

115693 - “The area between my house and my minbar is one of the gardens of Paradise”

the question

It was narrated from the noble Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: “The area between my grave and my minbar is one of the gardens of Paradise.” Al-Mu’jam al-Awsat by at-Tabaraani (vol. 2, p. 120). What is the meaning of this phrase? Is it, I wonder, that if a visitor merely sits in the Prophet’s mosque between his grave and the prayer hall or the minbar, he will enter one of the gardens of Paradise? Why is this garden limited to this short distance between the minbar and the grave only? In other words, why does this garden not include all of the Prophet’s Mosque? The entire mosque is regarded as noble and holy, in fact the entire city, is blessed because of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) migrating there, and because he settled and lived there. May Allah reward you with all good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

This hadeeth is one of the mutawaatir hadeeths that were narrated via many chains of narration, such as the report narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: “The area between my house and my minbar is one of the gardens of Paradise.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1196) and Muslim (1391).

With regard to the phrase “The area between my grave and my minbar”, this is mentioned in the report of Ibn ‘Asaakir that is attributed to al-Bukhaari, or the version of Saheeh al-Bukhaari

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transmitted by Ibn 'Asaakir, and some of the scholars – such as Imam an-Nawawi – continued to quote this version of the hadeeth. Rather, al-Bukhaari himself, when he narrated the hadeeth in the chapter entitled Kitaab Fadl as-Salaah fi Masjid Makkah wa al-Madinah (The virtue of prayer in the mosques of Makkah and Madinah), with the wording “my house and my minbar”, included it under a section heading “Fadl ma bayna al-qabr wa'l-minbar (Virtue of the area between the grave and the minbar)”. Moreover this wording is mentioned in some other hadeeths.

However, the scholars classed the wording “my grave” as da'eef (weak), for two reasons:

1. It is contrary to the report of the majority of narrators, hence it seems most likely that those who said “my grave” were narrating the meaning but not the wording.
2. If this wording were correct, the Sahaabah would have known where to bury the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and they would not have disputed concerning it, or at least some of them would have quoted this as evidence for choosing that spot. But we have no report to indicate that such a thing happened. This indicates that the word “my grave” is an error on the part of some of the narrators of the hadeeth.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is that he said: “The area between my house and my minbar is one of the gardens of Paradise.” This is what is proven in as-Saheeh, but some of them narrated the meaning and said “my grave” (instead of “my house”).

When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said these words, he had not yet been buried. Therefore none of the Sahaabah quoted this as evidence when they disputed as to where he should be buried. If they had known that, then this would have served as proof to settle the dispute. End quote.

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Majmoo' al-Fataawa (1/236)

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The chapter heading mentions the grave, but the two hadeeths mention the house, because the grave was dug inside the house; in versions of the hadeeth the word "grave" is mentioned. Al-Qurtubi said: The saheeh report mentions "my house"; in the case of those reports which mention "my grave", it is as if what is being narrated is the meaning, because he was buried in the house where he had dwelt. End quote.

Fath al-Baari (3/70)

He also (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words "The area between my house and my minbar" appear as such in the majority of reports. In the report of Ibn 'Asaakir alone it says "my grave" instead of "my house", which is an error. This hadeeth appears earlier in Kitaab as-Salaah, just before (the chapter on) funerals with this isnaad, saying "my house." It also appears thus in Musnad Musaddad, the book of the shaykh of al-Bukhaari.

Yes, in the hadeeth of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas that is narrated in (the book of) al-Bazaar, with an isnaad whose men are thiqaat (trustworthy), and it narrated by at-Tabaraani from the hadeeth of Ibn 'Umar, it mentions the grave. Based on that, what is meant by the house in the phrase "my house" is one of his houses, not all of them, meaning the house of 'Aa'ishah in which his grave is. The hadeeth was also narrated in the words "The area between the minbar and the house of 'Aa'ishah is one of the gardens of Paradise." Narrated by at-Tabaraani in al-Awsat. End quote.

Fath al-Baari (4/100)

Secondly:

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With regard to the meaning of this hadeeth, the scholars noted three points:

1. This place is likened to one of the gardens of Paradise in that the one who sits there attains tranquillity and peace.
2. Worship in this place is a means of attaining admittance to Paradise. This view was favoured by Ibn Hazm in al-Muhalla (7/284). It was narrated by Ibn Taymiyah from Imam Ahmad that he preferred to pray in the Rawdah.
3. The area between the minbar and the house of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) will itself be one of the gardens of Paradise in the Hereafter.

Al-Qaadi 'Iyaad (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words "one of the gardens of Paradise" may be understood in two ways:

1. That worshipping there will be rewarded with Paradise, and that du'aa' (supplication) and prayer in this place deserve that reward, as it is also said that Paradise lies in the shade of the swords.
2. That Allah will move that spot and it will actually be part of Paradise. This was the view of ad-Dawoodi. End quote.

Ash-Shifa (2/92)

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Some said that what is meant is that this spot will be taken up on the Day of Resurrection and will become a garden in Paradise.

Others said that this is by way of a metaphor. It is as if they mean that when he (the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) sat there and the people sat with him to learn the

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Qur'an and matters of faith and religion, that spot became like a garden, because of the noble harvest of knowledge that they attained there, and it was connected to Paradise because these things lead to Paradise. That is similar to what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Paradise lies in the shade of the swords" meaning that it (jihad) is an action that leads to Paradise. And it is similar to the idea that the mother is one of the gates of Paradise, meaning that honouring her will lead the Muslim to Paradise if he fulfils the obligatory duties. This is possible and is in accordance with Arabic usage. And Allah knows best what he meant by that. End quote.

At-Tamheed (2/287)

Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

They mentioned two views as to its meaning:

1. That that place itself will be moved to Paradise
2. That worship in that place leads to Paradise.

At-Tabari said: With regard to what is meant by "my house" here, there are two views: one view is that it refers to the grave, which was the view of Zayd ibn Aslam, as was narrated in a version that explained what was meant by "my house", "between my grave and my minbar"; the second view is that what is meant is the house in which he dwelt, as is the apparent meaning.

Another version says "between my chamber and my minbar".

At-Tabari said: The two views are close in meaning, because his grave in his apartment, which is his house. End quote.

Sharh Muslim (9/161-162)

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Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words “one of the gardens of Paradise” mean: it is like one of the gardens of Paradise with regard to the descent of mercy and attainment of tranquillity that results from attending gatherings of dhikr, especially at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). So it is likening it to a garden of Paradise.

Or it may mean that worship in that place leads to Paradise, so it is a metaphor.

Or it may be taken as it appears to mean, and that what is meant is that it is indeed a garden in a real sense, and that that place will itself be moved in the Hereafter to Paradise.

This is a summary of the ways in which the scholars interpreted this hadeeth, and they are given in order of strength. End quote.

Fath al-Baari (4/100)

To sum up:

That place has an evident virtue, which dictates that the Muslim should be keen to sit in that place and pray there. However what matters more is to fear Allah, may He be exalted, for that is the means of entering Paradise, not merely sitting in the Rawdah or any other place.

As it is a matter of worship, we cannot explain the reason why this place has been singled out and not others. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, singles out whatever He will of times, places and individuals for particular virtues, and there is great divine wisdom in that, of which we may be unaware.

And Allah knows best.