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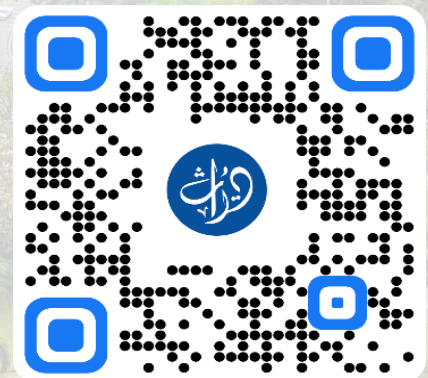
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# The Understandings Of Barakah From The Qur'an: A Study Of Five Of Its Categories

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## Abstract

The Arabic term "*Barakah*" is used to this day amongst Muslims in their different languages as a very popular supplication for prosperity. The term was mentioned in the Qur'an on numerous occasions in different contexts, some referring to a physical dimension while others refer to a spiritual one. This paper sets out to examine the Qur'anic concept of *Barakah* by examining the meaning of *Barakah* within the Qur'anic context. It will explore the different usages of *Barakah* in the Qur'an and the understandings that could be deduced from them through investigating Quranic verses and their exegesis from both classical and modern works of Tafsir. The paper concludes that Barakah in the Quran comes in numerous context and carries many important meanings turning something that seems ordinary into something extraordinary with incredible characteristics. Although Barakah maybe subtle and invisible only some aspects are understood which have been named and identified in the Quranic and Prophetic texts.

**Keywords:** Divine Blessing, Land of Barakah, Prophets, Quran, Ka'bah, Al-Aqsa, Night of al-Qadr



## INTRODUCTION

One of Islam's most popular terms used by Muslims in forms of supplication is the concept of Barakah, where one would pray that God would grant the other Barakah in wealth, family, etc. The word is used in the full form of the Muslim greeting, "*al-Salām 'Alaykum wa-Rahmat Allah wa-Barakātuh*". The root of the word *Barakah* comes in thirty-two verses in many forms (*tabāraka*, *mubārak*, *mubārakah*, *baraknā*, *barakatūh*, *barakāt*, and *bourika*). Its meaning can be approximately translated as divine blessing, but it carries many other meanings that have a sense of continuity such as growth, gain, expansion, comfort and staying put (al-Fayrūzabādī 1991: v.3, 426-427; al-Zubaydī 1994: v.13, 514-515; Ibn Manzūr 1999: v.1 386-387). It is also argued that *Barakah* is the divine goodness placed in a thing and, though this is invisible, its effects are detectable (El-Awaisi 2005:28). When the different meanings of *Barakah* in the Qur'an are explored, this leads to a better understanding of what it means for the different contexts and the dimensions it is used in. As the best way to understand the Qur'an is by looking at other verses that might better explain them, there are certain verses that share the term being investigated, giving a greater insight into their meanings.

In addition to sourcing pertinent Qur'anic verses by adopting a comparative approach, it is important to reflect upon the different exegetical understandings concluded by scholars of Tafsir. Needless to say, it is also relevant to occasionally relate some Prophetic traditions in relations to specific examples.

*Barakah* in the Qur'an comes in two main contexts, the first is the *Barakah* of God and always comes in the specific terminology of *Tabāraka*, and the second is the *Barakah* God gives to His various creations. Not much is known about the first context, although it is mentioned in ten places in the Qur'an; the what and the how are unknown. But it is argued that one of the meanings of the word *Tabāraka* is "to be exalted", and not growth or expansion, because God has no need of this, rather He is the one who grants all *Barakah* (al-Judaī 2000: 29-30). Ibn al-Qayyim adds, after discussing the many arguments on this issue, that the meaning of the word *tabāraka* comes from the fact that Allah is everlasting, full of good, magnificent, and everything that has *Barakah* is from His granting and grace (al-Judaī 2000: 36). Thus Barakah belongs fully to God and whatever he gives Barakah is then Mubarak. The second type of *Barakah*, in contrast, is of great importance as it refers to visible entities. This context can be divided into five categories: the *Barakah* God bestows on a being; object; "point in time"; text or statement; and place. After dividing these into categories the researcher found similar but not identical categorisation of Barakah. These are: the Qur'an; certain individuals, certain mosques, certain times and other (al-Judaī 2000: 41-43). Though these are not merely Qur'anic but address examples from the tradition of Prophet Muhammad. This paper would look into each of these in more detail, in an attempt to giving a better understanding of *Barakah*.

