

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CALIPH ABU BAKR TO THE FIRST MUSLIM LIBERATION OF ISLAMICJERUSALEM

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ABSTRACT: The first Muslim fath/ liberation of Islamicjerusalem in the seventh century was a remarkable historical turning point for the Holy Land. After centuries of exclusion, peace and inclusivity in Holy Land were finally established. Moreover, this historical event raised the standing of Islam between two superpowers, Byzantium and the Persia. As this vital event occurred in the era of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, several studies have documented his significant role. However, limited literature focuses on the role of his predecessor, the first Muslim Caliph, Abū Bakr al-Siddiq. Since his appointment as Caliph, Abū Bakr made crucial contributions not only to strengthen the foundation of the Islamic State in Madinah but also to liberate Islamicjerusalem. Investigation and analysis based on primary sources and historical records show that Caliph Abū Bakr was determined to continue the Prophet's plan to liberate Bayt al-Maqdis. Therefore, this study examined Caliph Abū Bakr's contributions during his reign in paving the way for the liberation of the Holy Land. His significant contributions included sending out 'Usamah's army, securing domestic threats and uniting Muslims during the Apostates War, prioritising and directing armies to al-Sham, and even the selection of his successor, all of which has contributed to the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis. The result of this study supports the view that Caliph Abū Bakr's contributions enabled the first Muslim liberation of Islamicjerusalem to be achieved merely a few years after his demise, during the reign of his successor, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb.

KEYWORDS: Bayt al-Maqdis, Holy Land, Prophet Muhammad, Abū Bakr, Fath, strategy.



INTRODUCTION

The connection of Muslims to Islamicjerusalem as their Holy Land began in the early days of the prophethood of Muhammad in Makkah. The first Muslims'

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connection to this blessed land commenced with them turning their faces in prayer towards their first Qiblah, later some of the Qur'anic verses revealed in Makkah were directly or indirectly pointing the early Muslims towards this land. The importance of the Holy Land led the Prophet and his companions to prepare for the liberation of Islamicjerusalem. Indeed, the first Muslim liberation of Islamicjerusalem in the seventh century is a remarkable victory and a triumph for Muslims and has been celebrated throughout Muslim history. However, because the event occurred in the era of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, many people attribute this liberation solely to him. Consequently, much research has typically focused on the role of the second Caliph as the leader during the liberation, and some contemporary research has focused on the role of the Prophet in laying the foundation to achieve this momentous juncture. In contrast, there are limited literature on 'Umar's predecessor, namely Abū Bakr. Therefore, this research will highlight his rarely discussed contributions to complete the missing link in analysing the event of the first Muslim liberation of Islamicjerusalem.

Indeed, Abū Bakr's contributions to the liberation of Islamicjerusalem were strongly rooted in his spiritual, religious, and political connections to this land even before his reign. These connections were strengthened, like those of other Muslims, through Quranic verses and Hadīth and through his close relationship with the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Abū Bakr's connection was always one step ahead; whereas the Sahaba (companions) prayed in secret towards Bayt al-Maqdis, Abū Bakr built a mosque in the courtyard of his house and would recite the Quranic verses that would attract the people in Makkah to see him weep while he prays (Al-Bukhārī 1997, v.3:276). While the Sahabah listened to the Quranic stories and prophecies, Abū Bakr would bet his money through placing a large wager on the Roman-Persian War revealed in Surat al-Rum (Quran 30:1-5) which was taking place in the vicinity of the Holy Land. This was culminated with Abū Bakr being given the honorific title "al-Siddiq" (steadfast affirmer of truth) by the Prophet on for his affirmation of the Prophet's Night Journey to al-Aqsa Mosque in Islamicjerusalem. Making this epithet a part of his name as a reminder of this event and his relation with Islamicjerusalem. Abū Bakr's position as the closest confidant and advisor to the Prophet and being present at almost all the junctures, gave him better comprehension of the Prophet's plans and strategies.

After the Prophet's death, Caliph Abū Bakr had to continue the liberation of Islamicjerusalem without the direct guidance of revelation. It represents an understanding of Caliph Abū Bakr's initiatives based on Prophet Muhammad's strategic plan towards the liberation of Islamicjerusalem during his lifetime. As a result of extensive research, this paper explores four main points regarding what Abū Bakr had contributed during his reign to liberate Islamicjerusalem as the first Muslim Caliph. Firstly, Caliph Abū Bakr had firm intentions to send the army of 'Usamah because he knew it was part of the Prophet's strategic plan to liberate Islamicjerusalem. Moreover, Caliph Abū Bakr understood that the battles of Mu'tah and Tabuk were the foundation before he dispatched 'Usamah's army.

Therefore, if these missions were completed and achieved their envisioned aim, the foundations for the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem would have been firmly laid down. Thus, if momentum was maintained, the fulfilment of the mission towards the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem would be inevitable. Secondly, Caliph Abū Bakr declared wars against the apostates to establish domestic security and unite Muslims in Arabia. He fought two enemies simultaneously; some who claimed prophethood, and those who refused to pay *Zakat* (obligatory alms). Thirdly, Caliph Abū Bakr dispatched four armies to al-Sham in order to pursue this goal. Lastly, Caliph Abū Bakr's selection of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb as the successive Caliph ensured the continuation of the process of the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem.

DISPATCHING 'USAMAH'S ARMY: COMPLETING THE PROPHET'S LEGACY

The Prophet had a clear strategy for the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis, through spiritual, religious, political and military dimensions (El-Awaisi, 2007). In the last year of the prophethood of the messenger of God he planned to send an army to fight the Byzantines in Bayt al-Maqdis. Although more experienced members of the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* were in the army, the Prophet appointed a young man as the leader, 'Usamah Ibn Zayd. Although the dispatch of this army was not fulfilled during the Prophet's lifetime, it was one of the most critical moments in the Prophet's life and his relationship with Islamic Jerusalem (Omar, 2006). Indeed, it was part of the final *Wasiyyah* (will) of the Prophet to his Ummah and the last preparatory step of the Prophet towards the liberation of the Holy Land. Caliph Abū Bakr knew of the Prophet's intention, so the most likely reason for his decision to dispatch 'Usamah's army was to complete the plan that had been launched, planned, and managed by the Prophet (Al-Sallābī, 2007). Prophet Muhammad, in this case, wanted the army to reach certain areas in the region of Bayt al-Maqdis and al-Sham that were under the control of the Byzantine Empire.

