بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HEROES OF ISLAM

SERIES 21

SALAH AL-DIN AL-AYYUBI

The Liberator of Jerusalem, According to the Qur'an, Authentic Hadith and the Books of History

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ ۖ يَغْفِرُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

“He said, "No blame will there be upon you today. May Allāh forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.”

Surah Yusuf 12:92

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who grants victory to whom He wills. 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 Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, the liberator of Jerusalem.

This book 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-first book of Heroes of Islam tells the story of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin): the pupil of Nur al-Din who ended the Fatimid state, united Egypt and Syria, won at Hattin, liberated Jerusalem with mercy, installed his teacher's minbar in al-Masjid al-Aqsa, held firm against the Third Crusade, and died with only 47 dirhams. His story is told with honesty about its sources, including the uncomfortable episodes and the unestablished legends. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih — knowledge that benefits.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows ***the old city of Jerusalem*** at sunset, seen from a stone terrace on the Mount of Olives, with the city walls, stone houses, minarets, olive and cypress trees, and a golden haze over the valley.

At its heart shines the golden ***Dome of the Rock***, and beside it the grey-domed ***al-Masjid al-Aqsa*** on the platform of the Haram al-Sharif — the city Saladin liberated on 27 Rajab 583 AH.

In the foreground lie ***a carved wooden panel*** with geometric star patterns — recalling ***Nur al-Din's minbar***, which Saladin installed in al-Masjid al-Aqsa — ***a handwritten book*** with ink and reed pen, ***a folded white cloth***, ***a curved sword*** in a leather scabbard, ***an old iron key***, a symbol of the city's surrender, and ***a brass oil lamp***.

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 20, so that all the covers of Heroes of Islam match.

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CONTENTS

SALAH AL-DIN AL-AYYUBI 5
1. WHO WAS SALADIN? 6
2. FROM TIKRIT TO DAMASCUS 7
3. EGYPT: THE VIZIER WHO ENDED THE FATIMIDS 8
4. UNITING EGYPT AND SYRIA 9
5. WHY JERUSALEM? 10
6. REYNALD AND THE BROKEN TREATY 11
7. THE BATTLE OF HATTIN 12
8. THE LIBERATION OF JERUSALEM 13
9. MERCY TO THE DEFEATED 15
10. FREEING THE CAPTIVES 16
11. THE FIRST FRIDAY IN AL-AQSA AND NUR AL-DIN'S MINBAR 17
12. THE THIRD CRUSADE: ACRE 18
13. SALADIN AND RICHARD: A RESPECTED ENEMY 19
14. THE TREATY OF RAMLA 20
15. STORIES THAT ARE NOT ESTABLISHED 21
16. DYING WITH 47 DIRHAMS 22
17. SOURCES OF SALADIN'S STORIES 24
18. PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMELINE 25
19. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SALADIN 26
20. LESSONS AND CONCLUSION 28
REFERENCES 29
SUPPORT & DONATIONS 30

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.com.

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SALAH AL-DIN AL-AYYUBI

On Friday, 27 Rajab 583 AH (2 October 1187 CE) — the anniversary of the Night Journey (al-Isra' wa al-Mi'raj) — ***Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi*** entered Jerusalem after the city had been in Crusader hands for 88 years. When the Crusaders took it in 492 AH, its streets ran with blood. This time there was no massacre; its people were allowed to ransom themselves and leave in safety, and thousands of the poor were freed without ransom.

Saladin (532–589 AH / 1138–1193 CE) was the pupil of Nur al-Din Zangi (Series 20). He ended the Fatimid state in Egypt, united Egypt and Syria, defeated the Crusaders at Hattin, liberated Jerusalem, installed Nur al-Din's minbar in al-Masjid al-Aqsa, and held firm against the Third Crusade. When he died, his treasury held only 47 dirhams and a single piece of gold.

This eBook is the twenty-first in the ***Heroes of Islam*** series. Saladin's story comes from sources very close to him: Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad, his judge, and 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, his secretary, as well as Ibn al-Athir and Abu Shamah. Every story is given with its source and grade honestly — including uncomfortable episodes, such as the execution of prisoners after Hattin, and the legends about Saladin and Richard that are not established — and its lessons are grounded in the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

Saladin's story is the story of victory accompanied by mercy — proof that a commander can win without losing his character.

