

Social Welfare in Medina during the 9th and 10th Hijri Centuries / 15th and 16th Calendar Centuries: A Historical and Cultural Study

Dr. Salih Maddah Aljedani.¹ Dr. Saad Saeed Alqarni.² Dr. Asma Khaled Abdulla Salman³

¹ Associate Professor of Islamic History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of History and Civilization, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, ORCID: 0009-0004-5178-6901, Email: SMALJEDANI@imamu.edu.sa

² Associate Professor of Modern history, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of History and Civilization, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, ORCID: 0009-0004-5272-1288, Email: ssalqarni@imamu.edu.sa

³ Assistant Professor of Islamic History, College of Arts, Department of Social Sciences, University of Bahrain, Sakhir, Kingdom of Bahrain, ORCID: 0009-0004-5272-1288, Email: Asmasalman97@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Social welfare in Medina during the 9th and 10th centuries AH (15th and 16th centuries AD) was of paramount importance in addressing the needs of both individuals and communities. This period was marked by significant political events and historical shifts, most notably the transfer of power in Medina, and more broadly in the Hejaz region, from the Abbasid State to the Mamlūk state. These changes significantly impacted social welfare in Medina, particularly as its population grew as people migrated from all parts of the Islamic world to this city. The Mamlūk sultans paid close attention to Medina due to its sacred status, providing it with comprehensive care and support. Their aim was to gain divine reward and consolidate their religious authority in Medina and the Hejaz region as a whole by offering social welfare programs.

This research focuses on the social welfare provided to the individuals and communities of Medina, ensuring a dignified and prosperous life by providing them with mosques, hospices, and support for intellectual pursuits, as well as establishment of educational institutions, endowments of scholarly books, encouragement of students, security measures, and other social services. The research consists of an introduction in which the importance of the research, its questions, objectives and methodology are stated, followed by several sections, and ends up with a conclusion that contains the most important findings that have been reached by the research.

KEYWORDS: Social welfare , Medina, the Mamlūk state, the 9th and 10th centuries AH, (15th and 16th centuries AD).

1. INTRODUCTION

The city of Medina in particular and the Hejaz region in general, went through a difficult historical period after the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate. Medina in particular, suffered administrative and material neglect. The region was embroiled in wars and

internal strife long before the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, which lasted for more than two centuries during the last days of the Abbasids. At this time, the Hejaz region suffered neglect and cultural stagnation, which contributed to an increase in the number of poor and the destitute people, a decrease in endowments and charitable projects, and consequently, increased need and destitution due to the scarcity of aid and assistance that the Hejaz, especially the Holy Cities (Mecca and Medina), used to receive from the Caliphs and Hajj leaders. This led to significant hardships for most segments of the society in the Hejaz and a rise in extreme poverty.

The Mamlūk state was established in Egypt on the ruins of Ayyubid rule in 648 AH/1250 AD. The Mamlūk rulers were able to consolidate their power thanks to their victories over the Mongols and the Crusaders, and their rule extended to the Levant, the Hejaz, and parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Nubia also came under their control later on. Many aspects of civilization flourished during the Mamlūk era, particularly trade, cultural life, and architecture. The Mamlūk era was made up of two phases: the first, the rule of the Bahri Mamlūks (648-784 AH/ 1250-1382 AD), and the second, the rule of the Circassian or Burji Mamlūks (784-923 AH/ 1382-1517 AD). The Mamlūk state fell to the Ottomans.

With the rise of the Mamlūk state in Egypt in 648 AH/ 1250 AD, the extension of their authority into the Levant, and the defeat they dealt to the Mongols at the Battle of Ain Jalut, their power was strengthened, and the Levant and Egypt were both unified under their control. They then turned their attention to the Hejaz region in order to fully legitimize their rule. The Hejaz region flourished, and its population grew with influx of newcomers resulting from great care and attention paid from the part of the Mamlūk sultans and princes.

Through their material and moral efforts, the Mamlūks were able to provide social welfare to their subjects in order to gain divine reward and consolidate their religious authority in Hejaz, especially in the Two Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina. The Hejaz region was among the regions that received the greatest attention from the Mamlūks relative to other provinces, as they sought to strengthen their power and legitimize it. Extensive charitable works were undertaken and social welfare services were provided to individuals and communities in numerous ways, such as providing food, water, and education, along with building of mosques and schools, establishment of water infrastructures and hospitals, dissemination of knowledge, and establishment of libraries, among other social initiatives. This practice continued under the Mamlūk sultanate till its fall to the Ottomans.

This introduction includes some elements that are very crucial to the method of conducting the research. These include the research problem, significance, objectives, questions, methodology and structure, as will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

1.1. Research Significance

The significance of this study stems from the fact that it is the first systematic study – to the best of the researcher's knowledge – that addressed social welfare in Medina, the city of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), during the Mamlūk era. The study offers great detail about the services provided to the individuals and communities of Medina during the 9th and 10th centuries AH (15th and 16th centuries AD), mostly for the sake of divine reward and recompense from Almighty God. Such

care and attention also served to consolidate the Mamlūk religious and political authority in Medina and Hejaz region in general, and to legitimize their rule over all the other regions.

1.2. Research Objectives

The main goal of this research is to shed light on the most important achievements of social welfare in Medina during the 9th and 10th centuries AH (15th and 16th centuries AD) under the Mamlūk state, and the reasons behind the development of social welfare in Medina, its manifestations and fields through mosques, hospices, water facilities, support for the scholastic movement, endowment of educational books, holding of lessons, encouragement of students to learn and gain knowledge, keeping security, and other social services during an important transitional period between two major Islamic states, the Abbasid and the Mamlūk states.

1.3. Research Questions

This research will answer a major question: What was meant by social welfare in Medina during the 9th and 10th centuries AH (15th and 16th centuries AD)? This main question branches into four sub-questions:

1. What kind of social services that the Mamluks provided to Medina population?
2. What were the reasons behind the development of social welfare in Medina during the research period?
3. What were the manifestations of social welfare in Medina during the research period?
4. What were the areas of social welfare in Medina during the research period?