After Prophet Muhammad passed away, the situation among Muslims in Arabia changed drastically. Many became apostates (*murtad*) and followed false prophets. At the same time, others refused to pay *Zakat*, one of the five pillars of Islam. Ibn Ishaq in Ibn Kathir (2004) states that many Muslims in Arabia became apostates after the Prophet had passed away, except for the people of Makkah and Madinah. It describes the turbulent situation faced by Abū Bakr as the Caliph, which invited debate among the Muslims in Madinah. The Prophet's companions advised Caliph Abū Bakr to rescind 'Usamah Ibn Zayd's mission. According to Al-Sallābī (2007), apostasy was a widespread problem that afflicted most areas of the Arabian Peninsula. Besides, Madinah was under imminent threat and needed the presence of Muslim army to defend it. Thus, the Muslims endeavoured to logically argue with Caliph Abū Bakr to call off the mission as the security of Madinah was far more important than sending out the army of 'Usamah towards al-Sham.

However, although their argument seemed reasonable, Caliph Abū Bakr was adamant on sending 'Usamah's army at all cost. He was not persuaded by the majority's opinion and seemed uncompromising on the matter, sharply

articulating his views on completing the mission of the Prophet. Immediately after his appointment as Caliph, Abū Bakr ordered Barīdah ibn al-Hassib to take the standard (war banner) to the house of 'Usamah and not dismantle it until after his mission (Al-Wāqīdī, 2005). As the Caliph, he stressed the significant vision towards the liberation of Islamicjerusalem through sending the army. With this mission being carried out barely twelve days after the Prophet's death, indicating that Abū Bakr, as the Caliph, took immediate action knowing that it was part of Prophet Muhammad's strategy to liberate Islamicjerusalem. Despite the threat of an imminent attack on Madinah looming closer, Caliph Abū Bakr would not reverse his decision; instead, he was more resolute on the matter; al-Tabarī and Ibn Kathir narrate Caliph Abū Bakr's response to the majority's argument, stating:

"Even if I thought that beasts of prey would snatch me away, I would carry out the sending of Usama just as the Apostle of God ordered. Even if there remained in the villages no one but myself, I would carry it out"... "Even if the dogs and wolves were to snatch me off, I would not reverse a decision the Apostle of God had made" (Al-Tabarī, 1993, pp. 14-15). "I swear by Allah! I shall not dismantle a flag [standard] tied by the Messenger of God (PBUH)... Even if the dogs should drag the feet of the wives of the Prophet, I would certainly prepare the army of 'Usamah" (Ibn Kathir 2003, pp. 421, 424).

Less than two weeks after the death of the Prophet and his appointment as Caliph, Abū Bakr continued the mission of the Prophet to dispatch the Army of 'Usamah. He was very determined to continue and implement the last will of the Prophet and was very committed to carrying out his intention to send 'Usamah's army (Al-Ashqar, 2010). The researchers argue that it clarifies Caliph Abū Bakr's insistence to send the army of 'Usamah despite the risks associated with the decision. His decision also illustrates the extraordinary strategy, as he considered the internal security of the Muslim community while also showing the external world that Muslim leadership was still strong. Al-Suyūtī (1995) argues that if Abū Bakr had not been appointed as a Caliph, then Allah would not have been worshipped. The context of this statement is that Caliph Abū Bakr insisted on sending 'Usamah's army despite Madinah being under imminent threat from the apostates in the Arabian Peninsula who rebelled after the death of the Prophet. If he did not send the army of 'Usamah, those people would think Muslims were weak after Prophet Muhammad's death and could drive them to attack Madinah. Accordingly, Caliph Abū Bakr knew the importance of securing Madinah from those who wanted to obliterate Islam, since this city was the capital of the Islamic state and should never collapse in order to keep the power of Muslim leadership.

According to the researchers' point of view, Abū Bakr succeeded in using his leadership as the Caliph; maintaining his trust in the directive of the Prophet, even though all his companions disagreed with him. Furthermore, he could not have done this unless the Prophet informed him about the importance of sending the 'Usamah's army, which he did even publically. Thus, Caliph Abū Bakr understood that the army was a stepping stone for keeping the integrity of the state and the

liberation of Islamic Jerusalem. As a result, the dispatch of 'Usamah's Army into al-Sham significantly influenced the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in the political aspect. Caliph Abū Bakr, through his action, conveyed an important message to all parties that, Muslims were still in a powerful condition; it made the apostates and the Byzantines in al-Sham think twice about attacking Muslims.

There was also another problem that Caliph Abū Bakr had to solve, the problem regarding the reputation of 'Usamah; some companions claimed he relatively lacked experience on the battlefield. In addition, most of 'Usamah's army were veterans of major battles with the Prophet, such as Badr and Uhud. Furthermore, several of them were in their fifties, including Abū Bakr (before being appointed as Caliph, he was one of the armies' soldiers), 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, and Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, amongst others. So, the companions sent 'Umar to try to persuade Caliph Abū Bakr on this matter, suggesting that someone older and more experienced should take charge. Caliph Abū Bakr was infuriated by the suggestion, which had surfaced when the Prophet appointed him, and said:

May your mother be bereft of you and destitute of you, Ibn al-Khattāb! The Messenger of Allah appointed him, and you order me to dismiss him? (Al-Tabarī, 1993, p.15).

From the perspective of the researchers, Caliph Abū Bakr, would have recalled the earlier discontent of the Prophet's appointment of 'Usamah as the commander. The Prophet was furious and according to an authentic Hadith narrated by Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, the Prophet justifying 'Usamah selection said:

He is worthy of leadership and is one of the dearest persons to me [...] (Al-Bukhārī, 1997, v.5:60).

This besides his young age, had to do with his social status. Caliph Abū Bakr while renouncing their views, took practical steps to ensure their obedience to the young 'Usamah. This was not just setting an example but also depicted a high-level respect for the Prophet's decision in appointing 'Usamah. For example, as Caliph Abū Bakr dispatched the army, he walked alongside 'Usamah, who was mounting his ride; after which, 'Usamah offered to dismount his animal or Abū Bakr rides alongside them, but Abū Bakr refused and did not allow 'Usamah to dismount (Al-Tabarī, 1993, p. 15). Caliph Abū Bakr established that he was selected by the Muslims to be their leader while 'Usamah was chosen by the Prophet. Thus, he deserved the respect, loyalty and obedience of every soldier under his command. In addition, when Caliph Abū Bakr desired 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb stay behind with him in Madinah, he requested this from 'Usamah courteously in front of his army. Although, as the Caliph, he could command 'Usamah to discharge 'Umar from his army, but he wanted to assert that 'Usamah was the person in charge and even the Caliph would seek his permission on such a matter.

Additionally, regarding the destination of 'Usamah's army, Caliph Abū Bakr instructed 'Usamah to follow the exact directive of the Prophet (Al-Tabarī, 1993a); this is concurred through a Hadith stating the specific sites:

'Usamah told me that the Messenger of Allah enjoined him to attack 'Ubna in the morning and to burn sites in it (Abū Dawud, 2008, v.3:265).

Abū Dawud, in his Hadith completion, mentioned an explanatory narration of where the site was, on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Amr al-Ghazzi;

I heard Abū Mushir being asked about 'Ubna. He said, "We know it well; it is Yubna in Palestine (Abū Dawud, 2008, v.3: 266).

