

JERUSALEM – IN MEDIEVAL FAḌĀ'IL LITERATURE

(from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries)

INTRODUCTION

'The term *Faḍīla* (Arab., pl. *Faḍā'il*) means an excellence or excellent quality. The plural *Faḍā'il* indicates a definite category of literature.'¹ This literature exposes the excellencies of things, individuals, groups, places and regions.

The *Faḍā'il* literature includes among other things the merits or virtues glorifying the sanctity of Sham and that of Jerusalem. This essay will limit itself to the *Faḍā'il* literature concerned with Jerusalem.

The term *Faḍā'il* were first used by a few tenth century geographers, as al-Muqaddasī (d. 375/985), who as his name indicates originated in Jerusalem, and al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1004) who dedicated some chapters in their works about the sanctity of Jerusalem.²

A large collection of works called *Kutub al-Faḍā'il* (Books of virtues) were devoted among other places, to *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) and which developed in the eleventh century. They were based mainly on *Ḥadīths* (traditions), legends and folk literature. Among the treatises written at this time, there were a few extracts issued from *Khuṭab* (orations) and conferences which were delivered in Jerusalem, Damascus and Baghdad around the twelfth century.³

The theme of the *Faḍā'il* aimed at encouraging people to visit Jerusalem in order to gain certain spiritual rewards. This aspect of the *Faḍā'il* literature, emphasizing the visit or even the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its advantages thereof was written and

¹ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed., s.v. 'Fadīla' by R. Sellheim.

² Shams ad-Dīn Abū Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Muqaddasī, *Ahsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rīfat al-Aqlām* (*Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*), ed. M.J. de Goeje, 2nd. ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1906) pp. 165-173. Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ibrahīm al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtasar Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, (Leiden: Brill, 1885) pp. 93-97.

³ Emmanuel Sivan, 'The Beginnings of the Faḍā'il al-Quds Literature', *Israel Oriental Studies*, vol. I (1971): 263-271.

compiled in works called *Kutub al-Ziyārāt* (Books of pilgrimage).

Another collection of books related to the *Faḏā'il* was *Kutub al-Jihād* (Books of Holy War) concerning the concept of Holy War to recapture Jerusalem and the conquered areas from the enemy. They were written largely in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The present essay intends to serve as a modest contribution to the development of the Medieval *Faḏā'il* literature from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries.

Some modern Arab scholars as A.S. Atiya,⁴ Ṣ al-Munajjid⁵ and A.L. Tibawi⁶ have contributed to the study of the *Faḏā'il* literature, as well as other non-Arab scholars who have added valuable observations in this field namely, C.D. Matthews,⁷ S.D. Goitein,⁸ J.W. Hirschberg,⁹ G. Vajda,¹⁰ E. Ashtor,¹¹ E. Sivan¹² and H. Büsse.¹³

⁴ Aziz Suryal Atiya, *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).

⁵ Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Munajjid, *Ar-Rab'a-i-Faḏā'il Dimashq*, (Damascus: Al-Maṭba'at al-Hāshimiyya, 1950); 'Tashīh al-Shām li l-Raba'i', *Majallat Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya*, vol. 2 (1956): 382-396; 'Qit'a min Kitāb Mafqūd al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik li l-Muhallabī', *Majallat Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya*, vol. 4 (1958): 49-55.

⁶ Abdul Laṭif Tibāwi, *Jerusalem: Its Place in Islam and Arab History*, (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969).

⁷ Charles D. Matthews, 'Kitab Ba'ithu n-Nufus', *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 14 (1934): 284-293; vol. 15 (1935): 51-87 (arabic text); 'Ibn Taymiyya - Qa'ida fi Ziyarat al-Quds', *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, vol. 56 (1936): 1-21.

⁸ Solomon Dob Fritz, 'The Sacred Character of Palestine in the Muslim Piety', *Yedi'ot Haḥevra Līdi'at Eretz Israel*, vol. 12 (1945/6): 119-126 (in Hebrew); 'The Historical Background of the Erection of the Dome of the Rock', *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, vol. 70 (1950): 62-66; 'The Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine in Early Islam', *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, (Leiden: Brill, 1966): 135-148; 'Les Noms Arabes de Jerusalem', *Minḥa Līhūda*, (Jerusalem, 1950): 62-66.

⁹ Joachim Wielhelm Hirschberg, 'The Sources of Moslem Traditions Concerning Jerusalem', *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, vol. 17 (1951/2): 314-350.

¹⁰ George Vajda, 'La Description du Temple de Jérusalem d'après Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik, ses éléments Bibliques et Rabbiniques', *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 247 (1959): 193-202.

¹¹ Eliyahu Ashtor, 'Un Ouvrage Arabe sur Les Titres de Gloire de Jérusalem', *Tarbitz*, vol. 30 (1961): 209-214.

¹² Emmanuel Sivan, 'La Genèse de la Contre-Croisade: Un traité Damas-

Yet, I believe there still remains an open field for future systematic researches for there is a considerable lack of material which may throw light on the idea of the *Faḍā'il* as to when they originated and how they developed in the subsequent centuries.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SANCTITY OF JERUSALEM

For long centuries, Jerusalem had been an important trade centre as the cities of Antioch and Alexandria. They were the centres where the intellectuals, religious and merchants met. There, the Arabs met to exchange goods, customs and ideas.

