Heroes of Islam
Series 23

Al-Zahir Baybars

The Conqueror of the Crusader Fortresses, According to the Qur'an, Authentic Hadith and the Books of History



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
AK (Kelantan)
quranscience.my

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron AK (Kelantan) • quranscience.my • @QuranScienceMY
This eBook is FREE for Muslims — not for sale.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HEROES OF ISLAM

SERIES 23

AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS

The Conqueror of the Crusader Fortresses, According to the Qur'an, Authentic Hadith and the Books of History

وَأَعِدُّواْ لَهُم مَّا ٱسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ ٱلْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِۦ عَدُوَّ ٱللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَىْءٍ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."

Surah Al-Anfal 8:60

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

quranscience.my | @QuranScienceMY

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH quranscience.my — free eBook. Not for sale.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who commanded the believers to prepare whatever strength they can to defend His religion. May blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, upon his family and Companions, and upon those who followed his path in excellence — among them al-Zahir Baybars, the conqueror of the Crusader fortresses.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This twenty-third book of Heroes of Islam tells the story of al-Zahir Baybars: the Kipchak boy sold cheaply because of a flaw in his eye, who became a commander at al-Mansurah and ‘Ayn Jalut, then the sultan who revived the ‘Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, built up the strength of the state, and conquered Antioch and Hisn al-Akrad. His story is told with honesty about its sources, including his mistakes and his injustices. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih — knowledge that benefits.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows ***the hills of Syria*** at dawn: a golden and rose-coloured sky, soft clouds, olive and cypress trees, and a dusty road winding up the hillside.

On the hilltop stands ***a great stone fortress*** with high walls and round towers — recalling Crusader castles such as ***Hisn al-Akrad*** (Krak des Chevaliers) and ***Safad***, which Baybars conquered — and from its towers fly ***green and gold banners***, a symbol of its liberation.

In the distance, in the morning haze, stand ***a dome and a minaret*** in the Mamluk style, recalling Cairo and the Mosque of al-Zahir Baybars, while ***thin smoke*** from campfires on the plain recalls an army always ready.

The ***dark blue band*** at the bottom, framed by ***fine gold lines***, is where the author's name appears — the same as on the covers of Series 1 to Series 22, so that all the covers of Heroes of Islam match.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

CONTENTS

AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS — *Introduction*
1. WHO WAS AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS? — *Books of history and biography*
2. A SLAVE BOY FROM THE KIPCHAK STEPPE — *Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah*
3. THE TRAP AT AL-MANSURAH — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*
4. THE YEARS OF EXILE — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah*
5. IN THE VANGUARD AT ʻAYN JALUT — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; al-Yunini, Dhayl Mir'at al-Zaman*
6. THE BLOOD OF QUTUZ AND THE THRONE — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah*
7. REVIVING THE ʻABBASID CALIPHATE — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah; Sahih al-Bukhari 7144; Surah An-Nisa' 4:59*
8. BUILDING THE STRENGTH OF THE STATE — *Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Sahih Muslim 1917; Surah Al-Anfal 8:60*
9. FOUR JUDGES, A MOSQUE AND THE BAN ON WINE — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah; Sahih al-Bukhari 5575*
10. CAESAREA, ARSUF AND SAFAD — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Sahih al-Bukhari 34; Surah An-Nahl 16:91*
11. THE CONQUEST OF ANTIOCH — *Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk*
12. HISN AL-AKRAD: THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS — *Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Sahih al-Bukhari 2892*
13. BERKE KHAN AND THE BATTLE OF ELBISTAN — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah*
14. IMAM AL-NAWAWI'S REBUKE — *Ibn al-ʻAttar, Tuhfat al-Talibin; al-Suyuti, al-Minhaj al-Sawi; Sahih al-Bukhari 7150*
15. STORIES AND FIGURES THAT NEED ASSESSMENT — *Source study*
16. DEATH IN DAMASCUS AND LEGACY — *al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Maʻrifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*
17. SOURCES FOR THE STORIES OF BAYBARS — *Table*
18. PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMELINE — *Tables*
19. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS — *12 questions*
20. LESSONS AND CONCLUSION
REFERENCES
SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS

After the victory at ‘Ayn Jalut in 658 AH (1260 CE), the Muslim world was still besieged from two sides: the Mongols in the east, and the Crusader fortresses still standing along the Syrian coast. Baghdad had been destroyed, the ‘Abbasid caliphate had vanished, and Egypt and Syria needed a strong leader to unite them.

