

THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

A Historical Study

*of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine
From the Time of the Prophets to the 21st Century*

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Revised and Updated Version 2023



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

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The Road to Jerusalem

A Historical Study of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine From the Time of the Prophets to the 21st Century

الطريق إلى القدس: دراسة تاريخية في رصيد التجربة الإسلامية
على أرض فلسطين منذ عصور الأنبياء وحتى القرن الحادي والعشرون

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List of Abbreviations

ALA	Arab Liberation Army
CBS	Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GS	Gaza Strip
ISA	Israel Security Agency (<i>Shabak</i>)
MB	Muslim Brothers
PA	Palestinian Authority
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command
PIJ	Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
RC	Refugee Camp
SLA	South Lebanon Army
UN	United Nations
UNLU	Unified National Leadership of the Uprising— <i>Qawim</i>
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States
WB	West Bank
WW	World War
WZO	World Zionist Organization

Foreword*

Prof. Dr. Imad al-Din Khalil

When I read Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh's *The Road to Jerusalem*, 2nd edition, published in London in 1995 as part of the *Filisteen al-Muslima* (Muslim Palestine) publications, I was impressed by the comprehensive and balanced coverage of Palestinian history, from the age of the prophets, peace be upon them, to the late 20th century; and equally impressed by the coherent in-depth knowledge of the authentic Islamic dimension throughout this long history, which one rarely encounters in other literature on the subject.

With this book, the author sets the record straight, tackling pre-Islamic Palestine and the eras that followed the Islamic *Futuh* (Conquests), after the winds of Eastern and Western invasions that tampered with the history of this blessed land.

From the first chapter, the reader is given what may be termed the Islamic approach to researching, studying and writing on history. The author examines historical data, narratives and archeological evidence from the lens of the testimonies in the Qur'an, which he makes the arbiter of their validity and not vice versa, as pseudo-historians and archaeologists who possess little historical truth sometimes do, while much of this truth remains invisible to them.

We are in dire need for this approach to ancient history, so that guess science, whim and relative knowledge do not become the final judge of historical fact. Recall, for instance, in opposition of all claims by traditional historians and archaeologists, that old attempt by Maurice Bucaille in his book *Le Bible, le Coran et la science: Les Ecritures saintes examinees a la lumiere des connaissances modernes*, in which he compared the claims of the three holy books against modern knowledge in various contexts, including history, archaeology and cosmology, revealing the clash with the Old and New Testaments, versus an astounding consistency with the Qur'an.

* Prof. Dr. Imad al-Din Khalil wrote this foreword for the third edition of the book in 1998.

In subsequent chapters, the author tackles the Islamic *Fath* of Palestine, the Muslim resistance against Crusaders and Tatars, and the contemporary Islamic experience in Palestine. In the book's new edition, the author rewrote the last chapter, adding more than sixty pages on the role of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in *Intifadahs* and resistance, in line with his approach that highlights historical milestones with major influence on the history of Palestine...

The author has been awarded first prize from an academic institution for this book, now publishing in its third edition, an even bigger sign of its importance and value to the readers and researchers in my opinion, given that the first edition was published less than two years ago... This means that the book was widely accepted by the public and those interested in the [Palestine] issue...

That is the real prize: the appreciation of readers, that every author everywhere aspires to.

Sixth Edition Introduction

The first edition of this book was published in 1995. Praise be to *Allah*, it received wide acclaim and was followed by a second edition, which sold out within a few months. On the encouragement of colleagues and readers who wanted us to expand on the contemporary experience, especially during the blessed *Intifadah* period and its aftermath, a third expanded and revised edition was published, covering in some detail the events leading up to August 1996.

The Arab Media Center in Cairo reprinted this book in 2002. It was edited and reprinted in 2012 and made available for free download.

In this edition, major revisions have been made to the material on modern and contemporary history, which was expanded to cover the historical period to the end of 2022. It has also been reformulated to focus more on the general trajectories of the Islamic movement and the lessons learned. The former fourth chapter is divided in this new edition into two chapters; a fourth covering the period up to the 1948 *Nakbah*, and the fifth covering the period 1949–2022. A section was added at the end of the new edition of the book, titled “Insights on the Road to Jerusalem” to distil down the main purpose for which the book was written.

We ask *Allah* (SWT) that this book be a torch to light the way to the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine, according to the Islamic perspective.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed with a suggestion, criticism or guidance, and our door remains open for more of these.

Praise be to *Allah*, Lord of the Worlds

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

First Edition Introduction

All praise and thanks be to *Allah*; we praise Him, we seek His aid, we ask His forgiveness and we seek shelter with *Allah* from the evils of ourselves and the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever *Allah* guides, there is none who can send him astray and whomsoever He sends astray, there is none who can guide him. We testify that there is no God but *Allah*, and that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger.

The Palestine issue has been, and continues to be, the subject of innumerable studies, books and literature in various fields. However, the number of research and books on the Palestine issue from an Islamic perspective is lacking in the Palestinian library, although some efforts in this direction started to be made from the 1980s.

The main aim of this book is to try to shed light on the Islamic historical experience on the land of Palestine, in accordance with an objective, Islamic and scientific perspective, and in line with a vision stemming from the Muslims' understanding of this sacred cause, their heritage and their cultural identity.

Although this book is academically sourced and attributed, the author has sought not to target experts and academics exclusively, and was therefore keen to employ an accessible style, away from rigidity and monotony to benefit the largest possible audience. Nevertheless, the book is rich in information and away from emotional rhetoric and flourish.

The author hopes that this book will serve many readers who want to learn about the history of Palestine and its cause from an Islamic point of view, in a single corpus synthesizing the intended portrait. The book can then serve as an entry point for anyone wishing later to specialize and expand his knowledge of the issue. The author also hopes that the book will provide a comprehensive introduction to the cause, history and Islamic experience of Palestine, without the need to read many books for that purpose. Our aim is to provide a reference for readers who do not experience the issue of Palestine around the clock, for whom Palestine is not their main concern on a day-to-day basis.

We have attempted in this book to select, summarize and focus information that highlights morals and lessons, while explaining and detailing where needed and abbreviating in other places without obscuring the overall picture. The book revolves around the main theme of the Islamic experience on the land of Palestine, seeking to establish its depth, authenticity and breadth, where the Muslims have succeeded in upholding the Islamic banner under whose shadow only they have consistently preserved their holy sites and liberated them from every usurper.

In the end, we ask *Allah* (SWT) to accept this work as dedicated to Him, and our hearts shall remain open to all constructive suggestion and criticism.

Praise be to *Allah*, Lord of the Worlds

Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

1995

Chapter One

*The Battle of Good and Evil
in Palestine Before the Islamic Fath
(Conquest)*

The Battle of Good and Evil in Palestine Before the Islamic *Fath* (Conquest)*

First: The Legitimacy of the Legacy of the Prophets

Allah (SWT) has ordained that Palestine be the land of messengers and prophets championing the cause of monotheism among their peoples. Throughout its ancient history, Palestine was host to the prophets' leadership and rule of their peoples, and fought (PBUT) fiercely to uphold the banner of righteousness in that blessed land.

Before we delve into the details, we must establish an important truth, namely, that the Muslims believe in all prophets. They consider the legacy of the prophets to be their own legacy, and believe the Islamic call to be an extension of the calls of the prophets that came before. They believe that their call is the same as the call of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), and therefore, the experience of the prophets in calling for worshipping the one true *Allah* is inseparable from the call of the Muslims and their experience.

Consider *Allah's* (SWT) verse in the Qur'an: "*And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid Taghut.'*"¹ It is then the same message of monotheism that every prophet has proclaimed. For any people to deny the prophet sent to them was to deny all prophets. Consider the following verses: "*The people of Noah denied the messengers*"; "[The tribe of] *Aad denied the messengers*"; "[The tribe of] *Thamud denied the messengers*"; "*The people of Lut denied the messengers*"; and "*The companions of the thicket denied the messengers.*"²

* As Fred M. Donner has written, "The Arabic term *fath* (pl. *futuh*) is often translated as 'conquest,' but this meaning is not intrinsic to the root f-t-h either in Arabic or in other Semitic languages. Rather, the word was applied to episodes in the expansion of the early Islamic state by later Muslim writers who described these events following a particular use of the word *fath* in the Qur'an, where it referred to an act of God's grace that was favorable for the community. This might include instances of actual conquest, but could also be applied to other ways in which an area came into the state, such as by treaty agreement. The rigid translation as 'conquest' is therefore potentially misleading." Therefore, hereafter we will use the *fath* and *futuh* terms to express the Islamic expansion.

For more see Fred Donner, "Arabic *Fath* as 'Conquest' and its Origin in Islamic Tradition," *Al-Usur al-Wusta* journal, vol. 24, no. 1, 2016, pp.1–14.

Many historians, when rebutting the claims by modern Jews to Palestine, summon archaeological evidence and the histories of the peoples that settled in, ruled, or passed through Palestine, to conclude that the period and the geography in which Jews once ruled is small and insignificant compared to Arab and Muslim presence. Although this aspect is useful in rebutting Jewish claims historically, intellectually and logically, many of those writers and historians, in our view, commit two major errors:

First: They consider the legacy of the prophets who were sent to the Children of Israel or who led them as a purely Jewish heritage, which is what pro-Israelis want!

Second: Undermining the legacies of a number of Israelite prophets by relying on evidence from the apocryphal Jewish Torah..., citing the “appalling behavior” of Israelites who strayed from the path when they arrived in Palestine, to denigrate the value of the state they had established and expose their cultural baseness... Part of this includes adducing the allegations mentioned in the *Isra'iliyyat** against prophets, of committing fraud, dishonesty, adultery, usurpation and murder of innocents, to shed a negative light on the Jewish legacy and state at the time.

The Qur'an has provided us a sufficient account of the morals of those Jews who disbelieved and were disobedient; however, their prophets and the righteous are a different matter. Prophets are the best of mankind, and they must not be denigrated. The apocryphal *Isra'iliyyat* must not be taken at face value, as they not only disparage the prophets but *Allah* (SWT) Himself.** For instance, the doctored Torah (Old Testament) and the Talmud portray *Allah* (SWT) as frolicking with the whales and fish for three hours every day. They portray *Allah* (SWT) as crying when the Temple was destroyed, His size shrinking from seven skies to four skies. They claim that earthquakes and storms occur when *Allah's* (SWT) tears fall into the sea, out of regret for the destruction of the Temple...³

* Translator: the body of narratives originating from Jewish and Christian traditions.

** We are here presenting the Islamic understanding of Jews and their behavior. Any exposition of unscrupulous conduct does not mean hostility to Jews qua Jews, or what is known in modern terms anti-Semitism. Indeed, the Islamic understanding differentiates between Jewish prophets and righteous servants on one hand, and the corruption and deviation of some of their followers on the other. This understanding considers them humans and may err, believe or disbelieve, succeed or fail... Islam deals with them as people of the Book, who are either dhimmis, protected by treaties, or otherwise are belligerents. In all cases, Islam deals with them on the basis of justice, tolerance and freedom of belief, regardless of color, creed or sex.

This in addition to the claims the Qur'an mentions they made: "*And the Jews say, 'The hand of Allah is chained.'*";⁴ "*Allah has certainly heard the statement of those [Jews] who said, 'Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich.'*";⁵ and "*The Jews say, 'Ezra is the son of Allah.'*"⁶

The apocryphal Torah also claimed that Jacob (*Ya'qub*) (PBUH) stole a golden statue from his father, and that he wrestled *Allah!!* near Nablus, and was therefore named Israel. He is also accused of bribing his brother and deceiving his father, remaining silent when his daughters committed adulteries, and that he associated with *Allah* someone...!! And similar claims are made regarding other prophets (PBUH).⁷

Those Jews who have doctored the Torah then adopted the corruption and false ethics and morals they invented, have cited what they falsely and deceptively attributed to their prophets. It is the duty of historians, especially Muslim ones, not to accept in their reading of Palestine's history these accusations against the prophets and messengers of *Allah*, in order to prove the rightfulness of the claim of non-Jews in Palestine.

If the bond of faith and belief is the basis around which Muslims of various affiliations and races come together, then Muslims are the most eligible to carry the legacy of the prophets, including the Israelites. To be sure, it is Muslims who are still carrying the banner of the prophets, and it is they who are treading the same path. According to the Qur'anic understanding, those prophets are Muslims and monotheists.

Consider these verses from the Qur'an: "*Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists. Indeed, the most worthy of Abraham among the people are those who followed him [in submission to Allah] and this prophet, and those who believe [in his message]. And Allah is the ally of the believers.*"⁸ And consider: "*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You.'*"⁹ "*And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself. And We had chosen him in this world,*

and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, 'Submit,' he said 'I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds.' And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], 'O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims.' Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac – one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.' ”¹⁰

These verses are clear and need no further explanation. On the other hand, Islam considers belief in the prophets and messengers a pillar of the faith. Consider the verse: “*Say, [O believers], 'We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses (Musa) and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.' ”*¹¹

Generally speaking, the nation of monotheism is a single nation, from the time of Adam (PBUH) until *Allah* inherits the Earth. The prophets and messengers of *Allah* are part of this nation, and the call of Islam is an extension of their call, Muslims being the most rightful of people to inherit the prophets and messengers and their legacy.

Indeed, the legacy of the prophets is our legacy, their experience our experience, their history our history, and the legitimacy bestowed upon them and their followers by *Allah* to rule the blessed land is evidence of our legitimacy and claim to the land.

True, *Allah* (SWT) had pledged the land to the Israelities when they were following the righteous path, representing the nation of monotheism in ancient times. We have no qualms about accepting this truth, because we would otherwise be in denial of the Qur'an. For Prophet Moses (PBUH), according to the Qur'an, told his people: “*O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah's cause] and [thus] become losers.*”¹² However, that legitimacy was contingent upon their commitment to monotheism and *Allah's* commandments. When they turned against *Allah*, disobeyed His messengers, and murdered His prophets, reneging

on their promises and covenants, and when they rejected the message of Islam delivered by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), who was mentioned in the prophecies of the Israelite prophets to their peoples “*the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel.*”¹³ “*and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad,*”¹⁴ they deserved Allah’s wrath and curse. Of them, the Qur’an states: “*So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard.*”¹⁵ And: “*Say, ‘Shall I inform you of [what is] worse than that as penalty from Allah? [It is that of] those whom Allah has cursed and with whom He became angry and made of them apes and pigs and slaves of Taghut. Those are worse in position and further astray from the sound way.’*”¹⁶

Thereupon, the legitimacy and claim to the holy land moved to the nation that followed the path of the prophets, and bore their banner, namely, the nation of Islam. In our understanding therefore, the claim is not about race, lineage and ethnicity, but the path.

Furthermore, on the subject of Jewish claims to Palestine based on the Torah, we refer to what they cite in the falsified Torah on how Abraham (PBUH) and his descendants were granted the land: “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you... So Abram went, as the Lord had told him ... and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ... The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’”¹⁷ And “Abram lived in the land of Canaan... The Lord said to Abram... ‘Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.’”¹⁸ “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.”¹⁹

Responding to the above, in addition to presenting our understanding of the issue based on the articles of faith, we make the following statements:

1. If there is such a covenant, then it was given to Abraham (PBUH) and his offspring. The Israelities are not the only offspring of Abraham, who include *Musta’riba* Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael (Isma’il) (PBUH) including Muhammad (PBUH).

2. If the issue is linked to offspring and lineage, evidence suggests most modern day Jews are not descendants of Abraham (PBUH), but are Khazars who converted in the ninth and tenth centuries CE!!
3. The Qur'an clarifies the issue of the supremacy of Abraham and his offspring unequivocally. Consider the verse: "*And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.' [Abraham] said, 'And of my descendants?' [Allah] said, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.'*"²⁰

When Abraham (PBUH) asked *Allah* (SWT) to grant him and his offspring custodianship, He made it clear to him that the wrongdoers among his descendants did not deserve it. So what wrongdoing is greater than what the Israelites have done by the admission of their own sources as well as the Qur'an?!

Concerning the historical claims of the Jews, many historians have spared us the need to rebut them. Indeed, the period of Muslim rule in Palestine is the longest throughout history compared to other rules. The peoples that settled in Palestine more than a thousand years before the arrival of the Jews remain there to the present day, intermarrying with the Arab migrants before and after the Islamic *futuh* (conquests), to form the current people of Palestine, the majority of whom are Muslim and Arab.²¹

Second: A Historical Perspective

Many difficulties affect the study of ancient history. Usually, historians resort to archaeology and deciphering ancient languages found on papers, leather and sometimes bones, as well as relics that contain writings, manuscripts and ancient history books. In studying the ancient history of Palestine, often they resort to the study of Torah and Jewish narratives, while reliance on archeology has increased in recent years. In our brief study, we seek to utilize the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition, and to complement what we learn from them with historical and archaeological data that do not contradict with the established beliefs we hold. This study will be concise, within the limits of our study of the Islamic experience on the land of Palestine.

Humans have settled in the land of Palestine since time immemorial, with archaeological finds dating back to the early stone age (500 thousand to 14 thousand years BCE) and the middle stone age (14 thousand to 8 thousand BCE). This era in Palestine is known as the Natufian culture, named after the Natuf caves, Shuqba caves and Natuf Valley, north of Jerusalem. The origins of the Natufians are still not fully known. Their culture was concentrated on the coast and they lived in caves such as those found in Mount Carmel.

In the late stone age (8000–4500 BCE), human settlement in Palestine became sedentary, moving from foraging to agriculture. The first signs of this emerged in Jericho, which to this date is considered the oldest city in the world, founded around 8000 BCE.

The stone-bronze age then lasted from 4500 to 3300 BCE. Several archaeological finds from that era were discovered in Beersheba, and between the mountains of Hebron and the Dead Sea and al-Khudaira along the coastal plain.

The start of the third millennium BCE saw the rise of ancient empires in the East, accompanied by the invention of writing and historical records, marking the beginning of the historical period in Palestine.

The period between 3200 and 2000 BCE is known as the early Bronze age. This period saw the rise of fortified cities on elevated hills, which spread in large numbers, mostly in central and northern Palestine, including Baysan, Majeddo, al-Affula, Ra's al-Naqurah and Tel al-Fari'ah, west of Nablus. In the third millennium BCE, the population of Palestine increased, cities grew, amid growing political and economic powers in the era of "city states."

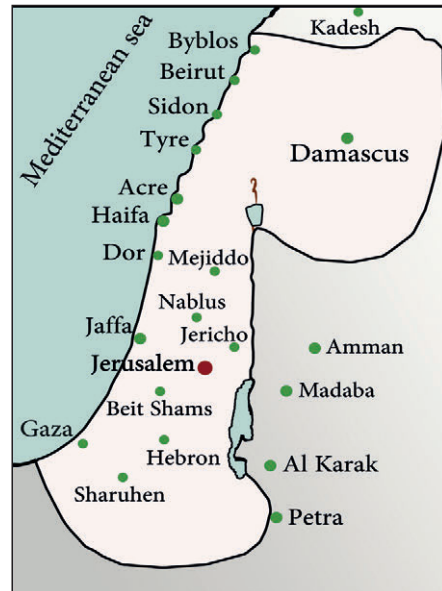
The Most Prominent Archaeological Sites in Palestine



In the third millennium BCE, the Amorites and Canaanites immigrated to Palestine, as well as the Jebusites and the Phoenicians, both Canaanite tribes, around 2500 BCE. The Canaanites settled the plains of Palestine, the Amorites in the mountains, and the Jebusites in Jerusalem and its environs. The latter founded the city of Jerusalem as Jebus then Ursalim. The Phoenicians settled in the northern coast of Palestine and Lebanon.

Historians believe that the Amorites, Canaanites, Jebusites and Phoenicians came from the Arabian Peninsula, and that the majority of modern-day Palestinians, especially in the villages, are descendants of those ancient peoples and tribes, and of the Arabs and Muslims who settled after the Islamic *fath* of Palestine.

The Canaanite migration was wide at the time, in such a manner that they quickly became the primary population of the land. The Land of Canaan is the oldest name Palestine was known as. The Canaanites founded the majority of Palestine's cities, numbering no less than 200 in the second millennium BCE, hundreds of years before the Hebrews arrived in Palestine. In addition to Jericho and Jerusalem, ancient cities include Shechem or Shakim (Balata, Nablus), Beit She'an (Baysan), Ashkelon ('Asqalan), Acre, Haifa, Hebron, Ashdod (Asdod), 'Aqir, Beersheba (Bir al-Saba') and Bethlehem.



The Land of Canaan

In the middle Bronze Age (2000–1550 BCE), the first half of the second millennium BCE saw the rise of the Hyksos who controlled Palestine between the 18th and the 16th centuries BCE.

The late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE) began with the decline of the Hyksos, with Palestine falling under absolute Egyptian control. It appears that in the Iron Age (1200–330 BCE), near the beginning (1200 BCE roughly), Palestine received waves of migrants from various areas including most prominently the People of the Sea, who seem to have come from West Asia and the islands of

the Aegean Sea (Crete and others). At first these peoples attacked the coasts of *al-Sham* (*Bilad al-Sham*, i.e., Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon) and Egypt, but the Pharaoh of Egypt Ramses III repelled them in the Battle of the Delta near modern-day Port Said. The Sea Peoples settled in the southern part of Palestine. According to inscriptions, they were referred to with the letters P L S T, giving rise to their name the Philistines, which over time became the Palestinians. The Palestinians established five kingdoms in Gaza, Ashdod, Gath, Ekron and Ashkelon. These cities are likely to be ancient Canaanite cities that the Palestinians expanded and organized. Later they established two new cities, Lod and Ziklag. Then they seized the rest of the coast all the way to Mount Carmel, and seized Marj Bani ‘Amer... The Philistines soon merged with the Canaanites, using their language and worshipping their gods such as “Dagon, Baal and Ishtar.” Nevertheless, they gave the land their name, which became known as Palestine.²²

It appears, based on comparative historical evidence, that Moses (PBUH) led the Israelites towards the Holy Land in the second half of the 13th century BCE, or the late Bronze Age, which, alongside the subsequent early Iron Age, saw the beginning of the Jewish passage into Palestine and the emergence of the kingdoms of David and Solomon (PBUT) (1004–923 BCE). These were divided into the Kingdom of Israel (923–722 BCE) and Judah (923–586 BCE), each of which reigned over a limited part of Palestine. From 730 BCE, Palestine generally fell under Assyrian influence coming from Mesopotamia, lasting until 645 BCE. The Babylonians then inherited that influence until 539 BCE. The Assyrians and Babylonians shared influence over Palestine alternately with Egypt. The Persians then invaded and ruled Palestine between 539 and 332 BCE.

Palestine then entered the Greek Hellenistic period, and was ruled by the Ptolemaic kingdom until 198 BCE, replaced by the Seleucids until 64 BCE. Upon the Roman conquest of Palestine, then the division of the Roman Empire, Palestine became part of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) whose capital was in Constantinople, and remained so until the Arab Islamic *fath* in 636 CE.²³

Third: The Righteous Call and the Path of the Prophets in the Holy Land

Abraham (PBUH) was the first prophet we know lived and died in Palestine. Abraham is the father of prophets (PBUT), his descendants including Isaac (Ishaq), Jacob, Joseph (*Yusuf*), Ishmael (*Isma'il*) and Muhammad (SAWS).

Abraham, according to historical evidence, was born in Ur in modern-day Iraq,²⁴ and lived there for many years. There he broke the idols, called for worshipping the one true *Allah*, and confronted Nimrud, who threw him in the fire in punishment for breaking the idols, but *Allah* made it cold and safe. Abraham and his nephew Lut then migrated following the way of *Allah*.²⁵ *And [then] he said, "Indeed, I will go to [where I am ordered by] my Lord; He will guide me."*²⁶

It appears that Abraham first immigrated with his companions to Harran in modern-day Turkey north of Syria. From there, he immigrated with his nephew Lut to the land of Canaan (Palestine) around 1900 BCE.²⁷ The Qur'an states: "*And We delivered him and Lut to the land which We had blessed for the worlds.*"²⁸ In ancient Iraq, this date represented the end of the "Third Ur era" dominated by the Sumerians and the beginning of the ancient Babylonian era, during which the Semitic peoples coming from the Arabian Peninsula known as the "Amorties" dominated Mesopotamia. In Palestine, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob were born.

Abraham reached Shakim near present-day Nablus. From there he went to the environs of Ramallah and Jerusalem, passing through Hebron then Beersheba, settling in the area for a period of time. Abraham then travelled to Egypt, then under the rule of the 11th or 12th dynasty of the Pharaohs of Egypt. He returned with Hagar, who was gifted to him by the Egyptian ruler. In one account, she was said to be a daughter of the Pharaoh or a princess. He returned to Palestine, passing near Gaza, where he met Abu Malek, the prince of Gaza. He then wondered between Beersheba and Hebron, before going to Jerusalem. Lut moved to the Dead Sea, where he was sent to preach to his people, while Abraham remained in the mountains of Jerusalem and Hebron. Ishmael was born to Abraham by his wife Hagar, then Isaac was born 13 years later by his wife Sarah.²⁹ It seems that Abraham had his children when he was old, evident from the Qur'an, quoting Sarah: "*She said, 'Woe to me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing!'*"³⁰

It seems that Abraham visited Hijaz several times. He brought Hagar and Ishmael to Mecca, and the story of Hagar's seeking water between Safa and Marwa, and the eruption of the Zamzam waterspring is well known. Abraham returned and built, with Ishmael, the Ka'bah. *"And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing.'*"³¹ However, Abraham's abode was in Palestine, where he died and was buried in the Cave of Machpelah near Hebron, the city named after him (*Al-Khalil*). He is thought to have lived 175 years.³²

Abraham was a contemporary of Maliki Sadiq; the governor of Jerusalem. The latter, it seems, was a monotheist and he was friends with Abraham.³³ At the time, there were very few believers. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) recounted how Abraham told his wife, when he encountered one of the mighty people "O Sarah! There are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and I."³⁴ It appears that the conversation took place in Egypt. We can glean the same meaning from the following Qur'anic verse *"Indeed, Abraham was a [comprehensive] leader; devoutly obedient to Allah."*³⁵ In any case, Abraham, the father of the prophets, was a resolute messenger (*Ulu al-'Azm*). He played a crucial role in spreading the call for monotheism in Palestine; establishing mosques and sanctuaries wherever he went. It would seem like the people of Palestine did not give him a hard time. He was not forced to flee due to his religious beliefs or call, and he remained in Palestine, moving through it freely until his death.

As for **Lut** (PBUH), he settled south of the Dead Sea, where he was sent to the village of Sodom. The people of the village were involved in sexual relations with other men; "sodomy." Lut advised them against it. They rejected in pride, so *Allah* (SWT) cast his revenge against them; their world was torn upside down and they were subjected to rains of baked clay *"And [We had sent] Lut when he said to his people, 'Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds?. Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.' But the answer of his people was only that they said, 'Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure.' So We saved him and his family, except for his wife; she was of those who remained [with the evildoers]. And We rained upon them*

a rain [of stones]. Then see how was the end of the criminals.”³⁶ “So when Our command came, We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest and rained upon them stones of layered hard clay, [which were]. Marked from your Lord. And Allah’s punishment is not from the wrongdoers [very] far.”³⁷

The Qur’an indicates that Abraham (PBUH) was a contemporary of Lut’s message and the annihilation of his people. Angels came to Abraham, foretelling the birth of Isaac, and informing him that they were sent to destroy the town of Lut. He “*said, ‘Indeed, within it is Lut.’ They said, ‘We are more knowing of who is within it. We will surely save him and his family, except his wife. She is to be of those who remain behind.’*”³⁸ In this manner, Allah (SWT) secured the victory of Lut, and cleansed his holy land “*from the city that was committing wicked deeds.*”³⁹ Abraham received the prophecy boding Isaac, and his role in upholding the call for monotheism in the holy land so that divine light may continue to spread in it.

Isaac lived in the land of Palestine. Allah (SWT) granted him Jacob (PBUH), who the Jews consider to be their forefather. After Abraham (PBUH), Isaac and Jacob were beacons of light for those who were searching for the way. Contemplate the Qur’anic utterance and its brilliance “*And We gave him Isaac and Jacob in addition, and all [of them] We made righteous. And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us.*”⁴⁰

Jacob (PBUH) was born in Palestine in the 18th century BCE (around 1750 BCE). Nonetheless, he seems to have migrated to Harran (Kingdom of Urhay) where he got married and had 11 children, including Joseph (PBUH). He had his twelfth son, Benjamin, in the land of Canaan (Palestine). Jacob (PBUH) returned with his children to Palestine. He settled in the town of Seir near Hebron,⁴¹ his story with his son **Joseph** is well-known. It is detailed in the Qur’an in the Surah entitled Yusuf or Joseph. It recounts the story of conspiracy of Joseph’s brothers’ against him, throwing him in the well and his rescue by a convoy. It also goes into how he was sold in Egypt where he grew up, prayed to Allah, resisted the temptations of women and persisted through his imprisonment until Allah delivered him. He was made responsible for the treasuries of Egypt following his truthful interpretation of the dream. Afterwards, Joseph summoned his father

Jacob and his brother to Egypt. Therein *Allah* restored Jacob's eyesight, which was lost as a result of grieving his son Joseph. He also forgave his brothers. Some stories claim that Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years, but he (PBUH) was buried near his father and grandfather, Isaac and Abraham, in Hebron.⁴²

It appears that the period in which Jacob and his sons lived in Egypt coincided with the Hyksos rule of Egypt. The latter were not originally Egyptian, they comprised the 15th and 16th dynasties, which ruled Egypt from 1774–1567 BCE.

In any case, it seems that Joseph and his brothers; the other sons of Jacob, enjoyed the freedom to work and pray in Egypt. They played a role in the call for monotheism. Yet, the matter did not continue in the following generations: the people of Israel were subjected to Pharaonic tyranny until *Allah* (SWT) sent Moses (PBUH) to Pharaoh to get the people of Israel out of Egypt and take them to the holy land.

At the time, the people of Israel were the people of truth and the bearers of the call for monotheism, while the Pharaoh of Egypt was arrogant and supercilious, claiming his divinity *"I have not known you to have a god other than me."*⁴³ He was a corrupter, he persecuted the people of Israel; slaying their children and raping their women *"Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them, slaughtering their [newborn] sons and keeping their females alive. Indeed, he was of the corrupters."*⁴⁴ **Moses** (PBUH) was born and raised in this climate. He was brought up in the house of Pharaoh of all places per a divine ordinance when in fact he was supposed to be slaughtered. The tale of Moses, his upbringing, his message to Pharaoh, his exodus along with the people of Israel, and the perdition of Pharaoh is too famous to be retold here. It is one of the significant and most recounted narratives of the Qur'an on account of its benefits, edifying moral lessons, and introduction to the people of Israel and their habits and temperaments...

Allah (SWT) ordained during those times that this believing faction was to be granted the land of Palestine *"And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors. And establish them in the land and show Pharaoh and [his minister] Haman and their soldiers through them that which they had feared."*⁴⁵ Moses (PBUH) was sent to Pharaoh to deliver *Allah's* order with the help of his brother Aaron

(Harun), who was also a messenger of Allah, “*And Moses said, ‘O Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. [Who is] obligated not to say about Allah except the truth. I have come to you with clear evidence from your Lord, so send with me the Children of Israel.’*”⁴⁶ Yet, Pharaoh in his pride rejected the message, for he did not believe in the signs and miracles with which Moses was sent, whereas the magicians, who were summoned by Pharaoh, believed Moses’ call.⁴⁷ Those who declared their faith and joined the People of Israel were a few youths of Israel. Their belief was mixed with fear of the lure of Pharaoh “*But none believed in Moses except some children of his people, for fear that Pharaoh and his chiefs would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was a tyrant.*”⁴⁸ Then Moses (PBUH) led the believers from amongst his people Eastwards. Pharaoh and his soldiers followed them, the sea was split, and Allah saved the people of Israel, while Pharaoh and his soldiers were destroyed “*Then We inspired to Moses, ‘Strike with your staff the sea,’ and it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain. And We advanced thereto the pursuers. And We saved Moses and those with him, all together. Then We drowned the others.*”⁴⁹

We can turn here to some of the historical narratives, which claim that the number of people who left Egypt with Moses numbered just 6 thousand, although some other narratives claim there were 15 thousand. As for assigning the historical period, it appears that the events took place in the 13th century BCE. More precisely, the exodus occurred in the last third of that century. The period coincides with the reign of Ramses II.⁵⁰ It is Allah’s will that the mummy of that Pharaoh is now on display in one of the Egyptian museums and this reminds us of Allah’s saying “*So today We will save you in body that you may be to those who succeed you a sign. And indeed, many among the people, of Our signs, are heedless.*”⁵¹ In fact, his mummy is taken every once in a while, to be put on display in Western museums. People who visit his corpse contemplate the art of mummification without observing Allah’s signs in that Pharaoh! Go back and read Allah’s saying “*And indeed, many among the people, of Our signs, are heedless.*”⁵²

After Allah delivered the people of Israel, the struggles of Moses and Aaron with them come to the fore. They revealed the fragility of their faith, their ignorance and their cowardice. They had barely left the sea when they stumbled upon

idolaters “*They said, ‘O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.’*”⁵³ Then, when Moses left them to meet his Lord, his people worshipped the calf despite Aaron’s presence among them! “*And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf - an image having a lowing sound.*”⁵⁴ “*and they said, ‘This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot.’*”⁵⁵ They almost killed Aaron when he tried to dissuade them away from their disbelief. He told his brother Moses “*indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me.*”⁵⁶ There are many similar incidents.

Then Moses guided the children of Israel towards the holy land and told them, “*O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah’s cause] and [thus] become losers.*”⁵⁷ Yet, they chose to turn away, “*They said, ‘O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter.’*”⁵⁸ They were heedless to advice and they reiterated “*They said, ‘O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here.’*”⁵⁹

Sayyid Qutb, may *Allah* have mercy on his soul, comments on this action from the children of Israel saying: “The true nature of the Jewish people is revealed, exposed without the thinnest beautifying veils... There is an imminent danger. As such, not even the *Allah*’s promise that the land is theirs provides a refuge from their fear. They desire a cheap victory, without paying the price or putting in the effort, an easy victory that is showered on them”.... “In this manner, the cowards audaciously leave, they panic in the face of the danger ahead, in a cowardly audacity they say, ‘*Go, you and your Lord.*’! He is not their God if acknowledging his divinity would cause them to fight ‘*We are remaining right here.*’ We do not want any power or glory, we do not want a promised land... This was Moses’ (PBUH) end, after the immense effort, long journey and putting up with the nuisances of the people of Israel!”⁶⁰

Moses (PBUH) suffers and turns to his Lord “[*Moses*] said, ‘*My Lord, indeed I do not possess except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people.*’”⁶¹ *Allah* responds to his prophet, “[*Allah*] said, ‘*Then indeed, it is forbidden to them for forty years [in which] they will wander throughout the land. So do not grieve over the defiantly disobedient people.*’”⁶² As such, they

were sentenced to wandering in the desert after they had been at the thresholds of the holy land. It appears that *Allah* (SWT) forbade that generation entrance into the holy land until another generation comes out of age, toughened by the wilderness of the desert. For that generation “was corrupted by humiliation, enslavement and tyranny in Egypt and was no longer suitable for such a solemn event.”⁶³

Moses (PBUH) died before he entered the holy land. In an agreed upon Hadith (*Muttafaq ‘Alaih*) reported by Abu Hurairah, it is said that the prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: When Moses’ time had come, he said “O Lord! Make me one stone throw away from the holy land” the prophet said (SAWS), “If I were there, I would have showed you his grave on the road by the red dune.”⁶⁴

After the emergence of a new, strong generation, and when the years of wandering were over, the people of Israel were led by a prophet named **Joshua, son of Nun** (PBUH), the Jews refer to him as “Yehoshua.” He was the one who led them through the crossing of the Jordan river. He defeated his enemies and took over the city of Jericho. The crossing of the Jordan River took place around 1190 BCE. He then invaded “Ai,” a place near Ramallah. He also attempted to enter Jerusalem, but he couldn’t. There were few Jewish people. As such, it was difficult for them to spread, take over the various areas and maintain control over them.⁶⁵ Among the things we know of Yehoshua, as recounted in the prophetic hadith, is that Yehoshua fought his enemies until it was almost sunset. He prayed to *Allah* that the sun would not set until he had triumphed and *Allah* obliged. Sunset was delayed until the victory of Yehoshua.⁶⁶

After Yehoshua (PBUH), the Jews were led by those known as the “judges.” Despite their attempts to reform their people, their era, which lasted for about 150 years, was marred with chaos, crises, strife and religious and ethical decay amongst the Israelites. During that time, they had settled in the highlands surrounding Jerusalem and in the Northern valleys in Palestine.⁶⁷

When the Israelites sensed their decayed state, they asked a prophet, his name is said to be “Samuel,” to entrust their affairs to a king who would lead them into military escapades in the name of *Allah*. Nonetheless, their prophet, who was familiar with their temperament, told them “*‘Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if fighting was prescribed for you?’ They said, ‘And why should we not fight in the cause of Allah when we have been driven out from*

our homes and from our children? ' But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them."⁶⁸ Their prophet told them that *Allah* had appointed Saul (*Talut*) to be their king. They objected, saying, "*We are more worthy of kingship than him,*"⁶⁹ adding that "*He has not been given any measure of wealth.*"⁷⁰ The prophet insisted that *Allah* had chosen him and furnished him with a stronger body and a more knowledgeable soul.

Saul, the avid believer, took lead of the Israelite kingdom around 1025 BCE. His followers fell one after the other when *Allah* trialed them, granting them a river and prohibiting them to drink from it "... 'excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand. ' But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them."⁷¹ Of the few that were left, many collapsed in the face of the next test as they were met with Goliath and his troops "*There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers.*"⁷² In the end, only a small group of believers stood all trials. *Allah* granted them victory. David (PBUH), who was still a youth during this battle, killed Goliath with a slingshot.⁷³

We do not know exactly what happened to Saul afterwards. Israelite narratives say that around 1004 BCE, Palestinians succeeded in defeating Saul in the battle of Gilboa. They killed three of his sons and forced him to kill himself. They then chopped off his head, and nailed his body and the bodies of his children on the wall of the city of Beit She'an "Baysan."⁷⁴

With the ascendance of **David** (PBUH), following Saul, in 1004 BCE, a new chapter is opened in the history of the children of Israel and of monotheism in the holy land. David (PBUH) is considered to be the true founder of the reign of the children of Israel in Palestine. In the earlier periods, they only succeeded in taking over restricted parts of Palestine and their rule was always contested. The era of the judges was spent in small group feuds, whereby each group (tribe) fought incessantly to preserve the small piece of land it had taken over.⁷⁵

David (PBUH) was born in Bethlehem. He ruled for about 40 years (1004–963 BCE). Initially his capital was Hebron. He stayed there for seven years. Afterwards, he succeeded in invading Jerusalem, around 995 BCE. He moved his capital there and continued his war against the non-believers in the rest of the holy land. He defeated them by 990 BCE approximately. He forced Damascus to pay tribute, and resided over the Moabites, the Edomites and the Ammonites.⁷⁶

In this manner, the monotheists of that time took control of most regions of Palestine. Nonetheless, the borders of David's (PBUH) kingdom most likely did not reach the sea except from the vicinity of Jaffa. It appears that in its heyday, the borders of the Israeli kingdom were 120 miles (191 km) long and 60 miles (97 km) wide. The parameters were even smaller most of the time. That is to say its area did not exceed 7,200 square miles (around 19 thousand km²). It is smaller than contemporary Palestine by around 8 thousand km². The Jews managed to take over the highlands, but they were not as successful when it came to valleys, especially around the coastlines. The latter were never controlled by their state.⁷⁷

If the Jews of this time lay claim to David (PBUH) and consider themselves to be his true inheritors, then Muslims are more worthy of the claim. They believe in him as a prophet, love and honor him, and are proud of him for establishing a monotheistic state in Palestine. In fact, they follow in his footsteps, bearing his message, after the people of Israel have veered off the path, neglected their beliefs and broken their oaths to *Allah* (SWT).

We know from the Qur'an that *Allah* (SWT) bequeathed knowledge and wisdom onto David (PBUH). He was given the book of the *Zabur* (Psalms) and a strong kingdom. Mountains and birds used to pray along with him and mention *Allah* whenever he did. *"Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant, David, the possessor of strength; indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back [to Allah]. Indeed, We subjected the mountains [to praise] with him, exalting [Allah] in the [late] afternoon and [after] sunrise. And the birds were assembled, all with him repeating [praises]. And We strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and discernment in speech."*⁷⁸ *"[We said], 'O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah.'"*⁷⁹ *Allah* also made iron malleable in the hands of David, as if it were wax or dough. He could shape it as he pleases without having to cast it in the fire. This is a miracle that God had given David. Despite his massive kingdom, David worked as a blacksmith and only ate from his earnings. He developed the industry of armors. For armors used to be made of a single piece, weighing down its wearer and slowing his movement. God inspired David to refashion armors using loops, making movement easier as well as proofing

them against arrows. “*And We taught him the fashioning of coats of armor to protect you from your [enemy in] battle. So will you then be grateful?*”⁸⁰ “*And We certainly gave David from Us bounty. [We said], ‘O mountains, repeat [Our] praises with him, and the birds [as well].’ And We made pliable for him iron. [Commanding him], ‘Make full coats of mail and calculate [precisely] the links, and work [all of you] righteousness. Indeed I, of what you do, am Seeing.’*”⁸¹

Solomon took after his father’s knowledge, ruling and prophethood. Narratives indicate that Solomon was one of 19 children of David. They also claim that Solomon was born in Jerusalem and that his reign over the holy land lasted for around 40 years (963–923 BCE).⁸² Solomon was granted uncountable gifts and powers. *Allah* (SWT) devoted the jinn for his service as well as the wind. Solomon was famous for his wisdom, justice and power. He also knew the language of birds and animals.

The reign of Solomon was itself a miracle, granted by *Allah* (SWT), as a sign of Solomon’s prophethood. Palestine was blessed with enlightened miraculous governance, supported by the jinns, humans, birds and wind. Solomon was also honored with the miracle of liquidating copper, so it would run as if it was springing out of a water well. Solomon’s kingdom witnessed thriving activity in construction. His power extended all the way to the kingdom of Sheba in Yemen.

The name of Solomon was mentioned numerous times in the Qur’an, pointing to his knowledge, rule and prophethood. *Allah* (SWT) said addressing Solomon: “*He said, ‘My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.’ So We subjected to him the wind blowing by his command, gently, wherever he directed, And [also] the devils [of jinn] – every builder and diver. And others bound together in shackles. [We said], ‘This is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account.’ And indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return.*”⁸³

Allah (SWT) said, “*And Solomon inherited David. He said, ‘O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.’ And gathered for Solomon were his soldiers of the jinn and men and birds, and they were [marching] in rows.*”⁸⁴ “*And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind – its morning [journey was that of] a month – and its afternoon [journey was that of] a month, and We made flow for him*

*a spring of [liquid] copper. And among the jinn were those who worked for him by the permission of his Lord. And whoever deviated among them from Our command – We will make him taste of the punishment of the Blaze. They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. [We said], “Work, O family of David, in gratitude.” “And few of My servants are grateful.”*⁸⁵ Allah (SWT) also said, *“And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had blessed. And We are ever, of all things, Knowing. And of the devils were those who dived for him and did work other than that. And We were of them a guardian.”*⁸⁶ Through the Qur’an, we have become familiar with Solomon’s story with the ant,⁸⁷ hoopoe,⁸⁸ the queen of Sheba⁸⁹—who ended up adapting the faith *“She said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds,’ ”*⁹⁰ the stories of how he would adjudicate in certain matters,⁹¹ and his love and care for horses.⁹²

As for the prophetic hadith, we gather from it that Solomon was physically very strong, that he was keen on serving Allah, and that he had a lot of wives. In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, “The Prophet said, ‘Sulayman, the son of Dawud, said, ‘Tonight I will sleep with seventy ladies each of whom will conceive a child who will be a knight fighting for Allah’s Cause.’ His companion said, ‘If Allah wills.’ But Sulayman did not say so, therefore none of those women got pregnant except one who gave birth to a half-child.’ The Prophet further said, ‘If he [Prophet Sulayman] had said it [i.e., ‘if Allah wills’] he would have begotten children who would have fought in Allah’s Cause.’ ”⁹³

The death of Solomon (PBUH) was a sign from Allah and a lesson to humans and jinns alike. It proved that jinn cannot foretell the future; for Solomon (PBUH) stood to pray in the sanctuary leaning on his cane. He died in that position. The jinn continued their intense labor, not knowing that he had died, until his cane was consumed by an insect and he fell to the ground. Allah (SWT) said, *“And when We decreed for Solomon death, nothing indicated to the jinn his death except a creature of the earth eating his staff. But when he fell, it became clear to the jinn that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment.”*⁹⁴

Fourth: The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

David and Solomon ruled for about 80 years. Their reign is considered to be the golden age for the rule of faith and monotheism over Palestine prior to the advent of Islam.

Following the death of Solomon, his kingdom was split in two separate kingdoms, which were often in conflict. They suffered internal corruption as well as military and political weakness, and external political influence. When Solomon died, representatives from the 12 tribes of the people of Israel met in Shechem, near Nablus to entrust Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, with the power to rule. Yet, the representatives of 10 tribes decided against it. According to some narratives this was because he did not promise them to decrease taxes. In his place, they chose Jeroboam, a member of the tribe of Ephraim. They named their kingdom “Israel.” Their capital was Shechem (then Tirzah, then Samaria). As for the other two tribes, Benjamin and Yoashua, they maintained their loyalty for Rehoboam and established the kingdom of Juda, with Jerusalem as its capital.⁹⁵

As for **the kingdom of “Israel,”** it was in place between 923–721 BCE (it was scornfully described as a rump kingdom by Encyclopedia Britannica). Due to the invasions of the Damascenes, it lost all territories, East of the Jordan and North of the Yarmouk. The most famous kings of the kingdom of Israel was Omri. He ruled between 885–874 BCE and established the city of Samaria, making it his capital. As for his successor; Ahab (874–852 BCE), he allowed his wife Jezebel—the daughter of the king of Sidon and Tyre—to enforce the following of the Phoenician God Ba'al. The matter led to the outbreak of revolt, led by a senior soldier, named Jehu, who restored the prayer for the god Jehovah.

In the era of Jeroboam II (785–745 BCE), the third descendent from Jehu, the kingdom expanded to the north at the expense of the Arameans. This didn't last for long, the rise of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BCE) put an end to that expansion. His successor Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II after him, put Hosea—the last of the Israeli kings—in his place. They destroyed his kingdom in 721 BCE. The Assyrians forcefully moved the inhabitant of Israel to Harran, Khabur, Kurdistan and Persia. They replaced them with Aramean groups. It appears that the exiled Israelis merged completely with their neighboring people. Consequently, no trace was left of the 10 lost tribes.⁹⁶

As for the **Kingdom of Judah** (923–586 BCE), according to the narratives of the Israelites (which should be taken with a grain of salt since there are no sources for their corroboration), in the reign of Jeroboam (923–916 BCE), heathenism spread, and people's morals were corrupted through the perversion of sodomy. When his son Nadav succeeded him (915–913 BCE), corruption was still running high. As for the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshafat (849–842 BCE), he killed six of his brothers along with other notables. Ahaz son of Yotam (735–715 BCE) is rumored to have been such a devoted idolater that he sacrificed his children for the Gods and chased after evils and lust. Manasseh son of Hezekiah (687–642 BCE) is said to have led his people away from God, building temples for the idols.⁹⁷

This should not come as a surprise. It fits well with the temperaments of the Israelites that they had shown earlier in their conduct with Moses (PBUH). Furthermore, the Qur'an reveals that they have changed, altered, and tampered with the word of *Allah*. In addition, they murdered prophets. *"We made a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We sent to them messengers. Whenever a messenger came to them with what their souls did not desire, some of them they accused of lying, and others they put to death."*⁹⁸ History tells them that they killed the prophet Hezekiah. One of their judges killed him in retaliation for his advice against an evil the judge had committed. Additionally, Manasseh killed the Prophet Isaiah. He ordered him to be nailed to a tree to avenge being preached and advised by him. The Jews also stoned the Prophet Jeremiah to death because he had called them out on some of their misdeeds.⁹⁹

It seemed that the Kingdom of Judah had been vulnerable and subject to external influence for long periods of time. It was invaded and defeated several times, with invaders entering Jerusalem itself, as did Egypt's Pharaoh Shoshenq, who took over Jerusalem in the late 10th century BCE. Palestinians and Arabs also invaded Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoram (849–842 BCE), taking over the palace of Jehoram and capturing his women and children. King Hezekiah (715–687 BCE) had to declare full submission to Assyrian King Sargon II following the fall of the Kingdom of Israel.

Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, paid tribute to Assyrian Kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, who tied him in brass chains and took him to Babylon, before he returned to Jerusalem where he died. Egypt's Pharaoh Necho advanced to

Palestine, where he defeated Josiah, son of Amon (640–609 BCE), and sent him as a prisoner to Egypt, where he died. Necho replaced Josiah with his son Jehoiakim (609–598 BCE), who drained the people with taxes to pay tribute for his Egyptian master and brought back the worship of idols. In 605 BCE, Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho in northern Syria before reaching Jerusalem, where he humiliated Jehoiakim and took over the country. When Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the latter and his army entered Jerusalem, tying him in brass chains until he died a while later.¹⁰⁰

During the rule of Jeconiah (598–597 BCE), Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, taking Jeconiah and his family, along with Jewish leaders and nearly 10 thousand residents (in what is known as the first captivity), as well as treasures of the Temple, to Babylon. He also appointed Zedekiah son of Josiah (597–586 BCE), who pledged allegiance to him. However, towards the end of his rule, Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonians, who in turn besieged Jerusalem for 18 months until its fall. They captured Zedekiah and took him in brass chains to Babylon, where his eyes were reportedly gouged after his children were killed in front of him. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, stealing its treasures and deporting nearly 40 thousand Jews to Babylon (the second captivity). The remaining Jews, including Prophet Jeremiah, migrated to Egypt. This marked the fall of the Kingdom of Judah in 586 BCE.¹⁰¹

According to the Talmud, the fall and destruction of the Jews' state only happened when "the sins of Israelites reached their limit, exceeding what cannot be tolerated by the great god, and when they declined to listen to the words and warnings of Jeremiah." Following the destruction of the Temple, Jeremiah addressed Nebuchadnezzar saying, "Do not think that with your power alone you managed to defeat God's chosen people. It was their wicked sins that led them to this torment."¹⁰²

The Torah also refers to the sins of Israelites, due to which they deserved the fall of their kingdom. "Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked the Holy One of Israel; they drew backwards,"¹⁰³ Prophet Isaiah said. "And the land has deceived because of its inhabitants, for they transgressed instructions, infringed statutes, broke the everlasting covenant," the Torah reads.¹⁰⁴

Fifth: Persian, Greek and Roman Rule in Palestine

Following the fall of their kingdom in Palestine, Jews saw the phase of “Babylonian captivity” in Iraq, when they seem to have begun writing down the Torah, at least 700 years after the emergence of Moses (PBUH). They did not complete it until the late second century BCE (more than 400 years later). During this period, Jews had not committed to their religion, instead worshipping the idols of the countries they lived in.

The opportunity came up to return to Palestine once again, when Persian Emperor Cyrus II led the fall of the Chaldean–Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE with the help of Jews. He conquered Media and extended his power to Palestine, which fell under Persian rule in 539–332 BCE. Cyrus allowed Jews to return to Palestine and build the Temple in Jerusalem, but only a few of them took the opportunity, because many of the captives had preferred the new land, but only the hardliners saved the Israelites from elimination.

According to historians, 42 thousand Jews returned to Palestine, a small percentage of the real number. They built the Temple and completed it in 515 BCE. In Jerusalem, Jews enjoyed **a sort of autonomy under Persian rule, which extended over a radius of 20 km** (no more than 1,257 km², less than 5% of Palestine’s total area).¹⁰⁵

In 332 BCE, Alexander III of Macedon occupied Palestine as part of his famed campaign, during which he took over *al-Sham*, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and parts of India, but he did not harm the Jews. After that, Palestine entered the age of **Greek Hellenistic** rule, which lasted until 63 BCE.

Following the death of Alexander III, a dispute erupted among his leaders, resulting in the division of his kingdom among them. Palestine (and the rest of Coele-Syria (Hollow Syria), from south Latakia and Lebanon and part of Syria, such as Damascus), Egypt, Cyrenaica (Barqah-Libya), and some islands in the Aegean Sea were ruled by Ptolemy I Soter, marking the beginning of the Ptolemaic Age, which lasted between 302–198 BCE in Palestine. The Ptolemies showed kindness to Jews, whose affairs were managed by the Chief Rabbi. The Seleucids (who took over northern Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the Iranian Plateau following Alexander III’s death) managed to take over Palestine following the battle of Paneion, where Seleucid King Antiochus III the Great

achieved a full victory over the Ptolemies. The Seleucid rule in Palestine lasted until 63 BCE.¹⁰⁶

The Seleucids tried to impose Greek Hellenism on the Jews. Antiochus IV Epiphanes tried to convert them in 167 BCE, when he sent one of his leaders and assigned him to eliminate all Jewish religious rituals and replace Jehovah with Olympian Zeus. He appointed a Greek pagan priest in Jerusalem, banning circumcision and the possession of holy books, and forcing the consumption of pork. These orders divided the Jews into two sides: One that dismissed religion, willingly or not. They were called Hellenist or Greek Jews and lived in Jerusalem and Greek cities. The other side—a smaller number—fled Jerusalem, and they were called the “Saints Party.” In general, Jews were influenced by the Greek, with Aramaic replacing Hebrew, and Greek becoming the language of the intellectuals. A Hellenized group was formed among the Jews and managed to reach power led by High Priest (*Kohen*) Jason (*Yason*).¹⁰⁷

Those who fled Jerusalem were led by the Hasmonean family head Mattathias before he died shortly after, and was succeeded by his son Judas Maccabeus “The Hammer,” who revolted against the Seleucids and defeated them several times between 166–165 BCE, joined by a large number of reluctant Jews. This prompted Antiochus IV to end the oppression of Jews, allowing them to practice their religion alongside the Hellenized Jews. Maccabees returned to Jerusalem on 25/1/164 BCE, and Jews continue to celebrate this occasion under the name of Hanukkah.¹⁰⁸

Jews in Jerusalem then enjoyed **autonomy** that kept expanding or shrinking, growing more independent or losing power, depending on the major powers’ conflict over Palestine (Romans, Ptolemies and Seleucids, etc.). The descendants of Judas Maccabeus became the ruling lineage, and they ruled as High Priests before calling themselves kings, despite being followers and paying tax to the Seleucids. In 143 BCE, Emperor Demetrius II exempted Jews from paying taxes, appointing Simon as a ruler and agreeing with the Jews to make him their king, thus founding a monarchy recognized by the Seleucids, who “gave Simon the right of coinage.”¹⁰⁹

The rule of Jewish King Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) included eastern Jordan (called by Jews Perea or Peraea) and the coast. His kingdom almost reached the borders of the Kingdom of Solomon. His widow, Salome Alexandra,

ruled after his death, until 67 BCE, when her two sons disputed power, with Nabatean Arabs intervening to help Hyrcanus II against his brother Aristobulus. In 63 BCE, Roman leader Pompey defeated the Jewish “micro-state,” appointing Hyrcanus II as High Priest, destroying the walls of Jerusalem, and cutting off the remaining parts of Jewish arms, thus maintain the Maccabean dynasty under Roman rule.¹¹⁰

Between 47–40 BCE, the Jewish “settlement” was ruled by Antipater I the Idumaeon, and in 40 BCE, the Persians attacked Palestine, appointing Antigonus II Mattathias, brother of Hyrcanus II, as a king and high priest. His rule lasted three years, and he was the last Maccabean ruler.

In 37 BCE, the Romans defeated the Persians, retaking Palestine and appointing Herod, son of Antipater, as ruler. However, despite converting to Judaism and attempting to earn the approval of the Jews, Herod was hated by them. In general, he was an oppressive tyrant, with allegiance to the Romans. He renovated the Temple, doubling its size and increasing its height, turning it into a great work of perfection and architecture.¹¹¹

Herod ruled until 4 BCE, and his contemporary Prophets were Zachary (*Zakariyya*) and his son John the Baptist (*Yahya*) (PBUH), as well as Mary (PBUH), daughter of Imran, and in his last days, Jesus (PBUH) was born.

Zachary (PBUH) was a carpenter, who raised Mary, daughter of Imran, and had a son called **John the Baptist** (PBUH), at an older age, as his wife was barren. Zachary and John exerted great efforts to preach guidance and virtue to Israelites. The Qur’an said John “[*who will be*] honorable, abstaining [*from women*], and a prophet from among the righteous,”¹¹² meaning he would lead his people while abstaining from lust and being chaste and ascetic.¹¹³ When John reached the age of his calling, *Allah* (SWT) addressed him, “*O John, take the Scripture with determination,*”¹¹⁴ meaning take it seriously and diligently, “*And We gave him judgement [while yet] a boy,*” as *Allah* (SWT) gave him wisdom at a young age.¹¹⁵ John performed his duty, preaching virtue and forbidding sin. In Christianity, he was known as John the Baptist, as he baptized people to wash away their sins, and he foretold the arrival of Jesus (PBUH).

John (PBUH) gave his life for his solid stance against Herod’s desire to marry his niece Herodias, who was known for her beauty. Herodias and her mother despised John for this, so they danced before Herod until she guaranteed his

affection and asked for John's head. Herod agreed, beheading John and giving his head on a silver platter to her as a reward.¹¹⁶ *"And peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he is raised alive."*¹¹⁷

Herod did not stop at this crime, killing Zachary (PBUH) too with a saw for defending his son John and opposing the marriage of relatives.¹¹⁸

Mary, the mistress of all the women in the worlds, was born before John the Baptist, and her mother had vowed to make her a servant of *Allah* while pregnant with her. *"So her Lord accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zechariah."*¹¹⁹ Thus, *Allah* chose Mary. *"And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.'"*¹²⁰

Allah (SWT) granted his great miracle by having Mary give birth to a child without a father. *"[And mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary – distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.' She said, 'My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?' [The angel] said, 'Such is Allah; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is. And He will teach him writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel. And [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.'"*¹²¹

Jesus (*'Issa*) (PBUH), son of Mary, was born around 4 BCE in Bethlehem. According to stories, Mary took her son and fled with Joseph the Carpenter to Egypt in fear for her son's life from Herod's injustice and violence. Shortly after, they returned to Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, hence the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and his followers were referred to as Nazarenes.¹²²

Jesus, son of Mary, whom *Allah* made a sign to the people, who declared him a prophet while still an infant. *"[Jesus] said, 'Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me*

blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive.’¹²³

In the blessed land of Palestine, Jesus (PBUH) performed his duty by preaching to worship *Allah* (SWT), exerting great efforts to guide Israelites and paving the way for Muhammad (SAWS), the last of prophets. “*and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.*”¹²⁴ However, despite all the miracles performed by *Allah* through Jesus, and his message of justice and light, the Israelites held prejudice and opposed him, and only a few believed in him.

On Easter Day in 30 CE, Jesus went to Jerusalem and visited the Temple, criticizing the presence of moneychangers and vendors.¹²⁵ According to Matthew (21/12–13), “Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ‘It is written,’ he said to them, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”¹²⁶

Jewish leaders and dignitaries despised Jesus. According to Luke (19/47), “Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.”¹²⁷ The Jewish Sanhedrin Council held a meeting and decided to arrest Jesus, who was immediately sentenced to death for blasphemy and opposing religion. He was then taken to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, the only one authorized to execute a death sentence, but he did not find the charges worthy of execution, sparking outrage among his Jewish rivals, who chanted: “crucify him, crucify him!” and said “His blood is on us and on our children!”¹²⁸

Pilate was forced to authorize the execution of Jesus, but *Allah* (SWT) showed mercy by raising him just as Jews thought they had killed him. “*And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them,*” “*Rather, Allah raised him to Himself.*”¹²⁹

This page of history ended with the conflict between good and evil in the holy land. The Israelites rejected the last prophet sent to them, accusing him of sorcery and conspiring against him.

The **Apostles** believed in Jesus and continued to spread his message after him, despite being subjected to oppression and harm. They continued to preach

to the Jews, giving sermons at the Temple. Years later, when the number of Christians had doubled, Jews worried that Christianity would spread and ordered the arrest and trial of Peter and others before the Sanhedrin Council, which only responded by lashing and releasing them. The new followers then fled to Samaria, Caesarea and Antioch, forming Christian groups. Peter reached Rome, where he founded a Christian group, focusing on preaching to Jews, unlike Paul, who preached both Pagans and Jews, using philosophical terms and concepts to explain Christianity in accordance with the dominant Hellenistic culture at the time.

Paul and Peter were eventually sentenced to death under the reign of Roman Emperor Nerone in 64 CE. But the message of Jesus was soon distorted, and his Bible was misinterpreted, with his followers being influenced by the Hellenistic civilization and the Roman regime. Their calling was mixed with many traditions, rituals and teachings prevalent in the target countries, which made it easier for these peoples to adopt. However, Christianity did not take off from its limited frame until Emperor Constantine adopted it in 325 CE, making it the official religion of the Roman Empire.¹³⁰ He took care of Palestine and built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which later became one of the greatest and highest ranking Christian churches. He built the Church of Ascension on the Mount of Olives, as well as the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. This was the time the people of Palestine adopted Christianity, until the arrival of the Islamic *futuh*.¹³¹

Sixth: The End of Jewish Political Presence in Palestine

The conditions of the Israelites in Palestine after the resurrection of Jesus must also be examined. The Romans had begun a direct rule of Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine since 6 CE, after deposing Archelaus, who had succeeded his father Herod, due to his poor governance. During the reign of Governor Pilate (26–36 CE), the events of Jesus (PBUH) took place, and the Jews revolted against the Romans in November 66 CE, under Emperor Nerone. However, Roman military leader Titus managed to suppress this revolution in September 70 CE, four years after it began. He entered Jerusalem following a severe siege, carrying out killings, lootings and arson, razing Herod's Temple to the ground.

Jerusalem was levelled, and many captives were sold as slaves in the Roman Empire's markets at low prices. Jews hoped to be bought by merciful buyers, who would not send them to wrestle beasts in shows enjoyed by the Romans. Titus built an arch in Rome to mark his victory over the Jews, and it still stands to this day, with engravings of the victory, featuring the iconic Jewish Menorah, which he took from the Temple.¹³²

Jews revolted against the Romans again, led by Bar Kokhba, whose real name was Simon. Their revolution lasted three years, 132–135 CE, with the support of a large number of Jews. He managed to occupy Jerusalem, but Roman Emperor Hadrian (Publius Aelius Hadrianus) sent a large army, led by Julius Severus, who retook Jerusalem after defeating the Jews, who in turn fled to Betar, where the ruins of the fortress they took refuge in still stand, known as *Khirbet al-Yahud* in Arabic (meaning “ruin of the Jews”). Hadrian abused the rebels and destroyed Jerusalem, killing and capturing large numbers of Jews, while banning others from entering the city, living in it or even approaching it, but he allowed Christians of non-Jewish origin to remain in the city. He built a new city over the ruins of Jerusalem and called it Aelia Capitolina, after his first name. He also built a Pagan Temple for Roman God Jupiter on top of the old Temple.¹³³

The Jerusalem entry ban for Jews continued for 200 more years,¹³⁴ and they rarely entered or stayed in the city during subsequent centuries, until the 19th century. Israelites spread across the world, and had nothing left in Palestine but some memories, mostly of infidelity, debauchery, prostitution and killing prophets. They were punished by *Allah*, deprived of the holy land and dispersed across the globe.

Prominent historian Gustave Le Bon says that when Israelites settled in Palestine all they took from these higher nations was the worst of their civilizations; namely flaws, bad habits, prostitution and myths. They gave offerings to Asia's gods, as well as Astarte, Baal and Moloch, much more than they did to their tribe's god Jehovah, whom they barely trusted. He adds that Jews lived in extensive chaos almost all the time, and their history was nothing but a story of various sins and that the history of Jews has zero civilization. He states that they did not in any way deserve to be considered one of the civilized nations, and even under the reign of their own kings, Israelites remained vagrant, bloody

invaders, driven into a brutal rivalry. Le Bon describes the Jews' mentality by being continuously close to that of the most primitive of peoples. They were stubborn, impulsive, reckless, naïve and rough, like beasts and children, adding that one cannot find a less tasteful people than the Jews.¹³⁵

Conclusion

- Most of the people of Palestine came from the Arabian Peninsula and continued to live there to this day.
- *Allah* promised Israelites the holy land when they followed his path and his prophets, but this right slipped through their hands when they changed and became infidels.
- Muslims are more worthy than Israelites of their prophets, and they are the true heirs of their legacy. The calling of Islam is to continue the preaching of these prophets, and the values they aimed to establish are the same values the Muslims aim to establish.
- Israelites never at any point ruled all of Palestine with its current borders, and they only ruled with complete independence for a very short time in comparison with the history of Palestine. Even when they had two kingdoms, they were mostly subject to higher power.
- The autonomy enjoyed by Jews after returning from the Babylonian captivity was weak and limited to Jerusalem and its suburbs, and they only enjoyed it after a limited independence under the Maccabees.
- Jews later dispersed across the globe, unconnected to Palestine for nearly 1,900 consecutive years.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Surat al-Nahl* (The Bees): 36, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=16&verse=36>
- ² *Surat al-Shu'ara* (The Poets): 105,123,141,160 and 176, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=26&verse=105>
- ³ See 'Umar Suleiman al-Ashqar, *Al-'Aqidah Fi Allah* (The Creed of Allah), 5th edition (Kuwait: Al-Falah Library, 1984), pp. 256–261.
- ⁴ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 64, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=64>
- ⁵ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 181, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=181>
- ⁶ *Surat al-Tawbah* (The Repentance): 30, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=9&verse=30>
- ⁷ See Muhammad 'Ali al-Zo'bi, *Daqa'iq al-Nafsiyyah al-Yahudiyyah* (The Finest Details of Jewish Psychology) (Beirut: n.p., 1968); and see also Boulos Hanna Mas'ad, *Hamajiyyat al-Ta'alim al-Suhyuniyah* (The Brutality of Zionist Teachings) (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1969).
- ⁸ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 67–68, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=67>
- ⁹ *Suratal-Baqarah* (The Cow): 127–128, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=127>
- ¹⁰ *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 130–133, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=130>
- ¹¹ *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 136, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=136>
- ¹² *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 21, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=21>
- ¹³ *Surat al-A'raf* (The Heights): 157, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=157>
- ¹⁴ *Surat al-Saf* (The Row): 6, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=61&verse=6>
- ¹⁵ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 13, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=13>
- ¹⁶ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 60, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=60>
- ¹⁷ Genesis 12, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GEN.12.niv>
- ¹⁸ Genesis 13, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GEN.13.NIV>
- ¹⁹ Genesis 15, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/GEN.15.NIV>
- ²⁰ *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 124, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=124>
- ²¹ See for example Muhammad Adib al-'Aamri, *'Urubat Filastin fi al-Tarikh* (The Arabism of Palestine in History) (Saida, Beirut: Al-Assrya Library, 1972).
- ²² On the previous historical phases, see *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17, 29, 64, 73–74, 84, 86 and 96–97.
- ²³ Detailed account in subsequent pages.
- ²⁴ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah* (Encyclopaedia Palestina), Chairman of the Executive Council Ahmed Marashly (Damascus: Encyclopaedia Palestina Corporation, 1984), vol. 1, p. 37, see <https://archive.org/stream/al-mawsuah-al-filastiniyah/qism-awwal-mujallad.01#page/n99/mode/2up>

- ²⁵ See in the Qur'an what happened prior Abraham's story: *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 258, <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=258>; and *Surat al-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 51–71, <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=51>.
- ²⁶ *Surat al-Saffat* (Those Ranges in Ranks): 99, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=37&verse=99>; and see the detailed story of Abraham in Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (The Beginning and the End), 5th edition (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'arif Library, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 146–175.
- ²⁷ Muhammad al-'Aamri, *'Urubat Filastin fi al-Tarikh*, p. 95; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 37.
- ²⁸ *Surat al-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 71, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=71>
- ²⁹ Muhammad al-'Aamri, *'Urubat Filastin fi al-Tarikh*, pp. 96–98; and Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin* (Our Country Palestine), sec. 2 in Bait al-Maqdis (1) (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1975), pp. 96–97.
- ³⁰ *Surat Hud* (Hud): 72, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=11&verse=72>
- ³¹ *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 127, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=127>
- ³² *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 37.
- ³³ *Ibid.*; and Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, sec. 2 (1), pp. 25–26.
- ³⁴ An Agreed Upon Hadith (*Muttafaq 'Alaih*), <http://www.quranexplorer.com/hadithebook/english/Hadith/bukhari/004.055.578.html>
- ³⁵ *Surat al-Nahl* (The Bees): 120, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=16&verse=120>
- ³⁶ *Surat al-A'raf* (The Heights): 80–84, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=80>
- ³⁷ *Surat Hud* (Hud): 82–83, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=11&verse=82>
- ³⁸ *Surat al-'Ankabut* (The Spider): 32, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=29&verse=32>
- ³⁹ *Suratal-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 74, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=74>
- ⁴⁰ *Surat al-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 72–73, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=72>
- ⁴¹ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 632–633.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Surat al-Qasas* (The Stories): 38, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=28&verse=38>
- ⁴⁴ *Surat al-Qasas* (The Stories): 4, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=28&verse=4>
- ⁴⁵ *Surat al-Qasas* (The Stories): 5–6, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=28&verse=5>
- ⁴⁶ *Surat al-A'raf* (The Heights): 104–105, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=104>; and see the a detailed version of Moses' story in Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 1, pp. 237–319.
- ⁴⁷ See for example *Surat Taha*: 42–76, <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=20&verse=42>
- ⁴⁸ *Surat Yunus* (Jonah): 83, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=10&verse=83>
- ⁴⁹ *Surat al-Shu'ara* (The Poets): 63–66, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=26&verse=63>
- ⁵⁰ See *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 390–391.
- ⁵¹ *Surat Yunus* (Jonah): 92, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=10&verse=92>
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *Suratal-A'raf* (The Heights): 138, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=138>
- ⁵⁴ *Suratal-A'raf* (The Heights): 148, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=148>
- ⁵⁵ *Surat Taha*: 88, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=20&verse=88>
- ⁵⁶ *Suratal-A'raf* (The Heights): 150, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=7&verse=150>

- ⁵⁷ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 21, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=21>
- ⁵⁸ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 22, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=22>
- ⁵⁹ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 24, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=24>
- ⁶⁰ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shades of Qur'an), 7th edition (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 695–697.
- ⁶¹ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 25, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=25>
- ⁶² *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 26, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=26>
- ⁶³ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 698.
- ⁶⁴ Copied from Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Khatib al-Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih* (A Niche for Lamps), referenced by Muhammad Nasir al-Albany (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1985), vol. 2, p. 159.
- ⁶⁵ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, sec. 2 (1), pp. 121–122, 124 and 138.
- ⁶⁶ Hadith recounted by Ahmad, there are other accounts to the same effect told by Muslim and Al-Bazzar. See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (The Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an) (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 302–303.
- ⁶⁷ Muhammad al-'Aamri, *'Urubat Filastin fi al-Tarikh*, p. 138.
- ⁶⁸ *Suratal-Baqarah* (The Cow): 246, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=246>
- ⁶⁹ *Suratal-Baqarah* (The Cow): 247, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=247>
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ *Suratal-Baqarah* (The Cow): 249, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=249>
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ See the story of the children of Israel with their prophet Saul in the Qur'an, *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 246–251, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=246>
- ⁷⁴ See *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 184.
- ⁷⁵ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim 1220 QM–1359M: Munzu Awwal Ghazw Yahudi Hatta Akhir Ghazw Salibi* (Ancient History of Palestine 1220 BCE–1359 CE From the First Jewish Invasion to the Last Crusade) (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1984), p. 35.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 43.
- ⁷⁷ See Ibid., pp. 48–49.
- ⁷⁸ *Surat Sad*: 17–20, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=38&verse=17>
- ⁷⁹ *Surat Sad*: 26, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=38&verse=26>
- ⁸⁰ *Suratal-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 80, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=80>
- ⁸¹ *Surat Saba'* (Sheba): 10–11, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=34&verse=10>
- ⁸² See Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 45; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 184–185.
- ⁸³ *Surat Sad*: 35–40, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=38&verse=35>
- ⁸⁴ *Surat al-Naml* (The Ants): 16–17, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=27&verse=16>
- ⁸⁵ *Surat Saba'* (Sheba): 12–13, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=34&verse=12>

- ⁸⁶ *Surat al-Anbiya* (The Prophets): 81–82, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=81>
- ⁸⁷ *Surat al-Naml* (The Ants): 18, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=27&verse=18>
- ⁸⁸ *Surat al-Naml* (The Ants): 20–28, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=27&verse=20>
- ⁸⁹ *Surat al-Naml* (The Ants): 22–44, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=27&verse=22>
- ⁹⁰ *Surat al-Naml* (The Ants): 44, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=27&verse=44>
- ⁹¹ *Surat al-Anbiya* (The Prophets): 78–79, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=78>
- ⁹² *Surat Sad*: 31–34, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=38&verse=31>
- ⁹³ An Agreed Upon Hadith (*Muttafaq 'Alaih*), <http://icraa.org/hadith-solomon-visiting-wives-single-night/>
- ⁹⁴ *Surat Saba* (Sheba): 14, <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=34&verse=14>
- ⁹⁵ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 185; and Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 46.
- ⁹⁶ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 238, and vol. 3, pp. 185–186; and Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 55.
- ⁹⁷ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2 (1), pp. 41–51.
- ⁹⁸ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread With Food): 70, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=70>
- ⁹⁹ See Muhammad al-Zo'bi, *Daqa'iq al-Nafsiyyah al-Yahudiyyah*, p. 75.
- ¹⁰⁰ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2 (1), pp. 41–51.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52; and Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, pp. 58–59.
- ¹⁰² Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 59.
- ¹⁰³ Yeshayahu - Isaiah - Chapter 1 (4), site of Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15932/jewish/Chapter-1.htm
- ¹⁰⁴ Yeshayahu - Isaiah - Chapter 24 (5), Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15955
- ¹⁰⁵ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, pp. 64–67.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68 and 74; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 266.
- ¹⁰⁷ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 75; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 266.
- ¹⁰⁸ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 77; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 267.
- ¹⁰⁹ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, pp. 78–79; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 267–268.
- ¹¹⁰ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, pp. 80–84.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87; and Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2 (1), p. 62.
- ¹¹² *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 39, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=39>
- ¹¹³ Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, *Safwat al-Tafasir* (The Best of Interpretations), 3th edition (Beirut: Dar al-Qur'an al-Karim, 1981), vol. 1, p. 201.
- ¹¹⁴ *Surat Mariam* (Mary): 12, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=19&verse=12>
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*; and see Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, *Safwat al-Tafasir*, vol. 2, p. 213.
- ¹¹⁶ See Muhammad al-Zo'bi, *Daqa'iq al-Nafsiyyah al-Yahudiyyah*, p. 76.
- ¹¹⁷ *Surat Mariam* (Mary): 15, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=19&verse=15>

- ¹¹⁸ Hadith narration states that Zachary was cut in two with a saw. See Zachary's story in Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 2, pp. 47–55.
- ¹¹⁹ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 37, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=37>
- ¹²⁰ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 42, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=42>
- ¹²¹ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 45–49, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=45>
- ¹²² *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, p. 214.
- ¹²³ *Surat Mariam* (Mary): 30–31, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=19&verse=30>
- ¹²⁴ *Surat al-Saf* (The Row): 6, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=61&verse=6>
- ¹²⁵ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, p. 216.
- ¹²⁶ Mathew 21, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.21.NIV>
- ¹²⁷ Luke 19, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/LUK.19.NIV>
- ¹²⁸ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2 (1), p. 66; and Luke 23, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/LUK.23.NIV>; and Mathew 27, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.27.NIV>
- ¹²⁹ *Surat al-Nisa'* (The Women): 157–158, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=4&verse=157>
- ¹³⁰ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, p. 217.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 573.
- ¹³² Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2 (1), pp. 68–70.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72; and Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, pp. 91–93.
- ¹³⁴ Zafarul-Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim*, p. 93.
- ¹³⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 117–124; and see Gustave Le Bon, *Les Premières Civilisations* (Paris: Bibliothèque Camille Flammarion, 1889).

