

LETTERS TO JERUSALEM

(8)

# JERUSALEM LIBERATED

THE LEGACY OF SALADIN



Su`ud Abu Mahfuzh

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(8)

## **Jerusalem Liberated**

**The Legacy of Saladin**

**Su`ud Abu Mahfuzh**

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## **Preface**

History witnesses to the loyalty of Muslims concerning the charge with which Allah has entrusted them; namely exerting themselves to keep the sanctuaries of all Divine messages. For, the Muslim nation is the sole nation that believes in all prophets and messengers.

The Muslim conquest of Jerusalem represented a new era, in which that piece of land restored its sacredness. Then, `Umar removed the filth from the Jewish sanctuaries that were damaged by the Romans. Furthermore, the Muslims traced all the sanctuaries of the preceding messengers and managed to preserve its sacredness and purity.

Due to our deep loyalty to the Almighty and our faithful desire to shed light upon various issues concerning Jerusalem, we chose to bear the responsibility of publishing this precious series under the title *Letters to Jerusalem*. Here is the eighth issue of our series: *Jerusalem Liberated: The Legacy of Saladin*.

Al-Falah on its part, appreciates the efforts made by Asmaa Yusuf in translating this precious book. Thanks should also be extended to Talaat Faruq, Fatima McCarthy, and Naseema Mall, our revisers and editors, under whose guidance and supervision the subject matter took form.

Also, we would like to express our indebtedness to Su`ud Abu Mahfuzh, the author, for his efforts in the cause of Islam.

Finally, all praise and thanks are due to Allah without Whose Help and Guidance nothing can be accomplished.

General Director

*Sheikh Muhammad `Abdu*

## **Pre-Saladin Era**

### **First: Domestic Challenges and Fading of the Ummah's Spirit of Jihad**

The seventh century A.C. witnessed the most significant event in history; the advent of Islam and the rushing of its forces eastward to eliminate the Persian Empire that had been a thorn in the world's flank for many ages, and northward to expel the Byzantine Empire from the Levant (the cradle of their religion; Christianity). In this century, the Islamic state seized parts of Turkey, Egypt, North Africa, Andalusia, the islands of the Mediterranean Sea and Sicily, reaching the south of France. Consequently, Western Europe was overwhelmed with the religion of Islam as well as being overwhelmed linguistically, economically, socially and intellectually. The overthrow, being firm and comprehensive, disturbed the European tribes that had moved north and west and had reverted its previous life patterns. Therefore, they united as nations and turned to be self-sufficient by concentrating on agriculture. The result was the emergence of local languages independent of the Latin language. Besides, agricultural prosperity led to the emergence of classes of knighthood and nobility, and the Jewish migration from the land of Khazars and Eastern Europe resulted in them playing functional, educational and usurious roles within their characteristic Ghettos.

On the other side, the battle of Yarmuk was decisive in the history of mankind, since its military, political, economic, social and cultural repercussions led to the eventual shrinkage of Constantinople and to the waning of the Roman hegemony. The powerful Umayyad surge was augmented by their victory in the battle of Yarmuk, yet the dormancy that pervaded the Islamic world following the reign of the Abbasids provoked many internal conflicts. Consequently, the pillars of the Islamic state cracked down, its grip slackened, its power collapsed and Jihad was suspended.

Following this expansion of the Islamic state, the Umayyad surge started to suffer internal challenges that impacted adversely on all political, economic and social spheres in the Muslims' life. Such challenges radically changed the Islamic society by corrupting the creed and turning it into polytheist rituals that had nothing to do with Islam. This challenge had emerged in the time of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, developed in the first century A.H., spread dangerously in the second century and ruined the essence of the Islamic

state in the third century. Thereupon, dozens of Batiniyya sects and public calls arose and renegade emirates and sultanates were established all over the Islamic State. Moreover, some Caliphs went astray due to the Batiniyya's influence that eventually resulted in divesting the Caliph in Baghdad of his power; the Caliph's only role was then limited to delivering the Friday sermon and minting. Meanwhile, the outrageous role of the Jews had emerged, as they assumed control of the affairs, tightened their grip and employed supporters.

In the meantime, the Islamic surge paused, the role in Jihad almost ceded, and, no longer having powerful armies, their fortresses collapsed. Consequently, the Saffarids, Samanids, Qaddahids, Kharmis, Mazdakis, Qarmatids, and many other sects who had multiple names but the same objective, appeared. The Islamic Levant, like the Islamic Maghrib and like Egypt, had been subjected to an attack that ruined the essence of Islam, usurped its role, distorted its teachings and converted its followers. Had it not been for Allah's Care and His Preservation of His Book, Islam would have ceased to exist.