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WHO WAS SALADIN?

His real name was ***Yusuf ibn Najm al-Din Ayyub ibn Shadhi***. He was of Kurdish descent, born in ***Tikrit*** on the bank of the Tigris in 532 AH (1137/1138 CE). His father, ***Najm al-Din Ayyub***, and his uncle, ***Asad al-Din Shirkuh***, were commanders in the army of Zangi and later of Nur al-Din.

He was known by the titles ***Salah al-Din*** ("righteousness of the religion") and ***al-Malik al-Nasir*** ("the king who brings victory"). His kunya was Abu al-Muzaffar. In European languages he is known as ***Saladin***.

NAME AND TITLES

NAME OR TITLE	EXPLANATION
Yusuf ibn Ayyub	His real name
Salah al-Din	"Righteousness of the religion"
al-Malik al-Nasir	"The king who brings victory"
Abu al-Muzaffar	His kunya
Saladin	His name in European languages

LESSONS

Lineage does not determine greatness. A Kurdish boy from Tikrit became a leader remembered by the whole ummah.

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FROM TIKRIT TO DAMASCUS

HISTORICAL NOTE: GROWING UP AT NUR AL-DIN'S COURT

Ayyub's family left Tikrit in the year of Saladin's birth and served 'Imad al-Din Zangi. Najm al-Din Ayyub later became governor of Baalbek, and after Damascus was united under Nur al-Din in 549 AH, the family settled in Damascus.

Saladin grew up in Damascus, learning the Qur'an, hadith and good manners, and training in horsemanship and polo. Ibn Shaddad mentions that he memorised the Hamasah anthology and loved to hear hadith. In his youth he was not known for great ambition — his leadership came later, when responsibility was placed on his shoulders.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; Ibn Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah.

LESSONS

A good environment shapes character. Saladin was raised under the shade of a just king.

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EGYPT: THE VIZIER WHO ENDED THE FATIMIDS

HISTORICAL NOTE: FROM YOUNG OFFICER TO VIZIER

Saladin joined his uncle Shirkuh on Nur al-Din's expeditions to Egypt. In the second expedition (562 AH) he defended ***Alexandria*** for more than two months against a siege by the Crusaders and the Fatimids.

In 564 AH (1169 CE) Shirkuh became vizier of Egypt and died two months later. The Fatimid caliph appointed Saladin, then about 31, as vizier. Ibn al-Athir mentions that from then on he gave up wine and amusements and devoted himself to serious work.

In ***567 AH*** (1171 CE), on Nur al-Din's orders, the Friday sermon in Egypt was read in the name of the 'Abbasid caliph, and the Fatimid state, more than two centuries old, came to an end. Saladin also built madrasas in Egypt and began the construction of the Citadel of Cairo.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; Abu Shamah, Kitab al-Rawdatayn.

LESSONS

Great responsibility changes a person. Saladin left comfort behind when duty demanded seriousness.

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UNITING EGYPT AND SYRIA

HISTORICAL NOTE: FIFTEEN YEARS OF UNIFICATION

After Nur al-Din died in 569 AH, his lands were divided among the emirs, and his son al-Salih Isma'il was still a child. In ***570 AH*** (1174 CE) Saladin entered Damascus. In the following years he united Homs, Hama, ***Aleppo*** (579 AH), and finally received the allegiance of ***Mosul*** (581 AH).

This unification did not happen without battles among Muslims, and historians — including Ibn al-Athir, who leaned towards the Zangid family — criticised parts of it. Yet the result was that, for the first time, Egypt, Syria and al-Jazira stood under one leadership, encircling the Crusader states from every side.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; Ibn Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Abu Shamah, Kitab al-Rawdatayn.

LESSONS

Unity requires long patience. Honest history records its achievements and the criticism of it.

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WHY JERUSALEM?