Chapter Two

The Islamic Fath of Palestine

The Islamic *Fath* of Palestine

First: Palestine's Islamic Status

Palestine has a special status in the Islamic perception, an awe-inspiring place and a focus for Muslims. Here, we will briefly outline the principal reasons for Palestine earning this status:

- It is the site of the holy *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the first *Qiblah* [the direction Muslims face when performing their prayers] for Muslims and the third holiest mosque in Islam to which pilgrimage is encouraged, and where prayer is considered to equal 500 prayers in other mosques. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (RA) said: the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), “*Do not undertake journey but to three mosques: this mosque of mine, the Mosque of al-Haram [The Holy Mosque] and the Mosque of Aqsa,*”¹ and also “*Prayer in the inviolable mosque [in Makkah] is like 100,000 prayers [elsewhere]. And prayers in my mosque [in Medina] is like one thousand prayers [elsewhere]. And a prayer in Bait al-Maqdis [in Jerusalem] is like five hundred prayers [elsewhere].*”²
- The land of Palestine is blessed, as stated in the Holy Qur’an: “*Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed,*”³ and, “*And We delivered him and Lut to the land which We had blessed for the worlds.*”⁴ Ibn Kathir interpreted the land to be *al-Sham*⁵ (*Bilad al-Sham*, i.e., Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon). In another verse, Allah (SWT) said, “*And to Solomon [We subjected] the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had blessed.*”⁶ Ibn Kathir again interpreted the land to be *al-Sham*.⁷ Also, Allah (SWT) said, “*And We placed between them and the cities which We had blessed [many] visible cities.*”⁸ Ibn ‘Abbas said: “the blessed cities refer to Bait al-Maqdis”.⁹
- The blessing here is actual and moral... because of the fruits and good things in this land, and due to its status as the dwelling-place of prophets and abode of the pure angles.¹⁰
- Palestine is a sacred land in the texts of the Holy Qur’an; Moses (PBUH) said on Allah’s behalf: “*O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you.*”¹¹ Al-Zajjaj said: Holy means pure. Moreover, it was said that

He called it holy because it was cleansed from polytheism; also, it was the home of prophets and believers. Al-Kalbi said: The Holy Land is Damascus, Palestine and parts of Jordan, while Qutadah said it is the whole *al-Sham*.¹²

- Palestine is the land and birthplace of many prophets (PBUT), and was inhabited by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Lut, David, Solomon, Saleh, Zachary, John the Baptist, and Jesus (PBUT), who were all mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. It was also inhabited by many Israelite prophets who were not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, and one of the prophets who was mentioned in the Hadith al-Sahih [Authentic Hadith] was Joshua (*Yusha' bin Nun*) (PBUH).
- When Muslims read the Qur'an, they feel a great bond between them and this land; because the field of conflict between right and wrong is based in this land, and because they believe that they are the inheritors of the prophets and the holders of their banner.
- *Al-Aqsa* Mosque was the Prophet's destination for his night journey from Masjid al-Haram, and then his *M'iraj* (night ascension) to Heaven. In *al-Aqsa* Mosque, *Allah* (SWT) gathered all the prophets, who were led in prayer by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), in an indication of the continuity of the message of monotheism brought by the prophets, and the bequeathal of the heritage of these prophets, the Imamate and the burdens of *Allah's* message to the Islamic nation.
- Angels spread their wings over the land of Palestine, which is part of *al-Sham*; in the Hadith al-Sahih [Authentic Hadith], it was reported that Zaid Bin Thabit (RA) said: "I heard the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) saying: '*Blessings to al-Sham, blessings to al-Sham, blessings to al-Sham!*' They asked why and he replied: '*Because the wings of the angels of the Merciful are lowered over al-Sham.*'"¹³
- Palestine is the land of the final gathering (Mahshar) and Resurrection. Imam Ahmad narrated with his chain of narration that Maymunah Bint Sa'ad the freed (female) slave of the Prophet (SAWS) said: "I said: 'O Messenger of *Allah*, tell us about Bait al-Maqdis [*Al-Aqsa* Mosque].' He said: '*It is the land where all people will be gathered (Al-Mahshar) and resurrected (Al-Manshar).*'"¹⁴
- Palestine is the epicentre and safe haven of Islam in times of adversity and *fitnah* (trials); It was narrated that Salamah Bin Nufail said that the Prophet (SAWS) referred to *Bilad al-Sham* as "*the center of the realm of Islam,*"¹⁵ and

according to ‘Abdullah Bin ‘Amr (RA), he said that the Prophet (SAWS) and “*I saw the spine of the book taken from underneath my pillow, then I looked and it was an extending light directed towards al-Sham. Certainly, safety during tribulations is to be found in al-Sham.*”¹⁶

- Those who inhabit this land are in a constant state of *jihad* [fighting in the way of *Allah* (SWT)] and *ribat* [keeping guard], according to the Prophet (SAWS): “The people of *al-Sham* with their wives and husbands, offspring and slaves to the boundaries of the Peninsula are in a state of *ribat* (keeping guard) in the way of *Allah* (SWT). Whosoever settles in one of its cities is in a state of *ribat* (keeping guard), and whoever occupies a border outpost in it, is in a state of struggle in the way of *Allah* [*jihad*].”¹⁷
- The victorious group that is firm upon the truth lives in *al-Sham*, especially Bait al-Maqdis and its surroundings; this was mentioned in a number of hadiths which interpret and strengthen each other; Abu Umamah reported that the Prophet (SAWS) said, “A group of my Ummah will remain on the truth, they will vanquish their enemy and those who disagree with them will not be able to harm them until commands.” “Where are these people?” the companions (RA) asked. The Prophet (SAWS) said, “In and around Al-Quds (Jerusalem).”¹⁸

This is the status of Palestine from a religious perspective, a position that made it part of the faith and sentiment of Muslims. This position was elevated with the Islamic *fath* (conquest) of Palestine and the occurrence of a number of battles in Islamic history on its soil, such as Ajnadayn, Fahl-Baysan, Yarmouk, Hattin and Ain Jalut. Its status was also promoted when the bloods of the Companions, their followers and the *Mujahideen* mixed with its blessed soil; many of the Companions and their followers, as well as many scholars and their descendants, migrated to and lived in it; and a number of its people rose to prominence as scholars, leaders and governors.

This leads us to one of the aspects of the Islamic solution to liberate the blessed land, which is expanding the circle of conflict to include all Muslims who believe in their rights, not abandoning any part of this land since it is a sacred Islamic territory and part of the Muslims’ faith and sentiment. Muslims’ perception of their duty to liberate the land of Isra’—The Night Journey, and taking practical actions in this regard, are real guarantees toward taking concrete steps in order to achieve the hopes of Muslims of restoring their land and sanctities.

Second: Eyes of Muslims Turn Towards Palestine

The Roman domination over Palestine continued after *Allah* (SWT) had raised Jesus (*'Issa*) up unto Himself. During the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337 CE), Christianity was officially recognized in the famous decree of the Edict of Milan in 313 CE. Constantine himself converted to Christianity and lived in the city of Jerusalem, “where the Christians believe that Jesus Christ was buried in” the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which became the greatest church to Christians. He also built the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, as well as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Constantine himself is the one who built the city of Constantinople, “Istanbul,” in 330 CE.

The Roman Empire was divided into two parts, Eastern and Western, after the death of Emperor Theodosius I in 395 CE. The Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire) was formed, with its capital being Constantinople, besides the Western Roman Empire with its capital Rome. The Western Empire fell in 476 CE, while the Eastern Empire, known to Arabs as the State of Rome, maintained its hegemony, except for a few periods, over Palestine until the Islamic *fath*.¹⁹

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was born in 570 CE, and after forty years, the Revelation came to him. He undertook the responsibility to deliver the Message and conduct *Da 'wah* (calling others to Islam). During his stay in Mecca, which lasted 13 years, he endured a lot of hardship and abuse.²⁰ However, since that time, and before the establishment of the Islamic State, the eyes of the first Muslims yearned for the *al-Aqsa* Mosque as it was their first praying *Qiblah*.²¹ Then came the miracle of *Isra' and Mi 'raj* (night ascension), which extended between the Mosque of al-Haram [The Holy Mosque] and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, followed by ascension to Heaven in the tenth year²² of the *al-Bi 'thah* (Prophetic Mission), thus emphasising the strong link between Islam and the Holy Land of Palestine, where *al-Aqsa* Mosque's precincts were blessed by *Allah* (SWT).

After the establishment of the Islamic State in Medina, and during the Trench Battle (*Ghazwat al-Khandaq*) in 5 AH, when the situation was very difficult due to the alliance of the polytheistic powers against the Muslims, laying a siege around them, *Allah* (SWT) said, “[Remember] when they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached

the throats and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions."²³ During this difficult situation, the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) struck a rock, lighting a spark with each hit; he gave glad tidings to the believers that the Byzantine State would be conquered, as well as Yemen and Persia.²⁴ Consequently, the believers' hearts were hopeful and confident that *Allah's* victory would come, and that the land would be liberated from all authority other than *Allah's*, even from those great powers whose mere mention was enough to strike terror into the hearts of men.

After the consolidation of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), being a Messenger to all mankind, sent his letters to the rulers and kings calling them to accept Islam. His letters sent in 628 CE/ 7 AH were directed to Persia's Khosrow, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire Heraclius and al-Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt. Khosrow tore the letter so the Prophet (SAWS) made du'a' (supplication) to *Allah* (SWT) to tear apart his kingdom. As for Heraclius, narrations say that he inclined to Islam and wanted to convert but he feared the Byzantines for his life and kingdom.²⁵ At the time, Heraclius had won over the Persians and drove them away from *al-Sham*. Perhaps he returned to Jerusalem to thank *Allah* (SWT) for his victory,²⁶ which was referred to in the Holy Qur'an, "*The Byzantines have been defeated; In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome; Within three to nine years.*"²⁷

The *fath* of Khaybar and Fadak, to the north of the Arabian Peninsula, in 7 AH was a prelude to looking forward to *al-Sham*. In Jumada I, 7 AH – September 628 CE, the Mu'tah Battle (*Ghazwat Mu'tah*) took place after one of the Ghassanids' leaders, Shurahbil bin 'Amr al-Ghassani, killed al-Harith bin 'Umair al-Azdi, the messenger of the Prophet (SAWS), when he was carrying a letter to the ruler of Busra. The Muslim army was composed of 3 thousand men, reportedly in the face of 100 thousand Byzantine soldiers, along with another 100 thousand pro-Byzantine Arabs led by Malik bin Rafilah.

The battle took place in eastern Jordan, 11 km to the south of the city of al-Karak. Three Muslim commanders were killed: Zaid bin Harithah, Ja'far bin Abi Talib and 'Abdullah bin Rawahah. Then, Khalid bin al-Walid, who took over leadership, was able to achieve a successful and honourable withdrawal, and the pro-Byzantine Arab leader Malik bin Rafilah was killed in the battle.²⁸

Then came the Tabuk Battle (*Ghazwat Tabuk*) in 630 CE/ 9 AH, initiated by the Prophet (SAWS) himself, with 30 thousand under his leadership, after he learned that the Byzantines and their allies had been preparing their forces against him. However, when he arrived in Tabuk (north of the Arabian Peninsula on the outskirts of *al-Sham*), he realized that the Byzantines did not have numbers there; nevertheless, He (SAWS) cemented the rule of Muslims in those areas and commissioned Khalid bin al-Walid who conquered “Dumat al-Jandal,” while the people of Ayla (on the Gulf of Aqaba), Adhruh, Tayma and Jarbaa were allowed to reconcile with him on the condition that they pay the *jizyah* tax [head tax on free non-Muslims living under Muslim rule].²⁹

With the end of the Prophetic era, some tribes’ subdivisions in eastern Jordan had converted to Islam, including Tubalah, Jerash and subdivisions of Quda‘ah. Before his death, the Prophet (SAWS) was preparing for the dispatch of the army led by Usamah, whom he ordered to start *jihad*; his father, Zaid bin Harithah, was killed and he was chosen leader on the last day of Safar 11 AH – 28 May 632 CE. However, the illness and eventual death of the Prophet (SAWS) on 8 June 632 CE/ 12 Rabi‘ I, 11 AH, delayed the dispatch of the army until Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq’s order came to launch the battle, so Usamah set off in the beginning of Rabi‘ II, 11 AH – 27 June 632 CE. Usamah’s army reinforced the power of Islam on the border of *al-Sham*, and quickly returned to Medina when the Muslims were busy fighting the *Ridda* Wars (the Wars of Apostasy).³⁰

The eyes and hearts of Muslims have for many years yearned for Bait al-Maqdis and the *al-Aqsa* Mosque, even before Palestine was conquered. Moreover, many Qur’anic verses and chapters, which were consecutively revealed to the Prophet (SAWS), talked about the stories of the prophets, with Palestine being the site of these stories (Jacob, Lut, Zachary (*Zakariyya*), John the Baptist (*Yahya*), David (*Dawud*), Solomon (*Suleiman*) and Jesus (*Issa*) (PBUT)), thus strengthening the psychological and religious links with this land.

Third: Contemplations on the Fath Approach and its Motives

Before we begin to talk about the *fath* of the Holy Land, we must pause to explore the method by which the concept of *fath* was built and the motivations that led to it:

First Contemplation: Referring to the truth of *jihad*; it was clear—to any unbiased researcher—that the duty of *jihad* for the sake of *Allah*, delivering the message of Islam to humanity, and striving to win one of the two best things, either victory or martyrdom, are the real goals that prompted Muslims to achieve the greatest and most merciful *fath* movement in history. This movement was not for material benefits or personal interests, or because of scarcity of resources and poverty; nor was it an act of aggression or coercion of people into converting to Islam under raised swords. Rather, *jihad* was against those regimes and authorities, which intervened between Islam and its call to people.

Sayyid Qutb said that the subject of Islam is the “human being” and its arena is this “earth”; it is a general declaration of the liberation of “humans” on “earth” from every authority other than the authority of *Allah*. It is a concrete, dynamic and positive declaration aimed at the practical application of a system governing mankind by the law of *Allah*. He adds that Islam is not just a doctrine; it initially aims to remove man-made regimes and governments, so that the system governing mankind becomes based on the worship of *Allah* alone, receiving the laws from *Him* alone, and then each individual is free to embrace any doctrine they wish under this general system. He believes that Islam is the universal foundation to which all mankind must return to and make peace with; no political system or material force should stand against its *Da‘wah*; nothing should be in the way between Islam and the individual who is free to choose it or not choose it, by his own will, on the condition that he does not confront or fight it; should he do so, Islam must fight him.³¹

Jihad for the sake of *Allah* is not *jihad* unless it is intended for the sake of *Allah*, and in accordance with what *Allah* has prescribed; Hasan al-Banna said:

Allah did not ordain *jihad* for the Muslims so that it may be used as a tool of oppression or tyranny or so that it may be used by some to further their personal gains. Rather *jihad* is used to safeguard the mission of spreading Islam. This would guarantee peace and the means of implementing the Supreme Message. This is a responsibility which the Muslims bear, this Message guiding mankind to truth and justice.... The Muslims in war had only one concern and this was to make the name of *Allah* Supreme, there was no room at all for any other objective. The wish for glory and reputation [are] forbidden to the Muslims. The love of wealth, the misappropriation of the benefits of war and striving to conquer through unjust methods are all made forbidden to the Muslim. Only one intention [is] possible and that [is] the offering of sacrifice and the taking of pains for the guidance of mankind.³²

Jihad in the Islamic understanding is linked to the concept that it is “for the sake of *Allah*,” with its reward being “Paradise.” No self-reward to attain in this world since it involves sacrificing one’s self and money; see *Allah* (SWT)’s words: “Indeed, *Allah* has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of *Allah*, so they kill and are killed.”³³

Second Contemplation: The *fath* of *Bilad al-Sham*—and other lands—was planned and accomplished on the basis of sincere desire to fight for the sake of *Allah*, and on that basis it started. Muslims applied the connotations of *jihad* during their *futuh*. When any honest researcher turns the pages of history and the records of the past, he will find real commitment on the part of the Companions and the Conquerors to the meaning of the Islamic *jihad*, its purpose, objectives and constraints. As an example, we will cite what was stated with regard to the *al-Sham futuh*.

When Abu Bakr al-Siddiq sent Anas bin Malik in Rabi‘ II, 12 AH – June 633 CE to the people of Yemen for the purpose of conquering *al-Sham*, he wrote to them:

...Before you all, verily, *Allah* has made *jihad* obligatory for the Believers and has commanded them to proceed go forth [in the path of *Allah*], [whether equipped] lightly or heavily, and said, “*strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah.*” *Jihad* is a greatly emphasized obligation and its rewards with *Allah* are tremendous. We have prepared the Muslims to march in *jihad* against the Byzantines in *al-Sham*. They have hastened to it with noble intentions and with great hopes of being rewarded. Therefore, O servants of *Allah*, you should hasten to what *Allah* has asked. You are assured one of two excellent virtues; either martyrdom or victory and booty. For *Allah* is not pleased with only words from His servants that are not accompanied by actions. He shall not leave His enemies until they believe in what is right and accept the instructions of the Qur’an, or until they give the *jizyah* (tax) willingly while they are humbled...³⁴

Abu Bakr advised Yazid bin Abi Sufyan when he went forth with his army to *al-Sham*, saying: “Fear *Allah* since he sees you from inside just like from outside. The worthiest of *Allah* are those who fear Him the most, and the closest people to *Allah* are those who are the most devout to Him...”³⁵

In another piece of advice from Abu Bakr to Yazid, he said:

O Yazid! I advise you to fear and obey *Allah*, prefer Him and fear Him, and if you confront an enemy and achieve victory over him, you shall not overdo; you shall not engage in treachery; you shall not act unfaithfully; you shall not engage in deception; you shall not indulge in mutilation; you shall not act cowardly; you shall kill neither a young child nor an old man nor a woman; you shall not fell palm trees or burn them, you shall not cut down [any] fruit-bearing tree; you shall not slaughter a sheep or a cow or a camel except for food. You will pass people who occupy themselves in monks' cells; leave them alone, and leave alone what they busy themselves with. If you encounter an enemy from amongst the Associators (infidels), then offer them three alternatives. Whichever of these they may accept, agree to it and withhold yourself from them: call them to embrace Islam. If they accept, then agree to it and withhold yourself from them. If, however, they refuse, then call them to pay the *jizyah* (protection tax). If they accept, then agree to it and withhold yourself from them. If they refuse, then seek help from Allah and combat them, God willing. *Allah* will surely support those who support Him and His messengers unseen.³⁶

Part of Abu Bakr's advice to Khalid bin Sa'id was "...you have gone forth desiring this great reward, and I hope that your going forth was out of a **sincere intention**, *Allah* willing."³⁷

In his farewell to Abu 'Ubaidah when he went forth with his army to *al-Sham*, Abu Bakr said:

Listen up like someone keen to understand what is being said to him, and then does what he is being ordered. You are leaving with the noblest of people, the best amongst Arabs, the most righteous of Muslims and the knights of *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic era), who used to fight out of zeal but now they fight out of good faith and sincere intention. Rely upon *Allah*, and sufficient is *Allah* as Disposer of affairs. Go forth tomorrow, *Allah* willing.³⁸

The next day, Abu Bakr came to him before his departure and said:

O Abu 'Ubaidah, do good, live as a Mujahid [the one who fights in the way of *Allah* (SWT)] and die as a martyr! [if you do so], *Allah* will give you your record in your right hand, and you will be content with your world and Hereafter. I swear by *Allah* that I wish you to be amongst those who repeatedly turn back to *Allah*; who are repentant, ascetic and devout in this world, and who desire the Hereafter. *Allah* has made you good and brought good to you, having made you in charge of directing an army of Muslims towards their polytheist enemies, combating those who disbelieve in *Allah*, associate partners with Him and worship besides Him other deities.³⁹

In his farewell to ‘Amr bin al-‘As, Abu Bakr said: “Fear *Allah* in your secret and in public, show shyness to Him when you are alone because He sees your doings. Seek the countenance of *Allah* in your deeds and fear *Allah* when you face the enemy.”⁴⁰

When Abu Bakr al-Siddiq sent Khalid bin al-Walid to conquer *al-Sham*, some of what he wrote to him was:

...the masses of the troops, with *Allah*’s help, didn’t worry when you got worried. May your intention and your favoured position gladden you, Abu Sulaiman! Therefore, complete [your work], so that *Allah* may make [it] complete for you. Do not by any means let self-admiration enter you, so that you lose and fail. See that you do not rely upon any work [of yours], for *Allah* controls the bestowal of favour, and He is the Owner of reward.⁴¹

These are some of the selected anthologies at the start of the *fath* campaign. Much more could be said, but these are sufficient to emphasize the foundations on which the movements of *jihad* and *futuh* were launched. As for how the Companions fared along those guidelines when they fought their battles; how they conducted *Da‘wah*; and how they increased their expansion, we will leave that to the examples provided later on in this text.

Third Contemplation: We will also focus on an important aspect in Abu Bakr’s advice to the commanders of the Muslim armies going forth to conquer *al-Sham*: the leadership of a Muslim army and some methods of conduct. It is one of the finest and most admirable pieces on army management, giving the Muslim army a religious dimension to deliver its message. This distinguishes the army’s conduct at the individual and leadership levels; combines discipline with obedience out of love and conviction; prevents the imposition of commanders on individual soldiers; necessitates consultation and moral charging; takes into account confidentiality; and emphasizes that *jihad* is a form of worship and a sincere act for the sake of *Allah*.

Abu Bakr’s advice to Yazid when he was going forth to *al-Sham*:

When you associate with your soldiers, be a good company, be the first to do good and promise them good. When you preach, make it short, as a lot of words cannot be wholly grasped. Better yourself so people become better. Perform prayer on time, completing *Ruku‘* (bowing), *Sujud* (prostration) and submissiveness. If you receive an enemy messenger, be generous to him, shorten their stay so that they leave your camp

unknowing. Do not show them around lest they see your weaknesses and know your plans. Prevent others from talking to them and be the sole person to speak, and do not expose your secrets lest your status will be questioned. When you request consultation, speak the truth to receive truthful consultation; do not keep anything from your advisor lest you become vulnerable. Have evening conversations with your companions to get news and discover secrets. Increase your guards and spread them within your camp, and surprise them at their posts without prior notice, and whoever you find away from his post, discipline and punish him without excess. Alternate between guards at night, making the first shift longer than the next, since the first is closer to daytime. Fear not to punish the one who deserves punishment, trying neither to exaggerate it, rush to it nor abandon it. Do not neglect your camp's troops lest they spoil, do not spy on them lest you expose them, and do not reveal their secrets and limit yourself to what they declare about themselves. Do not keep agitators' company and sit with people of honesty and loyalty. Be true to your appointments and do not be a coward lest people do; and shun fraud as it brings poverty and delays victory...⁴²

In another narration, Abu Bakr said to Yazid in his farewell: "and if you give a promise, keep it, and when you discover an enemy's exploit, keep it to yourself until you examine it...be true to your meetings, and do not be a coward lest others do."⁴³

Part of Abu Bakr's advice to 'Amr bin al-'As was: "...Be like an affectionate father towards your men. Do not race in your march, amongst them are frail and weak ones. Do not be lazy or negligent in the task to which you have been appointed. Avoid being frail by saying, Ibin Abi Quhafah sent me against an enemy whom I'm weak to conquer." He also ordered him to be charitable to the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar*, then he continued: "do not listen to Satan, thinking 'Because Abu Bakr appointed me over them, I must be better than them.' Consider yourself but a fellow soldier with them. Consult them in whatever task presents itself." Then he emphasized the importance of prayers and ordered him:

Call azan as soon as the time of prayers sets in.... When you preach, make it short, and better yourself so you people become better...., urge your companions to read the Qur'an, and prevent them from discussing the pre-Islamic period since this will lead to enmity. Turn away from worldly beauty and adornment until you meet those who have gone before you...⁴⁴

When Abu Bakr advised Khalid bin Sa'id, some of what he said was:

...support the scholar, teach the ignorant, admonish the extravagant fool, advise the Muslim public and privilege the troops' leader with advice and consultation about *Allah's* and Muslims' claim on you. Worship *Allah* as if you see Him. Consider yourself amongst the dead, and know that soon we will all die, then be resurrected, questioned and called to our account. May *Allah* make you and us amongst those who are grateful to His blessings and fearful of his anger.⁴⁵

Fourth: First Steps

Muslim elimination of apostasy that spread in the Arabian Peninsula after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), continued until the end of 11 AH/ February 633 CE, and with the beginning of 12 AH/ March 633 CE, Khalid bin al-Walid marched with an army of 18 thousand to Iraq, achieving consecutive victories there (Battle of Chains in Muḥarram 12 AH, Battle of al-Mathar in Safar 12 AH, Battle of Walajah in Safar 12 AH, Battle of Ullayis in Safar 12 AH, Battle of Amghishia in Safar 12 AH and Battle of Hira Rabi' I, 12 AH).⁴⁶ Then Shurahbil bin Hasnah returned from Iraq to bring glad tidings to Abu Bakr about the *fath* of Hira. Shurahbil saw a vision in his dream, which he interpreted to be the *fath* of *al-Sham*, and narrated that to Abu Bakr who told him that he was also thinking of conquering *al-Sham*.⁴⁷

On 30 Rabi' I, 12 AH – 14 June 633 CE, Abu Bakr gathered the senior Companions and consulted them about the *fath* of *al-Sham*. They agreed with him as they knew he was a proponent of religion and keen on Muslims. Then Abu Bakr called people for *jihad*, however, "By *Allah*, no one answered his call, in fear of invading the Byzantines, knowing their large numbers and strong force." 'Umar bin al-Khattab stood up and urged them to fight, then Khalid bin Sa'id came forth and gave an impressive speech, so Abu Bakr appointed him as a commander. Next, Khalid bin Sa'id announced that he and his family are forever entailed in the sake of *Allah*. Abu Bakr tied the banner for Khalid bin Sa'id, which was the first banner tied for the *fath* of *al-Sham* in 2 Rabi' II, 12 AH – 16 June 633 CE. 'Umar bin al-Khattab advised Abu Bakr not to make Khalid bin Sa'id in charge of the army because he was not qualified, so Abu Bakr appointed him as a leader of only a limited force and ordered him to camp in Tayma' as a reserve force.⁴⁸

Then Abu Bakr informed Yazid bin Abi Sufyan, Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah, Mu‘adh bin Jabal and Shurahbil bin Hasnah that he had decided to dispatch them and appoint them as leaders of the troops, and should their forces meet, then their leader will be Abu ‘Ubaidah. Then Abu Bakr sent a letter to Yemen calling the people to fight with Anas bin Malik. Subsequently, the Muslim regiments started to gather and prepare for *Jihad* from all sides.⁴⁹

The army of Yazid bin Abi Sufyan, consisting of about seven thousand men, was the first to go forth to *al-Sham* , and that probably took place on 23 Rajab 12 AH – 3 October 633 CE. The army of Shurahbil followed about four days later, then the army of Abu ‘Ubaidah followed Shurahbil’s about ten days later, and Mu‘adh bin Jabal was in the army of Abu ‘Ubaidah. Then Abu Bakr sent Khalid bin Sa‘id to join the army of Abu ‘Ubaidah.⁵⁰

Learning about the Muslim movements, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire Heraclius withdrew from Palestine around 23 Sha‘ban 12 AH – 2 November 633 CE; first to Damascus, then to Homs and then to Antioch, reaching it on 18/11/633 CE. There, he established his headquarters, organized his armies and mobilized his troops to confront the Muslims.⁵¹

Yazid’s army camped in the Balqa’ area to the east of Jordan, and Shurahbil’s army camped in the sub districts of Busra, while Abu ‘Ubaidah’s army camped in al-Jabiyah. Abu Bakr appointed ‘Amr bin al-‘As as a commander of a fourth army of two to three thousand men, with Quraysh’s notables and gentlefolk, such as ‘Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl, Suhail bin ‘Amr, al-Harith bin Hisham, joining this army. ‘Amr followed the battle route to Ayla heading toward Palestine.⁵²

After Abu Bakr learned of the huge Byzantine crowds, and upon receiving information about Khalid bin al-Walid’s important victories in Iraq, he sent a message to Khalid, around 21 Muharram 13 AH – 28 March 634 CE, asking him to go to *al-Sham* to aid the Muslims. Khalid moved from Iraq around 8 Safar 13 AH – 14 April 634 CE with reinforcements of nine thousand men, making the total number of the Islamic forces in *al-Sham* 33 thousand.⁵³

Muslim Camps in *Bilad al-Sham*



Source: Site of Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Muhammad_adil-Muslim_invasion_of_Syria-2.PNG

Battle Preparations

At the time when the Muslim armies were advancing to conquer *al-Sham*, Heraclius was preparing his armies and reinforcements to face the Muslims in Antioch. The news about the gigantic Byzantine masses reached Abu ‘Ubaidah so he sent to inform Abu Bakr, who replied to him in a letter, in Shawwal 12 AH – December 633 CE, which stated:

I have received your letter and understood what you mentioned about Heraclius, the Byzantine king. As for his positioning in Antioch, it is a defeat to him and his lot, and a victory from *Allah* to you and the Muslims. As for what you stated concerning Heraclius’ amassing of his kingdom’s people and gathering of his troops against you, we and you had already foreshadowed that they would do that. No people would gather their forces and leave their kingdom without fighting. I believe, thank *Allah*, that those many going forth [with you] are Muslim men who love death as much as their enemies love life, and in their fight hope to receive a great reward [from *Allah*]; men who love *jihad* in the sake of *Allah* more than their virgin women and the best of their money. One of these men in *fath* is better than a thousand of the polytheists; so move at them with your soldiers, and do not be troubled by whomever Muslims was absent because *Allah* is with you. Nevertheless, I will reinforce you with more men until you see it’s enough, and you do not need more, *Allah* willing.⁵⁴

First Battles

The first battle on the land of *al-Sham* after Usamah bin Zaid’s brigade was the Battle of al-‘Arabah and Dathinah (24 Dhul Hijjah 12 AH – March 634 CE). The Byzantines had dispatched a force of three thousand fighters to the city of Gaza, and they had likely headed toward Wadi ‘Arabah, south of the Dead Sea. There, they encountered a Muslim force. The Muslims defeated the Byzantines and killed one of their commanders. Then the Byzantine force retreated, but the Muslims pursued them. Again, the two forces met in Dathin near Gaza, and the Byzantines were defeated once again.⁵⁵

Khalid Bin al-Walid Becomes Commander-In-Chief

It seems that the Battle of al-‘Arabah and Dathinah was closer to a test of strength, and it appears that the Byzantines were becoming more aware of the gravity of the situation, so they gathered and amassed their forces. Therefore, Abu Bakr sent to Khalid bin al-Walid to relieve the Muslims in *al-Sham*. Khalid arrived hastily in Safar 13 AH – April 634 CE and took over as commander-in-chief of the Muslim armies in *al-Sham* instead of Abu ‘Ubaidah.⁵⁶

Fifth: Battle of Ajnadayn

The Battle of Ajnadayn was the first significant battle in the *fath* of *al-Sham*, and it took place in Palestine. Ajnadayn has no mention in the maps; however, according to Ahmad ‘Adel Kamal’s deduction, it lies 11 km north of Bayt Jibrin and 39 km south of Ramlah.⁵⁷

The five Muslim armies (Abu ‘Ubaidah, Khalid, Yazid, Shurahbil and ‘Amr) met in the area of Ajnadayn under the leadership of Khalid bin al-Walid, with their number estimated at 33 thousand men, while the Byzantine forces were about 100 thousand men.⁵⁸

On the day of battle, Saturday, 27 Jumada I, 13 AH – 30 July 634 CE, Mu‘adh bin Jabal, commander of the Muslim army’s right wing, repeatedly said, “O Muslims, sell yourselves today for *Allah*. If you defeat them today, this country will be forever a country of Islam, and you will attain *Allah*’s satisfaction and great reward.”⁵⁹ Under these religious and divine beliefs, the Muslims fought their battle on the land of Palestine.

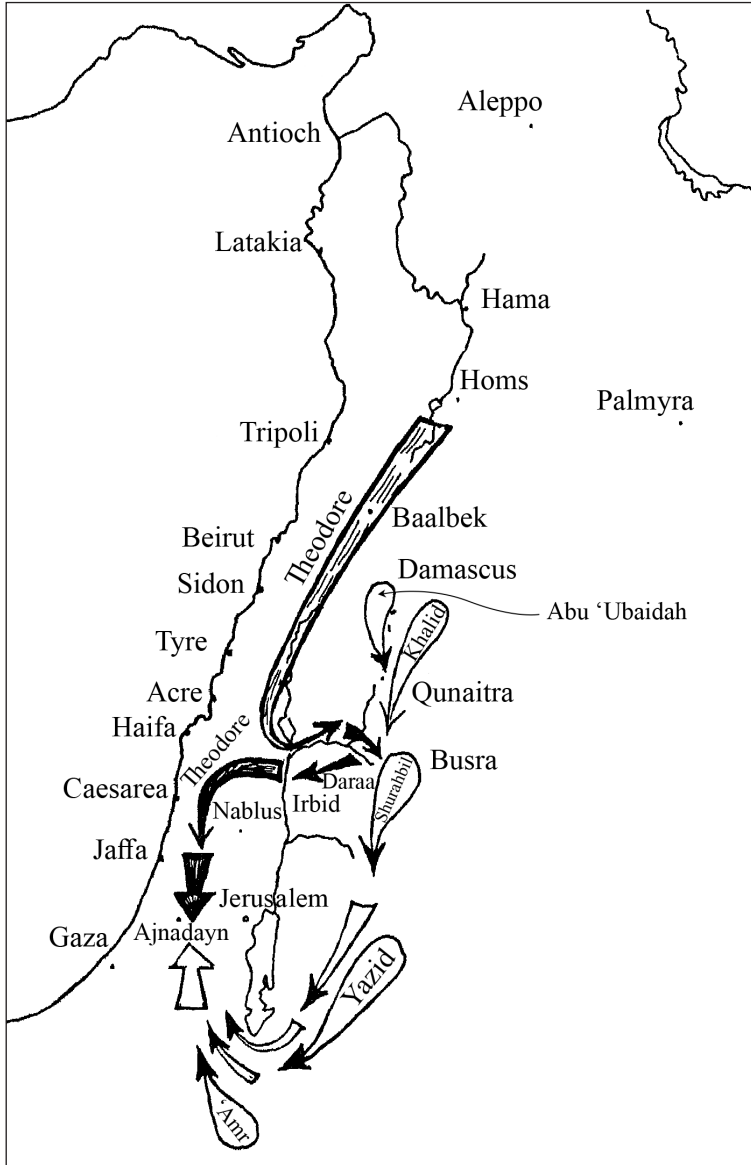
The Byzantines attacked the Muslim army’s right wing then its left, but the Muslims withstood the attacks; then they attacked the Muslims with arrows... After that, the Muslims attacked and defeated them very quickly. Al-Tabari reported Ibn Ishaq as saying that “the Byzantine commander said to them: ‘Wrap a cloth around my head’; they asked him: ‘What for?’ He replied: ‘I do not want to witness such a miserable day!! I have never seen in my life a severer day than this.’ Then the Muslims cut off his head, still wrapped in the cloth.”⁶⁰

Around three thousand Byzantines were killed in this battle, and their remnant forces scattered to Jerusalem, Caesarea, Damascus and Homs. Amongst the killed Muslims were Aban bin Sa‘id bin al-‘As, Hisham bin al-‘As, brother of ‘Amr bin al-‘As and Tulaib bin ‘Umair bin Wahab, son of Arwa bint ‘Abdul al-Muttalib, aunt of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).⁶¹

This battle represented a great victory for the Muslims, and the Byzantines’ prestige was shattered. The Muslims could indeed feel the merits of faith, patience and endurance in the face of their enemies’ numbers and equipment... They proceeded to continue their *futuh* with determination and steadfastness honed by skill and experience.

It appears that the Muslims did not complete their *futuh* of Palestine after this battle, as their forces did not head north; rather, they headed toward Damascus, going around the southern region of the Dead Sea, crossing eastern Jordan.

Battle of Ajnadayn



Source: Ahmad ‘Adil Kamil, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq (Fath Bilad al-Sham)* (The Route to Damascus (Fath of Bilad al-Sham) (Beirut: Dar al-Nafais, 1980), p. 271.

In **Marj al-Suffar**, about 38 km south of Damascus, the Muslims met with the Byzantine forces and defeated them on 17 Jumada II, 13 AH – 18 August 634 CE. Abu Bakr received this good news about the victory in his dying moment, for he died (RA) on Tuesday evening, 21 Jumada II, 13 AH – 23 August 634 CE.⁶²

Sixth: Khalid's Dismissal

‘Umar bin al-Khattab (RA) took over as caliph after Abu Bakr (RA); he ordered that Khalid be removed from the leadership of the *al-Sham* armies, then he sent to Abu ‘Ubaidah on around 26 Jumada II, 13 AH – 28 August 634 CE appointing him in Khalid’s place; the news probably reached Abu ‘Ubaidah after almost a week. ‘Umar’s letter to Abu ‘Ubaidah read:

I have made you in charge of the Muslims so do not be shy, because *Allah* is not shy of the truth. I advise you to fear *Allah*, Who has brought you out from disbelief into belief, and from misguidance to guidance. I have put you in charge of the army of Khalid bin al-Walid. Therefore, take charge of his soldiers and depose him of his leadership position. Do not advance the Muslims to destruction hoping for a war booty, and don’t let a company of soldiers face a huge number. Shut off your sight from this world and divert your heart from it. Do not at all let it destroy you as it destroyed those before you, whose deaths you have seen and secrets you have known. There is only a thin veil between you and the Hereafter, and I can almost see you awaiting a journey from a place whose bloom has disappeared and whose beauty has withered. The most judicious of people is he whose provision is piety...⁶³

Such were the letters of appointment in the time of the Companions: Clear, specific and full of care and mercy toward the believing soldiers. A call to increase piety and attach the heart to the Hereafter, and a balanced harmony between obligation, work and worship.

We do not want to discuss Khalid’s dismissal, but we will consider for a moment an act done by those great Companions who conquered the land of Palestine. Khalid knew of his dismissal without Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah telling him, and he kept carrying out his duties as commander-in-chief, with Abu ‘Ubaidah praying behind him... Khalid gently reproached Abu ‘Ubaidah wondering why he had not told him when it was in his authority to do so... Abu ‘Ubaidah replied:

I seek not the worldly authority and work not for a worldly reward... We are but brothers carrying out *Allah*’s (SWT) orders. It hurts not a man when his brother in religion, rather than his worldly brother, rules over him. The ruler is closer than the two to fitna (trials) and sin-making because he is more exposed to calamities, except those whom *Allah* (SWT) has protected and few they are.⁶⁴

One of the most important advantages of Islamic education, which reflects positively on the success of the Islamic *jihad* approach, is abstention from self-benefit and prejudice, instead attaching the heart and deeds to the Hereafter. Thus, conflict and rivalry over positions and titles lessen, and there is more competition for generosity and sacrifice, hence achieving *Barakah* (blessing) in all activities under the best psychological conditions. Contemporary Muslim leaders are required to be an example in this context. If the Mujahideen had sincerely referred to Abu ‘Ubaidah’s words, they could have overcome their problems, defeated their enemies, and restored Islam’s glory, state and revival.

Seventh: Battle of Fahl-Baysan

The Battle of Fahl-Baysan is one of the most prominent battles fought by the Muslims in their *fath* of *al-Sham*. It took place on the banks of the Jordan River. The Muslims had camped in Fahl, east of the Jordan River, while the Byzantine camp was in Baysan, west of the Jordan River (to the northwest of Fahl). However, the battlefield was in Palestine with its current border to the south of Baysan. The Byzantines numbered 50 thousand, or reportedly 80, whereas the Muslims were around 26 thousand and less than 30 thousand.⁶⁵

Before the battle, the Byzantines sent word to Abu ‘Ubaidah saying, “You and whoever is with you, your companions and people of your religion, must leave our land which grows wheat, barley, grapes and fruits, as you do not belong here. Return to your land, the land of misery and despair. Otherwise, we will come at you with what you cannot handle, and we will not leave anyone of you with his eyes blinking.”⁶⁶

Abu ‘Ubaidah replied:

As for your statement, Get out of our country, you do not belong to this land for it does not belong to a specific people. I swear we will not leave it as *Allah* has humiliated you there and made us inherit it [the land], taking it away from your hands and giving it to us. All land belongs to *Allah* and all people are servants of *Allah*, and *Allah* is Owner of Sovereignty, He gives His sovereignty to whom He will and takes sovereignty away from whom He will. He honours whom He will and humbles whom He will..., Do not think that we will leave it or give it away until we kill you all and force you out; so stay [if you wish], and do not think that if you do not come to us, we will not come to you. If you stand your ground and wait for us, we will not leave you until we annihilate you and eliminate you, *Allah* willing.⁶⁷

Such was the answer of the Muslim leadership: pride, dignity and supremacy, coupled with a deep understanding of the Islamic message and the development of history. Abu ‘Ubaidah summarized it all with only one statement: “You do not belong to this land for it does not belong to a specific people.” A psychological war, responding to the threat with a stronger threat, and stressing the persistence in spreading the message and conquering the land.

Next, the Byzantines requested a man to negotiate with, so Abu ‘Ubaidah sent Mu‘adh bin Jabal. Upon reaching their place, he saw they were sitting on mattresses and pillows in a scene of magnificence that would leave one in awe; however, Mu‘adh refused to sit on the mattresses with their leaders... and sat next to the mattresses on the bare floor. They said to him, “You would be more dignified if you came closer and sat with us...; the fact that you chose to sit on the floor is what a slave would do to himself. We see that you have belittled yourself.” Mu‘adh replied that this honour to which they were calling him was something with which they favoured themselves over their weaker people, and “we need not the honour of this world, not its pride, nor anything that could keep us from our God.” As for what they said about him acting like a slave, he said, “I am one of *Allah*’s slaves who has sat on one of His expanses; I take nothing from *Allah* to myself over my brothers, the allies of *Allah*...; I care not about my place in your eyes if my place with *Allah* was otherwise...”

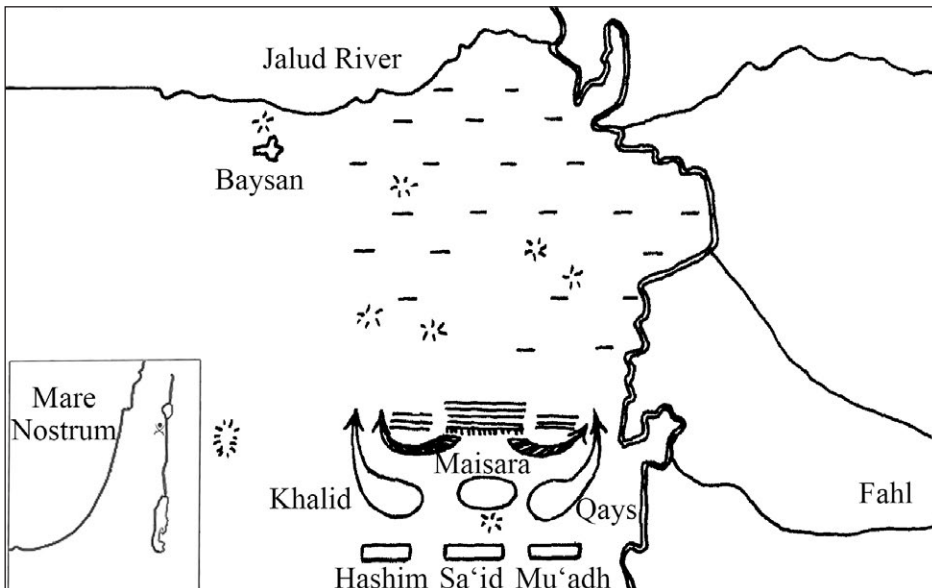
The Byzantines tried to boast their strength to Mu‘adh, saying: “Our king is alive, and our soldiers are huge in number..., our troops are as many as the stars of the heavens and the stones of the earth.” Then they asked him about the Muslims’ requests, and he called them to one of three: Islam, *jizyah* or war, saying to them:

If your King is Heraclius, *Allah* (SWT), who created us, is our King, and our leader is a man from amongst us. If he acts in accordance with the Book of *Allah* (the Qur’an) and the Sunnah of our Prophet (SAWS), we approve him; however, if he acts otherwise, we dismiss him. If he steals, we amputate his hand; if he commits *zina* (adultery), we flog him; if he curses one of us, he [the cursed will] curse him in a similar fashion; and if he wounds one of us, we inflict a similar wound on him. He does not conceal himself from us, nor does he deal arrogantly with us; he does not take to himself what *Allah* has granted us; he is like [any] man of us... As for you saying: “our soldiers are many”; if our troops were as many as the stars of the heavens and the stones of the earth, we do not trust in them, nor rely on them, nor hope for victory over our enemy because of

them. We renounce any power or strength and rely on *Allah* (SWT) and trust him; how many a small company whom *Allah* has honoured, enriched and made victorious, overcame a large company by permission of *Allah*, and how many a large company whom *Allah* has humbled and humiliated.

The Byzantines made an offer to Mu‘adh, saying they would give the Muslims Balqa’, extending to the Arab land, comprising the majority of Jordan, and invited them to fight the people of Persia and promised them support. Mu‘adh said, “What you have offered to give us is all in our hands, and even if you gave us all that is in your hands, which we have not yet conquered, but abstained from any of the three alternatives we have put forth, we would not accept.” They were angry with him and said, “We approach you and you keep away from us. Go to your lot; we swear that we will obliterate you in the mountains tomorrow.” Mu‘adh said, “You will not win in the mountains; I swear either we all die or we expel you from your land in humiliation, and you will be debased.”⁶⁸

Battle of Fahl – Baysan



Source: Ahmad ‘Adil Kamil, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq (Fath Bilad al-Sham)*, p. 338.

Regarding this rich negotiation scene, we make a quick reference to the following points:

- Nowadays, many of our leaders and negotiators suffer from an inferiority complex, lacking confidence in themselves or their cause, and try to

compensate for that by imitating their “opponents” in dress, prestige and appearance. This is their first sign of defeat.

- When the Byzantines tried to belittle Mu‘adh bin Jabal’s personal behaviour, he responded by emphasizing the meanings of the Islamic message, manifested in being servants to *Allah* and having no interest in worldly adornment. He exposed the defects of the Byzantine social-leadership behaviour as being unjust and arrogant toward the vulnerable; hence, his response was stronger, showing supremacy with his faith, behaviour and approach.
- When they threatened him with their king and numbers, he ascribed kingship to *Allah* (SWT), then challenged their leadership approach and the unjust subordination to their kings, explaining the methodology and nature of the Islamic leadership. He drove the Byzantines to wish they could treat their leader as the Muslims do. In addition, he replied to the matter of numbers by ascribing it to *Allah* in Whose hand is the realm of all things.
- All that in a manner of pride, strength and modesty, as well as insistence on calling to one of the three alternatives, and responding to the threat with a stronger and more effective one.

What could have been the feelings of Muslims when they read about this attitude of the Companions who conquered Palestine, compared to the attitude of those who are bargaining with it in our time (Gaza – Jericho...?!).

The Byzantines then sent one of their group to Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah to negotiate with him, and that resulted in a situation similar to what happened with Mu‘adh; upon approaching the Muslims, the man was not able to identify the leader. So, he asked about him, and they said, “There he is”...He looked and realized Abu ‘Ubaidah was sitting on the ground, putting a bow on his shoulder, and tipping arrows over in his hand; the Byzantine was astonished by that and asked him why he was sitting on the ground. Abu ‘Ubaidah said, “I no longer have a dinar or a dirham [have no money], and I have nothing but my horse, my weapons and my sword... If I had a rug or a pillow, I would not sit on it without my brothers and companions...” The Byzantine made an offer to Abu ‘Ubaidah, giving each Muslim fighter two dinars and a dress, giving Abu ‘Ubaidah one thousand dinars, and giving Caliph ‘Umar two thousand, as well as giving the Muslims the land of Balqa’ and the majority of Jordan on the condition that they return after signing covenants in that regard. Abu ‘Ubaidah refused and told him

that *Allah* ordered them to offer the enemy one of three: Islam, *jizyah* or war... So, the Byzantine departed.⁶⁹ The Byzantines had to realize that the Muslims had a message, and that they were not selling their message in exchange for a worldly offer, and that is also a lesson for those historians who brag about an economic motivation and factors of hunger and thirst, which they claim drove the Muslims to carry out the movement of Islamic *fath*.

The commander of the Byzantines in the battle was Theodore the Sacellarius (Saqalar), and the commander of the Muslims was Abu ‘Ubaidah. In the last third of the night of Monday, 28 Dhu al-Qi‘dah 13 AH – 23 January 635 CE, the Muslims were mobilized and organized. They prayed Fajr, then Abu ‘Ubaidah put Mu‘adh bin Jabal in charge of the right wing, Hashim bin ‘Utbah bin Abi Waqqas the left, Sa‘id bin Zaid bin ‘Amr bin Nufail in charge of the infantry and Khalid bin al-Walid in charge of the cavalry; then he led them and crossed the river toward the Byzantines.⁷⁰

As for the Byzantines, they thought that the Muslims in Fahl did not expect them to cross the river toward them, and their commander thought that if they did, they would find them asleep, thus surprising them. So, he led his army toward Fahl.⁷¹

In the morning the battle began, and the fighting was the fiercest they had ever experienced. Khalid bin al-Walid alone killed 11 of their strongest men and patriarchs. The Muslims won, and 80 thousand Byzantines were said to be wounded; however, only those who were able to flee escaped.⁷² Al-Baladhuri mentioned that around 10 thousand Byzantines were killed.⁷³

In this battle, the Muslims were victorious on the land of Jordan and gained the best of what the Byzantines had left in its countryside, thus securing abundant food and other resources. The Byzantines started moving to fortresses, horrified by what had happened, with many of their knights and wealthy men fleeing to Caesarea and Jerusalem.⁷⁴

Heading North

Although the Muslims defeated the Byzantines on two major occasions on the land of Palestine, one in the south, “Ajnadayn,” and another in the north, “Fahl-Baysan,” they did not continue to conquer the rest of Palestine; rather, they headed north and besieged Damascus for four months until they conquered it on

Sunday 15 Rajab 14 AH – 3 September 635 CE. Then they peacefully conquered Baalbek in late Rabi' I, 15 AH – early May 636 CE. Following that, they peacefully conquered Homs on 21 Rabi' II, 15 AH – 1 June 636 CE after a siege which lasted 18 nights. Next, Abu 'Ubaidah sent his soldiers to Aleppo and in the direction of Al-Jazira, but 'Umar bin al-Khattab asked him to gather his troops and halt. At the time, great preparations were being made for the Battle of Qadisiyyah between the Muslims and the Persians, while the Byzantines were also preparing for a decisive and crucial battle. Therefore, Abu 'Ubaidah summoned Khalid bin al-Walid and sent him to Damascus where he settled with a thousand Muslims. He also commissioned 'Amr bin al-'As to stay with his army in Palestine.⁷⁵

Eighth: Battle of Yarmouk

Heraclius, during the previous consecutive defeats, had still been residing in Antioch, mobilizing his forces and sending them to fight. It seems that when Damascus fell, and perhaps before, he wanted to mobilize the strongest force possible in preparation for a decisive battle. Narrations differ with regard to the number of the Byzantines assembled, with some narrators saying that no end could be seen to the massed ranks. Al-Azadi described them, saying, "They spread onto the land like the night [when darkness veils the light]; like a flood, as if they were a swarm of locusts."⁷⁶ The narrators' estimates ranged between 100 and 400 thousand. Perhaps the closest to the truth was that they were 200 thousand, led by Vahan, while the number of Muslims was 36 thousand, one thousand of them were Companions (RA), of whom 100 witnessed the Battle of Badr.⁷⁷

When the news of the great Roman masses reached Abu 'Ubaidah, and while the Muslims had been roaming the land of *al-Sham*, the leadership of the Muslim army decided to retreat and withdraw from Homs, returning *jizyah* to its people, as they were no longer unable to protect them.⁷⁸ Although 'Umar bin al-Khattab disliked this opinion, he approved their consensus on it and sent to them a force led by Sa'id bin 'Amer. He said to Sa'id, "I have appointed you as a leader of this army, and you are not the best of these men unless you are the most *Allah* fearing of them; do not insult their honour; do not batter their skins;

do not debase their weak; do not favour their strong; be a follower of the truth; and do not follow an aberrant desire...”⁷⁹ Thus, the relationship between leaders and soldiers in the Islamic army is distinguished by the leaders’ respect for the soldiers’ humanity and feelings, ensuring equality and justice amongst them. This is contrary to what happens in some armies, where staff of higher ranks do everything to humiliate those under them under the pretext of discipline, creating a relationship based on hatred and fear rather than on love, conviction and loyalty.

Abu ‘Ubaidah came back to Damascus, and the Muslims returned to the people what was levied from them.⁸⁰ The Muslims deemed it appropriate to gather and wait for their enemy and stand by awaiting the arrival of reinforcements..., they went forth toward Jordan, and the Roman army started its march, with Christians in the areas along their path joining it, and they plucked up courage against the Muslims.⁸¹ Abu ‘Ubaidah sent word to ‘Umar bin al-Khattab, “The Byzantines have mobilised their troops and moved toward the Muslims by land and sea, and have not left behind any man who could take up arms in order to attack us; they have brought with them priests and bishops, and monks have left their cells to join them. They have sought the support of the people of Armenia and al-Jazira...” Then he told him of the Muslims’ opinion to retreat and await reinforcements... He added, “Hasten! Hasten, O Amir al-Mu’mineen (Leader of the Faithful) to send men after men; otherwise, start counting the lost lives of Muslims if they hold their ground, or expect them to lose their religion if they flee. They are powerless against what’s coming unless *Allah* reinforces them with his angels or sends His aid to them; and peace be upon you.”⁸²

When Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah’s letter reached ‘Umar bin al-Khattab, he called on the Muhajireen and the Ansar (the Emigrants and the Helpers) and read it to them so they cried bitterly and felt pity for their brothers. It was not possible to send support or reinforcements to the Muslims because the Byzantines were close to them. So, ‘Umar sent a letter showing his support and urging them to stand their ground, emphasizing, during that crisis, the Islamic values, including faith, trust in *Allah*, and the scales of the conflict between right and wrong. Parts of the letter read:

...Do not be alarmed by their huge number as *Allah* is disassociated from them, and whomever *Allah* disassociates from is unlikely to benefit from his great number, and *Allah* will leave him to rely on himself to fail.

Do not be dispirited by the few number of Muslims since *Allah* is with you, and they are not few who have *Allah*. Stay where you are until you meet and combat your enemy, defeating them with *Allah's* support, and sufficient is *Allah* as an ally, helper and supporter... I swear if the Muslims held their ground and endured then they were killed, then that which is with *Allah* is best for the righteous.

Also, some of what was stated in 'Umar's letter to Abu 'Ubaidah read:

As for your statement that you are powerless against what's coming; if you are powerless then *Allah* is not; *Allah* is ever more powerful than them; I swear if we were to fight people with our own force, ability and numbers, they would surely annihilate and obliterate us. Rather, we rely on our God, *Allah*, attribute all power and ability to Him and plead with Him for victory and mercy. You will emerge victorious at any rate, *Allah* willing, so be sincere in your intention for *Allah*, beg Him for your wishes and "*persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful.*"⁸³

Then 'Umar admonished him to read his letter to the people.⁸⁴

The messenger brought 'Umar's letter on the day Sa'id bin 'Amer al-Jumhi reached the Muslims' camp in Yarmouk, with one thousand Muslim men as reinforcements sent by 'Umar; the Muslims rejoiced at the support and welcomed 'Umar's opinion.⁸⁵

The Muslim armies had assembled in al-Jabiyah before heading toward Yarmouk; in al-Jabiyah, the Muslim leaders met and discussed the matter, with some considering withdrawal south to the outskirts of the desert; however, Khalid bin al-Walid said, "I swear that if we are fighting depending on our power and number, they outnumber us and are stronger than us, and we are then powerless to confront them, but if we are fighting them by *Allah* and for *Allah*, I do not see their masses availing them, even if they were all of earth's people."⁸⁶

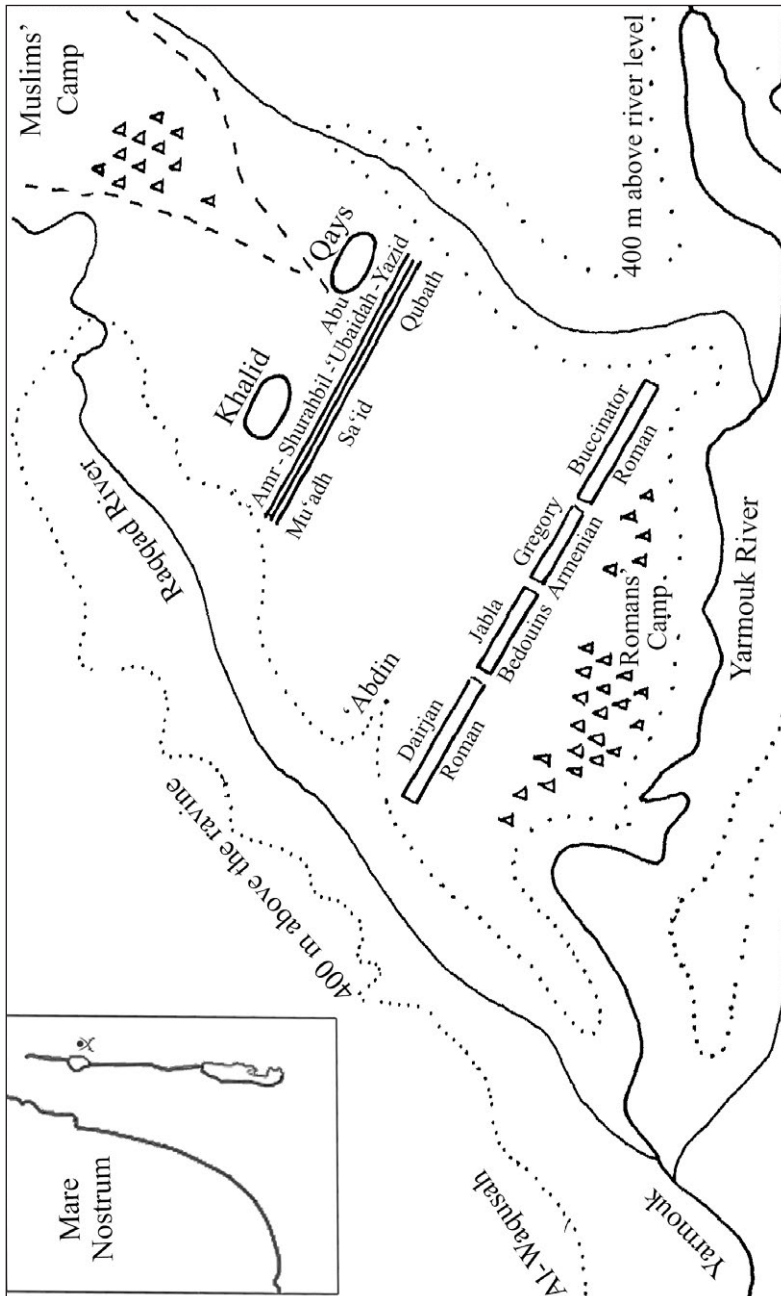
The Muslim leaders were aware of the seriousness of the situation and felt the great responsibility. In these circumstances where people quiver with fear, and those who seek high positions escape, Khalid bin al-Walid came forward and said to Abu 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah, "Will you carry out what I instruct you to do?" Abu 'Ubaidah, Custodian of Ummah, having absolute confidence in Khalid said, "Yes"; Khalid said, "Entrust me with what is behind your door [leave this matter to me] and put me in charge of the people; I hope that *Allah* will grant me victory over them"; Abu 'Ubaidah said "You have that."⁸⁷

Thus, Abu ‘Ubaidah authorized Khalid to lead the field command while retaining, as it seems, the official leadership of the army’s high command. Khalid remained considerate toward Abu ‘Ubaidah and consulted him with regard to the leadership of the right wing. Abu ‘Ubaidah nominated Mu‘adh bin Jabal, and Khalid agreed and said, “Appoint him as a leader,” and Abu ‘Ubaidah did so. Then Khalid nominated Qubath bin Ashiam to lead the left wing; thus, Abu ‘Ubaidah ordered him to do that; Khalid said, “I will lead the cavalry, and appoint whoever you wish to lead the infantry”; Abu ‘Ubaidah chose Hashim bin ‘Utbah bin Abi Waqqas, and Khalid agreed, therefore Abu ‘Ubaidah ordered him to do that. Next, Abu ‘Ubaidah, at the request of Khalid, sent word to all divisions to obey Khalid; Al-Dahhaq bin Qays communicated the order to the soldiers and said to them while they were marching, “Your leader, Abu ‘Ubaidah, orders you to follow Khalid bin al-Walid’s orders.”⁸⁸

The Muslims withdrew from al-Jabiyah toward Azru‘at where they camped behind the Yarmouk River, placing Azru‘at behind them. The Byzantines camped between Yarmouk and *al-Waqusah* the Raqqad Ravine (the part of the Raqqad River at the point it meets Yarmouk); thus they were surrounded from three sides. The Muslims moved from Azru‘at and camped opposite the Byzantines, whose only passage became through the Muslims.⁸⁹

In the previous battles, the Muslims fought as divisions, with each division acting as an independent unit cooperating with the other units; Khalid bin al-Walid’s opinion was to mix them into one army and reorganize them into regiments. He met with the army’s leaders and suggested that to them; part of what he said was: “This is one of *Allah*’s days; you should not feel proud or act aggressively; be devoted in your *jihad* and seek *Allah* in your work because this day will have its consequences...” “Each individual of you is allocated to an area of land; following a certain commander will not degrade you, just as being a leader will not increase your value. Appointing a leader from amongst you does not undervalue the rest of you in *Allah*’s eyes and in the eyes of the Successor of *Allah*’s Messenger (SAWS)...” This is how Khalid dealt with the sensitive issue of appointing a leader openly and clearly, blocking the devil’s ways into the soul and eliminating mistrust. Response to Khalid was smooth and easy, and reorganization, as Ahmad ‘Adel Kamal sees, occurred so as to seem like the army’s leaders were a supreme committee for field management, as evidenced by the existence of other leaders in charge of the right wing, left wing and infantry.⁹⁰

Battle of Yarmouk



Source: Ahmad 'Adil Kamil, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq (Fath Bilad al-Sham)*, p. 477.

Before the battle, Roman Leader Vahan invited Khalid to a discussion, and at the negotiations which ensued between them, Vahan spoke about the strength and invincibility of his nation, mocking the weakness and fragility of the Arab situation and offering to give the Emir (leader) 10 thousand dinars, Khalid 10 thousand, each head of division one thousand and each individual 100. Thus, once again the Byzantines presented the same bargaining mentality, which links life with materialism and interests, not understanding the fundamentals of the Islamic message, its loftiness, or the motives of its noble *jihad* movement. Khalid responded to Vahan's proposition by agreeing to what he mentioned about the Arabs' poverty, weakness, division and conflict, and explaining to him that what had happened recently had nothing to do with poverty or hunger, rather it was "the sending of the Prophet (SAWS) with the message of Islam and the order to fight whoever makes [as equal] with *Allah* another deity..." Then, Khalid offered Vahan one of three: Islam, *jizyah* or war.⁹¹

Dairjan, leader of the Roman left wing, called a man of the Arab Christians and ordered him to go and spy on the Muslims. He went and stayed in their camp for one night and the following day, returning to Dairjan in the evening and saying to him, "I have come to you from a people who spend all night praying; they fast during the day; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; monks by night and lions by day; if their king stole, they would cut off his hand, and if he committed adultery, they would stone him because they opt for justice and follow it over their desires." Dairjan said, "If these people are as you have claimed and mentioned, then the belly of the earth is better—for those who want to fight them—than its surface."⁹² This description is the true description of any Muslim army, which raises the banner of the Islamic solution to liberate the blessed land and reclaim it from the hands of the enemies.

On Monday, 5 Rajab 15 AH – 12 August 636 CE, the Battle of Yarmouk took place, and Vahan put Buccinator on his right wing and Dairjan on his left-wing; Gregory led the Armenian army, and Jabla bin al-Ayham al-Ghassani was in charge of the pro-Byzantine Bedouins who numbered 12 thousand, from the tribes of Lakhm, Jutham, Balqin and 'Amilah, which is composed of Quda'ah and Ghassan.⁹³

The Byzantines marched toward the Muslims like a "flood," numbering around 120 thousand infantry and 80 thousand cavalry. The Muslim commanders urged the soldiers to exercise patience and fight.

Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah led the Muslim march and said:

O servants of *Allah*, if you support *Allah*, He will support you and plant firmly your feet for indeed the promise of *Allah* is truth. O Muslims, be patient since patience is a safeguard against disbelief, a means to the approval of *Allah* and protection from shame. Never leave your lines; never take one step toward them; never be the first to attack; aim the spears; hide [behind the shields] and remain silent, unless you are mentioning *Allah*, until I give my orders, *Allah* willing.⁹⁴

Mu‘adh bin Jabal acted accordingly, as well as ‘Amr bin al-‘As who said:

I swear by the one who is pleased by truthfulness and gives reward for it, and who abhors falsehood and punishes for it, and who rewards with good. I have been informed that Muslims will conquer it inch by inch and castle by castle, so do not be terrified by their masses and numbers, because if you truly show them your strength, they will be frightened like baby partridges.⁹⁵

Abu Sufian bin Harb also acted accordingly; when the Muslim women came and stood on a high ground behind the rows, Abu Sufian came backwards to them and ordered stones to be brought into their hands; he said to them, “If any Muslim retreats, throw him with these stones.”⁹⁶

The Byzantines marched raising crosses and approached with the company of their monks, priests and patriarchs; their superiors pledged to die, and 30 thousand of them wrapped chains around their feet, with every group of 10 men using one chain so as not to flee.⁹⁷

Khalid bin al-Walid came backwards to the Muslim women and ordered them to kill any Muslim who comes toward them defeated. Khalid organized the army so that the cavalry was behind the infantry, and so that the Roman attack would break against the infantry; thus, when the Byzantines lose their order, Khalid will comfortably attack them with his cavalry.⁹⁸

The Roman attack began along the Muslim’s right wing then the left, and a tremendous collision ensued; in the face of this great Roman flood, the Muslims were exposed along the right and left wings, but they withstood the attack and fought in a state of flux.⁹⁹ The fighting was most intense along the right wing, where the Azd were stationed, and these were the people of Abu Hurayrah, who was raising the spirit of the Muslims there saying, “Adorn for *Hur al-‘Een* [fair women with large beautiful eyes] and aspire to be in *Allah* (SWT)’s proximity in the Gardens of Pleasure; there is no more favourable place of good to your God and for you to be in than this; truly the patient will have their favoured position.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, whoever observes the statements of the Muslim

leaders and the Companions in the battle (Abu Ubaidah, Mu‘adh, ‘Amr and Abu Hurayrah...) will not see any worldly motivation, nor promises of spoils and positions, but rather calls for sincerity, patience and mentioning of *Allah*, as well as trust in *Allah*’s promise of victory and desire for martyrdom and paradise.

When the Byzantine penetration of the right and left wings occurred, and while the center endured, the Byzantine forces poured into the Muslims’ camp from the rear, but the Muslim rows kept resisting, and those overwhelmed by the Byzantines returned to the rows again.

In these difficult circumstances, ‘Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl said, ‘I fought the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) in every place, only to leave him today?! Who pledges to die?’ 400 senior Muslims and cavalymen, including al-Harith bin Hisham and Dhirar bin al-Azwar, pledged and fought with extreme courage in front of Khalid’s tent until all of them were seriously injured. Some of them were killed, and some, such as Dhirar, recovered.¹⁰¹ On that day, Muslim women fought a fierce battle, like Khawlah bint al-Azwar, Um Hakim bint Hakim bin al-Harth, Salma bint Lu’ay and Asma’ bint Abi Bakr; Muslim women also nursed the wounded and provided drinking water.¹⁰²

Khalid bin al-Walid led half of the Muslim cavalry, while Qays bin Hubairah led the other half, and all cavalymen had not yet fought. When the Roman rows crumbled, Khalid advanced with his cavalry toward them; they were exhausted, and their rows were disrupted. As for the Roman cavalry, who had preceded the infantry to the Muslims’ camp, they were never heard from again, because it seems that they kept going and escaped from the battle and the siege; they totalled around 30 thousand cavalymen. Besides, when the Muslims saw the Roman cavalry in that state, they opened an escape route for them, so they fled in a state of chaos. Then Khalid moved forth with his cavalry and attacked the infantry reportedly killing up to 6 thousand and some said 10 thousand,¹⁰³ and it was also said that nine swords broke in Khalid’s hand.¹⁰⁴

The Muslims marched in conjunction with the attack of Khalid and Qays and so the Byzantines retreated, with the Muslims blocking all exits. They fell back and retreated toward *al-Waqusah* the Raqqad Ravine. Its edge was high, so they fell off because the weather was foggy, or according to another record, it was at night, and that is more likely. About 80 thousand of them were killed in this abyss, and 50 thousand were killed in the battle; 40 thousand managed to escape under the cover of night, while around 30 thousand cavalymen had already escaped.¹⁰⁵ Around 3 thousand Muslims were killed.¹⁰⁶

Recapture of *al-Sham*

By the end of the Battle of Yarmouk, which is considered one of the most significant battles in history, the Byzantines' power was shattered in *al-Sham*, and its *fath* became easier and more comfortable for the Muslims, who took full advantage of the opportunity presented. Khalid rapidly hunted down the Byzantines and recaptured *al-Sham*, reaching Homs.¹⁰⁷ Direct command of the armies returned to Abu 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah, whose camp moved to Marj al-Suffar and from there to Damascus.¹⁰⁸

In late August 636 CE, 'Umar bin al-Khattab ordered Abu 'Ubaidah to bring back the army, which came as a reinforcement from Iraq with Khalid bin al-Walid. Six thousand returned to Iraq and caught up with the Battle of Qadisiyyah, which took place 40 days after Yarmouk.¹⁰⁹

In Damascus, Abu 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah divided *al-Sham* amongst the commanders, putting Yazid bin Abi Sufyan in charge of Damascus, 'Amr bin al-'As in charge of Palestine, and Shurahbil bin Hasnah in charge of Jordan, while Abu 'Ubaidah departed to Homs. From Damascus, Yazid went forth, with Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan in the front, conquering Sidon, 'Arqah, Byblos and Beirut with ease. As for Shurahbil, he conquered the rest of Jordan easily, namely Sousiyah, Afiq, Jerash, Beit Ras, Qadas and Golan in the second half of 15 AH.¹¹⁰

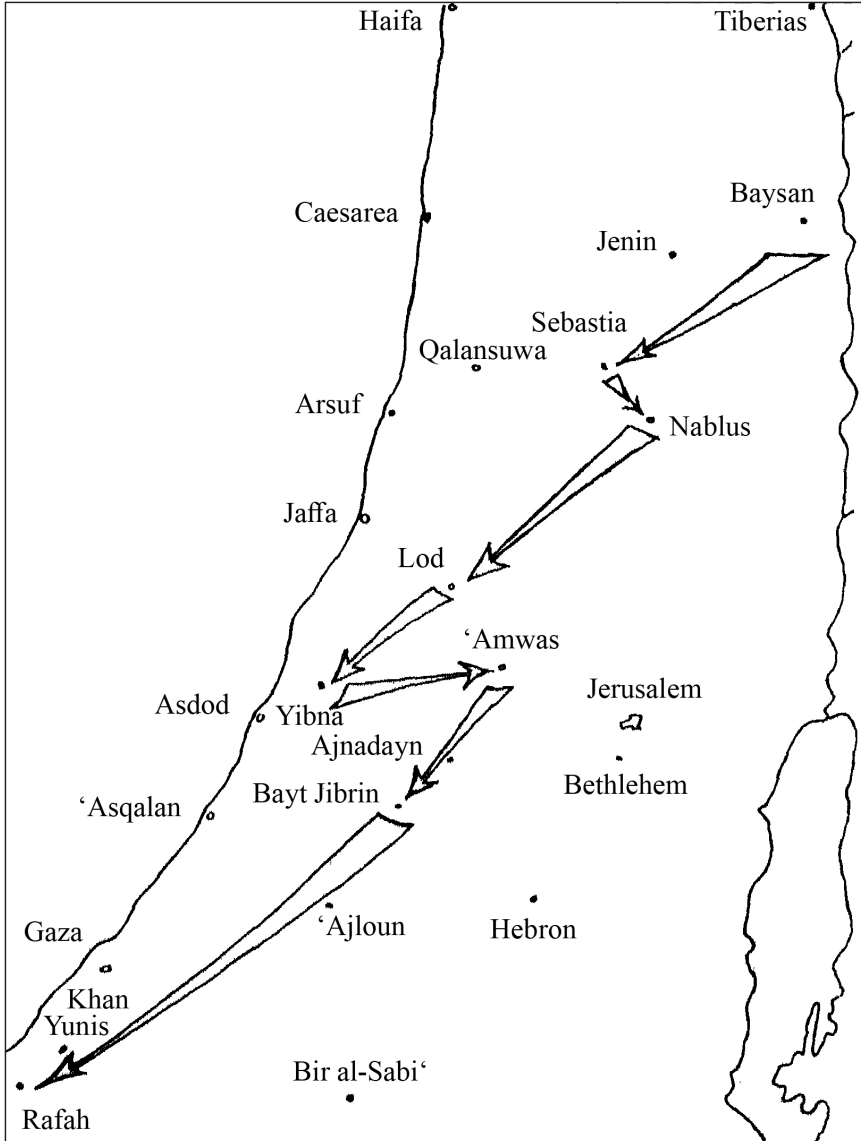
Ninth: The Fath of Palestine

After Yarmouk, the road to Palestine was open so 'Amr bin al-'As headed to it and conquered Sebastia and Nablus, then Lod and its surroundings, then Yibna, 'Amwas and Bayt Jibrin. Afterwards, he descended south west until he conquered Rafah, in another narration until he conquered Jaffa. Some say that Mu'awiyah conquered it. Then 'Amr conquered Ashkelon whose people later revolted so Mu'awiyah re-conquered it during his rule.¹¹¹ The author of *Futuh al-Buldan* (Book of the *futuh* of the Lands) mentioned that 'Amr bin al-'As conquered Gaza under Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.¹¹²

Thus, Palestine was conquered, with only Caesarea and Bait al-Maqdis remaining. As for Bait al-Maqdis, it was most likely conquered in Rabi' II, 16 AH – May 637 CE. 'Amr bin al-'As headed toward Jerusalem and besieged it after it had become an isolated enclave. After Abu 'Ubaidah finished clearing the northern part of *al-Sham* (notably Aleppo and Antioch), he went to 'Amr and took command of the siege himself.

The people of Jerusalem wrote to Abu ‘Ubaidah asking for peace under the same conditions as the other cities of *al-Sham*, but they stipulated that the treaty be held by ‘Umar bin al-Khattab.

Fath of Palestine



Source: Ahmad ‘Adil Kamil, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq (Fath Bilad al-Sham)*, p. 514.

‘Umar bin al-Khattab appointed ‘Ali bin Abi Talib in charge of Medina, and marched toward *al-Sham*, where the commanders of the Muslim armies came to him in al-Jabiyah. With the arrival of ‘Umar, the Byzantine leader (Aretion) fled from Jerusalem so a man from the people of Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem) and Ramlah called Al-‘Awwam reconciled on behalf of the Palestinian people. ‘Umar reconciled with the people of Jerusalem when he was in al-Jabiyah, writing the reconciliation treaty.¹¹³ It stated:

In the name of *Allah*, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the assurance of safety (*aman*) which the servant of *Allah*, ‘Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, has granted to the people of Aelia [Jerusalem]. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves, for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and the healthy of the city, and for all the rituals that belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited [by Muslims] and will not be destroyed. Neither they, nor the land on which they stand, nor their cross, nor their property will be damaged. They will not be forcibly converted, and no one will be harmed. No Jew will live with them in Aelia.

The people of Aelia must pay the *jizyah* like the people of the [other] cities, and they must expel the Byzantines and the robbers. As for those who will leave the city, their lives and property will be safe until they reach their place of safety; and as for those who remain, they will be safe. They will have to pay the *jizyah* like the people of Aelia...

If they pay the *jizyah* according to their obligations, then the contents of this letter are under the covenant of *Allah*, are the responsibility of His Prophet, of the caliphs and of the faithful.

The persons who attest to it are Khalid bin al-Walid, ‘Amr bin al-‘As, ‘Abdul Rahman bin ‘Awf, and Mu‘awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. This letter was written and prepared in the year 15 AH.¹¹⁴

This text, which is known as *al-‘Uhdah al-‘Umariyyah* (Pact of ‘Umar), was the basis on which Jerusalem was conquered, reflecting religious tolerance that Muslims enjoyed; it served as a model at a time when blind fanaticism and religious coercion prevailed all over the world.

Before we narrate how ‘Umar entered Jerusalem, it is worth reflecting on that pious generation that conquered the earth and destroyed the great powers of that time. We reflect on the ascetic leader, Caliph ‘Umar, to derive from his behaviour some standards needed by those who are currently at the forefront of Islamic action, and who bear the trust of *jihad* and liberation and

their consequences. Ibn Abi al-Dunya reported that Abu al-Ghaliyah al-Shami narrated that ‘Umar came to al-Jabiyah “on the back of a raw-boned camel, with his bald head shimmering in the sunlight, not wearing a skull cap nor a turban; his legs were flapping between the two sides of a saddle with no stirrups....; he was wearing a worn canvas shirt with holes down its side...; he took off his shirt, then washed and patched it” One of those present said: “You are the king of the Arabs, and this land is not suitable for camels; if instead you had worn something different than this and ridden a workhorse, it would have been regarded grander by the Byzantines.” ‘Umar said, “We are a people whom *Allah* has honoured with Islam; we seek no alternative to *Allah*.”¹¹⁵

Ibn Kathir reported that Tariq ibn Shihab said:

When ‘Umar came to *al-Sham*, he encountered a ford so he dismounted his camel, took off his shoes and held them with his hand then waded into the water with his camel. Abu ‘Ubaidah said: You have done a great deed today for the people of the earth; you did so and so; he continued: that greatly vexed ‘Umar, and he replied: if only someone else said such a thing than you O Abu ‘Ubaidah; you were the most humiliated of people, the most worthless of people and the most insignificant of people, then *Allah* honoured you with Islam, and however you seek honour otherwise, *Allah* will humble you.¹¹⁶

Here it is important to note: Muslim leaders and soldiers are required to have faith-based pride and dignity, overcome inferiority complexes, and value actions over appearance, such as clothing or luxury.

‘Umar bin al-Khattab on his way to Jerusalem, described the rule which governed the history of Muslims since the dawn of *Da‘wah* until today; It is that *Allah* has honoured Muslims with Islam, and however they seek honour otherwise, *Allah* will humiliate them. Experience has proved this rule, and advocates of the Islamic solution depend on it to liberate Palestine.

May *Allah* have mercy on your soul, O ‘Umar; to our wonder these days, how many people and leaders feel ashamed if they do not wear ties and suits, and if they do not twist their tongues to speak English or French words and terms, and are ashamed of their culture, history and even religious practices. While some leaders do not feel ashamed to forfeit the land of *Isra’* and *Mi‘raj*; they do not feel ashamed to put a theory in order to validate the Zionist penetration of the region and the official relationship with the Israeli occupation. They are also not ashamed to deny the heritage of the prophets and the blood of the martyrs.

‘Umar bin al-Khattab left al-Jabiyah and arrived in Jerusalem, he and his page taking turns in riding the camel. ‘Umar entered Jerusalem on foot while his page was riding [the camel]. It is noteworthy that four thousand of the Companions participated in the *fath* of Jerusalem, the only city whose keys Caliph ‘Umar received himself. When he entered Jerusalem, he prayed in the prayer niche (*mihrab*) of David (PBUH) reciting *Surat Sad* and prostrated the prostration of David. Then in the second *rak‘ah* he recited *Surat al-Isra’*, which talks in its opening about the incident of *al-Isra’* (night journey) and how *Allah* (SWT) blessed the land of Palestine. In addition, *Allah* twice promised the emergence of the Jews and the believers’ victory over them.¹¹⁷

‘Umar asked about the location of the Sacred Rock, whose features had disappeared because it was a site in which the Christian population disposed of rubbish and dirt. They did so in response to the Jews who used the site of the person who was crucified instead of Jesus (another was made to resemble him to the Jews and Christians) as a place to dispose of rubbish and dirt. It is the same place where Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, constructed the Church of “Refuse,” which was later known as the Church of the Resurrection or (Holy Sepulchre). *Ka‘b al-Ahbar* had guided ‘Umar to the site, and ‘Umar himself participated, with the Companions and locals, in removing the dirt off it and cleaning it. Then ‘Umar ordered that a sanctuary be built, and it was built of wood, with the capacity to accommodate around three thousand worshippers.¹¹⁸

As for **Caesarea**, it was conquered by Mu‘awiyah bin Abi Sufyan in Shawwal 19 AH – October 639 CE; thus, the Muslims completed the *fath* of all of Palestine. Caesarea was a huge city on the sea, and it seems that the Byzantines wanted to preserve it as a foothold. Its *fath* had been preceded by several unsuccessful attempts. The first to besiege it in 13 AH was ‘Amr bin al-‘As, who besieged it again after participating in the assembly of the armies for the battles of Ajnadayn, Fahl, Marj al-Suffar and Yarmouk. He again besieged it after the *fath* of Jerusalem, then went forth toward Egypt so ‘Umar bin al-Khattab appointed Yazid bin Abi Sufyan as a leader and ordered him to conquer it. Therefore, he prepared 17 thousand men and besieged it; however, he succumbed to illness in late 18 AH and went to Damascus, appointing his brother, Mu‘awiyah, as his successor, who conquered it by force.

Al-Baladhuri mentioned that when Mu‘awiyah conquered it, he found 700 thousand mercenaries, 30 thousand from Samaria, 200 thousand Jews, and 300 markets, of whom 100 thousand were guarding its walls. It was said that 100 thousand Byzantines were killed during its *fath*, and Mu‘awiyah captured 4 thousand and sent them to ‘Umar who accommodated them in al-Jarf.¹¹⁹ However, there appears to be a considerable amount of exaggeration in the numbers of mercenaries, Jews and markets; in fact, they were perhaps far fewer.

‘Umar stayed in Jerusalem for a few days, and before leaving, gave a speech to the Muslims:

O people of Islam, *Allah* (SWT) has fulfilled His promise to you, granting you victory over the enemies, and caused you to inherit the lands, and established you upon the earth. [Therefore,] His only repayment must be gratitude. Never commit sins because sinning is like denying the favours of *Allah*, and rarely would a people deny the favours of *Allah*, then not turn to repentance, that they are not robbed of their glory and their enemy is given power over them by *Allah*.¹²⁰

This is what was said by ‘Umar bin al-Khattab, whom *Allah* always inspired to say the truth, and this is the reality in which we are living today, and in which the Muslims lived during the Crusades. The denial of *Allah*’s favours and sin-doing, is followed by a robbed glory and empowerment of the enemy over Muslims.

Tenth: Islam Takes Root in Palestine

After the Islamic *fath* of Palestine, its land was once again gaining its Islamic identity. Its people adopted Islam, and the Companions who lived there had the effect of deepening and spreading its concepts.

One of the Companions who settled in Palestine was ‘Ubadah bin al-Samit (d. 34 AH), a Khazraj who witnessed Badr, Uhud, Trench and all other battles with the Messenger of *Allah* Prophet Muhammad (SAWS).¹²¹

Another Companion in Palestine was Shaddad bin Aws (d. 58 AH) (RA), a Khazraj and the nephew of Hassan bin Thabit; he was appointed the ruler of Homs under ‘Umar bin al-Khattab. His death occurred toward the end of Mu‘awiyah’s rule in Jerusalem. Also, amongst them were Usamah bin Zaid bin Harithah (d. 57 AH) (RA), who lived and died in the

Ramlah district; and Wathila bin al-Asqa' (d. 85 AH) (RA), who lived and died in Bait al-Maqdis and Firuz al-Daylami (RA), who was from the Persians of Sana'a and the killer of the false prophet al-Aswad al-'Ansi; and Dihyah al-Kalbi (RA), who witnessed many battles, including Yarmouk, and was sent by the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) to the Roman Caesar to call him to Islam. He met him in Jerusalem and handed him the letter. He settled in Palestine and lived there until the rule of Mu'awiyah, and he died in the village of "al-Dahi" which, along with the mountain on which it was located, was named after him; his tomb is well-known and is regularly visited.¹²² In addition, Companion 'Abdul Rahman bin Ghanim al-Ash'ari (d. 78 AH) (RA), Jurisprudent of *al-Sham* and Sheikh of the People of Palestine, was part of the teachers mission sent by 'Umar bin al-Khattab to teach the people of Palestine their religion.¹²³ Also, Companion 'Alqamah bin Mujzar al-Kinani was sent by the Prophet (SAWS) during the Battle of Tabuk to explore Palestine; he witnessed the Yarmouk Battle and the siege of Jerusalem, and he was a clerk to 'Umar bin al-Khattab on Jerusalem.¹²⁴

Amongst the Companions (RA), there was Aws bin al-Samit, brother of 'Ubadah bin al-Samit, witnessed Badr and all other battles and died in Palestine at the age of 85 years.¹²⁵ Companion Mas'ud bin Aws bin Zaid witnessed Badr and the *fath* of Egypt and died in Jerusalem. Companion Salam bin Qays bin Qaysar al-Hadhrami (or reportedly Salaamah or Salama) was the ruler of Bait al-Maqdis under Mu'awiyah.¹²⁶ Companion Zunba' bin Rawh al-Juthami was from Palestine before Islam.¹²⁷ Also, the government official Malik bin 'Abdullah al-Khath'ami (RA), who some consider to be amongst the Followers, was the Leader of Summer Battles in the time of Mu'awiyah, then Yazid bin Abi Sufyan, then 'Abdul Malik bin Marwan; he was from Palestine.¹²⁸

Amongst the Companions (RA), who lived and died in Palestine were Abu Rayhana Sham'un al-Ansari, Zu al-Asabi' al-Tamimi, Abu Ubayy bin Um Haram al-Ansari al-Khazraji, Anif bin Mallah al-Juthami, Suwaid bin Zayd al-Juthami, Sa'd bin Wa'il bin 'Amr al-'Ubaydi al-Juthami, Abu Ruwayhah al-Faza'i whose name was Rabi'ah bin al-Sakan.¹²⁹

Amongst the Companions (RA), who lived in Bait al-Maqdis were Ibrahim bin Abi 'Illah al-'Uqayli, Yazid bin Salam, 'Abdullah bin Muhayriz al-Jamhi, and Ziad bin Abi Sawdah.¹³⁰

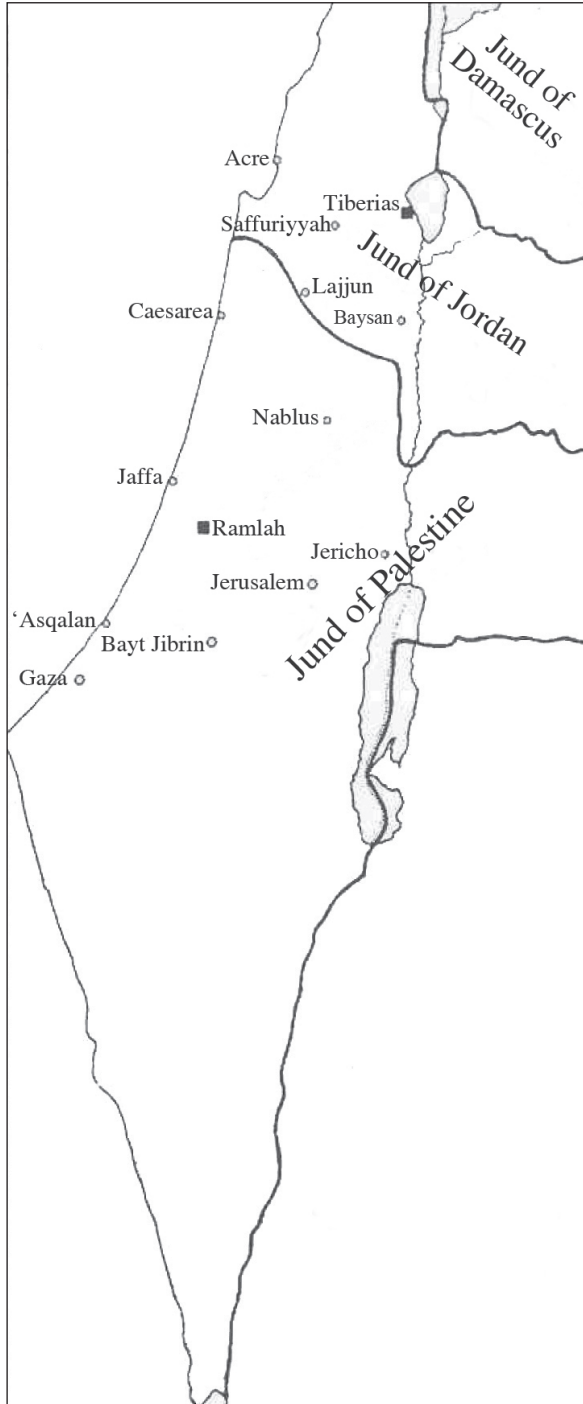
The Followers raised the banner of the Companions on the land of Palestine, and many of them were born there or lived there, as well as many who visited it, including Raja' bin Haiwah al-Kindi (d. 112 AH/ 730 CE), a native of Palestine who was born in Baysan and was the Treasurer of the House of Money under 'Abdul Malik bin Marwan. He advised Sulaiman bin 'Abdul al-Malik to appoint 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz as a ruler. Also among the Followers was 'Ubadah bin Nasi al-Kindi (d. 118 AH/ 736 CE). He was of a high esteem and was called Master of the People of Jordan, who assumed the judiciary of Tiberias. Also, Malik bin Dinar, 'Abdul Rahman al-Awza'i, Rawh bin Zunba', Hani' bin Kulthum bin 'Abdullah, Hamid bin 'Abdullah al-Lakhmi, Sufian al-Thawri, and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri.¹³¹

Amongst the most prominent of imams and jurists who lived in Palestine or visited it were Imam Muhammad bin Idriss al-Shafi'i, who was born in the city of Gaza, Ibrahim bin Adham, Al-Laith bin Sa'd, Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Tartoushi, Abu Bakr al-Jarjani and Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi. Imam Ibn Hajar Ahmad bin 'Ali al-'Asqalani was born in Egypt and lived there after his ancestors migrated to it following the destruction of 'Asqalan in 669 AH.¹³²

In Palestine there were also the great Islamic conqueror Musa bin Nusair al-Lakhmi (19–97 AH), Conqueror of Andalusia, and 'Abdul Hamid bin Yahya al-Katib, his grandfather being one of the masters of the Bani 'Amer clan, whom a certain meadow (marj) was named after (Marj Bani 'Amer). Al-Katib was from Caesarea, and was a master in writing and composition, sheikh of the *diwans* and friend of Marwan bin Muhammad, the last Umayyad caliph; the two were killed in 132 AH/ 750 CE.¹³³ To Palestine also belongs one of the first great Muslim chemists, Khalid bin Yazid al-Umawi, who was the first to convert the foreign sciences into Arabic in the Islamic State.¹³⁴

According to the ancient Islamic geographical divisions, the first three Abbasid caliphs can be attributed to Palestine, since Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur and his son al-Mahdi were born in al-Humaymah, Jund Filastin (The First *al-Sham*), which is now located to the east of Jordan, on the east side along the way from Ma'an to Aqaba.¹³⁵

**Administrative Divisions of *Bilad al-Sham*
in early Islam and the Umayyad Period**



Amongst the prominent “Palestinian” ministers were al-Rabi‘ bin Yunus, who belonged to the al-Kisaniyyah family from Mount Hebron. He was a *hajib* (a title similar to that of Chancellor) then a minister of Abu Ja‘far al-Mansur, then a minister and adviser to Al-Mahdi. His son, al-Fadl bin al-Rabi‘, served as a *hajib* for Al-Mansur, then a minister of Al-Mahdi, then a minister of Al-Hadi, then a *hajib* for Harun al-Rashid, then a minister of Al-Amin bin Harun al-Rashid.¹³⁶ Amongst the ministers also was Mu‘awiyah bin ‘Ubaidullah bin Yasar al-Ash‘ari al-Tabarani who was appointed by Al-Mahdi and made him in charge of the Abbasid state. During his tenure as minister, the ministry hugely improved due to his qualification and ability.¹³⁷ There was also Ahmad bin Abi Khalid Yazid bin ‘Abdul Rahman al-Katib al-Ahwal, who was one of the best ministers appointed by al-Ma’mun.¹³⁸

Amongst the prominent scholars were ‘Aqil bin Khalid al-Ayli (d. 144 AH), who reported Hadith of Malik bin Anas; Adam bin Abi ‘Abbas al-‘Askalani (d. 220 AH) whom al-Bukhari narrated from; Al-‘Abbas bin Muhammad al-Jerji (d. 320 AH), who was an authority in Hadith in Palestine, and was native to the village of Bait Jirja, which is part of Gaza; Sulaiman bin Ahmad al-Lakhmi al-Tabarani (d. 340 AH) was a famous traveler and narrator and was born in Tiberias.¹³⁹

A modern researcher counted the siblings of those who died in Bait al-Maqdis during the Islamic caliphates and found that they were 9 Companions, 60 kings, leaders and rulers, 167 scholars, 66 of the *Awliya’* and *Saliheen* (the Righteous and Devout) and 53 judges. He added that that was the tip of the iceberg concerning the siblings of those buried in Bait al-Maqdis, as the names of many of those who died there were lost...; and that research was for Jerusalem alone, and didn’t consider the whole land of Palestine.¹⁴⁰

Conclusion

- Islam has established the great status of Palestine as a blessed holy land, the land of the prophets, the land of the Isra’ (The Night Journey), the earth’s gate to heaven (*M’iraj* (night ascension)), the land of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the land of the victorious group, the land where all people will be gathered (*Al-Mahshar*) and resurrected (*Al-Manshar*), and a land in which right and wrong are decided.

- Islam encouraged residence in *al-Sham* (with Palestine in its heart), and Muslims have aspired to it since the Prophetic era. The blood of the Companions, their followers and the Muslim heroes were mixed with its blessed soil. After the Islamic *fath* of Palestine, its land gained its Islamic identity and its people adopted Islam, and their language became Arabic, and this identity became more entrenched as Arab tribes settled there. Palestine became the land of Islamic endowment for Muslims and their future generations.
- Islamic faith was the main motive for the *fath* of Palestine and other Islamic *futuh*. It was part of the duty of *jihad* for the sake of *Allah*, delivering the message of Islam, consequently, Muslims deserved the victory from *Allah* and His support.
- Islamic *futuh* of Palestine and *al-Sham* were completed during a short period (about three years). Due to their loyalty and sacrifice, Muslims conquered the Byzantines in the battles of Ajnadayn, Fahl and Yarmouk where they proved their outstanding martial arts skills and military genius.
- In the *fath* of Jerusalem, the Muslims presented an elegant civilized model. *Al-‘Uhdah al-‘Umariyyah* (Pact of ‘Umar), was the basis on which Jerusalem was conquered, reflecting the extent of justice and religious tolerance. Under the rule of Islam, Muslims’ behavior was “inclusive” based on coexistence, tolerance and justice. They were open to others, protecting them and preventing their oppression or abuse, and even benefiting from their abilities in building Islamic civilization. In contrast, the others’ behavior was “exclusive,” when they ruled Jerusalem and Palestine, failing to include the others throughout history.

Endnotes

- ¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud, for the English translation see <http://hadithcollection.com/sahihmuslim/135-Sahih%20Muslim%20Book%2007.%20Pilgrimage/10876-sahih-muslim-book-007-hadith-number-3218.html>
- ² *Hadith Hasan*, narrated by Al-Tabarani, for the English translation see <https://hadithcollection.com/fiqh-ussunnah/fiqh-us-sunnah-section-27-the-mosques/fiqh-us-sunnah-volume-002-supererogatory-prayer-fiqh-2070a>
- ³ *Surat al-Isra'* (Isra'): 1, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=17&verse=1>
- ⁴ *Suratal-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 71, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=71>
- ⁵ Ismai'l Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (The Holy Qura'n Interpretation) (Beirut: Dar Ihia' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1969), vol. 3, pp. 184–185.
- ⁶ *Suratal-Anbiya'* (The Prophets): 81, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=81>
- ⁷ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, vol. 3, p. 187.
- ⁸ *Surat Saba'* (Sheba): 18, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=34&verse=18>
- ⁹ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, vol. 3, p. 533.
- ¹⁰ Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, *Safwat al-Tafasir* (The Best of Interpretations), 4th edition (Beirut: Dar al-Qur'an al-Karim, 1998), vol. 2, p. 151.
- ¹¹ *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table): 21, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=21>
- ¹² Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 1, sec. 1, p. 343.
- ¹³ Muhammad Nasir al-din al-Albany, *Takhrij Ahadith "Fada'il al-Sham wa Dimashq" li al-Rab'y* (Referencing the Hadiths Found in "Fada'il al-Sham and Damascus" by al-Rab'y) (Damascus: Al-Maktab al-Islami, n.d.), p. 5, for the English translation see http://www.livingislam.org/mshsh_e.html
- ¹⁴ *Hadith Sahih*, narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* and Bin Majah in his *Sunan*, for the English translation see <http://www.palscholars.com/ar/articleDetails.php?articleId=1006&page=21&Next=20&type=7>
- ¹⁵ *Hadith Sahih*, narrated by Al-Tabarani, for the English translation see http://aqsamn.org/PDF_Files/IslamicProspectOfPalestine.pdf
- ¹⁶ *Hadith Sahih*, compiled by Al-Hakim and Abu Na'im in *Al-Hilyat al-Awliya'*, for the English translation see <http://immamalbani.blogspot.com/2011/05/virtues-of-al-sham.html>
- ¹⁷ Narrated by Al-Tabarani, and Al-Haythami said that this *Hadith* has a trustworthy chain of narrators except Arta'ah Bin al-Mundhir. For the English translation see <http://immamalbani.blogspot.com/2011/05/virtues-of-al-sham.html>
- ¹⁸ *Hadith* narrated by Imam Ahmad, for the English translation see <http://hamzajennings.com/2009/02/11/course-history-of-the-crusades-and-salahuddin/>
- ¹⁹ On the period between when Jesus ('Issa) was sent to his people and the Islamic *fath* see Mahmud Sa'id 'Umran, *Ma'alim Tarikh al-Imbaratoriyyah al-Bizantiyyah* (Milestones of the Byzantine Empire History) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1981), pp. 19–75; Joseph Nasim Yusuf, *Tarikh al-Dawlah al-Bizantiyyah* (The History of the Byzantine State) (Alexandria: University Youth Foundation, n.d.), pp. 35–111; Moses Hadas, *A History of Rome: from its Origins to 529 A.D* (US: Peter Smith, 1976); and A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* (Baltimore US: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

- ²⁰ On the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and the Meccan period, see for example ‘Abdul Salam Harun, *Tahdhib Sirat Ibn Hisham* (Revision of History of Ibn Hisham), 6th edition (Beirut and Kuwait: Al-Risalah Foundation and Dar al-Buhuth al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1979), pp. 36–118; and Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, pp. 2–177.
- ²¹ *Al-Aqsa* Mosque was the first *Qiblah* for Muslims until 2 AH, see ‘Abdul Salam Harun, *Tahdhib Sirat Ibn Hisham*, p. 135.
- ²² See *Ibid.*, pp. 89–92; and Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, pp. 108–118.
- ²³ *Surat al-Ahzab* (The Combined Forced): 10, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=33&verse=10>
- ²⁴ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 4, pp. 99–102.
- ²⁵ See the Prophet’s letters to the Kings in: *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 262–273.
- ²⁶ Ahmad ‘Adl Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq* (The Road to Damascus) (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa’is, 1980), p. 148.
- ²⁷ *Surat al-Rum* (The Romans): 2–4, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=30&verse=2>
- ²⁸ See ‘Abdul Salam Harun, *Tahdhib Sirat Ibn Hisham*, pp. 238–242; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 145–149.
- ²⁹ See Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 5, pp. 2–18.
- ³⁰ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 6, pp. 304–305; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 152–156.
- ³¹ Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Jihad fi Sabil Allah*, pp. 99–106.
- ³² The Complete Works of Imam Shaheed Hasan al-Banna, site of The Quran Blog – Enlighten Yourself, <https://thequranblog.wordpress.com/2008/06/07/english-translation-of-majmuuat-rasail-the-complete-works-imam-hasan-al-banna/>
- ³³ *Suratal-Tawbah* (Repentance): 111, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=9&verse=111>
- ³⁴ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 173.
- ³⁵ ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Shibani (aka Ibn al-Athir), *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh* (The Complete in History) (Beirut: Dar Sader for Printing and Publishing, Dar Beirut for Printing and Publishing, 1965), vol. 2, p. 404.
- ³⁶ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham* (The History of *al-Sham Futuh*), verified by ‘Abdul Mun‘im ‘Abdullah ‘Amir (Cairo: Sijjil al-Arab Foundation, 1970), pp. 11–12.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁰ Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham (Al-Sham Futuh)* (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, n.d.), pp. 15–16.
- ⁴¹ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 6, p. 352.
- ⁴² Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 2, p. 404.
- ⁴³ Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali bin al-Hussein bin ‘Ali al-Mas‘udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma‘adin al-Jawhar* (The Promoter of Gold and Precious Metals), verified by Muhyiddine ‘Abdul Hamid, 2nd edition (Egypt: Al-Sa‘adah Printing House, 1948), vol. 2, p. 315.
- ⁴⁴ Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 15–16.
- ⁴⁵ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 23–24.
- ⁴⁶ Ahmad ‘Adl Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila al-Mada’in* (The Road to Mada’in), 6th edition (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa’is, 1986), pp. 212–263; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 159.

- ⁴⁷ Ahmad ‘Adl Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 161–162.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 162–170; and Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 1–6.
- ⁴⁹ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 171.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 176–192.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196; and Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 27.
- ⁵² Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 209 and 215.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 239–240 and 247.
- ⁵⁴ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 30.
- ⁵⁵ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 208–210.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 238–242.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 273.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 263–272; and see Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan* (The *Futuh* of the Countries) (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1983), p. 120.
- ⁵⁹ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 90.
- ⁶⁰ Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* (History of the Prophets and Kings), verified by Muhammad Abu Fadl Ibrahim, 2nd edition (Cairo: Dar al-Ma‘arif, 1969), vol. 3, p. 418.
- ⁶¹ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, sec. 1, p. 135; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 280–281.
- ⁶² Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 291–298.
- ⁶³ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 102–103; and also Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 305.
- ⁶⁴ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 305–306; and according to Al-Azdi, what Abu ‘Ubaidah said in this text is what ‘Umar bin al-Khattab wrote to Abu ‘Ubaidah and Mu‘ath bin Jabal in his response letter, see Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 102.
- ⁶⁵ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 334 and 346; and Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 131.
- ⁶⁶ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 113–114.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ See the text of negotiations between Mu‘adh and the Byzantines in Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 115–121.
- ⁶⁹ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 121–125.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 332.
- ⁷¹ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 333.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 344; and Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 136.
- ⁷³ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 122.
- ⁷⁴ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 344 and 349.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 358–401.
- ⁷⁶ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 194.
- ⁷⁷ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 406–407; and see Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 152; and Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 141.
- ⁷⁸ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 153–156.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160–169.

- ⁸² Ibid., pp. 180–182.
- ⁸³ Ibid., p.183.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 184.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 170; and the quoted statement is that of Al-Azdi, but the correct one is “depending on our power and number,” see Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 428–429.
- ⁸⁷ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 170–171.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 189.
- ⁸⁹ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 433 and 444.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 445.
- ⁹¹ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 199–207.
- ⁹² Ibid., p. 211.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p. 210; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 466 and 471.
- ⁹⁴ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 218; the word in the square brackets is [behind papers] in Al-Azdi text.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 219.
- ⁹⁶ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 474.
- ⁹⁷ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 220.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 221; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 475.
- ⁹⁹ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 476–480.
- ¹⁰⁰ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 225; and Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham*, p. 206.
- ¹⁰¹ Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. 3, p. 401.
- ¹⁰² Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 217–218.
- ¹⁰³ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 487–489.
- ¹⁰⁴ Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham*, p. 218.
- ¹⁰⁵ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 231; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 491–494.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 496, and Al-Waqidi stated that of Muslims four thousand were killed, see Muhammad bin ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *Futuh al-Sham*, p. 226.
- ¹⁰⁷ Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, p. 231.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, p. 500.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 509–510.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 511–516.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 513.
- ¹¹² Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 144.
- ¹¹³ About the *fath* of Jerusalem, see Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 246–259; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 523–527; and Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. 3, pp. 607–608.
- ¹¹⁴ Translated by Yohanan Friedman, *The History of al-Tabari* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), vol. 12, pp. 191–192, https://www.kalamullah.com/Books/The%20History%20Of%20Tabari/Tabari_Volume_12.pdf
- Note: The translation was edited by al-Zaytouna Centre.
- ¹¹⁵ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*, vol. 7, pp. 59–60.

- ¹¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 7, p. 60.
- ¹¹⁷ See Al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 246–259; and see Mujiruddine al-Hanbali, *Al-'Uns al-Jalil bi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil* (The Dignified Affability of the History of Jerusalem and Hebron) (Amman: Al-Muhtasib Library, 1973), vol. 1, p. 255.
- ¹¹⁸ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 7, p. 222.
- ¹¹⁹ See Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, pp. 145–148; and Ahmad Kamal, *Al-Tariq ila Dimashq*, pp. 534–535.
- ¹²⁰ Mujiruddine al-Hanbali, *Al-'Uns al-Jalil bi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. 1, p. 258.
- ¹²¹ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2, p. 96.
- ¹²² See Ibid., vol. 9, sec. 2, p. 97; and Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha fi Biladina Filastin* (Arab Tribes and Their Progeny in Our Country Palestine) (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1979), pp. 47–48 and 188.
- ¹²³ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha*, p. 104.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 188.
- ¹²⁵ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Filastin*, vol. 9, sec. 2, p. 97.
- ¹²⁶ See Diya'uddin Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahid bin Ahmad al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali, *Fada'il Bait al-Maqdis* (The Merits of Jerusalem), verified by Muhammad Muti' Hafith, The Merits of Jerusalem series no. 2 (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1985), pp. 90–92.
- ¹²⁷ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha*, p. 104.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 98–99.
- ¹²⁹ Diya'uddin al-Maqdisi, *Fada'il Bait al-Maqdis*, pp. 90–92; and Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha*, pp. 98 and 111–113.
- ¹³⁰ Shafiq Jasser Ahmad Mahmud, *Tarikh al-Quds: Al-'Ilaqah Bayna al-Muslimin wa al-Masihiyyin Fiha Mundhu al-Fateh al-Islami Hatta al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah* (The History of Jerusalem: The Relation Between the Muslims and the Christians There, Since the Islamic *fath* Until the Crusades) (Amman: Dar al-Bashir for Publication and Distribution, 1984), pp. 125–126.
- ¹³¹ Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Min Huna wa Hunak* (From Here and There) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1986), pp. 80 and 109.
- ¹³² Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha*, p. 187; and Shafiq Mahmud, *Tarikh al-Quds*, pp. 126–143.
- ¹³³ See Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Min Huna wa Hunak*, pp. 80–81; and Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha*, pp. 138–140.
- ¹³⁴ See Saleh Mas'ud Abu Yasir, *Jihad Sha'b Filastin Khilal Nisf Qarn* (The Jihad of the People of Palestine During Half a Century), 3rd edition (Beirut: Dar al-Fateh For Printing and Publishing, 1970), pp. 24–25.
- ¹³⁵ Mustafa al-Dabbagh, *Min Huna wa Hunak*, p. 81.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 82.
- ¹³⁷ Ibid.
- ¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 83.
- ¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 112.
- ¹⁴⁰ Jamil al-'Asali, *Ajdaduna fi Thara Bait al-Maqdis: Dirasah Tarikhiyyah li Maqabir al-Quds wa Turbiha wa Ithbat bi Asma' al-A'ian al-Madfunin Hunak* (Our Ancestors in the Soil of Jerusalem: A Historical Study of the Tombs and Cemeteries of Jerusalem, Proving the Names of the Dignitaries Buried There) (Amman: The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 1981), p. 150.

Chapter Three

*Muslims in the Face of Crusaders
and Tatars*

Muslims in the Face of Crusaders and Tatars

First: The Divine Laws in Victory and Defeat

Allah's (SWT) way of granting victory to Muslims is inseparably linked to the extent of their commitment to the provisions of their religion and *Shari'ah* of their God. This is evidenced by the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah and confirmed by the episodes of history, as well as the ebb and flow of Muslims' lives.

- Victory comes only from *Allah* (SWT) “*And victory is not except from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.*”¹ He also said, “*If Allah should aid you, no one can overcome you; but if He should forsake you, who is there that can aid you after Him? And upon Allah let the believers rely.*”²
- *Allah* (SWT) grants victory to the true believing company, “*And Our word has already preceded for Our servants, the messengers, [That] indeed, they would be those given victory, And [that] indeed, Our soldiers will be those who overcome.*”³ The Almighty also said, “*and never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to overcome them].*”⁴
- Victory is achieved when the believers have a strong connection with *Allah* (SWT), committing themselves to His book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, and defending His religion, “*O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.*”⁵
- The real determinants of victory are: Steadfastness when meeting the enemy, communication with and remembrance of *Allah*, obedience to *Allah*, obedience to the Prophet (SAWS), avoidance of conflict and discord and endurance of battles' hardships. *Allah* (SWT) mentioned these, saying, “*O you who have believed, when you encounter a company [from the enemy forces], stand firm and remember Allah much that you may be successful. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart; and be patient. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.*”⁶
- Obedience to *Allah* and His Messenger involves responding to their orders with regard to endeavoring to make all necessary preparations, “*And prepare against them whatever you are able of power,*”⁷ as well as selling one's self to *Allah* and spending and fighting in His sake.

- The hard-working believers are the masters and rulers of the earth; *Allah* (SWT) said, “*Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient.*”⁸
- When defeat befalls the believing party, there must be a gap in the essence of their faith, either in their morals or actions, and the bigger the gap the more grievous the temporary defeat is. Then victory will be the believers’ when they have a strong presence, and when they have filled their gaps.
- For example, the gap in the Battle of “Uhud” was disobeying the Prophet (SAWS) and lusting after the booty. At the beginning of the Battle of “Hunain,” it was showing pride and admiration for the great number..
- Abandoning *Allah’s* (SWT) way will lead Muslims to weakness, humiliation, defeat and loss. The Almighty said, “*So let those beware who dissent from the Prophet’s order, lest fitnah strike them or a painful punishment.*”⁹

It was narrated that “Whenever a people neglect *jihad* they are humiliated.”

Thus, the ebb and flow in Muslims’ progress or decline, victory or defeat, and civilization or backwardness, are intrinsically related to the extent of their commitment to, or abandonment of, *Allah’s* law. In this sense, we come to understand the historical shifts with regard to Muslims’ victories and defeats.

Times Then Changed

The Muslim land of Palestine produced the best and most profitable efforts for Islam throughout its prosperous ages. However, this generous provision of a bright Islamic life did not continue.

Since the second Abbasid era, which started after the middle of the third century AH, the Islamic caliphate state became increasingly weaker as a result of fragile connection with *Allah* (SWT), lack of strict application of His law, weakness of rulers and their preoccupation with different means of entertainment and luxury, and the spread of misguided ideas and deviant groups in the Islamic State. In addition, Muslim scholars were going through a period of impasse

and imitation, which prevented them from solving many of the problems and issues facing Muslims in the renewable age. There were multiplicity of doctrinal differences, increasing sectarian fanaticism, disunion of the Islamic State and formation of three different caliphates instead of one: the Abbasid in the East, the Fatimid in Egypt and parts of Morocco and *al-Sham*, the Umayyad in Andalusia. Many Muslims were preoccupied with the trifles and joys of civilization, and the accumulation of fortune, bondmaids and bondservants...

In this state of slackness and weakness, which befell Muslims in that era, the Crusades started.

Second: The Political Map of the Region Before the Crusades

About forty years before the start of the Crusades, the Seljuk Turks were able to establish their control over Baghdad and rule under the nominal caliphate of the Abbasids. Indeed, the Seljuks established control over large parts of Persia, northern Iraq, Armenia and Anatolia around 1040 CE. Then the Seljuk Sultan Tughril Beg (*Tuğrul Bey*) took control of Baghdad in 1055 CE. The Seljuks expanded at the expense of the Byzantines in Anatolia. On 26/8/1071 CE, the Battle of Manzikert (*Malazgirt Meydan Muharebesi*), led by the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan (Muhammad bin Dawud Chaghri), took place causing the greatest catastrophe for the Byzantines, which continued until the end of the eleventh century CE. In 1071 CE, the Seljuks controlled most of Palestine except Arsuf, driving away the Fatimids and expanding at their expense in *al-Sham*, eventually capturing most of it.¹⁰

In 485 AH/ 1092 CE, the Seljuk Sultan Malik-Shah I (*Melikşah*) died leading to the demise of Seljuk power. Consequently, the Seljuks were engaged in internecine, long and fierce battles for control and influence. In the words of Ibn al-Athir, “The state was disintegrated and the sword fell.”¹¹ In 1096 CE, their power was distributed over five kingdoms: the Sultanate of Persia led by Berk-Yaruq, Kingdom of Khorasan and Transoxiana led by Sanjar, Kingdom of Aleppo led by Radwan, Kingdom of Damascus led by Duqaq, and Seljuk Sultanate of Rum led by Kiliç Arslan (*Kılıç Arslan*, meaning “Sword Lion”). Most of Palestine was governed by Damascus.

In light of the fragile rule of the two rulers of *al-Sham* (Radwan and Duqaq), many ruling houses emerged, most of which did not have authority over more than one city.¹²

The Crusaders began their campaign in 491 AH/ 1098 CE at the time when the Muslim regions in *al-Sham*, Iraq and others were torn apart by bloody disputes and conflicts. Brothers Radwan and Duqaq, sons of Tutush I (*I. Tutuş*), engaged in a war against each other in 490 AH. Concurrently, there were many battles between Muhammad bin Malik-Shah and his brother Berk-Yaruq for control over the Sultanate, during which time both took turns in declaring victories and delivering speeches at the caliphate palace (492–497 AH); “The war between them was long, and corruption prevailed: money was stolen, there was bloodshed, lands were destroyed, and villages were burned, thus the Sultanate was coveted and doomed, and the kings became overpowered.”¹³ At that stage, the Crusaders had established their rule in Palestine and many parts of *al-Sham*, and the Franks extended their control over what they seized of *al-Sham*, making use of “the occupation of the Muslim armies and kings in fighting each other, meaning Muslims had disparate views and different dispositions, and riches were squandered.”¹⁴

Third: The First Crusade and its Consequences

At the time, Europe’s focus was drawn to the Holy Land after Pope Urban II (1088–1099 CE) called upon the Council of Clermont on 26/11/1095 CE to “recover” the Holy Land from the hands of Muslims. Next, he held several councils where he called for launching the Crusades (Limoges, Angers, Le Mans, Tours, Poitiers, Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Nîmes) during the period 1095–1096 CE. He declared that anyone who would participate in the Crusades would have his sins forgiven. He also declared that the property of the Crusaders would be placed under the auspices of the church for the duration of their absence, and that each warrior should sew a cloth cross on his tunic.¹⁵

The Crusades were launched as public campaigns or callers’ campaigns. They were poor in arms and order. One of these campaigns was the campaign of Peter the Hermit, who was an eloquent person known for riding on a lame donkey barefoot and wearing tattered clothes. He gathered about 15 thousand volunteers from France. En route to their destination, they committed a massacre

in a Hungarian town where 4 thousand people were killed because of a dispute over rations. The bands of Walter the Penniless assembled with them in Constantinople, and they all entered the Asian seashore. A battle with the Seljuks took place, and the Seljuks defeated them killing 22 thousand Crusaders. Only 3 thousand Crusaders survived. As to the Volkmar and Emich von Leiningen campaigns, they massacred Jews along their route. Then the two campaigns perished in Hungary.¹⁶

Afterwards, what is known as “The First Crusade” took place, in which professional European barons and knights participated. In the summer of 1097 CE, the campaign started to overcome the Muslim regions. In March 1098 CE, the Crusaders established the County of Edessa under the leadership of Baldwin of Boulogne. The Crusaders besieged Antioch for nine months. The ruler of Antioch, Yaghi-Siyan (*Yağsıyan*), showed courage and “good opinion, and took precautions more than anyone else. Thus, most of the Franks perished. If their crowds had survived, they would have dominated over the Muslim countries.” However, one of the Armenians who was guarding the walls of the city was contacted by the Crusaders, and was given “money and property” so he opened the door of the tower he was guarding. As a result, the Crusaders occupied the city and established their second state on 3 June 1098 CE/ 491 AH under the Norman Prince Bohemond.¹⁷

To digress for a moment, we will talk about one of the incidents that is worth mentioning, and which reflects the extent of the Muslims’ division and animosity. After the fall of Antioch, the Muslims gathered their troops under the leadership of Kerbugha (*Kür-Boğā*), who was governor of Mosul. The armies of *al-Sham* joined him: its Turks, Arabs and so on, and the Muslims marched towards Antioch and besieged it, and the Franks stayed inside the city, not having anything to eat for 12 days. The strong ate their animals, while the weak fed on decaying animals and tree leaves. The price of one loaf of bread reached one dinar, and one egg cost two. The Franks (Crusaders) sent a message to Kerbugha, seeking a safe passage out of Antioch but he refused.... With the first signs of Muslim victory, the first signs of betrayal amongst Muslims began to take shape; Kerbugha mistreated the Muslims in his company and acted arrogantly towards the commanders. They were angered and he lost their loyalty.

The Franks decided to fight and exited through five or six doors. The Muslims pointed to Kerbugha that they should wait at each door and kill anyone

who would exit but he refused and said, “Do not [do that]; we should wait until they all have exited then kill them.” When they all had exited, the Muslims ran away defeated due to Kerbugha’s conduct: First, he underestimated and ignored them. Secondly, he prevented them from fighting the Franks. Thus, they were defeated, without having the opportunity to strike a sword, stab with a spear or throw an arrow. When the Franks saw that, they thought it was trap, as no fighting which might have made the Muslims flee had taken place. Only a group of Muslim fighters stood fast, but thousands of them were killed by the Franks who captured what was inside the camp including food, money, furniture, animals and weapons; thus, their situation became better.¹⁸

This situation is indicative of the circumstances of that era: corrupt, unilateral leadership; leaders whose rivalry with their ruler was greater than their enmity toward the Franks; large numbers of Muslims without efficient leadership; fewer numbers of Franks who were more trained, organized and professional; and true Muslim fighters who have existed through the ages, fighting for the sake of *Allah* and seeking His reward.

While the Seljuks were defending against the Crusaders’ march toward northern *al-Sham*, the Fatimids took the opportunity to invade and occupy Tyre in 1097 CE. They dominated Jerusalem in February 1098 CE during the Crusaders’ siege of Antioch. In Tripoli, Judge Ibn ‘Ammar, one of the followers of the Fatimids, declared independence. The Fatimids had, during their siege of Antioch, sent to the Crusaders a group on a mission to form an alliance. They proposed to fight against the Seljuks, provided that they would take control of Palestine, while the northern region, “Syria,” would be under the dominion of the Crusaders. The Crusaders sent a delegation to Egypt to explain their “good intentions.” While the Seljuks were engaged with the Crusades, the Fatimids were busy expanding their authority in Palestine at the expense of the Seljuks. Their borders even reached Nahr al-Kalb in the north and the Jordan River to the east.

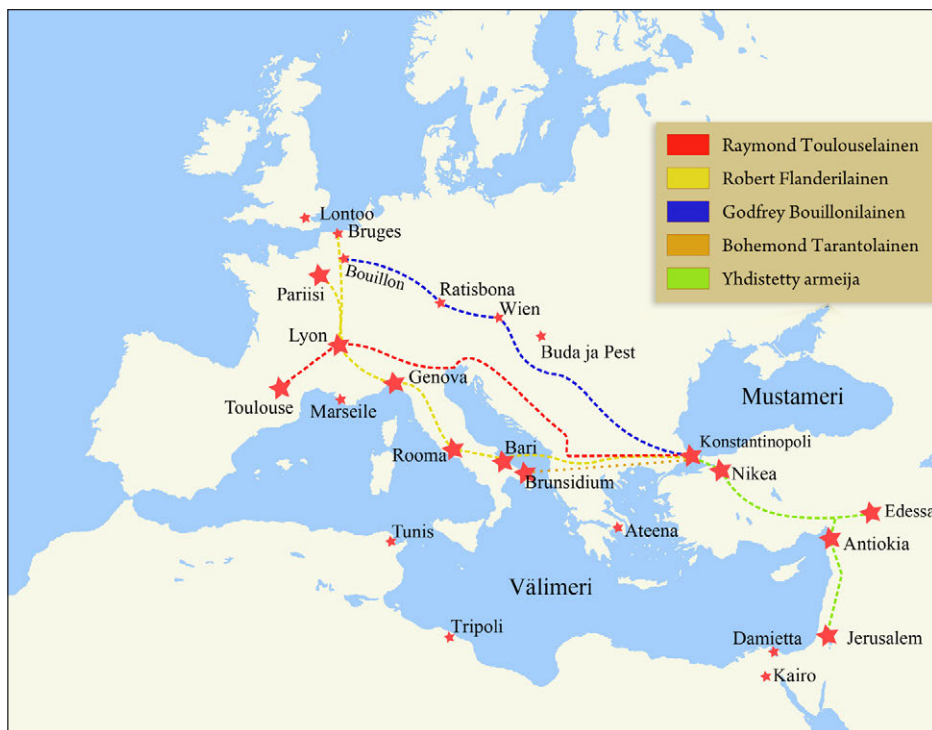
Treacheries and betrayals perpetrated by the city states, which were eager to maintain their authority and “gain the friendship” of the Crusaders during their expansion, manifested. This was clear when the ruler of the Shaizar region contacted the Crusaders and pledged not to confront them and instead provide them with what they required, in the form of food and rations. They even sent two guides with them to help them find the correct routes. The city of Homs offered them gifts; the city of Masyaf concluded a treaty with them; Tripoli paid

jizyah and provided them with guides; Beirut paid them money and proposed to be subjugated to their rule in case they managed to seize Jerusalem.¹⁹

Raymond IV of Saint-Gilles (Marquis of Provence and Count of Toulouse in France) continued to lead the rest of the Crusaders to Jerusalem. Their number was only one thousand knights and five thousand infantrymen. In the spring of 1099 CE, they entered Palestine. They went by way of Acre, whose ruler provided them with supplies, then by Caesarea and Arsuf. Next, they captured Ramlah, Lod and Bethlehem. On 7/6/1099 CE, they began a siege of Jerusalem, whose ruler, named Iftikhar al-Dawla, had been appointed by the Fatimids. The city was conquered on 15/7/1099 CE – 23 Sha‘ban 492 AH. The Franks kept killing Muslims for a whole week, murdering more than 70 thousand at the *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including many groups of Muslim imams, scholars and worshippers.²⁰ The Fatimid State received this news nonchalantly, and the Abbasid State took no action whatsoever.

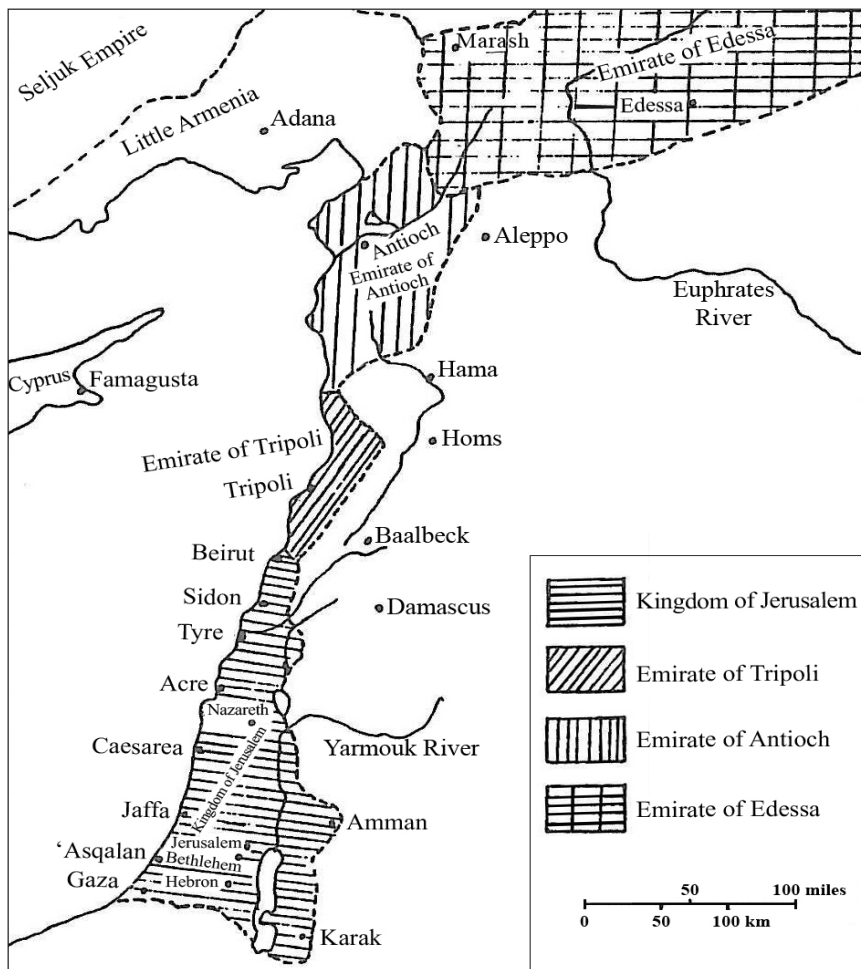
Crusader leader, Godfrey of Bouillon, took office as a ruler of Jerusalem, and was humbly called the “Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.” Nablus surrendered, and the Crusaders occupied Hebron.²¹

First Crusades Routes



It is said that only 300 knights and two thousand infantrymen of the Crusaders remained, unable to expand their control because many of them returned home, having fulfilled their oath to take over Jerusalem.²² Thus, the Crusaders' kingdoms became like islands in the middle of a sea of enemies. Nevertheless, the kingdoms survived for 200 years, and it took two centuries for the last one was removed. This was due to the supplies and expeditions which reached them from time to time, coupled with the weakness and fragmentation of the Muslims, being unable to exploit the opportunity to overcome the Crusaders, who were scattered over large areas of land in limited numbers; however, the Muslims delayed and took no action until the Crusaders' power consolidated and was hard to counter.

Crusader Kingdoms and States (Outremers) in *Bilad al-Sham*



More Palestinian cities continued to be captured; Jaffa was captured during the siege of Jerusalem by Genoan ships on 15/6/1099 CE. The Crusaders also captured the eastern area of Lake Tiberias (Al-Sawad) in May, 1100 CE. The Crusaders also captured Haifa by force during August 1101 CE/ Shawwal 494 AH, with the help of a great fleet from Venice. They dominated Arsuf peacefully in April 1101 CE and drove its inhabitants out. Next, they captured Caesarea by force on 17/5/1101 CE, killing residents and looting their property.²³

Thus, the Crusaders imposed their dominion over Palestine, except 'Asqalan which continued to resist, owing to the Egyptians (the Fatimids) supplying it with ammunition, men, and funds every year. The Crusaders continued to besiege Ashkelon on a yearly basis, but they failed to capture it until 1153 CE/ 548 AH. In that same year, 'Asqalan's people managed to drive the Crusaders back, rendering them seemingly defeated; however, they received news that 'Asqalan's people were engaged in internal dispute, so they waited patiently.

The reason for the dispute was that when its people returned victorious, each party alleged that they alone had secured the victory. This sparked conflict, which eventually led to the death of a person from one of the parties. This made the matter worse and more violent; consequently, war broke out between them, and many were killed. The Crusaders were hopeful again and advanced toward 'Asqalan and fought "with no one to resist them so they captured it."²⁴ I wonder... How many defeats are self-inflicted? "*..and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart.*"²⁵

Hence, the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem was founded, and we digress to refer to the Franks' establishment of a fourth kingdom in Tripoli on 12/7/1109 CE – 11 Dhul Hijjah 503 AH, after a seven-year siege.²⁶

Fourth: Continuation of Conflict (An Overview)

It is difficult to examine the details of events year by year, and incident by incident, especially given that our approach tends to summarize and get straight to the critical points in the context of our discussion of the historical experience of the Islamic solution on the land of Palestine. Still, painting a complete picture and knowing all the circumstances in that era requires reference to the following data, which emerged during the 30 years that followed the Crusader occupation of Jerusalem:

1. The number of Crusaders was limited, and they imposed their dominance by establishing castles scattered as isolated islands in many areas of *al-Sham*.
2. Conflict amongst Muslims continued, and some of them used the Crusaders' help against their opponents, which weakened the Muslims' position and sometimes allowed the Crusaders to play the role of a policeman. They benefited from this to increase their influence and consolidate their power.

An example of that was the struggle between Toghtekin (*Tuğtekin*) and Baktash, the son of Tutush II over Damascus; Baktash sought help from the Franks in 498 AH against his opponent, with "all those who wanted corruption," following him. However, the only help from Franks' king was to push Baktash to further corruption, which ultimately led to the triumph of Toghtekin.²⁷

At the battle between the Fatimids and the Franks in 498 AH, in an area between 'Asqalan and Jaffa, the Fatimids were supported by a force of more than 300 knights from Damascus, while the Franks were helped by a group of Muslims led by Baktash, the son of Tutush II.²⁸ When the Sultan's army, under the leadership of Bursuq bin Bursuq of Hamadan, came from Iraq to *al-Sham* in 509 AH to fight the Crusaders, the rulers of Aleppo and Damascus feared that their authority would be eliminated. They collaborated, under the leadership of Toghtekin, with Antioch's Franks against the Sultan's army; then Toghtekin himself fought the Franks of Jerusalem and retook the city of Rafania (Raphanea) after the Franks had captured it²⁹..., such was the conflict fuelled by ambitions and interests; sometimes they appear under the guise of fighting for the sake of *Allah*, and sometimes under the guise of defending an individual's "rights" (their rule) under the pretext of inheritance or qualification, even if it means forming an alliance with an enemy.

3. Muslims' *jihad* against the Franks (Crusaders) continued, although it lacked organization and proper planning. In addition, many Muslim leaders came and went, and the conflict with the Franks was happening on many fronts in *al-Sham*, at the time when Muslims lacked a powerful and large basis that could be used as a permanent launching pad for *jihad*. More often than not, the battles were in the form of a single Muslim city or castle trying to defend itself, or expand, against the Franks.

The Muslims and Crusaders exchanged triumph and defeat, and not a year passed without battles, taking turns in occupying cities and castles. It was not

difficult for Muslims to advance into the middle of Palestine and fight battles in places such as Ramleh or Jaffa, but the Crusaders continued to maintain authority and dominance over the areas they occupied.

A number of Muslim leaders emerged, but they were not strong enough to unite the Muslim forces for the fight against the Franks. Nonetheless, they managed to maintain the spirit of *jihad*, inflicting huge losses upon the Crusaders, depriving them of security and stability, and killing and capturing many of their leaders and prominent figures.³⁰ For example, Muineddin Sokman (*Sökmen*) was in the midst of a war against Shams-ul-Daulah Jikirmish (*Çökürmüş*), but when Harran was besieged by the Franks in 497 AH, they contacted each other pledging to sacrifice themselves for the sake of *Allah* and His reward. They marched and gathered near the Habur River, forming an army of 10 thousand composed of Turkmen, Turks, Arabs and Kurds, who confronted the Franks at the Balikh River. The Franks were defeated, the Muslims killing them “in all conceivable ways.” The Crusader leader, Baldwin II (*Baudouin du Bourcq*), was captured and traded for 35 dinars and 160 Muslim captives. Around 12 thousand Franks were killed.³¹

In 507 AH, Muslims from Mosul, Sanjar and Damascus assembled and fought the Franks in Tiberias. They defeated them and captured their king Baldwin I. Not knowing that he was the king, they seized his weapon and released him, while killing and capturing large numbers of Franks. Following that, reinforcements from Antioch and Tripoli arrived, which revitalized the Franks and encouraged them to fight again; however, the Muslims surrounded them completely so the Franks ascended to a mountain west of Tiberias. They remained stationed there for 26 days and did not descend to continue the fight. As a result, the Muslims left them and marched toward Baysan “pillaging and destroying the Frankish states” located between Acre and Jerusalem. After that, they returned. Mawdud bin Altuntash (*Mevdud bin Altuntaş*), atabey of Mosul, returned with Toghtekin to Damascus where, in the courtyard of a mosque on a Friday, a mystic attacked him inflicting four wounds on his body. The mystic was killed, and Mawdud died while fasting, as he had always wished. He was benevolent, open-handed, and just. It is said that Toghtekin is the one who conspired against him. After the murder of Mawdud, The Franks’

king sent Toghtekin a letter, which stated, “A nation who kills its leader in its place of worship on its holiday deserves to be obliterated by *Allah*!”³²

4. The original Muslim residents of Palestine continued to live in the lands occupied by the Franks, but some of them left to eastern Jordan and Damascus, refraining from cooperation with the Crusaders. Consequently, agriculture was disrupted in most coastal Palestinian cities. These made efforts to fight the Crusaders and provided many services to the Muslim attackers. They also joined the Muslim troops in *al-Sham*, playing the role of guides in Palestine. William of Tyre, a historian of the Crusades, said that “They taught our enemy how to destroy us; because they had sufficient information about our situation.”³³
5. One of the most prominent leaders of the early Muslim fighters was Aksungur al-Hajib (*Aksungur el-Porsukî*), who was appointed governor of Mosul in 508 AH by Sultan Muhammed Tapar, who ordered him to fight the Franks. Aksungur al-Hajib fought against the Crusaders in the northern *al-Sham*. In addition to Mosul, Upper Mesopotamia and Sanjar, Aleppo came under his leadership in 518 AH, thus expanding his anti-Crusader front. However, he was killed in 520 AH by mystics in Mosul. Aksungur was a Turk free-handed ruler who loved scholars and righteous people, and believed in and acted by justice. He was also one of the most pious rulers, performing prayers at their early stated times and doing Night Prayers.³⁴
6. The Fatimid State in Egypt, led by its Vizier Badr al-Jamali, sent many expeditions to Palestine and tried to defend its areas of influence along the coast. However, their expeditions were not at the same level as Egypt’s tremendous capacity and potential. It seemed that their expeditions took on a character of exhibition and lacked real coordination with the Muslim forces in *al-Sham*.³⁵ The Fatimid ruler had lost his credibility pertaining to Islamic *jihād* when he sent word to the Franks during their march toward Jerusalem, offering an alliance against the Seljuks and expressing his will to share control over *al-Sham*. Whatever the case, the Fatimid state was in decline and was suffering weakness and failure.