But Jerusalem had developed a distinguishable character which the Jews and Christians had ever since honoured. It was characterized holy by its many prophets who preached the commandments of God and guided the people in the right path.

The sanctity of Jerusalem must have been known to Muḥammad in his early youth, when he was engaged in commerce and visited al-Shām, (Syria). Later on, he became more and more interested in the Holy city of the Jews and Christians as he became more conscious of his *Risāla* (mission), as the prophet of God.

In his early mission, Muḥammad had formulated the precept of turning towards Jerusalem for prayers.¹⁴ But this lasted only for a period of eighteen months.¹⁵ Muḥammad then ordered the *Qibla* (direction of prayers) towards Makka.¹⁶ J.W. Hirschberg and M. Rodinson are of the opinion that since Muḥammad could not win

quin du Début du XIIe Siècle', *Journal Asiatique*, (1966): 197-224; 'Le Caractère Sacré de Jérusalem dans l'Islam aux XIIe-XIIIe Siècles', *Studia Islamica*, vol. 27 (1967): 149-182; 'The Beginnings of the Faḍā'il, al-Quds Literature', *Israel Oriental Studies*, (1971): 263-271.

¹³ Herbert Büsse, 'Der Islam und Die Biblischen Kultstätten', *Der Islam*, vol. 42 (1966): 113-147.

¹⁴ It was a custom that both the Jews and Christians turned towards Jerusalem for their prayers. 'As in the Nestorian church, these exercises were to be carried out at sunset and sunrise and also during the night'; Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed*, (Middlesex: Richard Clay 'The Chaucer Press' Ltd., 1971).

¹⁵ Muslim tradition is divided as to whether, in the pre-Hijra days Muhammad turned towards Jerusalem or towards the Ka'aba of Makka. But it is generally agreed that during the first eighteen months of Muhammed's stay at Madina, he and his adherents followed the Jewish custom of turning towards Jerusalem; Hirschberg, art. cit., p. 315.

¹⁶ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra II, 136-139.

the Jews on his side, he therefore changed the direction of the *Qibla* to Makka, stressing the importance of the latter being an Arab centre.¹⁷ Hirschberg then commented that Muḥammad, 'by this step (he) of course diminished the importance of Jerusalem.'¹⁸ Hirschberg's statement is too hasty for a conclusion and for this reason it demands some further considerations.

Jerusalem still remained (and remains) sacred in the eyes of Islām on account of its past, being the holy place where God's revelation took place. But the *Ka'aba* was established as a *Qibla*, thus going back to the early times of Abraham and traditionally also connected to the name of Adam. Some Quranic verses throw some light on God's desire to turn towards Makka for prayer rather than Jerusalem. Though it is not stated specifically, we can always follow some interpretations which could lead us to some conclusions.

To start with, one may ask the question, why did Makka take the place of Jerusalem? Quoting the Qur'an: 'The Fools among the people will say: "What hath turned them from the *Qibla* to which they were used?"...' ¹⁹ The 'Fools' here are interpreted to be 'the people who do not think' and are often referred to as the Jews.²⁰ They were constantly seeking to 'entangle in their talk' the followers of the prophet.²¹ Another verse reads: 'And we appointed the *Qibla* to which thou wast used, only to test those who followed the apostle from those who would turn to their heels (from the Faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous, except to those guided by God and never would God make your faith of no effect...' ²² The words 'the *Qibla* to which thou wast used', are referred, according to al-Suyūṭī to the *Ka'aba*.²³ He then directed the prayer to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Holy city). Thereafter changed to Mak-

¹⁷ Hirschberg, p. 135. Rodinson, op. cit., pp. 126-128.

¹⁸ Hirschberg, p. 135.

¹⁹ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 2, 142.

²⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn Abū Faḍl 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Qur'ān Karīm bi Tafsīr*, (Damascus: Maṭba'at al-Mallāḥ, 1969) p. 29.

²¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur-an, Text, Translation and Commentary*, vol. I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Murray Printing Company, 1938) p. 57, no. 140.

²² *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 2, 143.

²³ Al-Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 29.

القبلة التي كنت عليها: أي * أولا، وهي الكعبة وكان صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي اليها فلما هاجر امر
باعتقال بيت المقدس تالفا لليهود صلى اليه سنة او سبعة عشر شهرا ثم حول * .

ka. Another verse is interpreted as an evidence of the truth in the desire shown by God that all believers should turn their face towards the sacred mosque, that is the *Ka'aba*: '... Now shall we turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the sacred mosque; wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction...' ²⁴ Furtheron, the people of the Book (*al-ladhīna 'utū al-Kitāb*) that is the Jews and Christians, '... know well that that is the truth from their Lord ...' ²⁵

An interesting episode is related by Al-Ṭabarī, concerning the Caliph 'Umar (634-644) on his visit to Jerusalem in 636. When 'Umar asked Ka'b: ²⁶ 'Where do you think we should put the place of prayers?' He answered: 'By the Rock.' 'By God, Ka'b' said 'Umar, 'you are following Judaism'. Then 'Umar continued: 'We were not commanded concerning the Rock, but we were commanded concerning the Ka'aba!' ²⁷

Besides being the direction for prayer Makka was to become the centre for pilgrimage. God has revealed to Muḥammad that Ibrahīm had, 'settled some of (his) offspring in a barren valley' near a temple of God which he and his son Isma'īl had built. ²⁸ They had purified it and made it a place of pilgrimage and asylum.

