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# Supplementary Notes:

## THE MONTH OF RAJAB



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### Battle of Ajnadayn and conquest of al-Aqsā

Sourced from *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*:

‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه took his army placing his son ‘Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه on the right flank and Junādah ibn Tamīm Mālikī رضي الله عنه on the left flank. Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah رضي الله عنه was with him. At Jordan, he handed over charge to Abu A‘war al-Sulami. When he reached Ramlah, he found there a concentration of the Romans under the command of Arṭabūn. He was their most intelligent man and the most shrewd of their commanders. He had positioned a mighty army at Ramlah and an equal one at Īliyah. So ‘Amr informed ‘Umar رضي الله عنه of the situation. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه remarked, “We are going to pit our Arṭabūn against their Arṭabūn, let’s see who wins.”

‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه sent ‘Alqamah ibn Ḥakīm al-Fārsi and Masrūq ibn Bilāl Akkī رضي الله عنه against the army of Īliyah, and Abū Ayyūb Mālikī to Ramlah where Dadhariq was the Roman commander. He took this tactical step to occupy them away from himself and his army. Moreover, every time reinforcements came to him from ‘Umar رضي الله عنه ‘Amr sent some of them to each of the two armies. He himself stayed at Ajnadayn, and, he contemplated that he could not remain heedless concerning Arṭabūn and also could not rely on just any man as an envoy.

So, he disguised himself as one and went to him. He conveyed his message and heard his opponent’s demands. However, Arṭabūn spotted out the Arab envoy as ‘Amr himself or a very close and intelligent confidant of ‘Amr. So, he resolved to kill him and throw the Arabs into a quandary and distress, Accordingly, he whispered to one of his guards that he should go ahead and stand concealed at a certain place till ‘Amr came on that path, he should then kill him.

On his part, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه suspected that Arṭabūn was up to some mischief, so he said to him, “O Amīr, I have heard you and you have heard me. I am one of the ten men that ‘Umar has sent to oversee (the army and this) commander. I would like to bring all of them so that they might get your message first hand.” Arṭabūn said, “Surely go and bring them to me.”

Again, he whispered to a man directing him to hurry to a certain place and bring back the guard forthwith. ‘Amr got up and returned to his army while Arṭabūn investigated and realised that ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ had come to him personally. He lamented, “The man fooled me. Surely he is the most astute of the Arabs.” When ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was told of this he commented, “What an excellent man, ‘Amr is!” Then, ‘Amr advanced his forces and a fierce battle was fought at Ajnadayn. It was like the Battle of Yarmūk, a large number of men killed on both sides. Then the remaining armies joined ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه because the ruler of Īliyah had confined himself and his army within the fortress so that the Muslims could not do anything. ‘Amr’s army was thus reinforced.

It was a showdown between the Arṭabūn of the Arabs and the Arṭabūn of the Romans; the Roman general was defeated and fled with his troops to seek protection within the walls of the Holy city.

The city of Jerusalem was strongly fortified and virtually impregnable. The siege continued for four months, and the Muslim army was reinforced by the armies of Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr, and Khālīd ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه. This sowed terror in the hearts of the Romans, but still there was no victory and the sieged continued. The Muslims had to endure rain, snow, and bitter cold. Arṭabūn eventually wrote to ‘Amr, “... You cannot gain any victory at Palestine, so accept the single victory you gained at Ajnadayn and return. Don’t be fooled by that single victory or you will face the fate of all those who came before you.” ‘Amr رضي الله عنه responded, “I am going to take control of the very land under your feet!” and he instructed the messenger to observe the reaction of Arṭabūn when he reads the letter. Upon reading the letter he laughed and said, “The one who will conquer Jerusalem will be a man with three letters in his name.” ‘Amr رضي الله عنه wrote to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه informing him of the new developments, and urged him to come to Palestine. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه after consulting the Ṣaḥābah decided to set out to al-Masjid al-Aqsā.

## Conquest of Bayt Al-Maqdis at the hands of ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān رضي الله عنه advised him not to go so that their humiliation should be complete, but ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه suggested that he should go to them to compensate the Muslims for their effort. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه agreed with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and left for Syria, appointing ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as his deputy in Madīnah. In Syria, Abū ‘Ubaydah رضي الله عنه and the commanders welcomed him, among them Khālīd ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه and Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān رضي الله عنه. Abū ‘Ubaydah رضي الله عنه alighted and ‘Umar too alighted. The former stepped forward to kiss ‘Umar’s hands while ‘Umar moved to kiss Abū ‘Ubaydah’s feet.

Both then stopped short of what they had intended to do. Then, they went and concluded the peace treaty with the Christians of Bayt al-Maqdis. He placed the condition that they should emigrate to Rome within three days. Then ‘Umar رضي الله عنه went in the mosque from the door through which Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم had entered on the night of al-‘Isra (night journey). It is said that he called the talbiyah when he entered Bayt al-Maqdis and offered the Ṣalāh al-Taḥiyāt al-Masjid at the Miḥrāb of Dāwūd عليه السلام. In the morning of the next day, he led the Muslims in the ṣalāh of fajr and recited Sūrah Ṣad in the first raka‘ah making the prostration therein, and the Muslims also made the prostration. In the second, he recited Sūrah Banī Isrā‘īl.