1.4. Research Methodology

This research adopted the historical analytical critical research method in which systematic material is collected from the most reliable sources and then arranged, classified and presented in the form of a descriptive, analytical and critical study, by comparing it with the systematic material contained in the other contemporary sources.

1.5. Research Structure

This research is divided into an introduction, which explains the importance of the research and the gap it fills in the field of historical and cultural specialization concerning Medina during the specified period of time. The introduction then outlines the research questions and objectives, describes the methodology used, and offers the research structure. The body of the research is made up of three sections that describe the major types of services provided by the Mamluk authorities to the citizens of Median. The research finally concludes with a summary of the most important findings.

2. Section One: Social Welfare in Medina during the Research Period

Anyone who examines the general conditions in Medina during the period specified for this research will realize the extent of improvement in such conditions during these two centuries, as a result of the various kinds of care and attention provided by the Mamlūk sultans and princes and wealthy people of that time of the kind which were lacking before the aforementioned two centuries.[1] Al-Suyūti, for example, mentioned

that Sultan Al-Zahir Baybars (658-676 AH/1259-1277 AD) provided the people of the Two Holy Mosques (Mecca and Medina) and the people living in cities and villages on the road between them in the Hejaz region what had been cut off during the reigns of other kings.[2] This era was also accompanied by a civilizational shift that extended to most aspects of life, in which the civil society at that time enjoyed various services that contributed to the welfare of its members and provided them with a decent life.[3] Ibn Farhūn described these feats by saying that: "People today are kings or like kings, and they do not thank God Almighty for the blessings He bestowed upon them; rather, they denied them, to the point that some of them became preoccupied with intense envy and hatred of each other." [4]

After having established their state in 648 AH/1250 AD, The Mamlūk sultans of Egypt sought to annex the Hejaz region to their rule, in quest of serving the holy sites there and in order to legitimize their rule in the eyes of Muslims. They succeeded in doing so when the name of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars was invoked from the pulpits of the Hejaz during the Hajj season of 661 AH/1262 AD.[5] Several sultans visited the Two Holy Mosques in order to perform Hajj, check on peoples' conditions, and establish law and order in the region. Among these were Sultan al-Zahir Baybars, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawūn, and Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy.

The Mongol invasion of the eastern Islamic territories and their destruction of the Abbasid Caliphate in the first half of the seventh Hijri century led to widespread insecurity in the eastern regions of the Islamic empire. Consequently, global trade routes between East and West became concentrated along the Red Sea route, making Egypt a vital link and a prominent center for such trade. This transformation coincided with the establishment of the Mamlūk state in Egypt, and its sultans were keen to exploit this opportunity for their own benefit and encourage charitable works. The lands of the Two Holy Mosques constituted the best opportunity to achieve this sublime aim, as the reward will be multiplied by Almighty God, and there were many deserving people in the region.[6]

The Mamlūk sultans worked diligently to preserve existing gains and defend the rights of the vulnerable sects of the population. Ibn Farhūn explained this by saying: "I know that before, during, and after these times there were many groups, all characterized by abundant goodness, strong faith; pious people who established endowments of houses and palm groves and freed slaves. Many of them resided in the Holy Mosque area, diligently reciting the Quran and frequently listening to Hadith." [7] The Mamlūk sultans appointed loyal Sharifs from the Banu Husain, who had gained control of Medina since the time when the Fatimid dynasty took over in 358 AH (968 AD), or otherwise annexed Medina to the region under the control of the Sharif of Mecca.[8] The intellectual differences between the Shi'a rulers of Medina and the Sunni Mamlūk authority contributed to the Mamlūks' increased support for the Sunnis of Medina.[9] Furthermore, the evident religious sentiment among a number of Mamlūk rulers and their followers motivated them to undertake numerous charitable works, competing in philanthropy, particularly in the Two Holy Mosques.[10] They participated in various charitable activities, including endowments that were also used to deal with serious disasters such as fires and famines, by confronting them, mitigating their severity, and repairing the resulting devastations.[11]

Undoubtedly, the Mamlūk policy of establishing good relations with many Islamic states allowed them to express their Islamic identity and their concern for the interests of Muslims through the various charitable contributions they made to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina.[12] They were very keen to do everything in their range of control and engage in and expand charitable works in Medina, given Medina its very special sanctity in order to legitimize their rule, an endeavor in which they succeeded very often.[13]

Section Two: Manifestations of Social Welfare

Social welfare in Medina during these two centuries was provided by official bodies as well as through personal initiatives. It can be divided into two main types: material support in the form of cash payments or in-kind assistance, primarily sourced from endowments, alms, donations, and various gifts; or consisted of diverse forms of moral support, providing the community and its members with various forms of comfort, tranquility, and a decent life.[14]

3.1. Caring for the Destitute Sections of the Society

The religious environment and internal conditions of Medina during the Mamlūk era necessitated the presence of a large number of social groups in need of attention, including the poor and destitute, orphans and widows, the sick, the elderly, the disabled, [15] those living in remote areas, and others whose conditions required them to rely on others to manage their own affairs and needed help to endure the hardships of life.[16]

3.1.1. The Poor and the Destitute

These two groups received special social welfare, which took various forms as their numbers were increasing on continuous basis in the civil society of that time. Food and drink were essential for the poor and the destitute, and philanthropists paid close attention to this aspect.[17] For example, Sheikh Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Biskri, a prominent resident of Medina, used to host the poor in his own home.[18] Others dedicated their date palm fields to charity, allocating the dates produced for distribution to the impoverished.[19] The poor and destitute undoubtedly received the lion's share of the grain sent to Medina from Egypt on annual basis.[20] Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy had decreed the provision of a regular food ration for the poor people of the city, known as the "dashīsha" (porridge made from wheat).[21] For this purpose, enormous quantities of wheat were sent annually to the Hejaz region to prepare meals for students in the mosques, schools and Sufi lodges in Mecca and Medina, as well as for other poor, the destitute, widows, orphans, and strangers, as al-Samhūdi noted.[22] Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy allocated sixty thousand dinars for this purpose. Abdul Basit Ibn Khalīl a high-ranking Mamlūk prince, arranged in 854 AH/1450 AD for food supplies to be sent annually from Damascus and Cairo to the poor of the Two Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina.[23]

