

Al Madinah Al Munawwarah-The Enlightened City

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Madinah Munawwarah (“the enlightened city”) is the second holiest place in Islam after Makkah since there is Masjid Al Nabwi-the Prophet’s (ﷺ) (PBUH) Mosque.

*“Records indicate that **Al Madinah Al Munawwarah**, one of the world’s ancient cities, was built by the 5th generation of the descendants of Prophet Noah (PBUH) when they were looking for a home to settle in. During their search, they found a prairie surrounded by mountains, and decided to build a village there, and call it after their leader “Yathrib”.*

Yathrib was unknown for long ages (future archaeological discoveries might tell us more about this period) until its name appeared in the Minaean, Assyrian and Greek inscriptions that date back to a score of centuries before the Hijra (the emigration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Makkah to Al Madinah).

Those inscriptions and scriptures reveal that Yathrib was a station on the route between the Levant and Yemen, and that its people lived peacefully away from the bloody wars between the big kingdoms, under the sovereignty of the Hejaz kingdom, providing a safe place for caravans.”[Reference 1]

The city of Madinah was originally known as Yathrib, an oasis city dating as far back as the 6th century BCE. During the war between Jews and Romans in the third century CE, many Jews fled Jerusalem and migrated to their ancestral place of Yathrib (present Madinah). Nero sent a massive Roman force under Petra Lenidas to Madinah to massacre the Jews in 213 CE. A community survived and by the time the Prophet (ﷺ) had migrated there was a large Jewish presence around the city. [Reference 2]

It is known that there were Jewish settlers there in pre-Christian times. But the main influx of Jews would seem to have taken place as the result of their expulsion from Palestine by the Roman emperor Hadrian about 135 ce. It is probable that the Arab tribes of Aws and Khazraj were then in occupation of the oasis, but the Jews were the dominant factor in the population and development of the area by 400 ce. In that year Abi-kariba As’ad, the Sabaean king of Yemen, visited the colony and imbibed the lore and teaching of the Jewish rabbis with the result that he adopted the religion of the Jews and made it the state religion of Yemen on his return, in supersession of the local paganism. The Yemeni Jews, who in 1949 emigrated to Israel, are mostly descendants of the Arabs then converted. [Reference 3]

Merits of Madinah

- “Narrated Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) returned from a journey and observed the walls of Madinah, he would make his mount go fast, and if he was on an animal (i.e. a horse), he would make it gallop because of his love for Madinah [Bukhari]. The Prophet (ﷺ): *“For the believer, Madinah is the best place. If only they could understand it’s virtue fully, they would never leave it, and whoever departs from Madinah, having become disenchanted with it, Allah will send someone better to replace him. And whoever bears patiently the ordeals of Madinah, for him shall I be an intercessor(or witness) on the Day of Qiyamah.”* [Muslim]
- It is narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): When we came to Madinah, it was an unhealthy, uncongenial place. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) fell sick and Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) also fell sick; and when Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saw the illness of his Companions he said: *“O Allah, make Madinah as beloved to us as you made Makkah beloved or more than that; make it conducive to health, and bless us in its sa’ and mudd’ (two standards of weight and measurement) and transfer its fever to Juhfa.”* [Bukhari]
- It is stated in another hadith: *“There will be no town which Ad-Dajjal (the anti-Christ) will not enter except Makkah and Madinah, and there will be no entrance (road) but the angels will be standing in rows guarding it against him, and then Madinah will shake with its inhabitants thrice and Allah will expel all the nonbelievers and the hypocrites from it.”* [Bukhari]
- Narrated Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“Verily, Belief returns and goes back to Madinah as a snake returns and goes back to its hole (when in danger).”* [Bukhari]”

[Reference 2]

The First Inhabitants of Yathrib

[Reference 4]

The first inhabitants of Yathrib were from three large tribes and they were:

(a)The Amalekites:[The word Amalekite is derived from the Arabic word 'Amaliqah , which means giants.]