But according to Goldziher, there was a time when the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (65-86/685-705) had erected the Dome of the Rock (mosque) in Jerusalem with the intention of diverting the Muslim pilgrimage from the Ka'aba in Makka to Jerusalem. ²⁹ 'Abd al-Malik's intention was to outdo his rival 'Abdallah b. Zubayr, (d. 72/692) who exploited the holiness of Makka, his capital, for his political ends. This theory was challenged by S.D. Goitein. ³⁰ He commented that the great Muslim historians of the ninth cen-

²⁴ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 2, 144; Al-Suyuti, op. cit., p. 30; Ali, op. cit., p. 58, no. 148.

²⁵ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 2, 144.

²⁶ Ka'b al-Aḥbār (d. 652 or 654 a.d. in Ḥims). He was a Yamanite Jew who accepted Islam under one of the first two Caliphs and acted as teacher and counsellor to the court of Mu'awiyah (d. 680). Ka'b is held responsible for introducing a number of Jewish beliefs and practices into Islam.

²⁷ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh ar-Rusul wa l-Mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al., vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901) pp. 2408-1409.

²⁸ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 14, 40.

²⁹ Ignacz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern, tr. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, vol. 2 (London: Allen & Urwin, 1971) pp. 35-37.

³⁰ Goitein, op. cit., (Leiden: Brill, 1966) pp. 137-139.

tury, who dealt with the conflict between the 'Umayyads and Ibn Zubayr,³¹ as well as the earlier geographers, including Al-Maqdisī (or al-Muqaddasī, d. 375/985), a native of Jerusalem never made an allusion to 'Abd al-Malik's intention to divert the pilgrimage from Makka to Jerusalem. One of Goitein's considerations was that 'Abd al-Malik, himself an Orthodox and observant Muslim could have never violated such a basic commandment, being one of the five pillars of Islām for, 'he would have marked himself as a Kafir (unbeliever) against whom Holy war was obligatory.'³² This is only a general historic consideration which we can reasonably accept.

After Makka and Madina, Jerusalem became to be honoured as the third Holy city in Islam. This tradition was collected in treatises called *Faḏā'il* literature. In a general sense, the term denoted laudatory works and in a stricter one, it indicated works expounding the merits of Muslim countries, towns and holy places. In fact we know of the existence of a *Faḏā'il* literature in treatises dedicated to Makka, Madina, Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Merv dating ninth and tenth centuries.³³ Strangely enough, there was hardly any mention of the merits of Jerusalem (or Shām) as early as the ninth century except for Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in the early tenth century. It was only in the late tenth century that geographers as al-Muqaddasī (d. 375/985), al-Muhallabī (d. 352/963) and al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1004) started to devote detailed chapters to Jerusalem, describing also its merits.³⁴ Other classical geographers dedicated only a few chapters to Jerusalem.³⁵

Jerusalem was exalted by a number of *Hadīths* which referred to it as *Bayt al-Maqdis*.³⁶ Other *Hadīths* dealt with worshipping in

³¹ Aḥmad ibn Yahya Al-Baladhūri, *Anṣab al-Ashrāf*, ed. S.D. Goitein, vol. 5 (Jerusalem: University Press, 1936) pp. 255-378. There is a detailed account about the conflict between Ibn Zubayr and the Umayyads.

³² Goitein, op. cit., p. 138.

³³ Carl Bröckelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1942) pp. 137, 138, 149. (Hereafter cited as Gal., and S for Supplement); Gal (S), vol. I, pp. 138, 139, 209, 230.

³⁴ Al-Muqaddasī, op. cit., pp. 165-173; Al-Munajjid, art. cit., vol. 4 (1958) pp. 49-55; Al-Hamadhānī, op. cit., pp. 93-97.

³⁵ Ibn Khurdadhbih (d. 280/893), Al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897), Iṣṭakhrī (d. 341/957) and ibn Ḥawqal (d. 367/977).

³⁶ Mujir al-Din, *Al-Uns al-Jalil*, (Cairo: Matba'at al-Sa'ada, 1861) pp. 213-214.

Jerusalem, which we likened to worshipping in Heaven.³⁷ One particular *Ḥadīth* considered al-Aqsa mosque of Jerusalem as one of the oldest after that of Makka.³⁸

A number of traditions concerning Jerusalem was handed to us through the Arab geographer of the tenth century, al-Hamadhānī: 'Visiting the Holy city was as noble an act as visiting the mosques of Makka and Madina.'³⁹ 'One prayer in Jerusalem outweighed a thousand prayers elsewhere... If a muslim fasted in Jerusalem for one day he would save himself from Hell.'⁴⁰

In Hamadhānī's book, there are some Qur'anic interpretations concerning Jerusalem which are quite significant. The Holy city was the abode of the children of Israel.⁴¹ It was referred to as the refuge on a height where there were watersprings and pasturage.⁴² Jerusalem was inherited by whoever God pleased.⁴³ It was the city: (a) where God had announced the birth of Isaac to Abraham, (b) the angels had appeared to David ascending the Wall of *Mihrab*, (c) the good tidings of John's (the Baptist) birth was announced. Jerusalem is the site of the *Ṣirāṭ* (the bridge which all mankind must cross on Judgement Day).⁴⁴

An interesting point regarding the *Ḥadīths* attributed to Holy places in Jerusalem was issued by J.W.Hirschberg saying: 'The Koran, though devoting a great deal of space to this subject, (re-

³⁷ Al-Hamadhānī, op. cit., p. 94.