HISTORICAL NOTE: 88 YEARS UNDER THE CRUSADERS

The Crusaders took Jerusalem in Sha'ban ***492 AH*** (July 1099 CE). Muslim and Latin sources alike describe a great massacre of its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants. Ibn al-Athir gives the figure of 70,000 killed in al-Masjid al-Aqsa; modern historians consider that number exaggerated, but agree that the killing was terrible.

For 88 years the Dome of the Rock was turned into a church, and al-Masjid al-Aqsa into a palace and the headquarters of the Knights Templar. Liberating it became the aim of Zangi, Nur al-Din and then Saladin.

Status of the report: The event is historically established; the exact death toll is disputed.

REFERENCES:
Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; Latin sources such as the Gesta Francorum.

Al-Masjid al-Aqsa is one of the three noblest mosques:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1189

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيٌّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " لاَ تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلاَّ إِلَى ثَلاَثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِ الرَّسُولِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَمَسْجِدِ الأَقْصَى ".

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Do not set out on a journey (for worship) except to three mosques: al-Masjid al-Haram, the Mosque of the Messenger ﷺ, and al-Masjid al-Aqsa."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ali ibn al-Madini, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of Prayer in the Mosques of Makkah and Madinah, Hadith No. 1189.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:1189

LESSONS

Al-Aqsa is not merely a piece of land; it is part of this ummah's faith.

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REYNALD AND THE BROKEN TREATY

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE TREATY-BREAKER

Saladin had made a peace treaty with the Kingdom of Jerusalem. But ***Reynald of Châtillon*** (Arnat in the Arabic sources), lord of Kerak, broke it again and again. In 578 AH he sent ships into the Red Sea and threatened the road to Makkah and Madinah.

Around 582 AH, while the treaty was still in force, Reynald attacked a great trade caravan, captured its travellers and — according to Ibn Shaddad — mocked them: "Tell Muhammad to save you." When Saladin heard of it, he swore that he would kill Reynald with his own hand if Allah gave him power over him.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

Islam takes treaties seriously, including treaties with non-Muslims:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3166

حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسُ بْنُ حَفْصٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ، حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَمْرٍو، حَدَّثَنَا مُجَاهِدٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهَدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا تُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Whoever kills a mu'ahad (a non-Muslim under a treaty with the Muslims) will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance can be perceived from a distance of forty years' travel."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qays ibn Hafs, from 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Ziyad, from Al-Hasan ibn 'Amr, from Mujahid ibn Jabr, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Jizyah, Hadith No. 3166.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3166

LESSONS

A treaty is a trust. Muslims keep it even when the other side betrays it.

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THE BATTLE OF HATTIN

HISTORICAL NOTE: 24 RABI‘ AL-AKHIR 583 AH

In the summer of 583 AH Saladin besieged Tiberias. The Crusader army under King ***Guy of Lusignan*** marched across a dry plain to relieve it. Saladin cut them off from water. On ***4 July 1187*** (24 Rabi‘ al-Akhir 583 AH), at the twin hills of ***Hattin*** near the Sea of Galilee, the thirsty and exhausted Crusader army was defeated. King Guy and many nobles were captured.

Ibn Shaddad and ‘Imad al-Din relate that King Guy was brought to Saladin’s tent, and Saladin gave him iced water. Guy passed the water to Reynald. Saladin said that it was not he who had given Reynald drink — by Arab custom, a captive given drink by his host was granted safety. Saladin then killed Reynald for his treachery and mockery, and reassured King Guy: “Kings do not kill kings.”

The same sources also record that Saladin ordered the captured Knights Templar and Hospitaller — about two hundred men — to be executed, as they were regarded as the most hostile fighters against the Muslims. This is stated here honestly, because true history does not hide what is uncomfortable.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha’ al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by ‘Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; ‘Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

LESSONS

Great victory comes after long preparation. Honest history records a commander’s nobility and also his severity.

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THE LIBERATION OF JERUSALEM

HISTORICAL NOTE: 27 RAJAB 583 AH

After Hattin, the coastal cities fell one after another. In Rajab 583 AH Saladin besieged Jerusalem. Its defender, ***Balian of Ibelin***, threatened to kill the Muslim prisoners and destroy the Dome of the Rock if no guarantee of safety was given. Saladin consulted his advisers and accepted the city's peaceful surrender.