The threat reached Makkah, al-Madinah, the Black Stone and even Prophet Muhammad's tomb (pbuh). In the course of time, the person praying in either al-Azhar Mosque or the two Sacred towns (Makkah and al-Madinah) would stand up upon mentioning the name of al-Hakim Bi-Amrillah, the Sultan of Egypt. This coherent, powerful and multi-divided circle had helped in spreading terror, horror, theft and robbery, disunity and rupture. This approach continued for ages and was strengthened by a number of fanatics who had corrupted the people's religion. Tracing their dynasties, origins or cultures, you would find them closely linked to the Jews and propagandists of the Talmudic thought.

The pages of history were blackened through the barbarous activities carried out by the Jews and Magi who were skillful in infiltration, insinuation and manipulation of others to achieve their contemptible goals by spreading sedition and disturbances. Without possessing the secret of its power, Islam would have ceased to exist. More importantly, history books would reveal the deeply rooted link between the Crusaders and those Jews who had sought to undermine Islam. The Jews paved the way for the Crusaders by using a series of agreements, alliances and role exchanges.

The climax came with a resounding coup d'état in Baghdad against the nominal Caliph there, half a century prior to the arrival of the Crusaders. However, Allah entrusted the Seljuk Turks to preserve the status of the religion, confronting both internal and external

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enemies, and achieving a resounding victory in the battle of Malazgirt in 1071 A.C., a quarter century before the capture of Jerusalem. Such a victory coincided with the battle of az-Zallaqah in Andalusia that prolonged the Islamic role there for more than four centuries. However, this great victory was not well invested as the Assassins assassinated Alp Arslan, the great Seljuk king.

### **Second: The Emergence of Wars for Dominance among Muslims and Wars of Independence among Christians**

The weakness of the Fatimid Caliph in North Africa bred adverse consequences in the state in general and in Jerusalem in particular, as the system of 'garrisons' in the Mediterranean collapsed, Sicily fell and the Umayyad Caliphate in Andalusia was succeeded by an abominable sectarian government system. Thereupon, the wars for dominance spread among the Muslims while the war of independence was active among Christians. When the Fatimid Caliphate was transferred to Egypt, the Fatimids were submerged in seas of internal struggle with the people of Egypt and the Levant. The Hamadani state gave in to the Byzantine state as their fortresses fell down and then Byzantium ruled the North of the Levant, establishing inefficient systems as buffer zones between them and the Muslims.

All this prepared the stage for the European people to invade the Mediterranean later, starting with the Vikings and then the Normans. Hence, the republics of the Italian ports were tempted to try to invade us and the feudalist knights were also tempted to aspire after the wealth and riches of the east. They were also inspired by the spread of Biblical prophecies and the fanatic spirit of the Crusades that was in turn kindled by the sweeping internal Arab conflicts from Andalusia to the Levant.

Thus, the Arab existence in the islands of the south was removed and the Mediterranean was controlled, and the scene was prepared for a Crusade towards the East encouraged by a Jewish family who had pretended to convert to Christianity and had monopolized the papal throne. In the lap of such a Jewish family Pope Urban II grew up to inaugurate the cruciferous project of delivering Jerusalem from the hands of the 'pagans'. He bore the sin of declaring the start of the invasion of the Orient under overt and covert goals.

### **Third: The Start of the Frankish Crusades**

Due to the afore-mentioned challenges, the timing of the Crusades was crucial due to the then prevailing disintegration and dispute in the Islamic countries that weakened them

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on all domains. The Crusaders (the Franks) achieved great victories, building upon the state of disunity that had affected the Muslims and sapped their strength. Even Jerusalem could not escape that attack since the Seljuks and Fatimids alternately controlled it several times immediately before being invaded by the Franks in 1099 A.C.

The first outburst involved successive campaigns of more than one million fanatic Europeans, supported by other native inhabitants, particularly the Maronites, Armenians and some Syrians. Such a state would have encouraged the dwindling of Islam in the region, but this was prevented when Almighty Allah ordained for the non-Arab Muslims to surge from the Levant to defend the religion. The confrontation started by the European tribes against the Muslims in the Mediterranean coincided with the emergence of new Islamic powers among the tribes coming from the Asian borders. The most notable of these powers were the Seljuks, who achieved a great victory in the battle of Malazgirt in 1071 A.C. which was not less than the conquest of Constantinople. In Malazgirt, the great sultan, Alp Arslan vanquished the Byzantine armies and captured their emperor, Romanus Diogenes.