And it was they who founded Yathrib, according to the most authoritative narrations; and the tribe of 'Ubail – from which came Yathrib, after whom the city was named – belonged to the Amalekites. And it is obvious from their name that they were distinguished by their great height.¹

And they were from the descendants of 'Amliq bin Laud bin Shem bin Noah. They were in the area of Babylon and then they spread to different areas throughout the Arabian Gulf and some of them took up residence in the place known as Yathrib. And there is no doubt that they were Arabs. Imam At-Tabari considered their ancestor 'Amliq to be the first person to speak Arabic.

(b) The Jews:

When the Muslims migrated to Yathrib, they found there a number of Jewish tribes; and there is agreement that most of the Jews of Yathrib were the descendants of emigrants who came from Palestine. Some of them came as migrants after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Kingdom of Judea and killed many of the Jews and enslaved many of them; this took place 586 years before the start of the Christian Era (CE) (known by the Christians as BC). Likewise, other migrations took place when the Romans made an example of them in the year 70 CE, and again in the year 132 CE. And some of these migrants made their home in the area of Yathrib. And the first of the tribes which reached the area of Yathrib were Banu Quraizah and Banu An-Nadir, then other tribes followed them.

(c) Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj:

They are two Qahtani tribes which migrated to Yathrib from Yemen after the destruction of Sada Ma'arib. And the settling of these two tribes in Yathrib had a great effect upon its history. According to the most reliable reports, the two tribes arrived in Al-Madinah in the third century of the Christian Era or Common Era

The Names of Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

[Reference 4]

The City of Allâh's Messenger (ﷺ) is known by many names and the large number of names are evidence of its greatness; and its names include:

1.. Al-Madinah: *This is the name given to the famous city to which the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated and in which he was buried.*

2.. Tabah: *Al-Madinah is known as Tabah, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said”*

”Verily, Allâh the Almighty, the All-Powerful named it Tabah.”

And Tabah and Taibah are derived from At-Tayyib. [At-Tayyib: That which is good and pure – and that is because it is purified from Shirk , and every pure thing is Tayyib.]

3..Yathrib: *This was its first name and we have said that it was so named after the name of the man who founded it. And Allâh's Messenger(ﷺ) changed the old name to Al-Madinah. And it is possible that the Messenger(ﷺ) changed the name of Yathrib because the word Yathrib in Arabic language means blame, and it also means to corrupt and to adulterate. And it is reported in the Sahihain[The authentic collections of Ahadith compiled by Al Bukhari and Muslim.] from the Hadith of Abu Musa , from the Prophet (ﷺ), who said:*

"I saw in a dream that I was migrating from Makkah to a land of palmtrees and I guessed that it would be Yamamah or Hajar, but it was the city of Yathrib." [Al-Bukhari (3622) and Muslim (2272).]

And Abu 'Ubaidah said: "Yathrib is the name of a Land and the City of the Messenger(ﷺ) is in one corner of it." And it is mentioned in Mu'jamul-Buldan by Yaqut Al-Hamawi: "This city has twenty-nine names and they are: Al-Madinah, Taibah, Tabah, Al-Miskinah, Al-'Adhra', Al-Jabirah, Al-Mahabbah, Al-Muhabbabah, Al-Mahburah, Yathrib, An-Najiyah, Al-Mufiyah, Akkalatul-Buldan, Al-Mubarakah, Al-Mahfufah, Al-Musallamah, Al-Mijannah, Al-Qudsiyah, Al-'Asimah, Al-Marzuqah, Ash-Shafiyah, Al-Hirah, Al-Mahbubah, Al-Marhumah, Jabirah, Al-Mukhtarah, Al-Muharramah, Al-Qasimah, Tababa."