Then he went to the rock (*al-Sakhrāh*) and made enquiries about its position from Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. Ka‘b advised that he should build the masjid behind it. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه rejected, “That will be a resemblance to the Jews.” Then he built the masjid at the qiblah of Bayt al-Maqdis, and it is as is today. Then he removed the sand and dirt from the rock filling the folds of his cloak and robe (to shift that). The Muslims emulated him. He got the people of Jordan to remove the rest of it. As for the Romans, they had used the rock as a garbage dump because it was the qiblah of the Jews, so much so that their women sent their used menstrual pads to be thrown on the rocks. They did this to seize revenge from the Jews for creating the Qamāmāh. The Qamāmāh was the place where the Jews crucified the *Maslūt* (the one who was crucified) and then threw at his grave the *Qamāmāh* (garbage). Hence, that place is known as al-Qamāmāh and this name was then given to the cathedral that the Christians built there.

When Heraclius had received the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم letter while he was in Īliyah, he admonished the Christians for defiling the rock to such an extent that the garbage spilled over to the Miḥrāb of Dāwūd عليه السلام. He scolded them, “You are worthy of being killed for this crime of defiling the Masjid, just as the Children of Isrā‘īl had been killed for the blood of Yahyā ibn Zakariyyā. Then, they were commanded to remove the garbage. They began the task. They had not removed more than one third of it till the time the Muslims conquered it. Then ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb had all of it removed. This entire account is narrated by Ḥāfiẓ Bahaā’ al-Dīn ibn Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim ibn ‘Asākīr in his book *al-Mustaqṣā’ fī Faḍā’il al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* through (proper) lines of transmission.

Sayf mentioned that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه rode a horse from Madīnah, so that he might complete his journey sooner. He made ‘Alī رضي الله عنه his deputy in Madīnah. At Jābiyah he alighted and delivered a long eloquent sermon in which he said, “O people, correct your unseen (*Bāṭin*), thus your seen and open life (*Ẓāhir*) will stand corrected. Do deeds for the hereafter, which will suffice your affairs of this world. And know that between a man and Ādam, no father is alive and there is not between him and Allah any relationship. So, he who intends to go to Paradise must stick to the Jamā‘ah, for the devil is with a single person, but he keeps away from two persons. And none of you must stay alone with a woman, for the devil is the third. And he, to whom his piety is pleasing and impiety displeasing is a believer.”<sup>1</sup>

Then ‘Umar رضي الله عنه concluded peace with the people of Jābiyah and set out for Bayt al-Maqdis.

Sayf said that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه went to Bayt al-Maqdis thereafter from Jābiyah. His horse became balky (or unruly), so another was presented. This one was very swift when he alighted, he resolved never to ride it again.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, 1/18, 26; *Al-Tirmidhī*, # 2172; *Ibn Mājah*, # 2363. Summary of a lengthy sermon.

When ‘Umar came to Bayt al-Maqdis and camped by the city walls, and the Patriarch came out to meet him, and said, “By Allah, this is the one whose description we find in our books, the one at whose hands our land will be conquered.”<sup>1</sup> Then he went back to his people and told them, and they came rushing out, having suffered greatly during the siege, and opened the gate. They came out to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and asked him for a peace treaty and protection, and agreeing to pay the jizyah to him.”<sup>2</sup>

There follows the text of the treaty as it was narrated by al-Ṭabarī:

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

This is what the servant of Allah, ‘Umar, the Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, has granted to the people of Īliyah of security: He has granted them security for themselves, their possessions, their churches and crosses, their sick and healthy, and all their co-religionists. Their churches shall not be taken for residence and shall not be demolished, nothing shall be damaged from them or from their surroundings, nor shall their crosses be removed or anything taken from their property. They shall not be harassed because of their religion, and none of them shall be harmed. No Jew will be allowed to live with them in Īliyah. The people of Īliyah will have to pay Jizyah as the inhabitants of other cities pay. They have to expel from Īliyah the Byzantines and thieves. Those of them who leave shall have security for themselves and their belongings until they reach a place of safety, but anyone from among them who wants to stay in Īliyah shall be safe provided they pay the Jizyah like the people of Īliyah. If any of the people of Īliyah want to leave with the Byzantines and take their belongings with them, they and their churches and crosses shall be safe until they reach a place of safety. Any of the people of the land who were in Īliyah before the slaying of its last leader shall have the option of either staying, provided they pay the jizyah like the people of Īliyah or if they so wish, they will be allowed to leave with the Byzantines or go back to their original homes. No jizyah will be collected from them until they are able to pay it.

The promise of Allah, may He be exalted, His Messenger ﷺ, the Khalīfah, and the believers is therefore given to abide by the terms of this treaty as long as the people pay the jizyah.

Witnessed by: Khālid ibn al-Walīd, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Written in the year 15 AH.<sup>3</sup>

1 *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 1/213-216.

2 *Ibid*, 1/225.

3 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 4/436.

## Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī and the Conquest of al-Aqsā

### Battle of Ḥiṭṭīn

After a series of fights and forays a hotly-contested battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Tiberius beneath the hills of Ḥiṭṭīn<sup>1</sup>, on Saturday, the 24th of Rabī al-Ākhir, 583 AH, which gave a death-blow to the power of the Crusaders. The victory achieved by the Sultan has been described thus by Lane-Poole:

The flower of chivalry was taken the king and his brother, Reginald of Chatillon, Joscelin of Courtenay, Humphrey of Toron, the Masters of the Temple and Hospital, and many other nobles were among the prisoners... The rest of the chivalry of Palestine was under Moslem warders. Of the rank and file, all who were alive were made prisoners. A single Saracen was seen dragging some thirty Christians he had himself taken, tied together with a tent-rope. The dead lay in heaps, like stones upon stones, among broken crosses, severed hands and feet, whilst mutilated heads strewed the ground like a plentiful crop of melons.<sup>2</sup>

The field long bore the marks of the bloody fight where 30 000 Christians were said to have fallen. A year afterwards the heaps of bleaching bones could be seen from afar, and the hills and valleys were strewn with the relics of the horrid orgies of wild beasts.<sup>3</sup>

### Religious Ardour of the Sultan

The fateful fight at Ḥiṭṭīn came to a close with an incident which is symptomatic of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's fiery zeal for the religion This is how Lane-Poole describes it:

Saladin camped on the field of battle. When his tent was pitched, he ordered the prisoners to be brought before him. The King of Jerusalem and Reginald of Chatillon he received in his tent; he seated the King near himself, and seeing his thirst he gave him a cup of water iced in snow.