Historians considered this battle as the culmination of the great battle of Yarmuk since it paved the way for the downfall of the Byzantine Empire and the rise of its Ottoman counterpart, and no doubt, the Seljuk surge contributed to it. However, the sudden death of Sultan Alp Arslan, the fall of Seljuk leaders between the hammer of the Byzantines and the anvil of the Fatimids, the Fatimid occupation of Jerusalem and the Crusaders' eventual control of them, all led to the emerging Ottoman star being clouded for a while. It was due to the fact that the region was afflicted by two ferocious attacks over two successive centuries by the Crusaders from the West and the Mongols from the East. And while the Crusaders annihilated about ten million Muslims, mostly from the Arabs, the Mongols exterminated about forty million Muslims, mostly from the non-Arabs. Nevertheless, Islam managed to rise again, for Jihad revives it while slackness abates its flames.

In short, the Mercy of the Almighty and the greatness of this religion were manifested at the same time with the battle of Malazgirt in the East and the battle of az-Zallaqah in the West. The two battles resulted in absorbing the European outburst, though the latter lasted for centuries.

That is why the Jews work on brewing the geopolitical conditions that had prevailed during the wars of the Franks, when division, partition, treachery and dependency were

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common. From the very beginning, the Franks tried to invade Egypt, even before occupying Jerusalem, because Egypt was always the key to Jerusalem.

However, for alliance reasons, they postponed it to pay the price at Hittin when both the forces of Egypt and the Levant united against them. And haunted by their defeat at Hittin, they scrutinized the situation and proposed recommendations lest the nation would unite once again. They would allocate funds and utilize capabilities to derive lessons from history. In the context of these studies, Yeshua Brams, an expert in history of the Crusades, was awarded the highest prize from the president of the Hebrew state in 1969 when he proved that "Cruciferous antecedent will not be repeated with Israel."

## **The Accumulative Arrangement and Constant Preparation of the Generation of Liberation**

### **First: The Process of Change and Educational and Intellectual Preparation of the Ummah**

The Ummah achieved victory at Hittin because it was involved sincerely in a doctrinal-based battle of change, which limited the expansion of the Crusades, starting from 1125 A.C., immediately after getting rid of Hasan as-Sabbah, Sheikh of the Assassins in 1124, who – along with his followers – had murdered many Muslim leaders and scholars.

The process of change was led by a group of senior scholars, the foremost of whom was Sa`id al-Harawi. Many honorable leaders thus responded to the group such as `Imad ad-Din Zangi Aq Sunqur, his son Nur ad-Din, Asad ad-Din Shirkuh, Saladin al-Ayyubi and Najm ad-Din Ayyub. Sure enough, success was on their side because they placed the path of the right creed uppermost in their hearts, gave up deviation and misguidance, recognized their usurper enemy coming from overseas and were not preoccupied with unimportant details at all. The first to light the spark for change was the Seljuk Turks who saved the Ummah and resisted its enemies.

An-Nizhami, al-Ghazali and al-Kilani schools played a great role in helping the Ummah come out of the abyss towards which it was driven. It was these ideological schools that prepared and raised the generation of resistance and victory. They sowed victory and the hero Saladin reaped it.

On the whole, al-Qadiri and al-Ghazali schools played a very important role in the movements of reform, revival and social change, and in preparing the Ummah for Jihad in the Cause of Allah. Both of these schools contributed to the Jihad movement led by the Zangid, went on preparing the sons of immigrants from the usurped countries, resurrecting their role and planting rational people on the borders of the lands of the Crusaders. Their demographical impact is still existent around Palestine in the form of clans descending from their *Mujahidin* disciples.

The schools of Saladin and the garrisons of immigrants were the first line of defense that turned into a front line of attack in the victorious liberation march against the expansion of the Crusades. The Shafi`i school of Saladin was the most popular and the

largest in the country to the extent that whoever wandered there felt that it was an independent country by itself and that the expenses spent on it were innumerable.

It was this school that reformed mankind in the whole region for many successive centuries until the Protestants fulfilled their wish of controlling it. It was given to them as a present in the middle of the nineteenth century in the same period that the first Jewish quarter "Montefiore" was established in Sacred Jerusalem.

### **Second: The Role of Scholars in Dealing with the Rule and Rulers**

Imam `Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani focused his campaign against princes and scholars since their righteousness results in the whole Ummah being righteous. He repeatedly warned his disciples, and also warned the public, against listening to bad scholars. In this regard, he said, "Do not be misled by those scholars who are ignorant of Allah, the Almighty. All their knowledge is against them, not for them. They are conversant with Almighty Allah's Judgments, yet ignorant of the Almighty, Exalted and Glorified be He."