The endowment of Sultan Faraj Ibn Barqūq (801-815 AH/ 1398-1412 AD)[24] allocated a portion of the proceeds of his endowment designated for the Two Holy Mosques to be distributed among the poor and the destitute, in the form of sums of money.[25] This included, for example, the alms given to the people of the Two Holy Mosques by King Al-Zahir Baybars when he performed Hajj in the year (667 AH/

1269 AD),[26] as well as large sums of money given by the Sultan of Mali, Musa Ibn Abi Bakr Al-Takruri,[27] during his Hajj in the year 724 AH/ 1323 AD.[28] When the city of Medina became under the control of the Sharif of Mecca, it received care and attention from its Sharif rulers. For example, the Sharif of Mecca Muhammad Ibn Barakat (159-903 AH/ 1454-1497 AD) gave more than a thousand dinars to the people of Medina when he visited the city in the year 887 AH/ 1482 AD. Among the princes who participated in this aspect was Prince Saif al-Dīn Yashbak al-Nasiri (d. 831 AH/ 1427 AD),[29] who spent thirty thousand dinars and four hundred thousand dirhams on charitable causes during his Hajj pilgrimage.[30] The endowment of Prince Sheikh (d. 724 AH/1323 AD),[31] the Mamlūk Sultan's deputy to the Levant, included the annual dispatch of two hundred shirts to be given to the poor of the Two Holy Mosques.[32] The endowment of Fatima, wife of al-Zayti Sha'ban, written in 887 AH/1465 AD, was more explicit and detailed; Ahmad Hashim Badarshīni stated that the endowment allocated the expenditure of five and a half dinars to purchase raw linen fabric for tailoring shirts to be sewn for the poor and the destitute in the neighborhoods of the Two Holy Mosques.[33] It is also worth noting that the endowment of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban (764-778 AH/1362-1376 AD) allocated funds for the purchase of needles and thread.[34]

Some wealthy individuals provided housing for the poor and the destitute or otherwise designated hostels for their accommodation, such as the Maragha hostel.[35] Others paid off the debts of the poor or lent them money,[36] as did wealthy individuals like Izz al-Dīn Dinar.[37] Al-Badri (d. 734 AH/1333 AD), one of the custodians of the Prophet's Mosque, used to check on the material and family conditions of the poor.[38] Ibn Farhūn mentioned that Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Kanani, the muezzin, loved the poor, served them, and attended to their needs (729 AH/1328 AD).[39]

Sultan Qaitbāy did the same when he walked from his residence in Medina during his pilgrimage in 884 AH/1479 AD, surrounded by the poor and the destitute until he left the city.[40] Furthermore, others interceded with rulers on behalf of the poor and the destitute to demand and defend their rights.[41] Evidence of charitable work during the Mamlūk era includes a dome in the center of the Prophet's Mosque where funds designated for the poor were collected.[42] Many endowments also allocated funds for the poor of the neighborhoods of the Two Holy Mosques when it was not possible to spend them on their primary designated purposes. In general, orphans in the civil society of the Mamlūk era received comprehensive care from various segments of the society, helping them to lead a decent life, in order to make them active members of their community.[43]

The Sheikh of the Prophet's Mosque, Izz al-Dīn Dinar al-Shihabi al-Murshidi (d. 761 AH/1359 AD), sponsored a group of orphans, providing them with food, clothing, and shelter as if they were members of his own family.[44] Ibn Farhūn mentioned that Anbar al-Sarkhadi was a member of the entourage of Sheikh Izz al-Dīn,[45] the Sheikh of the Mosque, and that he died leaving behind young children whom thereafter Sheikh Izz al-Dīn sponsored. The endowment of Sultan Faraj Ibn Barqūq also allocated the provision of housing for a number of poor people in the neighborhoods of the Two Holy Mosques.[46] Similarly, the endowment of Prince Sheikh al-Mahmudi, the Mamlūk Sultanate's deputy in the Levant, decreed the sponsorship of ten orphans in Medina.[47] The endowment of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban was even more concerned

with orphans and more protective of their rights. He sponsored Muslim orphans who had not yet reached puberty, providing each of them with three hundred and sixty dirhams monthly, enough for their food, drink, clothing, and the educational materials they needed, such as tablets, inkwells, pens, and palm-leaf mats on which they usually sat.[48] The Imam of the Prophet's Mosque and preacher, Siraj al-Dīn Umar al-Ansari al-Khazraji (d. 726 AH/1325 AD),[49] often checked on the orphans and cared for them. With various types of charity, others pledged to raise and educate orphans of the city until they grew up and became self-reliant.[50] Some endowments decreed the appointment of teachers to educate and discipline orphans in exchange for sums of money paid to them.[51]

On the other hand, the ruler of Medina, Atiya Ibn Mansur Ibn Jamaz (60-773 AH/1358-1371 AD), cared for the orphans of the nobility and gave them money from his own pocket.[52] Similarly, Muhammad Ibn Yusuf al-Halimi (d. 766 AH/1364 AD) raised and educated his wife's brothers after their father's death.

Special orphanages were established in Medina to attend to the educational and daily needs of orphans. Among these was the orphanage established by Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy.[53] Prince Salah al-Dīn Yusuf al-Dawadar (d. 745 AH/1344 AD) also established an orphanage in Medina.[54] To protect these orphanages and ensure their continuity and success, they were often attached to schools or mosques, and food and drink were provided to their students regularly.[55] Care also extended to widows, who were allocated a share of the endowments.[56] Their needs were attended to by certain individuals who pledged to care for them and check on their well-being.[57] The sick, the elderly, and the disabled received the same level of care, as some endowment documents allocated a portion of the proceeds as well in order to meet their material needs.[58]

Furthermore, some sheikhs of the Prophet's Mosque made it a practice to provide the sick with food and medicine. Ibn Farhūn mentioned that Sheikh Izz al-Dīn Dinar al-Badri dedicated his residence to the sick, where they received food and drink.[59] Al-Sakhawi stated that his house was very much like a hospital for the sick. Ibn Farhūn reported that Izz al-Dīn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Tilmisani (d. 740 AH/1339 AD) used to visit the sick in Medina in order to check on their conditions and provide them with food and medicine.[60] As for the disabled, their physical condition warranted further assistance, as they often received greater compassion and care from some officials to help them overcome their hardships.[61] The Mamlūk rulers at the time provided the Mustansiri Hospital in Medina with the necessary doctors and medicines.[62] Furthermore, the Abbasid state had previously been keen to send a medical delegation to accompany the Hajj caravan, equipped with sufficient medicine to fulfill its medical role during the season.[63] The Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir li-Din Allah (575-622 AH/1179-1225 AD) distributed medicine to people during the Hajj pilgrimage during his reign.[64]