Guy drank and passed the cup to the lord of Karak, but Saladin was visibly annoyed. Tell the king, he said to the interpreter, 'that it was he, not I, that gave that man drink. The protection of 'bread and salt' was not to baulk his vengeance. Then he rose and confronted Reginald, who was still standing, 'Twice have I sworn to kill him; once when he sought to invade the holy cities, and again when he took the caravan by treachery.<sup>4</sup> Lo! I will avenge Mohammed upon thee!' And he drew his sword and cut him down with his own hand, as he had sworn. The guard finished it and dragged the body out of the tent; and God sped his soul to Hell.

The King, trembling at the sight, believed his own turn was now coming, but Saladin reassured him: 'It is not the custom of kings to slay kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, so what happened, happened.'<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Shaddād's version of Reginald of Chatillon's execution adds that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn offered him the choice of Islam and on his refusal cut off his head The Sultan said, "Lo! I avenge Muhammad, ﷺ upon thee."<sup>6</sup>

1 Ḥiṭṭīn is said to be the place where Nabī ʿĪsā ﷺ delivered his sermon on the mount.

2 *Saladin*, pg. 214.

3 *Ibid*, pg. 215.

4 Ibn Shaddād adds that when the caravan of pilgrims was treacherously waylaid by Reginald, some of his captives implored him to be merciful. Reginald, however, arrogantly turned down their request saying, "Ask your Prophet Muḥammad to come to your rescue." When Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn heard of it he vowed that he would slay Reginald with his own hands, if he got hold of him.

5 *Saladin*, pg. 214-215.

6 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 64.

## Conquest of Aqsā

The victory at Ḥiṭṭīn was but the prelude to the much coveted conquest of Jerusalem by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn for regaining the holy city has been starkly depicted by Ibn Shaddād who says that “the Sultan was so keen for Jerusalem that the hills would have shrunk from bearing the burden he carried in his heart.”<sup>1</sup>

On Friday, the 27th Rajab 583 AH, the day of the Prophet’s ascension, when he had led the congregational prayer of the earlier prophets in Jerusalem, the Sultan entered the city. Ibn Shaddād has given a graphic account of this memorable day He writes:

It was the victory of victories. A large crowd consisting of scholars and the nobles, traders and the laity had gathered on this joyous occasion. A number of people had come from the coastal lands on getting the news of the Sultan’s victory, and so had come nearly all the notable theologians from Egypt and Syria to congratulate him on his victory. Hardly any dignitary or any noteworthy personage of the empire was left behind. The joyful shouts of ‘Allah is Great and ‘There is no God but Allah,’ rent the skies After ninety years, Friday prayer was again held in Jerusalem The Cross that glittered on the Dome of the Rock was pulled down. An indescribable event as it was, the blessings and the succour of Allah were to be witnessed everywhere on the day.<sup>2</sup>

A costly pulpit which had been designed under the orders of Nūr al-Dīn al-Zangī twenty years ago was brought from Aleppo and erected in the Dome of the Rock.<sup>3</sup>

## Character of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was, in truth and reality, a standing miracle of the Prophet of Islam and a manifest sign of the truthfulness and authenticity of his message. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was brought up like other Kurd youths of moderate means,<sup>4</sup> studying the conventional sciences and the art of warfare. Nobody could have predicted before Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn captured Egypt and confronted the Crusaders, that this young man would one day emerge as the conqueror of Jerusalem and a great Defender of the Faith, and that he would achieve such an eminence as to be looked upon by the posterity as a brilliant example for his ardent zeal and courage in fighting the infidels, or, for his sterling virtues which could rightly be envied even by the most pious and pure in heart. Describing the youthful days of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Lane-Poole says:

As the favoured governor’s son, he naturally enjoyed a privileged position, but, far from exhibiting any symptoms of future greatness, he was evidently a shining example of that tranquil virtue which shuns ‘the last infirmity of the noble minds.’<sup>5</sup>

Allah had, however, destined him to become the most renowned leader of his time, and when Allah wills a thing, He provides the means therefore. His master Nūr al-Dīn ordered him to proceed to Egypt. Qāḍī Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Shaddād, a trusted councillor of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, writes that the latter had confessed it to him that he had gone to Egypt dragged against his will, like one driven to his death. It was the fulfilment of what the Qur’ān says, “But it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you.”<sup>6</sup>

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1 Ibid, pg. 213.

2 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 66.

3 *Abū al-Fīdā*, 3/77.

4 *Saladin*, pg. 72.

5 Ibid, pg. 72.

6 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 31.