That leader was ***al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars*** — a Kipchak boy once sold cheaply because of a flaw in his eye, who became a commander at al-Mansurah and ‘Ayn Jalut, and finally a sultan who ruled Egypt and Syria for seventeen years. He revived the ‘Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, built up the strength of the state, conquered Antioch and Hisn al-Akrad, and defeated the Mongols once more at Elbistan.

This eBook is the twenty-third in the ***Heroes of Islam*** series. Baybars’s story comes from history books, above all al-Rawd al-Zahir by his secretary Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi and al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir. Every story is given with its source and grade honestly — including uncomfortable episodes, such as his part in the killing of Qutuz, the prisoners of Safad killed after being granted safe conduct, and Imam al-Nawawi’s rebuke of him — and its lessons are grounded in the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

Baybars’s story is a story of power: how it is built, how it is used, and how it must submit to the Shari‘ah.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

WHO WAS AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS?

He is known as ***al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari al-Salihi***, the fourth Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria (658–676 AH). He was born around 620 AH on the Kipchak steppe (Dasht-i Qipchaq), north of the Black Sea, among the Turkic tribes.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir and Ibn Taghribirdi describe him as tall, brown-skinned and blue-eyed, with a powerful voice and great courage. In one of his eyes there was a white spot — a flaw that almost decided his fate when he was sold as a slave.

NAME AND TITLES

NAME OR TITLE	EXPLANATION
Baybars	A Turkic name, said to mean “panther” or “lord panther”
Rukn al-Din	“Pillar of the religion”
al-Malik al-Zahir	“The victorious, manifest king”
al-Bunduqdari	Mamluk of the emir ‘Ala’ al-Din Aydakin al-Bunduqdar
al-Salihi	Mamluk of Sultan al-Salih Ayyub
Abu al-Futuh	“Father of conquests”

LESSONS

A physical flaw does not prevent greatness. Allah looks at hearts and deeds, not at appearances.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

A SLAVE BOY FROM THE KIPCHAK STEPPE

HISTORICAL NOTE: SOLD CHEAPLY

In the 1240s, the Mongols attacked the Kipchak steppe, and many Turkic children were captured and sold in the slave markets. Baybars, then still a youth, was taken to Sivas in Anatolia, and then to Hama in Syria.

According to Ibn Taghribirdi, a buyer in Hama returned him because of the white spot in his eye. In the end he was bought by the emir ***'Ala' al-Din Aydakin al-Bunduqdar*** for about eight hundred dirhams — a low price for a mamluk. When Aydakin was arrested, Baybars passed to ***Sultan al-Salih Ayyub***, and joined the elite ***Bahriyyah*** regiment, garrisoned on the island of al-Rawdah in the Nile.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk.

LESSONS

One rejected by people can be raised by Allah. A person's worth is not decided by the price paid for him.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

THE TRAP AT AL-MANSURAH

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE SEVENTH CRUSADE

In 647 AH (1249 CE), King Louis IX of France led the Seventh Crusade and captured Damietta in Egypt. Sultan al-Salih Ayyub died while the Crusaders were advancing, and his death was kept secret.

In Dhu al-Qa'dah 647 AH (February 1250 CE), the Crusader cavalry under Robert of Artois charged into the town of ***al-Mansurah***. According to the reports, Baybars and Faris al-Din Aqtay ordered the town gates to be left open, then attacked them in the narrow streets. Almost the whole force was killed. A few weeks later, the Crusaders retreated, and Louis IX was captured at Fariskur.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah.

LESSONS

Wisdom in war can overcome great numbers. An enemy who rushes into unfamiliar ground can be trapped.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

THE YEARS OF EXILE

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE BLOOD OF TURANSHAH AND AQTAY

After the victory, Sultan Turanshah, the son of al-Salih Ayyub, began to sideline the Bahri Mamluks. In Muharram 648 AH he was killed by a group of Mamluks at Fariskur, and some sources name Baybars among the first to strike him. This is stated here honestly.