And it was reported in the words of the Prophet(ﷺ) (quoting the Words of Allâh the Most High):

"My Lord! Let my entry (to the city) be good, and (likewise) my exit (from the city) be good." [Al-Isra'17:80]

They said: "(The cities of) Al-Madinah and Makkah." [At-Tirmidhi (3139) and Ahmad (223/1)]

The arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ)

"Arab historical sources indicate that Yathrib later became home to individuals and tribes from the Arab Peninsula, Palestine and Yemen. They together with the Yathribis (people of Yathrib) formed a multiracial and a multi-religious society, and co-existed peacefully before a struggle for power was provoked by the despotic Jewish leader of the al-Fityawn of Banu Thaalaba who was later killed by Malik bin Ajlan of the Banu Khazraj. After killing al-Fityawn Jew leader, Malik bin Ajlan sought the help of his kin, the Ghassanids of the Levant and the Himyarite Kingdom in Yemen, to defeat the Jews.

Not long after that, strife between the two sisterly tribes Al Aws and Al Khazraj erupted. This strife, which was provoked by the Jews, caused intermittent wars over 6 decades, during which many lives were lost. The last of these wars was "Baath", which took place 5 years before the Prophet's journey from Mecca to Medina. When the wise people of the two tribes realized the expensive cost of the war they decided to call a halt to it and look for someone to bring about peace, justice and concord to Yathrib.

At that time, the Prophet (PBUH) was being distressed by the polytheists of Quraysh. During the time of pilgrimage, he would go to Minah to invite the delegations of tribes to enter Islam. In the

11th year of his prophethood, he met 6 pilgrims from Yathrib, and invited them to enter Islam. Not only did they accept his invitation, but they also reported it to their fellow Yathribis.

In the following year, he met 12 people from Yathrib, who pledged allegiance to him. A year later, he met 75 people, whom pledged allegiance to him and invited him and the other Muslims to emigrate to Yathrib.

Indeed, the Prophet's hijrah (emigration) to Yathrib marked the beginning of a golden era in the holy city's history. Following the emigration, the name of the city was changed, Islam was propagated in it, wars ended, and its people were called the Ansar (the Supporters). Though the city was a site for two major battles, "Uhud" and "Ahzab", it soon evolved into a center for preaching the word of Allah and a destination for delegations from around the Arab Peninsula coming to it to give a pledge of allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH)." [Reference 1]

"When the Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) and his followers faced persecution in Makkah, they were offered refuge by the main tribes of Yathrib. In an event known as the Hijrah (Migration), the Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) and his Companions left Makkah and traveled to Yathrib in 622 CE.. So significant was this migration that the Islamic calendar begins counting time from the year of the Hijrah." [Reference 5]

"Muhammad (ﷺ) was well acquainted with the situation in Medina. Earlier, before the Hijrah, the city had sent envoys to Mecca asking Muhammad (ﷺ) to mediate a dispute between two powerful tribes. What the envoys saw and heard had impressed them and they had invited Muhammad (ﷺ) to settle in Medina." [Reference 6]

Arrival in Madinah

"On Monday, 8th Rabi' Al-Awwal, the fourteenth year of Prophethood, i.e. September 23rd. 622, the Messenger of Allâh arrived at Quba'." [Rahmat-al-lil'alameen 1/102]

As soon as the news of Muhammad's arrival began to spread, crowds came flocking out of Madinah . They would come every morning and wait eagerly for his appearance until forced by the unbearable heat of the midday sun to return. One day they had gone as usual, and after a long wait and watch they retired to the city when a Jew, catching a glimpse of three travellers clad in white winding their way to Madinah , shouted from the top of a hillock: "O you people of Arabia! Your grandfather has come! He, whom you have been eagerly waiting for, has come!" The Muslims immediately rushed holding their weapons, (to defend him)[Bukhari 1/555]

. The joyful news soon spread through the city and people marched forward to greet their noble guest. Ibn Al-Qayyim said: "The shouts of 'Allâhu Akbar' (Allâh is Great) resounded in Banu 'Amr bin 'Auf. Muhammad's [pbuh] elation correspondingly increased, but with rare sense of timing and propriety, called a halt. Serenity enveloped him and the ñevelation was sent down:[Za'd Al-Ma'ad 2/54]