### 1. *Barakah bestowed on a being*

Five verses in the Qur'an refer to *Barakah* bestowed on people. The *Barakah* in these verses refers to named individuals: Prophet Noah and some of his offspring, Prophet Abraham and his family, Prophet Isaac, Prophet Moses and Prophet Jesus. One verse implicitly refers to the angels. These verses are as follows:

1. ...O **Noah**, come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us and **Barakāt** on **you** and on **some of the nations** [who will spring] from those with you... (Qur'an 11:48)
2. ... The Mercy of Allah and His **Barakāt** be upon you, **People of the house [of Abraham]!** ... (Qur'an 11:73)
3. And We bestowed **Barakah** over him (**Abraham**) and **Isaac**... (Qur'an 37:113)
4. But when he [**Moses**] came to the (Fire), a voice called him: "**Bourika** those **in the Fire and those around** (the Angels and Moses)... (Qur'an 27:8)
5. And He has made me [**Jesus**] **Mubarak** wheresoever I be... (Qur'an 19:31)

This *Barakah* as explained by the classical Qur'anic exegetists is primarily grace for the individual. It could also be beneficial for others who come into contact with that individual, by attaining radiations of their *Barakah* in many ways, one of which is by being part of the family of that individual with the condition of following his teachings. For others who are not relatives they can be part of this individual's enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and also part of the supplications of these individuals which are fulfilled (al-Tabarī 1999, v.8: 338-339; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.6(11): 29-30; Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.3: 108) and, in some cases, their miracles. This is in addition to being believers in their message as understood from the first verse, that only nations who believe will have this *Barakah* as is explained by Ibn Kathīr (1997, v.2:385). Also this *Barakah* could mean the Prophets having virtuous offspring, as was the case with the Prophets Noah and Abraham; all the messengers subsequent to them came from their lineage (al-Qurtubī 1998, v.5(9): 44, 64). Furthermore, the *Barakah* of these individuals is that their names live on forever; this is indubitably evident in the Prophets named above.

## 2. *Barakah bestowed on an object*

What is meant by objects here are matters such as water, plants, fruits and so on. This kind of *Barakah* is mentioned three times in the Qur'an:

1. ... a **Tree** that is *Mubarakah*, an **Olive**, neither of the East nor of the West ... (Qur'an 24:35)
2. ... We should indeed have opened out to them (**all kinds of**) *Barakat* from the **sky** and the **earth** (Qur'an 7:96)
3. And We sent down from the sky **water** that is *Mubarak* and We made gardens grow by it and grain for harvesting (Qur'an 50:9)

The first verse refers to a specific tree, the Olive tree, which is considered to be in a location that is neither in the east nor in the west; i.e. in the Holy Land. The *Barakah* is in the tree itself, and the verse refers specifically to the oil that comes forth from the tree (al-Māwardī nd: 24/35). Al-Baghawī adds that the verse refers particularly to Olive trees which grow in the area of al-Sham (historical Syria), which have the benefits of both eastern and western Olive trees. He states that there are other signs of this *Barakah* in the Olive tree, including advantages in curing certain illnesses. In addition, its produce is eaten, and it has other uses such as lighting and used for massaging ~~on~~ the body (al-Baghawī 2002, v.4:116; Ibn 'Atiyah 2001, v.4: 184-5). This is further supported by a saying of the Prophet "eat from the Olive tree and massage with it, as it comes from a blessed tree" (al-Tirmidhī 2000, v.1:486; Ibn Mājah 2000:484). Qutb adds that this is manifested in the ability of the tree to survive for generations and that its *Barakah* lies in the fact that everything in the Olive tree is beneficial – its oil, wood, leaves and its produce. In addition, as the Qur'an mentions, its oil is so special it glows without needing to catch fire (Qutb 1996, v.4:2519-20). In another verse where the Olive is referred to (Qur'an 95:1), it is understood by the majority of exegetists to be a metaphorical reference to Bayt al-Maqdis.