³⁸ The Dome is the shrine of which the Aqṣā Mosque is the sanctuary. Strictly, the word Aqṣā is applied to the mosque built by 'Abd al-Malik not far from the Dome. The Aqṣā was rebuilt about 155/771 by the Caliph al-Manṣūr following an earthquake and was later modified by the Crusaders. Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn restored it later to Islām. Our earliest description of it dates from Ibn al-Faḡh al-Hamadhānī (op. cit. pp. 100-101) and Al-Muqaddasī (op. cit., pp. 168-171).

³⁹ A tradition included in all collections of *Ḥadīths*: Muwatta', Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Daūd, Nasa'i, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal & Tayalisi.

⁴⁰ Al-Hamadhānī, op. cit. pp. 95, 96; Shihāb al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al Arab*, (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1925) pp. 316-323; Matthews, art. cit., *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 14 (1934) p. 54; Mujir ad-Din, op. cit., pp. 203.

⁴¹ *The Qur'ān*, Sūra 10, 93.

⁴² *ibid.*, Sūra 23, 52.

⁴³ *ibid.*, Sūra 7, 125.

⁴⁴ Matthews, art. cit., *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 14 (1934) pp. 72, 80.

ferring mainly to eschatological descriptions of sacred sites) never mentions any definite locality.⁴⁵ This is true to a certain respect, but one perhaps should not exclude the fact that though the Qur'an does not refer to any definite locality yet an interpretation of certain verses of the Qur'an could be considered. The 'Holy Land' in the following verses was interpreted as being Palestine: 'Remember Moses said to his people . . . "O my people. Enter thy Holy Land which God hath assigned to you . . ."⁴⁶' and the "Temple" was referred to Jerusalem in another verse: "And to enter your people as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction as that fell into their power."⁴⁷ The first interpretation is quite important on considering the fact that Palestine was always considered to be Holy in Judaism and Christianity for it was the homeland of prophecy and of God's revelation.⁴⁸

These traditions and legends have come down to us in two possible ways. There is a strong possibility that behind the recorded *Ḥadīths* and legends there was a pre-existing influence of Jewish or Christian legends. The second possibility is that they were handed to us through a legend-creating faculty of Muslim writers. A conjecture which is hard to prove though attempts to derive certain legends from a Judaistic background have been already tentatively done by J.W. Hirschberg and S.D. Goitein.⁴⁹ Though parallel studies between Judaism and Islām can always lead us to some positive results, yet the tendency would be to derive any possible doubts of the origin of a tradition from one source. This is where I find a weakness in Hirschberg and Goitein's works. They tend quite often to originate many traditions regarding Jerusalem from a Jewish background leaving hardly any margin for some possible Muslim originality.

However in view of the close connections between certain circles of the early Muslim pietists with their Jewish counter parts,

⁴⁵ Hirschberg, art. cit., p. 344.

⁴⁶ *The Qur'an*, Sūra 5, 20-21; Al-Suyuti, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

التفسير: المقدسة، المطهرة، التي كتب الله لكم - امركم بدخولها وفي الشام

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, Sūra 17, 7; Al-Suyuti, op. cit., p. 371.

التفسير: المسجد، بيت المقدس

⁴⁸ Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibat Allāh ibn 'Asākir al-Dimashqī ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. Ṣ. al-Munajjid, vol. 10 (Damascus: Al-Maṭba'at al-Hāshimiyya, 1951) p. 172.

⁴⁹ Hirschberg, art. cit., pp. 314-350; Goitein, op. cit., (Leiden, Brill, 1966) pp. 135-148.

which in fact had already existed in the early days of Islām, it is quite possible then that some ideas about the sanctity of Jerusalem attested in Jewish sources found their way into Islām. I would also add that some other influence was exercised in this respect by the Christian monks and hermits. Mujīr al-Dīn has often quoted teachings about the Holy city which were heard by pious Muslims from Christian monks.⁵⁰

What kept these traditions alive was through the many pious Muslims who visited Jerusalem and honoured its sanctity. Mujīr al-Dīn mentioned some ascetics and mystics (known as *Ṣūfīs*) of the ninth and tenth centuries who have been reported to have visited and stayed in it,⁵¹ as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibrahīm ibn Adham, Bayazīd Bistāmi, Bishr al-Ḥafi, Ṣarī al-Saqatī who came from Iran or other Eastern countries. The example of the early mystics was followed by their pupils, above all al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) whose seclusion in the sanctuary of Jerusalem in the year 488/1095, described by himself in his book was reported by the chronicles as a remarkable historical event.⁵² 'I went to Bayt al-Maqdis', said he 'and everyday I used to visit the Temple Rock, (then) I used to close the door for meditation.'⁵³ In Jerusalem, al-Ghazālī wrote a part of his classic '*lḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* at least the epitome of the Muslim creed, called *Al-Risāla al-Qudsīyya* (The Epitome from Jerusalem) included in first section of the book.⁵⁴

FADĀ'IL AL-QUDS (MERITS OF JERUSALEM)

From the *Hadīths* and legends dating back from the tenth century, one gets the impression that Jerusalem commanded such a paramount place in the consciousness of the world of Islām.⁵⁵ This impression is wrong, for one has to consider that the belief in the sanctity of Jerusalem was common mainly among the inhabitants of the city itself and perhaps of its surroundings. Two reasons bring me to this conclusion. The first is the observation of the Persian traveller Nāsir-i-Khurasaw (d. 437/1046) about the

⁵⁰ Mujīr ad-Dīn, op. cit., p. 256.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 251-258.

