiced by some Arabs. I've seen the look of yearning on the faces of many who visit

Jannatul Baqi

(The cemetery of Madinah) to be buried therein, and also the attachment of those whose purpose in life is only to shop till they drop. I've seen people saving up money for years upon years just to smell the air of Madinah, and agents who will promise them the Hilton, but give them the Dumpton instead. I've also seen sincere agents who offer a good deal, and visitors who think that they bought the hotel itself. They will rip open the carpets, steal the hand shower and make the agent beg for his money many years after the trip itself. Sadly, I've also heard the sighs of those who are so poor that they have no hope whatsoever of visiting this City, and those who visit the City four times a year simply to boast of their travels.

Madinah is becoming modernised day by day, but let not the sincere be discouraged. The Illuminated City can be modernised as much as it wants to, but our love and reverence for the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) will never diminish; the Hajj and Umrah packages can be exorbitant, but our salutations are still taken free of charge from anywhere in the world directly to the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*

); the icy wind at the time of Tahajjud can chill our bones, but the hospitality of those offering iftaar in Masjid an-Nabawi at the time of Maghrib will warm any heart; the Persian rugs may wear out in the Masjid, but never the quality of our prayers; the landmarks of Islam can be bulldozed and sealed off in the City, but never will it check the progress of Islam; Jannatul Baqi can be closed most of the time, but our rewards will still reach the deceased; the Arabic language can be corrupted, but never will the Qur'an and Sunnah be altered; and lastly, the kurtahs and abayahs can become as fashionable and fancy as possible, but it will never alter the piety in our hearts.

Madinah makes the dream of Islam triumphing over the entire world once again, possible.

Lastly, just as you become comfortable in Madinah Munawwarah, you will have to leave it. This parting is always an emotional and heartbreaking one. It is as if we are leaving a living person behind who played an excellent host for our duration in his City. However, we have

three ways in which we can always have a link with the Best of Creation (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*) wherever we are. This is certainly not by the new jewellery or exotic perfumes we bring back, but: 1) Emulating his noble example in our life and spreading Islam; 2) By reciting a minimum of 100 *salawaat* upon him daily; and 3) By always having the delicious dates of Madinah (my favourite is *ajwah* and *mabroom*) for which our Prophet (*Sallallahu 'Alaihi*