Fifth: The Jihad of Imad al-Din Zengi 521–541 AH

The era of *jihad* against the Crusaders entered a new phase with the emergence of Imad al-Din Zengi, the son of Aksungur, and the foundation of the Zengi State in Mosul and Aleppo. Imad al-Din Zengi took over as governor of Mosul in 1127 CE/ 521 AH, after he had shown proficiency in ruling Basra and Wasit in Iraq. He also ruled as Shihna (military governor) of Iraq.³⁶ In 1128 CE/ Muharram 522 AH, he managed to gain control over Aleppo. Zengi fought battle after battle, achieving victories over the Crusaders. After talking about Imad al-Din's victory over the Franks in a great battle, as well as the capture of al-Atharib Fort and siege of Harim in 1130 CE/ 524 AH, Ibn al-Athir said, "The forces of the disbelievers were weakened, and they knew that their states were facing something they had not planned for. Their utmost ambition became preserving what they controlled after having had greed for ruling everything."³⁷

Zengi's efforts to unite the Muslim forces against the Crusaders continued. He captured the cities of Hama, Homs, Baalbek, Sarji, Dara, Ma'arras and Kafartab, as well as Sur Fortress in Diyarbakir, fortresses of the Hamidian Kurd, Ba'rin, Shahrazur and Haditha. In addition, they took control over the Castle of Ashab from the hands of the Hakkarian Kurds.³⁸ In 1140 CE/ 534 AH, Zengi attempted to capture Damascus twice but to no avail. Damascus was the real key to the restoration of Palestine from the side of *al-Sham*. However, Mu'in al-Din Unur (*Müiniddin Üner*), the ruler at the time, contacted the Crusaders and formed an alliance with them against Zengi, promising them to besiege the city of Banias and hand it over to them, so they agreed. Zengi went after them before they came to Damascus; and when they heard that, they did not attempt to go there. Nonetheless, Mu'in al-Din besieged Banias with the help of a group of Franks, eventually seizing it and handing it over to the Franks.³⁹

The most famous triumph made by Zengi was the conquering of Edessa and the overthrow of the Crusader kingdom established there. He besieged the city for four weeks and conquered it by force in 1144 CE/ 6 Jumada II 539 AH. He also conquered all the cities that were under the province of this kingdom in Upper Mesopotamia (*al-Jazirah*). He also captured the city of Suruç and all the areas controlled by the Franks east of the Euphrates, except the city of Birecik (Biré/ Bile).⁴⁰

After carrying the flag of *jihad* for 20 years, Imad al-Din Zengi was treacherously killed, at the age of over 60, in mid-September 1146 CE – 5 Rabi' II, 541 AH at the hands of a group of his followers, while he was laying a siege to the Ja'bar Castle.⁴¹ According to Ibn al-Athir, Zengi was an able politician, highly respected and esteemed by his military and civil subordinates. He never assisted the strong to do injustice to the weak. Before he came to power, the state was a wasteland, alternating between rulers and full of oppression and close relations with the Franks. When he became ruler, he made it a prosperous, populated land.⁴² “Zengi was one of the best kings, and the best in appearance and manners. He was courageous, daring, and powerful, with all the other kings at the time yielding to him. He was one of the keenest to protect women, as well as one of the most charitable and friendliest to the public.”⁴³ After his murder, he was known as the “Martyr.”

Imad al-Din Zengi worked under difficult circumstances; intra-conflict between the leaders and princes of the Seljuks, on the one hand, and between them and the Abbasid Caliphate on the other. In addition, there was the prevailing system of hereditary rule and the desire of many for leadership and domination, even over a single city or castle. Moreover, the Crusader forces were very powerful and aggressive during his time. Despite that, Imad al-Din managed to construct a large and powerful base of *jihad*, extending from northern *al-Sham* to northern Iraq. He also prevailed over the Crusaders in many battles and facilitated the means of *jihad*, enabling hard work to liberate the land. Zengi was a model of leadership and *jihad* under the banner of Islam, raising the hope of restoring the holy lands. However, the best heritage he left, as it appears to us, is his son Nur al-Din Mahmud.

Sixth: The Jihad of Nur al-Din Mahmud 541–569 AH

After Zengi was killed, and according to the inheritance traditions at the time, his state was divided between his two sons: Nur al-Din Mahmud became ruler of Aleppo and its sub districts, while Saif al-Din Ghazi took over Mosul and its sub districts.

Nur al-Din Mahmud was born about 20 years after the fall of Jerusalem in the hands of the Crusaders in February 1118 CE/ 17 Shawwal 511 AH. He was

tall and handsome, with a light beard and an air that inspired awe and reverence. He married the daughter of Mu'in al-Din Unur (*Müiniddin Üner*) in 1146 CE/ 541 AH and had one daughter and two sons. He died on 15/5/1174 CE – 11 Shawwal 569 AH.⁴⁴

Under Nur al-Din, a new glorious phase of Islamic *jihād* started in *al-Sham*. Throughout the 28 years of his rule, one goal was clear in his mind: liberating and restoring the Muslim countries and uniting them under the banner of Islam.

Since that moment, he left no stone unturned, making all preparations, uniting the efforts of Muslims, and elevating them in all aspects of life according to an integrated Islamic vision aimed at restoring the glories of Muslims and expelling the Crusaders from their countries.

He entered this battle in line with a comprehensive and sound Islamic understanding, which emphasized the ideological importance of the conflict with the Crusaders, as it represented:

- A conflict between right and wrong, Islam and Kufr (apostasy).
- A matter, which concerns all Muslims, regardless of nationality and sector.
- No definitive peace until Muslims recover every inch of their land.
- An integrated preparation must be carried out by the Muslim nation so as to be *jihād*-ready in terms of faith, culture, education, *jihād* and the military, as well as at the social level.
- Efforts must be united under the banner of Islam in the face of the Crusader enemy.

Features of the Islamic Revival

To accomplish this purpose, Nur al-Din Mahmud initiated an Islamic revival that emphasized the integrity of the Islamic solution and was expressed through:

1. Honest Islamic Leadership

This leadership was manifested in his character and the characters of those around him, including rulers, officials and scholars. The exceptional character and psychological make-up of Nur al-Din Mahmud had a substantial impact on the formation of a knowledgeable, determined and *jihadi* Islamic leadership.

Ibn al-Athir said, "I have read the histories of all former kings, pre and post-Islam, and to this day, I have not seen a better conduct than that of the just king Nur al-Din, with the exception of the Rashidun Caliphs and 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz."⁴⁵

Nur al-Din was smart, bright and intelligent; was not of the suspicious kind, and not one to be easily impressed by men, thus only those that were genuinely creditworthy earned promotion: those who proved capable of authentic and responsible accomplishment; he never considered promoting anyone based on their social status, gender or nationality.⁴⁶

Nur al-Din was known for his piety and devotion, keen on performing optional prayers (Sunnah) and night prayer before daybreak. He used to sleep after Isha' prayer, then wake up after midnight in order to pray and perform du'a' (invocation) to *Allah* until the call to Fajr prayer was heard; he would also fast a great deal.⁴⁷

He was distinguished by his profound knowledge and understanding, modelling himself on the pious predecessors (*al-Salaf al-Salih*). He was well versed in the Hanafi school of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), earning a license authorizing him to transmit Hadith. He also wrote a book on *jihad*.⁴⁸

He was of a serious and sedate nature, and was bestowed with a great deal of charisma. "He was fearful though lenient and merciful." At his court, "only knowledge, religion and *jihad* consultations are mentioned," and "he never uttered obscenities, whether in anger or pleasure. He was a grave and silent man."⁴⁹

He was a modest ascetic to such an extent that even the poorest people at his time could afford to spend more than him, as he had no interest in wealth accumulation or worldly pleasures. When his wife complained about their financial hardship, he gave her three shops he owned in Homs and said, "This is all I possess. I am treasurer of everything I have in my hands, and that belongs to the Muslims, so I will not betray them. I refuse to be subjected to hell for your sake."⁵⁰

The Islamic scholar, Jurist Qutb al-Din al-Nisaburi, once said to him, "For *Allah's* sake, do not risk yourself and jeopardise Islam. If you were to be killed in battle, Muslims would all be put to the sword." Nur al-Din replied: "O Qutb al-Din!! Who is Mahmud to be addressed like that? Islam and this land are already protected by *Allah*, other than whom there is no deity."⁵¹

With the expansion of his authority and influence, he received a letter of honour from the Abbasid Caliphate, which included a list of the titles that were used at the mention of his name at the pulpits of Baghdad. It went: "O *Allah*,

set right the lord, the sultan, the just king, the hard-working scholar; the ascetic, devout, pious, *mujahid*, *murabit* [one who volunteers to defend Islam along a front], and the frontier soldier; the light of the religion (in Arabic Nur al-Din: the literal meaning of his name) and its instrument, cornerstone and sword of Islam, firm pillar of the state, choice and honourer of the caliphate, obedient beloved to the imamate, pride and glory of the religion, and owner of the highest nobility; master and sultan of kings of the east and the west, the one who spreads justice amongst people and defends the oppressed against the oppressors, and supporter of the State of Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful)"!! He prohibited all that, and settled for one du'a' (invocation), which went, "O *Allah*, set right your poor slave Mahmud bin Zengi."⁵²

He was immensely popular and loved by people, even those from countries he did not rule. He felt great responsibility not to waste time, or allow Muslim blood to be shed, Muslim dignity to be lost, or Muslim land to be invaded; He worked day and night without overlooking the needs of his people.⁵³

Allah bestowed upon him an unparalleled military composition through which he undertook huge *jihad* responsibilities for 28 years in a true *jihadi* spirit.⁵⁴

2. Commitment to and Application of the Precepts of Islam

Nur al-Din was keen to enforce the precepts of Islam on everyone, and was an example of commitment to these rules, enforcing them on officials and leaders. He was also keen on the restitution of rights to their rightful owners and would always say, "Everyone in my company must strive to refer to me any oppressed person who cannot reach me." In his attempt to unify the Muslim countries, he was keen not to shed the blood of Muslims, hence he was patient, wise and diligent in that regard. He preserved the holy *Shari'ah* and abided by its precepts.⁵⁵

Despite the fact that he had to clash with many Muslim leaders of city states and castles in his quest for unity, or because they were allies with the Franks, Muslim blood was sacred to him. "He only seeks the territory of a Muslim in case of urgency; either to get support to fight the Franks or to protect it from them."⁵⁶ When the rulers of Damascus allied with Crusaders in 1149 CE/ 544 AH, he fought the Crusaders without harming or dividing Muslims; he said, "Muslims do not need to kill each other; I remove their worries so that they sacrifice their

lives to only fight the polytheists.” Damascene people realized his sanctity, so they wished to have him as their king.⁵⁷

When someone filed a suit against him in court, the judge summoned him. He said, “We hear and obey. ‘*The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, ‘We hear and we obey.’*’ I have come here in compliance with the law of *Allah*.” On a second occasion, he was again summoned to appear in court, so he complied. However, when he was judged innocent, he gave his opponent what they had claimed.⁵⁸

He abolished the taxes which exceeded *shari’ah* limits despite the huge income they used to generate for the state budget, regardless of the fact that such taxes were justified to some people, especially under the circumstances of war.⁵⁹ He used to say, “We protect the road from the thieves and bandits... Shall we not protect this religion and prevent what might contradict it?”⁶⁰ His utmost desire was to listen to a word of truth or be directed to a Sunnah so as to perform it.⁶¹

3. Development of Faith, Education, and Culture

In this field, Nur al-Din got the support of hard-working scholars and allowed them to work in the field of Da’wah (preaching of Islam). He made efforts to build schools and mosques and placed them under the authority of the *Awqaf* (administration of religious endowments). He also fought *bid’ah* (religious innovations) and misleading ways. As a result, faith and knowledge spread amongst people; he also revived the characteristic of respecting and revering scholars. Although rulers and leaders did not dare to sit at his court without his permission or order, he would stand up to meet a knowledgeable scholar or righteous man and show him to his seat, approaching him with all respect and reverence.⁶² He used to say that scholars “are the soldiers of *Allah* and with their prayers, we are led to victory over our enemies. They can claim from the House of Wealth a lot more than the amount I give to them. If they feel satisfied with this portion of their right, it is a very kind act on their part toward us.”⁶³ *Al-Sham* had been a place with no scholars or scholarship, but in his time, it became a destination for scholars, jurists and Sufis (mystics).⁶⁴ He used to listen to the council of scholars and honour it, saying, “When al-Balkhi [the renowned scholar Burhan al-Din al-Balkhi] calls me: Mahmud, every hair on my body stands up in reverence, and my heart softens.”⁶⁵

4. Construction and Civil and Social Development

Nur al-Din was known as a person who cared about the conditions of Muslims and reinforced the meanings of solidarity and cooperation between them. He always alleviated their suffering and difficult conditions. He strived to sponsor orphans, marry widows, enrich the poor and build hospitals, shelters, orphanages, markets, public baths and roads. He also worked on settling Bedouins and giving them lands for tax farming so as not to harm pilgrims. He enhanced the services provided to the Muslims, so they loved him, and their relationship with him became strong and firm. This constructive, charitable characteristic passed down to his men, so they started competing to serve people and build schools, hospitals and shelters, and provide various other means of service.⁶⁶

5. Economic Development

Nur al-Din reorganized the Diwan of Zakat (The Alms Tax Office), and enhanced the system of levying taxes and Zakat distribution according to the principles of *Shari'ah*. He encouraged trade by securing transportation routes and lifting the taxes, which had weighed down on the movement of goods. He sought to strengthen the state and support its economic structure.⁶⁷

6. Jihadi Military Development

Nur al-Din undertook to revive the desire for *jihad* in people's minds, educate the nation on such meanings, consolidate the dignity, invincibility and force of Muslims, make efforts to provide necessary training and tools, choose suitable leaders, protect cities, build defensive walls and preserve the lives of Muslims. He was characterised by his strength and resolve in that regard, responding with extreme vigour to enemies if they violated the sanctities of Muslims. For example, when he had barely been in charge for one month, the Crusaders attacked Edessa, believing that the new ruler was weak; Nur al-Din attacked the Crusaders and killed three quarters of their army, whose remnants fled realising the power of this new leader. On another occasion, the Crusaders launched a surprise attack on Nur al-Din and part of his army. In the aftermath of this assault, he swore that he would not rest under a roof until he took revenge for Islam. His retaliation was vigorous in the Battle of Harim, where he killed thousands of Crusaders.⁶⁸

He even benefited from sports in the preparation for *jihad*, since at the time war was fought on horseback. To develop the skill of controlling horses and their movement, he used to play polo extremely well!!⁶⁹

He was keen to realize the nation's full potential for *jihad*. While busy doing everything in his power, he did not forget the prayers of the weak, old and needy. He was good to them and would always say that they might have been winning thanks to their prayers.

With this integrated development and serious, balanced preparation, Nur al-Din entered the stage of radical political change in order to achieve two aims, which went in parallel:

- Achieving Islamic unity and mobilizing forces in a single crucible.
- Gradually destroying the Crusader forces: by undermining them, exhausting their troops, and liberating the Muslim land under their control in a gradual manner. This was all pending the finalization of Islamic unity with the aim of achieving a decisive and final victory.

Efforts to Reach Islamic Unity

With a great deal of patience, wisdom and forbearance, Nur al-Din was keen to achieve unity, making sure not to shed Muslim blood and to attract and gain the friendship of the numerous Islamic forces in the North of *al-Sham* and northern Iraq. He gradually revealed the true nature of those rulers and leaders, who were a stumbling block to Islamic unity. People used to compare his *jihad* to the weakness of their rulers; his reforms to their rulers' corruption; his loyalty to *Allah* (SWT), His Messenger and the believers to their rulers' loyalty to their interests, desires and the Crusaders. As a result, people wished to be ruled by him, and he was widely welcomed by the people of the Muslim countries, which were annexed to his state.

Nur al-Din annexed Homs to his state in 544 AH/ 1149 CE, but he was eager to annex Damascus, which was standing between him and the Crusaders in Palestine. The regime in Damascus sought primarily to protect their authority, sometimes fighting the Franks, and other times cooperating and making peace with them. Occasionally, they would form an alliance with the Franks if they felt threatened by another Islamic force. According to a careful plan aimed at: controlling Damascus without shedding blood, winning the trust of its people,

and preventing its regime from requesting the support of the Franks when he set out after them, Nur al-Din was able to control Damascus on 25/4/1154 CE – 9 Safar 549 AH. This *Fath* (conquest) came after the death of Mu‘in al-Din Unur in 1149 CE, and after the rulers of Damascus became weak and fell under the influence of Crusaders who imposed taxes on Damascus, with their messengers entering the city to collect them every year.⁷⁰

Nur al-Din continued to control more cities and fortresses in *al-Sham* until most of them yielded to him. However, he realized that the only effective way to liberate Palestine and uproot the Crusader rule was to control Egypt and include it in the united Islamic front, putting the Crusaders between the jaws of a pair of pliers.

Nur al-Din’s opportunity to control Egypt came when one, named Shawar, of two opponents competing for the vizier position, requested his help against his rival, Dhirgham, in 1163 CE/ 559 AH, offering Nur al-Din one-third of the country, in addition to fiefs for the troops. Also, the commander whom Nur al-Din would send would reside in Egypt and act under his orders. Nur al-Din sent Asad al-Din Shirkuh, who defeated and killed Dhirgham. However, Shawar betrayed Shirkuh and used the help of the Franks to expel him, so they came and besieged Shirkuh and his companions in Balbis for three months until the news of the victories by Nur al-Din and his kingdom (Harim) reached them. Consequently, they proposed reconciliation and return to *al-Sham*, and he agreed. Shirkuh did not know what Nur al-Din had done in *al-Sham*.⁷¹

The rivalry between Nur al-Din and the Crusaders intensified over Egypt, especially since the Fatimid State was extremely fragile and in its dying stage. Nur al-Din sent Asad al-Din Shirkuh to Egypt with two thousand knights as part of a second campaign in 1166 CE/ Rabi‘ II, 562 AH. He was able to defeat the Franks and the army of Egypt in Upper Egypt. He established control over Alexandria with the help of its people and continued to control Upper Egypt. However, seven months later, he had to return to Damascus, after imposing a condition on the Franks that they would not capture any Egyptian territory, even a single village, and they agreed.⁷²

Nur al-Din finally controlled Egypt in his third campaign, which was also led by Asad al-Din Shirkuh in 1168 CE/ Rabi‘ I, 564 AH. At that time, the Franks, because of Shawar’s alliance with them, had consolidated their authority

over Egypt and gained a great influence. They had held the reins of Cairo and appointed an elite of their bravest knights who “imposed an unjust rule over the Muslims and caused them great harm.” The Franks coveted control of Egypt and led a campaign headed by the king of Jerusalem and occupied Balbis by force, killing and capturing many. Next, they besieged Cairo, and Caliph Al-‘Adid sent word to Nur al-Din, seeking his help and enclosed in his letters the hairs of his women, saying, “These are the hairs of my women who are here at my castle seeking your help to save them from the Franks.” As a result, Nur al-Din launched his third campaign, and when Asad al-Din approached Egypt, the Franks left in disappointment. The campaign ended with Asad al-Din Shirkuh’s control over Egypt and the death of Vizier Shawar. Asad al-Din took over his position as vizier on January 1169 CE/ 17 Rabi‘ II, 564 AH; however, Asad al-Din died after two months, on 23 March/ 22 Jumada II, and Salahuddin Yusuf al-Ayyubi replaced him.⁷³

On the authority of Nur al-Din, Salahuddin overthrew the Fatimid Caliphate, with the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustadi’, delivering his sermon on the second Friday of 10 September 1171 CE/ Muharram 567 AH; “No problems or conflicts ensued.” The Fatimid Caliph Al-‘Adid died on 10 Muharram without knowing what happened.⁷⁴ Thus, Egypt was officially annexed to the Abbasid Caliphate and fell under the effective leadership of Nur al-Din.

In 1170 CE/ 566 AH, Nur al-Din annexed Mosul and its one word to his state.⁷⁵ He also annexed Yemen in 1173 CE/ 569 AH after authorizing Salahuddin to conquer it. Salahuddin commissioned his brother, Turanshah bin Ayyub, who established control over it.⁷⁶ Thus, the united Islamic front spread from Iraq to *al-Sham*, then Egypt and Yemen, which foreshadowed the imminent elimination of the Crusaders.

Destroying the Crusader Forces

During his reign, which extended between 1146–1174 CE, battles and wars between Nur al-Din and the Crusaders were relentless, and while he consolidated his power and unified the efforts of Muslims, he was also gradually taking over the Crusader kingdoms and weakening their strength, day-by-day as he prepared for his decisive battle with them. During that period, Nur al-Din, as part of his Islamic *jihād*, was able to restore and liberate around 50 cities and fortresses, which had been under the control of the Crusaders.

Since the beginning of his rule, he established total control over the County of Edessa and cleared its administrative areas (Turbessel/ Telbaşir, Samosata, Rumkale, Dülük, Ravendan, Kurus, Maraş, Azaz, Ayntab and Birecik (Bile)) during the period between 1146–1151 CE. He also regained and liberated all the areas which fell under the administrative division of the Principality of Antioch, east of the Orontes ('*Asi*) river (1147–1149 CE), and killed Prince of Antioch Raymond of Poitiers in one of the battles (Inab 29/7/1149 CE). He also killed the leader of the Assassins, Ali bin Wafa, who cooperated with the Crusaders against the Muslims. Nur al-Din played a key role in the destruction of the Second Crusade (1147–1148 CE), in which King of France Louis VII and Emperor of Germany Conrad III took part. This was a serious turning point in the history of the Crusades, as it hugely undermined the authority of the Crusaders and raised the morale of Muslims.⁷⁷

Successive wars continued to take place, and many important battles occurred, ultimately leading to the undermining of Crusader influence and annexation of new areas to the state of Nur al-Din at the expense of the Crusaders. Eventually, Nur al-Din surrounded the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. There is insufficient room here to mention all the battles, but we will refer to one of them. This battle occurred at the Hill of Harim in 11 August 1164 CE/ Ramadan 559 AH.

In 1163 CE/ 558 AH, Nur al-Din had been defeated by the Franks at the Krak des Chevaliers in a battle known as the "Battle of al-Buqai'a"; the Franks suddenly fell upon them, killing and injuring a great number; however, Nur al-Din escaped at the decisive moment, fleeing to an area near Homs and taking temporary shelter there. There, he took an oath saying, "I shall never have a roof over my head until I have my and Islam's revenge." Next, he sent to Aleppo and Damascus and brought money, clothing, horses and weapons, then compensated the people for everything, which had been taken from them. As a result, the troops recovered, "as if they had not been defeated."⁷⁸

When Nur al-Din's companions saw how much he undertook and financed *jihad*, they said to him, "In your state, you give a great deal of income and

charity to scholars, poor people, mystics and readers; it is sounder to use these amounts [for *jihad*] at this time.” He was angry over this statement and said:

By *Allah*, my only hope to achieve victory is through them; people are given provision and granted victory because of their weak groups. How am I supposed to cut payments to people who fight for me with arrows that cannot miss (referring to their invocation), while I am sleeping in bed, and then spend them on those who do not fight for me unless they see that I am targeted with arrows which might either hit or miss me? These people have a share in the House of Wealth; how do I justify giving them to others!?⁷⁹

The Franks proposed reconciliation, but Nur al-Din refused. The armies of Muslims and Franks were face to face in Harim after mobilizing large numbers. Shortly before the fighting, Nur al-Din secluded himself at the Hill of Harim and prostrated to *Allah* (SWT), rolling his face in the dust and imploring, “O Lord, these are your servants and allies, and those are your servants and enemies, so grant your allies victory over your enemies; What is Mahmud’s worth in the middle of this.” He added, “Oh God, grant victory to your religion, not to Mahmud. Who is this dog Mahmud to be granted victory.” He said that to belittle himself and grovel to *Allah* (SWT).⁸⁰ There is a story relating how this invocation brought glad tidings of victory; we mention it as it was narrated by Abu Shamah in his book “*Al-Rawdatain*.” He said:

I was informed that an *imam* [teacher] of Nur al-Din saw the Prophet (SAWS) in his dream upon the night of the Franks’ departure from Damietta. The Prophet said to him: Inform Nur al-Din that the Franks have left Damietta this night; he replied: O Messenger of God, he might not believe me so tell me of a sign that he knows; he said: Tell him that the sign is that he prostrated on the Hill of Harim and said: Oh God, grant victory to your religion, not to Mahmud. Who is this dog Mahmud to be granted victory! He (the imam) followed: When it was over I went down to the mosque, and it was a habit of Nur al-Din to come to the mosque before dawn and keep praying until he prayed Fajr; he said: I interrupted him so he asked me about my business; hence, I told him about the dream and mentioned the sign, but I did not mention the word: dog. Therefore, Nur al-Din, may *Allah* have mercy on him, said: State the whole sign; and insisted on that so I mentioned it; thus, he cried, may *Allah* have mercy on him, and believed the dream; When the night was over, the news of the Franks’ departure came later the next night.

On 11/8/1164 CE, the two parties battled, and the great battle turned out to be a huge disaster for the Crusaders; 10 thousand of them were killed and at least

10 thousand were captured. Amongst the captives were the Princes of Antioch and Tripoli, and the Byzantine Governor of Cilicia; all the emirs were captured except the Prince of Armenia. The next day, Nur al-Din took over Harim, a historic *fath*.⁸¹

In 1173 CE/ 569 AH, Nur al-Din had fully prepared for his final attack on Jerusalem, with the aim of liberating it from the Crusader influence; he even constructed a new, impressive pulpit for the *al-Aqsa* Mosque to be placed in it after achieving victory. In that regard, he sent to his appointed ruler of Egypt, Salahuddin, who hesitated because of the special circumstances facing him in Egypt, which he believed needed patience, endurance and preparation. Nur al-Din did not accept that delay, and he decided to go to Egypt and arrange matters himself. However, death overtook him; he died on 15/5/1174 CE – 11 Shawwal 570 AH.⁸²

Thus, an outstanding chapter of *jihad* in the days of the Crusades reached an end. Nevertheless, the chapter that followed was bright and influenced the course of history, and that was the chapter of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi.

Seventh: Jihad of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi 569–589 AH

After Nur al-Din Mahmud, Salahuddin al-Ayyubi took up the flag and followed in the footsteps of his predecessor Nur al-Din. He emulated the Islamic approach and Islamic solution of the destruction of the Crusader forces and liberation of the Holy Land.

Salahuddin came and found that Nur al-Din had created the necessary conditions for the restoration of the Holy Land; hence, he took best advantage of that and harvested its ripe fruit after years of his rule.

Salahuddin was born in 1137 CE/ 532 AH in the Castle of Tikrit, of which his father was ruler. His father, his uncle, and himself entered the service of Nur al-Din Mahmud, and his uncle, Asad al-Din Shirkuh, participated in his three campaigns in Egypt and took over as vizier in the country at the age of 32.

Salahuddin is described as a good believer, mentioning [*Allah*] often and showing great perseverance in attending congregational prayer (*Jama'ah* prayer). He also persisted in performing Sunnah and Nafl prayer, as well as night prayer. He loved to hear the Qur'an, carefully choosing his imam; he was

soft-hearted, easily weeping when hearing the Qur'an. He had a great desire to listen to Hadith and honour the symbols of *Allah*. Also, he had great faith in *Allah*, relying on Him and turning back to Him.

Salahuddin was just and compassionate, showing mercy to the weak and supporting them against the strong. He was generous, convivial, gentle-mannered and righteous company; no one is mentioned in front of him unless with good intentions. He only listened to good words and had a pure tongue and pen, never writing anything that would harm Muslims.

He was brave, high-spirited, and strong, showing great perseverance in *jihad*; one day, while near Acre, he said:

Something is on my mind: once *Allah* Almighty facilitates the *fath* of the rest of the coasts, I will distribute control over the country [amongst rulers]; then I will make a will and bid my farewell. Following that, I will sail the seas to reach their islands and pursue them until everyone who disbelieves in *Allah* is eliminated from the face of the earth or I die.

Salahuddin died not having enough wealth to be zakatable, with nafl *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) having exhausted all the money he owned. He left no silver or gold in his vaults, except for 47 Nasri dirhams and one gold dinar; he left behind no property, house, assets or estate. He was determined to perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) in the same year in which he died, but he was constrained by financial hardship and lack of time.⁸³

Conflict Over the Succession to Nur al-Din

After Nur al-Din's death, his son, Al-Salih Isma'il, was sworn emir at the tender age of 11, and Shams al-Din bin al-Muqaddam was appointed his Atabey. This led to disagreement amongst emirs, and opinion was divided, while evil emerged, and alcohol and immorality spread. Enemies took advantage of the Muslims' situation.⁸⁴ When the Franks attacked the Muslims, Bin al-Muqaddam faced them in Banias, but he was too weak to resist them, so he gave them extensive amounts of money and reconciled with them. In addition, Al-Salih Isma'il lost control over Upper Mesopotamia, and the Banu al-Daya rulers controlling Al-Salih were dismissed and imprisoned, although they had been so close to Nur al-Din (Shams al-Din bin al-Daya and Majd al-Din bin al-Daya, foster brother of Nur al-Din...). All of this made Salahuddin angry with the rulers controlling King Al-Salih, and he considered himself the worthiest person to supervise the upbringing and service of King Al-Salih.⁸⁵

Thus, the system of hereditary rule, lack of “constitutional” *Shura* (consultation) institutions, a struggle for power, and a love of authority opened the door to a new era of conflict and disagreement between Muslims, which delayed the decisive battle that Nur al-Din had been preparing and forced Salahuddin to fight a battle for unity once again; a battle he won after more than 12 years.

In November 1174 CE/ Rabi‘ I 570 AH, Salahuddin peacefully annexed Damascus then annexed Homs, excluding its castle, on 10/12/1174 CE. Next, he established control over Hama and its castle on 28/12/1174 CE, then he returned to control Homs Castle. After that, he seized Baalbek in March 1175 CE/ Ramadan 570 AH, thus, the majority of *al-Sham* fell under his control. In the meanwhile, Salahuddin maintained his seeming loyalty to Al-Salih bin Nur al-Din, praying for him at mosques and minting coins featuring his name; however, after Salahuddin won a battle against Zengid soldiers from Aleppo and Mosul, he ceased praying for King Al-Salih during Friday sermons and minting currency coins featuring his name. He named himself the king over Egypt and *al-Sham*, and received the approval of the caliph. In April 1175 CE/ Shawwal 570 AH, Salahuddin seized Baarin Castle (Montferrand).⁸⁶

In 1125 CE/ 570 AH, Salahuddin took over Biza‘ah, Manbij and Azaz.⁸⁷ In 1181 CE/ 577 AH, King Al-Salih Isma‘il died in Aleppo, before reaching 20 years of age.⁸⁸ In 1182 CE/ 578 AH, Salahuddin crossed the Euphrates and established control the Al-Jazira region (Upper Mesopotamia: Edessa – Harran – Raqqa), as well as Sanjar.⁸⁹ In 1183 CE/ 579 AH, Salahuddin established control over Amida, Tell Khalid and Ayntab,⁹⁰ and he also controlled Aleppo in May 1183 CE/ Safar 579 AH when ‘Imad al-Din bin Mawdud bin Zengi ceded it in exchange for Sanjar, Nusaybin, Khabur, Raqqa and Suruç. With Salahuddin controlling Aleppo after besieging it for many times, “the rule of Salahuddin became stable, as it had been fragile until he seized it.”⁹¹ In addition, Salahuddin conquered the Harim Castle.⁹² In 1185 CE/ 581 AH, Salahuddin captured Silvan (*Meyafarikin*) and was able to control Shehrizor (*Şehrizor*) and the State of Karabeli, in addition to all territory beyond the Zab River.⁹³ Finally, Mosul and its sub-districts succumbed to the rule of Salahuddin in 1186 CE/ 582 AH.⁹⁴

Continued Jihad

This period (1174–1186 CE/ 569–582 AH) was not without fierce battles with the Crusaders, which helped preserve the prestige of Muslims,⁹⁵ as well

as identifying the enemy's capabilities and weaknesses, overcoming the shortcomings of Muslims, and denying the enemy the opportunity to consolidate their power or spread their control. However, Salahuddin did not enter into a decisive battle with the Crusaders.

Here, we will go over the most important battles with the Crusaders in that period. In 1174 CE/ 570 AH, Muslims inflicted a heavy defeat on the Crusader fleet which had come from Sicily and attacked Alexandria with 50 thousand men.⁹⁶ In 1177 CE/ 573 AH, Salahuddin attacked the Franks from Egypt until he reached and conquered 'Asqalan, capturing and killing many soldiers and burning enemy property. Afterwards, Salahuddin's soldiers spread, seeing that the Franks had not confronted them with more troops. Salahuddin marched toward Ramlah, where the Franks surprised and defeated them, and Salahuddin returned with great difficulty accompanied by a small group.⁹⁷ That was a tough lesson for him. In the same year, the Franks besieged Hama and Harim, but they failed and were defeated the following year in Hama's outskirts.⁹⁸ In 1179 CE/ 575 AH, Salahuddin attacked the areas controlled by the Franks and destroyed the castle which they had erected at Jabob's Ford (the Ford of Sorrows) near Baniyas, and a fierce battle occurred, in which the Muslims won. The king of the Franks survived, and a number of their leaders were captured: Balian of Ibelin, Ruler of Ramlah and Nablus, who had the highest position at the king's court, along with his brother, Ruler of Byblos. The Ruler of Tiberias, Grand Master of the Knights Templar and the Ruler of Jenin were also captured.⁹⁹

In 1182 CE/ 578 AH, Salahuddin carried out raids on the outskirts of Franks-controlled areas, focusing on Shoubak and al-Karak. The Muslims, led by Farrukh Shah (viceroy of Damascus), conquered Beaufort, a sub-district of Tiberias. Next, Farrukh Shah advanced into Baysan, capturing everything in it. The Arabs marched on and raided Jenin and Lajjun and approached Acre.¹⁰⁰ In the same year, Salahuddin defeated the fleet which Raynald (Renaud) de Châtillon, Lord of al-Karak in the Red Sea, sent to sabotage the Muslim coasts and attack Mecca and Medina... He sent some Frankish prisoners to Mina "to be slaughtered" as a punishment for those who sought to spread fear in *Allah's* Haram (sanctuary: Mecca and Medina).¹⁰¹

On 9/10/1183 CE – 19 Jumada II, 579 AH, Salahuddin crossed the Jordan River, attacking Beit She'an, "and the Muslims raided those sub districts through and through, reaching areas they had not hoped or dared to reach." Salahuddin

also attacked al-Karak then besieged it again the following year, but to no avail. Next, he attacked Nablus in 1184 CE/ 580 AH and marched to Sebastia and rescued a group of Muslim prisoners. He then reached and penetrated into Jenin before returning to Damascus, dispatching units left and right to capture or destroy Frankish property.¹⁰²

In 1186 CE/ 582 AH, the king of the Franks in Jerusalem died, and a young child took over his position, thus conflict and greedy struggles for power amongst the Franks occurred, leading the Ruler of Tripoli to correspond with Salahuddin and form an alliance with him against his fellow Franks. In the same year, the ruler of al-Karak, Raynald (Renaud) de Châtillon, committed treachery by attacking a large Muslim convoy, looting everything. He did not respond to Salahuddin's request and threat to release it. As a result, Salahuddin swore to kill him if he reached him.¹⁰³

Thus, 1187 CE/ 583 AH started, with the conditions necessary to prepare for the decisive battle fully established, including united Muslim forces, undermined Crusader prestige, and broader experience in dealing with them. In this manner, Salahuddin initiated the Battle of Hattin. However, before talking about this battle, we first contemplate Salahuddin's strategy.

Salahuddin's Action and Preparation Strategy

1. Starting From a Strong and Secure Base

This was reflected in the way he brought back and consolidated unity, as well as built the Muslim fighters' character, and developed the military economy.

2. Preparing the Community for War

In this regard, he was keen on spreading justice and removing hatred between the Muslim emirates, as well as directing hostility toward the Crusaders. In addition, he established military industries, such as shipbuilding, construction and consolidation of forts, and preparing siege supplies.

3. Clarity of Purpose

Exemplified by leading the Muslim nation to expel the Crusaders. This clarity helped improve the efficiency of performance and preparation: he "achieved the best result with the minimum of effort," and helped define the objectives of military operations, with the priority being liberation, and policies were determined on this basis.

4. Concern for Muslims

Salahuddin “was keen to protect Muslims in order to achieve the goal of the war, and was keen to continue the war to protect Muslims.” He used to respond to an aggression with a stronger aggression to maintain morale. Also, he employed a continuous combat readiness strategy and defined appropriate methods for each process.¹⁰⁴

In addition to these fundamental strategies, Salahuddin employed a strategy of indirect attack in his battles, such as carrying out long marches and surprise attacks, or attacking one side to reduce pressure on the other. Also, he employed a dispersal war strategy, such as the dispersal of a hostile army in battle (to separate cavalry from infantry, for example), as well as the exploitation of political conflicts, provoking a party against the other and neutralizing enemies. Another strategy involved carrying out preventive attacks, which weakened enemies’ combat capability before they could attack or complete their preparations.¹⁰⁵

Salahuddin mastered the fundamental principles of war with great efficiency, including:

- The principle of surprise.
- The principle of security: With his strong and efficient spying network.
- The principle swift movement: Meaning that the army could move, assemble and relocate in a quick manner.
- Striking first and offensive power: Exemplified by transforming defensiveness into aggressiveness.
- The principle of strong economy: Allocating appropriate resources to each battle.
- The principle of maintaining the objective: he was keen on destroying the human forces of the Crusaders in the first place and depriving them of their economic resources, thus rendering them a burden on the West. He also made sure that liberation started from inland areas moving toward the coast.

As for the Muslim army, Salahuddin laid the foundation of constant preparation for fighting and raised the spirit of faith and *jihad*, in addition to developing the army’s physical fitness and stressing the importance of discipline and full obedience (unless it involved disobedience [to *Allah*]).¹⁰⁶

The Battle of Hattin

Salahuddin prepared his army for the decisive battle, which consisted of 12 thousand regular fighters, along with volunteers. The Franks reconciled amongst themselves and made their preparations, with their kings and armies assembling together, forming an army of about 63 thousand fighters.

Salahuddin crossed the Jordan River and conquered Tiberias, with the exclusion of its castle. Skirmishes began on Friday; however, the battle raged on Saturday 4/7/1187 CE – 24 Rabi' II, 583 AH. The Franks suffered from heat, exhaustion and thirst, with the Muslims surrounding them and burning the dry weeds around and beneath them, thus “the heat of the sun, the cruelty of thirst, the heat of the fire, the heat of weapons, and the heat of thrown arrows all combined against them.” Then the Sultan ordered the Muslims to shout *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar: Allah is the greatest*) and carry out a full hearted assault. The Muslims crushed the Franks, killing 30 thousand of them, capturing 30 thousand more, and amongst the captives were all their rulers, save the ruler of Tripoli.

That day was truly exceptional, as it witnessed the glory of Islam and its followers, and the expulsion of falsehood and its followers; it was even narrated that some saw a number of peasants driving more than thirty Crusader prisoners, tied with tent ropes, while others sold a Crusader captive in exchange for a pair of shoes to wear on their feet, amongst other things that were unheard of, except in the time of the Companions and Followers.¹⁰⁷

In addition, King Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, fell captive, along with his brother Raynald (Renaud) de Châtillon, ruler of al-Karak, whom Salahuddin killed with his own hands, in fulfilment of his pledge, for his treachery and harmful acts against Muslims. Also, the Muslims captured the Ruler of Byblos and Humphrey IV of Toron, as well as the Grand Master of the Knights Templar, a group of the Knights Templar, and a group of the Knights Hospitaller. The Muslims executed the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller because of their sheer malice toward Muslims.¹⁰⁸

This is the Battle of Hattin, one of the decisive battles in Islamic and Palestinian history. The Muslims kept uttering *Takbir* and *Tahlil* (saying: *La ilaha illa Allah; There is no god but Allah*), and the battle ended with Salahuddin prostrating in gratitude to *Allah* after the fall of the king's tent and his capture.¹⁰⁹

Following this battle, the way was open to Muslims to liberate most of Palestine. Within a few days, Tiberias was conquered, followed by Acre (10 July), then Nazareth and Sepphoris, then Caesarea, Haifa and Arsuf, then Nablus, then al-Fula (Afula), Daburiyya, Jenin, Zir'in, At-Tur, Lajjun and Baysan, together with all the sub districts of Tiberias and Acre; next, he conquered Jaffa. After that, the Muslims turned north and conquered the castle of Tebnin (Toron), then Sidon (29 July), then Beirut (6 August), and Byblos. They then headed south to complete the *fath* of Palestine, conquering Ramlah,

Yibna, Bethlehem and Hebron, then 'Asqalan (4 September), Gaza and Darum. Salahuddin remained in 'Asqalan until he captured the fortresses of the Knights Templar in Gaza, al-Natrun, Bayt Jibrin/ Jibril, etc.¹¹⁰ Salahuddin accomplished all this over a period of approximately two months, although theoretically some areas would have needed years of siege to advance into. He conquered, inter alia, "fifty large districts, each of which had its own castle, stronghold and fighting forces."¹¹¹

Liberation of Jerusalem

All eyes were on Jerusalem, so Salahuddin made his preparations, starting its siege on 20/9/1187 CE – 15 Rajab 583 AH. Inside Jerusalem, there were about 60 thousand Crusader fighters, all of whom believing that death would be easier than surrendering the city. During its siege, many clashes occurred, and the Muslims attempted to storm the city, thus the two parties fought "the most intense fighting seen by people, each of the them seeing it as a religious, inevitable duty, without the need to be motivated by a higher authority."¹¹² The Franks requested a safe passage in return for ceding the city, but Salahuddin



refused and insisted on doing to them what they did to the Muslims when they occupied Jerusalem some 90 years before. Again, they requested a safe passage, threatening to kill their Muslim prisoners if denied, and there were thousands of them. They also threatened to kill their Christian women and children, destroy and burn their money and property, kill their animals, and damage the Dome of the Rock and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and then come out and fight until the end in a final stand. Salahuddin consulted his companions, and they unanimously agreed on granting them safe passage. Thus, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem on 2/10/1187 CE – 27 Rajab 583 AH, and Salahuddin showed a great deal of tolerance and mercy, with the Crusaders acknowledging that themselves.¹¹³

In this manner, Jerusalem returned to be ruled under the banner of Islam after 88 Gregorian years/ 91 Hijri years, and *al-Aqsa* Mosque was brought back to its splendour, with the sound of *adhan* (call to prayer) resonating through it. The *minbar* (pulpit) which was designed by Nur al-Din for the *al-Aqsa* Mosque 20 years before Jerusalem's *fath* was brought.¹¹⁴

It is worth noting that Salahuddin continued to conquer other Crusader cities and castles; in 1188 CE/ 584 AH, he conquered Jableh, Latakia and the Sahyun Castle (Citadel of Salahuddin). In addition, he conquered the Bakas Castle, Shugur Qadim, Sarminiah, the Castle of Barziyah, Darb Sak and Bagras.¹¹⁵ He also peacefully conquered al-Karak and its surroundings, such as Shoubak, after a long siege. "He now felt relieved with regard to that district, and Islam settled down in that stretch of land, with the hearts of everyone who was living in that territory, such as Jerusalem and others, feeling at peace, after having been frightened by the [Crusader fighters] manning those fortresses; fearing their evil." Salahuddin then peacefully conquered Safad after a period of siege, and the Franks left for Tyre, thus "*Allah* saved the believers from their evil, as they were in the middle of the Muslim countries."¹¹⁶ Salahuddin also conquered Kawkab. In April 1189 CE/ Rabi' I, 585 AH, he conquered Beaufort, one of the most heavily fortified Crusader castles.¹¹⁷

Thus, Palestine returned to be ruled under the banner of Islam again. However, the glory of victory did not last long, as a new chapter of conflict and rivalry started.

Continuation of *Jihad* Against the Crusaders

The Crusaders whose cities and castles had been conquered gathered in Tyre; Salahuddin had been lenient with them, allowing them free passage to the city. However, the Crusaders started to send calls for help, eventually receiving reinforcements until they recovered some strength. Furthermore, Salahuddin had set King Guy de Lusignan free in 1188 CE/ 584 AH on condition that he goes to France. However, he went to Tyre and assumed the leadership of the Crusaders there, with the help of a fleet coming from the Italian city of Pisa. “All that was due to Salahuddin’s reckless act when he released all those he had besieged earlier. As a result, he was full of remorse, as that backfired on him,” to quote Ibn al-Athir.¹¹⁸

The Crusaders launched an attack against Acre from Tyre in 1189 CE/ 585 AH and waited there until they received reinforcements from the Third Crusade, which was called for by Pope Gregory VIII with the aim of retaking Jerusalem. The campaign was led by three European kings: the Emperor of Germany, Frederick I Barbarossa, who died, along with the majority of his army,¹¹⁹ in route; Richard the Lionheart, King of England, who came by sea, and who upon his arrival, “the evil of the Crusaders became greater, and their spite toward Muslims deepened. He was a man of his time; courageous, cunning, firm, and patient. The Muslims were sorely tried by him, as he proved to be a catastrophe, unlike any other;”¹²⁰ and the King of France, Philip Augustus. All these armies laid siege to Acre (June 1191 CE/ Rabi‘ II – Jumada I, 587 AH), and it fell into the hands of the Crusaders on 12/7/1191 CE – 17 Jumada I, 587 AH. Thus, the Crusaders managed to gain a new foothold in Palestine again. The Muslims and the Franks fought many battles, with each side inflicting damage on the other, until eventually the Franks were able to expand south along the coast, occupying Haifa and Jaffa.¹²¹

It is important to note that the struggle was a bitter and bloody one. Ibn Kathir reported that Salahuddin defended Acre, fighting with extreme patience for 37 months, killing a total of 50 thousand Franks.¹²²

Bilad al-Sham at the End of Salahuddin's Era



Source: Map of The Latin East, 1190 CE, site of World History Encyclopedia, 27/8/2018, <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/9121/map-of-the-latin-east-1190-ce/>

The Third Crusade ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ramlah by Salahuddin and Richard the Lionheart on 1/9/1192 CE – 21 Sha‘ban 588 AH. It was a truce intended to last three years and three months. Under the terms of the agreement, the Franks would have control over a coastal strip, extending from Jaffa to Acre, and would be allowed to visit Jerusalem and enjoy freedom of trade. To add, the agreement stipulated that commercial convoys would move freely between the two sides.¹²³

It is important to draw attention to some points related to this reconciliation:

1. Salahuddin was not inclined to sign this treaty, and when he summoned his advisory group of commanders, his opinion was not to accept the truce. Imad al-Isfahani wrote Salahuddin's statement in his style:

Thanks to *Allah*, we are great in force, hoping for a nearing victory. We have become accustomed to *jihad* and made it our habit, and achieved our goals with it, and abandoning a habit is difficult... Fighting is our business and is what makes our existence meaningful... I see that I should leave everything regarding this treaty behind and opt for *jihad*, my recourse and source of my pride. I have the strongest and firmest support of *Allah*.¹²⁴

However, his counsellors unanimously agreed to accept the reconciliation under the pretext that the country would be destroyed; and that the soldiers and people were tired and food supplies were scarce. They also said that if the treaty was not brought about, the Franks would insist on standing their ground to fight. However, if it took effect, the country could be reconstructed, and the people would be able to return, the soldiers would rest and become strong enough to prepare for war. Their opinion was that the Franks would not abide by their promises so they advised him to sign the treaty in order that the Franks would scatter and dissolve. They continued to push him until he agreed.¹²⁵

2. This treaty was a short temporary truce, not a permanent peace treaty. Similar treaties had been signed before and many were signed after; the Islamic *Shari'ah* authorizes it if the Muslim leader approves it for the general good of Muslims. However, conflict and battles resumed after this treaty.
3. This treaty did not include any recognition of any rights for the Franks on the land of Palestine; rather, the treaty stated that, until its expiry, there should be no fighting over the lands they had seized.

There is a great difference between this truce, the like of which was signed tens of times by Muslims, and the contemporary peace treaty currently signed with Israel.

In any case, Salahuddin soon died afterwards, on 4/3/1193 CE – 27 Safar 589 AH,¹²⁶ only six months after signing the Treaty of Ramlah.

Eighth: Ayyubids and Their Struggle with the Crusaders

Salahuddin's successors came into discord with each other, and years after his death, they engaged in bloody conflicts, which weakened them and strengthened the Crusader kingdom in Acre, which expanded at their expense at times.

Love of power and worldly pleasure, even at the expense of their principles and sanctities, was one of the defining characteristics of a number of the Ayyubid sultans. Some of them formed an alliance with the Crusaders against their rivals, and more than once, they were offered Jerusalem in exchange for help requested by the Sultan of *al-Sham* to defeat the Sultan of Egypt or vice versa! The Crusaders were pleased with the role they played, but their greed was centred on everyone. However, the springtime of the Crusaders did not last long.

The Fourth Crusade sent by the West in 1204 CE/ 601 AH ended in Constantinople and did not reach *al-Sham* or Egypt.¹²⁷ As to the fifth campaign (1218–1221 CE/ 615–618 AH), it was launched from Acre itself, led by Jean de Brienne, toward Damietta in Egypt. When the Ayyubid Sultan Al-Kamil Muhammad bin al-'Adil realized the gravity of the situation, he made an offer of peace to the Franks in exchange for ceding Jerusalem, along with most of the Salahuddin-conquered areas. They refused and demanded the handover of south-east Jordan (Al-Karak and Shoubak) as well. King Al-Mu'azzam 'Isa bin al-'Adil, ruler of Damascus, sabotaged the walls of Jerusalem in 1219 CE/ 616 AH so that the Franks would not be able to put them to use should they occupy the city. However, the Ayyubids eventually mobilized their forces and managed to defeat the Crusaders, who returned, unsuccessful, to Acre, having missed a great opportunity.¹²⁸

The discord between Al-Kamil Muhammad and Al-Mu'azzam 'Isa led Al-Kamil Muhammad to seek help from Frederick II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who had become regent of the throne of the Crusader Kingdom of Acre, promising him the handover of Jerusalem if he helped him against his brother Al-Mu'azzam 'Isa.

Frederick II led the Sixth Crusade and arrived in Acre in 1228 CE/ 625 AH. Al-Mu'azzam 'Isa died, enabling his brothers Al-Kamil Muhammad and Al-Ashraf Musa bin al-'Adil to share his state, while his son Al-Nassir Dawud

took the cities of al-Karak, Balqa', the Jordan Valley, al-Salt and Shoubak, and Al-Kamil Muhammad was no longer in need of Frederick II's help, but despite all that, Al-Kamil forfeited Jerusalem "in fulfilment" of his promise to Frederick, who at the time did not have even the enough power to force Muslims to cede Jerusalem. Indeed, Frederick II even had to cry during his negotiations with Al-Kamil Muhammad to get his sympathy and take Jerusalem! Frederick was quoted as saying to Al-Kamil, "I am your subordinate and slave, who would never disobey your orders... If the Sultan saw that he could favour me with the honour of taking and visiting the country, it would be a charity that would allow me to hold my head high amongst all sea kings." Al-Kamil Muhammad accepted and signed the Treaty of Jaffa with him on 18/2/1229 CE – 22 Rabi' I, 626 AH. The treaty was to last for 10 years, and according to it, the Franks would take Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Tebnin, Hunin and Sidon, with a strip of Jerusalem territory which would run through Lod and end at Jaffa, in addition to Nazareth and western Galilee. However, the Muslims would retain *al-Aqsa* Mosque that includes the Dome of the Rock and the Qibali Mosque.¹²⁹

Thus, the Franks took over the city of Jerusalem, which angered the Muslims, who "cried bitterly, wailed and yelled loudly, and performed obsequies. This adversity was more than the Muslims could bear; the scholars and preachers said: What a shame on the Muslim kings to allow such incident. Condemnation of King Al-Kamil was widespread, and the people of Damascus bore a grudge against him and his affiliates; feelings of extreme hatred spread against him in all countries."¹³⁰ Ibn Kathir said, "It was a great shock for Muslims, with the majority feeling so debilitated or terrified."¹³¹

The struggle between the Ayyubid brothers continued. However, Al-Nassir Dawud, ruler of Jordan, seized the opportunity when the Treaty of Jaffa expired, and when the Crusaders were fortifying Jerusalem, in violation of the treaty's terms. He established control over Jerusalem and expelled the Franks on 7/12/1239 CE – 6 Jumada I, 637 AH. However, Al-Salih Isma'il, ruler of Damascus, handed it over to them in 1240 CE/ 638 AH! after seeking their help against the ruler of Egypt, Al-Salih Najmuddin Ayyub. Moreover, he ceded to them 'Asqalan, Belfort Castle, Wadi Mujib and its sub districts, and Safad Castle and its sub districts, as well as sharing equal control over Sidon and Tiberias

and their sub districts, and Jabal ‘Amel, along with all other coastal cities. This act angered the Muslims, “who greatly slammed King Al-Salih Isma‘il.” Once again, Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Franks.

When Al-Salih Isma‘il mobilised his forces to join his Frankish allies to fight against Al-Salih Ayyub in Gaza, the soldiers of *al-Sham* refused to collaborate with the Franks against their brethren. Instead, they took the side of the Egyptian soldiers and inflicted a heavy defeat on the Franks. However, Al-Salih Ayyub reconciled with them in 1240 CE/ 638 AH, and they fully established their control over Jerusalem, along with the territories ceded to them by Al-Salih Isma‘il.¹³²

Again, the Ayyubids entered into conflict with each other, and Jerusalem and the Holy Land remained a card they played in their struggle for power and influence. Al-Salih Isma‘il again offered the Franks an alliance in Acre in return for full control over Jerusalem, including *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Al-Nassir Dawud joined him in this proposal. Concurrently, Al-Salih Najmuddin Ayyub, ruler of Egypt, extended the same offer to the same Crusaders in exchange for forming an alliance with them!!!¹³³

The Franks chose to form an alliance with Al-Salih Isma‘il, who started an invasion of Egypt with the help of his allies Al-Nassir Dawud and Al-Mansur Ibrahim bin Asad al-Din, king of Homs, besides the Franks. On the other hand, Al-Salih Najmuddin Ayyub sought help from the Khwarezmians, who came with an army comprised of 10 thousand soldiers and occupied Tiberias and Nablus on their way to him. They stormed Jerusalem on 17 July and fully restored the city to the fold of Islam on 23/8/1244 CE – 642 AH.¹³⁴ With that, Jerusalem permanently returned to the hands of the Muslims, and retained its Islamic identity until 9/12/1917 CE, when the English occupied it.

Next, the Khwarezmians went to Al-Salih Ayyub to help him against Al-Salih Najmuddin Ayyub and his allies, which led to the Battle of La Forbie (which took place near Gaza in a site called Harbiyah) between these forces on 17/10/1244 CE – 12 Jumada I, 642 AH. The battle ended with a crushing defeat for Al-Salih Isma‘il and the Franks, with an estimated 30 thousand dead Franks, as well as 800 prisoners who were taken to Egypt. This battle was the most serious blow to the Crusaders after the Battle of Hattin and is considered one of

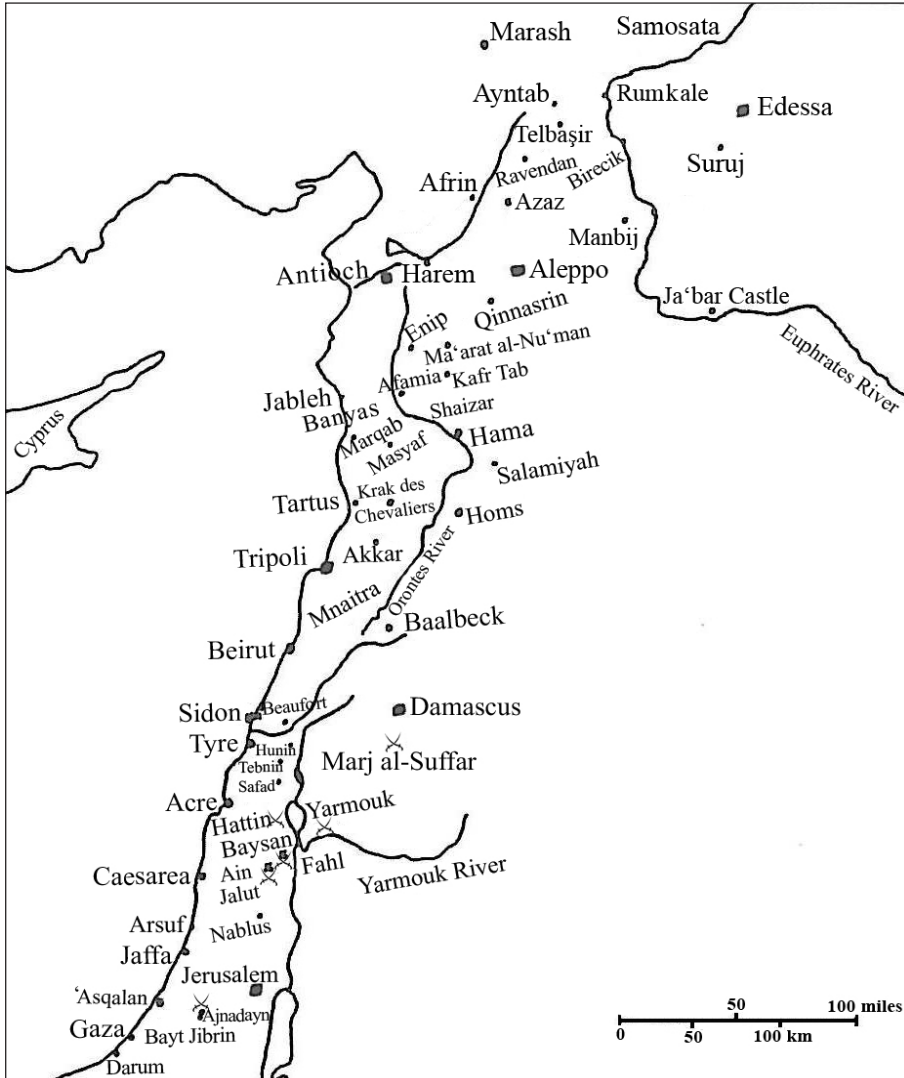
the most decisive battles in the history of Palestine, as afterwards, the Crusaders became weaker and were unable expand, and attempted to consolidate what they had.¹³⁵

Al-Salih Najmuddin Ayyub then took control over Jerusalem, Hebron, Bayt Jibrin, the Jordan Valley and Damascus in 1245 CE/ 642 AH. He punished the Franks by establishing control over the Castle of Tiberias and advancing into 'Asqalan. Thus, the borders of the Frankish kingdom receded to the gates of Jaffa in 1247 CE/ 644 AH.

Soon the Seventh Crusade led by Louis IX of France attacked Egypt in 1249 CE/ 646 AH, but ended in failure, and Louis IX was captured and then released; he later went to Acre.¹³⁶ The Ayyubid rule of Egypt soon ended with the Mamluks taking over in 1250 CE/ 647 AH. Thereafter, a new chapter of *jihad* against the Mongols and Crusaders started.¹³⁷

In this manner, Jerusalem and the Holy Land, during the 50 years following the rule of Salahuddin—especially in the second half of this period—were exposed to a state of instability. They were used more than once in the bargaining tactics of a number of Ayyubid rulers with the Franks in exchange for certain alliances. These rulers lost their Islamic and *jihadi* credibility, and even their fighting with the Franks did not necessarily reflect their Islamic commitment, as much as it reflected the extent of their greed for power, influence and personal interests. Therefore, fighting with the Franks was largely a reflection of the balance of physical power between these parties, which made Jerusalem and parts of Palestine fall more than once into the hands of the Franks without legitimate Islamic justification. However, the above does not deny the existence of many volunteers and sincere Mujahideen who were the fuel of the battles against the Franks and the way of the liberation of the *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Holy Land. In addition, the mobilization of *jihadi* faith and confrontation of the rulers who cooperated with the Franks by senior scholars, who were imprisoned and harmed as a result, such as al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salam, Sibt ibn al-Jawzi and others, played a great role in mobilizing the masses under the banner of Islamic unity, as well as urging the Muslims to preserve Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Most Important Cities and Battle Sites in *Bilad al-Sham*



Ninth: Mamluks and Confrontation with the Tatars

In the thirteenth century CE/ seventh century AH, the Mongolian (Tatar) threat to the Islamic State started to emerge. The Mongolian tribes had united under the leadership of Genghis Khan and started a major expansionist campaign, controlling Manchuria, China and Korea. In 1221 CE, they succeeded in destroying the army of the Muslim Khwarezmian State, which had been an impenetrable obstacle to their expansion toward the Muslim world, and had achieved a number of important victories over them.

Genghis Khan died in 624 AH/ 1227 CE; however, the Mongols continued their march and advanced into Central Asia and Russia, controlling Moscow and Ukraine. They also attacked Poland; defeated the German army; invaded Hungary after crushing its army; and made an incursion into Western Europe. They made another incursion into the Muslim world, establishing full control over Turkestan, Afghanistan, India and Persia.¹³⁸

The Mongols destroyed all the kingdoms in their way, without mercy or compassion, and with terrible ferocity, which made the world terrified of their power and vigour. They reached a stage whereby they started winning battles not only by their capability and strength, but by psychological warfare, striking fear into the hearts of people. Hence, a saying became widespread: “Do not believe anyone who tells you that the Tatars have been defeated.” The Mongols, to the fullest extent, employed lightning war, which depended on agility; they also adopted a war of nerves, spreading fear and panic as a result of their ubiquitous violence.

Muslim countries at the time were suffering division and weakness, which made it easier for the Mongols to march into their countries and easily conquer their kingdoms. The Muslim leaders were so weak that one of them—who was a ruler of a city— sent a pair of shoes with his portrait drawn on them as a gift to Hulagu, leader of the Mongols, so that he (the ruler) would be “honoured” when Hulagu placed his feet on his portrait when he wore the shoes!¹³⁹

Next, the Mongols invaded Iraq and besieged Baghdad, capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, which was suffering severe weakness, one cause of which was the plot of Vizier Ibn al-‘Alqami, with the Mongols, to overthrow the caliphate, demobilizing the majority of the caliphate’s army which was reduced to 10 thousand after once numbering more than 100 thousand.

Baghdad fell on 10/2/1258 CE – 9 Safar 656 AH, and for forty days, the Mongols carried out a large-scale massacre. Ibn Kathir reported that the number of victims reached 800 thousand—others claimed two million. Caliph Al-Musta‘sim Billah was killed; it was said that he was put into a bag and trampled to death.¹⁴⁰

The Mongols invaded Upper Mesopotamia, taking over Harran, Edessa and Diyarbakir, then they crossed the Euphrates and camped in Aleppo in January 1260 CE/ 658 AH. The Ayyubid rulers in *al-Sham* showed great weakness, with Al-Nasir Yusuf al-Ayyubi, ruler of Aleppo, announcing his subordination to

the Mongols; however, they invaded Aleppo and committed atrocities, to the extent that there were streams of Muslim blood throughout the city's alleys. Al-Mansur bin al-Muzaffar, ruler of Hama, fled with his sons and women to Egypt, abandoning the city and its people to their fate. Al-Nasir Yusuf al-Ayyubi then fled Damascus for Gaza with the intention of escaping to Egypt; "leaving Damascus with no authority, and with only its people remaining." Thus, the Ayyubid dynasty in *al-Sham* vanished quickly.

The Mongols reached Damascus and captured it in 1/3/1260 CE, while guaranteeing the security of its people. Before long, they acted treacherously by attacking them. During the spring, they occupied Nablus and al-Karak and advanced into Gaza with little resistance.¹⁴¹ Thus, control over Palestine was divided between the Crusader Kingdom of Acre and the Tatar-Mongols. Palestine returned to its suffering once more under the heel of the worst of the infidels.

Crusaders and Tatars

Europe rejoiced at the Tatar attack on the Islamic State and worked to coordinate with them to strike the "common enemy." They also aimed to spread Christianity amongst the Tatars themselves, and partially succeeded at first; as Tatar leader Hulagu who invaded the Islamic State was famous for his bias toward Nestorian Christians, and his entourage included a large number of them. His wife was a Christian, too, and played a major role, of which the Church was proud, in saving Europe from the horrors of the Tatar invasion, diverting it to the Islamic State. Moreover, the Tatar leader of the Battle of Ain Jalut, Kitbuqa Noyan, was Christian. A Christian bishop even described the Tatar campaign as a "full-fledged Crusader campaign—a Nestorian Christian campaign." The West counted on Hulagu and his commander Kitbuqa to "eliminate the Muslims." Hutton I, King of Armenia, and Bohemond VI, the Prince of Antioch and Count of Tripoli, along with the Frankish princes of Tyre, Acre and Cyprus, formed an alliance with the Tatars, with the aim of eliminating the Muslims in Asia and handing Jerusalem over to the Franks.¹⁴²

At that time, Sultan al-Muzaffar Qutuz Mahmud bin Mamdud assumed power over Egypt, which was under the Mamluks, on 5/11/1259 CE – 17 Dhu al-Qi'dah 657 AH. Qutuz was known for his piety, righteousness, and deep attachment to Islam; he was a student of the greatest scholar in that era, al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salam. In the words of Ibn Kathir, Qutuz was a courageous hero, was exceedingly charitable, and faithful to Islam and its followers. People loved him and made du'a' (invocation) for him regularly.¹⁴³

He was barely in power for a few months when he faced the problem of the Tatar invasion and received a threatening letter from Hulagu, before leaving Syria, demanding his surrender. It read:

You should think of what happened to others and submit to us, for we show no mercy to those who cry, neither do we soften to those who suffer... Where can you flee? What road will you use to escape us? Which country will protect you? You cannot evade our swords; nor can you escape from the terror of our armies... Fortresses will not detain us, nor armies stop us. Your prayers will not avail against us!¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Qutuz, the Muslim leader—who only feared *Allah*; who knew that victory is in the hand of *Allah*, and that if he made all necessary preparations and plans, did well regarding his connection with *Allah*, and sought His help, He would grant him victory—decided to call for *jihad* and confront the Mongolian march. After reading the letter, he arrested the messengers and ordered them to be executed in the middle (be struck in the middle part of their body, splitting them in two halves). Their heads were hung on one of the gates of Cairo (Bab Zuweila), as a sign of an unflinching determination to fight, and a challenge filled with feelings of strength and pride in the face the Tatar invasion.¹⁴⁵

Qutuz decided to seize the initiative and attack the Tatar forces first, to raise the morale of the Muslims and demonstrate the true spirit of *jihad*, which seeks martyrdom for the sake of *Allah*. Furthermore, he wanted to defend the Muslim land of Egypt and liberate the Muslim land of *al-Sham*, including Palestine and the Blessed *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In doing so, he wanted to strike fear into the Tatars by sending them a message that he was a new kind of man they had never encountered before. In addition, attack was considered the best form of defence.

On 26/7/1260 CE – 15 Sha‘ban 658 AH, the Muslim army under Qutuz crossed the borders and liberated Gaza, where they stayed for one day. Then they headed north toward the Tatar forces. The two forces, Tatars and Muslims, met at Ain Jalut, north-east of Palestine.

Battle of Ain Jalut

Ain Jalut witnessed one of the most decisive battles in history, the Battle of Ain Jalut, which took place on Friday, 3/9/1260 CE – 25 Ramadan 658 AH. In this battle, the Tatars had the elements of victory “logically and scientifically,” as the Tatars outperformed the Muslim army in terms of:

- Efficiency and experience due to the many wars they had fought, whether at the level of “commanders or soldiers.”
- Very high morale having never been defeated before.



- Great superiority in equipment, numbers and preparedness.
- High level of competence of their cavalry, who were characterized by their large numbers and the “lightning speed,” which was one of the distinguishing features of the Tatars.
- Strategic upper hand, as they had bases and military routes close to the positions of the Muslim army.

The Tatar positions during the battle were better than those of the Muslim army.

Despite the overwhelming Tatar superiority, the Muslims achieved a crushing victory.

Mongol Advance and the Battle of ‘Ain Jalut



Source: Mongol raids in Syria and Palestine 1260.svg, site of Wikimedia Commons, 11/6/2008, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol_raids_in_Syria_and_Palestine_1260.svg

Qutuz's army was characterized by the fact that it was an "Islamic army," established to support Islam and protect its holy land. Egyptian sheikhs, scholars and devoted men participated in this army, with the acts of enjoining good and forbidding wrong spreading through it. In this manner, the army left Egypt pure, turning with repentance to *Allah* and seeking to grant victory to His religion. The Muslim army was also characterized by having a faithful leadership, showing its "the will to fight" in its strongest manifestations, which is one of the most important factors of victory in any battle.¹⁴⁶

Qutuz asked his army to wait until Friday prayer was concluded and said, "Do not fight them until the sun sets, darkness falls, winds blow, and preachers and people make du'a' for us in their prayers." Thereafter, the fighting began.

In battle, Gulnar, Qutuz's wife, was killed while fighting, so Qutuz rushed toward her when she was in her last breath saying "Oh my beloved." She replied, "Do not say 'Oh my beloved' but say, 'Oh Islam.'" Soon she died after reminding him that Islam and *jihad* for the sake of *Allah* are more important than love and personal relations. Qutuz rose fiercely saying, "Oh Islam, Oh Islam," and the whole army repeated that until they achieved victory.

During the battle, Qutuz's horse was also killed so a prince dismounted to give him his horse, but he refused so as not to hold him back from performing *jihad*, and he waited for those concerned with the provision of horses to bring him a new one. He was asked why did he not ride on that horse, knowing that if he had been seen by one of the enemies, he would have been killed, thus jeopardizing Islam as a result. He answered, "Had I been killed, I would have gone to Paradise. As for Islam, it has *Allah* Who is well capable of protecting it." After winning the battle, Qutuz dismounted his horse, smeared his face with dirt and prostrated to *Allah*, thanking Him for the victory He had granted to him.

The Muslims immediately started to hunt down the Mongols, and Qutuz entered Damascus five days after Ain Jalut. The chase extended to Aleppo, and when the Mongols felt that the Muslims were approaching, they left behind the Muslim prisoners who suffered a great deal. After one month, the Muslims, under the leadership of the Mamluks, had been able to restore *al-Sham* from the hands of the Tatars and Mongols.¹⁴⁷

This battle is considered one the decisive battles in history, as it put an end to the Tatar march, which destroyed everything in its way. It was the beginning

of a series of successive defeats that forced the Mongols to retreat to their bases and resulted in the liberation of *al-Sham* from their occupation. With regard to the Mongols who settled in the Muslim countries, they converted to Islam and embraced it in great numbers, which meant another victory for Muslims.

Tenth: Mamluks and Elimination of the Crusaders

Despite the fact that the Tatar Mongolian expansion over Palestine was ebbing away, and despite the Muslims' victory in Ain Jalut, the Crusader Kingdom of Acre retained its control over the coastal area stretching from Jaffa to Acre. The Mamluk sultans took over the task of liberating the rest of Palestine and *al-Sham* until they managed to expel the last Crusader from it more than 30 years after the Battle of Ain Jalut.