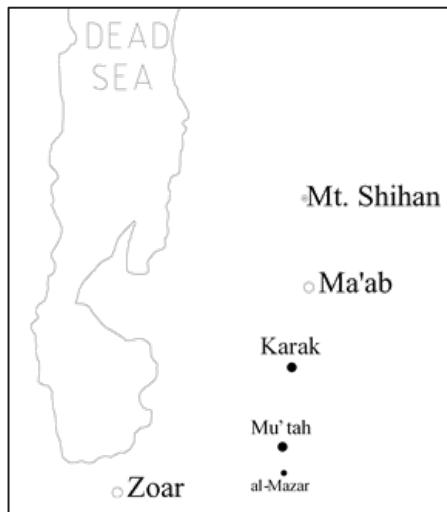
These narrations together with other Ahadith are complemented by a narration in al-Wāqīdī, who quotes Abū Bakr reiterating the Prophet's directive:

O 'Usamah, go in the name of God, and with His blessings until you reach the place where your father was killed [i.e. Mu'tah], and attack them with the horses, for I have appointed you over this army. Then, attack the people of 'Ubna in the morning (Al-Wāqīdī, 2011, v3: 546).

The site of 'Ubna has been contested, some claiming that it is a village close to Mu'tah. According to Omar (2008), it is *al-Mazār* the site where the three leaders of the Battle of Mu'tah were buried (Map 1).

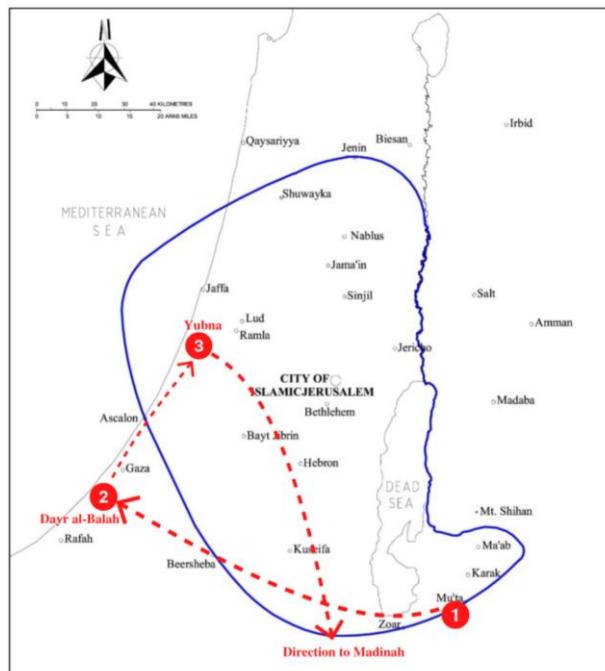
The word *al-Mazār* in Arabic means "the place to be visited", and this town has no significance today except for the graves of the three leaders. This place was known later by the Muslims since there were no records of its existence earlier or of this name. Therefore, Omar argues that *al-Mazār* today is most likely 'Ubna itself. However, since the researchers could not find supporting evidence in other historical records regarding this argument, this statement seems relatively weak and relies on later sources. Hence, the researchers tend to incline toward the opinion of the Abū Mushir (d.218 AH/ 833 CE), who is considered by scholars of Hadith, including al-Bukhari, as an authority in Hadith, history and Maghazi (military expeditions). Besides being a local of the region and acquainted with its geography, as is testified by his contemporaries. Thus his opinion is more conclusive. The city still carries the same name today; Yubna is known today as Yibna, located 15 kilometres southwest of Ramlah in Palestine.

Nonetheless, another historical account mentioned different places the destination of 'Usamah's army, such as al-Balqa and al-Darum (al-Tabārī, 1990, v.9: 163; Ibn Hisham, 2019, p. 753). The latter is located in the land of Palestine while the former is in modern day Jordan. According to al-Hamawi, Yubna is located near the city of Ramlah in Palestine, while al-Darum refers to a place near the city



Map 1. The Location of Mu'tah and al-Mazār.

of Gaza, namely Dayr al-Balah (Al-Hamawi, 1995). He also mentioned that al-Balqa is located between al-Sham and Wādī al-Qurā (north of the Arabian Peninsula). Therefore, the researchers through combining all sources above conclude that the route taken by 'Usamah's army started from Madinah to the north, towards al-Balqa (includes Mu'tah, where his father was martyred). Afterward, the army moved to the northwest, al-Darum near Gaza, and finally moved to the northeast until reaching Yubna close to Lud in the heart of the region of Bayt al-Maqdis. In that location, 'Usamah burned sites in the morning as a warning to the Byzantine and then headed back to Madinah without engaging in combat. Therefore, most of the named sites and the destination of the army of 'Usamah was within the region of Islamicjerusalem; based on El-Awaisi (2007), the areas of Mu'tah and Yubna are located within the region of Islamicjerusalem (Map 2).



Map 2. The Movement of 'Usamah's army (modified from El-Awaisi, 2007)

The impact of this was apparent, the news came to Heraclius, who was in Homs (Emesa), about the Prophet's death and the arrival of 'Usamah's army in one occurrence. Heraclius called his commanders and said, "This is what I warned you of, and you refused to accept my warning. The Bedouin [Arabs] come raiding in a month march to you; then they leave in a while without being hurt" (Al-Wāqidī 2011, v.3:549). In addition, Ibn Athīr (1997) stated that the Arab Christians and Byzantines were made to believe that the Muslims were mighty, so the Byzantines held back from fighting the Muslims. However, they had intended to fight Muslims before the arrival of the 'Usamah's army. Indeed, this explains that the

stronger argument regarding the position of Yubna would be closer to the centre of Aelia as mentioned by Abū Mushir. Because it also clarifies the relationship between the fear of Byzantine army had towards the Muslim army. The other opinion puts the location of 'Usamah's army in the periphery, *al-Mazar* (south of the Dead Sea), which would not had such an impact on the Byzantines.

Furthermore, as argued by El-Awaisi (2005) and Omar (2006), the researchers agree that both the Battle of Mu'tah and 'Usamah's army are connected with the Battle of Tabuk because these military campaigns occurred in the same region, in the southern part of al-Sham or the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, from the point of view of the researchers, Prophet Muhammad had a strategic plan towards Islamicjerusalem. The following Hadīth supported this argument during the Battle of Tabuk when 'Awf Ibn Mālik came to the Prophet's tent. The Prophet told him to count six incidents between then and the Day of Judgment. The first was the death of the Prophet, and the second was the *Fath of Bayt al-Maqdis* (Islamicjerusalem) (Al-Bukhārī, 1997). Hence, it clearly shows that the army of 'Usamah was intended as part of the Prophet's plan towards the liberation of the Holy Land. Therefore, after the return of the Prophet from Battle of Tabuk, he started to prepare this army and was ready before his death.