He was committed to attack the rulers and shower them with sharp critiques without fearing any blame, "Kings have become gods for many people." Al-Kilani went on shouting loudly, "The religion of Muhammad is in danger; its fences are falling down and its bases are tumbling down, so come on, rebuild what was broken down and establish what was dismantled, O sun, O moon, O day come on! Come on!" The two Imams, al-Kilani and al-Ghazali, worked assiduously to revive the sciences of the religion in order to awaken the community and to revive its spirit, "All your hearts are dead. You are only active when seeking the mundane world."

The Zangid state adhered to Islam as a creed, an approach and a way of life. Attention in Islamic education focused on preparing the whole Ummah for all types of Jihad by preparing, raising and refining the souls to strive in the Cause of Allah.

Meanwhile, they tried as much as possible to redress perverse trends among people, stirring an Islamic revolution against the prevailing doctrinal and social corruption and collaborating to free themselves from the prevailing state. Nur ad-Din was a great reformer; moreover, he urged the kings to follow the rule of justice and equity, to give up the unlawful and to engage in noble deeds.

Under such an atmosphere, Saladin - who dismissed worldly pleasures after entering the service of the martyr Nur ad-Din - emerged. It was Nur ad-Din who reformed the

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Ummah that bred Saladin who, in turn, systematically molded an elite generation and drew up a perfect strategy that led to the liberation of the Sacred Aqsa.

### **Third: The Role of Berbers, Turks, Kurds and Suburbanites in Protecting the Ummah**

In these circumstances, the non-Arabs played the role of protecting the religion and maintaining the abode of Islam. And while Almohads fought courageously westward, the Turks and Kurds did the same eastward. The strategy of sultan Nur ad-Din Mahmud, the martyr, came to pave the way for the great upheavals founded by Saladin and completed by the kings of the Mamelukes.

Egypt was the millstone in the strategy of Nur ad-Din and the southern Levant was the basis in the blueprint to protect Egypt. For, in the long term, Egypt was the store of treasury, stock, equipment and supplies and was the older brother of the Arabs. So, it is no wonder that the spirit of the first flame of Jihad sparked there.

Reaching a climax in 1124 A.C., the tide of the Crusades began to subside before the walls of Aleppo; the city that launched the second stage of the liberation and recovery wars. It was preceded by the first stage in Mosul, and followed by the third in Damascus. Then, the fourth and decisive stage sparked in Cairo, Egypt.

The sacrifices of Mosul and the endurance of Aleppo had had a manifest effect in abating the vehement Crusades and in launching the Islamic recovery campaigns. The perseverance of Damascus, however, had its role in achieving unity among the Arabs and paving the way for the historic battle of Hittin. Such perseverance was so amazing that Ibn `Asakir dedicated an eighty-volume book entitled *History of Damascus* about it alone.

Damascus, the capital of the Levant, aborted the project of the Crusades, keeping the Crusaders as an alienated group based on brutal military force. Hence, when the Ummah regained its military power, those Crusaders were vanquished and their temporary role came to an end.

In addition, Mosul led an Islamic awakening consisting of Sunni Muslims and their non-Arab leaders who united the Ummah on the basis of Jihad and resistance. The Seljuk presence contributed in maintaining the spirit of resistance, which was also nourished by the advent of new surges of immigrants from al-Ghuzz (Turkish) tribes. Rather, the great King Zangi, who assumed power of Mosul, initiated a turning point in the history of the

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city, and, in turn, Mosul contributed in transforming the history of the Levant as a whole. Such a mood is still present in the Levant up till now.

It was due to the Mercy of Allah that the emergence of Nur ad-Din coincided with the Crusaders turning to Egypt after they had despaired of appropriating the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula.

However, Nur ad-Din, who besieged the Crusaders in the East, preceded them in Egypt in the West, where he planted Shirkuh and his nephew Saladin, thereby besieging the Crusaders in Egypt too and eliminating their existence in the Levant. Nur ad-Din took an interest in Saladin and assigned him with the people of distinction under his service, keeping his company either when traveling or in residence.

During his reign, the Muslim society was coupled with the religion and the legal justification in militarizing the society was to carry out the duty of Jihad - participating in wars and covering its expenses. He also subordinated the agricultural sector to fulfill the requirements of the then prevailing military sector. Hence, he established a strong military economy based on utilizing agricultural resources in the interest of military efforts.