The second verse refers to the *barakāt* of the sky and the earth: the *Barakah* of the sky is the rain and the *Barakah* of the earth is what grows in it (al-Māwardī nd: 7/96; al-Zamakhsharī 1995, v.2:129; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.4:228; al-Baghawī 2002, v.2:302; Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.2: 206). Others include the sun and wind to the *Barakah* from the sky; as for the *Barakah* of the earth, they include animals, cattle, and having peace and security (al-Rāzī 1990, v.7(14):150). Al-Māwardī also adds that the *Barakah* of the sky is the acceptance of people's supplications, and the *Barakah* of the earth is making life easy (Ibn 'Atiyah 2001, v.2: 432). Finally, al-Tha'ālibī concludes that these are only parts of these *barakāt* that we are able to see, but there are many more that only God knows (al-Tha'ālibī nd: 7/96).

As for the third verse, it talks about the water that comes down as rain, which is full of *Barakah*. This *Barakah* lies in the fact that water is beneficial and returns things to life, and that nothing can live without water (Ibn al-Jawzī 1987, v.8:8; al-Baghawī 2002, v.5:132; Ibn Kathīr

1997, v.:189) as in the Qur'an "And We created from water every living thing" (Qur'an 21:30). Furthermore, Ibn 'Ashūr adds that the *Barakah* in the rain water, is in that it helps bring forth very good things such as plants, trees, and so on (Ibn 'Ashūr nd: 50/9).

### 3. *Barakah bestowed on a text or statement*

This kind of *Barakah* is in a text or specific words and it is found in the Qur'an in two contexts. The first is the Muslim greeting, and the second comes with reference to the Qur'an. These verses are:

1. But when you enter the houses, greet one another with the **greeting from Allah, Mubarakah** and pure (Qur'an 24:61)
2. And this is a **Book** which We have sent down, bringing **Barakah**, and confirming what came before it... (Qur'an 6:92)
3. And this is a **Book** which We have revealed as a **Mubarak**... (Qur'an 6:155)
4. And this reminder [the **Qur'an**] laden with **Barakah** which we have sent down. So are you going to deny it (Qur'an 21:50)
5. [Here is] a **Book** which We have sent down unto you, **Mubarak**... (Qur'an 38:29)

The first verse refers to the Muslim greeting *al-Salām 'Alaykum wa-Rahmat Allah wa-Barakātuh* (Peace be upon you, and the Mercy of Allah and **His Barakah**). God identifies this specific greeting to be from Him as *mubārah* and good. This *Barakah* comes in many forms. The first is that, when someone greets another person, he or she is actually praying to God for the good of that person. At the same time, the person starting the greeting gets a reward for saying it and his/her reward is being multiplied many times, especially he or she says it in full (al-Tabarī 1999, v.9:368; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.6:296; al-Zamakhsharī 1995, v.3:251; al-Rāzī 1990, v.12(24):33; al-Baghawī 2002, v.4:127).