Accordingly, these three battles were part of Prophet Muhammad's practical steps towards the liberation of Islamicjerusalem (El-Awaisi 2005). First, Mu'tah served as the initial special operations base for analysing the enemy and conflict zone. Second, Tabuk served as the primary staging area for all necessary preparations. Finally, the dispatch of 'Usamah's army served as the final test run before launching a full-scale offensive to liberate Islamicjerusalem. In addition, Omar (2006) highlights that Caliph Abū Bakr was also considering the route of 'Usamah's army, as he was aware of the benefits of the agreement that Prophet Muhammad made with the people of Ayla, during the Battle of Tabuk.

In short, the army of 'Usamah became a deterrent for those monitoring the situation amongst the enemies of Islam. It conveyed a clear message to the people around Arabia as well in Historical Syria, that even if Prophet Muhammad had passed away, the Muslims were willing to take on and confront the biggest superpower of the time, the Byzantines Empire. Thus, the Muslims and the Islamic State have not been weakened rather they will grow stronger. It also confirmed the wisdom of Abū Bakr in dealing with the political situation and strengthened his intention to continue the Prophet's plan to liberate Islamicjerusalem.

APOSTATES WAR: SECURING DOMESTIC THREAT AND UNITING MUSLIMS

Apostasy (Arabic: *al-Riddah*) is leaving Islam after having been a Muslim for some time. At the time of Abū Bakr's reign as a Caliph, the problem emerged regarding the apostasy in two forms: some individuals claimed prophethood, then became false Prophets, and those who refused to do one of the pillars of Islam, *Zakat*. The apostasy spread in the Arabian Peninsula, but the main problem was the false prophets within the south of Madinah (Yemen) and the east of Madinah

(Yamamah). In Yemen, the false Prophet's name was Al-Aswad Al-'Ansī, while in Yamamah it was Musailamah. Ibn Ishaq states that, all Arabs except for the inhabitants of Makkah and Madinah, became apostates after the death of Prophet Muhammad (Ibn Kathīr, 2004). This describes the critical situation faced by Abū Bakr as Caliph, which caused disputes among the Muslims.

For the first part of the apostasy, the Prophet's companions admitted that confronting Musaylima, Al-Aswad, and their followers was necessary. However, some of them felt it was unnecessary to fight those who refused to pay *Zakat*. 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb was one of the companions who believed in this opinion because he assumed their faith would escalate along with time, and then they would pay *Zakat*. He also believed that fighting them while 'Usamah's army was still gone was not a good idea because the number of the army in Madinah was limited. Caliph Abū Bakr could not accept the arguments of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb. According to a Hadīth narrated by Abū Hurairah, he said:

By Allah! I will fight whoever differentiates between *Salat* (prayer) and *Zakat*, as *Zakat* is the right to be taken from property [according to Allah's order] (Al-Bukhārī, 1997, v.9:47).

Based on this Hadīth, it is clear that Caliph Abū Bakr had no option to bargain with the apostates. So, when 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb observed his unwavering belief, he quickly changed his mind and decided to support him. Furthermore, Al-Sallābī (2007) argues that for Caliph Abū Bakr, there was no purpose in discriminating between different types of apostates because all apostates committed the same heinous crime: they all left Islam after being Muslims.

The researchers argue that this is evidence that Abū Bakr was more knowledgeable than any of the other companions of the Prophet; he had a comprehensive understanding that the religion of Islam was complete, and all the guidance had been revealed to the Prophet. Moreover, throughout his life, Abū Bakr made important decisions several times that other Muslims initially disagreed with, but then agreeing his opinion and acknowledge his hindsight and foresight. For example, Caliph Abū Bakr's decision to send out 'Usamah's army amidst the hesitancy of others, and over a decade earlier during the Night Journey when he endorsed what the Prophet said about his miraculous journey.

Caliph Abū Bakr decided that *Zakat* could not be separated from the five pillars of Islam. After he rejected a negotiation from the tribes, who came to Madinah to have legitimization to refuse to pay *Zakat*, he prepared to secure Madinah from invasion by calling out to the people of Madinah:

The land has sunk into disbelief, and their delegation has seen that you are few and that you would be unaware whether you were approached by day or night. [...] So get ready (for war) (Al-Tabarī, 1993, v.10:46).

Caliph Abū Bakr took several steps to fight against the apostates, such as ordering the people of Madinah to spend their night in the Prophet's Mosque, placing some people at various points of Madinah to defend the city from the enemy,

requesting the help of tribes near Madinah, sending letters to Muslim governors in distant provinces ordering them to fight against the apostates and also gathering the women and children into the safety of the citadels (Al-Sallābī, 2007).

Under Caliph Abū Bakr's leadership, Muslims in Madinah succeeded in defending the strikes that were coming from the apostates. The apostates, in general, made a mistake by undermining the strength of Muslims since they thought Muslims were weak after the death of the Prophet and leaving of 'Usamah's army. The apostates' armies did not expect such resistance from the people of Madinah. Finally, the apostates acknowledged Caliph Abū Bakr's firmness in his decision and made peace by distributing Zakat to Madinah. Only in one night, Zakat came to Madinah brought by some Zakat collectors appointed by the Prophet, such as Safwan, al-Zibriqan, and Adi (Al-Tabarī 1993, v.10:50). Later, after 'Usamah's army returned to Madinah, Caliph Abū Bakr began dispatching troops to attack various apostate tribes.

According to the researchers, Caliph Abū Bakr understood the suitable military tactic and initially applied a defensive strategy until the arrival of 'Usamah's army. Then, when 'Usamah's troops arrived, Caliph Abū Bakr changed his strategy to the offensive. He well-calculated the number of the remaining people in Madinah to analyse the best strategy to use in those circumstances; thus, he applied a defensive strategy first while waiting for 'Usamah to return. In addition, the researchers suggest that Caliph Abū Bakr took inspiration from the Battle of Trench when the Prophet applied a defensive strategy by using the credit of the geographical condition of Madinah, which was surrounded by mountains and date palm trees. As a result, Caliph Abū Bakr could buy time until 'Usamah's army arrived by delivering letters encouraging Arabs to return to Islam and adopt all of its principles. Accordingly, Caliph Abū Bakr was gearing up for a full-scale offensive that would be postponed until 'Usamah arrived with his army.