⁵² 'Izz al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abi l-Karm Muhammad ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fi al-Ta'rīkh*, vol. 10 (Cairo: Maḡba' at al-Istiḡamat, 1929) p. 172.

⁵³ Abu Muḡammad ibn Muḡammad al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, ed. F. Jabre, (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1969) p. 38.

⁵⁴ Vol. I, p. 93, (ed. 1933).

⁵⁵ Sivan, art. cit., *Israel Oriental Society*, vol. I (1971) p. 265.

origin of the pilgrims to Jerusalem.⁵⁶ The second one is the lack of the reaction in the Sunnī countries, to the liberation of the city from the Fāṭimid heretical occupation (462/1070) and that of the Frankish infidel conquest (492/1099).⁵⁷

In the eleventh century we find some scattered material about the *Faḏā'il*. E. Sivan has laid some important foundation on one of the treatises regarding *Faḏā'il al-Quds*.⁵⁸ Other *Faḏā'il* literature was partially examined and edited by C.D. Matthews who wrote about Ibn al-Firkah's work on *Kitāb Bā'ithu al-Nufūs* and Ibn Taymiyya's treatise on *Qā'ida fi Ziyārāt al-Quds*. Also A.S. Khalidi who compiled the work of Shihab al-Dīn al-Maḡdisī on *Muthīr al-Gharām fi Ziyārat al-Quds wa al-Sham*.⁵⁹

The most ancient *Faḏā'il al-Quds* tract seems to have been composed in Jerusalem around 410/1019-1020 by Abu Bakr Muḡammad ibn Aḡmad al-Wāsiṭī.⁶⁰ He was a Khaṭīb (orator) at the Aqṣā mosque of Jerusalem. Until the arrival of the first Crusade, two other treatises of this genre were written. One is by Abū l-Ma'ālī al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajja ibn Ibrahīm al-Maḡdisī. He was a *Faqīh* (legist) who lived in Jerusalem in the middle of the eleventh century. Abu Ma'ālī composed a book entitled *Faḏā'il al-Quds wa l-Shām*.⁶¹ The other was composed by Abu Ma'ālī's disciple, Abū l-Qāsim Makkī ibn 'Abd al-Salām al-Rumaylī al-Maḡdisī. He was the celebrated Palestinian *Muḡaddith* and *Muḡtī* in the late eleventh century. His work was not complete for he was taken prisoner and finally executed by the Crusades during the conquest of Jerusalem (492/1099).⁶²

⁵⁶ *Sefer Nameh; Relation du Voyage*, tr. C. Schefer, (Paris: E. Leroux, 1881) p. 67.

⁵⁷ Abu Ya'īḤ Hamzat ibn 'Asad al-Qalānisī ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. H.F. Amedroz, (Beyrouth: Impremerie Catholique, 1908) pp. 99-134; Claude Cahen, 'La Chronique Abrégée d'al-'Azimi', *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 230 (1938) p. 373.

⁵⁸ Sivan, art. cit., *Israel Oriental Society*, vol. I (1971) pp. 263-271.

⁵⁹ Matthews, art. cit., *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 14 (1935) pp. 57-81; *ibid.*, *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, vol. 56 (1936) pp. 1-21; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maḡdisī, *Muthīr al-Gharām fi Ziyārat al-Quds wa l-Shām*, ed. A.S. Khalidi (Jaffa, 1946).

⁶⁰ Al-Maḡdisī, op. cit.

⁶¹ Brockelmann, *Gal (S)* vol. I, p. 567; Mujir al-Din, op. cit., p. 264.

⁶² Taj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Matba'at al-Hashimiyya, 1948) p. 20; Mujīr al-Dīn, op. cit.,

What is important about these three writers is that they all have been inhabitants of Jerusalem. Two of them bore the name 'al-Maqdisī' which means a native of Jerusalem or even Palestine. The three of them had high functions in Jerusalem and consequently they must have been somewhat influential. Their works must have created some interest within the faithful to honour the sanctity of Jerusalem. But what were the principal motives behind these new awakening treatises of the *Faḍā'il al-Quds*?

Both al-Wāsiṭī and Abū l-Ma'ālī expounded four major merits of the Holy city about: (1) the three monotheistic religions,⁶³ (2) the hour of the resurrection and the last Judgement, (3) the sacred sites within and around the city,⁶⁴ (4) attracting pilgrims to settle in Jerusalem. The last major merit was divided into three other sub-divisions: (a) the importance of Pilgrimage to *al-Quds* and the prayers said in it,⁶⁵ (b) the protection and reward given to the faithful, (c) the call to set out for pilgrimage from Jerusalem to Makka.⁶⁶ Al-Wāsiṭī based his treatise mainly on a number of *Ḥadīths* most probably copied from the tenth century geographers, whereas al-Ma'ālī wrote a most detailed manual of worship to be used by the Muslim on visiting Jerusalem.⁶⁷

THE FAḌĀ'IL AFTER THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

When Jerusalem was taken by the Franks on 15th, July 1099 (492a.h.) the Muslim reaction was not so strong as it is expected to be. With those many traditions and legends dealing with the sanctity of Jerusalem and its merits, one would get the impression that the conquest of Jerusalem by the Franks had to produce a 'chaotic situation' on the Muslim side. And yet information is so scarce.