## Transformation of his life

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was, however, completely a changed man after assuming power in Egypt. Conviction dawned upon him that Allah had to take some work from him which would be thwarted by the pursuits of pleasure. Ibn Shaddād is on record that “no sooner did he assume the over-lordship of Egypt, the world and its pleasures lost all significance in his eyes. With a heart-felt sense of gratitude for the favour bestowed by Allah on him, he gave up drinking, renounced the temptations of pleasure, and took to the life of sweat and toil which went on increasing with the passage of time.”<sup>1</sup> Lane-Poole too has the same story to tell, He says:

On his side, Saladin began to order his life more rigorously Devout as he had always shown himself, he became even more strict and austere. He put aside the thought of pleasure and the love of ease, adopted a Spartan rule, and set it as an example to his troops. He devoted all his energies henceforth to one great object—to found a Moslem empire strong enough to drive the infidels out of the land. ‘When Allah gave me the land of Egypt,’ said he, ‘I was sure that He meant Palestine for me also.’ It may well be that natural selfish ambition quickened his zeal, but the result was the same. Thenceforward his career was one long championship of Islam. He had vowed himself to the Holy War.<sup>2</sup>

## Zeal for Jihād

The constant aim of his efforts was to fight in the way of Allah. Describing the zeal of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn for Jihād writes Ibn Shaddād:

Fired with the zeal to wage war against the Crusaders, Jihād was the most favourite topic of his discussion, he was always seen making his dispositions for the strengthening of his forces, seeking out men and materials for the same purpose and paying attention to anyone who spoke about these matters to him. He had gladly abandoned for its sake his hearth and home, family and children, and betaken to the life of the camp where a wind could uproot his tent. Anybody encouraging him in his ambitions could easily win his confidence.<sup>3</sup>

One could make a solemn affirmation that after he started the war against the Crusaders he never spent a single shell on anything save on the preparation for war and helping his men.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Shaddād continues:

The Sultan appeared to be like a bereaved mother on the battlefield, who had been deprived of her only child by the cruel hands of Death. He could be seen trotting on his horse from one end of the battlefield to another, exhorting the people to fight for the sake of Allah. He would himself go round all the detachments, with tears in his eyes, asking people to come forth for the aid of Islam.<sup>5</sup>

The same writer describes how Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn spent his days during the siege of Acre:

Excepting a sweet-drink for which his physician insisted, the Sultan did not take anything for the whole day.<sup>6</sup>

The royal physician told me that the Sultan had taken only a few morsels of food from Friday to Sunday as he was unable to pay attention to anything save the happenings on the battlefield.<sup>7</sup>

1 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 32-33.

2 *Saladin*, pg. 99.

3 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 17.

4 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 16.

5 *Ibid*, pg. 155.

6 *Ibid*, pg. 155.

7 *Ibid*, pg. 90.

## Benevolence of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

The forbearance, humanity and magnanimity of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn on this occasion (after conquering Aqṣā) was in striking contrast with the brutality of his Christian foes. The Christian biographer of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Lane-Poole, acknowledges that the Sultan's kindness of heart had conquered his desire for revenge. He writes:

Never did Saladin show himself greater than during this memorable surrender. His guards commanded by responsible Amīrs, kept order in every street, and prevented violence and insult, insomuch that no ill-usage of the Christians was ever heard of. Every exit was in his hands, and a trustee Lord was set over David's gate to receive the ransoms as each citizen came forth.<sup>1</sup>

Then, after describing how the people left in the holy city were ransomed and how al-Mahk al-'Ādil, the brother of the Sultan, the Patriarch, and Balian of Ibelin, were each allowed to set free a thousand slaves given by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Lane-Poole writes:

Then said Saladin to his officers, 'My brother has made his alms, and the Patriarch and Balian have made theirs, now I would fain make mine.' And he ordered his Guards to proclaim throughout the streets of Jerusalem that all the old people who could not pay were free to go forth. And they came forth from the postern of St. Lazarus, and their going lasted from the rising of the sun until night fell. Such was the charity which Saladin did, of poor people without number.<sup>2</sup>

Thus did the Saracens show mercy to the fallen city. One recalls the savage conquest by the first Crusaders in 1099, when Godfrey and Tancred rode through streets choked with the dead and dying, when defenceless Moslems were tortured, burnt, and shot down in cold blood on the towers and roof of the Temple, when the blood of wanton massacre defiled the honour of Christendom and stained the scene where once the gospel of love and mercy had been preached. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' was a forgotten beatitude when the Christians made shambles of the Holy City. Fortunate were the merciless, for they obtained mercy at the hands of the Moslem Sultan.

*The greatest attribute of heaven is Mercy,  
And 't is the crown of justice, and the glory  
Where it may kill with right, to save with pity*

If the taking of Jerusalem were the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and perhaps of any age.<sup>3</sup>

## The Saintly Sultan

In regard to the character and disposition of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Ibn Shaddād has left the following record:

In faith and practice the Sultan was a devout Musalman, even conforming to the tenets of the orthodox school of faith. He was regular in the performance of religious observances. Once he told me, "I have not performed a single congregational prayer alone for the past several years." Even during his illness he would send for the Imām and force himself to perform the prayer behind him. Assiduous in offering the prayers founded on the practice of the Prophet ﷺ, he also performed the voluntary prayers during the night. If he could not somehow offer these supererogatory prayers during the night, he made up for these before the dawn prayers as allowed by the Shafiī school. I have seen him standing behind the Imām during his last illness and except for the three days when he had

1 *Saladin*, pg. 230.

2 *Saladin*, pg. 232.