When 'Usamah and his army arrived, Caliph Abū Bakr left him in charge of Madinah. Caliph Abū Bakr led an army heading towards the valley of Dhil-Qissah and encamped with them. Then, he organised the armies from there under eleven banners and appointed a leader for each army. He considered encountering the enemy on many fronts simultaneously because the apostates scattered throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Amongst the eleven commanders appointed by Caliph Abū Bakr, were well-known companions who had military experiences, such as Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, Ikrīmah Ibn Abī Jahl, Shurahbīl Ibn Hasanah, Khālid Ibn Said, and 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās (Al-Tabarī, 1993a). The researchers note that these names, later on, would be sent by Caliph Abū Bakr to lead the armies heading to al-Sham in the expedition to liberate Islamicjerusalem. From the researchers' point of view, Caliph Abū Bakr intended to prepare these commanders for a further mission and give them practical experience. At the same time, Caliph Abū Bakr hoped that after the apostasy in Arabia was obliterated, Muslims could consolidate their power into the significant military expedition towards Islamicjerusalem and al-Sham. According to Madihah (2020), because of the role

of Caliph Abū Bakr, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb as his successor, did not have to face domestic problems anymore. Thus, ‘Umar could focus on expanding the message of Islam and achieve the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem as the most remarkable event in Muslim history, even amongst all the *futuhat* that ‘Umar had achieved.

PRIORITISING AND DIRECTING ARMIES TO AL-SHAM

After the Apostasy Wars, Caliph Abū Bakr made another remarkable contribution towards the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem. Some associate the expansion and military campaigns against the Byzantine Empire to ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb. On the contrary, the armies that Caliph Abū Bakr sent were the first military campaign of the Rashidun Caliphate in which Muslims expanded their boundaries. Furthermore, in the last year of Caliph Abū Bakr’s reign, when the Muslims were united under one flag and well-supplied with all of the manpower, logistics and weapons along the way to al-Sham, they pursued the Prophet’s promise of victory. Caliph Abū Bakr, with his solid connection with the Holy Land, prepared the military expedition to liberate Islamic Jerusalem. Indeed, the most notable expansions of Muslim territory happened during the reign of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb. However, it would not have been possible with the foundations laid by the Prophet and later Caliph Abū Bakr.

Abū Bakr, as the Caliph, prepared numerous expeditions towards the al-Sham area. He gathered the companions in the Prophet’s mosque and gave a public sermon, in which he said:

You should know that Prophet Muhammad had resolved upon turning his focus towards al-Sham, but then he passed away as Allah had recalled him to Himself. So be clear that I am determined to send heroes of the Muslim together with their families and wealth to al-Sham. As, the Apostle of God had informed me of this before his demise (Al-Wāqīdī, 1997, p.6; 2005, p.7-8).

According to Al-Qazqi (2003), whenever the term al-Sham was used, it referred to Bayt al-Maqdis, as is well established in the Hadith literature. From the above narration, the researchers argue that Prophet Muhammad had a clear plan to liberate Islamic Jerusalem and that Abū Bakr was well informed of its details. This is archetypal of most of the Prophet’s military action, always keeping the plans secret, informing only his close confidants. Therefore, it makes sense that Caliph Abū Bakr knew the Prophet’s plan towards Islamic Jerusalem better than other companions. Also, his statement as the leader of the Muslim nation that he is determined to send the Muslims with their families and dependents expresses an intention to liberate that land and settle in it.

After delivering his sermon, and before dismounting the pulpit, the Muslims answered that they would follow whatever his command while citing a verse, "commands them to obey Allah, the messenger of Allah, and those in authority over you" (Qur'an 4: 59). Caliph Abū Bakr was delighted to hear their answer and came down from the pulpit (Al-Wāqīdī, 1997). This gratified him immensely, as it meant that the Muslims were united to continue the Prophet’s plan to liberate

Bayt al-Maqdis. The event also described how Muslims unanimously recognised the position of Abū Bakr as their leader and acknowledged his ventures.

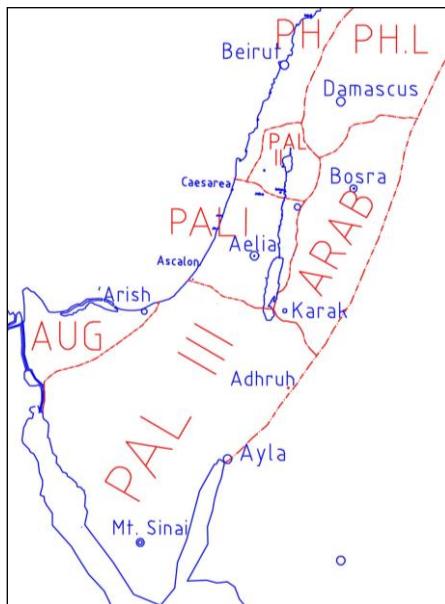
Therefore, Caliph Abū Bakr's first step was to call upon the people surrounding Arabia to join the army, such as Makkah, Taif, Yemen, Najd, and Hijaz. He sent letters in which he clearly indicated his intention, to wage Jihad against the tyrants and disbelievers in Bilad al-Sham, and awaited their reply. Anas Ibn Mālik was sent with the letters to the people of Yemen, significantly, they answered Caliph Abū Bakr's call enthusiastically, and they came to Madinah in vast numbers to join the armies to al-Sham. Moreover, they also brought their women and children. One of the first delegations from Yemen to come was Himyar. Their chief greeted Caliph Abū Bakr and recited a poem that made him smile. He said to 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib, "Have you not heard Rasulullah saying when the Himyar come with their women carrying their children then rejoice at Allah's help for the Muslims against all Polytheists". 'Ali replied, "You have spoken the truth; I have indeed heard Rasulullah saying this" (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.10). Furthermore, many tribes continuously came to Madinah. They greeted Caliph Abū Bakr and expressed their commitment to obey his command (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.9).

Although the idea of calling the people of Yemen was one of the ideas from the council meeting, conveyed by 'Abdurrahman Ibn' Awf (Al-Sallābī, 2007), the researchers argue that it was also part of Caliph Abū Bakr's political and military consideration. In the Apostasy War, the people of Yemen brought the first news of victory during his Caliphate, and they successfully fought against the false prophet, al-Aswad al-'Ansī (Al-Balādhurī, 2015). Hence, for Caliph Abū Bakr, the event described their bravery and passion for raising the word of Allah's word and defending Islam, so he needed such people to succeed in the expedition into al-Sham. As Al-Tabarī (1993b) mentioned, Caliph Abū Bakr instructed Khālid Ibn al-Walīd not to allow the apostates who had just reverted back to Islam to join his army. Instead, he requested those who join the army were Muslims who fought against the apostates and were steadfast in Islam after the death of the Prophet.

Caliph Abū Bakr prepared the armies for al-Sham. From Madinah, he dispatched four armies: 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās and Abū Ubaydah took the coastal road (through Ayla/ Aqabah), Yazid Ibn Abū Sufyan and Shurahbīl Ibn Hasanah took the Tabuk road (Al-Tabarī, 1993b). The instructions from Caliph Abū Bakr proves the significant result of the Battle of Tabuk, where the Prophet conducted the peace agreements with the people around Tabuk. El-Awaissi (2005) argues that the peace agreements in Tabuk were crucial for logistic preparation for Abū Bakr's campaign to liberate Islamicjerusalem. He continued what the Prophet had planned and paved the way towards Islamicjerusalem. Each of the commanders was assigned a particular area by Caliph Abū Bakr; for example, Abū 'Ubaydah to Hims, Yazid to Damascus, Shurahbīl to al-Urdun, and 'Amr to Bayt al-Maqdis. The latter, Abū Bakr guided with the specific commands:

You are assigned to Palestine and Aelia ('Alayka bi-Filistīn wa-Iliyā') (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.31).