The twelfth century chronicles left much to be desired in their accounts and sometimes were even too general. Ibn al-Qalānisi (d. 555/1160) in his account gave the impression that the conquest of Jerusalem by the crusaders was nothing else but like that of

pp. 264-265; Franz Rosenthal, *History of Moslem Historiography*, (Leiden: Brill, 1952) p. 388.

⁶³ Sivan, art. cit., *Israel Oriental Society*, vol. I (1971) pp. 266-271.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ For the abridged version of this manual, see Matthews, art. cit., *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 15 (1935) pp. 64-69.

any other town.⁶⁸ Moreover, the sad poems of the Muslim refugees from the conquered territories seemed to have made no mention of the fall of Jerusalem.⁶⁹ How could one explain this phenomenon, considering the fact that the occupied city was in Islam the third rank in sanctity?

E. Sivan remarked that the Muslims did not understand the religious meaning of the Frankish occupation in Jerusalem.⁷⁰ This statement does not seem to be quite correct. The inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surroundings may have been so much shocked at the Crusade's invasion and the result thereafter that for some time they could hardly react to it. This may explain the 'silence' of *Faḏā'il* literature at least for a period of time. Another reason is possible, that the sanctity of Jerusalem could only be gradually felt by the Muslims after the infidels (i.e. the Crusaders) had cruelly massacred and desecrated the Muslim image of Jerusalem.⁷¹ Perhaps an appropriate word would be that the Muslims (certain Muslims, probably peasants) did not 'fully evaluate' the sanctity of Jerusalem before the Franks' invasion. After all this seems to be quite common. Man only appreciates things, when after he possessed them, loses them.

S.D. Goitein tried to explain that this Muslim indifference was due to the fact that the little importance which the city of Jerusalem had as a demographic, administrative and intellectual centre could have lowered its prestige in the Muslim world.⁷² If this is true then al-Ghazālī would have not stayed in Jerusalem for some time to preach.

But there were certain Muslim milieus, who considered the Franks from the very beginning as infidels, and exhorted their compatriots to wage Holy war. However it seems that these militants of *Jihād* did not make allusion to Jerusalem.⁷³ There was

⁶⁸ Al-Qalanīsī, op. cit., p. 134; Cahen, art. cit., p. 373.

⁶⁹ Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd al-Isfahānī, *Kbarīdat al-Qaṣr wa Jarīdat al-'Aṣr*, ed. M.B. al-Athīrī-J. al-Sa'īd, vol. 2 (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Iraqī, 1955).

⁷⁰ Sivan, art. cit., *Studia Islamica*, vol. 27 (1967) p. 151.

⁷¹ Al-Qalanīsī, op. cit., p. 171; Cahen, art. cit., p. 369; Ibn Munqidh ibn Murshid Usāma, *Kitāb al-'Itīḫār*, ed. P.K. Hitt, (Princeton: University Press, 1930) pp. 69, 139.

⁷² Goitein, art. cit., *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, vol. 70 (1950) pp. 104-108; *ibid.*, op. cit., (Leiden: Brill, 1966) pp. 140-145.

⁷³ Sivan, art. cit., *Studia Islamica*, vol. 27 (1967) p. 152.

one exception. The Damascene, jurisconsult 'Ali ibn Ṭāhir al-Sulamī did in fact make mention of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, there is a record of two authors who prophesied in their dreams the fall of Jerusalem. They are important because they show a religious consciousness of Jerusalem in Islam within certain milieus. The first one is found in a necrological note by the chronicler Sibṭ al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256) on Abū l-Qāsim Samarqandī, a Damascene learner living in Baghdad. According to Samarqandī, Muḥammad had announced to him in a dream (before 489/1096) that a great calamity would come over Islam. Sometime after Jerusalem was captured.⁷⁴ The second one is the Sevillian judge, Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī who described the fall of the third Holy city in Islām.⁷⁵

Though al-Sulamī had remarked in his *Kitāb al-Jihād* (c. 499/1105) that Jerusalem for the Franks was the summit of their hopes, yet it seems that he was not so much surprised by its fall and if he had expressed his wish to see Jerusalem returned back to Islām, he did not consider its conquest as the supreme ideal of a future *Jihād*.

It was only in 538/1144, after the Frankish capture of Edessa that 'Imād ad-Dīn Zankī (521-542/1127-1146), sovereign of Mosul and Ḥalab, had decided to wage war against the Franks. Thereafter, Jerusalem becomes Zankī's ultimate aim in his *Jihād*. One of the poets said:

'He (Zanki) will turn tomorrow towards Jerusalem'.

Another poet wrote:

'If the conquest of Edessa is the plain sea,
Jerusalem and the Sāhil are its coasts.'⁷⁶

Perhaps Zankī may have been motivated to turn towards Jerusalem as his objective end of the *Jihād*, just as the Franks made Jerusalem the capital of the Latin Kingdom. But on the other hand, Zankī must have been stimulated to wage war, solely for Jerusalem's

⁷⁴ Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Muzfar Yūsuf ibn Qazawaghī Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī *Mir'at al-Zamān*, (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Dā'rat al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1952) p. 181.