As for the second context, this comes in four verses in the Qur'an, and refers directly to the Qur'an. The exegetists argue that the *Barakah* in the Qur'an lies in the fact that it is full of goodness and benefits (al-Zamakhsharī 1995, v.2:42; v.3:118; al-Rāzī 1990, v.7(13):66-7; v.11(22):155; al-Nasaḥī 1996, v.2:34; v.3:124; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.4:130; al-Alūsī 1994, v.4(8):303; al-Jazzā'irī 1998, v.2:144; Ibn al-Jawzī 1987, v.5:365; al-Baghawī 2002, v.4:358). Ibn 'Ashūr and Qutb argue that its *Barakah* lies in the fact that God gave it *Barakah* when it was being revealed, and He put *Barakah* in it wherever it is. This can be manifested in the fact that the number of pages in the Qur'an is small compared to the massive encyclopaedias written by humans, but every verse uses a most excellent combination of words, making the Qur'an easy to read and memorise. Moreover, every verse has guidance, wisdom, signs, and much more, which bigger books lack, since it would be impossible for a human to put so much into a relatively small book, even one double or triple the size of the Qur'an. In addition, its *Barakah* lies in its way of directing its words to all humanity, in a direct and kind way, and covering every small detail (Qutb 1996, v.2:1147; Ibn 'Ashūr nd: 6/155). Al-Rāzī argues along some of the points, saying that every verse in the Qur'an has *Barakah* in it since it either brings glad tidings and commands good, or brings warnings and forbids evil (al-Rāzī 1990, v.7(13):66). Ibn 'Ashūr adds that the *Barakah* of the Qur'an lies in its words, and God blesses the reciter of its words in this life and the hereafter (Ibn 'Ashūr nd: 6/155), since reciting the Qur'an removes sins, cures illnesses, and drives Satan from a house when recited in it (Al-Samarqandī 1997, v.1:486, 513; v.2:429; v.3:158).

Al-Rāzī adds that its *Barakah* is that the text of the Qur'an has remained unchanged unlike other books (al-Rāzī 1990, v.7(14):5; al-Naysabūrī 1996, v.3:190). He also adds, along with other exegetists, that the *Barakah* in the Qur'an is the knowledge which can be divided into two categories: theoretical and practical. The theoretical is the most honourable, as this is knowing Allah's names, attributes, actions, and rulings, and there is no other book that explains this in such a perfect way. As for the practical side, this involves physical and spiritual actions. Also, one *Barakah* in the Qur'an said to have been experienced by al-Rāzī and others, when working in the sciences of the Qur'an, was extreme happiness in their religion and life; they had not experienced this in any other fields of knowledge (al-Rāzī v.7(13):66; al-Naysabūrī 1996, v.3:120;

al-Alūsī 1994, v.4(7): 209,303). Furthermore, al-Biqā'ī says that its *Barakah* lies in the fact no one can deny its miraculous nature (al-Biqā'ī 1995, v.2:673).

Ibn 'Atiyah adds that *Barakah* is a description of what there is in the Qur'an – from the expansion of its good, removing the rulings of *jābiliyyah* (the stage before Islam), uniting the divided Arabs, to the many triumphs that came about because of it (Ibn 'Atiyah 2001, v.2:365; al-Tha'ālibī nd: 6/92). Furthermore, the promises in it will happen as decreed by God without any change (al-Biqā'ī 1995, v.2:747); one of which is inheriting Paradise and being saved from hellfire (Ibn 'Atiyah 2001, v.4:502). Finally, it can be said that the *Barakah* of the Qur'an, from these arguments, is infinite; only a few of its manifestations are known and named, and these can be summarised in that the Qur'an is guidance to all humans, is a cure for believers, and reward is obtained for the recitation of its text. This is in addition to its miraculous nature, both from the linguistic and the scientific point of views.