Additionally, one of the soldiers stated, “I was with the army which Abū Bakr sent to Aelia and Palestine under the leadership of ‘Amr Ibn al-Ās” (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.30). Furthermore, the researchers argue that Caliph Abū Bakr gave a particular instruction as part of his emphasis regarding Islamic jerusalem. He clearly was aware of the different roman divisions of the provinces and the difference between Palestina Tertia and Aelia. The Byzantine divided the area into three parts: Palestina Prima (PAL I), Palestina Secunda (PAL II), and Palestina Tertia (PAL III). Aelia was seen in the Muslim narrative as Palestina Prima (El-Awaisi, 2007), and at its centre was Aelia Capitolina, the walled city where al-Aqsa Mosque is located. Thus, the word Palestine which Caliph Abū Bakr mentioned to ‘Amr, refers to the Palestina Tertia since it is located in the south of the region of Aelia, where Amr and his army came from through Ayla (Map 3).



Map 3: Byzantine Provinces of al-Sham (El-Awaisi, 2007)

After one of the first encounters with the Byzantine army in Palestine, ‘Amr Ibn al-Ās asked some of the Arab prisoners, and they told him, “O Arabs, Heraclius has sent Rubīs against you with an army of 100.000 men and has instructed him to prevent anyone from entering Aelia” (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.36). From this narration, Aelia most probably referred to the region rather than the city, as ‘Amr had entered Palestina Tertia, and Rubīs came down to them in Palestina Tertia in order to prevent them entered the province of Aelia/ Palestina Prima. Afterward, a battle between ‘Amr and Rubīs took place in Dāthīn (close to Gaza) (Al-Balādhurī 2015: 141). After the battle, ‘Amr sent a letter to Abū ‘Ubaydah informing him that he had conquered Palestine, “... I had arrived in Palestine and fought against a Roman army of 100.000 men under the command of Rubīs. Allah granted us such a victory... and God has allowed the conquest of Palestine under my command” (Al-

Wāqidī, 2005, p.39). This narration clearly states that ‘Amr had conquered the whole of Palestine, meaning Palestina Tertia, but in fact, he had not arrived yet in Palestina Prima/ Aelia. So this stressed the argument that Aelia was a different entity from Palestine, as it referred to Palestina Tertia (El-Awaisi, 2007).

Interestingly, Al-Wāqidī mentioned that during the night, Caliph Abū Bakr was anxious in Madinah and prayed to Allah for the armies' victory in al-Sham. He then dreamed that ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Ās and his men were passing through a dark narrow mountain- pass and were greatly worried. They wanted to leave the pass. ‘Amr spurred his horse, and the others followed him. Suddenly he found himself in a lush green, wide place. He encamped and found great comfort. This dream greatly pleased Caliph Abū Bakr; ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affan interpreted it as a victory for ‘Amr and his army, but it appeared that they would first have to undergo great difficulty (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.31).

Moreover, another discussion from Athamina (1994) shows how Caliph Abū Bakr’s priority was to liberate Islamicjerusalem. When Khālid Ibn al-Walīd traveled to Hira (Iraq) to act on the ground in the manner of al-Muthanna al-Shaybani (who led raids into Persian territory), he did it without consulting first with the Caliph in Madinah. However, Caliph Abū Bakr had earlier expressed a lack of interest in seizing Iraq when Madinah’s attention and resources were focused on liberating Bilad al-Sham, prompting some historians to wonder if Khālid’s actions were planned with him. Al-Wāqidī stated that there is a difference of opinion about the matter of Khālid. One opinion holds that he went straight from Yamamah to Iraq, whereas other states that he returned from Yamamah to Madinah and then went to Iraq from Madinah (Al-Wāqidī, 2011). However, the main point is that Caliph Abū Bakr directed Khālid’s movement from Madinah. According to Al-Tabarī, Khālid’s actions in Iraq were coordinated with Madinah and carried out under Caliph Abū Bakr’s explicit instructions. Khālid went to Iraq from Yamamah, and Caliph Abū Bakr commanded him to head to the area where al-Muthanna was located (Al-Tabarī, 1993b, v.11:2). However, when the Muslims in al-Sham needed support and reinforcement, he did not hesitate to relocate Khālid to al-Sham.

The researchers concur with Athamina’s argument that Caliph Abū Bakr prioritised Islamicjerusalem over Iraq. However, at the end of the Apostasy Wars, al-Muthanna came to Madinah and asked permission from Caliph Abū Bakr for his tribe wanted to fight against Persians since they dwelled on the borders between Arabia and Iraq. Caliph Abū Bakr accepted his request, on the condition not to allocate further support for their campaigns, then al-Muthanna went back to Iraq and started his campaigns against the Persians. When al-Muthanna fell into difficulty, he requested help from the Caliph, then Abū Bakr sent a letter to Khālid who was in close proximity while in Yamamah, ordering him to take charge in Iraq. Furthermore, the interesting thing is that the content of the letter from Caliph Abū Bakr to Khālid described his initial intention to send Khālid to al-Sham. Thus, the researchers argue that Caliph Abū Bakr’s initial plan was to drive all the available resources into al-Sham. However, coincidentally, a leader of a tribe from

Iraq came to ask for permission to encounter Persians on behalf of the Islamic state. To deal with the situation, Caliph Abū Bakr commanded Khālid to go to Iraq first to affirm Madinah's authority to al-Muthanna and then to al-Sham. Al-Azdi (1853) confirms this on the advice of ‘Umar to Abū Bakr; “send Khālid ibn al-Walid to Iraq... and when the people of al-Sham are in need of him, he would be close to them” (al-Azdi, 1853, p.39). Al-Tabarī recorded the letter that described Caliph Abū Bakr’s plan to send Khālid to al-Sham:

When Abū Bakr wrote to Khālid Ibn al-Walid while the latter was in al-Yamamah that he [should] set out for Syria, he also commanded him to begin with Iraq so that he might pass through it. Khālid then began his journey from al-Yamamah, going along until he reached al-Nibaj (Al-Tabarī, 1993b, v.11:4).