In 652 AH, Sultan ‘Izz al-Din Aybak killed Faris al-Din Aqtay, the leader of the Bahriyyah. Baybars and his companions, including Qalawun, fled to Syria. For almost six years he moved between the Ayyubid rulers of Damascus and al-Karak, at times even fighting against Egypt itself.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir (Baybars’s own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

LESSONS

Power struggles among Muslims weaken the ummah while the enemy is at the gate. Honest history records the mistakes of heroes so that we do not repeat them.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

IN THE VANGUARD AT ‘AYN JALUT

HISTORICAL NOTE: RETURN TO QUTUZ

When the Mongols took Aleppo and Damascus in 658 AH, Baybars wrote to Sultan Qutuz asking for a guarantee of safety. Qutuz accepted him, honoured him, and granted him the district of Qalyub.

At ***‘Ayn Jalut***, on 25 Ramadan 658 AH, Baybars led the vanguard. He drew the Mongol army into the valley, where the main Mamluk force was waiting. After the victory, he pursued the remnants of the Mongols as far as Aleppo. (The full story is in Series 22: Sayf al-Din Qutuz.)

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir (Baybars’s own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk; al-Yunini, Dhayl Mir’at al-Zaman; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

LESSONS

Former enemies can become the best allies when they unite against a common danger.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

THE BLOOD OF QUTUZ AND THE THRONE

HISTORICAL NOTE: AL-SALIHIYYAH, DHU AL-QA'DAH 658 AH

On the way back to Egypt, Baybars and a group of emirs killed Sultan Qutuz near al-Salihiyyah. Historians mention several reasons, among them that Qutuz did not fulfil a promise to give Aleppo to Baybars, and an old grudge going back to the killing of Aqtay. Al-Maqrizi names Baybars as one of those who struck Qutuz.

The emirs then gave the oath of allegiance to Baybars as sultan. At first he chose the title ***al-Malik al-Qahir*** ("the subduing king"), but changed it to ***al-Malik al-Zahir*** after being advised that the first was ill-omened. He entered Cairo and, to win the people's hearts, abolished some of the taxes Qutuz had imposed.

The killing of Qutuz is a dark stain on Baybars's story, and it is stated here honestly. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a stern warning against shedding Muslim blood (Sahih al-Bukhari 31; see Series 22).

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

LESSONS

Power taken through bloodshed leaves a heavy burden. Good deeds done afterwards do not erase the wrong, but repentance and righteous deeds open the door of hope.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

REVIVING THE ‘ABBASID CALIPHATE

HISTORICAL NOTE: A CALIPH IN CAIRO

For three years after the fall of Baghdad, the Muslim world had no caliph. In Rajab ***659 AH*** (June 1261 CE), a man of ‘Abbasid descent, Ahmad ibn al-Zahir, arrived in Cairo. Baybars gathered the judges and scholars to confirm his lineage, then gave him the oath of allegiance as caliph with the title ***al-Mustansir billah***. The caliph in turn entrusted the affairs of state to Baybars.

Al-Mustansir was killed soon afterwards in an attempt to retake Baghdad from the Mongols, and in 661 AH another ‘Abbasid was given the oath with the title ***al-Hakim bi Amrillah***. The ‘Abbasid caliphate in Cairo lasted almost two and a half centuries, though real power lay with the Mamluk sultans.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir (Baybars’s own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah; al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa’.

The Qur'an commands obedience to Allah, His Messenger and those in authority:

SURAH AN-NISA’ 4:59

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا ٥٩

O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:59

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained the limits of that obedience:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7144

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنِي نَافِعٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ، فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ، مَا لَمْ يُؤْمَرْ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ، فَإِذَا أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلاَ سَمْعَ وَلاَ طَاعَةَ ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Listening and obeying is binding on a Muslim, in what he likes and what he dislikes, as long as he is not commanded to commit a sin. If he is commanded to commit a sin, then there is no listening and no obeying."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar, from Nafi', from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Judgements, Hadith No. 7144.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7144

LESSONS

The unity of the ummah needs a symbol and leadership. Yet obedience to leaders is always bound by obedience to Allah.

BUILDING THE STRENGTH OF THE STATE

HISTORICAL NOTE: POST, FORTRESSES AND FLEET

Baybars built a state postal system (***al-barid***) with relay stations of horses along the road between Cairo and Damascus, so that a letter could arrive in about four days. He also used carrier pigeons, and chains of fire beacons on the Euphrates frontier to warn of Mongol attacks.

He repaired the fortresses and towns of Syria destroyed by the Mongols, built a fleet of warships, and trained his army constantly, including in archery and horsemanship. Al-Maqrizi mentions that he himself often went down to the training grounds.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir (Baybars’s own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah.

