

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

265697 - There are saheeh reports about the virtues of Bilaad ash-Shaam (Greater Syria), so why are there so many people in that region who are far away from any religious commitment?

the question

my doubt is regarding the hadith where it says that as-sham (present day jordan, syria, lebanon & palestine) is the most blessed land of Allah.. but as far as i know, there is only corruption and evil in all of these countries.. can you please clarify this for me? Also, most of the people in these countries are not that religious. Please correct me if i'm wrong

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There is a great deal of sound evidence concerning the virtues of ash-Shaam (Greater Syria) in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, such as the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing”

[al-Israa' 17:1].

Imam at-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

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“whose surroundings We have blessed” here, Allah, may He be exalted, is saying: of which We have made the surrounding area blessed for its inhabitants in their livelihoods, food, tilling and planting. End quote. Tafseer at-Tabari (14/448).

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “O Allah, bless for us our Shaam; O Allah, bless for us our Yemen.”

They said: O Messenger of Allah, and our Najd?

He said: “O Allah, bless for us our Shaam; O Allah, bless for us our Yemen.”

They said: O Messenger of Allah, and our Najd?

I think he said the third time: “That is the place of earthquakes and tribulations, and from it the side of the Shaytaan’s head rises.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7094).

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It should be understood that the blessing in ash-Shaam includes blessing in both religious and worldly matters. Hence the land is called holy.

End quote from Majmoo‘ah Rasaa’il Ibn Rajab (3/224).

This is something obvious, for Bilaad ash-Shaam is one of the best lands in terms of provision.

Secondly:

There are also reports which indicate that faith and goodness are greater in ash-Shaam than in other lands.

It was narrated that Abu’d-Dardaa’ said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whilst I was sleeping, I saw the pillar of the Book being taken from beneath my

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head, and I thought that it was being taken away, so I followed it with my gaze, and it was taken to ash-Shaam. Verily faith, when tribulations come, will be in ash-Shaam.”

Narrated by Imam Ahmad in al-Musnad (36/62); classed as saheeh by the commentators on al-Musnad. It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Takhreej Ahaadeeth Fadaa'il ash-Shaam wa Dimashq (p. 13)

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

The pillar of the book and Islam – this refers to something that acts as a support; what is referred to here is those who learn the Qur'an and adhere to it]

This is similar to the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): “The heartland of the believers is ash-Shaam.”

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (27/42)

The hadith “The heartland of the believers is ash-Shaam” was narrated by Imam Ahmad and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah (1935).

It was narrated that Ibn Hawaalah said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “This matter will end with you becoming massed troops: troops in ash-Shaam, troops in Yemen, and troops in Iraq.”

Ibn Hawaalah said: Choose for me, O Messenger of Allah, if I should live to see that.

He said: “You should go to ash-Shaam, for it is Allah's chosen land, to which He will gather His chosen slaves. But if you refuse, then go to Yemen and draw water from your ponds, for Allah has promised me that He will take care of ash-Shaam and its people.” Narrated by Abu Daawood (2483). Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Sunan Abi Daawood (2483).

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The reports concerning this support one another.

That does not mean that in some periods religious commitment in this land will not be weak, because the report has to do with time overall. The people of ash-Shaam are still a fortress for Islam and the Muslims, and this land is still good and is still producing bearers of knowledge who act upon it and teach the people about their religion, reviving what has been forgotten or become distorted of religious teachings. In this land and at the hands of its people, the greatest military campaigns of the disbelievers against the land of Islam have been defeated, as happened during the Crusades, and as happened when the Tatars and their evil were prevented from advancing further into Muslim territory. In this land, they were defeated, which led to their decline.

This goodness will remain among them, if Allah wills, until the end of time, until Allah, may He be exalted, destroys the Dajjaal and his followers at their hands, when the Messiah 'Eesaa ibn Maryam comes down and leads the believers in the fight against the Dajjaal.

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

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) highlighted the distinct character of the people of ash-Shaam by noting that they will continue to comply with the commands of Allah until the end of time, and that the victorious group will remain among them until the end of time. This is speaking of an ongoing matter that will remain with them, that they will be numerous and strong.

This description does not apply to anyone in the Muslim world except the people of ash-Shaam... knowledge and faith are still present in that land, and whoever fights in that land to support the faith will be victorious and will be granted divine help.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (4/449).

It was narrated that Abu Umaamah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I said: O Prophet of Allah, what was the beginning of your affair? He said: "The prayer of my father Ibraaheem and the

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glad tidings of 'Eesaa. My mother dreamt that there came out of her light by which the palaces of ash-Shaam were illuminated." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah (1545).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer (1/444): The fact that ash-Shaam is singled out in conjunction with his light indicates that his religion and his teachings will abide in Bilaad ash-Shaam.

Hence at the end of time, ash-Shaam and its people will be a stronghold for Islam, and in that land 'Eesaa ibn Maryam will come down. End quote.

With regard to the lack of religious commitment in some eras, this may happen for some wise purpose that Allah, may He be exalted, wills. But this does not cancel out the general principle.

In some hadiths, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) indicated that the people of ash-Shaam may become corrupt, and if that happens, then its impact will affect the entire ummah.

It was narrated from Mu'aawiyah ibn Qurrah that his father said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "If the people of ash-Shaam become corrupt, then there is no goodness in you, but a group of my ummah will remain victorious, not harmed by those who let them down, until the Hour begins."

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2192). He said: This is a hasan saheeh hadith,

This is what we see confirmed in our own era. From the day when the Zionists gained power over the heart of ash-Shaam, Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) and the surrounding area, and Bilaad ash-Shaam was cut up into small states and its people were the subject of plots, from that time the Muslims have been in a state of weakness.

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We ask Allah to rectify the affairs of the Muslims.

And Allah knows best.