The terms: each man would ransom himself for 10 dinars, each woman for 5 and each child for 2, and they were given 40 days to leave with their property. On Friday, ***27 Rajab 583 AH*** (2 October 1187 CE), Saladin entered Jerusalem — on the anniversary of the Night Journey.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

Even in war, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade the killing of women and children:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3015

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، قَالَ قُلْتُ لأَبِي أُسَامَةَ حَدَّثَكُمْ عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ وُجِدَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مَقْتُولَةً فِي بَعْضِ مَغَازِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم، فَنَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنْ قَتْلِ النِّسَاءِ وَالصِّبْيَانِ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Umar said: A woman was found killed in one of the campaigns of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade the killing of women and children.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (Ibn Rahawayh), from Abu Usamah Hammad ibn Usamah, from 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar, from Nafi', freedman of Ibn 'Umar, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Hadith No. 3015.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3015

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Saladin's conduct recalls the words of the Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to the brothers who had wronged him:

SURAH YUSUF 12:92

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ ۖ يَغْفِرُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

He said, "No blame will there be upon you today. May Allāh forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/12:92

The books of sirah relate that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ repeated these words to the people of Makkah on the day of its conquest; the report is well known in the sirah, though Hadith scholars discuss its chain.

LESSONS

True victory is when a city is opened without revenge.

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MERCY TO THE DEFEATED

HISTORICAL NOTE: COMPASSION AT THE CITY GATES

Many of the poor could not pay the ransom. According to Ibn al-Athir and 'Imad al-Din, Balian paid a large sum to free thousands of the poor. Saladin's brother, ***al-'Adil***, asked for a thousand people as a gift and set them all free; Saladin himself freed many elderly people who could not pay.

It is also reported that the wives and daughters of knights who had been killed or captured came to him weeping. Saladin released the husbands and fathers who were still alive, and gave money to the widows and orphans. Contemporary Christian chroniclers also recorded his generosity. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was not destroyed, and local Christians were allowed to remain.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi; contemporary Latin sources.

Saladin's mercy was the fruit of the teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6013

حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ حَفْصٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي زَيْدُ بْنُ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ جَرِيرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَنْ لاَ يَرْحَمُ لاَ يُرْحَمُ ".

TRANSLATION:

Jarir ibn 'Abdullah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Umar ibn Hafs, from Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Zayd ibn Wahb, from Jarir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners, Hadith No. 6013.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:6013

Compare two events in the same city: the massacre of 492 AH, and the mercy of 583 AH.

LESSONS

A leader's character shows most clearly when he has power over his enemy.

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FREEING THE CAPTIVES

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE PRISON DOORS OPENED

'Imad al-Din mentions that there were many Muslim captives in Jerusalem who had been held for years. Their release was among the terms of the city's surrender, and they were freed when Saladin's army entered. Throughout his campaign Saladin also freed thousands of Muslim captives from the coastal cities taken after Hattin.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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:
'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi; Ibn Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah.

Freeing captives is a command of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3046

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " فُكُّوا الْعَانِيَ ـ يَعْنِي الأَسِيرَ ـ وَأَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ ".

TRANSLATION:

Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Free the captive, feed the hungry, and visit the sick."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir, from Abu Wa'il Shaqiq ibn Salamah, from Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Hadith No. 3046.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3046

LESSONS

Victory is not complete while our brothers remain in chains.

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THE FIRST FRIDAY IN AL-AQSA AND NUR AL-DIN'S MINBAR

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE CALL TO PRAYER RETURNS

The great cross on the Dome of the Rock was taken down, and al-Masjid al-Aqsa was cleansed and purified with rose water. On Friday, 4 Sha'ban 583 AH, the first Friday prayer in 88 years was held in al-Aqsa. The sermon was delivered by Qadi Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Zaki of Damascus, and 'Imad al-Din describes people weeping with joy.

Saladin then ordered ***Nur al-Din's minbar*** to be brought from Aleppo and installed in al-Masjid al-Aqsa — fulfilling the intention of his teacher, who had died fourteen years earlier (see Series 20).