The Mamlūk rulers inherited this tradition, consistently sending medical specialists with Hajj caravans, equipped with medicines and remedies, to serve the pilgrims and those residing in the Holy Sites.[65] This practice of residing in the Holy Sites was a religious and social phenomenon driven by the desire of some Muslims to spend time in spiritual retreats. The duration of this retreat varied depending on the individuals' wishes and circumstances.[66] Those residing in the Holy Sites were often poor and impoverished,

and some were strangers suffering from homesickness and separation from their families and homelands. Therefore, this group, which constituted the largest segment of civil society of Medina during the Mamlūk era,[67] received various forms of attention, including food supplies imported from outside the Hejaz region and cooked locally,[68] especially wheat, which was distributed to them annually in sufficient amounts.[69] Some even provided the residents with luxurious and rare delicacies. Jamal al-Dīn Ibn Khalaf al-Ansari al-Sa'idi (d. 741 AH/1340 AD),[70] who is also known as al-Matari provided housing and clothing for those who came to reside in Medina for extended periods of time.[71] Furthermore, some endowments were specifically dedicated to provision of residents with their clothing needs.[72] They also received a share of the funds distributed to the people of the neighborhoods of the Two Holy Mosques, as well as cash or in-kind zakat (alms).[73] Ibn Farhūn mentioned that the notables of Medina served the residents and attended to their needs.[74] Among these dignitaries was Sheikh Kafūr al-Muzaffari al-Hariri (d. 711 AH/1311 AD),[75] who served the residents, treated them kindly, fulfilled their needs, and cared for the sick among them. When some residents faced harassment from others, they received protection from either high-ranking officials in the city or the Mamlūk Sultan himself.[76] Sometimes, this even extended to the removal of the princes of Medina who persisted on harassing some residents as happened to the prince of Medina, Jamaz Ibn Mansūr (d. 759 AH/1357 AD).[77]

3.2. Other Categories

During the Mamlūk era, assistance extended to other groups in Medina who needed social care to help them overcome hardships and difficulties. These included young children (other than orphans), destitute pilgrims, custodians of the Prophet's Mosque, and slaves. An example of this is the work of the Sheikh of the Haram, Izz al-Dīn Dinar al-Shihabi al-Murshidi, who treated the children of the mosque's neighborhoods like a compassionate father, readily fulfilling their needs without complaint or annoyance. Ibn Farhūn mentioned that Izz al-Dīn Abu al-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Tilimsani often visited the homes of his friends, met their children, joked with them, and inquired about their well-being.[78]

The care for young children also included their education in traditional Quranic schools,[79] which were either formal schools or located within the mosque itself.[80] One such school was that of Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abdullah al-Sabti (d. 720 AH/1320 AD),[81] who, according to Ibn Farhūn, was particularly interested in the children of the mosque's neighborhoods, enrolling them in these schools.[82] There was also a group of teachers and tutors at the Prophet's Mosque during the Mamlūk era, dedicated to educating and disciplining Medina's children free of charge.

Among those cared for in Medina during the Mamlūk period were the destitute pilgrims arriving in Medina. Some Mamlūk sultans provided them with food supplies, and others ensured that their needs of food, drink, and lodgings were met upon their arrival. For example, Muhammad Ibn Salim Ibn Ibrahim al-Hadrami (d. 766 AH/1267 AD)[83] would host such people in his home, offering them hospitality, service, food, and water.[84]

Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban allocated funds from his endowments for the Two Holy Mosques to host pilgrims arriving in Medina. Any remaining funds were used to

transport pilgrims back to their homelands,[85] including providing camels for those walking, as well as supplying them with clothing, provisions, and other necessities.[86] The custodians of the Prophet's Mosque enjoyed both physical and moral support, and many sultans, princes, and wealthy individuals allocated sufficient endowments for them and protected them from those who oppressed them. As for the slaves, a large number of them enjoyed freedom as many benefactors freed them from bondage and attended to their needs, ensuring their sustenance including food,[87] shelter, and clothing, or securing their future by appointing them to jobs that provided them with sufficient income.[88] Among the benefactors who undertook such a kind of charity was the Sheikh of the Prophet's Mosque, Izz al-Dīn Dinar al-Shihabi al-Murshidi, who freed more than thirty slaves, and Salih Ibn Ismail al-Kinani (d. 707 AH/1307 AD), who freed an equal number.[89] Care for the deceased also extended to the establishment of endowments. For instance Ahmad Hashim Badarshini mentioned that the Mamlūk sultans endowed funds for all the needs of deceased Muslims, including preparation for their burial, such as washing, shrouds, embalming materials, and the wages of the washers or gravediggers.[90]

3.3. Mosques

Mosques of Medina were among the most prominent facilities that have received meticulous care during the Mamlūk era, from both rulers and subjects, since the advent of Islam and continued to do so during this period. During the Mamlūk era, the mosques of Medina benefited greatly from the attention paid by Mamlūk sultans and their officials, including princes and courtiers. Mosques received the lion's share of architectural development and services necessary for the comfort of worshippers, as well as the renovation of older mosque structures. It is worth noting that the Prophet's Mosque received considerable attention and care during the Abbasid era, a tradition which was then inherited by the Mamlūk sultans. The first renovation of the Prophet's Mosque was undertaken by Sultan al-Zahir Baybars, and the second during the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy, as well as other related works.[91] Some sultans renovated parts of the Prophet's Mosque, such as Sultan Muhammad Ibn Qalawūn, who renovated parts of the mosque roof in the years 705-706 AH/ 1305-1306 AD.[92] Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawūn also expanded the Prophet's Mosque in 729 AH by ordering the addition of some arcades in order to increase its capacity.[93] The developments of the Prophet's Mosque during the Mamlūk era were not limited to renovation and expansion; it extended to the establishment of endowments as permanent resources to cover the mosque's needs for restoration,[94] repairs, furnishings, adequate lighting, and related supplies.[95] These endowments also created positions where individuals provided various services to the mosque in exchange for fixed salaries.[96] Other mosques in Medina were not neglected either. Some Mamlūk sultans and their officials renovated mosques,[97] and other benefactors from the surrounding area also contributed to their upkeep. Ibn Farhūn mentions two such individuals who checked on and maintained well-known mosques, used to personally oversee their upkeep and service.[98] The following is a statement regarding the endowment of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban: "He allocated a salary of four hundred dirhams to a doorman residing at the Quba Mosque, who would open and close its doors, clean and maintain it, and prevent anyone from entering for purposes other than