3 *Saladin*, pg. 233-234.



fallen into a stupor, he never missed his prayers The poor-due [zakāt] could never become incumbent upon him since he never possessed, throughout his life, property of such estate and effects as was necessary to make him liable to pay that tax. Boundless in generosity, he gave away whatever he possessed to the poor and needy, and, at the time of his death, no more than forty-seven dirhams of silver and one of gold were found in his possession. He left no other property or goods.

He always kept the fast during the month of Ramaḍān. He had to omit the fast once which he got noted down by Qāḍī Fāḍil. Before his last illness he scrupulously made up for this involuntary omission against the advice of his physician. 'I do not know when death will overtake me,' said he; and, true to his words he gave up his soul soon after the repayment of that omission. The Sultan ardently desired to accomplish the pilgrimage to Makkah but he could never get time to fulfil his desire. During the year he died he had an intense desire to set out for the pilgrimage but he could not somehow leave for it.

He delighted in hearing the Qur'ān recited to him and it was not unoften that he listened to three or four chapters of the Holy Scripture from the battlement guards whom he sometimes visited during the night. He listened to the Qur'ān with all his heart and soul till tears trickled down his cheeks. He had also a fancy for listening to the sacred Traditions. He would ask everybody present to sit down and listen calmly while the Traditions were read out to him. If any reputed Traditionist visited the town, he would himself go to attend his lecture, sometimes he would himself relate a Tradition, his eyes brimming with tears. He would sometimes pause on the field of battle, between approaching armies, to listen the Traditions read out to him. He held the tenets of faith so reverently that it was on his command that a heretical mystic, al-Suhrawardī was executed by his son al-Malik al-Zāhn.

The Sultan had an unflinching trust and confidence in the beneficence of Allah. He used to turn with his heart and soul towards Allah in the moments of difficulty. Once Sultan was present within Jerusalem which then lay almost helpless before the besieging Crusaders. The Sultan had, however, refused the request to leave the city. It was a cold wintry night before Friday when I was alone with the Sultan, we spent the whole night in prayers and supplication. I requested the Sultan, late after mid-night to take a little rest but he replied, "I think you want to sleep. Go and take a nap." After a short while when I went to him for dawn prayers, which we more often performed together, I found him washing his hands. "I didn't sleep at all," said he. After the prayer was over, I said, "I have had an idea which may be of benefit to us. You should address yourself to Allah Almighty and beseech Him for help." He asked, "What should I do for that?" "Today it is Friday," said I, "You should take a bath before leaving for the Aqsā Mosque and also make some offerings secretly by way of charity. When you reach the mosque, offer a special prayer of two rakāts between the Call and congregational prayers, at the place where the Prophet had offered prayers during the Ascension. I have read in Tradition that the supplications made at that time are favoured with acceptance. You should thereafter beseech Allah thus, 'O my Lord, having lost all resources, I turn to Thee for help. I now submit to Thee, for, Thou alone can help Thy faith to attain success at this critical juncture.' I hope that Allah shall accept your supplications." The Sultan did likewise. I was by his side when I saw his head touching the ground in prostration and tears trickling down his beard on the prayer carpet. I did not hear what was he beseeching unto the Lord but I witnessed the signs of his prayer being answered before the day was over. Dissensions overtook the enemy camp from where we got heartening news for the next few days, till they broke their camp for Ramla by Monday morning.<sup>1</sup>

### Death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

On Wednesday, the 27th of Safar, 589 AH, died Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the faithful ally of Islam, after working his way up to the summit of his ambition, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.<sup>2</sup> Thus describes Ibn Shaddād the last days of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn:

It was in the night of the 27th of Safar, and the twelfth day since he fell ill, that the Sultan's illness took a serious turn.

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 5-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Abū al-Fidā*, 3/90.

He had become too weak by then. Shaykh Abū Ja'far, a pious and saintly person, was requested to stay within the castle during the night, so that if the Sultan were to breathe his last, he might be available for recitation of the Qur'ān at the last moment. It appeared as if the time of the Sultan's eternal rest was drawing near. Shaykh Abū Ja'far was sitting by his bed-side, reciting the Holy Qur'ān while the Sultan lay unconscious for the last three days, regaining his consciousness only for brief intervals in-between. When Shaykh Abū Ja'far recited the verse, *He is Allah other than Whom there is no other God, the Knower of Invisible and the Visible*<sup>1</sup>, the Sultan opened his eyes and smiled. His face lit up and he said joyfully, "Verily, this is correct." No sooner had he uttered these words that his soul departed. It was before dawn on Wednesday, the 27th of Safar when the Sultan passed away. The day of his death was for the Muslims, a misfortune such as they had never suffered since they were deprived of the first four Caliphs. The fort, the city and the entire world appeared to be lamenting over his death. Whenever I was told earlier that sometimes people longed for offering their own lives for others, I thought it was just a figurative expression, but, I learnt, on the day the Sultan died, that it could really happen. So, I was one of those who would have then gladly parted with their lives if there had been the slightest possibility of saving the life of the Sultan by our sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Shaddād writes that the Sultan left nothing except one dinar and forty-seven dirhams when he died, nothing else did he leave by way of houses, or goods, or villages, or gardens, or any personal property.<sup>3</sup> He had not left even as much that could suffice to defray his burial expenses and it had to be met by obtaining a loan in his name, while the shroud was provided by his minister, Qāḍī Fāḍil.

### Personality of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn

A devout Muslim as he was, the dominant notes of his character were an acute sense of justice, charitableness, tenderheartedness, patience, and courageousness. Ibn Shaddād writes that he held courts twice a week on each Monday and Tuesday, which were attended by the chiefs of state, scholars, jurists and Qāḍīs. Great and small, everyone found the door open. He used to read all the petitions and himself sign the orders dictated by him. He never allowed anyone to leave him without meeting his requirement. At the same time he also kept himself busy in the recollection of Allah.