Moreover, when a crisis developed in al-Sham, Caliph Abū Bakr received a request for reinforcement from the Muslim armies in al-Sham, as the Byzantines were consolidating their forces. According to Al-Tabarī (1993b), Abū Bakr wrote to Khālid Ibn al-Walid to hastily join them and commanded him to leave al-Muthanna in charge of Iraq. One could probably claim that this statement contradicts the previous argument, which stated that Caliph Abū Bakr’s initial plan was to send Khālid into al-Sham. However, the researchers perceived that the letter was not necessarily in separate order; it was only to speed up the initial plan of Caliph Abū Bakr. Ibn Murajjā recorded the supporting argument on this issue; in the letter sent by Caliph Abū Bakr to Khālid whilst in Iraq, he said:

Hurry to your brothers in al-Sham, by Allah, a *qaryah* (town) amongst the Qurā (towns) from Ard al-Maqdis [Islamic jerusalem], Allah helps you conquer, is better to me than the conquest of a great province from the provinces of Iraq (Ibn al-Murajjā, 1995, p.55; El-Awaisi, 2007, p.108; Abu-Munshar, 2013, p.84).

In the above letter, Caliph Abū Bakr, as the leader, highlights the importance of Bayt al-Maqdis, and his exhortation in the letter is apparent (Abu-Munshar, 2013). The letter conveys clearly that he was more concerned with Bayt al-Maqdis than Iraq and then decided his instruction. Also, Caliph Abū Bakr felt that the situation in Iraq was under control, following the victories at the hands of Khālid. The researchers argue this was evidence of Caliph Abū Bakr’s priority over Islamicjerusalem, which could be summed up from a comparison of the number of armies and soldiers sent to each. Abū Bakr was well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of both the Byzantine and Persian Empires, as he had been following their wars closely for nearly two decades, in fulfilment of the first Quranic prophecy revealed in relation to Bayt al-Maqdis (El-Awaisi, 2015). Even though the Persians were weaker than the Byzantines because they had suffered a significant defeat in the previous years, it could be assumed that strategically Caliph Abū Bakr would fight against the weaker empire. Nevertheless, he insisted on fighting against the stronger power in al-Sham. In short, it is clear that Caliph Abū Bakr was executing the Prophet Muhammad’s strategic plan to liberate Islamicjerusalem as a priority and thus adjust the implementation based on the situation during his leadership.

These efforts and actions that Caliph Abū Bakr presented towards the liberation of al-Sham are the contributions that will lead to the ultimate liberation of Islamicjerusalem. Genequand (2014) described that the conquest of al-Sham may be separated into three periods. The first phase, between 12 AH/633CE and 13 AH/634CE, witnessed the conquest of al-Sham's districts, intending to unite Arab tribes. The second phase lasted from 13 AH/634CE to 15 AH/636CE and was the main military expedition, during which most of al-Sham was liberated. Even with the arrival of additional Byzantine forces, the Islamic army won many significant battles, including Fahl (Pella) (13 AH/635CE) and Yarmuk (15 or 16 AH/636 or 637CE), which effectively ended the Byzantine Empire's eastern territories. Finally, between 16 AH/637 CE and 27 AH/ 647-648CE, the third phase was the conquest of Northern Syria, the Mediterranean coast, and several significant towns like Jerusalem [Islamicjerusalem]. Thus, it can be comprehended that Caliph Abū Bakr's efforts, leading the Muslim armies to al-Sham and Islamicjerusalem, significantly contributed to the later phases.

As part of the second phase, mentioned above, according to historical sources, just before Caliph Abū Bakr passed away, he received a letter from Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, through his messenger, 'Abdurrahman Ibn Humayd, which informed him of the victory in the Battle of Ajnādin (27 Jumada al-'Ula 13AH/ 30 July 634CE). Al-Wāqidī recorded details of the event:

Abū Bakr would leave Madinah daily after Salātul Fajr for news on al-Sham. One day as he was leaving Madinah, as was his habit, Ibn Humayd was seen coming. The companions hurriedly asked, "From where are you coming?" Ibn Humayd: from al-Sham - Allah has granted the Muslims victory. Abū Bakr immediately fell into prostration out of thanks. He lifted his head and softly went through the letter and then, after absorbing it, read it aloud to the others. People flocked to hear the news and it spread in Madinah so people hurried from all over the city and Abū Bakr read it [out loud] for a second time (Al-Wāqidī, 2005, p.114).

This narration clearly shows, how eager Abū Bakr was for news of Muslim victory in al-Sham and reading the letter aloud twice shows his excitement and that of the Muslims. Indeed this battle was the first major Muslim victory within the region of Bayt al-Maqdis, as Ajnādin is located west of Hebron, south of Bayt Jibrin within the region of Islamicjerusalem (Map 2). With Abū Bakr getting closer to achieving the goal, the Muslim army had to relocate towards the north of Bayt al-Maqdis, towards Damascus. Although the Muslim armies were a short distance from the holy city of Bayt al-Maqdis, it is apparent that Khālid had devised a strategy with Abū Bakr of completing the *fath* of the wider region before liberating it, as it was a stronghold and a religious centre for the Christians.

People started to flock to Madinah after this victory asking Abū Bakr to allow them to join the campaigns in al-Sham, al-Waqidi (2005) reports close to 9000 people were dispatched with a letter to Khalid, informing him of the next step to take. However, merely 24 days later as Caliph Abū Bakr while waiting for news from the al-Sham, he passed away at the age of sixty-three (on 22 Jumada al-Akhir

13AH/ 25 August 634) (al-Azdi, 1853, p. 81). Accordingly, until his last breath, Caliph Abū Bakr was adamant on monitoring the development of the military campaigns he ordered towards the liberation of Islamicjerusalem and Syria.

APPOINTING A SUCCESSOR: ENSURING THE LIBERATION OF ISLAMIC JERUSALEM

After all of Caliph Abū Bakr's contributions towards the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis, he realised that the final moment of the first Muslim liberation of the Holy Land might not happen during his reign. So, another significant contribution of his was ensuring that his successor would fulfil the same vision. Therefore, even before his death, he still thought about the sustainability of his struggle towards the liberation of Islamicjerusalem, especially since he understood this as a legacy inherited from Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, when Caliph Abū Bakr was contemplating the nomination of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb to succeed him, he asked several companions such as 'Abdurrahman Ibn 'Awf, Uthman Ibn Affan, and Asma bint 'Umays in private and separate occasions. Most of them responded positively to 'Umar's nomination (Al-Tabarī, 1993b). Hence, he nominated 'Umar as his successor to the general assembly. Caliph Abū Bakr said within the general assembly to the Muslims, "*If you so desire (and I shall have no objection), you may sit together to elect a man of your own choice*" (Kaka Khel, 1985). Diyaa Al-Rees in Al-Sallābī (2007) mentioned that 'Umar's appointment as the next Caliph followed the principle of Islam known as *shura* or mutual consultation. In short, *shura* values are still implemented in this process of succession.