Al-Zahir Baybars succeeded Sultan Qutuz, whose rule did not last for more than a year. Here, we present a useful summary written by *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah* (Encyclopaedia Palestina) regarding the role of Baybars and the subsequent sultans:

Baybars played a major role in fighting the Franks and removing them from *al-Sham*, constantly and relentlessly raiding their areas of control. Nevertheless, sometimes he would resort to signing treaties with them if he felt the need to. The duration of the treaty was usually ten years, ten months, ten days and ten hours.

Having completely eliminated the internal problems in his state, he turned to fighting the Franks. In 1263 CE/ 662 AH, he went to Palestine. When his troops arrived in Acre, the Franks came to him requesting the renewal of the truce and pledged to release the Muslim prisoners and uphold their covenants. However, Baybars did not pay attention to their demands and chose to attack their various positions, especially in Acre, to identify their strengths and weaknesses. He would continue until it was time to rescue the countries and locations they occupied, and the Franks did not have enough power to intercept him.

Al-Zahir Baybars again went for Palestine in 1265 CE/ 664 AH and seized a fortified Caesarea and demolished its walls. A section of his army attacked Acre and assaulted Haifa. Arsuf fell into his hands in the same year.

The next year, he once again went for Palestine and besieged Safad, eventually conquering it and demolishing its walls. He then returned to Palestine in 1267 CE/ 666 AH, and the Franks sent to him seeking truce.

He followed a policy of selective reconciliation with them so that their forces would not be united against him all at once. This policy enabled him to liberate Antioch in 1268 CE/ 667 AH. Capturing Antioch is considered the greatest victory achieved by the Muslims over the Franks in *al-Sham* since Salahuddin's liberation of Jerusalem in 1187 CE/ 583 AH. Following the *fath* of Antioch, Baybars agreed to sign a ten-year truce with Acre on the condition that control over Acre's sub-districts would be equally shared between the two parties, and that he controlled the highlands around Sidon.

After Al-Zahir Baybars, Sultan Al-Mansur Sayf al-Din Qalawun continued the process of liberating *al-Sham* from the Franks. At his time, a tripartite alliance, which included the Tatars and Crusaders in the Levant, and Sungur Al-Ashqar, insurgent deputy of Damascus, was formed. However, their alliance failed and Qalawun began to tighten his grip on the Franks, occupying the Margat Fort in 1285 CE/ 684 AH and capturing Latakia in 1287 CE/ 686 AH and Tripoli in 1289 CE/ 688 AH. Qalawun took advantage of the Franks' unstable situation, particularly in Acre and in *al-Sham* in general, due to their conflict and struggle for power. Thus, his position became more powerful, and he managed to eliminate the Crusader presence in the Arab East. In that period, the Franks were in control of only Acre, Tyre, Sidon and Atlit on *al-Sham*'s coast.

Qalawun figured it was time to liquidate the Crusader presence in Palestine. He seized the opportunity to declare *jihad* when the Franks attacked Muslim merchants in Acre, killing a number of them. He summoned forces from all over Egypt and *al-Sham* and settled outside Cairo waiting for the arrival of the reinforcements, but he suddenly fell ill and died on 10/11/1290 CE – 6 Dhu al-Qi'dah 689 AH. His son Al-Ashraf Salahuddin Khalil succeeded him. The Franks in Acre attempted to take advantage of the new situation and change in the Mamluk leadership and offered Al-Shraf a truce, whose conditions would be set by him, but he refused and completed his preparations. He marched to Acre and besieged it with the help of forces from *al-Sham*, eventually managing to liberate it on 18/5/1291 CE – 17 Jumada I, 690 AH, following the escape of its king, Henry II, to Cyprus. After conquering Acre, Al-Ashraf Salahuddin Khalil captured Sidon, Tyre, Haifa and Atlit, and ordered the demolition of all of these cities' fortifications. Thus, the last Crusader stronghold in the Arab East fell into the hands of the Mamluks, and the Frankish presence in Palestine and *al-Sham* ended after two centuries (1099–1291 CE/ 492–690 AH).¹⁴⁸

In this manner, Palestine returned to the fold of Islamic rule that lasted until the British occupation of Palestine.

Conclusion

Perhaps those who study the history of the Crusaders and the efforts made to liberate the Blessed Land would make the following salient points:

- The flag, which was raised during the liberation of Palestine, was that of Islam, not a national, secular or regional one.
- *Jihad* for the sake of *Allah* is the path through which Palestine returned to the Islamic rule.
- The most prominent symbols of *jihad* and the leaders at whose hands the Blessed Land was liberated (Imad al-Din Zengi, Nur al-Din Mahmud, Salahuddin al-Ayyubi, Qutuz, Baybars, Qalawun and his son) adopted Islam as an ideology and approach, as well as a means of mobilizing against the usurping enemy. In general, they were fully committed to Islam and its rulings, and had the integrity of faith and strong connection with *Allah*.
- The leaders, emirs, soldiers, volunteers and scholars who participated in *jihad* and the liberation process were of various nationalities and regions (Arabs, Kurds, Turks, etc.). They had one thing in common, and that was Islam and the belief in their sacred right to the Blessed Land.
- The restoration of the whole of Palestine took about 200 years of *jihad*, without the Muslims giving up their right to it. It was a battle, which lasted through the generations until the fruit of victory could finally be harvested.
- Therefore, the usurping occupiers were not an easy enemy, and we should not expect any enemy to be easy (currently, the Israelis). Nor should we lose hope however long it takes, and no matter how powerful and stubborn the enemy is.
- There is an intrinsic link between the victories of the Muslims and the extent of their commitment to the religion of *Allah*, referring to it as a means of arbitration in their lives. There is also an intrinsic link between the defeats of the Muslims and their conflict, disunion and remoteness from the methodology of Islam.
- The Islamic doctrine is the ideal means of mobilizing forces for the liberation of any Islamic land.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 126, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=126>
- ² *Surat Al 'Imran* (The Family of 'Imran): 160, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=3&verse=160>
- ³ *Surat al-Safat* (Those Ranges in Ranks): 171–173, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=37&verse=171>
- ⁴ *Surat al-Nisa'* (The Women): 141, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=4&verse=141>
- ⁵ *Surat Muhammad*: 7, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=47&verse=7>
- ⁶ *Surat al-Anfal* (The Spoils of War): 45–46, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=8&verse=45>
- ⁷ *Surat al-Anfal* (The Spoils of War): 60, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=8&verse=60>
- ⁸ *Surat al-Nur* (The Light): 55, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=24&verse=55>
- ⁹ *Surat al-Nur* (The Light): 63, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=24&verse=63>
- ¹⁰ See Fayid Hammad 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah: Al-'Asr al-Fatimi wa al-Suljuqi wa al-Zinki* (The Jihad of Muslims in the Crusades: The Fatimid, Seljuk and Zengi Periods), 4th edition (Beirut: Al-Resalah Foundation, 1988), pp. 51–54.
- ¹¹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 162.
- ¹² Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, p. 68.
- ¹³ See Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 190–220.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 222.
- ¹⁵ Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah* (The Crusades), translated by Al-Sayyid al-Baz al-'Arini, 4th edition (Beirut: Dar al-Nahdah al-'Arabiyyah, n.d.), pp. 23–24; Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, p. 78; and Sa'id 'Abdul Fattah 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah: Safhah Mushriqah fi Tarikh al-Jihad al-Islami fi al-'Usur al-Wusta* (The Crusade Movement: A Bright Page of the Islamic Jihad History in the Middle Ages), 4th edition (Cairo: The Anglo Egyptian Bookshop, 1986), vol. 1, pp. 104–107.
- ¹⁶ Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 108–113; and Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 25–26.
- ¹⁷ See Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 181; and Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 34–35.
- ¹⁸ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 187.
- ¹⁹ Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 108–112.
- ²⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 189; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 112–113.
- ²¹ Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 36–37; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, p. 116.
- ²² Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 229–230; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 444.
- ²³ Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 201–210 and pp. 231–232; Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 204; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 117–124.

- ²⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 42.
- ²⁵ *Suratal-Anfal* (The Spoils of War):46, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=8&verse=46>
- ²⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 258–259.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 222.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 228–229.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 272.
- ³⁰ For example, the death of Roger of Solerno of Antioch with three thousand cavalry and nine thousand infantries in a battle with Il-Ghazi of Aleppo [of Mardin] on 512 AH (Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 289), while capturing Joscelin I and a group of famous knights on 515 AH (Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 304).
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 222.
- ³² *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 226.
- ³³ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, p. 446.
- ³⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 268, 302 and 320.
- ³⁵ See *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 212, 218 and 228–229.
- ³⁶ Shahabuddin 'Abdul Rahman bin Isma'il (aka Abu Shamah al-Maqdisi), *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah* (The Two Gardens of the Tales of the Two States, the Nury and Salahy), authenticated by Muhammad Hilmi Muhammad Ahmad, vol. 1, sec. 1, (Cairo: The Authoring, Translation and Publication Committee, 1956), p. 75; and Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, pp. 309 and 323.
- ³⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 331.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 329–368, and vol. 9, p. 5; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 1, pp. 78 and 84–85.
- ³⁹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 8, p. 367.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 8–9; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 1, pp. 94–96.
- ⁴¹ Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 1, pp. 107–109.
- ⁴² Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 13.
- ⁴³ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 220; see also Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 1, pp. 109–114; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 179–204.
- ⁴⁴ Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah* (Nur al-Din Mahmud: The Man.. and the Experience) (Damascus–Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1980), pp.49–50.
- This book is considered one of the best books written about Nur al-Din Mahmud, where the author provided a comprehensive picture about his personality, his administrative, social, judicial, economic and cultural policies.
- ⁴⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 125.
- ⁴⁶ Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 53.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–47.
- ⁴⁸ Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 583. (Sec. 2 of vol. 1 was published in 1962 in Egypt by the Ministry of Education).
- ⁴⁹ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 278; and Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 24.

- ⁵⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 125; and see Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 584; and Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 278.
- ⁵¹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 125.
- ⁵² Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 42.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12 and 25.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–32.
- ⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 75–89.
- ⁵⁶ Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 544.
- ⁵⁷ See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 223; and Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 17.
- ⁵⁸ Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 36; Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 125; Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 79; and *Surat al-Nur* (The Light): 51, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=24&verse=51>
- ⁵⁹ Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, pp. 93–107.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36.
- ⁶³ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 281.
- ⁶⁴ Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, p. 144.
- ⁶⁵ On his interest in knowledge and scholars see *Ibid.*, pp. 129–165.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–24 and 111–118.
- ⁶⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 93–126.
- ⁶⁸ See Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 86–87.
- ⁶⁹ Imad al-Din Khalil, *Nur al-Din Mahmud: Al-Rajul..wa al-Tajrubah*, pp. 32–35.
- ⁷⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 45–46; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 1, p. 236.
- ⁷¹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 84–85; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 329–338.
- ⁷² Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 95–96; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 363–367.
- ⁷³ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 99–103; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 389–406; and on the control of Egypt by Nur al-Din, see Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 229–244.
- ⁷⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 111; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 492–500.
- ⁷⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 109–110.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 123; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 551–554.
- ⁷⁷ See in detail the Nur al-Din – Crusaders conflict in Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 207–226.

- ⁷⁸ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 82–83.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 83.
- ⁸⁰ Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 342–343.
- ⁸¹ See Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 86–88.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 124; and Abu Shamah, *Al-Rawdatain fi Akhbar al-Dawlatain al-Nouriyah wa al-Salahiyyah*, vol. 1, sec. 2, pp. 577–582.
- ⁸³ For more on Salahuddin and his morals, see Baha'uddin bin Shaddad, *Al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah wa al-Mahasin al-Yusufiyyah* (The Sultani Anecdotes and the Yusufi Good Qualities) (Egypt: The Arab Books Publishing Firm, 1317 AH), pp. 4–28; and Mahmud Sheit Khattab, *Bayn al-'Aqidah wa al-Qiyadah* (Between the Doctrine and Leadership), pp. 282 and 307–314; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 13–25.
- ⁸⁴ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 285.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 12, pp. 285–286; and Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 127.
- ⁸⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 129–133; and see Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 583–586.
- ⁸⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 137.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 153.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 156–159.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 161–162.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 162.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 163.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 169–170.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 171.
- ⁹⁵ About the battles between Salahuddin and the Crusades in that period, see Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 47–113.
- ⁹⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 129–130.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 141–143; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 596.
- ⁹⁸ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 142–145.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 147.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 155–156.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 160.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 164–166.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 174.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Bassam al-'Asaly, *Salahuddin al-Ayyubi* (Salahuddin al-Ayyubi) (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1983), pp. 99–106.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 107–109.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112–115.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, pp. 320–321; and Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 178.
- ¹⁰⁸ See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 321; and Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 178.

- ¹⁰⁹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 178; and on the battle of Hattin, see Al-‘Imad al-Asfahani, *Al-Fath al-Qasi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi* (The Strong Fath of the Holy Fath), pp. 76–83; Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 632–638; and Bin Shaddad, *Al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah wa al-Mahasin al-Yusufiyyah*, pp.60–64.
- ¹¹⁰ See Al-‘Imad al-Asfahani, *Al-Fath al-Qasi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi*, pp. 88–114; Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, pp. 172–182; and Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 637–643.
- ¹¹¹ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 322.
- ¹¹² Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 182.
- ¹¹³ See Ibid., vol. 9, p. 183; Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, pp. 323–324; and Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 644–650.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 185.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 190–195.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 196.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 196–200.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 197.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 207.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 213.
- ¹²¹ See Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 214–215.
- ¹²² Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 345.
- ¹²³ Al-‘Imad al-Asfahani, *Al-Fath al-Qasi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi*, p. 605; and Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 12, p. 350; and for details on the third crusades see Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 659–709; Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 86–93; and Fayid ‘Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 177–244.
- ¹²⁴ Al-‘Imad al-Asfahani, *Al-Fath al-Qasi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi*, p. 603.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 604–605.
- ¹²⁶ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, p. 3.
- ¹²⁷ See Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 279–291; and Fayid ‘Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 279–291.
- ¹²⁸ See Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 760–777; Ernest Barker, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, pp. 105–110; and *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 249, and vol. 3, p. 512.
- ¹²⁹ See Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, pp. 123–124; Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 791–804; and *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, p. 618.
- ¹³⁰ See Assayid al-Baz al-‘Arini, *Al-Sharq al-Adna fi al-‘Usur al-Wusta (1) Al-Ayyubiyyun* (The Near East in the Middle Ages (1) The Ayyubids) (n.p.: Dar al-Nahdah al-‘Arabiyyah, n.d.), pp.125–127; Fayid ‘Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 334; *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 618–619; and Mujiruddine al-Hanbali, *Al-‘Uns al-Jalil bi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. 1, pp. 406–407.
- ¹³¹ Isma‘il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, p. 124.
- ¹³² See Sa‘id ‘Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 817–821; and *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 250, and vol. 3, p. 447.
- Al-Hanbali said that Jerusalem stayed in the hands of the Muslims until 1243 CE/ 641 AH, see Mujiruddine al-Hanbali, *Al-‘Uns al-Jalil bi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. 2, pp. 5–6.
- ¹³³ *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 250.

- ¹³⁴ See Ibid., vol. 1, p. 250, and vol. 3, p. 447; Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 825–826; and Fayid 'Ashur, *Jihad al-Muslimin fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 354–355.
- ¹³⁵ See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, pp. 164–165; *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 250, and vol. 3, pp. 304, 447 and 512; Assayid al-'Arini, *Al-Ayyubiyyun*, pp. 141–142; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 826–827.
- ¹³⁶ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 250; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 831–849.
- ¹³⁷ Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 850–853.
- ¹³⁸ See Assayid al-Baz al-'Arini, *Al-Mamalik* (The Mamluks) (n.p.: Dar al-Nahdah al-'Arabiyyah, n.d.), pp. 40–43.
- ¹³⁹ Rashid al-Din Fadlullah al-Hamadhani, *Jami' al-Tawarikh* (The Dates Collector), vol. 2, sec. 1, translated into Arabic Muhammad Sadiq Nash'at, Muhammad Musa al-Hindawi and Fou'ad Abdul Mu'ti al-Sayyad (United Arab Republic: Ministry of Culture–Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, n.d.), p. 301.
- ¹⁴⁰ On Mongols taking over Baghdad, see Ibid., vol. 2, sec. 1, pp. 281–295; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 886–887.
- ¹⁴¹ On Mongols invading *al-Sham*, see Rashid al-Din Fadlullah al-Hamadhani, *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, vol. 2, sec. 1, pp. 305–309; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 886–887.
- ¹⁴² See Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 868–872 and 881.
- ¹⁴³ Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, p. 225.
- ¹⁴⁴ Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 899; and Mahmud Sheit Khattab, *Bayn al-'Aqidah wa al-Qiyadah*, pp. 333–334.
- ¹⁴⁵ Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 899.
- ¹⁴⁶ See Mahmud Sheit Khattab, *Bayn al-'Aqidah wa al-Qiyadah*, pp. 345–346.
- ¹⁴⁷ On the battle of Ain Jalut, see Rashid al-Din Fadlullah al-Hamadhani, *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, vol. 2, sec. 1, pp. 310–316; Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 899–901; Sa'id 'Abdul Fattah 'Ashur, *Al-Ayyubiyyun wa al-Mamalik fi Misr wa al-Sham* (The Ayyubids and Mamluks in Egypt and *al-Sham*) (Cairo: Dar al-Nahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1990), pp. 195–199; and Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, vol. 13, pp. 220–221.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 447–448.
- For more detail, see Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Harakah al-Salibiyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 905–936; and Sa'id 'Ashur, *Al-Ayyubiyyun wa al-Mamalik*, pp. 210–234.

Chapter Four

*The Islamic Action Experience in Palestine
From the End of the Ottoman State
Until the end of the British Occupation 1948*

Section One

The Islamic Action Experience in Palestine Until the End of the Ottoman State

First: Palestine Under the Ottoman State

Palestine remained under the control of the Mamluk State until the Ottomans controlled it in 1516–1517 CE. The might of the Ottoman State had enabled it to extend its rule over most of eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania, Greece, Cyprus...) in addition to Iraq, *al-Sham*, Hijaz, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria... . It was one of the most important and strongest countries in the world in the modern era.

The Ottoman State preserved the Islamic identity of the land of Palestine and entrenched it for four continuous centuries, whereas the people of Palestine used to regard this state as theirs and were loyal to it. They—along with other Muslims—enjoyed all the political and other rights, which were enjoyed by the Turks. They shared with the Turks all the military and civil positions of the state... .¹

For example, Musa Kazim al-Husaini, the father of ‘Abdul Qadir al-Husaini, was appointed the governor (*mutasarrif*) of ‘Asir in 1892, Najd in 1896 and al-Hasa in 1900, so forth and so on until 1912, when he became the governor of Hawran.² He was also the head of the Palestinian National Movement from 1920–1934. There was also As‘ad al-Shuqairi, the father of the first head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Ahmad al-Shuqairi. He assumed the highest position in the Caliphate State, following the position of “Sheikh of Islam,” and also held the position of Mufti of the Fourth Ottoman Army... .³

Second: Civilizational Regression

Islamic civilization reached its peak in the fourth century AH, but the innovative spirit gradually declined, even if it continued to be at the forefront of other sciences for more than three further centuries.

Since the fifth century AH, there have been major *madhhabs* (schools of Islamic law) and the rest of the scholars followed them. Consequently, a state of jurisprudential (*fiqh*) stagnation spread, which weakened the ability to interact with life and contemporary issues. Scientists and innovators in the following eras appeared as if they were isolated or exceptional cases in stagnant environments (such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Khaldun...).

Parallel to the rise and expansion of the Ottoman State, Europe witnessed sweeping cultural, political, economic and social changes. The Ottoman rise reached its climax in the sixteenth century during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, whose death in 1566 ended the golden chain of the great Ottoman sultans. Then the state plunged into stagnation, and it tried to survive through the reign of the “grand viziers.” However, the ruling family could not introduce great sultans for most of the period until the late eighteenth century (over 220 years), with limited exceptions. European countries, on the other hand, continued to have scientific, industrial and political revolutions that led to changes in their constitutional systems. The Ottomans did not notice these remarkable leaps except when the European countries were already tearing down their state and striking its heart in Egypt by the campaign of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. In concurrence, Europe was filled with universities, huge factories and trains, and its merchant ships controlled international trade. It also colonized the countries of the world and plundered their wealth, and at the same time, it developed its military systems and armies, invented new weapons which would resolve battles with unprecedented speed and high casualties, and it spread its culture and its secular capitalist vision to the world.

Even if the Muslim state maintained as a major military power until the middle of the eighteenth century, specifically the Ottoman State and the Mughal State in India. Yet, there was a lack of scientific and civilizational development parallel to its strength and status. The Ottoman State maintained its scientific momentum until the sixteenth century and it saw prominent scholars such as Taqiyyuddin Muhammad al-Shami (1526–1585), who was one of the greatest astronomers, physicists and mechanical engineers of his time, Mimar Sinan (1489–1588), who is considered one of the most prominent architects throughout history, and Ahmet Muhyiddin Peri “Piri Reis” (1470–1554), navigator, explorer and cartographer, who was the first to draw the earliest accurate maps of the

eastern coasts of North and South America, and the coasts of West Africa (two maps in 1513 and 1528).

At the same time, the state of jurisprudential stagnation reflected negatively on the interaction of *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) sciences with life and on finding appropriate solutions to develop the political, economic and educational systems. One example of this was that the Ottoman State did not benefit from the huge scientific leap provided by the invention of printing in Europe since the mid-fifteenth century, and it had lagged around behind Europe for 300 years before it started printing, only slowly and hesitantly. Regardless of the validity of *fatwas* (religious edicts) issued by the scholars of the Ottoman State prohibiting printing or orders banning printing during the reign of Sultan Bayezid (1485) and his son Sultan Selim (1515), the printing process was employed by (or permitted for) Jews and Christians only until the eighteenth century. The Ottoman State did not establish any official printing press until 1727 with a *firman* (official decree) issued by Sultan Mehmed III authorizing the printing of scientific books, while the printing of *Shari'ah* books continued to be prohibited. The *Qur'an* was not printed in Istanbul until 1877, with the demise of the Ottoman State.

This jurisprudential stagnation was adversely reflected, for example, on the state of scientific advancement led by the great scholar Taqiyuddin al-Shami, when Sheikh al-Islam Qadi Zadah (the Mufti of the Ottoman State) issued a *fatwa* on the illegality of the observatory established by Taqiyuddin and launched a campaign against him. Ultimately, the observatory, one of the most prominent astronomical observatories in the world at that time, was destroyed in 1580.

There was an almost complete inability to deal with global economic development, banking systems, insurance companies and others. Thus, the Ottoman State had to adopt Western legal systems since the mid-nineteenth century without providing Islamic solutions. The educational systems also remained underdeveloped compared to their Western counterparts that were ahead of them for centuries.

Third: The Emergence of the Zionist Project

Jewish people practically lost their connection with Palestine for 1800 years, and they only had a religious passion, which their rabbis and leaders refused to

turn into a practical program. They believed that due to their sins, they deserved the destruction of their state and their diaspora, and that they should wait for the Messiah (*Mashiach*) to settle in Palestine and establish their entity.

However, the establishment of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the convening of its first conference in Basel, Switzerland on 29–31/8/1897 under Theodor Herzl, was the precursor to the organized institutional political Zionist action to establish the Jewish state on the land of Palestine. Herzl was keen to achieve the Zionist project through diplomatic contacts and tried to encourage the major powers, especially Britain, to adopt this project in light of the interests and benefits that the colonial West could reap.

The emergence of the Zionist movement, which sought to establish a Jewish entity in Palestine, goes back to the rise among European Christians, especially Protestants, of Zionist tendencies supporting the assembly of Jews in Palestine since the sixteenth century AD. It is also due to the failure of the Jewish Enlightenment movement “Haskalah,” which sought to integrate Jews into the societies where they live. Other reasons behind its emergence include the development of nationalist and patriotic ideologies and the emergence of the nation-state in Europe, the “liberation of the Jews” and their transformation into citizens, especially in the nineteenth century, and the desire of some Jews to have a land they rule where they live their nationalism. It also goes back to the rise of the “Jewish problem,” especially in Eastern Europe, and the persecution of Jews at the hands of the Russians, which prompted Jewish communities to demand a safe haven and a state of their own. To achieve this, prominent Zionist Jews benefited from their ability to reach the circles of influence and decision in Europe and the United States (US). Moreover, Western European and US governments had little appetite for absorbing significant numbers of Jews from Eastern Europe, and they wanted to divert this exodus elsewhere.

The weakness of the Ottoman State, which Palestine was part of throughout 1516–1917, and the efforts of Western countries to divide its territories, contributed to the emergence of favorable conditions for the establishment of the Zionist project. Indeed, there was a Western desire to fill the void after the fall of the Ottoman State and to prevent the rise of a major Muslim force to succeed the Ottomans. At that time, in the late nineteenth century, an idea arose for establishing a buffer state in the east of the Suez Canal and in the west

of *Bilad al-Sham*, so that an alien entity would be implanted in the heart of the Muslim world separating its Asian and African parts and preventing its unity. This entity was also meant to ensure that the Muslim world stays weak, disintegrated and dependent, providing raw materials and being a consumer market for Western products.

Consequently, the survival, stability and growth of Israel—in a hostile environment—depends on the weakness, disintegration and backwardness of the Muslim countries surrounding it. Likewise, the *Ummah* [Muslim nation]’s revival, unity and strength are not feasible if Israel is still at its heart.

Fourth: The Stance of the Ottoman State

Sultan ‘Abdulhamid II (1876–1909) was the last of the Ottoman sultans whose religious scruples had the first role in their reigns, where loyalty to the Islamic notion made the stability of Muslim peoples of different races and regions achievable.⁴

Amid the challenges that afflicted the Ottoman State and the problems it faced, multiple ideas were suggested for reform. However, Sultan ‘Abdulhamid, along with many scholars, saw that the strength of Muslims lies in their unity under the banner of the Islamic caliphate which can, with its civilization history, confront Western civilization and stop European colonial expansion.⁵ Sultan ‘Abdulhamid believed that the strength he sought was in Islam, and in this respect, he said, “Islam is the only force that makes us strong, and we are a strong living *Ummah* if we believe in our great religion.”⁶

Sultan ‘Abdulhamid tried to revive the caliphate, so he proceeded to consolidate the authority of the caliph over Muslims and give the caliphate its prestige. He was keen, for the success of his policy, to complete the Hijaz railway in 1908, connecting Istanbul to Medina, with one-third of its costs collected from Muslims worldwide.⁷ During the days of ‘Abdulhamid, the idea of Islamic unity was well-known and widespread among people, and the Arabs during his rule did not think of separating from the state. This was evident, because the most important cause of the Arab revolution was the Turkification policy of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which deposed Sultan ‘Abdulhamid and ruled after him.⁸

Jewish immigration to Palestine became more organized and intense in 1882, following the escalation of the “Jewish problem” in Russia. When the dangers of the Zionist project in Palestine were revealed to the Ottoman State, it fought Jewish immigration and prevented the sale of land to Jews. Moreover, in 1887, it separated the Jerusalem sanjak (Turkish administrative division) from the Vilayet (province) of Syria and put it directly under the supervision of the Sublime Porte to take more care of Palestine, and thwart the Zionist-Western scheme of immigration and the Jewish settlement in it.⁹

The position of Sultan ‘Abdulhamid was entirely consistent with the Islamic idea of viewing the land of Palestine as part of the holy Muslim land, of which no part is allowed to be forfeited. When the founder of the Zionist movement Theodore Herzl requested that Sultan ‘Abdulhamid (through his friend Philipp Newlinski) sell Palestine to Zionist Jews, the Sultan said:

If Mr. Herzl is as much your friend as you are mine, then advise him not to take another step in this matter. I cannot sell even a foot of land, for it does not belong to me, but to my people. My people have won this empire by fighting for it with their blood and have fertilized it with their blood. We will again cover it with our blood before we allow it to be wrested away from us. The men of two of my regiments from Syria and Palestine let themselves be killed one by one at Plevna. Not one of them yielded; they all gave their lives on that battle-field. The Turkish Empire belongs not to me, but to the Turkish people. I cannot give away any part of it. Let the Jews save their billions. When my Empire is partitioned, they may get Palestine for nothing. But only our corpse will be divided. I will not agree to vivisection.¹⁰

Herzl made various attempts and substantial offers but to no avail, dying in 1904 without achieving his goals. Thus, Sultan ‘Abdulhamid II remained an obstacle to the Zionist projects throughout his reign. His position was based on his Islamic policy and his knowledge of the true Zionist ambitions. The sultan had said in his memoirs, “The world Jewry organized themselves and sought—through the Masonic lodges—to obtain the ‘Promised Land’... After a while, they came to me and asked for land to settle Jews in Palestine in exchange for huge sums of money, and of course I refused.”¹¹ The Sultan considered himself their greatest enemy,¹² and added that if Jews were allowed to settle in Palestine, then “We have signed the death certificate of our brothers of religion” meaning the Palestinians.¹³ Further confirming the Islamic basis of ‘Abdulhamid’s

connection to Palestine is the following statement, “Why would we leave Jerusalem?... It is our land at all times and ages, and it will remain so. For it is one of our holy cities, located in a Muslim land. Jerusalem must remain for us.”¹⁴

However, the Ottoman State, which was at the end of its reign, suffering from administrative corruption and the penetration of Masonic and secular organizations, was not able to fully achieve its goals in preventing Jewish immigration to Palestine and the transfer of lands to Jews. Important foreign ambassadors intervened and leveraged significant privileges; their objections hindered the restriction on Jewish immigration. There was the phenomenon of the “Bakhshish [bribes] party” which was widespread in the administrative system, whose members used to circumvent the law in exchange for bribes, including those paid to facilitate the immigration and settlement of Jews.¹⁵ In 1881–1914, the number of Jews who left their countries of origin was around 2.367 million, but only around 55 thousand of them (2.3%) went to Palestine.¹⁶ This highlights the relative success of the Ottoman authorities in enforcing limits on immigration to Palestine.

After the coup of the Young Turks Party and CUP against Sultan ‘Abdulhamid in 1909, the Ottoman State lost much of its Islamic credibility. This party was hostile to the Islamic idea, adopting “Turkification” policies. It was controlled by the Masonic lodges that had a lot of Jewish members, to the extent that some people considered the coup against Sultan ‘Abdulhamid a Jewish one rather than a Turkish one.¹⁷ Indeed, one member of the delegation that announced the dethronement decision to Sultan ‘Abdulhamid, was a Masonic Zionist Jewish leader, Emanuel Karasu. He had tried to influence the Sultan to let more Jews live in Palestine, and the Sultan expelled him from the Yildiz palace.¹⁸

Sir Gerald Lowther, the British ambassador in Istanbul, in his dispatch of August 1910, to Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary, stated, “In its internal form the Committee appears to be a Judao-Turkish dual alliance... the Jews who now seem to inspire and control the inside machinery of the State and are bent on the economic and industrial capture of Young Turks.”¹⁹

Indeed, Sultan ‘Abdulhamid mentioned in a letter to Sheikh Mahmud Abu al-Shamat in 1911 that the reason that CUP had dethroned him was their insistence that he would endorse the establishment of a national home for Jews

in the Holy Land of Palestine, which he refused. He told them that even if they paid tons of gold, he would not agree to that.²⁰

In addition to the above, social vices contrary to the rulings and ethics of Islam had spread, such as cabarets, discos, bars and usury. Therefore, most people saw the CUP as far from Islam, contrary to its teachings, and there were hostile reactions to these vices in Palestine and Syria.²¹

Therefore, it was inevitable that movements hostile to CUP rule would emerge in Arab countries, most of which at first demanded reform within the Ottoman State. However, when those demands were not met, the Arab Revolt of 1916 began, supported by many influential thinkers and reformists.²²

During World War (WW) I, the Ottoman State lost what was left of the Arab land it ruled (Yemen, Hijaz, Iraq and *al-Sham*). Then, in 1923, Kemal Atatürk announced the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, and in 1924, he abolished the Ottoman caliphate. In doing so, Muslims lost for the first time the umbrella of the Islamic caliphate, and their countries were divided among colonial powers.

Section Two

The Islamic Action Experience in Palestine Under British Occupation 1917–1948

First: The British Occupation of Palestine and its Policies

Britain adopted the Zionist project, and on 2/11/1917, issued the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain pledged to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine. It was able to complete its occupation of Palestine in September 1918, denying its promises to the Arabs, led by Sharif Husain bin ‘Ali, of freedom and independence, and dividing the spheres of influence in *Bilad al-Sham* and Iraq with France, according to the Sykes-Picot Agreements (May 1916) that planned to make Palestine an international zone. They completely occupied the southern and central parts of Palestine in December 1917, and on 9/12/1917 the British entered Jerusalem. According to Arab references, General Edmund Allenby, who led the British army, remarked while celebrating his victory in Jerusalem, “Today, the crusades have ended.”²³ It was similar to what the French commander Henri Gouraud was reputed to have done when he occupied Syria; he stood upon Salahuddin’s grave, kicked it, and said, “The Crusades have ended now! Awake Saladin [Salahuddin], we have returned! My presence here consecrates the victory of the Cross over the Crescent.”²⁴ As if their campaign against Palestine was the last crusade, and as if the Crusades did not stop since the Europeans launched them more than 800 years until that moment. In September 1918, the British occupied northern Palestine, and in September – October 1918, they occupied Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon. After that, Britain forcefully launched the organized Judaization of Palestine. Then, Britain seized control of Palestine according to the San Remo Resolution (April 1920) in exchange for the French giving free rein to Syria. Britain provided itself with international cover with a League of Nations resolution (dated 24/7/1922), which granted it a mandate over Palestine that became an internationally-recognized official commitment.

Palestine was, under the British occupation, the target of a heinous conspiracy, as the Palestinians were prevented from establishing their constitutional institutions and obtaining self-rule. They were put under direct British rule, and “high commissioners” were given absolute powers. Britain made it difficult

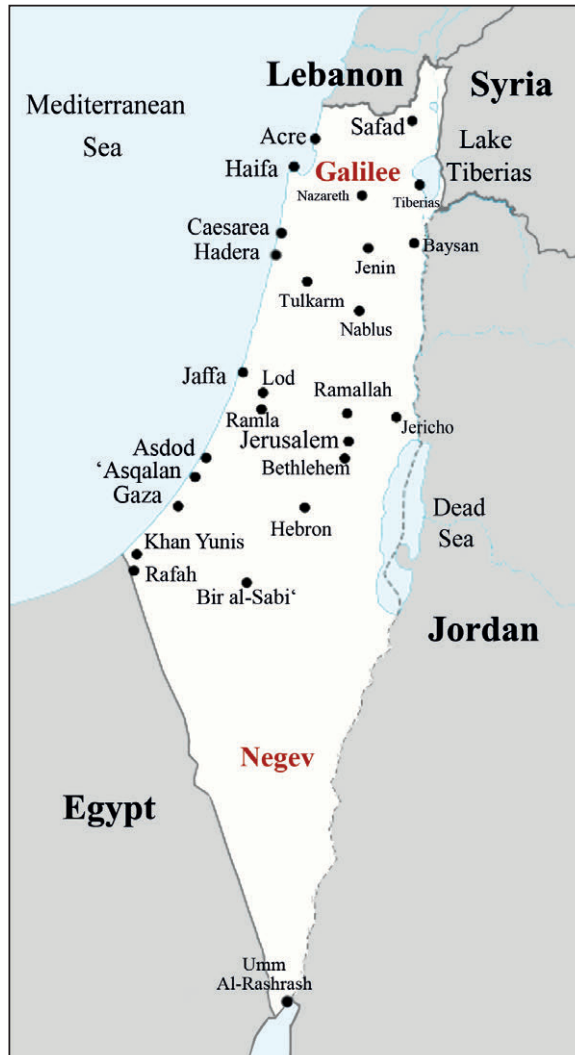
for the Palestinians to earn a living, and sought to deepen tribal and sectarian divisions, creating strife among the Palestinians. On the other hand, Britain encouraged Jewish immigration to the country, which led to an increase in the number of Jews in Palestine from 55 thousand (8% of inhabitants) in 1918 to 646 thousand (31.7% of inhabitants) in 1948. But despite the concerted efforts of some Zionist Jews and the British to acquire land, Jews were only able to take control of around 6% of Palestine by 1948—most of which being either government-owned or land that was sold by non-Palestinian feudal landowners, who lived in Lebanon, Syria or elsewhere. There, the Jewish settlers went on to build 291 settlements. In 1929, the Jewish Agency was established, which was in charge of Jewish affairs in Palestine, and became the equivalent of a state within a state due to the broad powers it enjoyed. Jewish people established huge economic, social and educational institutions that constituted a strong infrastructure for the future Jewish state.²⁵

Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916



The British authorities sought to disarm the Palestinians, even killing those who carried firearms and imprisoning for years anyone who owned ammunition, daggers or knives. However, it turned a blind eye to, and even secretly encouraged, the armament of Jews and their formation and training of armed militias: For instance, there were more than 70 thousand fighters when the 1948 war started (64 thousand from the Haganah, five thousand from Irgun, two thousand from Stern, etc.); more than three times the number of the Arab armies that took part in the War of 1948.²⁶ The British mandate of Palestine can be viewed as characterized by much injustice, oppression and favoritism.

Palestine Under British Occupation



Second: The Palestinian National Movement

The Palestinians were drained after WWI, and the Arab countries around them, and the Muslim world in general, fell under the control of colonial powers. The Muslim world lacked the material resources and the ability to exert political pressure and influence, in stark contrast to the support the Zionist project received from the major powers and World Jewry. Despite this disparity, the Palestinians clung to their full rights in Palestine, and insisted on their independence at any cost; this stance characterized their political struggle throughout the British occupation, focusing on the following specific demands:

- To annul the Balfour Declaration and the injustice it engendered towards the rights of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Palestine.
- To put an end to Jewish immigration.
- To stop the sale of land to Jews.
- To establish a national Palestinian government, to be elected through a parliament (Legislative Council), representing the true will of the Palestinians.
- To enter into negotiations with the British to sign a treaty that would ultimately lead to the independence of Palestine.

Hence, the Palestinian National Movement was born.

The Palestinians organized themselves and held seven congresses. The national movement was led by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Congress Musa Kazim al-Husaini, who remained officially in this post until his death in March 1934. However, practically Haj Amin al-Husaini became most prominent in the Palestinian National Movement. He became the mufti of Jerusalem in 1921 and was the Chairman of the Supreme Muslim Council since its foundation in 1922, which became the most important fortress of the national movement and one of its driving forces. After the death of Musa Kazim al-Husaini, Haj Amin became the undisputed leader of Palestine until the end of British colonialism in 1948. He participated in the Palestinian Revolt 1936–1939, when the Arab parties became united, and the Arab Higher Committee was formed (chaired by Haj Amin al-Husaini himself) on 25/4/1936.

After the end of WWII, the Palestinians regrouped, and on 11/6/1946, they formed the Arab Higher Executive²⁷ headed by Haj Amin al-Husaini. When the Arab armies entered Palestine in May 1948, they prevented al-Husaini from entering Palestine or being in the places they controlled. The Arab regimes did not allow Haj Amin and his companions to organize and lead the Palestinian people in the liberated areas but rather began to disarm the Palestinians, especially the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas, which was organized by the Arab Higher Executive. On 23/9/1948, the Committee declared the All-Palestine government in Gaza, and on 1/10/1948, in a Gaza Conference, it declared the independence of Palestine. However, it faced hostility and was ignored by some Arab regimes, and it was prevented from exercising its authority in the rest of Palestine (West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS)); While its influence abroad waned in the following years.

In the 1948 war, the Zionists declared their state of Israel, after seizing approximately 77% of the land of Palestine (20,770 km² out of 27,009 km²), and forcibly displacing 800 thousand Palestinians out of 925 thousand outside the area they established their entity on (the total number of Palestinians at the end of 1948 was about 1.39 million people). As for what remained of Palestine, Jordan officially annexed WB (5,876 km²), while Egypt placed GS (363 km²) under its administration. The United Nations (UN) agreed to Israel's membership into the world body on condition that it allows the Palestinian refugees to return to the homes and villages from which they were expelled. But, to this day, Israel adamantly refuses to comply with this demand.

The 1948 War Results



Third: The General Path of the Islamic Movement Experience

Until the mid-1930s, there were no organized Islamic movements with a specific methodology, but the political and social influence of Muslim scholars was clear and strong. In addition, the Islamic popular sentiments were still deep in the hearts of the Palestinian people, and nothing could compete with them. Therefore, the popular movement acquired an Islamic nature, and the uprisings that occurred at that stage were either fully Islamic or were deeply influenced by Islam. As for the Islamic resistance action, it took a clearer form with the launch of al-Jihadiyyah Movement led by Ezzedeen al-Qassam in 1935, and when the Muslim Brothers (MB) movement spread in the 1940s. Haj Amin al-Husaini was the most prominent Palestinian figure who led that phase and was a model of a “national Islamic” leader, who was managing Palestinian affairs.

The first Palestinian armed resistance movement with an Islamic character was *al-Kaff al-Aswad* (The Black Palm), which was established in early 1919 and changed its name to *al-Fida'iyyah* in May 1919. Its headquarters was in Jaffa and had branches in Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Tulkarm, Ramallah and Hebron. It was initially led by Muhammad al-Dabbagh, then Mahmud ‘Aziz al-Khalidi, and it took many forms until 1923. It was active in recruiting members among Palestinian officers and police, and those with previous military experience. The scholars of Jerusalem had a key role in establishing and supervising it, where it was greatly influenced by the personality of Haj Amin al-Husaini, and its members swore to redeem Haj Amin with their lives.²⁸ Behind the scenes, figures like Haj Amin al-Husaini, Sheikh Sa‘id al-Khatib, Sheikh Hassan Abu-al-Su‘ud and Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf al-‘Alami were in charge of directing it. A British intelligence report described Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf al-‘Alami, as “very active, and a driving force behind the spotlight in all associations, the greatest danger lurking among the instigators in Jerusalem.” Although many of its members were arrested, it appears that its members constituted important instigators in the uprising of *al-Quds* or *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa* (Prophet Moses Season) in April 1920.²⁹

During the 1920–1929 period, three uprisings expressed popular wrath towards the Zionist project and were directed against Jews. They attempted to spare the British (for the aforementioned reasons), but the latter were the ones

that played the main role in suppressing these riots. The uprising of *al-Quds* or *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa* (Prophet Moses Season) took place on 4–10/4/1920 in Jerusalem. It erupted during the Muslims' celebrations of this religious season, and its spark was when a Jew tainted one of the Islamic flags of the Hebron procession; 5 Jews were killed and 211 were injured, compared to 4 Arabs were killed and 24 injured. Haj Amin had a major role in organizing the revolution, and he along with 'Arif al-'Arif were forced to flee to Transjordan after their roles were exposed to the British authorities. They were sentenced in absentia to ten years in prison. However, the High Commissioner pardoned them, in the hope of subduing Haj Amin and his companion.

As for the Jaffa Uprising, it erupted between 1–15/5/1921 and included parts of northern Palestine. One of its triggers was the provocative behavior of some Jews against the religion, morals and ethics of Muslims.³⁰ 47 Jews were killed and 146 were injured, while 48 Arabs were killed and 73 injured.

Al-Buraq Uprising lasted from 15/8–2/9/1929 and erupted due to the dispute over al-Buraq Wall (The Western Wall of the *al-Aqsa* Mosque), which the Muslims were defending against Jewish Zionist claims and aggressive attitude. The uprising spread all over Palestine, where 133 Jews were killed and 339 were injured, and 116 Arabs were killed and 232 were injured. Haj Amin, the *mufti* of Jerusalem, secretly played a prominent role in al-Buraq Uprising. As for the official political Palestinian leadership, it continued to adhere to peaceful methods and even strove to contain the sentiments of rage.³¹

The Palestinians were able to revive and mobilize the Arab and Islamic dimensions of the Palestine issue. Reports in May 1931 mentioned a revolutionist plan for armed resistance to save Arab countries, especially Palestine and Syria, headed by Prince Shakib Arslan (Lebanese Muslim), with the participation of Haj Amin al-Husaini and Shaukat 'Ali, the renowned Indian leader. They were in contact with the leaders of Arab movements in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, *Bilad al-Sham* and Egypt. However, the plan failed.³² On 7–17/12/1931, the General Islamic Conference was held in Jerusalem under the chairmanship of Haj Amin al-Husaini and was attended by delegates from 22 countries. This firmly established the Islamic dimension of the Palestine issue, which became a main concern for the whole Muslim world, and was attended by renowned scholars and Muslim figures such as Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida, Indian

poet, and thinker Muhammad Iqbal, Indian leader Shaukat 'Ali, Tunisian leader 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Tha'alibi, former Iranian Prime Minister Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i, Syrian leader Shukri al-Quwatli and others. Many practical decisions were issued, such as the establishment of an Islamic university, the foundation of a company to retain land, and the formation of commissions for Palestine in several countries.³³ However, most countries of the Muslim world became colonized and the British persisted in thwarting any practical resolutions, and thus most of these decisions were left unimplemented.

Palestinian Muslim scholars saw their role becoming ever more crucial after they held their first conference on 25/1/1935, where they issued *fatwas* prohibiting the sale of land to Jews, declaring those who do so as apostates and launched a large awareness campaign for Palestine.³⁴

The Palestinian Revolt

The Palestinian Revolt, 1936–1939, had a clear Islamic aspect, for the Palestinian people, who were known for their deep connection to Islam, expressed their revolution and feelings through Islamic slogans and the *jihad* concept.

It erupted on 15/4/1936, with the 'Anabta-Nur al-Shams operation, at the hands of Sheikh al-Qassam's movement, now led by Sheikh Farhan al-Sa'di.

On 20/4/1936, the Palestinians declared they were going on a general strike. Arab parties united together, and the Arab Higher Committee was formed, chaired by Haj Amin al-Husaini himself. It announced its insistence to continue the strike until the fulfillment of the Palestinian demands of establishing a responsible Palestinian government before an elected parliament, stopping Jewish immigration and preventing the sale of land to Jews.

The strike lasted 178 days (around six months), rendering it the longest strike in history conducted by the entire Palestinian people. Meanwhile, a revolt prevailed throughout Palestine. Its first phase ended on 12/10/1936, upon the calls of Arab monarchs and heads of state, and in preparation for the visit of the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) to examine the situation and submit its recommendations. The Commission issued its recommendations in early July 1937 and proposed the partitioning of Palestine between Arabs and Jews. This reignited the feelings of the revolt, which was started again with

the assassination of the British District Commissioner for the Galilee (North Palestine) Lewis Andrews on 26/9/1937. The British authorities took drastic measures, dissolving the Supreme Muslim Council, the Arab Higher Committee, and the national committees, and attempted to arrest Haj Amin, who was able to flee to Lebanon in mid-October 1937 and continued to lead the revolt from there.

Among the statements that deeply expressed the Islamic orientation of the revolution was the statement of the general command of the Palestinian Revolt in 1938, stating the following:

Those who strive and fight in the cause of *Allah*, have in fact given their persons and souls to Him. They came out to fight merely in obedience of Him, seeking to gain His reward, and wishing for nothing else. *They are true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration.* They compete with each other, contending to reach the field where they fight on the side of truth and justice, and in defense of their Muslim *Ummah* and holy land. Exactly for this cause, they left their homes, properties and riches, and suspended their interests.

Whoever behaves this way, his only aim would be *the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter*, from *Allah* only. Fighters like these would never propagate corruption on this earth... .

We will continue in this path until Almighty *Allah* grant this *Ummah* victory or until He brings *fath* [conquest] a decision from Him “*And Allah will surely support those who support Him*”³⁵ “*if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet,*”³⁶ and *Allah* is our protector, *Excellent is the protector, and Excellent is the helper.*³⁷

A statistical study³⁸ of the data and reports of the Palestinian Revolt (The second phase 1937–1939) published in the volume “*Watha’iq al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah 1918–1939: Min Awraq Akram Zu’aytir* (Documents of the National Palestinian Movement 1918–1939: From the Papers of Akram Zu’aytir), that included 154 documents, has shown that there were 698 news and reports on resistance operations, that Islam and its prominent figures and symbols had the lion’s share of the names of the factions (41 factions out of 86 factions), whereas only 3 names of factions had national meanings, 15 faction names had general meanings (*Al-Sawa’iq* (lightning bolts), *Al-Iqdam* (prowess)...), 10 factions were named after places or villages in Palestine, and

3 factions were named after Qassamite leaders. In addition to the names of 9 other factions associated with prominent people (The Mufti, Sa'id al-'Aas,...), and finally, there were 5 faction names associated with kind of work (*Al-Ta'dib* (discipline), *Al-Qannasah* (snipers)...).

In addition, the military statements and reports were written in an Islamic way; i.e., they usually started with *Basmalah* (In the name of *Allah*), and under it, the verse “*And prepare against them whatever you are able of power*”³⁹ and sometimes “*victory from Allah and an imminent fath*,”⁴⁰ beside it “*Allah is Great*.” Furthermore, the leaders of the revolution used to sign their statements with “*Mutawakkil 'ala Allah*” (The one who trusts *Allah*), or “*Khadim Dinih wa Watanih*” (The Servant of his religion and country), or “*al-Mu'tasim Billah*” (The one who seeks refuge in *Allah*), or “*al-Mu'tazz Billah*” (The one who is strengthened by *Allah*). As for seals, the seal of the Office of Revolt included the term “*Allah is Great*,” and under it a crescent with the verse “*victory from Allah and an imminent fath*” inside it. Concerning the areas of operations, they were concentrated in the north of Palestine and the Nablus District, where the presence of al-Qassam forces was intense.

The Qassamites contributed to organizing and leading the revolt, where three of them (out of six) participated in the military leadership, which chose on 2/9/1936 Fawzi al-Qawuqji as the general leader of the revolt. His leadership continued until the end of the first phase of the revolt, on 12/10/1936.

As for the second phase of the Revolt, 'Abdul Rahim al-Haj Muhammad was its general leader, who was known for his piety. He was killed on 26/3/1939.

The Qassamite commander Abu Ibrahim Sr. (Khalil Muhammad al-'Isa) was the head of the Revolt leadership of northern Palestine, whose most of its members were leaders from al-Qassam group (Abu Mahmud al-Saffouri, Sulaiman 'Abdul Jabbar, 'Abdullah al-Asbah, Tawfiq al-Ibrahim, 'Abdullah al-Sha'ir and others). In the Nablus district, which was divided into four divisions, there were two prominent Qassamite commanders: Sheikh 'Atiyah Ahmad 'Awad, who—in his area—was succeeded by the Qassamite leader Yusuf Abu Durrah; and Sheikh Muhammad al-Saleh al-Hamad (Abu Khalid), who—in his area—was succeeded by the Qassamite leader 'Abdul Fattah Muhammad al-Haj Mustafa. This is in addition to an area led by 'Abdul Rahim al-Haj Muhammad and another led by 'Arif 'Abdul Raziq.

The leader of the Jerusalem area was ‘Abdul Qadir al-Husaini, the Lod area Sheikh Hasan Salameh, and the Hebron area ‘Isa al-Batat then ‘Abdul Halim al-Joulani.

Haj Amin al-Husaini secretly played a prominent role in organizing, financing, and directing the Palestinian Revolt in its first phase, and then his role was direct in the second phase.⁴¹

The Revolt shook British rule in Palestine, reaching its peak during the summer of 1938, when the rebels controlled the Palestinian countryside and several cities. Thousands of military operations were carried out and Revolt established field command centers and courts that judge according to Islamic law.... The British authorities could not end the Revolt only after it had enlisted a huge part of its imperial army, which was dominating dozens of countries and regions, including the Indian continent. These military reinforcements were led by the best military leaders such as John Dill, Archibald Wavell, Robert Haining, Bernard Law Montgomery and Evelyn Hugh Barker, who reoccupied Palestine village by village, using the most destructive and modern military capabilities of the time. In addition, it violently suppressed all civilian supporters of the revolution (all Palestinians).⁴²

The 1948 War

The Zionists declared the State of Israel on the evening of 14/5/1948 and were able by the end of the war to defeat the Arab armies that were the example of poor leadership, poor coordination and inexperience, and many of which were still under colonial influence.

As for the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas,⁴³ which was led by ‘Abdul Qadir al-Husaini and under the directions of Haj Amin al-Husaini, it recruited large numbers of Palestinians and fought many important battles in Palestine, especially Jerusalem; such as the bombings of Ben Yehuda Street, the Palestine Post newspaper, Hasolel street, the Montefiore quarter and the Jewish Agency.

Among the most famous battles waged by al-Jihad al-Muqaddas Army was the Battle of al-Qastal, in which at first ‘Abdul Qadir al-Husaini asked the military committee of the Arab League to provide him with weapons, but to no avail. He left the meeting with the committee’s head, shouting, “You are traitors... you are criminals, and history will record that you lost Palestine, I will

occupy al-Qastal, and I and all of my brethren will die.” He left the place telling his friend Qassem al-Rimawi:

Let’s go back to Palestine to die there the death that we set our mind on, let’s get martyred or defeat the enemies, let’s remember *Allah’s* words “*So let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. And he who fights in the cause of Allah and is killed or achieves victory – We will bestow upon him a great reward.*”⁴⁴

On 8/4/1948, ‘Abdul Qadir and his colleagues won the Battle of al-Qastal and liberated it, but ‘Abdul Qadir himself was killed.

When the war began in 1947–1948, the Qassamites⁴⁵ returned to participate in the resistance, fighting with the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas led by Haj Amin al-Husaini, or with the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) led by Fawzi al-Qawuqji.

Their resistance was mainly in the northern areas, where the most prominent Qassamites were Abu Ibrahim Sr., Abu Ibrahim Jr. (Tawfiq al-Ibrahim), Abu Mahmud al-Saffouri and Surur Barham. However, this time, they were not the leaders steering the action, rather, they were subordinate to higher leaders, which often placed them in difficult circumstances, for they could not perform their duties as they wanted.

Abu Ibrahim Sr. led the Second Yarmouk Regiment of the ALA, headed by Adib al-Shishakli. He led the battle of Jiddin in the north, which left 120 Jew casualties (killed and injured), while 9 of the Arabs were killed and 6 were wounded.

Abu Ibrahim Jr. led the action in the Nazareth area with 200-armed men under his command. He was part of the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas led by ‘Abdul Qadir al-Husaini and under the directions of Haj Amin al-Husaini. As for Abu Mahmud al-Saffouri, he defended, along with 50 al-Jihad al-Muqaddas soldiers, the Shafa ‘Amr village, while Surur Barham, the assistant commander of the Haifa garrison, was killed when he refused to surrender, after being besieged along with his fellow combatants. He detonated the car carrying ammunition, killing more than 50 Jews and 14 freedom fighters, including Barham himself.

The Palestinian MB movement fully participated in the *jihad* when the Palestine War of 1948 broke out. However, their then-fledgling organization in Palestine and its lack of adequate and strong growth and stability, made their participation constrained by their limited and modest capabilities.

Nevertheless, the MB movement chapters in Palestine formed irregular forces at the onset of the war, operating in northern and central areas, under the local Arab leaders there (who were affiliated with the ALA or the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas). They carried out successful raids on Jewish settlements and their transportation routes despite being badly armed or trained.⁴⁶

Therefore, we do not find an official source mentioning the MB movement's role in these areas in general. In the southern regions, especially Gaza and Bir al-Saba', many Palestinian MB movement members joined the (Egyptian) Free MB Forces under the leadership of Kamel al-Sharif and participated effectively in the battles there. Kamel al-Sharif mentions that the Free Egyptian MB Forces numbered around 200 in southern Palestine, and that about 800 other Palestinian freedom fighters fought under its leadership, many of whom, during the fight, were influenced by the MB movement ideology.⁴⁷

The most active MB chapter in the fighting was that of Jaffa. There was a "special secret military organization" among the MB there, where only those who are fit for this work participated. When Kamel al-Sharif came to Jaffa, with a company of young university students, he led about a hundred MB fighters. Yusuf 'Umairah says that the MB movement had defended some regions, such as al-Bassa, Tal Al-Rish, al-'Ajami, and al-Nuzha areas in Jaffa, while maintaining internal security.⁴⁸

In Jerusalem, the MB movement fighters hailed from different Arab countries to fight, and the Palestinian MB joined forces with them or with the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas.

As for the Egyptian MB movement,⁴⁹ in addition to their role in media mobilization, fundraising and armament, they showed serious intention and readiness before the start of battles; by sending the first batch of 10 thousand freedom fighters to Palestine (which was larger than some Arab armies). Sheikh al-Banna wrote to the Arab League on 9/10/1947, but received no response, and asked the Egyptian government for permission, but it refused. The MB began preparing and sending groups, but the government was restricting them, so they had to deceive the authorities (by claiming that they are having a scientific trip to Sinai...) to go after that to Palestine.

When the pressure on the Egyptian government increased, it allowed volunteers to participate in the fighting under the banner of the Arab League,

where they were trained in Camp Huckstep. The volunteering process was overlooked by Mahmud Labib, the MB commissioner for military affairs. Three volunteer brigades were formed, consisting of an estimated 600 fighters, nearly half of them were MB, who had a clear impact on the brigades. Their most prominent leaders were Ahmad ‘Abdul ‘Aziz and ‘Abdul Jawad Tabbalah. Nevertheless, Camp Huckstep was not sufficient to accommodate the volunteers, who were ten times greater than the participants. As a result, the MB movement sent a hundred of its members to train in the Qatana Camp in Syria, where this number was all that the MB headquarters managed to persuade the Egyptian government to accept.

The Egyptian MB movement played a significant role in the Palestine war, recognized by all historians who wrote about this war. Their impact was noticed in southern Palestine in the areas of Gaza, Rafah and Bir Al-Saba‘, where they attacked settlements and cut off Zionist gangs. Among the most prominent battles in which they participated were the Battle of Hill 86, which military historians say saved Gaza Strip on the Arab side, the battle of Kfar Darom, and the occupation of the Yad Mordechai settlement, among others. They also played an important role in easing the siege of the Egyptian forces besieged in al-Faluja.

The Egyptian MB movement participated in the battles of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron, particularly Sur Baher. Among the most prominent battles in which they participated in were the Battle of Ramat Rachel, the recapture of Mar Elias, the destruction of the tower of Talpiot settlement near Bethlehem, and the defense of al-Yaman Hill, which was called the Muslim Brothers Hill, owing to the heroism they showed.

About a hundred of the Egyptian MB were killed in the battles of Palestine, and a similar number was wounded, while some were captured. The MB, who played heroic roles, were arrested and imprisoned before returning to Egypt. The Egyptian government outlawed the MB movement on 8/12/1948, and its intelligence services assassinated Sheikh Hasan al-Banna on 11/2/1949, before signing the armistice agreement with Israel. There is an apparent relationship between the dissolution of the MB movement and the assassination of al-Banna, on one hand, and the MB fighting in Palestine, on the other.

The Syrian MB⁵⁰ played a particularly remarkable role in the battles of Jerusalem. The Syrian MB regiment, of about a hundred fighters, was trained

in the “Qatana Camp” and then traveled to the Jerusalem area, led by the Controller General of the Syrian MB movement, Sheikh Mustafa al-Siba‘i. The Jerusalem battles included the Battle of Hebron Gate, the Battle of al-Qastal, the Battle of the Old Quarter in Jerusalem, the Battle of al-Qatamun, and the bombing of the Jewish synagogue that the Zionists had used as a war headquarters, among others.

The Jordanian MB movement⁵¹ interacted greatly with the Palestine War, where a volunteer company from Amman was formed that included about 120 MB fighters, named the Abi ‘Ubaidah Brigade, led by ‘Abdul Latif Abu Qurah, the Controller General of the MB movement in Jordan at that time. As for its military leadership, it was assumed by retired Lieutenant Mamduh al-Sarayreh. It entered Palestine on 14/4/1948, was stationed in ‘Ain Karem and Sur Baher, and fought in many battles, where many MB fighters were killed including Salem al-Musallim and Bashir Sultan.

As for Iraq, one week after the partition decision, the MB movement of Iraq,⁵² under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf, actively participated in forming the “Palestine Rescue Association” in Baghdad. The call to volunteer was answered by 15 thousand, most of them trained soldiers or police. The MB played during that time a fundamental role in mobilizing the masses for *Jihad* .

Among the volunteers for *Jihad* , the regiments al-Hussein, al-Qadisiyyah, the Commando Brigade, and others were formed. Whenever a group was trained, the association would send it to the Military Committee in Damascus. On 7/1/1948, the first commando company arrived in Damascus, and a week later another two fully equipped companies arrived. As the association was preparing to send a new regiment, it received a warning from the Military Committee to stop sending volunteers until further notice!! In March 1948, the two regiments al-Hussein and al-Qadisiyyah (each one consisting of 360 fighters) arrived in Palestine.

Many Iraqi MB joined the groups who went to fight with ALA, however, they found that the army’s leadership, headed by Fawzi al-Qawuqji, suffers lots of lethargy, weakness and mismanagement. Nevertheless, they fought their best in the battles, especially in northern Palestine.

Fourth: Most Prominent Symbols and Movements

1. Haj Amin al-Husaini⁵³

The lineage of Haj Amin al-Husaini (1895–4/7/1974) goes back to one of the largest and most influential families in Palestine, due to its affiliation with the family of the Prophet Muhammad SAWS (*Ahl al-Bayt*). Haj Amin joined al-Azhar in Cairo, and was a student of the reformist revival thought with Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida at the Dar al-Da‘wah and al-Irshad Association. When the WWI broke out in 1914, he went to Istanbul to enroll in the Military College and graduate with the rank of non-commissioned officer in the Ottoman Army. However, he later joined the Arab Revolt forces led by Sharif Husain. Then he soon took a hostile attitude against the British occupation, after its deception and support of the Zionist project were exposed.

Since his childhood, Haj Amin was characterized by intelligence, brilliance in leadership, charm and good manners.⁵⁴ He was “brave, patient, loyal,”⁵⁵ and he was distinguished for being secretive and mysterious, making his actions more effective. High Commissioner Harold MacMichael described him as a master of cunning and deception, and the instigator of more than one revolution and turmoil.⁵⁶

John Marlowe described Haj Amin as “one of the most capable politicians the Near East has produced in the past years.”⁵⁷ He added that he could stir up religious fanaticism without being a fanatic, and “he is a very capable and dangerous” person whom the British underestimated and failed to notice until it was too late.⁵⁸ ‘Aref al-‘Aref, one of the most prominent historians of Palestine, who had contact with Haj Amin and other Palestinians, especially throughout 1917–1948, said that Palestine has given birth to the most sincere to the Arab issue.⁵⁹

The popularity of Haj Amin grew in Palestine, especially after he became the Mufti of Jerusalem (1921) and the head of the Supreme Muslim Council (1922).⁶⁰ He used mosques to serve the Palestine issue, educate people and confront Zionist Jews and British colonialism. At that time, mosques were platforms for national broadcasting, gathering centers, and popular launch sites for Palestinian demonstrations and revolutions.

As time passed, he became the first figure in Palestine. Ahmad al-Shuqairi, one of the prominent figures in the Palestinian National Movement at that

period, described him as saying, “Haj Amin was that leader who was the idol of the people; there was no chance or possibility for replacing him.”⁶¹ When the British government decided to prevent him from participating in the London (Round Table) Conference in 1939, *Falastin* newspaper depicted him as the one who represents the *Ummah* and their will.⁶²

Haj Amin remained the most prominent figure in the eyes of the Palestinian people for nearly thirty years. The Palestinian national forces saw him as a man of consensus. Neither his turban and cloak nor his position as mufti prevented the patriotic, nationalist and Islamic movements from accepting his leadership.

The influence of Haj Amin was not limited to Muslims, but extended to include Christians as well. He was one of the few leaders who were able to break the sectarian barrier, which made his personality an asset for both sides. While Muslims chanted “Haj Amin is the sword of religion,” Christian youth sang “Haj Amin is our Mufti” in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁶³ George Antonius, the well-known historian, believed that Haj Amin was a saint!⁶⁴ The Christians of Palestine generally trusted his leadership and they enjoyed a strong representation in the Arab Party (the Mufti’s party), around three folds their numerical proportion in Palestine.⁶⁵ A high percentage of those were educated and politically active.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Haj Amin became a national leader of the Palestinian people and the people of the Arab and Muslim worlds. He was one of the most prominent and respected Arab and Muslim leaders. His response to events made him the national hero of the Arabs, and his influence increased until the 1930s when he became the most influential spiritual Muslim leader.⁶⁶ Consequently, the clear Islamic dimension in his personality has given the Palestine issue a global Islamic dimension, and contributed to a large extent to introducing the Palestine issue and mobilizing support for it in the Muslim world.

For example, in Baghdad (when he was a refugee there) and before the end of 1940, Haj Amin became a major figure in Arab politics, especially in Iraq, where he was even behind the appointment of Taha al-Hashemi as prime minister. His influence grew to the extent that people waited to see him and receive his blessings, while army officers visited him before visiting the guardian of the Iraqi throne!!⁶⁷

There were attempts to tarnish the image of Haj Amin because of his ties to Hitler and Nazi Germany. Germany was an obligatory passage for Haj Amin as after the outbreak of WWII, he was forced to flee from Lebanon to Iraq so that the French would not hand him over to the British. After the Rashid 'Ali al-Gaylani revolt failed and the British took control of Iraq, Haj Amin was forced to flee to Iran and then to Turkey until he settled in Germany. Nevertheless, he sought to take advantage of his presence there to try to issue a statement supporting the independence of the Arab countries under British occupation and opposing the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine. He supervised the German military training of hundreds of Arabs and Palestinians for the next battle. A large weapon storage facility was set up on the island of Rhodes, and 30 thousand weapons were hidden in Libya to be sent to Palestine at the right time.⁶⁸

In this regard, Haj Amin says, "I did not go to the Axis powers to put myself at their disposal. I went to serve my cause, which is the cause of my entire nation... I went as a negotiator, not a cooperator. I hoped that my stay would benefit Palestine in particular, my great Arab homeland in general, and Islam for the support of which I bear the greatest task."⁶⁹

Haj Amin was arrested by France after the end of WWII, but he managed to escape to Egypt, so joys were celebrated in Palestine. According to Khalil Sakakini, "Decorations were installed throughout the country, processions were held and people were overwhelmed with great joy."⁷⁰ Haj Amin continued his leadership of the Palestinian people through his presidency of the Arab Higher Executive, which was formed in June 1946. However, a large part of the official Arab leadership was under British and French influence, thus it became hostile to Haj Amin, bypassing, ignoring and marginalizing him, and at the same time trying to impose its agenda on the Arab Higher Executive.⁷¹

Following are some conclusions concerning Haj Amin:

- Haj Amin did not establish an Islamic organization or movement, nor did he present a written Islamic vision, which made many overlook him when writing about Islamic movements and trends and confine him to the circle of national leadership. This also may have been due to his early full involvement in the leadership of national action, and his highly dynamic nature. Moreover, his leadership of all the people of Palestine with their various tendencies and

sects made him more flexible in accommodating all parties, which made the Islamic jihadist movement methodology that relies on education and focus absent. However, the objective analysis of Haj Amin's behavior and political performance indicates that he had a deep Islamic identity reflecting his vision of national action and the Arab environment. Indeed, Haj Amin represented an exceptional and special model in the modern history of Palestine and the Arab world. For decades, he remarkably succeeded in seamlessly combining Islamic affiliation with national leadership.

Furthermore, his Islamic identity appeared in his sponsorship of the Arab Higher Executive's "official" army—the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas—that represented the people of Palestine, and whose Islamic aspect was clear. Haj Amin had also strong relations with the MB movement. He paid dearly for his Islamic convictions, where he was besieged, excluded and marginalized by the Arab political forces, particularly when he assumed the leadership of the Arab Higher Executive in 1946, and then by the Gamal 'Abdul Nasser regime in the 1950s.

- The societal environment and the conflict and family rivalry reflected on the leadership of the Palestinian action during the British occupation, where the competition emerged between the Husainis and the Nashashibis, and between the "*Majlisiyyun*" (those supporting the Supreme Muslim Council) and their opponents. The British, the Zionists and the opponents of Haj Amin tried to take advantage of this aspect, by promoting the idea that Haj Amin was the leader of the Husainis and the head of the Council, which weakened the Palestinian National Movement and negatively affected Haj Amin's performance.
- The British tried to contain Haj Amin and bind him with job restrictions due to his position as Mufti of Jerusalem (since 1921) and head of the Supreme Muslim Council (1921–1937). Certainly, the official job under the eyes of the British was a hindrance to Haj Amin, who has tendencies towards revolutionary and armed action. Many criticized Haj Amin for being keen on having national action that was not up to the level of being a revolution, and for distancing himself from assuming the direct leadership of the Palestinian National Movement. However, Haj Amin believed that the British could easily suppress any organized revolutionary movement, and that the Palestinian

people were not quite ready for launching a sustainable revolution that would succeed. Therefore, after looking at the pros and cons of a revolution, Haj Amin opted for the gradual preparation, as well as, for political and tactical action until the conditions become more favorable, while his sponsorship of military resistance action took a secret and calculated form. This was the case until 1936, when he took to the field and assumed direct command.

- Haj Amin succeeded in absorbing most of the active Palestinian scholars, especially those who strongly oppose the British occupation and the Zionist project and who support the resistance. However, his relationship with Ezzedeen al-Qassam was not completely clear, noting that the latter was more urgent in declaring revolution and armed resistance. Also, al-Qassam believed that spending should be focused on the resistance and that spending on maintaining mosques should be within the necessary limits rather than decorating them. Yet, al-Qassam remained an imam and authorized official of the Supreme Muslim Council headed by the Mufti, and he used this as a cover for his work without his activity being objected to by the Mufti. Moreover, when Haj Amin joined the battlefield in 1936 to directly lead Palestinian action, al-Qassam commanders—like the rest of the field military commanders—gave their allegiance to him and worked under his guidance. Haj Amin maintained a strong relationship with Sheikh Hasan al-Banna and the MB movement whom he welcomed to Palestine. Many of his supporters joined the ranks of the movement, which in turn respected the Mufti and appreciated him.
- Haj Amin represented a model of “national Islamism.” Throughout his life, he remained committed to his Islamic affiliation and armed resistance, and he did not believe in conceding any part of Palestine. Ultimately, he was fought and besieged because of this commitment. The 1948 Palestinian *Nakbah* (The Catastrophe), Jordan’s and Egypt’s control over WB and Gaza Strip respectively, and preventing him and his executive body from residing in both countries and working there, undermined Haj Amin’s work and influence. With the rise of the strong leftist Arab tide and the siege of the Islamic movement, Haj Amin was subjected to more restrictions and marginalization, leading to his departure from Egypt in 1958. Afterwards, with the emergence of the Palestinian guerrilla factions and the establishment of the PLO, he assumed a minor regressive role

2. Al-Qassam Group “Al-Jihadiyyah”

Sheikh ‘Ezzedein ‘Abdul Qadir Mustafa al-Qassam was born in 1882, in Jableh of the Latakia Governorate in Syria. He studied at al-Azhar, and returned to be an active preacher of Islam in his hometown in Syria. He was one of the leaders of the Syrian revolution against the French in 1918–1920, and when it stopped, he fled to Palestine and settled in Haifa.