Allah commanded the believers to prepare strength:

SURAH AL-ANFAL 8:60

وَأَعِدُّواْ لَهُم مَّا ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن قُوَّةٖ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ ٱلۡخَيۡلِ تُرۡهِبُونَ بِهِۦ عَدُوَّ ٱللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمۡ وَءَاخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُونَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَعۡلَمُهُمۡۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَيۡءٖ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَنتُمۡ لَا تُظۡلَمُونَ ٦٠

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/8:60

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained this verse from the pulpit:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1917

حَدَّثَنَا هَارُونُ بْنُ مَعْرُوفٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَمْرُو بْنُ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ أَبِي عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَامَةَ بْنِ شُفَيٍّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عُقْبَةَ بْنَ عَامِرٍ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو

عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ يَقُولُ " وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ أَلاَ إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْىُ أَلاَ إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْىُ أَلاَ إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْىُ "

TRANSLATION:

'Uqbah ibn 'Amir said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say while he was on the pulpit: ***"'And prepare against them whatever you are able of power.' Indeed, power is shooting. Indeed, power is shooting. Indeed, power is shooting."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Harun ibn Ma'ruf, from 'Abdullah ibn Wahb, from 'Amr ibn al-Harith, from Abu 'Ali Thumamah ibn Shufayy, from 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Government, Hadith No. 1917.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1917

LESSONS

Strength does not appear suddenly. It is built through preparation, training and orderly administration.

FOUR JUDGES, A MOSQUE AND THE BAN ON WINE

HISTORICAL NOTE: ADMINISTRATION AND RELIGION

In ***663 AH***, Baybars appointed four chief judges in Cairo — one for each of the Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali schools — so that people could be judged according to their own school. The same system was later applied in Damascus.

He built the ***Mosque of al-Zahir Baybars*** in Cairo (665–667 AH), repaired the Prophet's Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron, and performed the Hajj in 667 AH. According to al-Maqrizi and Ibn Kathir, he also banned wine several times, closed the places where it was sold, and abolished the tax collected from it.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned about wine:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5575

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ فِي الدُّنْيَا، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُبْ مِنْهَا، حُرِمَهَا فِي الآخِرَةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Whoever drinks wine in this world and does not repent from it will be deprived of it in the Hereafter."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf al-Tinnisi, from Malik ibn Anas, from Nafi', from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Drinks, Hadith No. 5575.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5575

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

LESSONS

The strength of a state lies not only in its army, but also in the justice, knowledge and morals of its people.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

CAESAREA, ARSUF AND SAFAD

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE FORTRESSES OF THE SYRIAN COAST

In ***663 AH*** (1265 CE), Baybars took ***Caesarea*** and ***Arsuf*** on the coast of Palestine. The following year, ***664 AH*** (1266 CE), he besieged ***Safad***, a powerful Templar fortress in Galilee.

After a hard siege, the Templar garrison surrendered under a guarantee of safety. Yet according to both Muslim and Crusader sources, Baybars then ordered most of them to be killed, on the grounds that they had violated the terms of surrender, among other things by hiding weapons and property. Whether or not that reason was true, this event is stated here honestly as something open to question.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir (Baybars’s own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

The Qur'an commands that covenants be fulfilled:

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:91

وَأَوۡفُواْ بِعَهۡدِ ٱللَّهِ إِذَا عَٰهَدتُّمۡ وَلَا تَنقُضُواْ ٱلۡأَيۡمَٰنَ بَعۡدَ تَوۡكِيدِهَا وَقَدۡ
جَعَلۡتُمُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ كَفِيلًاۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تَفۡعَلُونَ ٩١

And fulfill the covenant of Allāh when you have taken it, [O believers], and do not break oaths after their confirmation while you have made Allāh, over you, a security [i.e., witness]. Indeed, Allāh knows what you do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:91

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made breaking a covenant one of the signs of hypocrisy:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 34

حَدَّثَنَا قَبِيصَةُ بْنُ عُقْبَةَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُرَّةَ، عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنْهُنَّ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ حَتَّى