#### 4. *Barakah* bestowed in a "point in time"

*Barakah* may also be referred to a specific point in time, as is the case in the night in which the Qur'an was revealed:

1. We sent it (the Qur'an) down in a **night of *Barakah*** for We are constantly giving warning. (Qur'an 44:3)

This refers to the time the Qur'an was revealed all at once from the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lawh al-Mahfūz*) to the House of Might (*Bayt al-Izzah*) in the lower sky, in the Night of Al-Qadr (*Laylat al-Qadr*) during the Month of Ramadan (Qur'an 2:185), as is argued by Ibn 'Abbās and others (al-Qurtubī 1998, v.8: 117, al-Rāzī 1990, v.14(27):203-4; al-Samarqandī 1997, v.3:254; Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.4: 117,455). Some of the *Barakah* in this night is explained in other verses in the Qur'an, which gives a measurable extent of its *Barakah*. One verse states that this night is better than a thousand months, corresponding to more than 83 years, thus the reward of worship on this night is multiplied over 30,000 times. This means that a person would get more reward of worship in a single night than in his whole life's worship. Also, forgiveness of all previous sins can be attained in this night, as is stated by the Prophet: "Whoever stands (in prayer) during the Night of *al-Qadr* with faith and expecting reward (from Allah), will be forgiven for their previous sins" (al-Bukhārī 2000:355-6; Muslim 2000, v.1:310; al-Nasā'ī 2000, v.1:359; Ibn Hanbal, v.9:498; al-Tirmidhī 2000, v.1:192; Abū Dawūd 2000, v.1: 235). Another part of the *Barakah* of this night is that the angels descend in massive numbers including Gabriel (Qur'an 97:4), due to its abundant blessings (al-Baydāwī, nd:44/3). Also, there is peace in this night until dawn (Qur'an 97:5), which means there is security in which Satan cannot do any evil or any harm. In addition, matters and fate are determined during this night for the coming year, such as dividing provisions and so on (Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.4:117). Some exegetists add that the *Barakah* in this night lies in the abundant rewards, goods and blessings that descend on people on that night for their worldly as well as their spiritual life (al-Qurtubī 1998, v.8: 117; al-Zamakhsharī 1995, v.4:263-4). This is by their rewards multiplied, their supplications answered, and being granted mercy and forgiveness (Al-Alūsī 1994, v.13(25):110-13).

In short, what is taken from these arguments is that a night's *Barakah* extends itself thousands of times – not in a time-frame but in other dimensions, making it equivalent to thousands of nights for those who utilise it.

## 5. *Barakah bestowed on a place*

For places or locations, there are nine verses relating *Barakah* with specific sites or areas. Five of them are related to Islamic Jerusalem and its surrounding areas, while other refers to other areas. These are as follows:

1. And He placed therein [on **earth**] mountains on top of it, and bestowed **Barakah** therein... (Qur'an 41:10)
2. And **say [Noah]: "My Lord! Land me in a Mubarak landing-place..."** (Qur'an 23:29)
3. But when he came to the (Fire), a voice was heard from the right bank of the valley, from a tree in the **Mubarak ground: "O Musa..."** (Qur'an 28:30)
4. The first **House** (of worship) appointed for humans was that at *Bakka*; full of **Barakah** and guidance for all beings (Qur'an 3:96)
5. Glory to Whom took His worshipper on a journey by night from *al-Masjid al-Haram* to **al-Masjid al-Aqsa whose surrounding We blessed with Barakah...** (Qur'an 17:1)
6. And to Solomon We gave the fiercely blowing wind, speeding to his command to the **land which We have given Barakah ...** (Qur'an 21:81)
7. And We saved him (Abraham) and Lot to the **land which We have given Barakah** for all beings (Qur'an 21:71)
8. And We granted inheritance to the people who were persecuted, the East and West of the **land which We have given Barakah ...** (Qur'an 7:137)
9. And We made between them and **the towns** which We placed **Barakah**, towns in prominent positions, and had appointed stages of journey in due proportion... (Qur'an 34:18)

This *Barakah* in the first verse is general to the whole of the earth, by making the earth full of good things for its dwellers. One of the *barakat* given to earth is the potential to be planted and bringing forth produce (al-Tabarī 1999, v.11: 88; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.8: 306; al-Rāzī 1990, v.27: 89, 91; Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.4: 79). There are other bounties on earth that cannot be listed because they are infinite, but they may be summarised in a saying of Ibn ‘Abbās as including "the creation of rivers, mountains, trees, fruits, different kinds of animals and all other things which are needed" (Al-Rāzī 1990, v.27: 89).