Sheikh al-Qassam was known for his piety, intelligence and breadth of knowledge. He was brave and bold, and one of the scholars most eager for resistance. He was a loving empathetic man, who shares people’s worries, joys and sorrows. He was known for his good conduct, politeness, modesty and for being a brilliant orator with a strong argument, which made him quite popular.⁷²

The roots of the Jihadist movement of al-Qassam go as far back as 1925, when he established a secret struggle movement that follows the principles of Islam and considers *jihad* the only way to save Palestine.⁷³ Emile Gory considered it the most dangerous secret organization and the greatest guerrilla movement, not only in the history of the Palestinian National Movement but in the history of modern Arab *jihad*.⁷⁴ This movement was called Al-Jihadiyyah Movement,⁷⁵ however, after the killing of al-Qassam in one of the confrontations, it was called al-Qassam Group or al-Qassamiyun.⁷⁶ Its motto was “This is *jihad*... victory, or martyrdom.”⁷⁷

Al-Qassam group did not accept members unless they were selected and scrutinized, and only “a believer who is ready to die for the sake of his country” becomes a member.⁷⁸ In 1928, the first leadership of al-Qassam Organization was formed, headed by al-Qassam himself, and the members were al-‘Abd Qasim, Mahmud Za‘urah, Muhammad al-Saleh al-Hamad, and Khalil Muhammad al-‘Isa.. It was based in Jaffa.⁷⁹ In 1935, the group numbered about 200 members, most of whom oversee orientation meetings of supporters, whose number reached 800.⁸⁰

Al-Qassam Organization established five specialized units including the arms procurement unit; a training unit; a unit to spy on Jews and the British; a revolution propaganda unit; and the fifth was for political communication.⁸¹ Financially, the organization depended on member subscriptions, and trusted donations,⁸² while one of its methodologies was to train all of its members to

carry weapons, to be ready to fight the *jihad* battles when declared, however, each member had to equip himself with weapons.⁸³ It is worth mentioning that, most of the members were not well-off, for they had to toil to make a living, nevertheless, “they prevented themselves from bread to buy weapons,” to rely on themselves in action and preparation.⁸⁴

It seems that al-Qassam group’s transition to the arming and training phase had taken place at the end of 1928,⁸⁵ then al-Buraq Uprising erupted in August 1929, strengthening the group’s military aspect. Al-Qassam participated in the training, which included night trips, reconnaissance movements and exercises to hit the target.⁸⁶ When the group wanted to go public in November 1935, it had—according to one of its members Subhi Yasin—a thousand weapons and an armament base in the Latakia region.⁸⁷

Although al-Qassam group was late in going public, it carried out several military operations, especially in the 1930–1932 period, which looked like solo attacks. It seems that these operations aimed at breaking the fear barrier among the group’s members knowing the reactions of the Arabs, British and Jews; and expressing enthusiasm and interaction with national issues, and increasing them according to the preparation and mobilization plan.

In November 1935, al-Qassam Group “al-Jihadiyyah” announced the beginning of *jihad*, at a time when there was a massive increase in immigration, settlement and smuggling of weapons to Jewish militias, in addition to the fact that the surveillance of al-Qassam and his brethren intensified. The movement’s plan was to visit the villages, urge people to buy weapons, prepare for the revolution and mobilize those supporting the group.⁸⁸ In late October, al-Qassam and a number of his brethren disappeared, after the former had sold his only house in Haifa, and his brethren sold their wives’ jewelry and some of their home furniture to buy bullets and rifles.⁸⁹

After dawn, on 20/11/1935, a large police force of 400 officers, most of whom were British, cordoned off al-Qassam and 10 of his brethren in the Ya‘bad forest at the Sheikh Zaid village. The battle began at 5:30 am and lasted four and a half hours.⁹⁰ According to Arab references, the British lost 15 men,⁹¹ while British sources mentioned that Constable Reginald Cyril Victor Mott was killed and Constable Frank Thomas Reader was injured in his hand.⁹² As for al-Qassam group, Sheikh Ezzedeen al-Qassam, Yusuf al-Zibawi and Muhammad Hanafi

al-Masri were killed, and Nimr al-Sa‘di and As‘ad al-Muflih were injured and held captives. Other captives were an ‘Arab Badawi, Muhammad Yusuf, Ahmad Jabir and Hasan al-Bayer.⁹³

The killing of al-Qassam and his colleagues caused a major shock in Palestine. At their funeral, about 30 thousand people came to Haifa from different parts of Palestine.⁹⁴ It was the largest funeral in the history of Palestine until that time. According to Subhi Yasin, were the authority not to withdraw its “soldiers” from the funeral, the Arab revolution in Palestine would have erupted five months ahead of its date.⁹⁵ The killing of al-Qassam brought about a fundamental change in the action of the Palestinian National Movement, where the *jihad* became part of its major action after many years of a useless political movement, and the movement became “a wonderful example of audacity and overt *jihad* against the British.”⁹⁶ The country rose and was moved a great deal, and since then, Arab hatred of the Mandate government intensified, and this hatred began to appear in violent forms.⁹⁷ The people of Palestine even called al-Qassam “the father of patriotism.”⁹⁸ The Arab leaders in Palestine felt the severity of the impasse in which they were placed. The High Commissioner of Palestine Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope explained to the Secretary of State for the Colonies James Henry Thomas in a despatch on 7/12/1935 the ramifications of the killing of al-Qassam and his brethren. He said that in an interview with him six days after al-Qassam’s death, representatives of the five Arab parties submitted a memorandum on 25/11/1935, and told him that “Unless they received a reply to their memorandum, which could be generally regarded as giving satisfaction to their requests, they would lose all influence with their followers; extreme and irresponsible counsels would prevail and the political situation would rapidly deteriorate.”⁹⁹

Thus, al-Qassam was right when he said before the start of the battle: that he and his brothers were the match that would ignite the revolution in the country.¹⁰⁰

By studying the experience of al-Qassam Organization, **the following points can be drawn:**

- Through al-Jihadiyyah Movement, al-Qassam presented a purely Islamic jihadist vision, based on liberating the holy land from the British occupation and thwarting the Zionist project.

- Al-Qassam Group “al-Jihadiyyah” combined advocacy; educational, military, and security action; and political awareness within a disciplined secret movement structure.
- The members of al-Jihadiyyah Movement or the Qassamites were distinguished for their high level of secrecy and sincerity, believing their actions to be for the sake of *Allah*. These features kept the movement safe for ten years (until it revealed itself). Although resistance operations were executed, many were not announced until many years later. Some Qassamites kept their secrets for decades, and just before their death they revealed them, and perhaps some had been buried with their secrets.
- Al-Jihadiyyah Movement formed a militant organization, the majority of whom were peasants and workers, whose leaders, along with al-Qassam, were poorly educated peasants. Therefore, what they have done was considered a great achievement, since they lived in a culture dominated usually by educated classes who control the political, organizational and ideological action.
- The movement was strict and highly dynamic, and it combined having ideological belief and organizational affiliation, on one hand, and being practical and willing to sacrifice, on the other hand. It forced its members to acquire weapons and military training, and as the leading position got higher the subscription fees increased.
- The movement was self-financed that also received unconditional donations from trustworthy people, consequently, it enjoyed the freedom of decision-making, and was not subject to the will of anyone.

On the other hand, al-Jihadiyyah Movement suffered from the following:

- Al-Qassam was a scholar, jurist, leader and theorist, however, after his death the movement did not become a school of thought or maintain its Islamic character. The death of al-Qassam caused a vacuum, because, despite the large number of field leaders who were distinguished by their military expertise, the movement lacked intellectuals like him.
- Most of the leaders of the movement were killed, whether in the battle when al-Qassam was killed or during the Palestinian Revolt 1936–1939. As a result, the movement became weak and unable to effectively reorganize itself, had limited impact in the 1948 war, and then it faded.

- After his killing, al-Qassam's movement actions were limited to military operations. It did not develop a political party, nor did it develop organizational, educational and advocacy frameworks to become an Islamic group or movement.

3. The MB Movement

The importance of talking about the MB movement is not only due to its role in Palestine in the 1940s, but rather because it became later the main Islamic movement among the Palestinians, inside and outside the occupied territories, to the present day.

Sheikh Hasan al-Banna established the MB movement in March 1928 in Isma'iliyyah, Egypt.¹⁰¹ This movement sought to revive the true meanings of Islam and the adherence to Islamic teachings (concerning doctrine, behavior and way of life), build the Muslim individual, the Muslim family, the Muslim society and the Muslim state, while ridding the Islamic countries of all forms of colonialism. The movement sought to establish a single Islamic caliphate over the Muslim countries, which would work towards the *Ustathiya* of the world [eminence among nations].¹⁰² According to its comprehensive concept of Islam, the group considered itself "a Salafi *da'wah* [preaching about Islam]... a Sunni order... a Sufi truth... a political body... a sports group... a scientific cultural association... an economic company... and a social idea."¹⁰³

The interest of the MB movement of Egypt in Palestine began early on, but it emerged clearly during the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939, through propaganda, media, demonstrations and fundraising. The first indication of the MB movement starting its *da'wah* in Palestine was in August 1935, when 'Abdul Rahman al-Sa'ati and Muhammad As'ad al-Hakim visited it. There they were welcomed by Haj Amin and began to promote their *da'wah*.¹⁰⁴ During WWII (1939–1945), the MB's visits to Palestine increased, and Palestinians began to join the MB movement. However, the formation of chapters of the MB movement officially did not take place, as it appears, until after the end of the war, when British oppression loosened, and the Palestinian political movement was revitalized. It seems that the first chapter of the MB movement to be established was the Gaza chapter headed by Sheikh 'Umar Sawwan, while Zafer al-Shawwa took over the secretariat. Then, MB chapters were established

in October and November 1945 in Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, Haifa and Jaffa. During the same period, other groups were established and they were the nuclei of the MB chapters in Nablus, Bir al-Saba', Ramallah, Lod and Jericho.¹⁰⁵ Chapters were then established in Qalqilya, Tulkarm, al-Majdal and Silwad; the total exceeded 20 chapters.¹⁰⁶

The Jerusalem branch, whose secretariat and office manager was Muhammad As'ad Imam al-Husaini, witnessed a distinguished opening ceremony on 5/5/1946, attended by Jamal al-Husaini. The Jaffa branch was headed by Zafer al-Dajani, and the Haifa branch was headed by Sheikh 'Abdul Rahman Murad,

The MB movement in Palestine was active between the inception period late 1945 and the partition decision on 29/11/1947, spreading their mission and establishing their own chapters and branches; opening libraries and clubs; delivering lectures¹⁰⁷ on *da'wah*, education and Islamic awareness; explaining the Zionist threat to Palestine; and mobilizing for *jihad*. It is estimated that in 1947, the total number of the MB movement's members in Palestine reached approximately 20 thousand.¹⁰⁸

The decisions issued by their public conferences in the years 1946 and 1947 demonstrated the group's strength and responsiveness to political events, as well as its advanced military mobilization.¹⁰⁹ In the grand conference held by the MB movement before the UN decision to partition Palestine, in Haifa on 27/10/1947, several decisions were taken, the most prominent of which were:

- The MB declared their determination to defend their country by all means, and their willingness to cooperate with all national factions to this end.
- The MB movement would bear its full share of the costs of the struggle.¹¹⁰

Remarkably, when the National Committee was formed in Jerusalem on 26/1/1948 to take care of and protect the city during the 1948 war, it consisted of 14 members, among them five members of the MB movement in Jerusalem, namely: Sharif Sabuh, As'ad al-Imam, Taher Barakat, Jamil Wahbeh and 'Eid 'Abdin.¹¹¹ This can be seen as an indication of the respect and influence that the MB movement and its affiliated figures enjoyed in Jerusalem, especially if we take into account the multiplicity of trends, parties and associations, and the religious diversity in Jerusalem.

After analyzing the performance of the MB movement during the above period, **we may conclude the following:**

- The Palestinian MB movement was able to spread widely, as compared to the period between the end of WWII and the 1948 war; This is due to the open and moderate nature of the Palestinian Muslims, and their aspiration for an Islamic model to confront the Zionist project., on one hand, and due to the comprehensive and moderate nature of the movement, its advanced political and jihadist discourse, and its high dynamism, on the other hand. Furthermore, the Egyptian MB movement was able to spread its call and forge positive relations with many social and religious symbols in Palestinian society. Haj Amin al-Husaini and the Palestinian leadership welcomed the movement and facilitated its spread among Palestinians.
- The Palestinian MB movement was able to overcome obstacles, problems, and Palestinian family and partisan conflicts. They mobilized the supporters and had people from different classes of society, including intellectuals, peasants, workers and others join the movement.
- They also succeeded in establishing positive relations with the Palestinian Christians.
- They proved to have mature political visions and advanced interaction with Palestinian social and living aspects.
- The MB movement played an honorable role in the 1948 war, in comparison with their available capabilities. They were a prominent example of a united nation that worked honestly and effectively for the sake of the Palestine issue. The members of the MB movement came from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq to Palestine, fiercely fought, and many were killed there. The Egyptian MBs paid a heavy price for their active participation in the war. Their movement was banned in Egypt, cadres and leaders were arrested, property was confiscated, and their Guide Hasan al-Banna was assassinated. Nevertheless, they considered these actions a badge of honor, and a price that they are willing to pay for the defense of Palestine.
- After the catastrophe of 1948, the MB succeeded in consolidating its presence in Palestine, and among the Palestinian diaspora. Their establishment was not transient, rather they became the strongest Islamic movement in Palestine to date.

On the other hand:

- The short period between the establishment of the MB movement in Palestine and the 1948 war did not give them enough time to build their organizational structures and advocacy and social institutions.
- During this period, they were not able to make their prominent figures and leaders more visible at the Palestinian level, although many of them had prestige and respect at the local level before joining the MB movement.
- The MB mobilization capabilities were scant compared to the 1948 war that had huge Arab and international dimensions, nevertheless, they did what they could in those circumstances.

Conclusion

- The Ottoman State preserved and protected the Islamic identity of Palestine for four centuries, however, our *Ummah* (Muslim nation) and its political systems were in a state of ignorance, backwardness and civilizational decline, in the midst of jurisprudential and intellectual stagnation and the absence of any renewal and creativity, while having internal conflicts and being charmed by the worldly life. Consequently, political, military, economic, cultural, educational and social weaknesses emerged. The weak regimes were unable to keep pace with the developments, or build effective systems (derived from the Islamic religion and heritage), capable of facing contemporary challenges and competing with the rising world powers. This made the Muslim world, including Palestine, an open area, easy for the colonial powers and other enemies to desecrate, occupy and tear apart, while spreading Western ideologies.
- As the Ottoman State collapsed, the idea of an Islamic caliphate receded, and the colonial states established, in most parts of the Arab and Muslim world, loyal regimes. The colonial states facilitated the secular movements that flourished in their universities and institutions to assume leadership and decision-making positions, while fighting the revival Islamic movements. They paved the way for the emergence of states whose leaders do not give a major priority to the central issues of the *Ummah*. Therefore, the people

became incapable of expressing their will, playing their advancement, civilized and unitary role, and confronting the *Ummah's* enemies, especially the Zionist one. Isolating the Islamic movement from leadership and decision-making positions weakened its ability to play the desired effective roles; it took limited roles, not proportional to its potential.

- The region was put under colonial control, particularly British and French colonialism, which made artificial divisions and borders according to the Sykes-Picot Agreements and others; and a commitment towards the Zionist project through the Balfour Declaration. This led to the imposition of a systematic coercive plan, in which the major powers colluded against the will of the Palestinian people and *Ummah*. Palestine was isolated from its Arab and Islamic surroundings, to be singled out. The huge disparity in capabilities provided a cover for the Zionist project, protected and nurtured it, to establish a usurping entity, while suppressing and crushing the will of the people and *Ummah*.
- The Zionist project had organizational and leadership nous, global influence, and advanced political, media, financial and military capabilities. In contrast, the formation and performance of the Palestinian National Movement was affected by the *Ummah's* state of underdevelopment. Its leadership and organizational expertise were weak. Its internal conflicts and competition impacted the overall jihadist and national performance.
- The Palestinian people resisted with all their strength the British occupation and the Zionist project. Their revolutions, uprisings and sacrifices followed, culminating in the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939, which forced Britain in May 1939 to cancel the Balfour Declaration and commit to establishing a Palestinian state within ten years. However, with the end of WWII, it reneged on its promise. It was a conspiracy against the Palestinian people, and beyond their capacity to resist.
- In 1918–1948, left-wing, secular, nationalist and territorial nationalist Western ideas and ideologies were not rooted in the Arab and Islamic environment, and the notion of a nation state was not mature or well-established. Therefore, the general basis of people's movement, mobilization, discourses, slogans and resistance to the Zionist enemy was based on Islam with its simple, tolerant and moderate understanding. Also, the interaction of the Muslim masses with

the issue of Palestine was significant, and it took on a practical manifestation in the direct participation in the *jihad*, on the land of Palestine. These masses even took leadership roles in resistance action; for example Ezzedeen al-Qassam (Syria); Fawzi al-Qawuqji (Lebanon); the volunteers of the MB movement (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq...), and ALA (several countries), among others.

- The Islamic movement had a major pioneering role in resisting the Zionist project and the British occupation, whether through the political and religious leadership of Haj Amin al-Husaini and his fellow scholars, or through al-Jihadiyyah Movement led by Ezzedeen al-Qassam, or through the MB movement in Palestine and the Arab countries, as well as others.

Endnotes

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- ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 135–135; and see also Khalil al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana Ya Dunya* (That's How I Am, O Life) (n.p.: The General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, 1982), pp. 134–135.
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- ⁷ See Philip Hitti, *Tarikh Suriyyah wa Lubnan wa Filastin* (History of Syria Including Lebanon and Palestine), translated by Kamal al-Yaziji (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafah in collaboration with Burt Franklin Printing and Publishing Corporation, 1959), vol. 2, p. 349; and Vladimir Borisovich Lutsky, *Tarikh al-Aqtar al-'Arabiyyah al-Hadithah* (Modern History of the Arab Countries), translated by 'Afifah al-Bustani (Moscow: Dar al-Taquddum, 1971), p. 382.
- ⁸ Bayan al-Hout, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu'assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin 1917–1948*, p. 11.
- ⁹ See Hassan Ali Hallaq, *Mawqif al-Dawlah al-'Uthmaniyyah Min al-Harakah al-Sahyuniyyah 1897–1909* (The Position of the Ottoman State on the Zionist Movement 1897–1909), 2nd edition (Beirut: El-Dar el-Gamaya, 1980), pp. 86–90 and 101–105.
- ¹⁰ Raphael Patai (ed.), *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (London: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), vol. 1, p. 378, <https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzlEngVolume3OCR/TheCompleteDiariesOfTheodorHerzlEngVolume1/page/n195/mode/2up?q=vivisection>
- ¹¹ *Mudhakkarat al-Sultan 'Abdulhamid*, p. 65.
- ¹² Samir Ayyub, *Watha'iq Asasiyyah fi al-Sira' al-'Arabi al-Sahyuni* (Essential Documents in the Arab-Zionist Conflict) (Beirut: Dar al-Hadathah, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 269–270.
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- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- ¹⁵ 'Abdul 'Aziz Muhammad 'Awad, *Muqaddimah fi Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith 1831–1914* (An Introduction to the Modern History of Palestine 1831–1914) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing–Muhtaseb Library, 1983), p. 62; and Hassan Hallaq, *Mawqif al-Dawlah al-'Uthmaniyyah min al-Harakah al-Sahyuniyyah*, pp. 96–98.
- ¹⁶ William Fahmi, *Al-Hijrah al-Yahudiyyah ila Filastin* (Jewish Immigration to Palestine) (Egypt: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1974), p. 36.

- ¹⁷ See Khairiyyah Qassmiyyah, *Al-Nashat al-Sahyuni fi al-Sharq al-'Arabi wa Sadah 1908–1918* (The Zionist Activity in the Arab East and its Resonance 1908–1918), Palestinian Books Series, no. 41 (Beirut: The Research Center (PLO), 1973), pp. 41–49.
- ¹⁸ Saleh Abu Yasir, *Jihad Sha'b Filastin Khilal Nisf Qarn*, p. 33.
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- ²¹ See Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tayyar al-Islami fi Filastin wa Atharuhu fi Harakat al-Jihad 1917–1948* (The Islamic Movement in Palestine and its Impact on the Jihad Movement 1917–1948), 2nd edition (Kuwait: Al-Falah Library, 1989), pp. 59–61.
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- ⁹² *Watha'iq al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah 1918–1939: Min Awaq Akram Zu'aytir*, p. 397. See also Police Report, 1935, p. 40; and *The Edinburgh Gazette*, 7/1/1936, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/Edinburgh/issue/15241/page/30/data.pdf>
- ⁹³ 'Abdul Sattar Qasim, *Al-Sheikh al-Mujahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam*, pp. 66–67.
- ⁹⁴ Akram Zu'aytir, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah 1935–1939: Yawmiyyat Akram Zu'aytir*, p. 32.
- ⁹⁵ Subhi Yasin, *Al-Thawrah al-'Arabiyyah al-Kubra*, pp. 39–41.
- ⁹⁶ Muhammad 'Izzah Darwazah, *Al-'Idwan al-Isra'ili al-Qadim wa al-'Idwan al-Sahyuni al-Hadith 'ala Filastin wa ma Jiwaraha* (The Old Israeli Aggression and the Modern Zionist Aggression Against Palestine and Its Surroundings) (Beirut: Dar al-Kalimah, 1980), vol. 2, p. 52.
- ⁹⁷ Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib, *Min Athar al-Nakbah*, p. 88.
- ⁹⁸ Kamel Khullah, *Filastin wa al-Intidab al-Baritani 1922–1929*, p. 594.

- ⁹⁹ See the despatch of the High Commissioner of Palestine Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope to Secretary of State for the Colonies J.H. Thomas, 7/12/1935, C.O. 733/294, in ‘Abdulwahab al-Kayyali, *Palestine; A Modern History* (London: Third World Centre for Research and Pub, 1978), p. 143, <https://archive.org/details/PalestineAModernHistory/page/n142/mode/1up?q=EXTREME+AND+>
- ¹⁰⁰ ‘Abdul Sattar Qasim, *Al-Sheikh al-Mujahid ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam*, p. 106.
- ¹⁰¹ Hasan al-Banna, *Mudhakkarat al-Da‘wah wa al-Da‘iyah* (The Memoirs of the Advocation and the Advocate), 5th edition (Beirut–Damascus: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1983), p. 28.
- ¹⁰² Hasan al-Banna, *Majmu‘at Rasa‘il al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna*, pp. 271–273.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156–157.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hasan al-Banna, *Mudhakkarat al-Da‘wah wa al-Da‘iyah*, pp. 198–199.
- ¹⁰⁵ ‘Abd al-Fattah M. el-‘Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1928–1947* (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), p. 162.
- ¹⁰⁶ About the emergence of the MB movement in Palestine, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tayyar al-Islami fi Filastin wa Atharuhu fi Harakat al-Jihad*, pp. 438–445.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bayan al-Hout, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu‘assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin*, p. 405.
- ¹⁰⁸ ‘Abd al-Fattah el-Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1938–1947*, p. 155.
- ¹⁰⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tayyar al-Islami fi Filastin wa Atharuhu fi Harakat al-Jihad*, pp. 447–450; and Bayan Al-Hout, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu‘assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin*, p. 503.
- ¹¹⁰ Bayan al-Hout, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu‘assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin*, p. 794.
- ¹¹¹ See the names of the National Committee in Jerusalem in: Bayan al-Hout, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu‘assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin*, p. 906; and see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, “Documentary Lights on the Muslim Brothers in Jerusalem in 1946,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, vol. 15, issue 58, Spring 2004, pp. 67–83. (in Arabic)

Chapter Five

*The Islamic Resistance in Palestine
1949–2022*

Section One

Between Ascendancy and Stagnation 1949–1987

First: General Background

- The 1948 war was disastrous for the Palestinian people. Zionist ethnic cleansing displaced nearly 800 thousand out of 1.39 million Palestinians (57.6% of the population). The Palestinians also lost 77% of their homeland, which the Zionist Jews then claimed as their own state. The Palestinians' social fabric was torn apart, along with their economic and civilian infrastructure. The Palestinians were unable to establish their state on the rest of their land; Jordan annexed WB and Egypt placed GS under its direct administration. The Arab Higher Executive representing the Palestinian people at the time was prevented from exercising its powers over WB, GS and elsewhere where Palestinians were present.
- The adherents of Islamic movements suffered the same fate that afflicted the Palestinians, including killing, destruction and displacement. They became preoccupied, like other Palestinians, with healing their wounds and adapting to their new conditions, while looking forward to returning to their homeland, and looking for ways to restore national dignity through a national liberation project.
- The damage inflicted on the Palestinian territories seized in 1948 was catastrophic. Zionists expelled 86.5% of the population of the 1948 occupied territories. Only about 125 thousand out of the 925 thousand, who had resided there, remained. These territories were placed under military rule until 1966. During this time, the Islamic movement was driven underground, while the Communist Party (which recognized the Israeli entity) became active among Palestinians. However, the Islamic movement began to recover in the mid-1970s and assume its leading popular position in the 1980s.
- The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by the dominance of nationalist and leftist movements in the Arab political life, especially during the period of

Gamal 'Abdul Nasser's rise 1956–1967, and the rise of the Nasserist idea, the idea of the “nationalist struggle” in the sense that the Palestine issue was a pan-Arab nationalist issue and responsibility. The star of 'Abdul Nasser shone, especially after the Tripartite Israeli-British-French Aggression on the Suez Canal in 1956, and the forced withdrawal of these forces after a few months. This was accompanied by popular Palestinian anticipation of the liberation of Palestine in efforts led by the Arab countries. However, this anticipation turned into disappointment and frustration in the 1967 war, when the Arab countries were defeated catastrophically, which led to the Israeli occupation of the rest of historical Palestine (WB and GS), the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, and the Syrian Golan Heights.

- In this climate, the Palestinian national identity became entrenched, with an awareness that the Palestinians must take the initiative themselves. The Arab regimes tried to regain some of their dignity in the October 1973 war and achieved partial successes on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. But the Israelis soon managed to reverse some of these gains thanks to the huge support by the US. This was the last of the Arab-Israeli wars. The Palestinian resistance faced the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 without Arab intervention (except for limited Syrian support) and was struck a severe blow which led to its expulsion from Beirut. The defeat practically ended resistance outside Palestine. The wider Arab environment was mired in division, with Egypt entering into a peace accord with Israel (Camp David Accords 1978); and Iraq was exhausted by its war with Iran 1980–1988. The Arab environment became more inclined towards the path of peace accords and the two-state solution, with the emergence of Prince Fahd's project in 1982, thus, pushing the PLO in this direction.
- Within the official Palestinian framework, the Arab regimes continued to occlude the Arab Higher Executive and marginalize its role, leaving it with only paralyzed offices unable to make an impact on the ground. Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdul Baqi continued to represent Palestine on its behalf in the League of Arab States until his death in 1963. However, the Palestinian arena was brimming with popular organizations and movements, which alerted the Arab regimes, especially 'Abdul Nasser, to the need to absorb and shape the

Palestinian situation. The PLO was thus established under the leadership of Ahmad al-Shuqairi in 1964, as an expression of aspiring Palestinian statehood. However, the disaster of 1967 prompted the Palestinian factions, whose popularity increased, especially the Fatah movement, to take control of the PLO in the summer of 1968; Yasir ‘Arafat assumed its presidency in February 1969. The PLO was able to obtain recognition of the Arab regimes as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974, and was able in the same year to gain international recognition for its participation in the UN. It obtained observer membership and secured voting by a large majority in each of the following years, in favor of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and their right to resistance in all its forms. However, the Israeli side continued its occupation and its programs of repression and Judaization, benefiting from US and Western support that blocked any binding decision against it at the UN.

- The nation-states that arose in the Arab region were established as quasi-secular states that separated religion from the state or employed religion in the service of the “legitimacy” of the ruling regime and the ruling families. The elites who were brought up in colonial schools and universities were able to dominate the levers of these states and were inspired by Western models in managing state and society. Islam occupied a different place in this order, varying in degree from one country to another, but in any case, it was no longer the model for governance nor its main reference. The Islamic movement was unable to translate its project and vision through a state or political system.
- Despite the pan-Arabist slogans raised, and the Arab League presence, the general trend in the region was towards retreat into the individual nation-states, especially after the failure of unification projects, the most prominent of which was the Egyptian-Syrian unification project 1958–1961.
- The absence of an official Arab state or regime that adopts the Islamic line and Islamic resistance action to liberate Palestine, especially in the strategic environment surrounding Palestine, blocked the opportunity for the Islamic movement to benefit from the enormous logistical capabilities of states, compared to the capabilities of individuals and organizations, including bases, headquarters and launching pads, as well as military, financial, security and

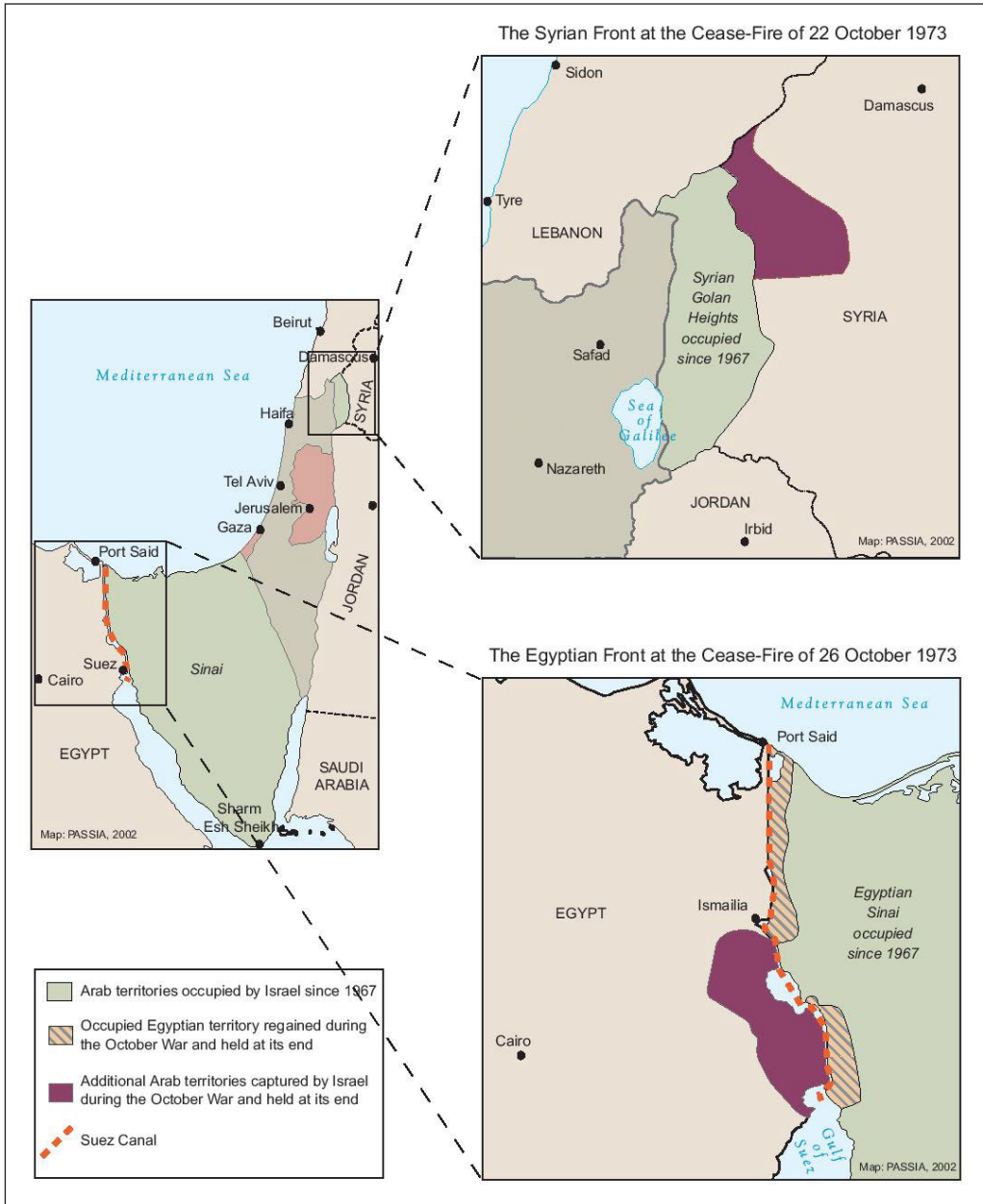
media support, while Nasserist, pan-Arabist, Ba‘athist and leftist organizations benefited from many Arab regimes. The Islamic movement, thus, was only able to express itself within a limited popular framework, unable to shape events or form a critical mass capable of influencing their course.

- The popular presence of the Palestinian Islamic movement went through periods of ebb and flow. It had a strong presence in 1949–1956 in GS, WB and Transjordan, but then suffered a decline especially in 1956–1967, following a series of crackdowns and smear and persecution campaigns led by ‘Abdul Nasser’s regime, amid the rise of nationalist and leftist currents. The Islamic movement was ascendant again in the 1970s, becoming since the end of that decade the number one rival of the Fatah movement. This was accompanied by a wave of Islamic awakening across the Arab and Muslim worlds.
- The Palestinian Islamic movement took the lead in launching armed resistance from GS and Sinai, after the catastrophic Arab defeat in the 1948 war, with a relatively smaller role in the WB armed resistance. However, ‘Abdul Nasser’s regime’s crackdown on the MB movement disrupted this work. This prompted the MB to play a key role in establishing the Fatah movement, while the Palestinian MB movement rearranged its organization, and preferred to rely on education and survival amid the persecution of Islamists. Their only military resistance role was within their limited participation in the Shuyukh training camps (1968–1970), pending more effective efforts in the late 1970s that led to the launch of Hamas in 1987. The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) (which emerged from the MB movement) was not launched until 1980.
- In 1952, the Hizb ut-Tahrir was established under the leadership of the Palestinian Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani. He was able to include many of the MB’s youth and leaders, especially in Jerusalem and Hebron. He gained considerable popularity in the 1950s, and had a role in defending Islam and calling for the Islamic caliphate, but did not practice *jihad* work, which he believed must be under the banner of a caliph of the Muslims, focusing instead on the priority of the establishment of a caliphate, as something that must precede national liberation.

1967 War Results



1973 War Results



Source: The October War, 1973, site of Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, <http://www.passia.org/maps/view/23>

*Second: The MB Movement and Armed Resistance 1949–1955*¹

The Palestinian MB movement is credited with the pioneering experience of military resistance launched from GS and Sinai, in coordination with the Egyptian MB movement. This experiment may have had a limited impact on the course of events, given its limited timespan (1950–1955). However, it must still be seen as a historically pioneering act. It must also be credited for providing an example of capable leadership and the incubation of resistance work, out of which the Fatah movement was eventually born. Historians of the Palestine issue fail to give this experience credit in the history of the Palestinian resistance.

It was not surprising that the idea of military action after the *Nakbah* was present in the hearts of the MB. There are indications that organized resistance in GS and the Egyptian borders began with Kamel al-Sharif. Al-Sharif was one of the leaders of the Egyptian MB movement, from Sinai, who participated in the 1948 war, in Jaffa and southern Palestine. Kamel and his comrades of the MB movement and their supporters rebelled against the armistice between Egypt and Israel, which was signed in March 1949. They continued the fighting, despite the Egyptian political and security environment of crackdown and persecution against the movement, after banning it and assassinating their General Guide. However, the Egyptian authorities arrested al-Sharif and his comrades in Rafah, then released them in the early 1950s, and he was forced to return to al-‘Arish.²

Al-Sharif remained “haunted” by the idea of *jihad* against the Israelis, and took residence in the city of al-‘Arish. He began to rearrange a network of armed resistance in GS and across Egyptian borders, under the broad umbrella of the MB movement. Al-Sharif, who hailed from the Sinai desert, with his successful military experience, won the confidence of the MB leadership in Cairo. The movement entrusted him with the task of fighting the Israelis in Palestine and the British in the Suez Canal, after the Egyptian Prime Minister al-Nahhas Pasha withdrew Egypt from the treaties of 1899 and 1936 with Britain, in late 1951.³

In coordination with Kamel al-Sharif, the MB movement established a secret military organization in GS, which carried out resistance operations in coordination with the Bedouins of the Negev and Sinai deserts. According to testimonies from members of this secret military structure, such as:

Muhammad al-Khudari, Fawzi Jabr, Khairy al-Agha and Muhammad Siyam, this clandestine work was highly organized.⁴ To ensure the success of this effort, it was not subject to the supervision of the “traditional” official MB leadership in Gaza, but was overseen by Kamel al-Sharif in al-‘Arish. Al-Sharif was in turn overseen organizationally by the MB movement Comptroller General Office, Sheikh Muhammad Farghali, the general commander of the MB campaign in the 1948 war in Palestine.⁵

Muhammad Abu Sido⁶ was the main liaison between al-Sharif and the leaders in the Strip. He worked as a plumber in the Egyptian army in al-‘Arish and used to return to Gaza over weekends. This provided him with a convenient cover for communicating information and instructions, starting from Rafah, passing through Khan Yunis, and all the way to his place of residence in Gaza.⁷

Organizationally, GS was divided into three areas:

1. Gaza: Under the command of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), aided by Fawzi Jabr, Muhammad al-Khudari, Mu‘ath ‘Abed, ‘Abduh Abu Muraihil and Hamad al-‘Aydi.
2. Middle Area (Khan Yunis): Under the command of Khairy al-Agha.
3. The South (Rafah): Under the command of Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar.⁸ He was assisted by Musa Nassar. Later, Ibrahim ‘Ashur took over from al-Najjar.⁹

One of the encouraging signs was that hundreds of Palestinian youths trained in MB camps during the 1948 war. The movement benefited from the presence of the MB-affiliated officer in the Egyptian army ‘Abdul Mun‘im ‘Abdul Ra’uf in GS, following the success of the Egyptian revolution. He facilitated military training for them.¹⁰ Kamel al-Sharif and his comrades also provided logistical support for the resistance, establishing a training camp in al-Qusaima in Sinai, about 86 km southeast of al-‘Arish, near the border with occupied Palestine.¹¹ A number of Palestinians also received military training in camps set up by Egyptian universities, following the escalation of the crisis with Britain in the Suez Canal from late 1951 until 1954. Yasir ‘Arafat (who was close to the MB movement) was one of the Palestinians who received training at MB trainers at Fuad I University (Cairo) during that period.¹²

Most of these weapons were light arms suitable to limited resistance operations and mine laying, but not large-scale, sustained or direct battles.¹³

A considerable number of resistance operations were conducted under the supervision of Kamel al-Sharif in the first half of the 1950s against the Israelis. The Egyptian military intelligence sometimes briefly detained some of Kamel al-Sharif's colleagues. However, there was a group of officers, generally associated with the MB movement and the Free Officers, who supported and participated in these operations, which facilitated the work of the resistance.¹⁴ Abu Jihad indicated, in an interview conducted by Salwa al-'Amad, that he and his comrades carried out mine-laying operations. The water pipes in Israeli settlements were also blown up.¹⁵

'Abdullah Siyam carried operations out of northern Gaza, while Hamad al-'Aydi carried out attacks from the center, and Ibrahim 'Ashur from the south. The Bus Operation, on 17/3/1954, was one of the most famous operations. Evidence suggests the Bedouins conducted it in coordination with the MB movement, killing 11 Israelis near Bir al-Saba', next to the settlement of Ma'ale Akrabim.¹⁶

The MB military operations in GS helped foil plans to settle Palestinian refugees in Sinai, which had been approved by the Egyptian authorities. Indeed, each resistance operation was followed by Israeli retaliation, which embarrassed the Egyptian government and prompted it to establish the Palestinian Battalion.¹⁷ Even after the MB movement was banned in the Strip and persecuted, it continued the secret resistance work. The MB also played a role in the popular resistance against the Israeli occupation of the Strip (31/10/1956–6/3/1957). Under the occupation, they organized a successful large-scale strike, prompting the Israelis to detain a number of the movement members, who remained in prison until the Israelis withdrew from the Strip.¹⁸

However, the Egyptian regime's persecution of the MB, giving way to pan-Arabist and socialist movements, and the emigration of MB movement symbols and talented cadres, especially to the Gulf for work, weakened the movement in GS. Thus, its role was marginalized, especially from the late 1950s until 1967.¹⁹

The WB

After Jordan annexed WB, about 75% of the kingdom's population became "Palestinians" or of "Palestinian origin."²⁰ The natives of Transjordan also believed in the Palestine issue as their religious, national and patriotic cause, undermining the borders put by colonialism between the parts of the Arab

Muslim *Ummah*. The integration of the Islamic movement, specifically the MB movement from WB, with their brethren in Transjordan was smooth and strong, truly expressing the spirit of one nation. The movement's leadership, headed by 'Abdul Latif Abu Qurah and then Muhammad 'Abdul Rahman Khalifah, placed Palestine at the top of its priorities.

In WB, the MB movement's branches continued their activities after the 1948 war, including branches in Jerusalem, Nablus, Hebron, Bethlehem and Tulkarm. New branches were also established in Jenin, Qalqilya, 'Anabta, Dura, Surif, Sur Baher, Barqa and Jericho; and in several refugee camps, including 'Aqabat Jaber near Jericho, and al-Arroub near Bethlehem.²¹

The MB in Jordan, who was not satisfied with the performance of the army, led by British General Glubb Pasha, sought to support and strengthen the National Guard. The Guard were defensive military formations that were formed in 1949 and were in charge of protecting the lines of contact with the Zionist enemy but were poorly armed, trained and resourced.²² Thus, many MB joined the National Guard and were among its formations in the regions and villages from which they hailed. In Sur Baher, for example, most members of the National Guard were MB, working to fortify the frontline villages.²³

In 1953, the MB movement made great efforts to mobilize the Muslim world to support the cause of Palestine. They convened the "Islamic Conference" in Jerusalem on 4–10/12/1953, attended by representatives of Arab and Muslim countries and by Muslims from the rest of the world. The conference issued resolutions, including the establishment of a fund to support the reconstruction of Palestine, and to the forefront Palestine in the Muslim world. Sa'id Ramadan was elected Secretary-General, and Kamel al-Sharif as his deputy.²⁴

The MB movement's desire was for the conference to provide cover for resistance against the occupation. Mustafa al-Siba'i held a press conference in April 1954 in which he said that the Islamic Conference had decided to train the youth of Palestine to bear arms, adding, "Our task will be to strengthen the front lines between the Arab countries and Israel, and arm the Palestinians with sufficient armament."²⁵

It seems that the MB movement wanted to elect Kamel al-Sharif to this position to provide him with cover to pursue his resistance work across WB. By the end of 1953, Kamel al-Sharif did indeed move to Jordan. Close cooperation

has developed between the General Islamic Conference and the National Guard. A lot of money was raised under the cover of the conference to arm the National Guard. The conference supervised the fortification of the borders and the support of the National Guard along the armistice lines in WB. The conference fortified four villages near Jerusalem and Hebron and provided many villages with building materials and other materiel to establish fortifications under the supervision of the conference or the MB movement. It spent money on building barricades in a number of Jerusalem neighborhoods, and a hospital was established on al-Bireh-Jalazoun road for the National Guard.²⁶

A large part of the funds went to the secret commando operations supervised by al-Sharif, who brought ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali, one of the MB’s most prominent military trainers who participated in the 1948 war. He came from Egypt on 21/7/1954, after obtaining permission from the MB movement in Egypt. Al-Sharif asked him to secretly train the guerrillas. ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali trained several MB batches in Jerusalem, and they also conducted operations against Israel. Their activities were concentrated in Jerusalem and Hebron. Among those who helped in the military action were the sons of ‘Abdul Nabi al-Natsheh in Hebron, as well as ‘Abdul Rahim al-Sharif, who was a judge in Gaza, and had a house in Hebron, where the operations were planned.²⁷

‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali continued to work and train, but in December 1954, the Jordanian authorities expelled him and Kamel al-Sharif,²⁸ after the Chief of Staff of the Jordanian Army at that time, Glubb Pasha, became disturbed by their activities. Later they returned to Jordan, after King Hussein expelled Glubb in March 1956. However, military action had stopped by then.²⁹

The Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956 sparked a wide popular movement in Jordan, and the MB Executive Office of the Arab countries strongly supported Egypt and ‘Abdul Nasser against the aggression (despite his persecution of the movement). They supported the nationalization of the Suez Canal, affirmed that Islam is the religion of liberation and that the battle with colonialism is a battle of faith, where colonialism must be expelled for the last time from Muslim lands. They affirmed that the MB movement in all Arab Muslim countries would deploy all their capabilities in support of Egypt and its army.³⁰ The MB movement in Jordan subsequently benefited from the government’s relaxation of its security grip and began to train to fight in the

MB chapters, including the roof of the headquarters in Amman, and in their headquarters in Jerusalem. They began to prepare themselves to face any possible Israeli aggression.³¹

Under the cover of scouting groups and camps, the MB movement in Jordan sought to train on weapons in Nablus, Hebron, Jerusalem and Transjordan. This was of great concern to the Jordanian authorities. Jordanian security reports contain information about training in the mid-1950s through 1958, conducted secretly and at night in secluded places, where weapons were carefully hidden, and cadets returning as ordinary citizens to their homes afterwards.³² However, these training camps were held for preparation, and were not followed by military resistance operations.

In Lebanon, Sheikh Fadel ‘Abbas, who came to the country in 1953 (he was one of the Palestinian MB youths), organized secret resistance groups, which managed to penetrate the borders towards northern occupied Palestine and conduct reconnaissance in the period 1954–1956. However, their role did not develop beyond that.³³

In Syria, it appears that the Special Apparatus affiliated with the Syrian MB movement recruited many Palestinians, in the first half of the 1950s, including Hani al-Hasan, where they underwent ideological education and military courses.³⁴ This appears to have been in line with the orientations of the Syrian MB movement, who, under the leadership of their Comptroller General Mustafa al-Siba‘i, participated in the 1948 war. Their enthusiasm for the Palestine issue continued to kindle after, but we have no information if they later carried out any military operations against Israel.

In Iraq, one of the remarkable early experiences was the experience of Saleh ‘Abdullah Sariyah, who immigrated to Iraq following the 1948 *Nakbah*. He was a member of the MB movement and was mentored by its Comptroller General in Iraq, Sheikh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf. In addition to his university education, he received military training and graduated in 1959 with the rank of “second lieutenant” from the Military College in Baghdad. It seems that he followed his Islamic commitment, without continuing his membership in the MB movement. He had a major role in establishing the Palestine Liberation Front (later its name was changed to the Palestinian National Liberation Front) in 1959, most of whose members merged with Fatah in 1968. He became a

member of the Fourth Palestinian National Council, in the summer of 1968, in which the Palestinian factions took control of the PLO, and had a close relationship with Yasir ‘Arafat after the early 1960s. However, Sariyah, who began to lean towards a strict Islamic vision, and who later settled in Cairo, was arrested in 1974 in the Military Technical Academy attack on charges of seeking to overthrow the regime and was executed in 1976.³⁵

Third: The Relationship of the MB Movement with the Emergence of the Fatah Movement³⁶

Harassment, persecution, and smear campaigns against the Islamic movement, especially in Egypt and GS, raised questions among enthusiastic Palestinian MB youth, who began wondering about other possible means of action to liberate Palestine. Although the MB general climate urged patience and focus on educational and faith aspects, another current within the movement started inclining towards organized armed action, which does not take overt Islamic forms, but rather adopts nationalist frameworks that enable it to recruit among broader segments of youth, and do not make it vulnerable to persecution by regimes. The experience of the Algerian revolution in that period provided one of the important incentives for this work.

Evidence indicates that the MB movement was the incubator for the emergence of the Fatah movement, especially among members from GS (and particularly from the Special Apparatus). Many of them maintained contact with each other when they moved to study in Egypt or when they returned to the Strip, or when they went to work in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan (including WB). It appears that the discussions in the period 1955–1957, which followed the hiatus in their work, convinced them of the need to establish what was later known as “Fatah.” It appears that much of the MB initially considered Fatah a part of their group, or at least an asset to them. However, the two began separating and differentiating from each other after the summer of 1962.

According to Khalid al-Hasan, one of the most prominent Fatah leaders, Abu Jihad (Khalil al-Wazir) was the one who founded the Fatah movement,³⁷ a view confirmed by several Palestinian MB figures and leaders.³⁸ Abu Jihad was one of the leaders of the Special Apparatus.³⁹ As for Yasir ‘Arafat, there is near

consensus among the MB that he was not a member of the MB movement, yet he was close to it.⁴⁰

A few months after the end of the Israeli occupation of GS, in the summer of 1957, Abu Jihad presented a memo to the leadership of the MB movement in GS, for the establishment of an organization having no Islamic character, but carrying the slogan of liberating Palestine through armed struggle and make due preparations. Abu Jihad noted in his memo that this organization would unlock the closed doors between the MB movement and the masses, and break the siege that 'Abdul Nasser's regime imposed on it. It would also keep the Palestine question alive and force Arab countries to go to war.⁴¹

It seems that the MB leadership in GS did not take the memoir seriously, so it was ignored and remained unanswered, while its general tendency was to take its time, be cautious regarding security and focus on discipline and self-preservation under the weight of the Egyptian regime's crackdown. Perhaps the nature of the leadership, which tended not to be engaged in adventures in such an unfavourable environment, was why the proposal was negatively received.⁴²

When Yasir 'Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir came to Kuwait in 1957, they started promoting the idea behind Fatah in the MB circles, which was their natural environment. They were acquainted with most of the graduates from the MB youth, who had come to Kuwait. Two leaders from the MB Special Apparatus, Yusuf 'Umairah and Muhammad Abu Sido, had come to Kuwait before Khalil al-Wazir. They had a great impact in creating the right conditions for the emergence of Fatah among the Palestinian MB in Kuwait. They were also joined by a third MB leader residing in Kuwait, Suleiman Hasan Hamad.⁴³

'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, who was one of the MB in GS, admitted that the Fatah idea was a "rational one, carried out by reliable MB leaders." He also added that before the GS, MB came up with clear answers and perceptions, and within three years (1957–1960), the movement had lost many of their efficient and competent members, and that the "credibility and leadership of the MB, who advocated for Fatah have further served it to convince many distinguished MB," he added. A careful reading of the MB behavior, who participated in Fatah in the first three years after its inception, at the very least, indicates that many of them continued their membership in the movement in parallel and that they benefited from their leadership and organizational positions in recruiting distinguished MB.⁴⁴

Among the most prominent Fatah founders from GS, who have an MB background, were Salim al-Za'nun, Hashim al-Khazindar, Salah Khalaf, As'ad al-Saftawi, Sa'id al-Muzayyan (Abu Hisham), Ghaleb al-Wazir, Fathi al-Bal'awi, and Riyad al-Za'nun.⁴⁵

In Jordan, including WB (which was unified with Transjordan in 1950), the MB movement was an essential incubator of the Fatah movement. According to Hashim 'Azzam, who was an MB who joined Fatah in the late 1950s, the leaders of Fatah in Jordan "were all Muslim Brothers at the beginning."⁴⁶ Among the most prominent founders, who had an MB background or affiliation in WB, were Hamad al-'Aydi (Abu Sami), 'Abdul Fattah Hammud, Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar, Ramadan al-Banna, Zakaria Qunaibi and Musa Ghushah (brother of Ibrahim Ghushah). In Transjordan in Amman, Muhammad Rateb Ghunaim (Abu Maher), Muhammad Abu Sardaneh and 'Abdullah Jabr were among the MB pioneers who joined Fatah. Fatah leaders also maintained a strong connection to Kamel al-Sharif.⁴⁷

Among the founders of Fatah with an MB background or affiliation in Saudi Arabia were Sa'id al-Muzayyan, 'Abdul Fattah Hammud, Sa'id al-Misshal and others. In Qatar, the establishment of Fatah was led by an MB from WB, Rafiq al-Natsheh, who was later joined by Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar, 'Abdul Fattah Hammud, Kamal 'Adwan, Sa'id Taym and others.⁴⁸

In Lebanon, 'Ibad al-Rahman was the declared head of the MB movement in the 1950s. Pioneers of Fatah from this group were Toufic Rashed Houry (Publisher of *Filastinuna: Nida' al-Hayat* (Our Palestine) Magazine); Hani Fakhoury; Zuhair al-'Alami, one of the prominent MB youths in GS, who moved to Lebanon at the beginning of the 1960s; and Muhammad 'Abdul Hadi (Abu al-Haytham). In Syria, Hani al-Hasan⁴⁹ and his brother 'Ali al-Hasan were among the founders of Fatah with an MB background.⁵⁰ In Germany and Austria, Yahya 'Ashur (Hamdan) from GS was one such Fatah pioneer.⁵¹

Regarding the first leadership of Fatah, Khalil al-Wazir mentioned that the founding meeting of Fatah was held in Kuwait, and was attended by five people, namely Khalil al-Wazir, Yasir 'Arafat, 'Adel 'Abdul Karim, Yusuf 'Umairah and Taufiq Shadid. At the second meeting, Shadid was absent, so the remaining four continued their work.⁵² The accounts of the establishment of Fatah acknowledge

the founding role of these four, out of whom three had MB backgrounds⁵³ and the fourth ('Arafat) was close to the MB movement.

The Palestinian MB movement suffered a severe upheaval, with the exit of a significant number of its leaders, who subsequently formed the Fatah movement. Those were distinguished elements characterized by efficiency, dynamism and vitality. Most of them were leaders and key cadres in the MB Secret Military Structure, in the first half of the 1950s. Consequently, the Apparatus' methods, training, and military experience gained by these elements provided an important and rich base for launching the Fatah movement, continuing from where the Special Apparatus left off.

A table enclosed in the appendix to the book "*The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*," pages 299–304, includes the names of 50 pioneers and founding members of Fatah with an MB background. Although the table does not give an exhaustive list of names, it gives another strong indication of how Fatah emerged out of the MB movement incubator. It is noted from the table that 27 members joined Fatah in the 1950s, and 14 who became members of the Fatah Central Committee. Most of these fifty (at least thirty) members occupied high-level positions in the movement at some point. Their presence in first-row leadership decisions was decisive and overwhelming during the foundation stage, especially 1957–1961, compared to people with other party backgrounds who occupied senior positions, whose numbers were small.⁵⁴

The disagreement of the Palestinian MB movement with Fatah was neither over the resistance and *jihad* approach, nor over the work within a national framework. It was rather over the timing, success potential and the ability to control Fatah's orientation. According to Suleiman Hamad, who was a mediator in the negotiations that took place between the two parties, the talks failed to reach an accord, where the MB leadership wanted to supervise or practically dominate Fatah, while Fatah insisted on its independence, despite its keenness to keep the MB on the side. Therefore, the MB leadership decided in 1962 to compel its "dual members" to choose either the movement or Fatah. On the other hand, Fatah also compelled its members to make the same choice, and separation then occurred. One of the last to be expelled from the MB movement, against his will, was a member of the Fatah Central Committee Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar, in 1966.⁵⁵

Fatah did not feel that it had lost much. The MB movement-affiliated members (who insisted on remaining in Fatah) had distinguished capabilities, talents, zeal, strength and dynamism. This had made it difficult or impossible for the MB leadership—which lived in conditions of secrecy, isolation and weakness—to pursue such a work demanding high dynamism and popular and political openness, and quick decisions. According to MB leader ‘Abdul Rahman Barud, “The MB movement did not have strong and capable figures that could persuade Fatah supporters of the movement’s deficiencies, and the MB leaders were not convincing leaders in the eyes of the Fatah members, who were former MB.”⁵⁶ Moreover, the exposure of the link between the two (which would not have been difficult) would have harmed Fatah and its action.

In any case, the MB movement should not exaggerate by attributing Fatah to it, just as Fatah should not also deny its background and beginnings. Even if the birth of Fatah took place within the MB environment, Fatah was neither established by a decision of the MB movement nor according to their plan. Fatah’s project did not carry the MB ideology, nor the limitations that ensure that this project would serve their goals. In any case, Fatah now is not proud of their MB background, and the MB are not proud of Fatah’s MB background, especially as the influence of these backgrounds was limited to the early years. Fatah did not take long to become a pragmatic secular movement with a national identity, emphasizing national struggle and specific political reasoning.

Perhaps the two most prominent lessons from this experience are that working for Palestine may allow a reduced rhythm of action, but does not tolerate retreat and isolation, which can only be accepted as an exception and only when dictated by necessities. The inability of the MB movement to absorb and direct the energy of a group of its best competent members (for subjective and objective reasons) led to losing them. These members became active in the Palestinian arena in a way that later affected the Palestinian national path.

The second lesson is that those who do not pay attention to defining their paths and red lines (ideological and doctrinal), who respond only to pragmatic considerations and tactics and give up on their commitments (religious, behavioral and intellectual). These people might end up with their goals lost, their standards distorted and their values diminished. Indeed, the “religiosity” of the founding generation in Fatah turned over time into a personal religiosity

for several individuals, with its influence in decision-making and in guiding its path fading away, with the predominance of the “patriotic/nationalist” over the “religious” in their personalities.

Fourth: The Path From the MB Movement to Hamas

From the popular standpoint, the MB movement was the most popular group among Palestinian grassroots in 1949–1956, both in WB and GS. This was owing to their reputation for *jihad* during the 1948 war, their patriotic and Islamic platform, the relative freedom they enjoyed in Egypt until late 1954, and the favorable conditions they had in Jordan. The decline in the popular presence of Palestinian Islamists in 1956–1967 led to a dwindling number of members, a decline in their ability to recruit new cadres and a decrease in their social presence and advocacy influence. They did not have an influential presence in the political framework either. Although the situation of the MB movement in Jordan, including WB, was better compared to GS, the MB movement was not a crucial actor, nor an active element in the establishment of the PLO, nor the establishment of Palestinian guerrilla organizations at that time.

After the end of the 1948 war and in the early 1950s, the MB movement was increasing in strength and influence, especially in GS. In GS, Sheikh ‘Umar Sawwan became the head of the Administrative Office. The MB movement’s command center, where the Administrative Office was located, was in al-Daraj neighborhood. There were 11 other branches in Rimal, Shujaiyyeh, Zeytun, Bureij, Nusairat, al-Maghazy, Deir al-Balah, Khan Yunis, Bani Suheila, Rafah and Beit Lahia. During the 1949–1956 period, the MB movement was the strongest, and the top political force in GS.⁵⁷ However, the MB movement in GS underwent a decline in its popular, advocacy and organizational presence, when Gamal ‘Abdul Nasser dealt a severe blow to the MB movement, pursued them, and used his powerful media to smear them. Subsequently, the MB movement and Islamists in general pursued self-preservation and self-restraint, awaiting better conditions.

In the mid-1950s, the MB movement in GS secretly rearranged itself under a young leadership, the most prominent of whom were ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah and ‘Abdul Badi‘ Saber. Hani Bsiso, one of the most prominent youths of the

MB movement, supported by all its members, went to teach in Iraq in the Zubair region in 1953. However, the MB movement in GS would hand over leadership to him, and consult him on all matters, when he returned in the summer.⁵⁸

In this environment of harsh pressure, demotivation, abandonment and apathy felt in the ranks of the MB movement; and with the dispersal of the MB movement in several countries and with Fatah recruiting many distinguished elements from the MB movement; the MB movement's leadership decided to fortify and protect itself. Subsequently, it decided to rebuild the organization. The leadership arranged a meeting in the summer of 1963 (or 1962 by some accounts) attended by 15 delegates in *mawasi* (farms) of 'Eid al-Agha in the Khan Yunis area. The participants decided to establish the "Palestinian MB movement," and elected Hani Bsiso as the head (Comptroller General). Bsiso quit his teaching career in Iraq and settled in Cairo under the cover of postgraduate studies to dedicate himself to the leadership of the organization. 'Abdul Badi' Saber was elected as his deputy. The Palestinian MB movement included GS, the Gulf countries and Syria, but it did not include Jordan (or WB), as the MB movement had its own organization there.⁵⁹

In 1965, the Egyptian regime arrested Hani Bsiso as part of its campaign against the MB movement and sentenced him to three years in prison. However, he was not subsequently released, and he died in prison of meningitis in 1970.⁶⁰

'Abdul Badi' Saber, who settled in Qatar, took over the leadership of the Palestinian MB movement in the absence of Hani Bsiso. He was officially installed as Comptroller General at the meeting of the Palestinian MB *Shurah* Council, held in Beirut, in 1969. In 1970, 'Abdul Badi' Saber resigned and was replaced by his deputy, 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah. However, Abu 'Azzah, who developed intellectual views critical of the MB's action and the thought of Sayyid Qutb, in turn, resigned from his leadership position and the MB movement.⁶¹

'Umar Abu Jbara, who was also the head of the Palestinian MB movement in Kuwait, took over from 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah and was then regularized by his election as Comptroller General in the *Shurah* Council meeting, in 1973, with Khairy al-Agha being elected his deputy. Besides them, Suleiman Hamad, Nader al-Haj 'Isa, and Khalil Hamad were elected to the Executive Committee. 'Umar Abu Jbara died at the beginning of the summer of 1975, when he fell off a pick-up truck while preparing to travel to Jordan, then his deputy,

Khairy al-Agha, took over the MB movement leadership. As for Suleiman Hamad, he replaced Abu Jbara as Head of the Palestinian MB movement in Kuwait. In the same year, at the *Shurah* Council meeting, Khairy al-Agha was elected a Comptroller General, and Suleiman Hamad his deputy.⁶²

Al-Agha and Hamad worked in perfect harmony, especially in terms of their mutual interest in *jihad* action in Palestine, as well as in the youth and student sectors. Al-Agha was one of the leaders of the Secret Military Structure in the GS (1952–1954), and Hamad was one of the founders of Fatah (which he later left). This resonated perfectly with Sheikh Ahmad Yasin’s character, who led the MB movement in GS following the Israeli occupation there in 1967, succeeding Isma‘il al-Khalidi. His deputy was ‘Abdul Fattah Dukhan.

The unification of the Palestinian and Jordanian MB movements⁶³ was a milestone in the MB’s history. At the meeting of the Palestinian MB Executive Committee in the summer of 1976, the Committee drafted a resolution calling for merging the Palestinian MB movement with the Jordanian one at home and abroad. The idea was to merge regional MB organizations, for example, the MB movements in Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon would unite into the *Bilad al-Sham* organization. The same would go for Egypt and Sudan, making up the North Africa movement. Consultations and opinion surveys were conducted with MB in various countries. The idea was presented to the Palestinian MB *Shurah* Council at its 1977 summer session and was unanimously approved. The Executive Committee was tasked with submitting the idea to the Office of the Comptroller General, who approved and encouraged it. It also discussed the idea with the leadership in Jordan, who warmly welcomed it. The idea was mooted with the MB *Shurah* Council in Jordan, with the participation of Khairy al-Agha and Suleiman Hamad and was unanimously approved. In 1978, the MB *Shurah* Councils in Jordan and Palestine were dissolved, and a new council was elected, under new statutes. A new leadership headed by Muhammad ‘Abdul Rahman Khalifah was elected. Palestinian MB structures in GS, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates joined the new organization named *Bilad al-Sham* organization. Even though operational and unforeseen circumstances prevented the MB movements in Syria and Lebanon from joining the newly founded organization, it retained the name “*Bilad al-Sham*.”

WB was part of the Jordanian organization, while GS was under the Palestinian organization. When the two organizations united, a specialized

committee was created by this new organization to follow up on Palestinian affairs at home, especially in WB and GS. Among its most prominent committee members were Qandil Shaker and Sa‘duddine al-Zamili (Abu Bashir), overseen by secretary Yusuf al-‘Azm. An administrative office was created for WB and GS inside Palestine, overseen by this committee. This office was headed by Radhi al-Salaymeh from Jerusalem, who succeeded by ‘Abdul Fattah Dukhan from Khan Yunis.

On 20 and 21/10/1983, an internal conference was held for Palestine. It was the first conference on the Palestine issue held by the *Bilad al-Sham* organization, to discuss the unification principles and means of action for Palestine, and launch action programs. This conference was held in Jordan in the presence of representatives from the organization’s various regions, including GS. Its decisions, which were detailed over ten pages, affirmed that working for the Palestine issue and the liberation project did not contradict the project of establishing an Islamic state, being two parallel lines that go side by side and complement each other. Within the framework of the internal organization, it took 26 decisions to develop and support the action in the Palestinian arena, including dedicating a special apparatus or committee for Palestinian MB movement advocacy, to lay down plans and build up readiness; and establishing a single leadership for the organization inside Palestine about mobilization and advocacy affairs, while separating Palestinian regions concerning resistance action. There were decisions related to Jerusalem and its centrality, advocacy, popular, educational and media activities. The decisions of the conference also dealt with resistance action in the Palestinian arena and stressed the need for military readiness and preparation to ensure its success. The conference also decided to form a committee tasked with following up on the implementation of its decisions.⁶⁴

Discussions developed the idea and establishing a central body was suggested, that would follow up and supervise action for Palestine at home and abroad. The project was submitted to the leadership of the MB movement in Jordan, which agreed to establish this body under the name of the “Palestine Division” in October 1985, and later it became known as the “Palestine Apparatus.” Khairy al-Agha agreed to lead the new formation, and worked on it vigorously after that. This apparatus managed Palestinian action and was

the body concerned with following up on the Palestinian interior. It had broad powers, but it remained committed to working under the oversight of the *Bilad al-Sham* organization.

In the summer of 1985, the leadership of the MB movement decided to take advantage of any events to participate in the confrontation against the occupation, that is, two years before the start of the *Intifadah*. Two MB movement youths were killed in the confrontations that took place at Birzeit University in 1986. It seems that the external leadership gave the internal branch the power to choose the appropriate time to act.⁶⁵

On 23/10/1987 the administrative office, meeting in the house of Hasan al-Qiq, in Dura, Hebron district, decided to launch resistance and confront the occupation. That meeting was attended, in addition to Hasan al-Qiq, by ‘Abdul Fattah Dukhan, Hammad al-Hasanat, Ibrahim al-Yazuri, ‘Adnan Maswady, Naji Sobha, Mahmud Musleh and Fadel Saleh. Sa‘id Bilal was absent from the meeting because he could not reach the place. The meeting decided to give each city the choice to take action in the manner it deemed appropriate.⁶⁶ GS took the initiative, following the incident of the trampling of four workers on 8/12/1987, after which the Hamas movement was launched.

Fifth: The Aspirations and Paths of Jihad

The MB movement may have paid a heavy price by losing some of its best members and leaders who joined Fatah, losing their Palestinian influence. With time, the idea of self-preservation and focusing on education and secret work became entrenched, and a school of thought was established that emphasized educational and organizational construction and advocacy expansion wherever possible. An internal climate emerged that was accustomed to a passive posture that adopted the Islamic jurisprudence concerning the “unarmed ones,” amid grandiose slogans and modest capabilities. However, questions began to rise among the ranks, about what was needed, in terms of organizational and advocacy expansion, to implement a transition to *jihad* and military action. There was fear that the passivity would turn from a temporary situation into a permanent one.

Moreover, the volatile nature and variables of the Palestine issue, the state of permanent conflict with occupation and aggression, the emergence of dangers that require an urgent response, and the emergence of opportunities that secret educational work is not sufficient to seize, underscored the importance of military action in the discussions of the MB movement leadership and base. Then, in the post-1967 war period, the issue of “credibility” and seriousness of action for Palestine, in the eyes of the Palestinian people, became linked to the ability to confront the enemy, especially in armed action.

The Shuyukh Camps

Following the 1967 war, the emergence of Palestinian *feda'iyyin* (freedom fighters) resistance action and the spread of its bases, especially in Jordan, there was increasing desire among the MB movement's youth to participate in armed resistance. There were two conflicting opinions: the first supported the establishment of an independent faction, while the second supported the participation of the MB movement in guerrilla action, but not under its official name. However, when some MB movement youth took the initiative to undergo intensive military training in Fatah camps in 1967, among them Ahmad Nufal, Dawud Qujuq and Mashhur Hasan Haymur, they tried to establish independent bases in the woods of Dibbin, but a Fatah military force besieged them, arrested them and prevented them from establishing the base.⁶⁷ It was clear that an independent Islamic action was not welcome.

The Jordanian MB movement's enthusiasm for establishing resistance camps was encouraged and supported by the Egyptian MB movement in exile, and by the Kuwaiti and Sudanese MB movement in the Executive Office that supervises the MB movement organizations. The idea was then supported by the Syrian, Iraqi and Lebanese MB movement organizations.⁶⁸

The leadership of the MB movement decided to establish training camps for the MB movement and its supporters. The MB movement benefited from the climate of freedom afforded to guerrilla action and the massive popular support, especially after the defeat of 1967 war. However, the MB movement could not work with complete independence as a result of the ongoing hostility against Islamists, especially from 'Abdul Nasser and leftist forces, in addition to funding hurdles.

The arrangement was for the MB movement to operate under the banner of Fatah. A committee was formed to coordinate between Fatah and the MB movement, where the MB movement was represented by Sa‘duddine al-Zamili (Abu Bashir), Ishaq al-Farhan and ‘Abd Khalaf Dawudia, while Fatah was represented by Muhammad Rateb Ghunaim (Abu Maher) and Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar. Both had an MB movement background.⁶⁹

However, the leadership of the Palestinian MB movement organization did not endorse participation in these camps, because this military action was premature, and decided not to launch armed action, believing it is futile according to its assessment of the situation: Israeli aggression and ascendancy, Arab weakness and weak capabilities to make a positive impact. Instead, they stressed the need to exert all energies to unite Arab forces under the banner of Islam to defeat the Israelis. However, the leadership of the Palestinian organization did not prevent any of its members who wished to join these camps, supporting them financially.⁷⁰

The Fatah movement agreed to provide cover for these camps, and it committed to providing supplies, weapons, and ammunition, in addition to expenses for the volunteers. Guerrilla operations took place in coordination with Fatah. The MB movement had its own camps, had complete freedom in managing them, and could conduct training and recruitment independently. About 300 men were trained and distributed over seven guerrilla bases.⁷¹ Individuals from Arab nationalities such as Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan (about seven Sudanese), Egypt and Yemen attended these bases.⁷²

Among the prominent operations carried out by the Shuyukh camps was the Green Belt operation on 31/8/1969, in cooperation with Fatah, which targeted three nearby settlements: Yardena, Beit Yosef and Neve Ur. The attack took place on a single night, reverberating widely. Another was the Deir Yassin operation, jointly with Fatah, in the Golan Heights against the Nahal Hagolan settlement, on the night of 15/9/1969, where an officers’ club, a gas station, supply depots and Israeli military vehicles were destroyed.⁷³ Another was an operation on 5/6/1970, where 6 fighters attacked two tanks and a minesweeper. The Israelis admitted 12 dead, while 3 of the fighters were killed, including Mahdi al-Idlibi from the Bait al-Maqdis base, led by Sheikh ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, and Bilal al-Maqdisi from the Gaza base.⁷⁴

According to ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali, during the 1968–1970 period, 11 were killed in the Shuyukh camps,⁷⁵ but ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam mentioned 13. Among them were Radwan Krishan, Radwan Bal‘ah al-Dimashqi, the Yemeni officer Muhammad Sa‘id Ba‘bad and Abu al-Hasan Ibrahim al-Ghazi.⁷⁶

Restored Popularity

After the catastrophe of the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the rest of Palestine, Sinai and the Golan Heights, the Islamic movement began to regain its vitality among Palestinians. Interest in Islam increased after the grassroots saw the failure of nationalist, secular and leftist ideologies in resolving the Palestine issue. In general, the MB movement, which began to regain its popular status (with the rise of the Islamic awakening) in the second half of the 1970s, set its sights on armed resistance. However, they decided to delay its launch until they complete preparations and build a military structure that was difficult to eradicate. Thus, the emergence of Hamas in its mature form was a natural fruit of long efforts and a calculated transformation into a group rooted in Palestinian reality.