يَدَعَهَا إِذَا اؤْتُمِنَ خَانَ وَإِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ وَإِذَا عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ، وَإِذَا خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ ". تَابَعَهُ شُعْبَةُ عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Four traits — whoever has all of them is a pure hypocrite, and whoever has one of them has a trait of hypocrisy until he abandons it: when he is entrusted, he betrays; when he speaks, he lies; ***when he makes a covenant, he breaks it***; and when he disputes, he transgresses."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qabisah ibn 'Uqbah, from Sufyan al-Thawri, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from 'Abdullah ibn Murrah, from Masruq ibn al-Ajda', from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 34.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:34

LESSONS

A guarantee of safety is a trust. A victory won by breaking one's word tarnishes the honour of a hero.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

THE CONQUEST OF ANTIOCH

HISTORICAL NOTE: 4 RAMADAN 666 AH

Antioch was one of the greatest cities of Syria, and had been in Crusader hands for 170 years, since 491 AH (1098 CE). In Ramadan ***666 AH*** (May 1268 CE), after taking Jaffa, Baybars besieged Antioch, and the city fell on the fourth day of Ramadan.

The sources speak of mass killing and enslavement of the city's inhabitants, and of enormous spoils. Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir copied Baybars's letter to Bohemond VI, the prince of Antioch, who was then in Tripoli, describing the city's destruction in a mocking tone. The Crusader Principality of Antioch came to an end.

Status of the report: The conquest of Antioch is historically established; the figures for the dead and captives vary and may be exaggerated.

REFERENCES:

Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

LESSONS

A great victory brings a great test as well. Islam teaches mercy to civilians, even in war.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

HISN AL-AKRAD: THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS

HISTORICAL NOTE: KRAK DES CHEVALIERS, 669 AH

Hisn al-Akrad (known in the West as Krak des Chevaliers) was a mighty Hospitaller fortress on a hill in Syria, which had withstood many attacks, including one by Salah al-Din. In Rajab and Sha'ban ***669 AH*** (March–April 1271 CE), Baybars besieged it with mangonels (stone-throwers) and mined beneath its walls.

After the outer wall was breached, the defenders in the inner keep surrendered under a guarantee of safety. This time the guarantee was honoured: they were allowed to leave for Tripoli. Baybars then repaired the fortress and built a mosque inside it.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained the virtue of guarding the frontier (ribat):

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2892

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُنِيرٍ، سَمِعَ أَبَا النَّضْرِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " رِبَاطُ يَوْمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا، وَمَوْضِعُ سَوْطِ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا، وَالرَّوْحَةُ يَرُوحُهَا الْعَبْدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوِ الْغَدْوَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا ".

TRANSLATION:

Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sa'idi narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Guarding the frontier for one day in the path of Allah is better than the world and all that is on it.*** The space of one of your whips in Paradise is better than the world and all that is on it. And a journey in the evening or the morning that a servant makes in the path of Allah is better than the world and all that is on it."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Munir, from Abu al-Nadr Hashim ibn al-Qasim, from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Abdullah ibn Dinar, from Abu Hazim Salamah ibn Dinar, from Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sa'idi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Chapter: The Virtue of Guarding the Frontier for a Day, Hadith No. 2892.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2892

LESSONS

Even the strongest fortress can be opened with patience. And keeping one's word to an enemy who surrenders is a mark of honour.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

BERKE KHAN AND THE BATTLE OF ELBISTAN

HISTORICAL NOTE: AN ALLY IN THE NORTH, A VICTORY IN ANATOLIA

Berke Khan, ruler of the Golden Horde (Ulus of Jochi) north of the Black Sea, was a grandson of Genghis Khan who had embraced Islam. Baybars, himself from the Kipchak steppe under Berke's rule, sent envoys to him from 660 AH onwards. The two allied against Hulagu, and the war between Berke and Hulagu kept the Ilkhanid Mongols from attacking Syria in full force. (Berke's story will be told in Series 24.)

In Dhu al-Qa'dah ***675 AH*** (April 1277 CE), Baybars marched into Anatolia and defeated the Mongol army and its Seljuk allies at ***Elbistan*** (al-Abulustayn). He then entered Kayseri and sat on the Seljuk throne, before withdrawing to Syria.

Status of the report: Narrated in history books such as al-Rawd al-Zahir by Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir (Baybars's own secretary), al-Suluk by al-Maqrizi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir and al-Nujum al-Zahirah by Ibn Taghribirdi, without a chain by the standards of the Hadith scholars. The story is accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal al-Muluk; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir; Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah.