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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:

'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi; Abu Shamah, Kitab al-Rawdatayn; Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan.

After victory, Allah commands glorification and seeking forgiveness, not arrogance:

SURAH AN-NASR 110:3

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ تَوَّابًۢا ﴿٣﴾

Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of Repentance.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/110:3

LESSONS

Victory is greeted with prostration and seeking forgiveness. And a teacher's promise is fulfilled by his pupil.

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THE THIRD CRUSADE: ACRE

HISTORICAL NOTE: TWO YEARS AT ACRE

The fall of Jerusalem provoked the ***Third Crusade***, led by the kings of England, France and Germany. From 585 to 587 AH (1189–1191 CE) the Crusaders besieged ***Acre*** (‘Akka), while Saladin besieged them from outside. Ibn Shaddad, who was at his side, describes Saladin falling ill yet staying on the battlefield.

Acre surrendered in Jumada al-Akhirah 587 AH (July 1191). When the ransom negotiations were delayed, King ***Richard I*** of England ordered about 2,700 Muslim prisoners from Acre to be killed in full view of the Muslim army. Ibn Shaddad records this event with deep grief.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha’ al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by ‘Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh; contemporary Latin sources.

The Qur'an permits equivalent retribution, but declares that patience is better:

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:126

وَإِنۡ عَاقَبۡتُمۡ فَعَاقِبُواْ بِمِثۡلِ مَا عُوقِبۡتُم بِهِۦۖ وَلَئِن صَبَرۡتُمۡ لَهُوَ خَيۡرٞ لِّلصَّٰبِرِينَ ١٢٦

And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient - it is better for those who are patient.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:126

Bitter as the events at Acre were, Saladin did not retaliate by massacring the Christian inhabitants of his lands.

LESSONS

The enemy’s injustice does not make it lawful for us to abandon good character.

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SALADIN AND RICHARD: A RESPECTED ENEMY

HISTORICAL NOTE: GIFTS IN THE MIDST OF WAR

Saladin and Richard never met face to face, but they corresponded through Saladin's brother ***al-'Adil***, who met Richard several times to negotiate. Ibn Shaddad records these negotiations in detail.

It is reported that when Richard had a fever, Saladin sent him fruit and snow from the mountains. Latin sources also mention that when Richard's horse was killed at Jaffa, two horses were sent to him from the Muslim side. These stories show courtesy in the midst of enmity, though their details differ between sources.

At the battle of ***Arsuf*** (587 AH) Richard defeated Saladin's army, yet he was never able to take Jerusalem.

Status of the report: The negotiations and exchange of gifts are mentioned in contemporary sources; details of some stories differ between sources.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Latin sources such as the Itinerarium Peregrinorum.

LESSONS

Enmity does not erase courtesy. The most feared and most respected enemy is one who is both strong and noble.

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THE TREATY OF RAMLA

HISTORICAL NOTE: A PEACE THAT KEPT JERUSALEM

Both sides were exhausted. In Sha'ban ***588 AH*** (September 1192 CE), Saladin and Richard concluded the ***Treaty of Ramla*** for three years and eight months. The Crusaders kept the coastal strip from Tyre to Jaffa, while ***Jerusalem remained in Muslim hands***, and Christian pilgrims were allowed to visit it in peace.

Ibn Shaddad mentions that some emirs wanted to keep fighting, but Saladin accepted peace for the sake of the people and the army, who had long suffered. After the treaty, he kept it in full.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

LESSONS

Wisdom needs the courage to make peace when peace is more beneficial, and the honesty to keep the treaty.

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STORIES THAT ARE NOT ESTABLISHED

NOTE ON SOURCES: LEGENDS ABOUT SALADIN

Saladin's fame in Europe gave rise to many legends. The best known is Walter Scott's novel ***The Talisman*** (1825), which shows Saladin disguised as a physician treating Richard, and the two meeting and displaying their swordsmanship. All of this is the invention of a novel; they never met.

The same applies to stories of personal contests between Saladin and Richard, and to romantic tales in medieval European literature. These stories are not found in contemporary sources such as Ibn Shaddad, 'Imad al-Din or the reliable Latin sources.