As for the second and third verses, they refer to two areas that are *Mubarak*, but the exegetists do not explain what kind of *Barakah* it is. In addition, the *Barakah's* location in the second verse is unspecified, but it is known that the Ark of Noah landed on *al-Jūdī* (Qur'an 11:44). Moreover, *Mubarak* in this verse has also been interpreted as the process of landing rather than the landing site.

There are however arguments on where this mountain is, with most of the exegetists accepting it is a mountain in *al-Jazīra* (al-Tabarī 1999, v.7: 47; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.5: 38; Ibn Kathīr 1997, v.2: 383), today close to Jazirat ibn Umar or Cizre in southern Turkey today. As for the location of the tree in the third verse, this is around Mount Sinai, but it is not very clear where it is exactly, although the verse mention the right side of the valley. Moreover, the sites named are both *Mubarak* according to the Qur'an, one being the site where Moses first spoke to God, and the other possibly where the Ark landed by the command of God.

As for the *Barakah* in the *Ka'bah* in Makkah in the fourth verse, this *Barakah* is restricted to the *Ka'bah* only, as is understood from the verse. The *Barakah* in the *Ka'bah*, according to most exegetists, lies in the fact that worshipping there abolishes sins, as well as multiplying rewards for any good action. It is in addition a place of safety for everyone, even for animals (al-Tabarī 1999, v.3: 357; al-Zamakhsharī 1995, v.1: 379; al-Qurtubī 1998, v.2: 131; Abū Hayān 2001, v.2, 546). Al-Rāzī (1990, v.8: 130) elaborates on this and divides the *Barakah* in the *Ka'bah* into two categories; the first is 'increase and expansion' and the second is 'remain and continuity'. For 'increase and expansion', he divides the *Barakah* into three types: the first is that for any good action done there, the reward is multiplied and sins are removed. The second is that all kinds of fruits are brought there as in the verse (Q 28:57), and thirdly, the *Ka'bah* is in the centre of an unlimited number of circles of people praying towards it. As for the second category, the continuous *Barakah*, this is clear from the fact that the *Ka'bah* is never without people circling, prostrating, bowing, or making *I'tikāf* (seclusion). Then he says that since the earth is round,

there is in every split second a group of people continuously somewhere on this earth praying in the direction of the *Ka'bah*, which acts as a spiritual hub for all believers. Finally, he adds that the continuation of the *Ka'bah* for thousands of years as a centre of worship is because of this continuous *Barakah* (al-Rāzī 1990: v.8: 130; al-Naysabūrī 1996, v.2: 213-4; al-Alūsī 1994, v.2: 222). Ibn 'Āshūr takes a different angle and states that the *Barakah* in the building comes from the fact that the stones of the building were put together by the hands of Abraham and Ishmael and later on Prophet Muhammad (Ibn 'Āshūr, nd: 3/96) and, it could be argued, initially by Prophet Adam and the Angels.

As can be seen, the *Barakah*, which is in the building of the *Ka'bah*, and which could be thought to be relatively small for its size, in actual fact includes many branches of *Barakah* – nowhere else on earth can they be found all together as they are here.