prayers." Some Mamlūk sultans also employed men to guard the shoes of worshippers at the gates of the Prophet's Mosque during prayers.[99]

3.4. Free Lodgings

Free lodgings became widespread in the city of Medina during the Mamlūk era, driven by the desire of benefactors to accommodate impoverished individuals arriving for pilgrimage or to provide them with the psychological and physical comfort necessary to facilitate their journey. These free lodgings were equipped with essential services such as water and kitchens to ensure the residents' well-being until their departure. The number of free lodgings in Medina during the Mamlūk era exceeded twenty; some were for men, others exclusively for women, and some were designated based on the resident's nationality or place of origin. They were established by sultans, governors, princes and high-ranking officials, as well as merchants and philanthropists.[100] Among those who established free lodgings was the Mamlūk Sultan Qaitbāy, as part of his charitable urban development projects that he established in Medina in 888 AH/1483 AD. Shihab al-Dīn Rashid Ibn Abdullah al-Saadi was one of the custodians of the Prophet's Mosque (died after 720 AH/1320 AD),[101] whom Ibn Farhūn cited as one of those who established free lodgings and houses in Medina.[102] Rayhan al-Hind (d. after 720 AH/1320 AD) also established two free lodgings which were of great benefit,[103] as did Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Shushtari (d. 785 AH/1383 AD), who also established a free lodging.[104]

Sheikh Safi al-Dīn Abu Bakr Ibn Ahmad al-Salami (d. 715 AH/1315AD)[105] endowed two free lodgings in Medina, one for men and the other for women.[106] Efforts were not limited to construction and building of free lodgings, but extended to the renovation of existing structures of free lodgings and maintenance, repair, and checking of those already in existence. Among these efforts was that of Alam al-Dīn Suleiman Ibn Abdul Aziz al-Hilali (d. 802 AH/1399 AD), whom Ibn Farhūn mentions as having taken charge of the free lodgings of the city, and used to repair those that were on the verge of ruin. Muhammad Ibn Zakariya al-Ba'dani (d. 10 AH/1407 AD)[107] also rebuilt the free lodging of Dhakala using funds he collected from benefactors.[108] Furthermore, during the Mamlūk era, guest houses in Medina were endowed alongside the free lodgings; and among those who established them was Anbar al-Mawsili, who built a guest house, and Shihab al-Dīn Rashid Ibn Abdullah al-Saadi, who endowed a group of houses, among others.

3.5. Water Service Facilities

The services provided to supply water in the city of Medina during the Mamlūk era were diverse. They included digging wells, repairing and renovating existing ones, constructing and maintaining springs and drinking water fountains. Among the wells renovated during the Mamlūk era was the Aris Well in Quba, which people used for drinking and ablution,[109] and the Hail Well,[110] which Ibn Farhūn described as being in the middle of a small garden with good palm trees north of the city wall, now known as the Nuwayriyya Well. The Ruma Well,[111] which had been in use since the time of the Prophet, was renovated and maintained during the Mamlūk era in the first half of the 7th Hijri century.[112] The Ghars Well in Quba was renovated in the 8th Hijri century,[113] then purchased by a wealthy merchant in 882 AH, who restored it

and made it an endowment. Furthermore, the Bassa Well, near al-Baqī', which has been flooded and buried,[114] was then re-excavated, repaired, and endowed to serve the needy.[115]

Springs also constituted an important source of drinking and irrigation water for the residents of Medina during the Mamlūk era.[116] Among the most prominent was the Blue Spring,[117] which continued to supply water to the residents till this time, and was later renovated by Sultan Al-Ashraf Qaitbāy in 886 AH/ 1481 AD.[118] Similarly, the Martyrs' Spring continued to benefit the inhabitants of Medina during the Mamlūk era.[119] Water and public drinking fountains were also provided throughout the city, especially around the Prophet's Mosque. Among those who contributed to the construction of fountains was Sultan Al-Ashraf Sha'ban, who established well-stocked water fountains in the Prophet's Mosque and supplied them with vessels and jugs.[120] Sultan Qaitbāy had also established a water fountain in the school that he established which was located next to Al-Rahma Gate. This fountain had a window that allowed people to drink while inside the mosque.[121] Furthermore, the Mamlūk Sultan Qansūh al-Ghawri (906-922 AH/ 1501-1516 AD) allocated an endowment of ten gold dinars annually for the purchase of vessels and jugs and appointed an employee to be responsible for supplying them with water.[122] This endowment was particularly designated for visitors to the Prophet's Mosque. Rayhan al-Hindi, one of the custodians of the Prophet's Mosque, also contributed to the establishment of a water fountain, while Judge Fakhr al-Dīn Abu Bakr al-Sinjari (d. 739 AH/1338 AD)[123] collected donations to establish a number of water fountains in the city next to the Prophet's Mosque.[124]

3.6. Other Facilities

Among the other facilities that were constructed, maintained, and repaired by benefactors in Medina, enabling them to serve the community and its members, were a number of ablution facilities, bathhouses, hospitals, and mortuaries. Among the ablution facilities was the one ordered to be built by Sultan al-Mansur Qalawūn al-Salihi (678-689 AH/ 1279-1290 AD) near Bab al-Salam in the year 686 AH.[125] According to Ibn Battuta, this ablution facility had a spacious courtyard. Bathhouses were widespread in the city,[126] the most prominent of which was the one built by Sultan al-Ashraf Qaitbāy in 888 AH/ 1483 AD, which al-Samhūdi described as the only bathhouse in Medina. As for hospitals, there was the Mustansiri Hospital, established by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustansir Billah (623-640 AH/1226-1242 AD) in 627 AH/1229 AD,[127] and later renovated by Sultan al-Zahir Baybars, as mentioned by Ibn Taghribirdi.[128]

3.7. Support of the Educational Movement

The educational movement and the provision of various means of education were among the most important aspects that received attention and care in Medina during the Mamlūk era. The educational services offered were numerous and varied in terms of types and systems. Among the most prominent of these were the construction of schools, the endowment of books and establishment of libraries, and holding of lessons and scholarly gatherings, in addition to the encouragement and material and moral support provided to scholars and students.