⁷⁵ *Kitāb al-'Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim*; ed. Constantine (1928) pp. 212-213. Quoted in E. Sivan, art. cit., *Studi a Islamica*, vol. 27 (1967) p. 153.

⁷⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Isma'īl Abu Shāma, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fi Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, ed. M. Ḥilmī-M. Aḥmad, vol. I (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif, 1962) p. 40; Al-Iṣfahāni, op. cit., vol. I, p. 110.

religious character. If so, where did this idea originate from? Either the two propagandists, both of them Sāhil refugees, Ibn Munīr and Ibn al-Qaysarānī may have influenced Zanki or else he may have been motivated through ideas propagated by Sulamī and Samarqandī. Both theories are difficult to prove. Whatever the case may be Zankī became increasingly interested in Jerusalem and made enormous efforts to propagate the idea of *Jihād*.

Nūr ad-Dīn (511/1117-569/1174) followed his father's ambitions and made successive calls to reconquer Jerusalem not only for its religious character but also for Al-Aqṣā mosque, by tradition being the 'umbilicus of the earth', and the site where Muḥammad ascended to heaven.⁷⁷ Ibn al-Qalānisī proclaimed:

'Let the town of Jerusalem be purified by the shedding of blood;
Let the Sahil be purified for prayer by the sword.

(Indeed) Nūr ad-Dīn's decision is strong
and the steel of the lance is directed to al-Aqṣā.'⁷⁸

In order to succeed in his campaigns against the Franks, Nūr ad-Dīn called for 'Unity' in Islām. This unity was a striking force which brought the Muslim together to fight for one cause - Jerusalem and its sacred sites.

Nūr ad-Dīn was enlightened by Tiqat al-Dīn ibn 'Asākir's (d. 571/1176) religious ideas on the *Jihād*. As a matter of fact, Ibn 'Asākir composed the first treatise of this genre (i.e. Jihād).⁷⁹ He had already lectured about the *Jihād* in Damascus in 545/1150. The title of the (lost) treatise was *Glory Titles in Makka, Madina and Jerusalem*. The part which dealt with the merits of Jerusalem was contained in *Ta'riḫ Dimashq*. This part of the book was highly praised in Damascus 560/1164 by quite a large audience.⁸⁰ From scattered notes, we learn that there was in Jerusalem quite a good number of pilgrims, learned men and *Ṣūfīs*.⁸¹ Most probably the Muslims who participated in these conferences could have transmitted the ideas to others. This fact also proved that partici-

⁷⁷ Hirschberg, art. cit., pp. 324-325.

⁷⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, op. cit., vol. I, p. 158.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 548.

⁸⁰ Ibn 'Asākir, op. cit., vol. I, p. 62.

⁸¹ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 13-14; Abī Ḥasan ibn Abī Bakr Al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt ila Ma'rifat al-Ziyārāt*, ed. J. Sourdel - Thomine (Damascus, Institut Français, 1953) p. 24; Arthur John Arberry, *An Introduction to the History of Sufism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944) p. 68.

pation in these conferences was to create a certain 'awakening consciousness' in the religious value of the city.

Moreover the *Faḍā'il* propaganda expanded through the famous Egyptian traditionalist al-Silafi, who left a complete treatise written in 575/1180 entitled *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis al-Shāmi*.⁸² Contemporary poets equally contributed to this glory of the 'virtues' of Jerusalem, frequently evoking the mosques of al-Aqṣā and al-Sakhra.⁸³

When Nūr al-Dīn died (570/1174), Jerusalem became the focus point in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's campaigns, who by now had taken possession of Egypt. When he marched on to Syria he sent a letter to the Caliph (571/1175) implying the idea that 'Syria cannot restore order with its present government; there is no man (who is) able to pursue the conquest of Jerusalem up till the end.'⁸⁴ He also underlined the fact that Syria could be used as a base for future military operations. The Caliph agreed on his demand and encouraged him to proceed with his military plan towards the conquest of Jerusalem.

But in order to fulfill his ambitions, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn had to lead campaigns against the Lords of the Zangid kingdom who were hindering the 'Unity' for the *Jihād*. Once the Islamic unity could be realized, there was no doubt that Jerusalem could be taken. When Mosul was conquered in 582/1186, Jerusalem became an immediate step and all efforts were being done to prepare for the great exploit. A letter sent by 'Imād ad-Dīn (d. 598/1201) at the end of 582/1186 declared that: 'The swords of Jihād stir with cheerfulness in their sheaths, the cavalry of God is ready to charge. The Dome of the Rock rejoices in these tidings that the Qur'an, which was deprived, will come back to it.'⁸⁵ Soon after the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn on 3rd July 1187 (584), the letters relating to this victory announced: 'We will soon march on to Jerusalem ... for a long time the night of error has enveloped this city; here comes the dawn of salvation which will shine over it.'⁸⁶

Finally, it was the reconquest of Jerusalem by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn on

⁸² Brockelmann, Gal (S) vol. I, p. 624.

⁸³ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. I, p. 254; *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 59, 116.

⁸⁴ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. I, p. 243; Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fi Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'*, vol. 10 (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'at al-Amīriyya, 1916) p. 146.

⁸⁵ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 66.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

2nd October 1187 (583), that led its importance to its climax. More than seventy letters were sent all over the kingdom and the Muslim world to announce the great event and at least twelve poems and two *Khuṭab* (orations) were devoted to Jerusalem.