If anybody had any complaint to make, he would listen to him patiently and give his judgment. Once a man lodged a complaint against Taqī al-Dīn, the Sultan's nephew, who was immediately summoned to the court for answering the charges. On another occasion a man brought a suit against the Sultan himself who immediately made necessary investigations. Although the claim of the person presenting the suit was not established, the Sultan granted him a robe of honour and a handsome grant before allowing him to leave the court.

Kind and noble of heart, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was full of gentleness, patience and tenderness, and could never tolerate any injustice. He always overlooked the mistakes of his associates and servants; if anything unpleasant was heard by him, he never allowed his annoyance to be betrayed to the person concerned. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, once, asked for water which was somehow not procured for him. He reminded five times for it and then said, "I am dying of thirst." He drank the water which was brought thereafter without saying anything more.<sup>4</sup> Another time when he wanted to take bath after a prolonged illness, he found the water too hot. He asked for some cold water to be brought in. The servant twice splashed the Sultan with cold water which caused him unpleasantness owing to his weakness but he simply said to the servant, "Tell me, if you want to get rid of me." The servant apologised and the Sultan instantly forgave him. Ibn Shaddād has narrated a number of incidents exhibiting Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's charity and goodness of heart.

So generous and open-handed was he that sometimes he gave away the provinces conquered by him. After he had

1 Sūrah al-Ḥashr, 22.

2 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 249-250.

3 *Ibid*, pg. 6; *Saladin*, pg. 375.

4 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 21.

conquered Āmad, one of his generals Qurrah Arslan expressed a desire for the city and the Sultan granted it to him.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he sold even his personal estates and effects for presenting a gift to his visitor. The treasurers of the sultan always used to keep a secret balance for the emergencies, for, left to himself, the Sultan would have given away the last shell.<sup>2</sup> The Sultan once cynically remarked that there were certain people for whom money and dust were alike, “I know,” says Ibn Shaddād, “that he was indirectly referring to his own views in this regard.”<sup>3</sup>

The Sultan never allowed his visitor, even if he was a pagan, to leave him without a gift or some mark of recognition.<sup>4</sup> The ruler of Saida once paid a visit to the Sultan whom he welcomed with open arms. The Sultan not only entertained him but also explained the tenets of Islam to him. He regularly sent ice and fruits to Richard, his greatest foe, during the illness of the latter.<sup>5</sup>

He was of so noble disposition and kind of heart that he could not see anyone in distress without being moved. Once an old Christian woman came to him seeking her baby. The old woman, screaming and in flood of tears, told the Sultan that her baby had been taken away from her tent by the bandits. She had been told, the woman said, that only he could help her to get her child back. Touched by her lamentation the Sultan broke into tears and asked his men to find out from the slave market where her baby was. After a short while her baby was brought back and the woman departed praying for the welfare of the Sultan.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Shaddād relates that the Sultan was very kind to the orphans. Whenever he found such a child he entrusted him to someone or himself made arrangements for his up-bringing. Similarly, he was always grief-stricken to see the aged and infirm, whom he considered to be his special charge.<sup>7</sup>

### Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn — a Scholar

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had a good grounding in the religious lore. He was aware of not only all the Arab tribes and their genealogy but even the pedigree of famous Arab horses, which testifies to his wide knowledge of the history of Arabs. He was always keen of gathering information from his courtiers and associates.<sup>8</sup> It has been reported by certain historians that he had also committed the *Hamasa*<sup>9</sup> to memory.

Writing about the youthful days of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Lane-Poole says:

To judge by later years, his literary tastes tended to the theological, he loved poetry indeed, but less than keen dialectic, and to hear holy traditions traced and verified, canon law formulated, passages in the Koran explained, and sound orthodoxy vindicated, inspired him with a strange delight.<sup>10</sup>

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1 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 13.

2 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 13.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid*, pg. 24.

5 *Saladin*, pg. 355.

6 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 26.

7 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 28; *Saladin*, pg. 372.

8 *Al-Nawādir al-Sultaniyah*, pg. 27.

9 A collection of Arabic poetry.

10 *Saladin*, pg. 73-74.

## Collapse of Fatimids

The rise of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn signalled the fall of the Fatimid<sup>1</sup> power which had established a separate Caliphate in Egypt. It lasted for 266 years from 299 AH to 567 AH. The Fatimids had introduced strange cults in the Islamic faith and practice, changing its tenets and doctrines, rules of conduct and behaviour out of recognition. A reputed historian al-Maqrizī has given a few examples of the orders promulgated by the Fatimids in his book *al-Khulal wa al-Āfthār*. He writes:

In 362 AH, the law of inheritance was amended. If a person left behind him a daughter along with a son or a nephew, or the uncle, the daughter excluded all others from succession. Any violation of this law was treated as an evidence of enmity with Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ. Visibility of the new moon or the beginning of a new month no longer remained necessary as the Ramaḍān and ʿĪd were ordered to be observed in accordance with the officially computed calendar.

Tarāwīḥ was banned throughout Egypt by a Royal edict in 372 AH. A man who was found in possession of the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* of Imām Mālik was punished.