LESSONS

The brotherhood of Islam crosses races and kingdoms. A Mamluk sultan and a Mongol khan were united by faith.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

IMAM AL-NAWAWI'S REBUKE

HISTORICAL NOTE: A SCHOLAR BEFORE THE SULTAN

Imam ***Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi***, author of Riyad al-Salihin and the Forty Hadith, lived in Damascus in the time of Baybars. His student Ibn al-'Attar and al-Suyuti report that al-Nawawi wrote several letters to Baybars, rebuking him for injustice to the people of Damascus, among other things the seizure of orchards and heavy taxes.

It is reported that when Baybars sought a fatwa to take the people's wealth to fund the war, al-Nawawi refused to sign it until the sultan and the emirs first gave up their own wealth — just like the fatwa of al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salam to Qutuz. Baybars was angered and ordered him to leave Damascus. Al-Nawawi replied, "I hear and obey," and returned to his village of Nawa, where he died in 676 AH — the same year as Baybars. The story is famous, but some of its details are reported only by al-Nawawi's admirers.

Status of the report: Al-Nawawi's rebuke of Baybars is famous in his biographies; some details (including words attributed to Baybars) cannot be confirmed.

REFERENCES:

Ibn al-'Attar, Tuhfat al-Talibin fi Tarjamat al-Imam Muhyi al-Din; al-Suyuti, al-Minhaj al-Sawi; al-Subki, Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra.

The scholars rebuked rulers because they understood the weight of the trust of leadership:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7150

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الأَشْهَبِ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، أَنَّ عُبَيْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ زِيَادٍ، عَادَ مَعْقِلَ بْنَ يَسَارٍ فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ مَعْقِلٌ إِنِّي مُحَدِّثُكَ حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ اسْتَرْعَاهُ اللَّهُ رَعِيَّةً، فَلَمْ يَحُطْهَا بِنَصِيحَةٍ، إِلاَّ لَمْ يَجِدْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

Al-Hasan narrated that 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad visited Ma'qil ibn Yasar in the illness from which he died. Ma'qil said to him: I will tell you a hadith I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ***"There is no servant whom Allah places in charge of subjects and who does not look after them with sincere care, except that he will not smell the fragrance of Paradise."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu Nu'aym al-Fadl ibn Dukayn, from Abu al-Ash-hab Ja'far ibn Hayyan, from Al-Hasan al-Basri, from Ma'qil ibn Yasar رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Judgements, Hadith No. 7150.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7150

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

LESSONS

Scholars brave enough to rebuke, and rulers who let them live, are a sign of an ummah still in good health. Al-Nawawi obeyed without compromising the truth.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

STORIES AND FIGURES THAT NEED ASSESSMENT

SOURCE NOTE: BETWEEN FACT AND LEGEND

Several things in Baybars's story need careful assessment. ***First***, the main source on him, al-Rawd al-Zahir, was written by his own secretary, Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, who praised him, while Crusader sources portray him as a cruel enemy; both must be read with care. ***Second***, the figures for the dead and captives at Antioch (up to a hundred thousand) are considered exaggerated by modern historians.

Third, the story that he died after drinking poisoned ***qumiz*** (fermented mare's milk) — said to have been prepared for someone else — is reported by some historians, while others mention illness or a wound; the true cause is uncertain. ***Fourth***, the ***Sirat al-Zahir Baybars***, a long folk epic about him recited in the coffee houses of Egypt and Syria for centuries, is a work of fiction, not history.

Status of the report: The main events are established; the figures, the cause of death and the folk-epic stories cannot be confirmed.

REFERENCES:

A comparison of Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, al-Maqrizi, Ibn Kathir, Crusader sources and modern historical studies.

LESSONS

A great figure is often surrounded by excessive praise and excessive accusation. Honesty is the middle path.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

DEATH IN DAMASCUS AND LEGACY

Baybars died in Damascus in Muharram ***676 AH*** (July 1277 CE), at about fifty-five years of age, and was buried in ***al-Madrasah al-Zahiriyyah***, which today houses the Zahiriyyah Library. He ruled for seventeen years and left his successors a strong state, which later ended the Crusader presence in Syria in 690 AH.