"... then verily, Allâh is his Maula (Lord, Master or Protector), and Gabriel, and the righteous among the believers, - and furthermore, the angels – are his helpers." [Al-Qur'an 66:4][Za'd Al-Ma'ad 2/54; Ibn Hisham 1/493]

'Urwah bin Az-Zubair said: They received the Messenger of Allâh [pbuh] , and went with them to the right. There Banu 'Amr bin 'Awf hosted him. That was on Monday, Rabi' Al-Awwal. He sat down silent, and Al-Ansar (the Helpers), who had not had the opportunity to see him before, came in to greet him: It is said that the sun became too hot so Abu Bakr stood up to shade him from the hot sun rays.[Bukhari 1/555] It was really an unprecedented day in Madinah . The Jews could perceive concretely the veracity of their Prophet Habquq, who said: 'God has come from At-Taiman, and the Qudus one from Faran Mount.

Muhammad [pbuh] stayed in Quba' with Kulthum bin Al-Hadm, a hospitable chief of the tribe of 'Amr bin 'Awf. Here he spent four days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday . It was during this period that the foundation of Quba' Mosque was laid on the basis of pure piety. 'Ali hung back in Makkah for three days to return the trusts, on behalf of the Prophet [pbuh], to their respective owners. After that he started his emigration journey to catch up with him at Quba'. [Za'd Al-Ma'ad 2/54; Ibn Hisham 1/493]

On Friday morning, the Prophet [pbuh], sent for Bani An-Najjar, his maternal uncles, to come and escort him and Abu Bakr to Madinah . He rode towards the new headquarters amidst the cordial greetings of his Madinese followers who had lined his path. He halted at a place in the vale of Banu Salim and there he performed his Friday prayer with a hundred others [Bukhari 1/555] . Meanwhile the tribes and families of Madinah , the new name for Yathrib and a short form of 'The Messenger's Madinah (City)', came streaming forth, and vied with one another in inviting the noble visitor to their homes. The girls of the Madinese used to chant beautiful verses of welcome rich in all meanings of obedience and dutifulness to the new Messenger.

Though not wealthy, every Ansar (Helper) was wholeheartedly eager and anxious to receive the Messenger in his house. It was indeed a triumphal procession. Around the camel of Muhammad [pbuh] and his immediate followers, rode the chiefs of the city in their best raiment and in glittering armour, everyone saying: "Alight here O Messenger of Allâh, abide by us."

Muhammad [pbuh] used to answer everyone courteously and kindly: "This camel is commanded by Allâh, wherever it stops, that will be my abode."