3.7.1. Construction and Maintenance of Schools

The Mamlūk era witnessed an expansion in the establishment of schools in the city, amounting to a total of eleven schools. Only one of these was founded at the end of the Ayyubid period, while the rest were established during the Mamlūk era. The founders included rulers, princes, dignitaries, merchants, the wealthy people, and other benefactors. These schools taught all branches of knowledge, including religious disciplines such as Quranic studies, jurisprudence and its principles, Hadith and related disciplines, some Arabic language subjects, astronomy, mathematics, and others. Furthermore, some of these schools taught the four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence, such as the Shihabiyya School, which was built to teach the four schools of jurisprudence, and the Ashrafiyya School, established by Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy, who appointed teachers for all the four schools of jurisprudence. Those in charge of these schools ensured a suitable academic environment, investing in their construction and providing them with all the necessary resources required by students and teachers. For example, the Shihabiyya School had two halls: a large one for teaching and a smaller one as an office for teachers. The Ashrafiyya School, founded by Sultan Qaitbāy, was also built with exquisite architecture and included numerous facilities. Abdul Ghani al-Nabulsi describes it as a hall with four large rooms adorned with colorful carved stone and large brass windows. There was a courtyard paved with engraved tiles at its center, and it overlooked Bab al-Salam. It provided offices for teachers and rooms for students to study and live in. Other schools included the Shihabiyya, Azkajiyya, and Basitiya schools. These schools were endowed with diverse and permanent endowment resources, both from within the city itself and in the whole region. They also benefited from additional resources provided by benefactors. Thanks to these endowments and stable resources, the schools were able to perform their educational functions regularly. Some of these schools were well-organized, as was the case with the Shihabiyya School,[129] which had appointed administrators and supervisors. The Ashrafiyya School, for example, had two supervisors to manage its administration. As for the teachers, they were carefully chosen,[130] by the founder or the Mamlūk Sultan himself,[131] and some of these schools included libraries containing books in various disciplines. On the other hand, the old schools had also a share of reform and restoration.[132]

3.7.2. Books and Library Endowments

Books are considered a vital support for the educational movement, as they are the cornerstone of the educational process. Given that books are both a cause and a result of educational development, the Mamlūk authorities exerted strenuous efforts to provide and maintain them. This was done either by purchasing books and endowing them to scholars and students, or by undertaking book-making activities such as copying, binding, and other related tasks. The Prophet's Mosque provided a significant opportunity for many of those interested in endowing books, especially after the destruction of its collection following the fire that broke out in the mosque in 654 AH.[133] Among those who participated in this endeavor was Ibrahim Ibn Rajab al-Tilimsani, a resident of Medina (d. 755 AH/1354 AD),[134] who endowed valuable books to the Prophet's Mosque,[135] and Shah Shuja' Muhammad Ibn al-Muzaffar al-Yazdi, the Sultan of Persia, who endowed a library to the Prophet's Mosque.[136] Al-

Sakhawi described his contributions to the city saying that: "Among his contributions there is the noble library containing the finest and most famous books." [137]

In the wake of the fire of 886 AH/ 1470 AD, [138] the Prophet's Mosque lost most of the books that were stored there, prompting the Mamlūk Sultan Al-Ashraf Qaitbāy to send a large collection of books to the mosque, which were placed in designated areas on the eastern side of the mosque after its reconstruction. [139] The Prophet's Mosque also contained, during the Mamlūk era, private retreats for some scholars and princes. [140] Several schools in Medina also housed numerous endowed libraries, including Al-Shihabiyya School, which housed a great number of books. [141] This school received several endowed libraries during the Mamlūk era, donated by various benefactors. Among these was Yahya Ibn Zakariya al-Hawrani (d. 667 AH/1268 AD), [142] who endowed his personal library to the school. [143] Others including Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Gharnati, (d. 754 AH/1353 AD), endowed valuable books to the school, while Ibrahim Ibn Rajab Ibn Hammad al-Tilimsani endowed a collection of books on various subjects. [144]

When the contents of the Prophet's Mosque were destroyed in the fire of 886 AH (1470 AD), Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbāy supported the school named after him with numerous books sent from Egypt. Imam Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Sakhawi (d. 902 AH/1496 AD) also endowed a collection of his personal books to this school. Furthermore, there were libraries dedicated to scholars and students in Medina during the Mamlūk era. Those who earned their living through copying and writing, as well as some benefactors who profited from copying books, had the opportunity to purchase available books and dedicate them to students.

3.7.3. Lessons and Scholarly Gatherings

The lessons and scholarly gatherings held within the Prophet's Mosque during the Mamlūk era were diverse, encompassing a wide range of academic disciplines and varying in organization. They took several forms; some of which were conducted through the dedicated efforts of qualified scholars who generously shared their knowledge with students free of charge. Others, a newer development during the Mamlūk era, consisted of regular lessons organized by benefactors who allocated specific sums for the teachers and students. Among the scholars who studied and taught in the Prophet's Mosque was Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Khalaf al-Khazraji, [145] who was one of the imams of Hadith, history, and jurisprudence, [146] and he taught Hadith in such a way that he benefited many students in this part of knowledge. Furthermore, Yusuf Ibn al-Hasan al-Zarandi (d. 712 AH/1312 AD), [147] who had a lesson in Hadith in the mosque; Muhammad Ibn Farhūn Ibn Muhammad Ibn Farhūn (d. 721 AH/1321 AD), [148] who had a corner in which he taught Maliki jurisprudence and grammar, Siraj al-Dīn Umar Ibn Ahmad al-Ansari al-Qahiri, who taught Hadith, Ibrahim Ibn Masoud Ibn Saad al-Qahiri (d. 745 AH/1344 AD), who taught the Quranic readings, Umar Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Qatari al-Hindi al-Hanafi (d. 758 AH/1356 AD), who, according to Ibn Farhūn, devoted himself to teaching in the Prophet's Mosque, and Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rahim al-Amyuti (d. 790 AH/1388 AD), who offered legal opinion and taught in Medina for the sake of divine reward, all of these have been among the teaching staff of the Prophet's Mosque during the Mamlūk era. Muhammad Ibn Abdul Rahman Ibn Muhammad al-Subaybi (d. 807 AH/1404 AD), who taught jurisprudence, Khalaf Ibn Abi Bakr Ibn