LEGACY	ITS EFFECT
A caliph in Cairo	A symbol of the ummah's unity after Baghdad
Mamluk strength	Egypt and Syria defended against Mongols and Crusaders
Crusader fortresses	Caesarea, Arsuf, Safad, Jaffa, Antioch, Hisn al-Akrad
Administration	The barid post, four judges, a fleet
Architecture	Mosque of al-Zahir Baybars; al-Madrasah al-Zahiriyyah

THE CHARACTER OF BAYBARS

TRAIT	EXAMPLE FROM HIS STORY
Brave and shrewd	The trap at al-Mansurah; the vanguard at 'Ayn Jalut
A great organiser	Post, fortresses, fleet and army training
Guardian of religious rites	The caliphate, four judges, mosques, the wine ban
Tireless	On campaign almost every year
Harsh and at times unjust	The prisoners of Safad; Antioch; al-Nawawi's rebuke
An ordinary human being	His part in the killing of Qutuz

LESSONS

Power is a trust. It is noble when used to defend the ummah, and blameworthy when used to oppress.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

SOURCES FOR THE STORIES OF BAYBARS

This table summarises the source and grade of each story, so that readers can distinguish what is authentic from what is merely famous.

STORY	SOURCE	GRADE
Sold because of his eye	Ibn Taghribirdi	History
The trap at al-Mansurah (647 AH)	al-Maqrizi; Ibn Kathir	History
The killing of Turanshah and Qutuz	al-Maqrizi; Ibn Taghribirdi	History
A caliph in Cairo (659 AH)	al-Maqrizi; al-Suyuti	History
Hear and obey unless it is a sin	Sahih al-Bukhari 7144	Authentic
Post, fortresses and fleet	Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi	History
Power is shooting	Sahih Muslim 1917	Authentic
Four judges (663 AH)	al-Maqrizi	History
Warning about wine	Sahih al-Bukhari 5575	Authentic
The prisoners of Safad killed (664 AH)	al-Maqrizi; Crusader sources	History; disputed
The signs of a hypocrite	Sahih al-Bukhari 34	Authentic
Antioch (666 AH)	Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi	History; figures exaggerated
Hisn al-Akrad (669 AH)	Ibn ʻAbd al-Zahir; al-Maqrizi	History
The virtue of ribat	Sahih al-Bukhari 2892	Authentic
Al-Nawawi's rebuke	Ibn al-ʻAttar; al-Suyuti	Famous; details uncertain
The ruler who fails his subjects	Sahih al-Bukhari 7150	Authentic
Death by poisoned qumiz	al-Maqrizi and others	Uncertain
Sirat al-Zahir Baybars	Folk epic	Fiction

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMELINE

PERSON	ROLE
al-Salih Ayyub	Ayyubid sultan; Baybars's master
Faris al-Din Aqtay	Leader of the Bahriyyah; killed by Aybak
Sayf al-Din Qutuz	Sultan before Baybars; hero of 'Ayn Jalut
al-Mustansir billah	The first 'Abbasid caliph in Cairo
Louis IX	King of France; captured after al-Mansurah
Berke Khan	Muslim khan of the Golden Horde; Baybars's ally
Imam al-Nawawi	Scholar of Damascus who rebuked Baybars
Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir	Secretary and biographer of Baybars

PLACE	EVENT
al-Mansurah	The Crusaders trapped (647 AH)
'Ayn Jalut	Victory over the Mongols (658 AH)
Cairo	Seat of the sultanate and the caliphate
Safad	Templar fortress taken (664 AH)
Antioch	The Crusader principality ended (666 AH)
Hisn al-Akrad	Hospitaller fortress taken (669 AH)
Elbistan	Mongols defeated in Anatolia (675 AH)
Damascus	Place of his death and tomb (676 AH)

YEAR	EVENT
c. 620 AH	Born on the Kipchak steppe
647 AH	The Battle of al-Mansurah
652 AH	Flees to Syria
658 AH	'Ayn Jalut; becomes sultan
659 AH	The 'Abbasid caliphate in Cairo
663 AH	Four judges; Caesarea and Arsuf
664 AH	Safad
666 AH	Jaffa and Antioch
669 AH	Hisn al-Akrad
675 AH	The Battle of Elbistan

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

YEAR	EVENT
676 AH	Dies in Damascus

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS

This chapter answers questions often asked about al-Zahir Baybars. The answers are brief; details are in the earlier chapters.

1. WHO WAS AL-ZAHIR BAYBARS?

The fourth Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria (658–676 AH), a commander at al-Mansurah and ‘Ayn Jalut.

2. WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

From the Kipchak Turkic tribes north of the Black Sea; he was sold as a slave in his youth.