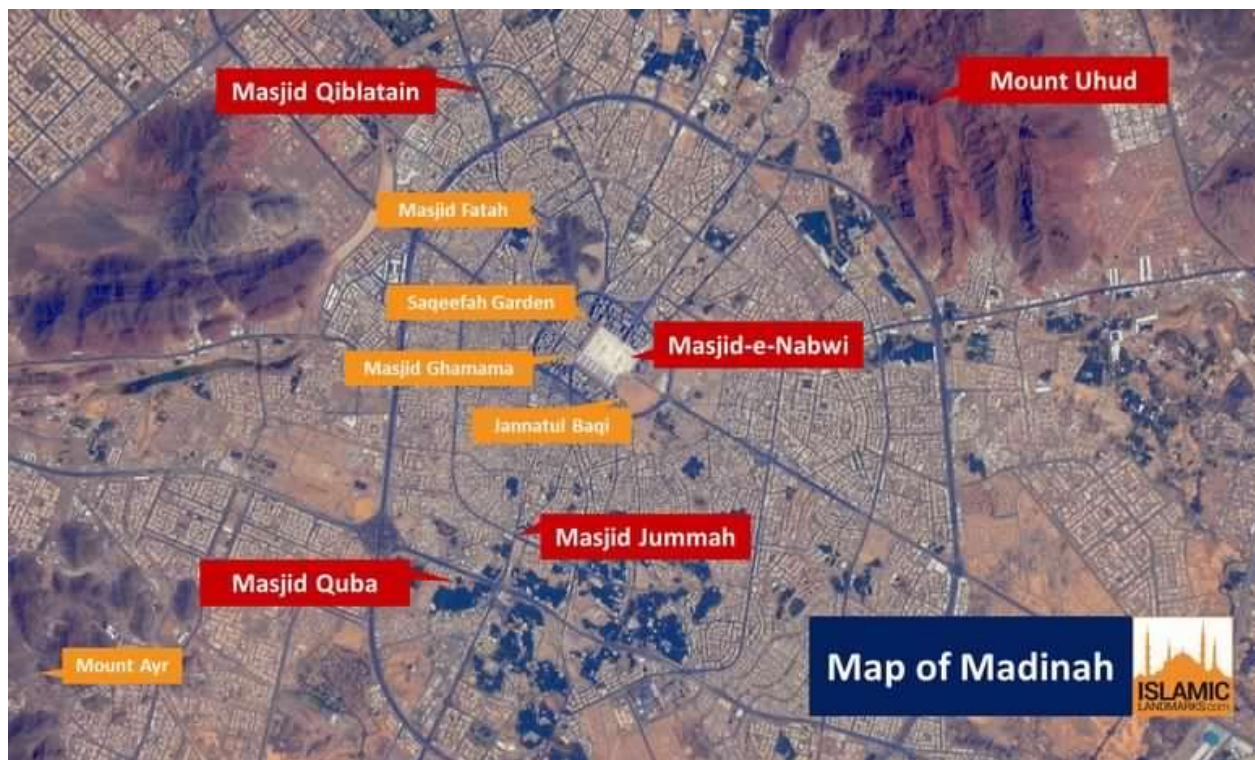
The camel moved onward with slackened rein, reached the site of the Prophetic Mosque and knelt down. He did not dismount until it rose up again, went on forward, turned back and then returned to kneel down in the very former spot. Here, he alighted in a quarter inhabited by **Banu Najjar, a tribe related to the Prophet [pbuh] from the maternal side.** In fact, it was his wish to honour his maternal uncles and live among them. The fortunate host, Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari, stepped forward with unbounded joy for the Divine blessing appropriated to him, welcomed the Noble Guest and solicited him to enter his house. [Za'd Al-Ma'ad 2/55]" [Reference 7]

When individuals from the family has were soliciting him to enter their houses, a certain Abu Ayyoub stepped forward to his saddle and took it into his house. The Prophet said:

"A man goes with his saddle." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)]"[Reference 8]

“The city of Madinah was not unfamiliar to the Prophet (ﷺ) when he emigrated there. His father Abdullah was buried there and when he was six years old he had travelled with his mother Aminah and their devoted slave girl Barakah (later to be known as Umme Ayman). In later life he recounted how he had learned to swim in a pool which belonged to his kinsmen with whom they had stayed, and how the boys taught him to fly a kite. However, not long after they had set out for the return journey his mother fell very ill, and died a few days later at Abwa, not far from Yathrib where she was buried. Barakah did what she could to console the boy, now doubly an orphan and brought him back to Makkah.” [Reference 2]

- About a year before the migration, the Prophet (ﷺ) had dispatched Mus’ab bin Umair (may Allah be pleased with him) on a mission to propagate Islam (Tableegh) to the people of Madinah. Many of the Ansar became Muslims at his hands.” [Reference 3]



Location of Madinah

Madinah is 210 miles (340 km) north of Makkah. At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), Madinah was approximately the size of the present masjid and the surrounding white tiled area. [Reference 2]

Medina lies 2,050 feet (625 metres) above sea level on a fertile oasis. It is bounded on the east by an extensive lava field, part of which dates from a volcanic eruption in 1207 CE. On the other three sides, the city is enclosed by arid hills belonging to the Hejaz mountain range. The highest of these hills is Mount Uḥud, which rises to more than 2,000 feet above the oasis.. [Reference 3]

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