

Which is better: Ribaat or Residing in Makkah for worship?

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Shaykh al-Islaam, Ahmad bin Taymiyyah, may Allah sanctify his soul about the *hadeeth*, 'Guarding a night at the shores is better than a mans actions for his family, for a thousand years;' and on the residents of Makkah and al-Quds and al-Madeenah, (who reside) with the intention of worship and total devotion to Allah, the Most High, and the ones who reside in Dimyaat and Alexandria and Tripoli with the intention of *Ribaat*...which of them is better?

So he answered:

Praise be to Allah...

Nay, residing at the frontlines of the Muslims, like the ones in the Levant and Egypt is greater than being a neighbour of the three *masajid*.

I do not know any difference of opinion amongst the people of knowledge on this issue, and more than one of the scholars has explicitly stated this.

The reason is that *Ribaat* is part of *Jihaad*, and being a neighbour (or within the proximity) is part of *Hajj*, as the Most High says: 'Do you consider the providing of drinking water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of *Al-Masjid-al-Haram* (at Makkah) as equal to the worth of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah? They are not equal before Allah.' [at-Tawbah: 19]

And in the *Saheehayn*, the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam* was asked: 'Which action is best?' He answered: 'Belief in Allah and His Messenger'. It was said, 'Then what?'. He said: 'Then *Jihaad* in His path'. It was asked, 'Then what?' He responded 'Then dedicated *Hajj*' [that is, *Hajj* free of doing trade, *Hajj*, just for its sake].

It has been narrated, 'An expedition in the path of Allah is greater than seventy pilgrimages'.

In Muslim's *Saheeh*, from Salmaan al-Faarisi, the Prophet of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam* said: 'The guarding (*Ribaat*) of a night and day in the path of Allah is greater than the fasting and praying of a month; and whoever dies whilst in *Ribaat*, dies a *Mujaahid*, and he is given his reward from paradise and is protected from the two tribulators (the angels who come at death)'

And in the *Sunan*, from 'Uthmaan, the Messenger of Allah *sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam* said: 'The guarding of a day in the path of Allah, is greater than one thousand days in other than it of places,' and this was said by 'Uthmaan on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam*, and it is said he narrated this to spread this *Sunnah*.

Abu Hurayrah said 'To do *Ribaat* for a night in the path of Allah is more beloved to me than to pray on *Laylat al-Qadr* at the Black Stone'.

The rewards of *Ribaah* and guarding in the path of Allah are too many, and cannot be mentioned fully on this paper.

And Allah knows best.

[See *Majmoo' al-Fataawaa* 28/5]