3. WHAT DOES “AL-BUNDUQDARI” MEAN?

He was once the mamluk of the emir Aydakin al-Bunduqdar.

4. WHAT WAS HIS ROLE AT AL-MANSURAH?

He was among the commanders who trapped the Crusader cavalry inside the town.

5. HOW DID HE BECOME SULTAN?

After he and a group of emirs killed Sultan Qutuz in 658 AH.

6. WHAT DID HE DO FOR THE CALIPHATE?

He gave the oath of allegiance to a man of ‘Abbasid descent as caliph in Cairo in 659 AH.

7. WHAT WAS AL-BARID?

A state postal system with relay stations of horses between Cairo and Damascus.

8. WHICH CRUSADER FORTRESSES DID HE TAKE?

Among them Caesarea, Arsuf, Safad, Jaffa, Antioch and Hisn al-Akrad.

9. DID HE MAKE MISTAKES?

Yes, among them his part in the killing of Qutuz and the killing of the prisoners of Safad.

10. WHY DID IMAM AL-NAWAWI REBUKE HIM?

Because of injustice to the people of Damascus and heavy taxes.

11. WHEN AND WHERE DID HE DIE?

In Damascus in Muharram 676 AH; his tomb is in al-Madrasah al-Zahiriyyah.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

12. WHAT IS THE GREATEST LESSON OF HIS STORY?

Power is a trust that must submit to the Shari'ah.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

Baybars's story is that of a slave boy rejected because of a flaw in his eye, who became a sultan who united Egypt and Syria, revived the caliphate and brought down the Crusader fortresses — but also a man whose hands were not clean of blood and injustice.

LESSON	FROM BAYBARS'S STORY
Origins do not decide destiny	A slave sold cheaply became sultan
Obedience within the Shari'ah	A caliph in Cairo; An-Nisa' 4:59; Sahih al-Bukhari 7144
Preparing strength	Post, fortresses and fleet; Al-Anfal 8:60; Sahih Muslim 1917
Guarding public morals	The wine ban; Sahih al-Bukhari 5575
Keeping covenants	Safad and Hisn al-Akrad; An-Nahl 16:91; Sahih al-Bukhari 34
The virtue of guarding the frontier	The fortresses of Syria; Sahih al-Bukhari 2892
Accepting the scholars' rebuke	Imam al-Nawawi; Sahih al-Bukhari 7150
Honesty about sources	Praise, accusations and legends that need assessment

May we take the good from Baybars — his determination, preparation and zeal in defending the ummah — and avoid his mistakes, by making power a trust that submits to the command of Allah.

In sha' Allah, the Heroes of Islam series will continue with the story of Berke Khan.

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

REFERENCES

THE QUR'AN AND TAFSIR

The Noble Qur'an, ‘Uthmani text and the Sahih International translation. https://quran.com

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-‘Azim (An-Nisa’ 4:59; Al-Anfal 8:60; An-Nahl 16:91).

HADITH

Sahih al-Bukhari 34, 2892, 5575, 7144, 7150. https://sunnah.com/bukhari

Sahih Muslim 1917. https://sunnah.com/muslim:1917

Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari; al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim.

BOOKS OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir.

Al-Maqrizi, al-Suluk li Ma‘rifat Duwal al-Muluk.

Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah.

Al-Yunini, Dhayl Mir’at al-Zaman.

Ibn Taghribirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah fi Muluk Misr wa al-Qahirah.

Al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa’ and al-Minhaj al-Sawi fi Tarjamat al-Imam al-Nawawi.

Ibn al-‘Attar, Tuhfat al-Talibin fi Tarjamat al-Imam Muhyi al-Din.

Wikipedia, “Baybars”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baybars

RELATED SERIES ON QURANSCIENCE.MY

Heroes of Islam, Series 1: Hamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib to Series 22: Sayf al-Din Qutuz.
https://quranscience.my/#pahlawan

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims

SUPPORT & DONATIONS

This eBook is published **entirely free** for Muslims and is **never to be sold**. Donations are most welcome to help with the costs of research, hosting the website quranscience.my and publishing further eBooks — but they are **not obligatory**. May Allah accept every donation as an ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah).

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

JAZAKUMULLAHU KHAIRAN KATHIRA



Scan the QR code above (DuitNow, Malaysia) to donate.

DONATE

International donors: click the DONATE button or visit paypal.me/quranscience

© 2026 CE / 1448 AH All Rights Reserved Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron — Free for Muslims