As for the *Barakah* in the fifth verse in relation with al-Aqsa, it is very different from that of the *Ka'bah*. Although the verse does not refer to al-Aqsa Mosque as *mubārak* –as was the case with the *Ka'bah*– it refers to its surroundings as such. It was not described as *mubārak* but rather as the source of the *Barakah* being radiated to the surrounding area. Qutb argues that the site of al-Aqsa according to the Qur'an is overflowing with *Barakah* extending to cover the surrounding area. The verse indirectly gives a reference to the fact that al-Aqsa was a Mosque and *mubārak* long before Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey – as it does not tie in the *Barakah* with the visit of the Prophet but rather is a general statement about this place. Indeed this *Barakah* would have existed even before the time of Prophet Abraham in the area and may possibly have been bestowed on the mosque from the foundations of the initial construction. This is so forty years after the first construction of the *Ka'bah*, as is clear from the Hadīth of Abū Dhar. It is narrated that Abū Dhar asked the Prophet which mosque was first built on this earth. He replied: *al-Masjid al-Harām*; then he asked what was the second, he replied: *al-Masjid al-Aqsa*. He further asked how long was between them and the Prophet replied: forty years (Al-Bukhārī 2000, v.2: 661, 676; Muslim 2000, v.1: 209-10; Ibn Mājah 2000: 111; al-Nasā'ī 2000, v.1: 112).

The verse however does not specify the span of the *Barakah* to the surrounding area, as it does not give any territorial extent. Nevertheless, the verse makes a very crucial point: it specifies al-Aqsa Mosque as the centre or nucleus of the surrounding area which is *mubārak* referring to the Land of *Barakah*. The extent of the radiation needs further investigation; this can take into account other Qur'anic verses using the same etymology as in Qur'an 6:92 and 42:7 (See also El-Awaisi 2005: 33).

The other four verses refer to the Land of *Barakah* (*al-Ard al-Mubarakah*). By referring to the place as *al-Ard* (the land) three times (Qur'an 7:137, 21:71,81), *al-Qurā* (the towns) once (Qur'an 34:18), and then continuing with the wording "*al-latī baraknā fihā*" (which We placed *Barakah* in). The majority of exegetists divided the *Barakah* in this land into two categories, spiritual/religious and material/worldly. The spiritual or religious *Barakah* is represented as being the Land where most Prophets dwelt and spread their messages. As for the material or worldly *Barakah*, this is in its fertile grounds and its numerous varieties of fruits and plants, as well as its water, which gives both rich and poor a decent life. (Al-Tabarī 1999, v.8:17); al-Samarqandī (1997, v.2:300); al-Māwardī (nd: 21/81); al-Zamakhsharī (1995, v.2:623); Ibn al-Jawzī (1987, v.5:5); al-Rāzī (1990, v.10:117); al-Qurtubī (1994, v.5(9):193); al-Baydāwī (nd: 17/1); al-Nasafī (1996, v.2:443); al-Naysabūrī (1996, v.4:323); Abū Hayān (2001, v.6:7); al-Biqā'ī (1995, v.4:329); al-Alūsī (1994, v.8(15):14); al-Zuhaylī (2003, v.8:11); Qutb (1996, v.4:2212). Ibn 'Atiyah argues that it is in two categories, one in "this life" and the other "for the hereafter". The one in "this life" is what others have called the material or worldly *Barakah*, which he says is in the land which is the best over all others in the world: it has the tastiest water and abundant fruits and graces (Ibn 'Atiyah 2001, v.4:89).

Further to this, *Barakah* is not restricted to believers, but is, as verse (Q 21:71) explains, for **all** believers and disbelievers (al-Jazā'irī 1998, v.3:427). Moreover, the *Barakah* existed well



before most of the Prophets dwelled in that land. Most of the Prophets in this land certainly came after Abraham, and mostly descended from his offspring. The same verse states that Prophets Abraham and Lot were saved to the land which has been blessed for *all beings*. Therefore, the *Barakah* was there long before Abraham and was not placed in the land because of these Prophets dwelling in it. It seems that the *Barakah* was bestowed in that place long before, since the source of the *Barakah*, al-Aqsa Mosque, was also there well before Abraham. This refers to the *Hadith* concerning the building of al-Aqsa Mosque and its building by Prophet Adam as is argued by Ibn Hajar and others. What can be argued is that one of the manifestations of this *Barakah* is the dwelling of the Prophets in that land, or that the Prophets were attracted to this land because it was full of *Barakah* and they chose to live there.