It was the religious importance of the Holy city which the Sultan decided to concentrate his efforts on the propaganda of Jerusalem.⁸⁷ What characterized this religious propaganda, was not the thematic embellishment but the solemn atmosphere which reigned in Jerusalem. Moreover the historic character of the event coincided with another important event, that of the commemoration day of Muhammad's ascent into heaven from Jerusalem.⁸⁸

The *Faḏā'il* literature did not terminate after the reconquest of Jerusalem. A treatise was written by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 655/1257) on *Faḏā'il al-Quds al-Sharīf* (The Virtues of Noble Jerusalem). This treatise rendered homage to the Ayyubid exploit as well as the idea of *Jihād* in general.⁸⁹ A whole movement of poets, authors and religious people encouraged by Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn were stimulating the faithful with a religious propaganda campaign on the sacred character of the city. Ibn al-Jawzī and Bahā' al-Dīn ibn 'Asākir (d. 632/1234) read in public the writings of the latter's father, the renovator of the *Faḏā'il*.⁹⁰ Bahā' al-Dīn had compiled an exhaustive collection on the *Merits of Glory of al-Aqsa Mosque*.⁹¹

In an effort to defend and preserve Jerusalem, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had initiated three important steps: (a) The fortification of the city at the end of 587/1191; (b) The inhabiting of Jerusalem following the *Ḥadīth*: 'He who lives in Jerusalem is considered as a warrior for the cause of God ... to die in Jerusalem is to die almost next to heaven';⁹² (c) The encouraging of pilgrimage into Jerusalem: 'He who visits Jerusalem ... will enter Paradise,' said one *Ḥadīth*.⁹³

⁸⁷ Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 206.

⁸⁸ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 97-99, 101, 105; Al-Qalqashandī, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 500.

⁸⁹ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 66.

⁹⁰ Ibn 'Asākir, op. cit., vol. I, p. 629.

⁹¹ Though the book was lost, a good part of it was reconstructed. It constituted one of the sources of *Bā'ithu al-Nufūs ilā Ziyārāt l-Quds al-Maḥrūs* compiled at the beginning of the 14th century by the Damascene Ibn al-Firkāh, ed. C.D. Matthews, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, vol. 15 (1936) pp. 57-81.

⁹² Matthews, art. cit., pp. 79-80.

⁹³ Abū Shāma, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 94.

Another *Ḥadīth* claimed that, 'he who performs the ritual ablutions and prays in Jerusalem, obtains forgiveness of his sins'.⁹⁴

Visiting and honouring Jerusalem as the Holy city was the theme of a number of books called *Kutub al-Ziyārāt*. This is the third and last classification of the *Faḍā'il* literature. These books were written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries namely by Abū Bakr al-Herawī (d. 611/1214), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 765/1363) and Muwaffaq al-Dīn al-Khazrajī (d. 780/1378). What is interesting about these works is that they deal not only with visiting the Holy places of Jerusalem but also incite the Muslims to preserve them within the Islamic empire and defend them against infidels whose presence would pollute the shrines. Finally, one has to note that these authors as well as orators who encouraged the pilgrimage to Jerusalem never diminished in glory the two Hejaz cities of Makka and Madīna, the first two Holy cities of Islām.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

No complete work has yet been concluded on the history of the *Faḍā'il* literature. There has been quite a good number of material studied but much is left obscured. The *Faḍā'il* literature comprises the virtues or merits of Jerusalem, its sacred sites and the Holy land (Palestine/Shām). The merits quoted in traditions and legends were compiled by illustrious Muslim authors to propagate the sanctity of the Muslim sacred places.

There were three reasons in order to propagate the merits attributed to Jerusalem: (a) To increase the devotion and honour of the sacred places; (b) To focus the idea of the *Jihād* by the importance of the Holy city (third rank in Islam); (c) To encourage the faithful to visit and stay in Jerusalem.

In the first instance the *Faḍā'il* literature developed in the early ninth and tenth centuries. In the eleventh century only a few treatises of *Faḍā'il al-Quds* were written. They were in a way a reminiscence of the traditions and legends propagated earlier. Then with the capture of Jerusalem by the Franks, there was a 'pause' for some period of time. Eventually, Jerusalem became the main

⁹⁴ Matthews, art. cit., p. 80.

⁹⁵ Goitein, art. cit., *Journal of American Oriental Studies*, vol. 70 (1950) pp. 104-108; Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Walid al-Fabri al-Ṭartūshī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith wa l-Bid'a*, ed. M. Ṭalbi, (Tunis: Impremerie de Tunisie, 1959) pp. 100, 116-7.

objective end of the *Jihād*, as a conscientious duty to liberate Jerusalem from the infidels. Finally, when Jerusalem was recaptured new treatises were compiled. These treatises encouraged the faithful to visit and stay in Jerusalem.

The patriotic consciousness of Jerusalem became very important during the Crusade period. The efforts by Ṣalāḥ to unite the Muslims for the Jihad was praiseworthy and the recapture of Jerusalem has by far reached the zenith of the *Faḏā'il*. Now, Jerusalem became increasingly strengthened by its own identity of sanctity and its recapture not only symbolized an Islamic victory but it unified all the traditions and legends that for long years have been established. If these traditions and legends in the early centuries had a fade or no meaning at all to the people, with the recapture of Jerusalem the *Faḏā'il* marked a significant importance which is indelible to Islām.

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