Moreover, Caliph Abū Bakr's endeavour to nominate and justify his reasoning about 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb as the best candidate played a vital role in the process. 'Umar was from the clan of 'Ady Ibn K'ab, one of the ten noble tribes of Quraysh. 'Umar's tribe was distinguished by its knowledge, wisdom, and intellect, which allowed its members to hold the position of ambassador to other towns and arbitrators in disputes (Haikal, 2015). However, some companions found 'Umar to be a tough person, so they doubted whether he would become the Caliph. Jabnouñ (2012) argues that 'Umar's toughness stemmed from his commitment to discipline, law, and order. Although he was a former heavy drinker, he was also the first to advocate the prohibition of alcohol. More importantly, one of the main reasons that might have led Caliph Abū Bakr to trust 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb as his successor was his track record as the confidant of Abū Bakr during decision-making or strategic planning. For instance, when Caliph Abū Bakr appointed Khālid Ibn Sa'id as the first of the commanders into al-Sham, 'Umar heard about it he was not happy with his selection. He told Abū Bakr that there were better candidates than him. After considering 'Umar's suggestion and consulting this issue, Caliph Abū Bakr followed 'Umar's opinion. For Caliph Abū Bakr, 'Umar had firm faith in his heart, always gave good advice, and the Prophet held him in high esteem (Al-Wāqidī, 2005). Ibn Athīr (1997) stated that Caliph Abū Bakr justified his decision to nominate 'Umar despite his toughness because 'Umar saw Abū Bakr as a soft person. But then, when leadership responsibilities fall upon him, he will

act less toughly than he does now. According to Haikal (2015), during ‘Umar’s inauguration speech, he said that his toughness would still be maintained in dealing with the people who were unjust and hostile to Muslims. ‘Umar was not tough in every matter; his toughness was not an end in itself; it was a means to serve the interest of Islam. Jabnoun (2012) argues that it can better be called strength or resolve. An authentic Hadith recorded ‘Umar’s characteristics:

The most graceful person for my nation is Abū Bakr, and the toughest person for the sake of the religion of Allah, is ‘Umar (Ibn Mājah, 2007, v.1:178).

‘Umar was also an intellectual and possessed great intuition based on his background from a notable, wise, and well-educated family. His intuition and cleverness were manifested in many situations; for instance, many revelations supported his opinion many times, such as in the treatment of the prisoners of war from the battle of Badr, the wives of the Prophet covering themselves, the prohibition of alcohol consumption, the prohibition of praying for the deceased hypocrites and joining their funerals, and the necessity of taking permission before entering private rooms. Furthermore, during Caliph Abū Bakr’s reign, he appointed ‘Umar as the judge of Muslims, and ‘Umar accomplished his legal responsibility to maintain justice within the Muslim community. Finally, ‘Umar accumulated comprehensive and strategic knowledge by being a close adviser to the Prophet Muhammad and later to Abū Bakr. Accordingly, ‘Umar’s physique, resolve, courage, knowledge, conscience, and justice earned him a lot of respect and reverence, adding even more reasons for Caliph Abū Bakr to nominate him.

The researchers argue that among Caliph Abū Bakr’s reasons for choosing ‘Umar was his potential to become a vital factor in maintaining the unity and order of the growing Muslim state. ‘Umar was Abū Bakr’s solution for this nation because he saw that the world was coming to the Muslims with its riches and temptations, and he feared that if they embraced those temptations with open arms, then they would be heading down the path of destruction. The researchers assume that since Caliph Abū Bakr’s priority was to maintain the unity of Muslims, he would like to make sure the process of electing the next leader went smoothly and without any disputes that might harm the solidarity of Muslims. Caliph Abū Bakr’s expectations and hope for ‘Umar were later fulfilled. ‘Umar prioritised the liberation of Islamicjerusalem and continued on the strategic plan of Prophet Muhammad and its implementation commenced by Abū Bakr.

Accordingly, Caliph Abū Bakr’s contributions successfully set the foundation for the first Muslim liberation of Islamicjerusalem. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb could focus on the external military campaign outside the Arabian Peninsula because Caliph Abū Bakr settled all the internal problems in Madinah (Madihah, 2020). Prophet Muhammad established a solid foundation for Muslims to follow in his footsteps in the spiritual, religious, political, and military scopes. It also shows that the effort to liberate Islamicjerusalem requires a clear vision, strategic planning, and continuous action that may take more than one generation, as demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb. ‘Umar was able to

reap the fruit planted by Prophet Muhammad, nurtured by Abū Bakr. This long-term strategy was culminated with the participation of ‘Umar with thousands of the Prophet’s companions and praying for the first time inside their first Qiblah, al-Aqsa Mosque and bringing the holy city under the realm of Islam.

CONCLUSION

Due to the importance of Islamic Jerusalem, early Muslims were eager to reach the Holy Land in order to liberate it and bring it under the fold of Islam. It is a place they were closely attached to from the commencement of the prophethood and saw it as their rightful inheritance, since it was the cradle of Islam’s great prophets. This was reflected in Caliph Abū Bakr’s actions throughout his time in Makkah and Madinah. After the passing away of Prophet Muhammad, Abū Bakr, as the first Caliph, had to take the reins of the Ummah and continued what the Prophet had initiated for Islamic Jerusalem. During his reign, Caliph Abū Bakr realised that a military operation was needed initially to stabilise the Arabian Peninsula, which became one of his most significant contributions as the leader of Muslims. Therefore, in the midst of debates among the companions, Caliph Abū Bakr decided against all odds to dispatch the army of ’Usamah towards the Holy Land.

Additionally, after the Apostasy Wars were concluded, Caliph Abū Bakr sent four armies to the region of al-Sham in an effort to liberate the Land of Barakah and specifically the Holy Land/ Islamic Jerusalem. As a result, Caliph Abū Bakr resolved most of the possible threats that might hinder the liberation of Islamic Jerusalem. On his deathbed, Caliph Abū Bakr was awaiting news from the armies in al-Sham hoping for a victory that will lead to Bayt al-Maqdis. Furthermore, he wanted to ensure that his successor shared the same vision for Bayt al-Maqdis, so he consulted his council to nominate and justify his reasoning about ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb as the best candidate for the second Caliph.

Indeed, it is only with the in-depth connection and vital contribution of Caliph Abū Bakr that the first Muslim liberation of Islamic Jerusalem could be achieved in a short period after his Caliphate. In only two years, Abū Bakr succeeded in paving the way to his successor to Islamic Jerusalem. Therefore, Caliph Abū Bakr’s contributions to the first Muslim liberation of Islamic Jerusalem are undeniably significant; he created the foundation to liberate the Holy Land. Finally, it showed that the vision towards Islamic Jerusalem is the cooperation and continuous process of the Muslim generation, as Prophet Muhammad, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb demonstrated. How Muslims could benefit from their strategic plan in a contemporary context, including spiritual, religious, political, and military elements, requires further research into the matter. Furthermore, the spirit and strategies that Caliph Abū Bakr implemented throughout his entire life are more than enough to inspire Muslims to contribute to the effort to liberate the Holy Land. Indeed, if history repeats itself, let it repeat the legacy of the best exemplary figures such as, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din.

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