Status of the report: Literary invention; not established.

REFERENCES:

Comparison with Ibn Shaddad, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani and contemporary Latin sources.

LESSONS

Saladin needs no legends to be a hero. His true history is noble enough.

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DYING WITH 47 DIRHAMS

HISTORICAL NOTE: 27 SAFAR 589 AH

A few months after the Treaty of Ramla, Saladin fell ill in Damascus and died on ***27 Safar 589 AH*** (4 March 1193 CE), at about 55 years of age. Ibn Shaddad, who was at his side, mentions that when verses of the Qur'an were recited to him, his face shone.

Ibn Shaddad wrote that Saladin left nothing in his treasury but ***47 dirhams*** and a single piece of gold — no house, land, garden or other property. The money for his shroud and burial had to be borrowed. He had spent almost all his wealth on jihad, madrasas and charity. His tomb lies beside the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

Status of the report: Narrated in the history books, above all al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (the judge and eyewitness who accompanied Saladin) and al-Fath al-Qussi by 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (his secretary), 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 Shaddad, al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah; Abu Shamah, Kitab al-Rawdatayn; Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat al-A'yan.

He died like his example, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2739

حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرُ بْنُ مُعَاوِيَةَ الْجُعْفِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، خَتَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَخِي جُوَيْرِيَةَ بِنْتِ الْحَارِثِ قَالَ مَا تَرَكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ دِرْهَمًا وَلاَ دِينَارًا وَلاَ عَبْدًا وَلاَ أَمَةً وَلاَ شَيْئًا، إِلاَّ بَغْلَتَهُ الْبَيْضَاءَ وَسِلاَحَهُ وَأَرْضًا جَعَلَهَا صَدَقَةً.

TRANSLATION:

'Amr ibn al-Harith, the brother of Juwayriyah bint al-Harith (wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ), said: ***At his death the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left no dirham, no dinar, no male or female slave, nor anything else, except his white mule, his weapons, and a piece of land he had made a charity.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ibrahim ibn al-Harith, from Yahya ibn Abi Bukayr, from Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah al-Ju'fi, from Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i, from 'Amr ibn al-Harith رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Wills, Hadith No. 2739.

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

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:2739

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SALADIN'S QUALITIES AND CHARACTER

QUALITY	EXAMPLE FROM HIS STORY
Generous	Dying with 47 dirhams
Merciful	Freeing the poor and giving to widows
True to his word	The Treaty of Ramla
Firm against traitors	Reynald of Châtillon
Loyal to his teacher	Nur al-Din's minbar in al-Aqsa
Patient	Holding out two years at Acre despite illness

LESSONS

The most valuable wealth is that spent in the way of Allah. Saladin left the world almost without wealth, but he left Jerusalem free.

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SOURCES OF SALADIN'S STORIES

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

STORY	SOURCE	GRADE
Vizier of Egypt; end of the Fatimids (567 AH)	Ibn al-Athir; Abu Shamah	History
Uniting Egypt and Syria	Ibn al-Athir; Ibn Shaddad	History
The three noblest mosques	Sahih al-Bukhari 1189	Sahih
Reynald breaks the treaty	Ibn Shaddad	History
Killing a mu'ahad	Sahih al-Bukhari 3166	Sahih
Hattin; water for King Guy (583 AH)	Ibn Shaddad; 'Imad al-Din	History
Surrender of Jerusalem (27 Rajab 583 AH)	Ibn Shaddad; 'Imad al-Din; Ibn al-Athir	History
Forbidding the killing of women and children	Sahih al-Bukhari 3015	Sahih
Mercy to the poor and widows	Ibn al-Athir; 'Imad al-Din	History
Whoever does not show mercy	Sahih al-Bukhari 6013	Sahih
Free the captive	Sahih al-Bukhari 3046	Sahih
First Friday; Nur al-Din's minbar	'Imad al-Din; Abu Shamah	History
Acre; killing of prisoners (587 AH)	Ibn Shaddad; Latin sources	History
Treaty of Ramla (588 AH)	Ibn Shaddad; Ibn al-Athir	History
Saladin disguised as a physician	Walter Scott, The Talisman (1825)	Not established
Dying with 47 dirhams (589 AH)	Ibn Shaddad	History