Just as the Palestinian factions were active in establishing educational, health, social and economic civil institutions, the MB movement was also active in establishing civil institutions, building mosques in Palestine, and using them to promote their call. They built many charitable and social institutions in WB and GS. Supportive frameworks and institutions for the Palestinian people abroad were also built, and several fronts for Palestinian Islamic student action were established in Kuwait, Britain, Germany and the US. Over time, Islamic charities, *zakat* (almsgiving) and social solidarity committees began to increase in number, and the number of mosques in WB and GS doubled. Islamic books and tapes became a popular medium. In GS, the role of the Islamic Academy and Sheikh Ahmad Yasin emerged, and the Islamic University of GS became one of the most important Islamic strongholds. The number of mosques increased from 200 mosques in 1967 to more than 600 mosques in 1987.

The Islamic movement also strengthened in occupied Palestine in 1948 and became increasingly popular. Among its prominent leaders were Sheikh ‘Abdullah Nimr Darwish, Sheikh Raed Salah, Sheikh Kamal al-Khatib... and others.

The Roots of Hamas' Military Action

The question of *jihad* was present from the beginning with Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, who assumed leadership of the MB movement in GS in September 1967, succeeding Isma'il al-Khalidi. Sheikh Yasin was eager for launching military action in the Strip, but his comrades in GS leadership, and the leadership of the Palestinian MB movement abroad, believed that the priority was educational work and rebuilding the organization, especially in light of weak capabilities and the small number of the MB members. The question of *jihad* also was on the mind of MB members who helped establish Fatah and then left it in compliance with the MB movement's decision, such as Suleiman Hamad, or those who remained in the MB movement with previous membership in secret military action, such as Khairy al-Agha, Muhammad al-Khudari and Fawzi Jabr.

In general, the dialectic of the relationship between educational preparation and gaining supporters, on one hand, and resistance and the fear of its consequences, including arrest, killing and the closure of institutions, on the other hand, took a pragmatic turn. Indeed, educational preparation and acquiring supporters are important, but it cannot be an endless process. It suffices to have a strong solid core able to work and sustain itself. Furthermore, resistance is an educational process that refines men, and educational preparation (especially under occupation) is the essence of resistance and sacrifice. Therefore, organizations must be built on these bases.

In the late 1970s, the MB movement became more self-confident as its popularity rose and the organization expanded. Their aspiration for military action returned, especially amid the escalation of *jihad* in Afghanistan, the success of Iran's revolution, in conjunction with the battles the Palestinian resistance was waging in Lebanon, and the atmosphere of anger and defiance following the Camp David Accords, and Egypt's involvement in the peace process with Israel.

In 1979, the "Jihad Family" (*Usrat al-Jihad*) organization was formed in the Arab Triangle community and was apparently related to Sa'id Bilal (from the MB movement leadership in WB). This organization destroyed dozens of Israeli economic facilities and burned Israeli cars, factories and farms. Israel was able to uncover the organization in the following year and arrested dozens of its members (more than sixty members) from the villages of Umm al-Fahm, Kafr

Qassem, Qalansuwa and Baqa al-Gharbiyye. Among its most prominent leaders were Farid Abu Mukh and Sheikh ‘Abdullah Nimr Darwish, who were along with many comrades sentenced to prison with different jail times.⁷⁷

In the second half of 1979, preparations began for launching military action with the Palestinian MB movement in Kuwait. Khalid Mish‘al played a major role, with special support from Suleiman Hamad, head of the administrative office of the *Bilad al-Sham* organization in Kuwait at the time. The leadership began to send selected cadres (from abroad) in complete secrecy, starting in 1980, for military training in several arenas where there was an opportunity for action. The group trained many cadres from a variety of countries, dedicating many exclusively to military and security action.⁷⁸ At the same time, the Division of Military Action Abroad benefited from the military experience of the Jarmaq Brigade cadres (the student battalion) who fought in southern Lebanon, and who adopted the Islamic ideology, and from others with military experience from the Muslim and Arab world.

A core nucleus was formed to foster military action in 1981–1982 under the leadership of Mish‘al. In 1984–1985, this entity expanded its training to include selected cadres from several countries outside Palestine. Then, after the Palestine Apparatus was founded, a central committee was formed for affirmative (military) action under the supervision of Mish‘al and headed by Muhammad al-Khudari. The committee continued to recruit members from the MB movement in the Palestinian interior, especially those who live and study abroad and can return, and “planted” them to work inside the country in resisting the occupation. In early 1988, the committee linked up with Salah Shehadeh, who was in charge of military action in GS, to coordinate the work between the interior and the exterior.⁷⁹

Security action was launched abroad in 1981, and a specialized crew was assigned to it. In 1986, security work took on a central dimension in the Palestine Apparatus and became within the Military Action Committee until it was assigned an independent department within the leadership of the apparatus later.⁸⁰

Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, the actual founder of military action inside Palestine, established the military apparatus in the Strip. In late 1982 and early 1983, Ahmad Yasin began to give priority to military action. He formed a secret committee

under his leadership responsible for preparation for *jihad*, consisting of ‘Abdul Rahman Tamraz, Ibrahim al-Maqadmeh and Ahmad al-Maleh. In April 1983, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin sent Tamraz to Jordan, where he sought funds to purchase weapons. He met Yusuf al-‘Azm, the secretary of the MB movement in Jordan, who gave him initial support. When the MB movement concerned with Palestine action in Kuwait learned about the matter, they decided to support the military action in GS, and sent no less than 30 thousand Kuwaiti dinars (about \$100 thousand) through Yusuf al-‘Azm; Sheikh ‘Umar al-Ashqar and his comrades in Kuwait had a major role in this financing. Eighty items of weaponry were purchased, and several cadres were trained inside and outside GS. However, this was uncovered by Israel, and several MB movement members were arrested at intervals, the last of which included Sheikh Ahmad Yasin himself in mid-July 1984. Yasin was sentenced to 13 years, Tamraz to 12 years, Muhammad Shehab to 10 years, and Ibrahim al-Maqadmeh to eight and a half years. Salah Shehadeh was sentenced to two years. Sheikh Ahmad Yasin was released in the prisoner swap that took place on 20/5/1985, between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Israel.⁸¹

Other cells were not arrested and continued to operate, such as the Al-Meghrafah group led by ‘Adnan al-Ghoul, which carried out several operations in 1985–1986, including targeting a military truck, shooting an intelligence officer and liquidating several Israel collaborators.⁸²

After the formation of the Palestine Apparatus in 1985, the leadership decided to “invite all its members, in all the places of occupied Palestine, to participate in or call for demonstrations and clashes with the occupying enemy.” In light of this, the leadership in GS unanimously agreed in 1986 to launch military action. The military apparatus was rebuilt again under the name of the “Palestinian Mujahidun,” and Sheikh Ahmad Yasin returned to lead this apparatus in mid-June 1987. On 17/11/1987, it was decided to launch military action, as Yasin entrusted Salah Shehadeh with forming the military apparatus in the northern GS, and ‘Abdul ‘Aziz al-Rantisi with forming the military apparatus in the southern GS. After al-Rantisi’s administrative detention on 15/1/1988, the responsibility of the apparatus was given to Salah Shehadeh.⁸³

Before the start of the *Intifadah* on 9/12/1987, Salah Shehadeh had formed military groups, including the Beit Hanoun group led by Subhi al-Yazji, which carried out several military operations; the Jabalia Refugee Camp group led by Fathi Hammad, which also carried out several operations; and the Jabalia group (Group 101) led by Muhammad al-Sharath, which operated months before the *Intifadah* and attacked settler cars in September 1987.⁸⁴

On the other hand, ‘Abdul Rahman Tamraz, at the request of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in 1983, formed the Da‘wah Security Apparatus, and Yahya al-Sinwar played a key role in its leadership. After the release of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in the prisoner swap deal after about ten months (20/5/1985), he agreed to his comrades’ request for him to lead this apparatus. In 1986, the Jihad and Da‘wah Organization “Majd” was formed as a military strike force affiliated with the security apparatus, headed by Yahya al-Sinwar, and with him was Ruhi Mushtaha. Its mission was to resist corruption and corruptors, then its tasks branched out into counterespionage.⁸⁵

Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ), was established in 1980 by several Palestinian youths studying in Egyptian universities, headed by the late Dr. Fathi Shiqaqi. He joined the MB movement in the Strip under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in 1968 and continued in the MB movement’s ranks until the late 1970s.⁸⁶

Shiqaqi was born in Gaza in 1951 (his family originally hailed from the village of Zarnuqa in the Ramla district). He studied medicine at Zagazig University in Egypt from 1974 to 1981. He mentioned that the idea of establishing the PIJ arose during his university studies, amid differences between him and the MB movement regarding the approach to change, the issue of Palestine and the position on regimes, the real world, literature and art. He stated that he felt that “the MB movement does not have a methodology, and that there is chaos in the concepts within the framework of the movement.”⁸⁷

Shiqaqi criticized what he considered the passive formation curricula of the MB movement, confusion in work methods, neglect of planning, and the exaggerated importance it assigned to the principle of safety.⁸⁸ However, Shiqaqi believed that the MB movement was the mother of the Islamic movement in the region and that Hasan al-Banna was a great pioneer. He said that he and

his movement had “all respect and appreciation for this movement for its educational role and its preservation of Islam in the region.”⁸⁹

Shiqaqi said, with the advent of 1978, the distinction was clear between him and a number of his comrades, on one hand, and the MB movement, on the other. Shiqaqi followed the Iranian revolution with interest and wrote his book “Khomeini: The Islamic Solution and the Alternative” in January 1979, before the success of the revolution, but was published days after its success. He had not met any Iranian official before that and was arrested on the night the book was published for four days because of his Islamic activity at the university. He was re-arrested on 20/7/1979 and detained for four months. After his release, his organizational links to the MB movement stopped. He felt that the idea of “influence and harmony” no longer existed between him and the MB movement, so he began to form the nucleus of the PIJ in the early 1980s.⁹⁰

Before returning to Palestine in 1981, Shiqaqi was preceded by a number of his comrades who had graduated in 1980 from Egyptian universities and started their activities inside the occupied territories. Shiqaqi worked at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem for two years until he was arrested in 1983, and jailed for a year for publishing *Al-Tali'ah* magazine. He was re-arrested in 1986 and sentenced to four years in prison on charges of forming a secret military organization, then deported in 1988 to Lebanon, where he lived for one year, before moving to Damascus.⁹¹

According to the founding idea of the PIJ, it considers “Islam as a starting point, *jihad* as a means, and the liberation of Palestine as a goal.” It described itself as “a force of renewal within Islamic thought and within the Islamic movement at the level of ideation, approach, organization and conduct within Palestine.”⁹² In general, the movement focused on the values of *jihad*, national liberation, and the organization of elements to carry out military operations. It was influenced by the experience of Islamic Jihad in Egypt, the Iranian experience, and the Qassami experience. It has maintained a strong relationship with Iran since its establishment to the present day.

The movement established by Shiqaqi was joined by two groups with almost the same political and *jihadi* orientations: The first group was the Islamic Jihad Brigades, a group whose origins trace back to elements of the Fatah movement, stationed mainly in Beaufort Castle in Lebanon, and distinguished

by its experience and military formation. The well-known Palestinian thinker, Munir Shafiq, shaped its thinking, while its military leadership was under Abu Hassan Qassem “Muhammad Muhammad Bhais” and Hamdi “Muhammad Basem Sultan al-Tamimi.” This group is believed to have carried out the most famous operations of the PIJ in the 1980s, which is Operation Mughrabi Gate on 16/10/1986, which led to eighty casualties among the Israeli Givati Brigade. The second group was formed by Ibrahim Sarbal, who, along with his companions, gave allegiance to Sheikh As‘ad Bayoud al-Tamimi. It was known as the Islamic Jihad, and this group later preferred to withdraw from the unity agreement with Shiqaqi and his companions.

On the other hand, Islamic resistance action developed in Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion, when the Palestinian resistance was forced to withdraw. The Fajr Forces affiliated with *al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah* (lit. The Islamic Group) emerged, as did Hizbullah, which became the largest resistance force in southern Lebanon. The Islamic resistance was active against the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon and forced it to withdraw from Sidon and large parts of the south in 1985, redeploying to a “security belt,” until it finally withdrew under the blows of the resistance on 25/5/2000.

Section Two

Towards Military and Popular Eminence 1987–2022

First: General Background

- This period, in general, witnessed the popular ascendancy of the Palestinian Islamic movement, which dominated armed Palestinian resistance through Hamas and PIJ. The Islamic movement proved itself in the Palestinian arena, in a way that it could no longer be sidestepped, marginalized or ignored.

Despite the ebb and flow it witnessed in 1994–2000, the Islamic Resistance quickly recovered its strength and vigour. The Islamic Resistance achieved a major leap during *al-Aqsa Intifadah* 2000–2005, advancing military action in GS, and defending it in the wars and battles with Israel in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2021 and 2022. It also had a major role in the popular and armed resistance in WB, including Jerusalem.

- The Islamic movement built a popular base and a pro-resistance administration in GS, which, despite being subjected to a suffocating siege, managed to withstand and develop its military capabilities, and recruit and train tens of thousands of fighters.
- At the popular level, the Islamic movement (particularly Hamas) achieved and maintained an advanced position of popular support, especially in the first two decades of the 21st century. Hamas was able to win an overwhelming majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in WB and GS in 2006. Since that time, the leadership of the PLO (the leadership of the PA and Fatah) has avoided holding fair and transparent elections, at home and abroad, and continues to obstruct reconciliation and the rebuilding and activation of the PLO.

Since 2007, Fatah continued to control areas of the PA in WB, while Hamas continued to control GS, in what has become known as the Palestinian schism or division.

- The Islamic movements in the Arab world experienced successes and failures during this period. However, the Islamic movement remained among the most

popular, compared to the nationalist, leftist, liberal and pan-Arabist currents. This was evident whenever there were strong freedoms and transparent elections. This emerged during the Arab Spring, specifically from 2011–2013. However, experience has shown that the Islamic movement has a lot to learn to move from the leadership of society to the leadership of the state, and has shown the extent of hostility from the opponents and rivals of Islamic movements, as well as from the “deep state” and Western powers that hold a “veto” on the Islamists’ access to power.

- The Palestinian people continued their steadfastness on their land despite the severity of their suffering and the cruelty of the occupation. The number of Palestinians exceeded the number of Jews in historical Palestine at the end of 2022. Likewise, the Palestinian people abroad, whose numbers exceed half of the total number of Palestinians, continued their attachment and insistence on the right of return and liberation, and their development of institutions supporting this right.
- The Islamic movement in the 1948 occupied Palestinian territories rose to become one of the most prominent forces in Palestinian society. It had and still has a major role in spreading Islamic awareness and commitment, defending the rights of the Palestinians and supporting their steadfastness. They stood out in defending *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem and preserving its Islamic identity. Despite its division into two “northern” and “southern” movements in 1996, and despite the restrictions and bans on the “northern” movement under the leadership of Sheikh Raed Salah in 2015, the Islamic movement still plays an active role in the Palestinian society.
- As a result of different objective and subjective circumstances, the PLO entered the peace process, which led to the Oslo Accords in 1993, and subsequent commitments and arrangements. Accordingly, the PLO leadership recognized Israel, ceded 77% of the land of Palestine, committed itself to stop armed struggle and suspended the provisions of the Palestinian National Charter that contradict this. This caused great anger in Islamic circles, which rejected these agreements because Palestine is a sacred Islamic land that cannot be compromised in part or in whole, where *jihad* is required to liberate it entirely. These agreements were also opposed by left-wing, nationalist and patriotic

Palestinian forces. Hamas and the PIJ, in agreement with these factions, formed the Alliance of the Ten Factions to overthrow the Oslo Accords.

- Based on the Oslo Accords, the PLO established the PA in 1994, seeking to transform it into a Palestinian state on the 1967 occupied land (WB and GS). However, with time, it turned into a bureaucratic authority that serves the purposes of the occupation more than it serves the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Its security forces have grown in size and were preoccupied with security coordination with Israel, pursuing resistance action, and striking and dismantling its cells. The PA became plagued with various forms of corruption. It failed to improve the living and economic conditions of the Palestinians. It also failed to form effective executive, legislative and judicial institutional structures, and build a system that accommodates all Palestinian forces and expresses the free will of the Palestinian people.

The Islamic movement has suffered, and continues to suffer, from restrictions and attempts by the PA to isolate and marginalize it, especially in WB. Nonetheless, this Islamic movement has maintained its strength and popularity.

- Israel achieved great dominance during this period, benefiting from the impotence of Arab and Muslim countries, the fragmentation [of the Arab world] that followed the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and its repercussions, Palestinian schism, Western support and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist system, when hundreds of thousands of Jews from those areas immigrated to Israel. The number of Jews in Israel in 2022 reached about 7 million, or about 47% of the world's Jews. Israel used the Oslo Accords and the peace process to market itself in the international environment, establish new diplomatic relations with dozens of countries, and carry out normalization with several Arab and Muslim countries. Israel also exploited the Accords to double its settlement and Judaization activities in WB, especially in Jerusalem, with the number of settlers jumping from about 280 thousand in 1993 to more than 800 thousand in 2022.

Israel developed its military, technological and economic capabilities. It achieved living standards comparable to Western Europe. The Israeli society also saw an increase in religious and national extremism and began legitimizing it through more racist and unjust laws.

On the other hand, the development of the resistance capabilities forced Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000, and from GS in 2005, as its missiles became able to reach all of historic Palestine. Israel continues to face rejection and hostility by the Arab and Muslim peoples, lacks top-tier political leaders, and is witnessing a decline in the motivation and capabilities of its soldiers, as internal contradictions fester and explode within the Israeli society.

- A major Arab rift occurred following the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in the summer of 1990, and the US-led international intervention. The crises of the Arab and Muslim worlds were multiplied by the US-led occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, even as these nations continued to suffer from the regimes' continuous corruption and tyranny. The Arab Spring, especially in 2011–2013, came to express the *Ummah's* aspirations for freedom, progress and the peaceful transfer of power, bringing about huge tremors in the Arab environment. Initially, the Islamic movement succeeded in leading the popular and political scene and also the change movements in the region. However, a “counter-revolutionary wave” was able to regain the initiative and abort most of the change movements. Today, the region is still in a state of flux and instability, which heralds the return of the change forces in the future. Some regimes sought more assistance from the major powers to ensure their survival and normalized their relations with Israel. This worsened the Arab weakness and fragmentation, at a time when the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement came under further siege and persecution, blocking their sources of funding, support and official backing. Popular forces and institutions were prevented from supporting the Palestinian resistance and the steadfastness of the Palestinian people.
- During this period (1987–2022), and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world turned into a unipolar system led by the US, which provided an ideal cover for Israel to continue its occupation and expansion. However, the world has been slowly moving towards a multipolar system with the decline of US power and the rise of China, and the attempts of Russia, India and the European Union (EU) to assert their position in international relations.
- During this period, the manifestations of globalization, social media and multinational corporations expanded; while values and moral aspects declined, and religious and national extremism spread. A “strategic vacuum” emerged in the Arab region marked by the growth of efforts towards pan-Islamic revival, to offer humanity the Islamic project that will bring it out of the state of loss.

Second: The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)

As mentioned previously, the MB administrative office in WB and GS decided to launch resistance against the occupation, accompanied by the launch of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), in a meeting at the house of Professor Hasan al-Qiq, on 23/10/1987.⁹³

Following the ramming attack on four Palestinian workers on 8/12/1987, the MB leadership in GS met that night (in the presence of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, Ibrahim al-Yazuri, ‘Abdul ‘Aziz al-Rantisi, ‘Abdul Fattah Dukhan, Muhammad Sham‘ah, Salah Shehadeh and ‘Isa al-Nashshar), to discuss the developments, and decided to escalate the confrontations in various parts of GS. This indeed happened following the dawn prayer on 9/12/1987, with the protests emerging from the Jabalia Refugee Camp. Two members of the MB, Hatim Abu Sisi and Ra‘ed Shehadeh, were the first killed and whose deaths signalled the beginning of the *Intifadah* in Palestine.⁹⁴ On 14/12/1987, Hamas issued its first communiqué, giving an overview of its policies and attitudes.⁹⁵

After the meeting of the MB’s administrative bureau in WB and GS, on 10/1/1988 in Jerusalem, at the home of Hasan al-Qiq in the Industrial School at the Arab Orphan’s Home, a decision was made to sustain the *Intifadah*, and expand action into all parts of WB, using the same methods and tactics seen in GS. As for the decision to abbreviate the Islamic Resistance Movement as Hamas, this was agreed upon by the administrative bureau at the home of Hasan al-Qiq, who had proposed it. He would put, in the group’s first statements, the letters H, M, and S [*Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah*], to which the letter A was added later, becoming Hamas (lit. Enthusiasm).⁹⁶

For the MB movement, what was new about Hamas was that:

1. It resolved the “intermittency” in the military efforts of the MB movement, turning them into a permanent continual effort.
2. It provided a resistance framework for the MB movement, characterized by administrative, political and military institutions, with public political leadership.
3. There was a quantum leap in the internal status of the Palestinian MB movement, where organizational, educational and tactical work served *jihad*-related efforts and the resistance strategy.

Hamas quickly rose to become the main competitor to Fatah in leading the Palestinian arena and was able from the beginning to build on solid ideological, action and popular foundations. This enabled it to withstand the harsh blows from Israel and the PA after that. Hamas benefited in its rapid ascent from the long-standing history of the Palestinian MB movement. Indeed, it is the oldest Palestinian activist movement that has retained its presence in the arena. The MB also benefited from the impressive global intellectual, religious and educational legacy of the MB movement produced by the Hasan al-Banna School and its thinkers throughout the world since the 1930s, and from the support of MB branches around the world. The MB did not focus exclusively on the project for armed resistance, but also formed an advocacy movement for reform, an educational edifice and a social-charitable organization. Through their activities, they penetrated the population and recruited members, making any attempt to uproot the organization nearly impossible. In addition to this, the MB movement was proud of its resistance-*jihad* past, part of its identity since 1948.

On the other hand, the Palestine Apparatus, led by Khairy al-Agha (who was affiliated with the *Bilad al-Sham* organization), continued to supervise Hamas and its activities in the Palestinian interior. The political committee of the movement abroad was formed in 1989, headed by Ibrahim Ghushah. In 1991, Hamas formed its *Shurah* Council, which was chaired by Sheikh ‘Umar al-Ashqar. He was respectively replaced by Ibrahim Ghushah, Muhammad al-Khudari and Ahmad Bahar. Al-Agha continued to lead Hamas until 1993 when he resigned and was replaced by his deputy, Musa Abu Marzuq. When Abu Marzuq was arrested in the US in 1995 (as a result of his having to leave Jordan and with no Arab country willing to host him), Khalid Mish‘al assumed leadership until 2017, when Isma‘il Haniyyah succeeded him.

It is worth pointing out the great status and unanimous respect enjoyed by Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and the high symbolism he holds in the ranks of Hamas and the Palestinian people, given his leadership of the MB *jihad* project in the Palestinian interior, his deep faith, leadership qualities and strategic visions, and the insistence on persistent work despite his physical disability. Sheikh Ahmad Yasin was released on 1/10/1997 as a result of an agreement between Jordan and Israel, in exchange for the release of two agents of the Israeli

Foreign Intelligence Service, Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations (Mossad), who had tried to assassinate the head of the movement, Khalid Mish'al, in Amman on 25/9/1997. Sheikh Yasin resumed his main role in overseeing the resistance work, especially in GS. Sheikh Ahmad Yasin remained a "godfather" to Hamas until his assassination.

Hamas continued to observe a system in which its leadership was assumed by an executive committee residing abroad until 2009, when Hamas switched to the "regions system" which made membership of the executive committee equal between the regions of WB, GS and abroad (six members for each region in addition to the head of the movement), which was also equal at the level of membership of the movement's General *Shurah* Council. In addition, Hamas remained affiliated (MB-wise) with the *Bilad al-Sham* organization until 2012, when it was agreed that it would separate from the MB movement in Jordan, and take over the Palestinian MB action itself.

Hamas's Goals and Political Vision

Hamas published its Charter on 17/8/1988. According to 'Adnan Maswady, it was 'Abdul Fattah Dukhan (Abu Usama) who drafted the Charter, before it was endorsed by the general administrative bureau of the MB in WB and GS, and after reading it twice at the home of Hasan al-Qiq.⁹⁷ It was also approved by the leadership of the *Bilad al-Sham* organization in Amman, Jordan. It was distributed widely in the same year in Kuwait and Jordan, in addition to Palestine.

In the Charter, Hamas declared itself to be a wing of the MB movement in Palestine and one of its extensions, stating that "The Movement's program is Islam. From it, it draws its ideas, ways of thinking and understanding of the universe, life and man. It resorts to it for judgement in all its conduct, and it is inspired by it for [the] guidance of its steps."⁹⁸ Hamas's objectives were described as: "fighting against the false, defeating it and vanquishing it so that justice could prevail, homelands be retrieved and from its mosques would the voice of the *mu'azen* emerge declaring the establishment of the state of Islam, so that people and things would return each to their right places."⁹⁹ Further, the Charter states: "The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part

of it, should not be given up.” Hamas believes that “there is no solution for the Palestinian question except through *Jihad*,” and that the “liberation of Palestine is then an individual duty for every Muslim wherever he may be.”¹⁰⁰

In its Charter, Hamas expressed its keenness on educating Muslim generations and gave Muslim women a role no less important than that of men in the battle for liberation.¹⁰¹ Hamas “views other Islamic movements with respect and appreciation” and respects Palestinian nationalist movements including the PLO; however, Hamas at the same time rejected the idea of secularism, declaring that it cannot lead to liberation.¹⁰² Hamas emphasized itself as a humanistic movement. “It takes care of human rights and is guided by Islamic tolerance when dealing with the followers of other religions. It does not antagonize anyone of them except if it is antagonized by it or stands in its way to hamper its moves and waste its efforts.”¹⁰³

Hamas sees that military action is a permanent strategic choice, and treats the battle as a long-term battle, one that may be settled over generations. In light of the peace process atmosphere and the nation’s weakness, Hamas seeks to keep the flame of *jihad* burning as an expression of not abandoning the Holy Land. However, what complicates the matter for Hamas is that it adopted the military option at a time when others were abandoning it, and thus went against the current. Yet it has managed to prove itself.

In early May 2017, Hamas issued its political document,¹⁰⁴ in which it affirmed its Islamic identity and reference point, its commitment to the fundamentals, and its focus as a Palestinian national movement. The document dealt with gaps in Hamas’s charter, the most prominent of which was regarding the Jews. Indeed, there was confusion between the Jews as followers of a religion and as among the People of the Book, and Zionist Jews who usurped the land of Palestine. It was an unintended gap, given that the folk culture that prevailed in the Arab and Muslim world used simplified language and generalized the term Jewish without distinction. However, the Israeli side took advantage of this to accuse Hamas of “anti-Semitism” and smear its image everywhere. Therefore, the document confirmed that Hamas does not fight the Jews because they are Jews or because of their religion, but rather fights the Zionist project and the Zionists, the aggressors occupying Palestine.

The document was characterized by comprehensiveness and a flexible political language open to reality and emphasized commonality with others without prejudice to the fundamentals. It also emphasized a moderate, tolerant Islamic spirit, far from exaggeration, extremism and intolerance, and the common human values of freedom, justice and the rejection of injustice and aggression.

It should be noted that Article 20 of the document, part of which refers to the possibility of accepting a Palestinian state along the lines of June 4, 1967, sparked discussion and preoccupied public opinion as if it were a new initiative or a concession on the part of Hamas. The clauses about Palestinian statehood came in the context of a decisive text that refuses to concede any part of Palestine, whatever the reasons. Here is the text for those who haven't seen it:

Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the circumstances and the pressures and no matter how long the occupation lasts. Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea. However, without compromising its rejection of the Zionist entity and without relinquishing any Palestinian rights, Hamas considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their homes from which they were expelled, to be a formula of national consensus.¹⁰⁵

This text is linked to a fundamental issue that has been and still is the subject of discussion in the Palestinian arena over the past ten years. It is the issue that Hamas was required to address in all its dialogues with Fatah and the Palestinian forces to build convergence and a common intersection, to overcome the Palestinian division and have a joint action within the Palestinian frameworks such as the PLO and the PA. Here, Hamas has proven its keenness on the partnership, consensus and ending division, and that it is not an obstacle to the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state on the lines of June 4. However, this formula does not dictate any obligations to Hamas towards the enemy, such as recognizing Israel or giving up any part of Palestine, as evident from the texts that preceded the text on the issue of the state.

Third: The Military Performance of the Islamic Movement: The Blessed Intifadah 1987–1993¹⁰⁶

The first *Intifadah* was known as the “blessed *Intifadah*” and the “*Intifadah* of the children of stones.” Although it was not the first uprising, it marked a milestone in Palestinian history. Indeed, the focal point of Palestinian resistance moved from outside Palestine to the Palestinian interior during this uprising. It was characterized by its comprehensiveness and the participation of all sectors, political movements and age groups of the Palestinian people. It was also marked by the emergence of the religious factor and the role of the Islamic movement in stoking the spirit of resistance and the quest for martyrdom. Since that date, the Islamic movement has regained its passion for resistance, and *jihad* became the core of its program and composition. The Islamic movement took the lead in Palestinian military action, especially through Hamas and PIJ.

In any case, in the first six years of the *Intifadah* (December 1987–December 1993), according to PLO statistics, 1,540 Palestinians were killed, 130 thousand were wounded, and 116 thousand were arrested over various periods.¹⁰⁷

The leadership of the *Intifadah* was contested by two movements: the Islamic movement (Hamas and PIJ) and the PLO, pursuing different strategies and goals, but with similar resistance activities. The Palestinian grassroots responded to both movements. This division in the field annoyed the PLO leadership, which found the rise of the Islamic movement to be a major challenge. Since that time, the political schism and struggle have characterized Palestinian national action. Neither Hamas nor the PIJ is ready to abide by the PLO’s program, decisions and commitments, nor are the PLO leadership and its institutions ready to undertake structural reform, to become more “democratic” and better able to accommodate all Palestinian segments and movements, and more expressive of a comprehensive national vision, to which everyone adheres.

Hamas believes that it was the one that bore the burden of launching this *Intifadah* in its early days. The decision to take to the field and escalate resistance activities coincided with the first moments of the *Intifadah*. Meanwhile, the PLO and its factions did not participate clearly in it until about two weeks later, when they called for a general strike on 21/12/1987. Subsequently, the factions belonging to the PLO formed the “Unified National Leadership of the Uprising—*Qawim* (UNLU),” and issued its first statement on 8/1/1988.

Hamas was not a known faction in the Palestinian arena. For many months, the media ignored its statements and activities. Furthermore, Hamas had not yet produced political or media figures that could speak in its name, helping the PLO and its factions to come to the limelight during the *Intifadah* instead. However, Hamas's ability to organize broad-based events on the ground, lead protests and stage wide-ranging strikes gave it a lot of credibility, sparking curiosity about the movement and its leaders.

Hamas-organized events spread rapidly into the WB. Many leaders soon emerged from the ranks of Hamas, such as Sheikh Hamed al-Bitawi, Muhammad al-Haj, Bassam Jarrar, Jamal Salim, Jamal Mansur, Hasan Yusuf and Jamal al-Natsheh. Younger leaders assumed the secret management of Hamas's activities, and Hasan al-Qiq handed over this leadership to Muhammad Sawalhah in June 1989, who oversaw the field activities of the *Intifadah* in the central region (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho). Taysir 'Umran assisted him in leading the northern WB, and Tahsin Shawar in commanding the southern WB. The movement came under campaigns of liquidation, arrest and persecution in WB. Sawalhah continued to be pursued at the end of 1990, but he continued his role until he was able to leave abroad on 27/6/1991.

Hamas's *Intifadah*-focused activities evolved from strikes, demonstrations and throwing stones, to progressive development of military activities, such as knife attacks, gun attacks, kidnapping of soldiers, execution of collaborators and then car bombs and what is called by Hamas "martyrdom operations." The military wing became an integral part of the structure of Hamas. Despite the crackdown against this wing in 1988, 1989 and 1990, due to its military activities, Hamas would rebuild it anew. Despite the ups and downs, the military wing remained present, active, and crucial. Hamas was able to overcome difficulties thanks to the willingness of its men to sacrifice themselves. Israeli analysts admit that "Hamas created new models for the Palestinian person and are the new martyrs."¹⁰⁸

As indicated earlier, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin returned to lead this military apparatus in GS in mid-June 1987. On 17/11/1987, it was decided to launch military action. Due to the administrative detention of 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantisi on 15/1/1988, the leadership of the southern Gaza region was attached to Salah Shehadeh who thus became the field commander of the military apparatus.¹⁰⁹

On 21/3/1988, Group 101 in Hamas's military arm, "the Palestinian Mujahidun" led by Sheikh Salah Shehadeh, attempted to kidnap an Israeli engineer and contractor in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of GS. However, the operation faced hurdles, and the group ultimately shot and wounded the man in question instead. This was followed by the detonation of explosive devices in Beit Hanoun in May 1988; on 'Eid al-Adha on 25/7/1988; and Hijra anniversary on 14/8/1988. The group killed an Israeli settler on 18/8/1988 near Beit Lahia in northern GS. The group also kidnapped and killed Israeli Sergeant Avi Sasportas on 3/2/1989, and kidnapped and killed Corporal Ilan Saadon on 3/5/1989. However, Hamas's military wing soon came under attack in May 1989, when the Israeli forces arrested more than a thousand of the movement's cadres and members. Hundreds of them were interrogated using brutal methods. This led to the discovery of the movement's organizational structure for the first time, and Sheikh Ahmad Yasin was arrested on 18/5/1989. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, plus 15 years.

Subsequently, the leader of the Palestine Apparatus abroad, Musa Abu Marzuq, returned to the Palestinian interior. At the behest of the head of the apparatus at the time, Khairy al-Agha, he reorganized the movement and placed military action under the supervision of the apparatus abroad. He also rearranged the coordination process between WB and GS, through secret communication between Hasan al-Qiq (then Sawalhah) in WB and Sayyid Abu Musameh, who took over work in the Strip after the organization was struck in May 1989.¹¹⁰

Hamas formed its current military wing, the Ezzedein al-Qassam Brigades, in 1990, which replaced the Palestinian Mujahidun.¹¹¹ According to Musa Abu Marzuq, Yasir al-Namruti was the first commander of al-Qassam Brigades.¹¹²

Military action in WB was delayed compared to GS, but it quickly took root and spread after the start of the *Intifadah*. Military action in WB initially took the form of individual or organized initiatives, influenced by internal mobilization and Hamas's calls for revenge against the enemy and confronting its aggressions.

It seems that the first initiatives were the formation of the Beit Amr Group in Hebron, led by Badr Abu 'Ayyash, whose first operations took place in March 1988;¹¹³ the initiative of Hamas member Ahmad Shukri, who killed an Israeli worker in Tel Aviv who had served in the Israeli army, on 7/9/1989;¹¹⁴ the

initiative of Samir al-Usta group in Nablus, which attacked a military patrol on 5/4/1990, causing serious injuries; and the operation of ‘Amer Abu Sarhan, who killed three Israelis and wounded a fourth on 21/10/1990, and was considered the pioneer of knife warfare,¹¹⁵... and others.

However, it appears that the first group to take an organizational form under the WB leadership was the ‘Adel ‘AwadAllah Group, whose foundation dates to the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1989.

There were al-Buraq groups formed under the supervision of the Hamas leadership in Hebron. The groups were led by Naji Sinokrot, who has trained abroad and then came to WB in the spring of 1990, based on the instructions of the movement’s leadership in Jordan. A large number of fighters were recruited, large quantities of weapons were purchased, and training took place in the mid-1990s. After one of the groups threw hand grenades at an Israeli military patrol near the Ibrahimi Mosque, the group was hunted and its leaders and several groups were arrested. However, other groups continued and were undetected, and later joined the founding cells of al-Qassam Brigades in 1992.¹¹⁶

After his release in March 1991, Sheikh Muhammad Abu Tair sought, in cooperation with ‘Adel ‘AwadAllah, to establish an organized military action, in coordination with the leadership abroad. However, Sheikh Abu Tair, ‘Adel ‘AwadAllah and their companions were arrested after an arms deal they sought was exposed.¹¹⁷

Al-Qassam Brigades’ ability to take a stable form in WB can be credited to the meeting between Saleh al-‘Arouri, the leader of the Islamic Bloc at Hebron University, in prison, with ‘Adel ‘AwadAllah, the leader of the Islamic Bloc at Bethlehem University, and Ibrahim Hamed, the leader of the Islamic Bloc at Birzeit University. There, they decided to launch military action in 1991, after their release from prison and to reconstitute the administrative office of the Islamic Bloc in Ramallah city and its villages, where al-‘Arouri would be their head. They used their positions to nominate members for military action, provided that al-‘Arouri would lead the apparatus with ‘AwadAllah as his deputy. Hamed would be responsible for communicating with the outside world to mobilize support for the apparatus.¹¹⁸ Al-‘Arouri recruited Musa Dudin and ‘Abbas Shabaneh from Hebron, received several al-Qassam fugitives from GS, and took charge of sheltering and arming them. He coordinated action in

northern WB with Zaher Jabarin and ‘Adnan Mar‘ie, and also coordinated with GS. The movement’s leadership abroad followed up the action of Saleh al-‘Arouri and his comrades, under the supervision of Musa Abu Marzuq, and sent Muhammad Salah with funds to support the military action in WB. In 1992, the name al-Qassam Brigades was established in WB, in agreement with Hamas abroad and in GS. The first military action in WB, under al-Qassam Brigades name was on 22/9/1992, by Muhammad Bisharat, killing an Israeli soldier. Then, the action continued, despite al-‘Arouri’s arrest in October 1992 and his administrative detention.¹¹⁹

Since then, military action progressed steadily in extremely difficult circumstances. There is no room in this study for a detailed follow-up of the military structures and operations of the resistance. However, we will list the most prominent milestones, trying to draw the general paths and describing the general characteristics related to the resistance work in each stage.

On the third anniversary of the launch of Hamas on 14/12/1990, Hamas killed three Israelis, triggering the largest comprehensive arrest operation against the movement. The movement’s organs were once again attacked. One of the most prominent results that accompanied this crackdown was the exposure of the movement’s relationship abroad, and its role in what was going on inside Palestine.

On 13/12/1992, Hamas kidnapped the soldier, Nissim Toledano, and demanded, in exchange for his release, the release of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. After Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin rejected these demands, the movement liquidated the soldier, which prompted Rabin to announce in the Knesset a total war on Hamas; 1,300 Hamas supporters were arrested, and the Israeli authorities carried out the largest operation of displacement and deportation after the 1967 war, deporting 415 Palestinians, the vast majority (about 380) civilian Islamic leaders affiliated to Hamas, and others affiliated to the PIJ. This decision was implemented on Thursday evening 17/12/1992, when the deportees were thrown outside the northern Palestinian border with Lebanon. However, the deportees’ steadfastness in Marj al-Zuhur on the border with Lebanon won them the international media battle against the occupation, expanded the circle of interest in Hamas, and increased its popularity, forcing the Israeli authorities to agree to the gradual return of the deportees, a year after the deportation.¹²⁰

According to a study by Ghassan Duuar, Hamas conducted a total of 138 operations in 1993, leaving, according to Israeli authorities, 79 dead and 220 wounded.¹²¹

As for the PIJ, it presented another distinctive model of *jihad*. Its members suffered from imprisonment, persecution and deportation, and many were killed in daring military operations. Four of the movement's members (two of whom had escaped from Gaza Central Prison in May 1987) carried out several resistance operations until they were killed in the Shujaiyyeh operation on 6/10/1987 in an armed clash with the Israeli forces. The PIJ believes that that day 6/10/1987 was the first day of the *Intifadah*. It continued, throughout the years of the *Intifadah*, to call for a monthly strike to commemorate the anniversary of the *Intifadah* on this day.¹²² Its call for a strike, on the sixth day of every month, was endorsed by large sectors of the Palestinian people in WB and GS.

The PIJ was greatly affected by the assassination of Abu Hassan Qassem, Hamdi Kayyali and Marwan Kayyali in Cyprus, carried out by the Israeli intelligence on 14/2/1988, as they commanded the hard military core of the movement. Among the PIJ operations during the *Intifadah* was the stabbing operation by Talal al-A'raj in al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza, on 19/3/1989, wounding three Israeli soldiers; the Gilad Camp operation on 14/2/1992, killing three Israelis; the Matityahu operation on 17/10/1992, killing an Israeli settler; and the Anwar 'Aziz operation on 2/8/1993, when a bus he was driving collided with several Israeli vehicles, killing one and wounding five.¹²³

Fourth: The Islamic Movement's Military Performance 1994–2000

This period is considered one of the toughest periods experienced by the Islamic resistance in Palestine. The Israeli oppression converged with the oppression of the PA (established in 1994), following the PLO's settlement with Israel, and its establishment of self-rule in the populated areas in WB and GS. The PA leadership (Fatah leadership) aspired to establish a Palestinian state within five years of the Oslo Accords. It considered the armed resistance against Israel a disruption of the peace process, and a thwarting of the Palestinian state

dream, especially since it is committed by the Oslo Accords to stop armed resistance, and prevent resistance action from its areas. Israel succeeded in linking any expansion of the self-rule powers to the extent of the PA's security control over its people. For this reason, the security aspect of the PA swelled until eight security forces were formed, and accounted for the largest share of the PA's budget. These forces carried out harsh security measures and campaigns, especially after the military operations that were carried out mostly by Hamas and PIJ. For example, from May 1994 to August 1995, the PA launched a total of 12 arrest campaigns affecting more than a thousand Palestinians.¹²⁴ During only one month, 19/4–19/5/1995, the PA raided 57 mosques 138 times and subjected them to searches, tampering and vandalism. It also established, on 7/2/1995, the “State Security Court,” which are military courts whose judges are security officers. They mainly targeted cadres of the Islamic movement, and their trials were held at night and in secret. Amnesty International condemned these courts and called for their immediate suspension.¹²⁵

One of the most regrettable and bloody events was what is known as the “Black Friday Massacre” committed by the PA security forces against worshipers who were intending to go out in a peaceful march, after Friday prayers, from the Palestine Mosque in Gaza on 18/11/1994, leaving 13 worshipers killed and 200 wounded. Hamas accused the PA of orchestrating the massacre, declaring “the intentions are hidden, and the massacre is planned.”¹²⁶ In late June 1995, the PA arrested several Hamas leaders, including Mahmud al-Zahhar and Ahmad Bahar, who were tortured and humiliated. However, the most severe crackdown took place in March – April 1996, following a series of self-immolation* operations that rocked Israel. The crackdown affected more than a thousand Hamas and PIJ activists, aiming at destroying and dismantling the organizational infrastructure of the Islamic movement. Schools, charities, Zakat (alms) committees and orphanages affiliated to Hamas and the PIJ were shuttered. The PA succeeded to a large extent in striking, marginalizing and weakening the resistance movement until the situation changed with the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000.¹²⁷

* The overwhelming majority of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims are considering these operations as “martyrdom operations” while most Israelis and western writers and media are considering them as “suicide operations”. We used the word “self-immolation” in this report to be as neutral as possible. However, such terms may need more discussions.

The Islamic movement found itself facing difficult and complex circumstances, with the previous comrades in arms now becoming tools of suppression against resistance. However, this Islamic movement, led by Hamas, developed rules to deal with this emerging situation, the most prominent of which was the insistence on pursuing resistance against the Israeli enemy, preserving national unity, avoiding collision with the PA, and opposing peace agreements, while insisting on the full rights of the Palestinian people in their land and holy sites, and emphasizing political freedoms, the right of expression and freedom of the press.

The Islamic resistance movements had to swim against the tide and walk in a minefield full of challenges, in an adversarial “official” Palestinian environment, and in a popular Palestinian environment that had not yet come to know the real nature of the PA and its bureaucratic and security role. There was a considerable segment that was still hoping that the peace process can fulfil their dreams of a Palestinian state in WB and GS.

All of this made resistance action almost impossible. However, the period 1994–1996 witnessed a qualitative development in resistance operations, particularly self-immolation operations. These include Hamas’s response to the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre on 25/2/1994, with five resistance operations, killing 39 Israelis and wounding 158. Hamas responded to the assassination of Yahya ‘Ayyash on 5/1/1996, with four resistance attacks in the period 25/2–3/3/1996, killing 45 Israelis and wounding 113. ‘Ayyash was the architect of operations that killed 70 Israelis and wounded 340 others according to Israeli admissions. The PIJ carried out a fifth operation in Tel Aviv, possibly in cooperation with Hamas, on 4/3/1996, killing 14 Israelis and wounding 125 others.¹²⁸ The operations shook Israel, and prompted an international conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on 13/3/1996, with the participation of major countries, for what they called “combating terror” or what they called the “Summit of Peacemakers.” The parties concerned with the peace process felt that their peaceful project was blown “in the wind,” as Palestinian leader Saeb Erekat put it.

From that time until 2000, the Israelis and the PA, in direct cooperation with the US and using all possible security techniques, carried out a fierce campaign aimed at eradicating everything related to the movement of Islamic resistance in Palestine. Hamas and the PIJ went through one of the harshest stages in their history and suffered many severe blows. The PA managed to dismantle most of

the resistance cells. Nevertheless, Hamas made an exceptional effort to continue the resistance, and military operations reappeared in 1997. Muhyieddeen al-Sharif, ‘Adel ‘AwadAllah, and ‘Imad ‘AwadAllah, who was assassinated in 1998, emerged as prominent figures in the military leadership. In those circumstances, Hamas was able to carry out only two self-immolation operations in 1997–1998, in addition to several operations that did not affect the general course of the peace process and negotiations.

As for the PIJ, it carried out several qualitative resistance and self-immolation operations such as those of Netzarim on 11/11/1994,¹²⁹ Beit Lid on 22/11/1995¹³⁰ and Tel Aviv on 4/3/1996 (referred to earlier). It also came under the same kinds of pressures and persecution that Hamas was subjected to. Its leader Fathi Shiqaqi was assassinated by the Israeli Mossad on 26/10/1995. He was succeeded by Ramadan ‘Abdullah Shallah, who continued to lead the movement until illness incapacitated him in the spring of 2018. The PIJ elected Ziyad al-Nakhalah as his successor on 28/9/2018. Ramadan Shallah died on 6/6/2020, in Beirut.

On the political level, relations between Hamas and PIJ strengthened. Shiqaqi stated in January 1995 that the relationship with Hamas was “excellent, friendly and fraternal, and we seek to increase cooperation on the ground.”¹³¹ Ramadan Shallah confirmed these values when he said: There is an understanding and convergence in the trench of confrontation with the enemy between us and the brothers in Hamas, and we are keen to develop and strengthen the relationship to rise to the level of the fierce war targeting the Islamic project in Palestine and the region.¹³²

Liberation of Southern Lebanon¹³³

During the 1990s, the resistance, led by Hizbullah, escalated against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA), which overlooked the border security zone with Israel. The annual rate of Israeli deaths there was about 22, while they were much higher in SLA. Israel and its agents tried to suppress the resistance and subdue the people of the south, using brutal means, however, they failed miserably. These means include Operation Accountability in 1993, where southern Lebanon was heavily bombed, to spread terror among the people and displace them; and Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996, when the Israeli air forces committed the Qana massacre, killing about 100 civilians, who sought refuge in the UN headquarters there.

In 1995–2000, the resistance, led by Hizbullah, developed its techniques and qualitative methods, especially by using remote-controlled improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and killing a number of senior Israeli leaders and agents in the border security zone. Among those were Brigadier General Erez Gerstein, who commanded Israel’s Lebanon Liaison Unit, and was killed in southern Lebanon on 28/2/1999; and also, the deputy SLA leader Aql Hashem, who was killed on 30/1/2000. The Israeli army Northern Command stated that Hizbullah executed 670 attacks in 1997 and 1,200 in 1998.

Due to the severe blows inflicted by the resistance, Ehud Barak’s government decided to withdraw from southern Lebanon, after its army’s survival turned into a heavy burden. The Israeli army abandoned its agents at the border, who were frustrated and angry and had to flee. The Israeli withdrawal was completed on 25/5/2000.

Fifth: The Military Performance of the Islamic Movement: Al-Aqsa Intifadah 2000–2005

“They wanted to drag us into compromise, so we dragged them into resistance!” With this sentence, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin summarized the core of the dispute between the PA and the Fatah movement, on one hand, and Hamas and the anti-peace process camp, on the other hand. It was also a way to express about the success of Hamas in *al-Aqsa Intifadah*.

Hamas and the anti-peace process forces believed that the Oslo Accords contained the seeds of its own failure, and that this would be revealed sooner or later, especially when the final agreements and issues like the future of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, the state and its sovereignty collided with reality. This is what happened after the collapse of the second Camp David negotiations in July 2000. *Al-Aqsa Intifadah* made the Palestinian people return to support the resistance, after they were tired of the Israeli negotiations and stalling tactics, the Judaization of Jerusalem and the settlements, in addition to their anger at the PA performance and the corruption of its institutions.

Al-Aqsa Intifadah broke out on 29/9/2000, when Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud Party, stormed the *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 28/9/2000. Muslims were determined to defend it; five were killed in the first confrontations, and more than a hundred were wounded. Then the *Intifadah* continued for about five years.

The *Intifadah* had many indications, the most important of which were:

1. The Muslim *Ummah* (Nation) is still alive, despite the many blows, the spirit of resistance and sacrifice had not died. Indeed, tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of demonstrators staged protests in almost every country in the Muslim world, from Rabat in the far west of the Muslim world to Jakarta in the far east, in support of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Jerusalem and Palestine. These protests supported the resistance and offered donations; a glimpse of the huge potential of Islamic unity in Palestine.
2. The Palestine issue unites Muslims and motivates them to overcome their differences and focus on their common challenge represented by the Israeli occupation. This issue has become the Muslim world's central issue, for no other issue or enemy would bring Muslims together this way.
3. The *Intifadah* dealt a strong blow to the peace process and normalization with Israel, while the resistance option emerged stronger.
4. This *Intifadah* was reflected in people's manner of thinking and daily lives, hostility increased against Israel and the US, and resistance and unity were reinforced. The masses responded to the calls for boycotting US and Israeli goods, and millions of people changed their daily eating, drinking, clothing, transport, communication and entertainment habits. Thus, a popular socio-educational school has emerged, with results the like of which reform movements need years to reach. Even more, US companies had to publish ads stating that they were not related to Israel and to make donations to the *Intifadah* victims. This was the case for McDonald's, where the license holders of McDonald's franchises in the KSA pledged to donate one Saudi riyal (about \$0.27) to *al-Aqsa Intifadah*'s wounded, for each meal sold.¹³⁴

The *Intifadah* was thus characterized by broad popular participation all around Palestine, all Palestinian movements included. Simultaneously, it was characterized by extreme Israeli oppression, including killing children and innocents, and using internationally prohibited weapons, thus, exposing the falsehood of Israel's "peace" claims, as it scrambled to crush the blessed *Intifadah*.

In 2005, the wave of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* subsided as a result of the circumstances that followed the death of Yasir 'Arafat, the election of Mahmud 'Abbas as PA

president, and the preoccupation of Palestinians in GS and the WB with the municipal elections and the legislative elections.

Between 28/9/2000 and 31/12/2005, 4,242 Palestinians were killed, including 793 children and 270 women. The number of targeted killings reached 376, while 46,068 were wounded.¹³⁵ The number of prisoners rose at the end of 2005 to about 9,200 prisoners.¹³⁶ At the end of 2005, about 4,000 Hamas members and supporters were languishing in Israeli prisons, most of whom were from WB. Most of the leaders of the first, second and third ranks of Hamas in WB were imprisoned.

During *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, Yasir ‘Arafat was put under siege in his Ramallah headquarters for two and a half years. He passed away in mysterious circumstances on 11/11/2004. Several Hamas leaders also were killed, such as Jamal Salim and Jamal Mansur on 31/7/2001, Salah Shehadeh on 22/7/2002, and Isma‘il Abu Shanab on 21/8/2003. Hamas was dealt one of its strongest blows when its spiritual leader and founder Sheikh Ahmad Yasin was killed on 22/3/2004, followed by ‘Abdul ‘Aziz al-Rantisi on 17/4/2004. Moreover, 604 members of al-Qassam Brigades were killed during *al-Aqsa Intifadah* (28/9/2000–end of 2005), excluding the numbers of non-combatants and supporters.¹³⁷ The Israelis also assassinated Abu ‘Ali Mustafa, the Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), on 27/8/2001.

All Palestinian factions took part in military operations. According to Israeli estimates, 22,406 resistance operations were executed between 29/9/2000 and 24/7/2005.¹³⁸ Hamas was distinguished by its prominent role and self-immolation operations, which caused an enormous impact, and destabilized security in Israel. Most of these operations were carried out in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948. Until 1/12/2005, 135 self-immolation operations took place, 61 of which were carried out by Hamas, in addition to many operations carried out by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the PIJ.¹³⁹

During the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, PIJ formed its military arm, al-Quds Brigades. It carried out several self-immolation operations such as the Pardes Hanna Junction operation on 29/11/2001, the Karkur junction operation on 21/10/2002, the Ra’fat Abu Diak operation on 20/3/2002, the Raghil Jaradat operation on 10/4/2002, and the Megiddo Junction operation on 5/6/2002. It also carried out ambushes and clashes with the Israelis, such as the Alley of Death ambush in Hebron on 15/11/2002 and others.¹⁴⁰

Among the noteworthy operations is the PFLP assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, on 17/10/2001. Ze'evi was a former army general, and an extremist and his killing was in retaliation for the assassination of the PFLP's Secretary General Abu 'Ali Mustafa.

A report by the Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*) indicates that 1,513 Israelis were killed and 3,380 others injured from the start of the *Intifadah* until July 2005.¹⁴¹

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2002 was economically the worst year in 50 years (1953–2003).¹⁴² The annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita income decreased by about \$3 thousand (from \$18,600 in 2000 to \$15,600 in 2002). According to some estimates, total Israeli economic losses during the first two years of the *Intifadah* amounted to about \$8 billion, or about \$11 million per day.

One of the most prominent results of this *Intifadah* was that the Islamic movement has strongly dominated armed resistance action and imposed itself on the Palestinian equation. Although it did not become part of the “official” Palestinian institutions, it could be no longer ignored or bypassed. The movement's resistance action made it, to a large extent, disrupt or impede the peace process, and the paths of the Fatah leadership that leads the PLO and the PA. This prompted Fatah to have talks with Hamas during the *Intifadah*, to reach a truce and put the Palestinian house in order. The talks ended up with the Cairo Declaration on 17/3/2005, in which the Palestinian factions agreed to reform the Palestinian political house, hold municipal and legislative elections for the PA, and rebuild the PLO.

The Israeli Withdrawal From GS 2005

Israel conducted a unilateral withdrawal from GS in the second half of 2005. Regardless of the political and strategic factors that prompted the unilateral Israeli withdrawal, the Palestinian resistance played a major role in this. Hamas emerged as the most effective resistance faction in GS. According to a statistical study prepared by al-Qassam Brigades, for the period from the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* until 15/8/2005, the Israelis admitted to 400 resistance operations in GS causing casualties among the Israelis. Al-Qassam Brigades carried out 217 resistance operations, killing 79 Israelis, out of 167 that Israel acknowledged, and injuring 646 Israelis, out of 1,084 that the Israelis have

admitted to. For its part, al-Quds Brigades (PIJ) killed 12 Israelis and injured 104 others, while the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (Fatah) killed 8 Israelis and injured 43 others. Joint operations conducted by two or more factions killed 51 Israelis and injured 130 others. Regardless of how acceptable these figures are to various parties, it is safe to say that Hamas was at the forefront of armed resistance during the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*.¹⁴³

Sixth: The Military Performance of the Islamic Movement 2006–2022

Israel continued its aggression from 2006 to 2022, as the Palestinian factions continued their resistance, albeit at different intensities and forms. Among the most prominent features of this period were:

- During this period, the Islamic resistance movement became entrenched and continued to lead the armed resistance, becoming impossible to overwhelm and marginalize. The Islamic movement secured “popular legitimacy” through a landslide victory in the 2006 PLC elections, after which it entered into a “quarrelsome partnership” with Fatah concerning the leadership of the Palestinian people. Indeed, with Fatah’s insistence on monopolizing the leadership of the PLO and PA, and with the emergence of the Palestinian schism, there have been two Palestinian “legitimacies”: One as a result of Fatah’s takeover of power in WB, and the other of Hamas’ takeover of power in GS in 2007.
- The PA in Ramallah continued its commitment to the peace process and continued its repressive behavior (in coordination with Israel) towards resistance forces in WB. This became the basic justification of its survival for the Israelis, the US and the Western powers. It also based its continued dominance of the PLO and the official Palestinian representation on the support of the Arab and international environments, which are compatible with its political path (the peace process and the two-state solution), and are mostly opposed to the dominance of Islamic resistance action over the official Palestinian scene, regardless of its popularity. Therefore, the Islamic resistance movement, despite its wide popularity and its strong chances of winning any transparent and fair elections, and despite the support of the Palestinian

majority to resistance action, it was marginalized by the official Palestinian, Arab and international parties, and put under suffocating blockade, especially in GS. The Islamic movement also suffered from drying up the support sources in the Arab countries, and from accusations of “terrorism” in the Western world. However, this movement is still able to impose itself in the Palestinian equation.

- Security coordination in WB reached advanced levels, as Israeli security forces announced the foiling of Palestinian resistance attacks and the detection of resistance cells, in coordination with Palestinian security forces. Several Israeli security and military sources, including Israel Army Chief of the General Staff Gadi Eisenkot, said that security coordination had prevented Hamas from returning to its operations in the WB.¹⁴⁴ For example, Shin Bet Head Nadav Argaman, told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on 6/11/2018, that during 2018 the Shabak thwarted 480 attacks, arrested 219 Hamas cells and prevented 590 potential lone-wolf attacks.¹⁴⁵ In general, the PA security forces thwart an average of 40% of resistance operations in WB.¹⁴⁶
- The Palestinian resistance and most of its cells in WB were hit and dismantled, due to the comprehensive and systematic cooperation between the PA and Israel. However, this did not prevent the continuation of resistance action, albeit to varying degrees, as we saw during the Jerusalem *Intifadah* 2015–2017, the Lion’s Gate Uprising and the Gate of Mercy uprising, leading to the escalation of individual operations and the formation of pockets of resistance in Jenin and Nablus in 2022.
- Hamas and the Palestinian resistance grew exponentially stronger in GS, under the auspices of the Hamas-led government, enabling the resistance to recruit tens of thousands of fighters. The resistance also developed its combat capabilities and the performance of the joint operations room, and waged four major wars in 2012, 2014 and 2021 against Israel, placing all Israeli areas in the range of resistance missiles.
- Relying heavily on rocket fire in the resistance operations, especially from GS, and the decline of self-immolation operations that had marked the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*.
- In 2006–2021, 7,258 Palestinians were killed and 105,888 wounded, and according to Israeli sources, 342 Israelis were killed and 3,324 wounded. The

annual average number of Palestinian casualties was about 454 killed and 6,618 wounded.¹⁴⁷ This underscores the continuation and ferocity of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and its resistance, and it also shows that the resistance of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation has continued. Yet there is a wide discrepancy between the huge Israeli military capabilities, which are usually deployed in killing innocent Palestinian people and civilians to subjugate and intimidate them; and the limited capabilities of the Palestinian resistance which is under occupation and siege. Also, the resistance's cessation of self-immolation operations during this period, and its reliance on missiles and ranged contact (as in the battles with the resistance in GS) have reduced Israeli losses of life compared to the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*.

- The years in which the resistance in GS had wars with Israel saw the highest number of Palestinians killed, reaching a climax of 2,240 Palestinians, in 2014. The largest number of injured people occurred in 2018, most of them wounded during the return marches organized by popular resistance forces in GS, reaching 31,603 wounded. Most of the killed and wounded Palestinians were civilians.¹⁴⁸
- In the summer of 2006, Israel launched a large-scale war against southern Lebanon, which was confronted by the resistance forces led by Hizbullah. Israel suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat after failing to achieve its goals, despite the war lasting for 33 days. Arab sources estimated the Israeli losses at 400 killed, most of them soldiers, while Israel admitted that 83 soldiers and 39 civilians were killed. Hizbullah said it destroyed 120 Merkava tanks, 30 armored vehicles, two gunships and five helicopters. Hizbullah also fired more than 3,200 rockets at Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine. The costs of war for Israel amounted to about \$5.227 billion.¹⁴⁹

Below we follow the milestones of the Israeli aggression and Islamic resistance action in Palestine

In 2006–2008, Israeli military campaigns focused on GS, with the aim of overthrowing the Hamas government, striking the resistance and suppressing its rockets. One of the most prominent campaigns was Operation Summer Rains, 26/6–31/10/2006. The operation came after Hamas, in cooperation with the Popular Resistance Committees and Army of Islam, carried out Operation Dispelled Illusion that led to the capture of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Operation Summer Rains resulted in the killing of 400 Palestinians and the wounding of 1,852 others. Israel also carried out Operation Autumn Clouds in November 2006, which killed 105 Palestinians and wounded 353 others. Operation Hot Winter, 27/2–3/3/2008, killed 107 Palestinians. Certainly, such campaigns were met with heroic, though disproportionate, resistance from the Palestinian resistance.¹⁵⁰

The Israeli War on GS: Al-Furqan Battle/ Operation Cast Lead 2008/2009

The all-out Israeli war on GS during the 27/12/2008–18/1/2009 period, was one of the most ferocious Israeli campaigns. It was dubbed Operation Cast Lead by Israel and al-Furqan Battle by the resistance. The brutal Israeli war machine faced steadfastness and ferocious resistance by Hamas and the rest of the resistance forces. In the end, the Israeli forces failed to occupy the Strip or overthrow the Hamas-led government and were forced to withdraw unconditionally from GS. This gave a great boost of morale to the resistance forces and mobilized broad Palestinian, Arab, Islamic and international support for them. In this war, 1,334 Palestinians, including 417 children and 108 women, were killed, and 5,450 were wounded. 5,350 homes were destroyed and more than 16 thousand were partially damaged. As for Israel, it only acknowledged the killing of 13 Israelis and about 185 wounded. But the resistance forces estimated that they had killed about 80 Israelis.¹⁵¹

Stones of Baked Clay Battle/ Operation Pillar of Defense 2012¹⁵²

The Israeli army attacked GS in the Stones of Baked Clay Battle (dubbed by the Israelis Pillar of Defense), on 14–21/11/2012. The war casualties included 191 killed and 1,526 wounded, most of whom were children, women and elderly. In this war, the Israeli army attacked about 1,500 targets in GS, including government buildings, tunnels, rocket launchers, homes, prominent activists and weapons storehouses.

According to Shabak, in this war, six Israelis were killed, including two soldiers, while 232 were wounded. About 1,731 rockets targeted the GS surrounding southern settlements, in addition to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. According to the business information company BDI estimates, on 17/11/2012, Operation Pillar of Defense costed the Israeli economy around 1.1 billion shekels (\$278.3 million) a week.

The Eaten Straw Battle/ Operation Protective Edge 2014¹⁵³

GS was subjected to broad Israeli aggression that lasted 51 days (7/7/2014–26/8/2014). The assault was dubbed Operation Protective Edge by Israel and Eaten Straw Battle by the Palestinians. It was clear that the Israeli army was pursuing a devastating retaliation against civilians in GS, evident in the mass killings of defenseless civilians in their homes.

The 51-day resistance showed that it (most notably Hamas) has developed its missile systems, increasing their range to approximately 120 km, reaching all the Israeli population centers in the 1948 occupied territories. Moreover, the resistance managed to infiltrate the Israeli side by land, sea and air and had new surprises such as UAVs. The command in GS maintained its control of Palestinian resistance forces and was not disrupted. The Israeli side had a case of “intelligence blindness” on the ground, which weakened the potential for Israel to hit its targets. Moreover, the resistance achieved a popular and broad consensus of support, despite the extremity of violence and damage inflicted by the Israeli forces on civilian areas.

According to statistics by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2,147 were killed, including 530 children and 302 women. Additionally, 10,870 were injured, including 3,303 children and 2,101 women. The Israeli army attacked 5,263 targets in the Strip during the offensive. The aggression also led to the destruction of 17,123 homes, of which 2,465 were completely destroyed and 14,667 were partially destroyed, in addition to 39,500 damaged homes.

The Deputy Minister of Economy Taysir ‘Amr said on 28/8/2014 that the total losses suffered by GS during the Israeli offensive were \$7.5–\$8 billion, including direct and indirect losses.

According to Shabak, Operation Protective Edge/ Eaten Straw Battle led to the deaths of 73 Israelis, including 67 soldiers, while 312 were wounded. In addition, 4,692 rockets fell from GS on the 1948 occupied territories, targeting the southern settlements surrounding GS, as well as Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and al-Khudaira (*Hadera*). Israeli sources estimated the direct and indirect economic damage by the war at 12 billion shekels (about \$3.07 billion).

The Jerusalem *Intifadah* 2015–2017¹⁵⁴

The Jerusalem *Intifadah* was one of the most important developments that shook Israel since its outbreak in October 2015. The Palestinians rose, especially in Jerusalem, to make the Israeli occupier understand that *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the holy sites are a red line that cannot be crossed.

The Jerusalem *Intifadah* was characterized by resistance operations based on individual initiative, especially stabbing and ramming, in which the Palestinians excelled in resourcefulness, amid the prominent role of Palestinian youth. According to Shabak, 57 Israelis were killed and 416 were wounded.

Israel committed grave violations that included all aspects of the Palestinian citizens' life. Israeli forces executed young people and children at checkpoints, as well as made arrests, intimidated citizens, confiscated land, demolished houses and displaced hundreds of citizens. A statistical study prepared by the PLO's Abdullah al-Hourani Centre for Studies and Documentation issued on the second anniversary of the *Intifadah*, which began in October 2015, reported that the total number killed during the Jerusalem *Intifadah* reached 347, including 79 children and 17 women.

Lion's Gate Uprising 2017¹⁵⁵

Following a resistance operation, on 14/7/2017, at the Lion's Gate in *al-Aqsa* Mosque, that resulted in the killing of two Israeli soldiers stationed there, as well as the deaths of the perpetrators, Israeli authorities installed metal-detecting electronic gates at the entrances to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, along with surveillance cameras. They also seized the keys to the rooms and offices that were used by the Administration of Jerusalem's Awqaf, and tightened restrictions on the roads leading to *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

The Palestinian people and their leaders and scholars in Jerusalem realized the seriousness of the Israeli measures aimed at imposing direct security administration of *al-Aqsa*, while gravely reducing the role of the Administration of Jerusalem's Awqaf. Subsequently, they refused to use those gates for entry into the compound and stopped praying at the mosque demanding the restoration of the status quo before 14 July. They continued their popular uprising, which received widespread Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic popular solidarity. Ten days later, the Israeli authorities were forced to dismantle the electronic gates. On

27/7/2017, they had to remove the metal railings and scaffolding and then allow the opening of the Ablution Gate. This restored all the gates of *al-Aqsa* Mosque to their pre-14/7/2017 status.

A report released by the PLO's Abdullah al-Hourani Centre for Studies and Documentation revealed that 20 Palestinians were killed in July 2017, and of those 15 were killed as a result of events at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, in addition, more than 1,400 Palestinians were injured. The Shabak recorded 222 attacks in July 2017 in WB, including East Jerusalem, GS and the 1948 Occupied Territories. The attacks resulted in the deaths of five Israelis and the injury of seven others.

Gate of Mercy Uprising 2019¹⁵⁶

In 2003, the Israeli authorities closed the Gate of Mercy. The uprising began after worshipers in *al-Aqsa* Mosque discovered that the Israeli police had placed a lock on the gate on the evening of 17/2/2019, following the meeting of the new Administration of Jerusalem's Awqaf in the building, and the performance of the noon prayer there. The next day, the masses of Jerusalemites performed the noon prayer in the Gate of Mercy area. Young Palestinians broke the gate and clashed with Israeli forces, and the area turned into a point for rallying, sit-ins and prayers, which turned it into a flash point. The situation culminated with the reopening of Gate of Mercy to the people of Jerusalem on 22/2/2019, for the first time since it was closed in 2003.

The Cry of Dawn Battle¹⁵⁷

This battle was fought by the PIJ's al-Quds Brigades and other Palestinian factions, on 12–15/11/2019, in response to the assassination of the Chief of Staff of the Resistance in al-Quds Brigades, Bahaa Abu al-'Atta. The operation lasted three days, bombing Israeli gatherings in the 1948 occupied territories. 16 members of al-Quds Brigades were killed, and due to the Israeli attacks and air raids on GS, 34 Palestinians were killed and more than 100 wounded.

Marches of Return and Breaking the Siege 2018–2019¹⁵⁸

In January 2018, via social media platforms, Palestinian groups proposed holding popular marches simultaneously in GS and WB along with the Palestinian Diaspora. Their objective was to have an actual and peaceful return of Palestinian refugees, under the Palestinian flag, to their homeland and to the houses they were expelled from in the 1948 war. Palestinian Land Day was the date chosen to launch these marches.

The International Coordination Committee for the Great March of Return (GMR) was formed, and it stressed that the idea was a non-factional one, wanted by the masses to mobilize refugees and gradually progress towards borders. However, when the Palestinian factions in GS joined the marches, on 17/3/2018, it added a resistance dimension. Then, the “Supreme National Authority of the March of Return and Breaking the Siege” was formed as the new framework of the marches, thus adding a local objective to the marches, which is breaking the siege. The GMR started on Friday 30/3/2018, and received a wide response, thus becoming one of the most important developments that raised the Israeli army concerns, who despite pursuing measures and policies could not prevent them from taking place. In GS, the marches embodied the objectives most, as there is a pro-resistance environment, people are suffering from the siege, and the population are mostly refugees.