The *Barakah* that is regarded as the worldly *Barakah* is not just restricted to plants, fruits and water, but concerns much more. Such as its strategic geographical location, and its various material features which include several topographies and climates, in addition to various agricultural products (El-Awaisi 2005: 28), different weather patterns and so on. As can be seen, this land carries crucial importance both for this life and the next. In this world, it has been the centre of attention of many nations and has had consequent effects on the rest of the world (El-Awaisi 2005: 144). In the hereafter it is believed by Muslims to be the land of the rising and gathering for the Day of Judgment. As for "growth and expansion" and "increase and multiplication", the exegetists have based most of their arguments around this from both a material and spiritual sense. However, this *Barakah* is not restricted to believers; it is unchanged for all who reside in it whether they are believers or not, but it is restricted to within a certain area that seems to be unchanged. Additionally, this *Barakah* although its extent is unchanged, is everlasting; as mentioned above, it could date back to the time of the building of al-Aqsa Mosque by Prophet Adam or even to the creation of this world.

## CONCLUSION

In short, from the above Qur'anic examples a better understanding of the meaning of *Barakah* can be gained. *Barakah*, as has been discussed, comes in many forms and meanings. In the first context, that is the *Barakah* of God, although it may not have similar connotations to the following categories of *Barakah*, it nevertheless carries many meanings that are reflected later, such as being everlasting.

For certain **beings**, mainly Prophets, *Barakah* lies in the fact that their names are *eternal* as well as in the continuation of their message, and the achievements they accomplished during their life-time and after their death. As for **objects**: these are mainly to do with material benefits that can be felt, such as the *crucial importance* of water which no one can live without, as well as its *long-lasting* effects and being the cause of *growth and expansion*. As for the category of **texts** or **statements**: these are also of *crucial importance* – as in the case of the Qur'an, its being *unchanging* and *everlasting*, as well as the *multiplication* of rewards for its recitation and implementation within the Islamic theology. As for **time**: a period such as the Night of al-*Qadr* is of *crucial importance*, in the sense of what has happened in it and what continues to happen in it, and also the *multiplication* of rewards. The Qur'an in this case gives us a measurable extent of the *Barakah*; where one night equals more than thirty thousand days. Finally, for **places** or locations, there is a general *Barakah* for the whole of the earth that is manifested in a *Physical Goodness* that exists in all parts of the world. Moreover, within the earth there are certain sites that have an increased intensity or a different dimension of *Barakah*, mainly spiritual but also physical. The *Ka'bah* in Makkah, for example, has *increase, expansion, crucial and everlasting importance* and *multiplication of rewards*. The understanding of the intensity of *Barakah* can be better described in horizontal and vertical dimensions. It becomes clear that the whole earth has some minimal level of *Barakah*, while specific sites have a more extensive density or a higher intensity of *Barakah*, as is the case in the Land of *Barakah*. Although the Land of *Barakah* is a particular area of the world, it seems that its *Barakah* in it is multiplied thousands of times, as was the case in the Night of Power which though

only a single night was equal to more than thirty thousand. Although the space is restricted, the *Barakah* continues to increase on other dimensions. Furthermore, the physical *Barakah* is not restricted to believers, as has been the case with some other forms of *Barakah* namely the spiritual-religious connotation.

In essence, it can be seen that a theme runs through most of the verses discussed showing that *Barakah* has many important meanings. These are: being very crucial and having great importance, as well as growing and expanding which brings on increase and multiplication; however, the source is unchanged but is everlasting. This can be applied to nearly all the examples mentioned. Although most examples examined are relatively small or short phases, or are just ordinary, the *Barakah* turns them into something extraordinary with incredible characteristics. Moreover, one could argue, since most of the *Barakah* is subtle and is not visible, people can understand only small aspects of the *Barakah*, namely, those which are named or identified. There could be much more that is unidentifiable or invisible to humans and has not been divinely stated, as is stressed by many exegetists and as is explained by many of the narrations from the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah.

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