In 393 AH, thirteen persons were punished for performing Ṣalāt al-Ḍuḥā. Two vegetables, that is, water-cress and marsh-mellow were prohibited in 395 AH, because Caliph Muʿāwiyah and ʿĀʾishah (the wife of the Prophet ﷺ) were reported to have been fond of these. During the same year, curses and imprecations (upon the first three Caliphs and the Umayyads), were ordered to be displayed prominently on the walls of all mosques, shrines, and other public buildings. Wine was made lawful in 411 AH by the Fatimid Caliph al-Zāhir al-Ayzaz Dīn Allah. On the one hand, tumultuous scenes of extravagant luxury, debauchery, and drunkenness had become a common sight; on the other, famine and disease were working havoc among the lesser folk. During this period of the cruellest suffering people used to gather round the Royal castle and cry, 'Hunger, Hunger.' The callous indifference of the rulers, at last, gave rise to pillage and plunder.

In 424 AH, when the heir-apparent to the Fatimid throne, who was then only four years of age, drove through the well-decorated bazars of the Capital, people prostrated themselves before him.

It had become almost a rule among the Fatimids to raise the children of tender age to the throne of Caliphate. Mustanṣir bī Allāh was of only seven years when he ascended the throne, Āmir bī Aḥkām Allāh of five years, one month and a few days, Al-Fayyāḍ bī Naṣr Allāh of five years and ʿAzid lī Dīn Allāh of 11 years at the time of their being vested with the office of Caliphate.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to power in Egypt marks the beginning of an era when Shīʿī creed began to vanish, with the restoration of the spiritual authority of the orthodox Islam. Schools were established in numerous places for the instruction of the masses. Gradually all traces of heretical beliefs and practices which had been adopted by the people during the Fatimid rule of about three hundred years were effaced from Egypt. The annalist of Egypt, al-Maqrizī writes:

The Shīʿah, Ismāʿīliyyah, and Imāmiyyah creeds became so extinct that they have left no trace in the whole of Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

The Fatimid rule in Egypt was indeed a scourge for Islam. During the three hundred years of its supremacy it continued to play a cruel joke with the tenets and doctrines, performances and practices enjoined by the Scripture and Traditions.

1 The Fatimides claimed descent from Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ but the historians are unanimous that they were not descendants of the Prophet ﷺ. The progenitor of the sect was either a converted Jew or Magian. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyab, Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, and al-Maqrizī have discussed the question in greater detail and reached the conclusion that the Fatimides were not from the lineage of the Prophet ﷺ.

2 *Al-Maqrizī*, abbreviated from pg. 352-359.

3 *Ibid.*

The orthodox schools were looked down upon and its followers were persecuted, while the dissenters, sceptics and non-conformists preaching licentiousness and libertine conduct were elevated to the positions of Power and authority. Al-Maḡdisī has summed up the achievements of the Fatimids rule in these words:

It was an affliction that Islam had to endure during the entire period of the Fatimid rule. It began in 299 AH and came to an end in 567 AH. The Shīʿah came to have a dominant position under them, oppressive imposts and taxes were levied upon the people. The Shīʿah, particularly those belonging to the Ismāʿīliyyah sect, had a corrupting influence on the beliefs and faith of the simple and impressionable people belonging to the hilly tracts of Syrian border as also of Nusayris and Daruziz tribes. The Ḥashashīn (or the hashish-eaters) were also one of the Ismāʿīlī sects. The Ismāʿīlī preachers were successful among the above-mentioned tribes of the border areas owing to their ignorance and naivety, but they could not gain influence among other people. It was during their reign that the Franks captured many Muslim cities in Syria and northern Iraq. Their onslaught continued till the Atabeks came into power and a defender of Islam, as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was, came forward to crush their power. He regained the Islamic territories and saved the bondsmen of Allah from the Fatimid scourge.<sup>1</sup>

The revolutionary change brought about by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Egypt was a harbinger of great religious and moral revival and, therefore, it is only natural that the historians of that period have expressed satisfaction over it. Al-Maḡdisī had himself witnessed the traces of a revolution that had transformed Egypt only 29 years before his birth. The collapse of Fatimid rule finds expression in these words of al-Maḡdisī:

Their kingdom collapsed and with it ended the age of degradation for Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Another scholar of repute, Ibn Qayyim, has given an impressive account of the rise of the Bāṭinīs and their downfall at the hands of Nūr al-Dīn al-Zangī and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in his book *al-Sawāʾiq al-Mursalah*. He says:

The teachings of the Batinites died a natural death in the East but it began gradually to gain ground in the West until it became a force, deeply entrenched, to be reckoned with. They assumed the charge of a few cities in North Africa, from where they advanced to Egypt and succeeded in taking possession of that country. They founded al-Kahira (modern Cairo). Their missionaries continued to enlist adherents and diffuse their esoteric cult. It is they who produced the *Tracts of the Brethren of Purity*. Ibn Sīna (Avicenna) wrote the *Isharat* and the *Shifāʾ* and certain other tracts under their influence, for he has himself acknowledged that his father was one of the missionaries of the Fatimid Caliph Ḥākim bī Allāh. During the reign of the Fatimids the path of the Prophet became an impious blasphemy, the collections of the Traditions were proscribed and only a few remained who read these books or secretly acted on these precepts. A dominant note of their teachings was that reason should be given precedence over revelation and the guidance of the apostles of Allah.

Gradually a greater part of the territories in North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Ḥijāz submitted to the Fatimid rule. Iraq also remained under their sway for about a year. Sunnīs were treated like Dhimmīs under their rule and the Christians at least enjoyed the security of life and property, unknown to the Sunnīs. Innumerable religious scholars were executed or expired in their dungeons.