By the end of 2019, 86 return marches were staged. The Palestinian people have marched, confronted the Israeli army, stormed their positions and launched incendiary kites and balloons into Israeli settlements. Friday Marches continued, culminating on 14/5/2018, when the US celebrated the transfer of their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, where 58 were killed and 2,771 injured in GS. On 20/12/2019, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights reported that the Israeli army had killed 364 Palestinians in GS since the launch of the GMR. The Center stated that 19,173 Palestinians, including 4,987 children and 864 women, were injured during their participation in the marches, while thousands suffered suffocation.

The return marches were characterized by wide popular participation, especially in GS, and the interaction of all social groups. The marches showed the Palestinian people’s honest and strong commitment to the right of return, manifesting national unity. They were also characterized by creativity, where marchers were innovative, using kites, balloons and night confusion. The GMRs forced the easing of the GS siege.

The Sword of Jerusalem Battle 2021¹⁵⁹

The people of Jerusalem rose up to face Israel’s attempts to seize the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, and its relentless endeavors to Judaize *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem, with confrontations kicking off in early May 2021 (during the last ten days of Ramadan). The Hamas leadership in GS decided to mobilize for Jerusalem and its people, and fire its missiles after the Israeli refusal to back down.

The battle then expanded, with the resistance calling it the Sword of Jerusalem Battle (dubbed by Israel Operation Guardian of the Walls). It continued over 11 days in the period 10–21/5/2021.

For the first time, despite the siege and scarcity of capabilities, Hamas and the resistance forces in GS imposed a new equation, linking them to Jerusalem, thus acting on behalf of the Palestinian people and the *Ummah* (Arab and Muslim nations) in defending *al-Aqsa* and the holy sites. Despite the fierce and devastating Israeli aggression against GS, the resistance confronted it and developed its deterrence, where the range of its missiles reached 250 km, hence all areas controlled by Israel, and they gained more accuracy and explosive power. Up to 4,400 were fired, breaching Israel's Iron Dome system and hitting Israeli cities and gatherings, forcing millions of Israelis to go to bomb shelters, and stopping train traffic between the center and south of Israel. Flights were suspended at Ben Gurion Airport.

This battle saw the escalation of the popular uprising in Jerusalem and the rest of WB and the 1948 occupied territories. There was huge popular interaction abroad, and Palestinian, Arab, Islamic and international solidarity. Huge demonstrations took place all over the world, including Europe and US, condemning the aggression. The Palestinian people rallied behind the resistance, at a time when the PA and PLO leaderships were isolated politically and popularly, as the peace process proved to be a failure. Senior Israeli politicians, and military, security and media figures admitted that Hamas and the resistance forces won this confrontation and that Israel came out losing.

During the Sword of Jerusalem Battle, which targeted civilians, residential buildings and public facilities, 260 Palestinians were killed in GS, including 66 children, 40 women, and 17 elderly people, and injured 1,948. In WB, 29 were killed, and about 6,300 were wounded. Two Palestinians of the 1948 territories were killed and many were wounded. Israel destroyed about 1,800 housing units in GS, while thousands were partially damaged. On the Israeli side, 13 were killed and about 330 others were injured, and many buildings were damaged. 3,424 Israelis submitted compensation requests for damage to their property, homes, and means of transportation. Israel's economic losses amounted to about \$2.14 billion.

The Unity of Arenas Battle ¹⁶⁰

On 5–7/8/2022, the PIJ fought this battle to face Israeli aggression on GS. The movement launched about 950 missiles towards the 1948 occupied territories. Twelve PIJ fighters were killed, the most prominent of whom was Taysir al-Jaabari, al-Quds Brigades commander in northern GS, and Khaled Mansour, al-Quds Brigades commander in southern GS. As a result of the aggression, 49 Palestinians were killed, and 360 were wounded.

Conclusion

The most important conclusions concerning the path of the Islamic resistance movement are the following:

- Experience has proven that Islam is the force most capable of mobilizing the masses, promoting the spirit of steadfastness and sacrifice, and escalating resistance and revolution. That's why the Islamic movement could quickly take the lead in armed resistance and popular mobilization after it regained the initiative. Actually, nationalist and pan-Arabist movements have always used an Islamic mobilizing language when it comes to resistance and confronting the occupation.
- *Jihad* and fighting the occupying enemy are divinely blessed. There is no fear for sustenance or life, for these are in the hands of the Creator, not in the creation. There is no fear for the organization, its popularity and its funding, for despite the harsh blows to the resistance, it came out stronger and more popular. It was clear that the rise of the resistance and its influence were linked to the continuation and escalation of action, and not to any pivot from the military to political action. However, the resistance forces believe that they have the right to choose the timing of escalation and calm, and the means and tools of resistance, as long as their message remains fixed and their compass does not change direction.
- The colonial divisions of our countries, especially Sykes-Picot Agreements, should not be reflected in our thinking, feelings and belief in the unity of *Ummah*. Patriotic action within the national framework must not retreat into a narrow nationalist or ethnocentric one. The sanctity and holiness of Palestine

are not linked to the borders set by the British colonialists. The people of Palestine are part of the *al-Sham* people, who are part of the *Ummah* and are its vanguard and frontiersmen (*Ashab al-Thughur*). The liberation project is a unitary revival project in which the whole *Ummah* participates, especially in the strategic surrounding of Palestine.

- The centrality of Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* emerged throughout the Palestinian revolutions and uprisings. Their ability as central issues to mobilize the Palestinian people and the *Ummah* became clear. They have become a focal point of pan-Islamic unity and a unified direction of the *Ummah* compass facing the enemy. The enormous value of mosques also emerged as centers of religious and educational preparation, deepening steadfastness, and being platforms for demonstrations and confronting the occupation. The 1987–1993 *Intifadah* was even known as the Mosques *Intifadah*. Moreover, the most prominent contemporary *Intifadah* 2000–2005 was known as *al-Aqsa Intifadah*. Also, we recall the confrontations defending the tunnel under *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 25–27/9/1996, the Jerusalem *Intifadah* 2015–2017, the two uprisings of Lion’s Gate 2017 and Mercy Gate 2019, the Sword of Jerusalem Battle 2021, and others.
- Experience has proven the ability of the resistance, especially the Islamic one, to mobilize the Arab and Muslim world, disrupt the peace process, impede normalization and expose the ugly face of the regimes normalizing with the enemy. Furthermore, the defense of Jerusalem, the holy sites and Palestine provided a standard benchmark for people to measure the patriotism of their regimes and leaders. Whoever stood for Palestine will rise in their eyes, and whoever abandons it will lose status and people will abandon them.
- The Islamic movement (particularly the MB movement) was a pioneer in launching military resistance action after the catastrophe of the 1948 war, especially in GS and across the Egyptian borders. However, this action was disrupted due to the fierce war waged by Gamal ‘Abdul Nasser’s regime (and several Arab regimes) against the MB, and the Islamic movement in general. The MB movement resorted to self-preservation and self-reliance, waiting for better conditions. In this atmosphere, internally, some were more inclined to self-preservation and educational action than to taking the initiative or risk, or to being bold. But others remained yearning for the practical application

of Islam in terms of preaching, *jihad*, political and social leadership, and to being more interactive with actual events. The Islamic movement continued for nearly two decades to be between these two states; adaptive realism and the aspiration for change. The experience of the Shuyukh Camps 1968–1970 was a positive opportunity for some segments of the MB movement, while others still preferred to wait and prepare.

- The MB movement was the incubator from which the Fatah movement arose, which then turned secular. The Fatah experience highlights the importance of doctrinal and educational formation of the founding leadership generation, and the importance of having a clear vision and message, to have a clear path and compass direction. This way, the passionate Muslim youth would not lose the vision and the compass direction after losing the core. It is after such loss, the “patriotic” mould was filled with “secular” content, and the appearance superseded the actual performance. In addition, retaining influence and political domination took precedence over the fundamentals and the effective institutional building of official Palestinian representative institutions. Thus, the Oslo Accords of 1993 happened, giving away most of historic Palestine and pledging to stop resistance action, while the mentality of hegemony and monopoly became entrenched in the leadership of the PLO and PA, even if that meant the institutions would deteriorate and collapse, and the popular legitimacy is lost.
- Experience has shown the importance of taking initiative, accompanied by some boldness or calculated risk, or to put it more precisely, putting trust in *Allah* in order to achieve qualitative leaps in resistance action for the liberation of Palestine. Such a spirit emerged in the Shuyukh Camps; the initiative of Khairy al-Agha and Suleiman Hamad in uniting the Palestinian MB movement with the Jordanian one and establishing the *Bilad al-Sham* organization; Sheikh Ahmad Yasin’s initiative to launch military action in GS; the initiative to establish the Palestine Apparatus and provide cover for military action; and the decision to launch Hamas and the *Intifadah*... and so on.
- Experience has shown the importance of strong religious and doctrinal foundation of youth action, before giving it full powers and opportunities to take on its role. This much was evident in the experiences of Khairy al-Agha and Suleiman Hamad abroad, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in GS, and Hasan al-Qiq

in WB. This provided the MB movement and Hamas at the time with a strong ability to continue the action throughout generations, and strengthen and expand it while being creative.

- The rise of Hamas and the forces of Islamic resistance who imposed themselves in the Palestinian equation, was not linked to their entry into the Palestinian official institution (the PLO). Rather, it was linked to their resistance action on the ground and their ability to mobilize the masses and *Ummah* around their program, especially in the 1987–2005 period. Surely, obtaining “official legitimacy” and being able to lead the Palestinian representative institutions is important, as they express the will of the Palestinian people and they can mobilize the forces in the battle for liberation. However, the official Palestinian environment (if not dealt with appropriately) can turn into a burden and a source of restrictions; tightening the screws on resistance action, under the pretext of appeasing the Arab and international political environments, while living in fear of delegitimization, thus adjusting the rhythm of resistance action according to paths that do not anger others. It can thus transform resistance into a political tool rather than the opposite scenario, where the resistance has a political force that can impose itself on the Arab and international reality.
- As for the Palestinian “official legitimacy,” it was used, especially after the Oslo Accords, as a tool to legitimize the occupation and give up Palestinian fundamentals. It was used to crack down on the resistance, marginalize it and strip it of its legitimacy. It was also used to subjugate and domesticate the resistance in accordance with what is called “international legitimacy” and the conditions of the International Quartet. This legitimacy was also used to give an incorrect impression of the true orientations of the Palestinian people, imposing the peace process against their will and the will of the *Ummah*. The Palestinian people have paid heavy prices as a result of the deterioration of the Palestinian official institutions, their abandonment of effective struggle, failure to express real “popular legitimacy,” resistance to reform and rejuvenation, and refusal to assimilate the resistance forces (especially the Islamic ones) according to their real weights. This eventually led to what is known as the Palestinian “schism.” Therefore, we must strive to reach a Palestinian “official legitimacy,” which expresses the will of the Palestinian people and *Ummah*, and become again the vanguard of the liberation project.

- Hamas has partially benefited from the Palestinian “legitimacy” following its victory in the 2006 elections, which made many countries recognize its political legitimacy, gave official cover for its control over GS, and “legitimized” the line of resistance. But Hamas remained committed to the fundamentals and its Islamic line of resistance, despite the severity and cruelty of the pressures.
- The nature of resistance action and liberation projects requires a faith-based, missionary zeal, and a revolutionary spirit. It also needs high dynamism, freedom from bureaucratic burdens, and a focus on the “itinerants” who carry the resistance and do not burden it with costs and formalities. The Islamic Resistance must beware of the “trap” of complacency, compromising adaptation, and seeking calm and stability. It must beware of the “trap” of the strings that come with money “especially official” funding at certain stages, that force it to adapt itself accordingly so that it does not find itself captive in any way to any funding sources. It must exert all precious efforts in preserving the independence of its decision and not compromising its identity, mission, military action, popular support and links with the wider Arab-Muslim *Ummah*.
- One of the reasons for Hamas’s success and preservation of its strength and cohesion, over the past period, was the existence of a solid activist nucleus, an institutional *Shurah* structure, regular periodic elections, the ability to carry out internal self-criticism, the lack of sanctification of persons and the ability to rotate power and leadership. Its strength was reinforced by its direct contact with the masses and response to people’s concerns, the high dynamism enjoyed by the leadership of the movement, and its ability to adapt and deal with difficult environments. Hamas seeks to preserve the advantages in light of the great expansion of the movement; its extensions in WB, GS and abroad; being forced to work under fire and siege, in conditions of persecution and deportation; and in light of the difficulties of harmonizing armed action with political relations, while raising means of support and financing.
- The Islamic resistance movement benefited from the genuine incubator, and the strong and effective support provided by the Islamic movement, especially the MB movement in Jordan. They spared no effort to provide good conditions to successfully launch, strengthen and expand Hamas. This applies to the MB

movement in the Arab and Muslim countries (led and sponsored by the MB movement in Egypt), along with the Islamic forces, which provided conditions for broad popular religious, mobilization, political, media and financial support for Palestine, while spreading awareness and confronting normalization with Israel. This underscores the importance of the Islamic dimension in the struggle against Israel, without forgetting the sincere national, nationalist and international forces that support the resistance.

- Although the achievements of the Islamic resistance are widely appreciated, the Islamic project for the liberation of Palestine still has great strides and great challenges to achieve its goals. Indeed, the core of its work focuses on “bogging down” the enemy, weakening it, preventing its expansion and strengthening popular (and to some extent official) steadfastness in confronting it. It has also established a solid resistance base in GS. However, the transition from preventing expansion to inflicting defeat, and from “attrition” to “liberation” requires qualitative leaps, including raising awareness and spreading the belief in the Islamic way of liberation; having a strategic environment that supports resistance; mobilizing the *Ummah* and preparing it to participate in the project, where each people take into consideration their circumstances and capabilities. Other leaps include having a unitary civilizational revival that would lead to strategic superiority over the enemy; developing the official and popular Palestinian institutions to play effective roles in the liberation project; supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their land and in their confrontation with Israel; bequeathing the Palestine issue to future generations; expanding the global advocacy for the liberation project; and thwarting normalization attempts and the peace process that compromise any part of Palestine.

Endnotes

¹ On the armed resistance of MB movement, especially in Gaza Strip (GS), see chapter four of the book: Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2021), pp. 153–221.

² An interview with Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006.

³ Kamel al-Sharif, *Al-Muqawamah al-Sirriyyah fi Qanat al-Suwis* (The Secret Resistance in the Suez Canal), 2nd edition (Zarqa, Jordan: Al-Manar Library, 1984), pp. 57 and 71.

⁴ Fawzi Jabr, interview by the author, Kuwait, 20/11/1999.

Fawzi Jabr is an MB movement veteran. He was an assistant to Khalil al-Wazir in the MB military action, One of the most prominent and active members, whose activities were focused on the financial and charity aspects, and on the support of the Palestinian resistance.

⁵ Kamel al-Sharif, *Al-Muqawamah al-Sirriyyah fi Qanat al-Suwis*, pp. 48–50, 54 and 57; Maha Kamel al-Sharif (ed.), *Selected Pages from the Papers of Kamel al-Sharif*, pp. 49 and 102 (Ms. Maha Kamel al-Sharif kindly gifted a copy of these Arabic papers to the author, Amman, 2006); and an interview with Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006.

⁶ Muhammad Abu Sido was born in Gaza city, on 15/1/1931. He participated with the MB brigades in the 1948 war and was a prominent leader of the MB military action in GS in the early 1950s.

⁷ Interviews by the author with: Muhammad al-Khudari, Jeddah, KSA, 13–14/9/1998, Muhammad Siyam, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 4–5/6/2000, Khairy al-Agha, Jeddah, KSA, 16/9/1998, Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006, and Fawzi Jabr.

Muhammad al-Khudari was an assistant to Khalil al-Wazir in the MB's military, and became an official representative of Hamas for about twenty years. Al-Khudari was the chairperson of General (Central) *Shurah* Council of Hamas for two sessions 2004–2013, and he was a member of the General Secretariat of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad.

Muhammad Siyam was part of the MB special military action and a symbol of the Hamas movement.

Khairy al-Agha was one of the leaders of the MB's military action in GS 1952–1956, one of the founders of the Palestinian MB movement and a member of the General (Central) *Shurah* Council since its inception. From 1973–1975, he was the deputy controller general, and controller general of the Palestinian MB movement in 1975–1978. Al-Agha was the head of the Palestine Apparatus, one of the most prominent founders of Hamas, and its first head until his resignation in 1993.

⁸ Interviews with Muhammad al-Khudari and Khairy al-Agha.

⁹ An interview with Fawzi Jabr.

He believes that the central camps (Nuseirat, Al-Bureij, and Al-Maghazy) represented a fourth district, led by Shawqi al-Kharraz.

¹⁰ Interviews by the author with: Munir ‘Ajjur, Kuwait, 24/11/1999, Suleiman Hamad, several interviews with the author, mainly in Kuwait, 22–27/11/1999, ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 29/6/1998, Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006, Fawzi Jabr and Muhammad al-Khudari.

Munir ‘Ajjur was a veteran of the MB movement in GS. He participated in leading the “Popular Resistance Front” to resist the Israeli occupation of GS, and was one of the pioneers of the Fatah movement in Kuwait.

Suleiman Hamad was a member of the MB movement since 1950. He was one of the founding generation of Fatah. Hamad was a member of the *Shurah* Council of the Palestinian MB movement, a member of its Executive Committee in 1973, the deputy controller general from 1975 to 1978. He was a founding member of the Palestine Apparatus (which preceded the establishment of Hamas), one of the founders and early leaders of Hamas, and the head of the MB’s “strategic planning” committee from 1988 until 1990.

‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah was one of the MB movement main leaders in GS from 1955–1962, and in the second half of 1960s, he became the deputy head of the Palestinian MB movement, then in 1970, when ‘Abdul Badi’ Saber relieved himself of the leadership role, he became the head of the movement. An Islamic thinker, historian and writer, who published many studies and books.

¹¹ An interview with Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006.

¹² ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali, interview by the author, Kuwait, 27/9/1985.

‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali was a member in the Egyptian MB movement, participated in the 1948 Palestine war and was a senior military MB trainer.

¹³ Maha Kamel al-Sharif, Selected Pages from the Papers of Kamel al-Sharif, pp. 88–89. (in Arabic)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁵ An interview conducted by Salwa al-‘Amad with Khalil al-Wazir, *Assafir* newspaper, Beirut, 25/4/1988.

¹⁶ A number of British Foreign Office files, kept in the British National Archives, talk about this incident, the most important of which is the 200-page F.O. 371/111077. Also F.O. 371/111098, F.O. 371/111099, F.O. 371/111100 and F.O. 371/111101.

See Letter, British Embassy, Tel Aviv to A.D. Ross, Eastern Department F.O., London, confidential, 14/4/1953, F.O. 371/104779.

The British Foreign Office File F.O. 371/115896 covered the Bus Operation (Ma‘ale Akrabim) in 200 pages of documents, containing various correspondence and reports on them.

¹⁷ An interview conducted by Salwa al-‘Amad with Khalil al-Wazir, *Assafir*, 25/4/1988; and see Khalil al-Wazir, “The “Fatah” Movement: The Beginnings,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, issue 104, Fall 2015, pp. 61–62. (in Arabic)

¹⁸ ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma‘ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah* (Along With the Islamic Movement in the Arab Countries) (Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1985), pp. 48–50.

¹⁹ See Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 191–194.

²⁰ According to Ilan Pappé, Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank (WB) added 670 thousand Palestinians to the 300 thousand East Bankers, who include some of Palestinian origin; and until 1967, 75% of Jordan’s population was Palestinian. According to As‘ad ‘Abdul Rahman, the population of the West Bank was 425 thousand, and were joined by 360 thousand Palestinians from the 1948 occupied territories, who sought refuge in WB. Another 110 thousand sought refuge in East Jordan.

See As‘ad ‘Abdul Rahman, *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah* (Palestine Liberation Organization) (Nicosia: The Research Center (PLO), 1985), p. 25; and see Ilan Pappé, “Jordan Between Hashemite and Palestinian Identity,” in Joseph Nevo and Ilan Pappé (eds.), *Jordan in the Middle East 1948–1988: The Making of a Pivotal State* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 63.

²¹ See Faruq Badran and Saud Abu Mahfuz, “Milestones in the History of the Islamic Movement in Jordan (The Muslim Brothers) 1946–1996,” Introduction to the Group History Conference, Amman, Jordan, 1996 (in Arabic); and see also ‘Abd al-Fattah el-‘Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question*, p. 162; and Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank under the Jordanian Regime: 1949–1967* (London: Cornell University Press, n.d.), pp. 144–145.

²² Benny Morris, *Israelis Border Wars: 1949–1956* (New York, US: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 7.

²³ See *Filastin* newspaper, 23/8/1950; *Al-Difa’* newspaper, 18/10/1953 and 15/3/1956; and see Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties*, p. 169.

²⁴ Despite the decision to hold the conference annually, the Jordanian authorities prevented its leadership, including Sa‘id Ramadan, from entering Jordan in early 1954. The conference was prevented in 1955, and the movement was forced to hold its second conference in Damascus 1956. Then in 1956, after Glubb Pasha was expelled, the ban on the movement was lifted, however, the third conference wasn’t allowed to be held until 1959, and it was in Jerusalem, but it was emptied of much of its original content.

See Faruq Badran and Saud Abu Mahfuz, “Milestones in the History of the Islamic Movement in Jordan (The Muslim Brothers) 1946–1996,” pp. 21–23 (in Arabic); and *Filastin* newspaper, 26/8/1954; and see Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties*, pp. 176–177.

²⁵ *Al-Difa’* newspaper, 7/4/1954.

²⁶ Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties*, pp. 169 and 176–177; and see *Al-Difa’* newspaper, 8/7/1958; and Faruq Badran and Saud Abu Mahfuz, “Milestones in the History of the Islamic Movement in Jordan (The Muslim Brothers) 1946–1996,” p. 22. (in Arabic)

²⁷ Interviews with Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006 and ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali; and An introductory booklet of *Al-Mu‘tamar al-Islami al-‘Am* (the General Islamic Conference) (Jerusalem: Permanent Office of the General Islamic Conference, n.d.), p. 13.

The author, while preparing for his master’s degree, had previously met ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali, where he confirmed the above. Perhaps Al-Sharif meant Hafez ‘Abdul Ghani ‘Abdul Nabi al-Natsheh, and Hashim Sadiq ‘Abdul Nabi al-Natsheh, when he referred to the sons of ‘Abdul Nabi al-Natsheh, both of whom were MB.

²⁸ Their expulsion coincided with the harshest blow to the MB movement in Egypt, see an interview with ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali.

²⁹ Interviews with Kamel al-Sharif, 3/8/2006, and ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali.

³⁰ See a booklet in Arabic issued by the Executive Office of the Conference of MB Leaders in the Arab Countries, 1957 (photocopy preserved with the author); and *Al-Difa’* newspaper, 15/8/1956.

³¹ Faruq Badran and Saud Abu Mahfuz, “Milestones in the History of the Islamic Movement in Jordan (The Muslim Brothers) 1946–1996,” p. 25 (in Arabic); and see Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties*, p. 169.

³² Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties*, p. 168.

³³ Muhammad ‘Abdul Hadi, interview by the author, Saida, Lebanon, 2/9/1998.

Muhammad ‘Abdul Hadi was a member of the Ibad al-Rahman Group since the 1950s. He joined the Fatah movement and was one of its officials in the Saida region, then left it later. In 1965, he joined *Al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah* (lit. The Islamic Group).

³⁴ Yezid Sayigh, *Al-Kifah al-Musallah wa al-Baith ‘An al-Dawlah: Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah, 1949–1993* (The Armed Struggle and the Search for the State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993), translated by Bassem Sarhan (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2002), p. 151.

³⁵ Ghassan Duar, *Qawa'id al-Shuyukh: Muqawamat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin Dud al-Mashru' al-Suhyuni 1968–1970* (The Shuyukh Camps: The Resistance of the Muslim Brothers Against the Zionist Project 1968–1970) (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2018), pp. 39–40; and *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah* (Encyclopaedia Palestina), vol. 3, pp. 2–3.

³⁶ On the details of the MB movement's relationship with the emergence of the Fatah movement, see chapter five of: Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 213–285.

³⁷ Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (US: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 24.

³⁸ Interviews with Muhammad al-Khudari, Khairy al-Agha and Suleiman Hamad.

³⁹ Interviews with Muhammad al-Khudari and Fawzi Jabr.

⁴⁰ See for example Interviews with Suleiman Hamad, Muhammad al-Khudari, Muhammad Siyam and 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, etc.

⁴¹ 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, *Ma' al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah*, pp. 71–72.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 73–86.

⁴³ See a letter, Suleiman Hamad, Kuwait, to Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, Malaysia, 10/2/1998.

⁴⁴ 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, *Ma' al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah*, pp. 76–77; and an interview with 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah.

⁴⁵ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 229–231.

⁴⁶ Hashim 'Azzam, interview by the author, Amman, Jordan, 14/8/1998.

Hashim 'Azzam joined the MB movement in the mid-fifties and was one of the first to join the Fatah ranks in WB. He was a founding member and treasurer of the Council of Islamic Organizations in Jordan. 'Azzam was a member and a secretary of Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa Society 1970–2008.

⁴⁷ On the establishment of Fatah in Jordan, see for example Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 234–238.

⁴⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 238–242.

⁴⁹ Yezid Sayigh, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah*, p. 151.

⁵⁰ Salim al-Za'nun, *Al-Sirah wa al-Masirah: Mudhakkarat Salim al-Za'nun abu al-Adib* (The Biography and the Path: Memoirs of Salim al-Za'nun Abu al-Adib) (Amman, Jordan: Al-Ahliya for Publication and Distribution, 2013), p. 97.

⁵¹ Saud al-Mawla, *Min Fatah ila Hamas: Al-Bidayat al-Ikhwaniiyyah wa al-Nihayat al-Wataniyyah* (From Fatah to Hamas: From the MB Beginnings to the National Endings) (Jdeidet el-Matn, Lebanon: Dar Saer al-Mashrek, 2018), pp. 108–109.

'Ashur later became Fatah commissioner in the Lebanese region in 1969, and deputy commissioner of mobilization and organization in 1972. He became the secretary of the Fatah Revolutionary Council from 1989 until 2009. He died on 22/3/2016.

⁵² Khalil al-Wazir, "The "Fatah" Movement: The Beginnings," pp. 63–64. (in Arabic)

⁵³ Abu Jihad, Yusuf 'Umairah and 'Adel 'Abdul Karim, whom Yezid Sayigh referred to as being former MB, see Yezid Sayigh, *Al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah*, p. 151.

⁵⁴ See Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 299–304.

⁵⁵ 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, *Ma' al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah*, pp. 77–96; and interviews with 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah and Suleiman Hamad.

⁵⁶ 'Abdul Rahman Barud, an interview with the author, Jeddah, KSA, 14/9/1998.

'Abdul Rahman Barud joined the MB movement in the early 1950s. One of the founders of the Palestinian MB movement, and the deputy controller-general, was Hani Bsiso. He was one of the symbols of the MB movement in Saudi Arabia, and one of the founders and symbols of the Hamas movement.

⁵⁷ For the Palestinian MB movement in Gaza Strip, see chapter two of Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 39–95.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55–64.

⁵⁹ An interview with Khairy al-Agha; ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma’ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 94–96; Isma‘il al-Khalidi, *60 ‘Aman fi Jama‘at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (60 Years in the Muslim Brothers Movement) (Gaza: Centre of Palestinian Historiography & Documentation, 2010), p. 68. See the discussion of the narratives about the history of this council in Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 105–106.

⁶⁰ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers 1949–1967*, pp. 111–112.

⁶¹ An interview with Suleiman Hamad; and see ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma’ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah*, p. 225.

⁶² An interview with Suleiman Hamad.

⁶³ The general context is basically from Suleiman Hamad, however the information—or part of it—were repeated in many testimonies, like that of Khairy al-Agha; and Yahya Shaqra, an interview with the author, Amman, Jordan, 24/8/1998.

Yahya Shaqra was a prominent leader in Palestinian MB movement in Kuwait (then *Bilad al-Sham*) from the late 1970s to 1990, and was the deputy head in 1986–1989. He participated in founding the Palestine Apparatus and then Hamas. Then he became the secretary of the movement’s executive office.

⁶⁴ The decisions of the conference are in a document kept by the author.

⁶⁵ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Filastin: Dirasat Manhajiyyah fi al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah* (Palestine: Methodological Studies of the Palestine Issue) (Kuala Lumpur: Fajr Ulung, 2003), pp. 408–409; and see Muhib al-Nuwati, *Hamas min al-Dakhil* (Hamas From Inside) (Gaza, Palestine: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002), pp. 49–57 and 67–72; and see about the backgrounds of Hamas emergence: Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters* (London: Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd., 2006), pp. 10–51.

⁶⁶ Bilal Mohammad (ed.), *Ila al-Muwajahah: Dhikrayat Dr. ‘Adnan Maswady ‘an al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi al-Daffah al-Gharbiyyah wa Ta’sis Hamas* (Towards Confrontation: Memoirs of Dr. Adnan Maswady Regarding the Muslim Brothers in the West Bank & the Founding of Hamas) (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2013), pp. 97–98.

In his book, ‘Adnan Maswady referred to Mahmud Musleh and Fadel Saleh by the initials M.M. and F.S., for security reasons at the time.

⁶⁷ Ghassan Duuar, *Qawa‘id al-Shuyukh*, pp. 34–37.

⁶⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 42–47; and ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma’ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 127–144.

⁶⁹ Ghassan Duuar, *Qawa‘id al-Shuyukh*, pp. 53–55.

⁷⁰ Interviews with ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah and Suleiman Hamad; and ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma’ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 129–133.

⁷¹ An interview with ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali; and see Ghassan Duuar, *Qawa‘id al-Shuyukh*, pp. 54–55; and ‘Abdullah Abu ‘Azzah, *Ma’ al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyyah*, pp. 127–144.

⁷² An interview with ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali.

⁷³ See ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, *Hamas: Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah fi Filastin: Al-Judhur al-Tarikiyyah wa al-Mithaq* (Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine: Historical Roots and Pact) (Peshawar, Pakistan: Al-Mujahidin Service Bureau, 1989); Ghassan Duuar, *Qawa‘id al-Shuyukh*, pp. 91–97; and Muhammad al-Hasan, *Mawqif al-Islamiyyin min Qadiyyat Filastin* (The position of Islamists on the issue of Palestine) (Qatar: Al-Fateh Library and al-Ghazali Library, 1995), p. 139.

- ⁷⁴ ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, *Hamas: Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah fi Filastin: Al-Judhur al-Tarikiyyah wa al-Mithaq*, pp. 73–74; and see also Ghassan Duuar, *Qawa'id al-Shuyukh*, pp. 100–102.
- ⁷⁵ An interview with ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Ali.
- ⁷⁶ ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, *Hamas: Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah fi Filastin: Al-Judhur al-Tarikiyyah wa al-Mithaq*, p. 76.
- ⁷⁷ Ziyad Mahmud ‘Ali, *‘Ada’ al-Yahud li al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah* (Jewish Hostility to the Islamic Movement) (Amman: Dar al-Furqan, 1982), pp. 100–114; and Fayez Sarah, “The Islamic Movement in Palestine: The Unity of Ideology and the Division of Politics,” *Al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi* journal, Centre for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, issue 124, June 1989, p. 55.
- ⁷⁸ Khalid Mish‘al, several interviews with the author, most importantly in Amman, Jordan, 28/8/1998, and Doha, 15/12/2016.
- ⁷⁹ An interview with Khalid Mish‘al.
- ⁸⁰ An interview with Khalid Mish‘al.
- ⁸¹ On the military and security action in Gaza Strip before the establishment of Hamas, see Nehad al-Sheikh Khalil, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Qita’ Ghazzah 1967–1987* (The Muslim Brothers Movement in Gaza Strip 1967–1987) (Gaza: Centre of Palestinian Historiography and Documentation, 2011), pp. 348–364; Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994” (Master degree thesis, Islamic University, Faculty of Arts, Department of History and Archeology, Gaza, Palestine, 2010), pp. 32–47 (in Arabic); and Rub‘i al-Madhun, “The Islamic Movement in Palestine 1928–1987,” in *Shu’un Filastiniyyah* magazine, Markaz al-Abhath, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), issue 187, October 1988, p. 27. And concerning the financial support of the MB who were working for Palestine in Kuwait, see an interview with Khalid Mish‘al.
- ⁸² Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 40. (in Arabic)
- ⁸³ Nehad al-Sheikh Khalil, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Qita’ Ghazzah*, p. 354; and Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” pp. 77–78. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁴ Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” pp. 46–47. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁵ Nehad al-Sheikh Khalil, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Qita’ Ghazzah*, pp. 356–357; and Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” pp. 43–45. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁶ An interview with Fathi al-Shiqaqi, *Al-Wasat* magazine, London, 6/11/1995.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ See Hamad Sa‘id al-Maw‘id, “Intellectual Sources of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine,” *Al-Hayat* newspaper, London, 27/1/1995.
- ⁸⁹ *Al-Wasat*, 30/1/1995.
- ⁹⁰ *Al-Wasat*, 6/11/1995.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.; see also *Al-Aswaq* newspaper, Amman, 30/10/1995.
- ⁹² *Al-Wasat*, 30/1/1995.
- ⁹³ Bilal Mohammad, *Ila al-Muwajahah: Dhikrayat Dr. ‘Adnan Maswady ‘an al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi al-Daffah al-Gharbiyyah wa Ta’sis Hamas*, pp. 97–98.
- ⁹⁴ See Ghassan Hamdan, *Al-Intifadah al-Mubarakah: Waqa’i’ wa Ab‘ad* (The Blessed Intifadah: Facts and Dimensions) (Kuwait: Dar al-Falah, 1989), pp. 36–38.
- ⁹⁵ See the statement in Hamas Media Office, *Watha’iq Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah* (The Documents of the Islamic Resistance Movement), the Movement’s statements collection, no. 1 (n.p.: Hamas’s Press Office, n.d.), pp. 17–18.

- ⁹⁶ Bilal Mohammad, *Ila al-Muwajahah: Dhikrayat Dr. 'Adnan Maswady 'an al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi al-Daffah al-Gharbiyyah wa Ta'sis Hamas*, p. 99.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- ⁹⁸ The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, 18/8/1988, Article 1 and 2, the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp
- Hereafter, we will refer to this reference as: *Charter of Hamas*.
- ⁹⁹ *Charter of Hamas*, Article 9.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Charter of Hamas*, Article 11 and 13–14.
- ¹⁰¹ *Charter of Hamas*, Article 17.
- ¹⁰² *Charter of Hamas*, Article 23 and 25–27.
- ¹⁰³ *Charter of Hamas*, Article 31.
- ¹⁰⁴ A Document of General Principles and Policies, site of the Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas, 1/5/2017, <http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/>
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶ Regarding Hamas's operations between 1989 and 1993, see Ghassan Duuar, *Maw'ad ma' al-Shabak: Dirasah fi al-Nashat al-'Askari li Harakat Hamas wa Kata'ib Ezzedein al-Qassam Khilal 'Am 1993* (A Date With the Shabak: A Study on the Military Activities of Hamas and the Ezzedein al-Qassam Brigades in 1993) (London: Filisteen Almuslima, 1995); Ghassan Duuar, *'Imad 'Aql* (Imad Aql) (Amman: Filisteen Almuslima, 1995); Ghassan Duuar, *Harb al-Ayyam al-Sab'ah: Usud Hamas* (The Seven Day War: The Lions of Hamas) (Amman: Filisteen Almuslima, 1993); and Muhib al-Nuwati, *Hamas min al-Dakhil*, pp. 71–90.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Sawt al-Sha'b* newspaper, Amman, 8/12/1993. The Palestinian News and Info Agency (WAFA) stated that the data of the Foundation for the Care of the Families of Martyrs and Prisoners indicated that 1,550 Palestinians were killed, and that 100 thousand were arrested during the *Intifadah*. See The Intifadah Facts and Data, site of Palestinian National Information Center – Palestinian News and Info Agency (WAFA), https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3479; and Palestinian Wounded Day, Palestinian National Information Center – WAFA, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=fCJqTua27460929309afCJqTu
- ¹⁰⁸ See Musa al-Kilani, The Most Difficult Number in the Equation, *Addustour* newspaper, Amman, 1/2/1995.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Nehad al-Sheikh Khalil, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Qita' Ghazzah*, pp. 348–355; and Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 46. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁰ Shaker al-Jawhari, *Doktor Musa Abu Marzuq: Mishwar Hayat: Zikrayat al-Luju' wa al-Ghorbah wa Sanawat al-Nidal* (Musa Abu Marzuq: A Life Journey: Memoirs of Seeking Refuge, Emigration and the Years of Struggle) (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2019), p. 143; and Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 83. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹¹ See Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 100. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹² Musa Abu Marzuq, a letter to the author, 11/12/2022.
- ¹¹³ See Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 87. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁴ Fareh Hamid, “The Military Action of the Martyr Ezzedein al-Qassam Brigades in the Center of West Bank (1992–2006 AD)” (Master degree thesis, Islamic University, Faculty of Arts, Department of History, Gaza, Palestine, 2020), p. 26. (in Arabic)

- ¹¹⁵ See Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” pp. 88–89. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁶ Fareh Hamid, “The Military Action of the Martyr Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades in the Center of West Bank (1992–2006 AD),” p. 33 (in Arabic); and Rajab Hasan al-Baba, “The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian Intifadah 1987–1994,” p. 88. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁷ Fareh Hamid, “The Military Action of the Martyr Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades in the Center of West Bank (1992–2006 AD),” pp. 29–30. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35–43; and see also Shaker al-Jawhari, *Doktor Musa Abu Marzuq: Mishwar Hayat*, p. 144.
- ¹²⁰ Ghassan Duar, *Harb al-Ayyam al-Sab‘ah: Usud Hamas*, p. 47. The audio-visual and print media covered the deportation details, the deportees conditions, and their return, starting when they were deported and throughout 1993. See for example the issues of *Filisteen Almuslima* magazine, London, which covered the deportees and their news in detail throughout 1993.
- ¹²¹ Ghassan Duar, *Maw‘ad ma‘ al-Shabak*.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*; and see also about the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) in Ziad Abu ‘Amr, *Al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Daffah al-Gharbiyyah wa Qita‘ Gazzah* (The Islamic Movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) (Acre: Dar al-Aswar, 1989), pp. 111–148.
- ¹²³ Jihadi Operations, site of Al-Quds Brigade, The Military Wing of Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, <https://saraya.ps/>
- ¹²⁴ *Alrai* newspaper, Amman, 25/8/1995.
- ¹²⁵ Dawud Sulaiman, *Al-Sultah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah fi ‘Am 1994–1995* (The Palestinian National Authority in 1994–1995) (Amman: Middle East Studies Center (MESC), 1995), pp. 75–83 and 135; and see the report of Amnesty International, *Trial at Midnight: Secret, Summary, Unfair Trials in Gaza*, June 1995, MDE 15/15/95.
- ¹²⁶ See *Filisteen Almuslima* magazine, Issues November and December 1994 and January 1995.
- ¹²⁷ See *Asharq Alawsat* newspaper, London, 27/6/1995; *Alrai*, 2/7/1995; *Filisteen Almuslima*, August 1995; and *Al-Mugtama‘* magazine, Kuwait, 29/6/1996.
- ¹²⁸ See *Alrai*, 7/1/1996 and the issues of 26/2–5/3/1996; *Al-Hayat*, 9/3/1996; and *Filisteen Almuslima*, April 1996.
- ¹²⁹ *Filisteen Almuslima*, April 1994.
- ¹³⁰ See *Alrai*, 23–25/1/1995.
- ¹³¹ *Al-Wasat*, 30/1/1995.
- ¹³² *Al-Wasat*, 1/4/1996.
- ¹³³ Concerning the liberation of South Lebanon, see Randa Haidar, Israel.. After the Withdrawal From South Lebanon, site of Aljazeera.net, 3/10/2004. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁴ For more reports on this subject, see reports between October and December 2000 published by the sites of the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) and Islam Online.
- ¹³⁵ Site of Palestinian National Information Centre, 9/2/2005, http://www.pnic.gov.ps/arabic/quds/arabic/viol/quds_viol_12-2005.htm
- ¹³⁶ See the report by the Ministry of Prisoners and Liberated Prisoners for 2005, Palestinian National Information Centre, www.pnic.gov.ps/arabic/social/prisoners/2005.html
- ¹³⁷ See “Al-Qassam: Facts and Figures,” *Qassamiyyun* magazine, the Resistance Media Unit – Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, special issue no. 5, December 2007, p. 10. (in Arabic)

- ¹³⁸ Site of Israeli Defense Forces, http://www1.idf.il/SIP_STORAGE/DOVER/files/9/21829.doc
- ¹³⁹ Site of Israeli Defense Forces, http://www.idf.il/SIP_STORAGE/DOVER/files/6/31646.doc
- ¹⁴⁰ Jihadi Operations, site of Al-Quds Brigade, The Military Wing of Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.
- ¹⁴¹ Published by *Maariv* newspaper and translated by *Assafir*, 15/7/2005.
- ¹⁴² Site of Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), www.cbs.gov.il; and see Panorama Bulletin, Quds Press International News Agency, 2/1/2003.
- ¹⁴³ Site of Ezzedeem al-Qassam Brigades, Press Office, 16/8/2005, <http://www.alqassam.ps/ensihab/ehsaeiat/ehsaeiat4.htm>; and see *Filisteen Almuslima*, 1/3/2006, <http://www.fm-m.com/2006/Mar2006/story15.htm>
- ¹⁴⁴ For more see Shehab News Agency, 27/1/2018, <https://shehabnews.com>; *Asharq al-Awsat* newspaper, London, 28/1/2018 (in Arabic); site of Arabs 48, 2/9/2018; and site of Makan—Israeli Broadcasting Corporation, 17/12/2018.
See a video of ‘Abbas and the security coordination, site of Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ShehabAgency.MainPage/videos/293870234669332>; and see also site of Ynetnews, 2/9/2018.
- ¹⁴⁵ *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper, 6/11/2018, <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/shin-bet-head-we-thwarted-480-terror-attacks-in-past-year-571165>
- ¹⁴⁶ Quds Press, 3/5/2018.
- ¹⁴⁷ See the chapters discussing the Palestinian resistance in the *Palestine Strategic Report Series*, covering the period 2006–2021, published by al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/palestine-strategic-rep/#.Y8pz2HZByUk>
- ¹⁴⁸ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2016–2017* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2018), p. 229; and Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2021), p. 213.
- ¹⁴⁹ For the War on Lebanon 2006, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2010), pp. 117–141.
- ¹⁵⁰ On these campaigns, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006*, p. 93; and Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2010), p. 112.
- ¹⁵¹ On the War on Gaza, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008*, pp. 113–114; Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2009* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2011), p. 118; and Abdul-Hameed al-Kayyali (ed.), *Dirasat fi al-‘Udwan al-Isra’ili ‘ala Qita’ Gaza: ‘Amaliyyat al-Rasas al-Masboub / Ma’rakat al-Furqan* (Studies on the Israeli Aggression on Gaza Strip: Cast Lead Operation/ Al-Furqan Battle) (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2009).
- ¹⁵² On the War of Stones of Baked Clay (dubbed by the Israelis Pillar of Defense), see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2012–2013* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2015), p. 109.
- ¹⁵³ On the Operation Eaten Straw, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2014–2015* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2016), pp. 123–125.
- ¹⁵⁴ On the Jerusalem *Intifadah*, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2016–2017*, pp. 224–225.
- ¹⁵⁵ On the Lion’s Gate Uprising, see *Ibid.*, pp. 225–228.
- ¹⁵⁶ On the Gate of Mercy Uprising, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019*, pp. 140–143.

- ¹⁵⁷ With video.. 3 years since the battle of “The Cry of Dawn” and the martyrdom of Commander Bahaa Abu al-Atta, site of Al-Quds Brigade, The Military Wing of Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, 12/11/2022 (in Arabic); and the site of Palestinian Ministry of Health, 14/11/2019, <https://www.moh.gov.ps/portal/phic-moh-gaza-infograf-of-israelian-occupation-aggression-against-gaza-strip-the-3th-day-cumulative/>
- ¹⁵⁸ On the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019*, pp. 205–207.
- ¹⁵⁹ On the Battle of Sword of Jerusalem 2021, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh and Basem Jalal Elkassem (eds.), *Ma'rakat Saif al-Quds wa Tada'iyatuha Filastiniyyan wa Israelliyyan wa 'Arabiyyan wa Duwaliyyan 10–21 Ayyar 2021* (Battle of the “Sword of Jerusalem” and Its Impact on the Palestinian, Israeli, Arab and International Levels 10–21 May 2021), Information File 28 (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2021).
- ¹⁶⁰ How Did the “Unity of Arenas” Battle Deepen the Occupation’s Anxiety?, site of Al-Mayadeen Media Network, 8/8/2022, <https://www.almayadeen.net> (in Arabic); Al-Quds Brigades Announces the “Martyrdom” of 12 of its Members in Gaza During the Recent Escalation, site of Anadolu Agency, 8/8/2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/ar> (in Arabic); and the Increase of Number of Martyrs of the Recent Israeli Aggression on Gaza Strip, Al-Mayadeen Media Network, 13/8/2022. (in Arabic)

Insights on the Road to Jerusalem*

1. Islam is a way of life and a founder of civilization: Islam is a comprehensive religion, an integrated system for life. It is the source of the *Ummah*'s glory, dignity and progress. It is the way to prosperity and success for humanity in this world and the hereafter. It is distinguished by "realistic idealism," that is, it is the best blueprint for humans, and is suitable for every time and place. It is following Islam's foundations and rules that the best nation that was brought for mankind has risen: the *Ummah* of *al-Tawhid* "monotheism," the *Ummah* of the final divine message, the *Ummah* of moderation and centrism, and the *Ummah* that would be a witness over the people (*Al-Ummah al-Shahidah*).

The Islamic civilization arose and spread throughout the Earth, absorbing people of all nationalities, races, colors, classes and sects, forming an incubator for coexistence, tolerance and human ingenuity. And it will be upon its foundations that the *Ummah* will rise from its weakness, backwardness and fragmentation, restore its glory and defeat its enemies.

2. The legitimacy of the legacy of the prophets: This great religion is the religion of monotheism that the prophets and messengers advocated for. Muslims thus believe that they are the true heirs worthy of the legacy of David and Solomon and the prophets of the Children of Israel and their righteous ones, who ruled Palestine for a period of time under the banner of monotheism (Islam). Therefore, the legitimacy of governing Palestine was transferred to Muslims because they raised the banner of monotheism after these messengers, and are the ones following the path of the prophets, and also because the Israelites strayed from the path of truth, hence the holy land is no longer theirs.

*We put forward these insights as general conclusions for this book. Being preoccupied for decades to introduce Palestine, its issue and the pathways to its liberation means that there are reiterations of and overlaps with studies and articles we published previously. We have benefited from these that are in line with the insights of this book, including the booklets *Basic Facts on the Palestine Issue* and *Illusions in the Palestinian Politics*.

3. Location, status, and empowerment (*Al-Makan, al-Makanah* and *al-Tamkin*): This trinity characterizes Palestine, its civilized mission, and its role throughout history. The location, with its attractiveness for living and strategic importance, is at the dividing point between Asia and Africa, in the heart of the Arab world and in the heart of the Muslim world. Its status is great as a blessed holy land, and for being the land of prophets, *al-Isra'* (night journey) and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. And its role throughout history has been associated with the empowerment of *Allah's* religion, as it is a center for the struggle between right and wrong, where *Allah* Almighty made it (and the rest of *Bilad-al-Sham*) the land of *ribat* and the home of the victorious faithful who uphold righteousness (*Al-Ta'ifah al-Mansurah*). All of this made it the focus of the world's attention, and a graveyard for unjust invaders throughout history... Palestine will be the place where the corruption and transgressions of the Israelites (as in the openings of *Surat al-Isra'*) will come to an end, the Dajjal will be slain, and Gog and Magog will meet their end.

4. The decline of the *Ummah*: The Muslim *Ummah* and its political systems have suffered from backwardness and civilizational decline, manifestations of weakness and division, political despotism, intellectual and jurisprudential stagnation, a decline in the ability to innovate and renew, internal conflict, and a misguided focus on worldly affairs. They have failed to develop policies capable of keeping pace with progress and building effective systems (derived from our religion and Islamic heritage) capable of facing contemporary challenges and competing with emerging global powers. As a result, our Muslim world, including Palestine, became easy to invade by colonial powers and the enemies of the *Ummah*, easy to desecrate, occupy, tear it apart, and spread Western ideologies in its midst.

5. The nature of the Zionist project: The Zionist project is an aggressive, expansionist, settler-colonial project of population replacement. It is not only hostile to the Palestinian people but also to humanity and its values and to the *Ummah*, especially the Arab-Muslim environment surrounding it. The Zionist project was implanted in the heart of the region. It is allied with the Western colonial powers having mutual objectives. The establishment of Israel to fulfill the role of being a "buffer state" and a colonial stronghold, supported by western colonialism, especially the British, represents the pinnacle of the western-Zionist threat. By establishing it in the heart of the Muslim and Arab lands, it would

split the two wings of the Muslim world in Asia and Africa into two separate parts. It would obstruct Muslim unity and thereby weaken it. Hence, this would ensure that the Arab and Muslim world remains divided and incapable of any revival, rotating instead in the orbit of subservience, producing raw materials and consuming western commodities. It also aims to prevent the emergence of a major Islamic power, to replace the Ottoman State, which was in the process of collapse. The chances of Israel continuing to enjoy stability and growth in a hostile environment rest upon an assurance that the Muslim states around it remains weak, fragmented and underdeveloped. Likewise, the likelihood of the revival of the Muslim *Ummah*, its unity, and its strength is dependent upon its ability to end the Zionist occupation of Palestine.

6. Dividing the region and isolating Palestine: Colonial domination, which benefited from the state of underdevelopment and division, and the aspiration of its local forces to power, led to the spread of the idea of the narrow nation-state. It facilitated the division of the region into states and mini-states. One of the most dangerous divisions was what was known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the subsequent arrangements that divided *Bilad al-Sham* and Iraq. It created a more appropriate environment for the establishment of the Zionist Jewish entity in Palestine, by singling-out Palestine and trying to isolate it from its Arab and Islamic surroundings.

7. Jerusalem (Al-Quds) is an indicator of the *Ummah's* strength and weakness: Throughout history, Jerusalem (and *al-Aqsa* mosque) have been an indicator of the *Ummah's* strength or weakness. When the *Ummah* is strong, Jerusalem is free and dignified, and when the *Ummah* is weak, backward and torn, Jerusalem is exposed to aggression and occupation by enemies. This is because Jerusalem and Palestine are the focus of the world's religious and strategic attention. The liberation of Jerusalem is an indication of the *Ummah's* recovery and strength.

8. The central issue of the *Ummah*: When it comes to matters of liberation and conflict with the *Ummah's* enemies and colonialism, Palestine appears to be the central issue of the *Ummah*. This is so not only because of its religious and strategic position, but also because the Zionist project is an aggressive global project that aims to weaken and tear the *Ummah* apart prevent its revival, and poses a real danger to it. This means that when Muslims defend Palestine, they are also defending themselves, their land, identity, religion, history and heritage.

Consequently, Palestine, Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* will unite the *Ummah* against its common central enemy, and act as leverage for the *Ummah*'s revival and strength, because the liberation of Palestine cannot be accomplished without that. In contrast, Palestine exposes and shames those who let it down and abandon it. Therefore, the *Ummah* must move from the state of support to a true partnership (Especially in the strategic environment surrounding Palestine), where Muslims would contribute according to their abilities, capabilities and circumstances.

The centrality of this issue does not diminish the value of other major issues of the *Ummah*, such as the establishment of *Allah*'s law on earth; achieving civilizational advancement and Islamic unity; fighting injustice, corruption and tyranny; and liberating the rest of Muslim lands... .

9. The Islamicity of the liberation project: If the land of Palestine is an Islamic one, its people are Muslim, its civilizational and cultural affiliation is Islamic, its popular incubator is Muslim and its strategic environment is Muslim, then it is natural that the identity of the liberation project should be Islamic. Those who want to distance Islam from the liberation project fall into a great delusion because they are like those who seek to separate the soul from the body or strip energy and engines from active forces.

The "Arab" aspect also applies to all of the above without contradiction. It goes along with our statement, as this aspect is associated with Islam in terms of "conquest" (*Futuh*), propagation, language, Arabization and civilization. The "Arab" conquistadors (*al-Fatihun*) were Muslim and carried the message of Islam, and other peoples and nationalities remained under its umbrella, while living in openness and civilizational interaction, accommodating all in one *Ummah* under the banner of Islam. Palestine's Arab identity was and is still a natural part, in harmony with its broader Muslim identity.

10. Islam is the best mobilizer of the masses: Islam is the most capable of mobilizing the masses, orienting and urging them to sacrifice. The harmony of the Palestinians (as well as the Arabs and Muslims) with themselves, their creed, culture and heritage, is essential for instigating their enthusiasm and making them ready to sacrifice life and money. For when Muslims believe that victory is from *Allah*, Who has guaranteed victory for His true servants; when they deem Palestine, with its sanctity, blessing and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, as part

of their religious beliefs, considering them endowments for the *Ummah* and the Muslim generations that they are entrusted with; when they believe that their steadfastness and suffering would be rewarded and considered good deeds; when they consider their victory a glory for the *Ummah* and part of its dignity; and when they believe that martyrdom would make them attain the highest level of Paradise... Then, it will be realized that no ideology has the energy, vitality, power and influence that Islam has.

11. Setting the fundamentals and paths: Palestine is an Islamic land and belongs to Muslims and their generations throughout the ages until the Day of Resurrection; it is not permissible for anyone, whether they are Palestinian, Arab or Muslim, to give up any part of it, no matter how small it is. Therefore, Palestine is not the property of Palestinians or Arabs only, but it is the property of all Muslims... and Muslims everywhere should practically contribute to defend it, by providing money and making other sacrifices, as a mandatory religious obligation on all (*Fardh 'Ayn*).

The Muslim identity of Palestine defines the fundamentals, as well as the tracks. It determines the extent and areas of national work as well as the margins of maneuvering and interim programs. There is no room for tampering with the full right to Palestine and the sovereignty over it, from its river to its sea; no room to recognize any legitimacy or right for the occupation over any part of it; and no room to waive the right of return of refugees to their homes from which they were expelled, just as there is no room to waive the right of resistance and *Jihad*, until victory is achieved and liberation is completed.

12. The lessons of historical experience: Historical experience has proved that the liberation of Palestine is linked to Islam, from the age of *Futuh* to the Crusades and the confrontation of the Tatars and until our contemporary times. The various ideologies that have dominated the Arab and Palestinian public discourse and politics in our modern history, whether leftist, nationalist or region-oriented, have failed to lead a real liberation project. We are still paying a bitter price for the official dominance of these ideologies.

Although the Islamic trend was fiercely fought in the region and deprived of the means of revival and empowerment, especially in the strategic surrounding area of Palestine, Islam remained the main motivator (or at least a major one) of revolutions, resistance action and the uprisings of the Palestinian people over the

past hundred years. For more than two decades, the Palestinian Islamic resistance has represented the backbone of the armed resistance forces in Palestine.

13. The upcoming persistence and revival, preceded by weakness and defeat: The projects of unity, liberation, and revival were preceded throughout our history by cases of rupture, fragmentation, weakness, and the domination of enemies. These conditions were an essential motivation for thinkers, scholars, and activist forces of the *Ummah* to launch these projects and push the wheel of change and creativity. The miserable situation that the *Ummah* has been through, led to the emergence of many revival projects over the past two centuries. Mobilization will continue until the elements of success, empowerment and advancement of an Islam-based project shall unleash the *Ummah*'s energies, unite them and defeat their enemies.

14. Towards a comprehensive reform: Throughout its modern and contemporary history, the *Ummah* has been subjected to many blows and calamities. Its energies and human and material resources have been depleted, its competencies have been displaced, and its countries have been led by corrupt, tyrannical regimes subservient to major powers hostile to the *Ummah* and its collective will. One of the most recent manifestations of its suffering was the setback of what is known as the “Arab Spring” and the unrest, tragedies and disasters of the peoples of the region.

However, these setbacks have strengthened the movements that seek comprehensive change, and not just reform under the umbrella of the regimes. They revealed the faults of the Arab and regional regimes and exposed the hypocrisy of the calls for democracy and freedom made by the international powers, and their willingness to ally with the corrupt regimes to prevent an Islamic revival. They also revealed the failure of the regime's political, economic, social and revival programs. The tragic situation of the *Ummah* was accompanied by mass resilience, with the emergence of hundreds of thousands or millions who confronted the oppressors and tyrants by both soft and hard means. This constitutes a strategic asset in the projects of mobilization, resistance and liberation.

15. Towards an independent, civilized Islamic alternative: The system on which the revival project is based, must constitute an independent civilized Islamic alternative, based on Islamic belief, behavior, values and way of life.

It offers comprehensive visions and solutions, not just partial ones or just adaptations of other civilized environments, or programs governed by the conditions, tools and powers of others, specifically Western civilization.

The Muslim *Ummah* is capable (as long as it adheres to its holy book and the Sunnah of its Prophet) to become the “civilizational witness” leading humanity. It is the most capable of offering humanity an environment that provides justice, truth, freedom, and harmony between man, the Creator (*Allah* Almighty) and the universe. Therefore, the restoration of the *Ummah*’s status is possible, obligatory and necessary. The active forces of the *Ummah* have a great task ahead, which is to build the desired civilized model that goes beyond addressing some of the consequences of secularism here or there, presenting solutions and alternatives to have a civilized advancement and lead humanity, taking advantage of the best accomplishments that civilizations have reached.

16. Basic conditions for the success of the revival and liberation project:

The clarity of vision and message; faithful and competent leadership; a solid core of activists and competent leaders, capable of activating the masses and then leading the state and the revival project; an effective consultative institutional system; a comprehensive, realistic and ambitious practical program; and a strong will ready to pay the prices and make sacrifices. These are six basic conditions that must be built into any revival and liberation project.

17. The essential relationship between revival and liberation: There will be no change in our backward and weak situation except through an Islamic revival project.

There would be no revival project unless it is independent, comprehensive, and satisfies the subjective and objective conditions of success.

There would be no revival project without being “empowered” in an independent state.

There would be no revival project without a unitary project.

There would be no room for empowerment and unity without confronting external influence and interference.

Nor is there room for empowerment and unity without confronting the Zionist project.

The revival project would not be completed unless the liberation of Land and Man is one of its pillars.

Thus, the project of advancement, unity and empowerment is intrinsically linked to the project of liberation.

18. The Islamic Perspective of Liberating Palestine: The most prominent features of the Islamic vision for the liberation of Palestine are:

- a. Adopting Islam comprehensively: its principles, as a code of conduct, as a way of life, and governance according to what Almighty *Allah* has revealed.
- b. There must be qualified sincere leadership capable of facing the Zionist plan and defeating it.
- c. Broadening the circle of struggle against the Zionist occupation (in addition to being the responsibility of every Palestinian and Arab) to become the responsibility of every Muslim, and every human being who is a defender of right, justice and freedom.
- d. Supporting the Palestinian people and preparing them with various means, in their capacity as the people on the front lines of the defense of the Islamic *Ummah*, to remain firm in their land and be able to continue their struggle and resistance.
- e. Striving to achieve a civilized revival that can pave the way to achieve change, positive political, economic, scientific and military progress, and unity, especially in the strategic environment of Palestine. Thus, the Muslims will be able to shoulder the burdens of battle and liberation and secure the necessary conditions for being strong and fit to pioneering humanity and world civilization.

19. A battle of generations: The battle for the liberation of Palestine is a continuous battle that does not stop until its complete liberation and the defeat of the Zionist project. It is a battle of generations, one after another until *Allah* permits victory and liberation.

Defeats, setbacks, frustrations, betrayals from near and far, and corruption of regimes and their rulers should not be reasons for giving up any part of the blessed land. Rather, it should constitute a motive for the faithful to conduct revisions, draw lessons, redouble efforts and creativity, and complete the conditions for success.

20. Parallel lines of action: The *Jihad* for the liberation of Palestine, on one hand, and working for the civilized advancement of the *Ummah* and the establishment of the Islamic state, on the other hand, are two parallel and complementary actions. One may leverage the other, without one waiting for the other or holding it back. Just as revival and unity are the path to liberation, so too *Jihad*, confronting the Zionist enemy, weakening it, preoccupying it, and defeating it are the path to revival and unity.

21. Achieving strategic superiority: The role of the people of Palestine is vital, and they bear a great responsibility. They are the vanguard guardians of the *Ummah's* frontiers (*Ashab al-Thughur*), and by their steadfastness, they prove the land's Islamic identity, and by their resistance, they weaken the enemy, make it lose its security and stability, and hinder its expansion. However, Palestine cannot be liberated from within, and the Palestinian people alone cannot liberate all of Palestine. Achieving the complete liberation project and confronting a global Zionist project sponsored by superpowers can only be achieved through an Islamic revival project, especially in the strategic environment surrounding Palestine, that achieves a strategic superiority that enables it to drive out the Zionist project.

22. No contradiction with the national and Arab dimensions: The Islamic vision of liberation does not contradict the Arab nationalist dimensions. Muslims are quite loyal to their homeland, and they support objective patriotism which means love, longing and nostalgia for the land; dignity and liberation; and cooperation, solidarity, and compassion of the society. Moreover, preserving the land and sacrificing life and money to liberate it from enemies is part of the Muslims' faith and religion.

There is no conflict between the Arab and the Islamic aspects, as Arabs now are overwhelmingly Muslims (about 95%). What mostly unites Arabs is their religion and their language preserved in the *Qur'an* and the Islamic heritage. Arab unity projects can be viewed positively as a step towards Islamic unity, if they express the will of the people, are open, and are not based on exclusionary fanaticism and mentalities, nor the dictatorship of minorities or military coups. Therefore, the circles of action for Palestine, whether they are national, Arab, Islamic or humanitarian, are integrated ones, and their positive elements should be activated in the revival and liberation projects.

23. The revival liberation project accommodates non-Muslim religious sects: The Islamic project is not sectarian, racist or isolationist. It does not mean injustice or marginalization of non-Muslim religious sects, nor does it mean coercion in religion; rather, it is a civilized revival project that is open and flexible, and accommodates all segments and forces seeking to contribute to the liberation project, which will take their positions according to their sincerity and competence.

If Islam is the main uniter of the Palestinian people, Arabs and the peoples of the *Ummah*, and it is the greatest common denominator among all, it is not permissible to exclude it in favor of ideologies that do not bring together even halves, quarters, or tenths of what Islam brings together.

Using the same analogy, why, according to the pan-Arabist perspective, should peoples of other nationalities in the Arab region such as the Kurds, Amazighs, Africans and Turkmen, all of whom are Muslims (and speak Arabic) be overlooked, when their percentage of the population is higher than the percentage of people of other religious sects?

The greatest driving force, instigator and unifier of liberation should not be dispensed with; in favor of ideologies that have failed, over many years, to mobilize this huge reservoir of energy and vitality in the *Ummah* to confront the Zionist project.

Moreover, the Christians of Palestine (since the time of ‘Umar (RA)) and the Christians of the East, have been integrated into Islamic civilization and participated in its construction. They have lived in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance throughout Islamic history. The Christians of Palestine contributed strongly to confronting the Zionist movement with words, pens and guns. They worked without any sensitivity under the leadership of the Mufti of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husaini, and fought within the formations of the Holy Jihad Organization. They were and still are an essential part of the Palestinian national movement.

24. Fighting the usurpers and aggressors: Muslims do not fight the Jews because they are Jews. Muslim relationship with the Peoples of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) is based on justice and benevolence, while enjoying freedom, as well as religious and citizenship rights under Muslim rule. Muslims fight the Zionist aggressors, who usurped the land of Palestine, expelled its people

and violated its holy sites, and they will fight any faction or group that tries to occupy their land, irrespective of religion or nationality.

25. The nature of *Jihad* movements: Swimming against the tide, not in line with the prevailing paradigm, and not maneuvering and adapting to the current “rigid regimes,” or under the ceilings and calculations of the regimes: All these are usually the characteristics of *Jihadi*, revolutionary and transformative movements. Such movements should not be discouraged by any lack of adherents or the abundance of complacent people. What is important is a good relationship with *Allah*, the validity of the approach, and the reliance on *Allah* after doing everything possible to satisfy material conditions.

On the way to the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine, and after the clarification of the vision, path and approach, credibility and seriousness should be proven on the ground, through patience, steadfastness, perseverance, sacrifice, defending the frontiers, supporting the resistance fighters, and competing only in defeating the enemy, while respecting the reasoning of the honest men fighting on the ground and guarding the frontiers (*Ashab al-Thughur*).

26. Transnational safety nets: To confront the Zionist project and liberate Palestine, the sincere and active forces of the region must form safety nets (popular and official where possible):

- a. A national, Arab and Islamic safety net that supports development and advancement.
- b. A safety net against sectarian and ethnic conflicts, and everything that prevents the unity of the *Ummah* or diverts it from the struggle with its real enemies.
- c. A safety net against external interference and the forces seeking to weaken and fragment the *Ummah*.

Consequently, the *Ummah* would save its energy and potential for a civilized advancement and the liberation of its lands and holy sites.

27. The Humanitarian Dimension of the Palestine Issue: The Palestine Question has profound and far-reaching humanitarian dimensions. The Zionist project is based primarily on the usurpation of rights and injustice. It is hostile to human values that adhere to the principles of right, justice and freedom. The Zionist movement and its occupation of Palestine is one of the last remaining

outposts of traditional western European colonialism that was obliterated from all parts of the world, and must, sooner rather than later, be expunged from Palestine.

The presence of Israel in the heart of the Muslim world, its mobilization of weapons of mass destruction, and the unlimited US and Western support of it, will always be the burning fuse threatening world peace to explode; as long as it insists on the occupation of Palestine, the Judaization of the land, people and holy sites; and the suppression of the Palestinian people and the will of the *Ummah*. Therefore, the mission of liberating occupied Palestine is essentially a humane and civilized mission in which all nations and countries should contribute.

28. The Defeat of the Jewish Zionist Project: The defeat of the Jewish Zionist project in Palestine is not only possible, it is an affirmed truth, because Almighty *Allah* (SWT) has given us glad tidings of this in the Holy Qur'an, and so did Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). Moreover, *Allah's* Laws in this universe and history tell us that injustice doesn't continue forever, that the tyrant will inevitably be defeated, that no right is lost if there is someone behind it and that when the *Ummah* obeys *Allah* (SWT), gets unified, reclaims the reasons of strength and honour, then and only then, it will be able, *Allah* willing, to achieve victory and liberation. The *Ummah* and its fighting forces must educate the generations to trust in *Allah's* promise, and on the fact that the Zionist project is one of the episodes of struggle over the Holy Land, and it will be defeated and vanish, just as many previous invasions and occupations were defeated.

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1. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh and Basheer M. Nafi', editors, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005, 2007*.
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3. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2007, 2010*.
4. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008, 2010*.
5. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2009/10, 2011*.
6. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2010/11, 2012*.
7. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12, 2013*.
8. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2012–2013, 2015*.
9. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2014–2015, 2016*.
10. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2016–2017, 2018*.
11. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019, 2021*.
12. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2020–2021, 2022*.

Am I Not a Human? Series

13. 'Abbas Ismail, *The Israeli Racism: Palestinians in Israel: A Case Study*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (1), translated by Aladdin Assaiqeli, 2009.

14. Hasan Ibhais, Mariam Itani and Sami al-Salahat, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Woman Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (2), translated by Iman Itani, 2010.
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17. Mariam Itani and Mo‘in Manna‘, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Refugee*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (6), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2010.
18. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Suffering of Jerusalem and the Holy Sites Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (7), translated by Salma al-Houry (published in collaboration with al-Quds International Institution (QII)), 2012.
19. Hasan Ibhais and Khaled ‘Ayed, *The Separation Wall in the West Bank*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (8), translated by Baraah Darazi, 2013.
20. Hayat Dada, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Student Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (9), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2017.
21. Mariam Itani, Amin Abu Wardeh and Waddah Eid, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Worker Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (10), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2014.
22. Fatima Itani and Atef Daghlas, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Patient Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (11), translated by Mohammed Ibrahim El-Jadili and Saja Abed Rabo El-Shami, 2012.
23. Fatima Itani and Nitham ‘Ataya, *The Suffering of Palestinian Environment and Farmer Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (12), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2016.
24. Fatima Itani and Mohammed Dawood, *The Suffering of Palestinians From Israeli Roadblocks in the West Bank*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (13), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2018.

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37. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Issue: Historical Background & Contemporary Developments*, 2014, revised and updated version, 2022.
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- *Awalastu Insana?* (Am I Not a Human?) series, 13 books.
- *Taqrir Ma'lumat* (Information Report) series, 30 books.
- *Malaf Ma'lumat* (Information File) series, 11 books.
- *Dirasat 'Ilmiyyah Muhakkamah* (Refereed Academic Studies) series, 15 books.
- Non-Serial Publications (95 books).

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THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

A Historical Study

of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine

From the Time of the Prophets to the 21st Century

This Book

Palestine... the holy land, the arena of conflict between good and evil. Since Abraham (PBUH), raised the banner of righteousness and *al-Tawhid* (monotheism) there, generations of prophets and righteous people inherited and circulated it, preserving its identity and authenticity. The more the Holy Land is freed from the tyranny of the usurpers, the more people of truth will come to remove the darkness from it, so that it may shine again with the light of monotheism.

This book ... reviews the Islamic experience on the land of Palestine from the ages of the prophets to our time (until 2022), studies the Islamic *Futuh* (conquests) of it, its liberation from the Crusaders and Tatars, and discusses its modern and contemporary conditions since the end of the Ottoman State. It sheds light on the role of the Islamic movement in uprisings, revolutions and resistance action against the British occupation and Israel, including the roles of Haj Amin al-Hussaini, al-Qassam's al-Jihadiyyah movement, the Muslim Brothers movement, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine...

This book calls the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) to preserve its authenticity and insist on its right. It asserts that the usurping Zionist occupation is but a stage in the history of the conflict and a link in its chain, and that when the *Ummah* returns to its senses and regains its strength, unity and revival elements, this state will vanish, as did before the people of evil.

This book... serves many readers who want to learn about the history of Palestine and its issue from an Islamic point of view. It is academically sourced and attributed, informative and it employs an accessible style, away from rigidity and monotony. It seeks to highlight morals and lessons, while being away from emotional rhetoric and flourish.



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