Ahmad al-Tahriri (d. 808 AH/1405 AD), who was interested in Hadith and jurisprudence, and Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Kazruni (d. 864 AH/1459 AD), who was one of the most prominent scholars of Quranic readings, have also been among that teaching staff.[149]

Other scholars also held sessions of preaching and admonition, which served as a means of guidance and correction of peoples' path of conduct. Among those who held these sessions in the Prophet's Mosque was Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Farhūn (d. 746 AH/1345 AD), who held a preaching session every Friday, and Muhammad Ibn Ghushn al-Qasri al-Ansari (d. 723 AH/1323 AD), the host of the well-known preaching session.[150] The scholarly gatherings and lessons held in the Prophet's Mosque were not limited to men; women also participated.[151] All of this stemmed from scholarly enthusiasm and a desire to serve one school of thought or another. Among the most prominent private lessons held in Medina at that time were those named after Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban. He appointed five teachers to the Prophet's Mosque, one to teach Hadith and the others to teach the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. He assigned ten students to each teacher and allocated annual stipends for both teachers and students.[152]

Another private lesson was that of Prince Khayr Bek (d. 807 AH/1404 AD), who provided it with substantial endowments. The four schools of Islamic jurisprudence were taught there, and among the teachers of Maliki jurisprudence was Shu'ayb Ibn Abi Madyan al-Tunisi (d. 770 AH/1368 AD) and Prince Salary.[153]

3.7.4. Encouragement of Scholars and Students

Special services were provided to the scholars of the city of Medina during the Mamlūk era, encompassing various forms of material and moral support. Such support helped scholars fulfill their missions and helped students achieve their goals. Materially, scholars received stipends from endowments in return for their teaching work, and they were also given in-kind gifts of food, drink, and clothing. Students received similar support, with generous stipends and accommodation provided in religious schools or hostels for regular attendance. Students were encouraged and motivated to pursue knowledge in various ways. Scholars' homes were open to them, and some sheikhs even repeated lessons for students who had missed them.[154]

3.7.5. Maintaining of Security

Security is a vital and urgent requirement for individuals and societies everywhere and in all times. People cannot live without guaranteed security and without enjoying a peaceful and stable life that will enable them to fulfill their worldly and spiritual needs. When we come to examine the conditions in the city of Medina during the Mamlūk era, we observe that its inhabitants and visitors enjoyed a variety of security services provided by the Mamlūk authorities or their representatives which included services designed for both individuals and the communities. As security touches all aspects of human life, the Mamlūk sultans and their deputies sought to combat corruption of all kinds and forms. Piety and fear of Allah played a strong incentive to protect citizens' rights and contributed to maintaining security. Competent individuals were appointed to perform their duties diligently, and their influence was strengthened both materially and morally by the Mamlūk sultans.[155] They enjoined good and forbade evil, a path they followed in order to get divine and worldly reward. Various efforts were made to preserve the safety of life and property. Furthermore, the Ashraf (descendants of the

Prophet) were prevented from extorting money from the people by appointing other officials to check their behaviors. Governors were also prohibited from collecting taxes from the general public, and were compensated instead with fixed grants and monetary and in-kind stipends.[156]

Some sheikhs also took it upon themselves to protect endowments from those who might be tempted to misappropriate them. Ibn Farhūn mentioned that the Sheikh of the Prophet's Mosque, Zahir al-Dīn Mukhtar al-Ashrafi (d. 723 AH/1323 AD), was a man of great prestige and authority. He fulfilled his role admirably, instilling fear in the hearts of the nobles and princes. He recovered endowments and properties that they had unjustly seized from their rightful owners and defended the rights of the vulnerable, standing firmly on their side.[157] Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban undertook many initiatives that contributed to establishing security and tranquility among the people of Medina. He allocated funds and endowments to serve the Two Holy Mosques in this regard, including payments to those who protected the caravans that used to travel between Mecca and Medina, and used to pay compensation to the tribes residing along this route in exchange for their refraining from harming the Hajj pilgrims.[158]

4. Section Three: The Impact of Social Welfare on Public Life

Ibn Shahīn (d. 873 AH / 1468 AD) described the city of Medina at that time, saying: "The noble city of Medina was surrounded by a wall that encompassed most of its districts, and there was a citadel on one part of this wall. The city abounded with schools, mosques, markets, streets, and orchards, while palm trees were found in many of its neighborhoods, along with inns and public bathhouses that were established there." Generally speaking, during the Mamlūk era, Medina stood as one of the most beautiful and sophisticated urban centers. Indeed, some of these amenities, such as the bathhouses, were novel additions to the city's social fabric, as their very existence was a product of the Mamlūk era. Furthermore, the arts of architecture and ornamentation underwent significant development; builders and decorators were specifically dispatched from Egypt to execute various projects in Medina. Along with such technicians, materials intended for architectural embellishment were also transported.[159]