At last, Allah Almighty came to the rescue of the Muslims who were saved from the clutches of the Fatimids by Nūr al-Dīn and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Islam appeared to be at the verge of extinction in these countries but the revolution brought about by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn granted a new lease of life to it. Muslims were indeed overjoyed at this miraculous revivification of Islam at a time when people had begun to ask one another, 'Who can now dare to defend the faith of Allah?' It was at such a moment that Allah enabled His bondsmen to get back Jerusalem from the Crusaders whom the defenders of Islam fought with indomitable courage and chivalry."<sup>3</sup>

1 Al-Maḡdisī, 1/201.

2 Ibid, 200.

3 Ibn Qayyim, 2/233-234.

The chronicles of time show that the news of the fall of the Fatimid kingdom was generally received with a sense of relief and pleasure by the entire Islamic world and by the Muslims of Syria, in particular.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn stemmed the tide of the Crusaders which saved the world of Islam from the bondage and exploitation of western nations for centuries to come. On the other hand, he plugged a great source of evil by overthrowing the Fatimid Caliphate which was spreading the contamination of Bāṭinī and Ismāʿīlī cults to other Muslim lands from its centre in Egypt. The esoteric doctrines preached by these sects during the last two or three centuries were responsible for the then prevailing intellectual waywardness and the degeneration of the faith and morals. The world of Islam cannot, indeed, forget either of these two achievements of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn nor can any Muslim, living in any part of the world, ever fail to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyubī.

### The Third Crusade

The fall of Jerusalem and the terrible rout of the Crusaders at the Battle of Ḥiṭṭīn threw the whole of Christendom into a violent commotion. Reinforcements from Europe poured forth into Palestine. Almost all the principal sovereigns and eminent generals of the then Christendom, such as, Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, Richard Coeur de Lion, King of England, and Philip Augustus, King of France, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders sallied forth with their armies against the lonely Sultan and his few chiefs and relatives who had to defend the honour of Islam.

### Negotiations of Peace

Both the parties which had been arrayed against each other in a sanguinary combat for five years at last got tired of the fruitless, harassing and decimating struggle. They came to an agreement at Ramla in 588 AH, which recognised Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn as the sovereign of the whole of Palestine leaving the principality of Acre in the hands of the Christians. Thus, ended the Third Crusade and with it the task entrusted to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn by Allah. Lane-Poole describes the inglorious end of the Third Crusade in these words:

The Holy War was over, the five years contest ended. Before the great victory at Ḥiṭṭīn in July, 1187, not an inch of Palestine west of the Jordan was in the Moslems' hands. After the Peace of Ramla in September, 1192, the whole land was theirs, except a narrow strip of coast from Tyre to Jaffa. Saladin had no cause to be ashamed of the treaty. The Franks indeed retained most of what the Crusaders had won, but the result was contemptible in relation to the cost. At the Pope's appeal, all Christendom had risen in arms. The Emperor, the Kings of England, France, and Sicily, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders, hundreds of famous barons and knights of all nations, had joined with the King and Princes of Palestine and the indomitable brothers of the Temple and Hospital, in the effort to deliver the Holy City and restore the vanished kingdom of Jerusalem. The Emperor was dead, the Kings had gone back, many of their noblest followers lay buried in the Holy Land, but Jerusalem was still the city of Saladin, and its titular king reigned over a slender realm at Acre.

All the strength of Christendom concentrated in the Third Crusade had not shaken Saladin's power. His soldiers may have murmured at their long months of hard and perilous service, year after year, but they never refused to come to his summons and lay down their lives in his cause. His vassals in the distant valleys of the Tigris may have groaned at his constant requirements, but they brought their retainers loyally to his colours, and at the last pitched battle, at Arsuf, it was the division of Mosul that most distinguished itself for valour. Throughout these toilsome campaigns Saladin could always count on the support of the levies from Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as from northern and central Syria; Kurds, Turkmans, Arabs, and Egyptians, they were all Moslems and his servants when he called. In spite of their differences of race, their national jealousies, and tribal pride, he had kept them together as one host—not

<sup>1</sup> Al-Maḡdisī, 1/198-199.

without difficulty and twice or thrice a critical waver. But, the shrinking at Jaffa notwithstanding, they were still a united army under his orders in the autumn of 1192, as they had been when he first led them 'on the Path of God' in 1187. Not a province had fallen away, not a chief or vassal had rebelled, though the calls upon their loyalty and endurance were enough to try the firmest faith and tax the strength of giants. The brief defection, quickly pardoned, of a young prince of his own blood in Mesopotamia only emphasises, by its isolation, Saladin's compelling influence over his subjects.

When the trials and sufferings of the five years' war were over, he still reigned unchallenged from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Libyan desert, and far beyond these borders the king of Georgia, the Catholicos of Armenia, the Sultan of Konza, the Emperor of Constantinople, were eager to call him friend and ally.

To such allies he owed nothing, they came not to aid but to congratulate. The struggle was waged by Saladin alone, except at the last, when his brother came prominently to the front, one cannot point to a single general or counsellor who can be said to have led, much less dominated, the Sultan. A council of war undoubtedly guided his military decisions, and sometimes overruled his better judgement, as before Tyre and Acre, but in that council it is impossible to single out a special voice that weighed more than another in influencing his mind. Brother, sons, nephews, old comrades, new vassals, shrewd Kady, cautious secretary, fanatical preacher, —all had their share in the general verdict, all helped their Master loyally according to their ability, but not a man of them ever forgot who was the Master. In all that anxious, laborious, critical time, one mind, one will was supreme, the mind and the will of Saladin.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Saladin*, pg. 358-360.