In terms of daily life, the individual's standard of living improved significantly. New foodstuffs previously unknown to the populace were introduced, and the variety of dining establishments and beverages expanded. Moreover, the "Dashisha", a daily meal program instituted by the Mamlūk Sultan Al-Ashraf Qaitbāy, prepared daily in the city and distributed to the households of its residents, played a pivotal role in alleviating the burdens of daily life of the citizens and contributed to a reduction in food prices. Indeed, the establishment of this "Dashisha" program even spurred advancements in the tools utilized by the citizens of the city, especially the mechanical mill that was introduced into the community replacing the hand-querns that had been the primary grinding tools used before.[160] Ultimately, these urban development efforts, coupled with the establishment of numerous public amenities and charitable institutions, fostered the growth of economic activity within the city. They provided the citizens with a diverse array of opportunities across various professions, including skilled trades,

administrative roles, scholarly pursuits, and other fields; thereby contributing to both economic stability and psychological well-being.[161]

Furthermore, we should not overlook the social impact of the funds of Zakat, which was disbursed at that time to eligible recipients, and thereby fostered social solidarity among members of the community, curbed and combated poverty, and narrowed the disparities between social classes. Furthermore, it contributed to maintaining security by providing a source of support for various destitute groups, thereby preventing them from resorting to robbery or infringing upon the rights of others. Multiple facets of economic life in the city of Medina evolved, influenced by the social welfare efforts undertaken during that era. Markets proliferated throughout the city, diversifying in their specializations and offering a wide array of goods, both those produced locally and those imported from abroad. The Mamlūks' commitment to ensuring security in the Hejaz region, specifically by preventing the Sharifs from levying arbitrary taxes, served to encourage pilgrims and merchants to bring goods and commodities into the city. Agriculture flourished, and farms proliferated in the areas surrounding the city, accompanied by a significant increase in agricultural output. All these factors positively impacted on trade activities, buying and selling, and, consequently, led to a rise in employment opportunities.[162]

As a result of this economic prosperity, stability, and enhanced social welfare within the community, scholars, students, and long-term residents flocked to the city of Medina during the Mamlūk era, and cultural achievements flourished. Interest in the various branches of knowledge intensified, and intellectual pursuits gained significant currency within the academic circles. Financial endowments permanently allocated to support schools, scholarly lectures, and other educational initiatives, played a pivotal role in enabling these institutions to sustain their academic missions. These endowments also fostered a spirit of healthy competition among scholars vying for academic positions, and they produced generations of students who carried forward the scholarly tradition in Medina. Furthermore, the circulation of books expanded; private libraries grew in size, scholarly works diversified, and the number of individuals engaged in authorship and compilation increased. Moreover, illiteracy rates declined as the number of educated individuals within the society increased, reflecting the scholars' dedication to disseminating knowledge, nurturing students, and encouraging them to pursue their studies.[163] On the other hand, people from all walks of life flocked to acquire knowledge and attend the assemblies of prominent scholars. This era witnessed a growing interest in jurisprudence as the followers of various jurisprudence schools multiplied within the city. These groups engaged in friendly rivalry to serve the cause of knowledge, either through teaching, striving to establish officially sponsored academic sessions within the Prophet's Mosque, or instituting specialized jurisprudential courses in various schools. This development eventually evolved to include the appointment of judges based on specific jurisprudential schools, as well as the designation of specific stations for the imams of the Sunni schools, who would lead their respective followers in prayer within the Prophet's Mosque.[164]

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding narrative, the researcher has arrived at several findings, which are outlined here, as a conclusion to this study:

- The general situation in Medina improved significantly during the 9th and 10th Hijri centuries (15th and 16th Calendar centuries). During this period, the Sultans of the Mamlūk state, along with princes, and wealthy benefactors, bestowed upon the city of Medina a massive volume of grants and diverse charitable donations. These resources took various forms: some in the form of tangible material support, either monetary or in-kind, while others took the form of diverse forms of moral and intangible support.
- The social welfare and patronage enjoyed by the community of Medina during these two centuries manifested across multiple spheres, encompassing various aspects of the citizens' daily lives. Collectively, these initiatives included care for the destitute, establishment of public service facilities, support of the scholarly movement, and upholding of security. The impact of this social welfare, benefited both individuals and the community as a whole, and was clearly evident in the improved living standards of the inhabitants of Medina. This, in turn, led to the attraction of large numbers of people from across the Arabian Peninsula who sought to settle in Medina during this two-century period.
- As a direct result of the aforementioned factors, a profound civilizational transformation took place; one that extended across almost every facet of life, following the extensive patronage and support received by the community of Medina. During the Mamlūk era, various services were provided that contributed to the uplifting of individuals and the community as a whole, ensuring a decent life for people of all social strata. Notably, the Sheikhs and custodians of the Prophet's Mosque played a significant role in undertaking numerous acts of charity, and served as benevolent intermediaries in the establishment of a great number of charitable institutions. Their efforts were often aimed at preserving existing assets and endowments, preventing encroachments upon them, and protecting the vulnerable and defending their rights. Such efforts had a palpable impact on the realization of justice and the improvement of living conditions for all the members of the community.
- The Mamlūk Sultans, along with their princes, wealthy patrons, and philanthropists, paid to the visitors of the city, who stayed permanently or just passed by for Hajj or Umrah, various forms of material and moral attention, recognizing that they had come from every corner of the Islamic world. The facilities dedicated to serving these visitors received meticulous attention at both official and popular levels. To this end, new facilities were constructed, and ample funds were allocated. Furthermore, existing facilities were diligently maintained through renovation, repair, and upkeep, and their financial endowments were safeguarded to ensure their longevity and their continued provision of benevolent services.
- The social welfare extended to the community of Medina had a profound impact on enriching the cultural and scholarly landscape, stimulating intellectual activity, and fostering a diversity of cultures and intellectual traditions. It led to an increase in the number of individuals dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, as well as a surge in the influx of delegations comprising scholars and students of religious learning visiting

Medina during that era. Moreover, interest in various schools of jurisprudence intensified as the number of their adherents grew, and they engaged in friendly rivalry to advance the cause of knowledge, either through teaching, establishment of sponsored academic courses within the Prophet's Mosque, or introducing specialized jurisprudential curricula in various educational institutions. Broadly speaking, the cultural, scholarly, and intellectual spheres witnessed a renaissance, which is perhaps unprecedented in the history of Medina. As a direct result, the city of Medina also experienced an urban expansion on a scale never witnessed during the earlier Islamic dynasties before, where the number of buildings surged, facilities multiplied, services proliferated, and architectural arts significantly evolved.

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