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PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMELINE

PERSON	ROLE
Najm al-Din Ayyub	Saladin's father
Asad al-Din Shirkuh	His uncle; vizier of Egypt (564 AH)
Nur al-Din Zangi	His teacher and ruler (Series 20)
al-'Adil Sayf al-Din	Saladin's brother; negotiator with Richard
Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad	His judge and biographer
'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani	His secretary and historian
Reynald of Châtillon	Lord of Kerak; treaty-breaker
Guy of Lusignan	King of Jerusalem; captured at Hattin
Balian of Ibelin	Defender of Jerusalem who negotiated
Richard I	King of England in the Third Crusade

PLACE	EVENT
Tikrit	Birthplace (532 AH)
Cairo	Vizier; end of the Fatimids (567 AH)
Hattin	Great victory (583 AH)
Jerusalem	Liberated (27 Rajab 583 AH)
Acre ('Akka)	Two-year siege (585–587 AH)
Ramla	Peace treaty (588 AH)
Damascus	Place of death and tomb (589 AH)

YEAR	EVENT
492 AH	The Crusaders take Jerusalem
532 AH	Saladin born in Tikrit
564 AH	Becomes vizier of Egypt
567 AH	End of the Fatimid state
570 AH	Enters Damascus after Nur al-Din's death
583 AH	Hattin and the liberation of Jerusalem
585–587 AH	Siege of Acre; the Third Crusade
588 AH	Treaty of Ramla
589 AH	Death in Damascus

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SALADIN

This chapter answers questions often asked about Saladin. The answers are brief; details are in the earlier chapters.

1. WHO WAS SALADIN?

Ruler of Egypt and Syria (564–589 AH) who liberated Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 583 AH.

2. WHAT WAS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH NUR AL-DIN ZANGI?

He was trained and sent to Egypt by Nur al-Din, and continued his struggle.

3. WHERE WAS HE BORN?

In Tikrit, Iraq, in 532 AH, into a Kurdish family.

4. WHAT HAPPENED AT HATTIN?

He defeated the Crusaders and captured King Guy on 24 Rabi‘ al-Akhir 583 AH (4 July 1187).

5. WHEN WAS JERUSALEM LIBERATED?

On Friday, 27 Rajab 583 AH (2 October 1187), the anniversary of the Night Journey.

6. WERE THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM KILLED?

No. They were allowed to ransom themselves and leave safely, and thousands of the poor were freed without ransom.

7. WHY WAS REYNALD KILLED?

Because he repeatedly broke treaties, attacked caravans and mocked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

8. DID SALADIN EVER MEET RICHARD?

No. They negotiated through al-‘Adil; the stories of their meeting are a novelist’s invention.

9. WHAT WAS THE TREATY OF RAMLA?

The peace treaty of 588 AH that kept Jerusalem in Muslim hands.

10. WHAT IS THE CONNECTION WITH NUR AL-DIN’S MINBAR?

Saladin installed the minbar Nur al-Din had commissioned in al-Masjid al-Aqsa after its liberation.

11. HOW MUCH WEALTH DID HE LEAVE?

Only 47 dirhams and a single piece of gold, according to Ibn Shaddad.

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12. WHAT IS THE GREATEST LESSON OF HIS STORY?

True victory is accompanied by mercy, faithfulness to treaties and humility before Allah.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

Saladin's story is that of a pupil who fulfilled his teacher's aim, a commander who won without taking revenge, and a king who died almost without wealth.

LESSON	FROM SALADIN'S STORY
The status of al-Aqsa	Sahih al-Bukhari 1189
Keeping treaties	Reynald; Ramla; Sahih al-Bukhari 3166
Ethics in war	Sahih al-Bukhari 3015
Forgiving in power	Jerusalem; Yusuf 12:92
Mercy to the weak	The poor and widows; Sahih al-Bukhari 6013
Freeing captives	Sahih al-Bukhari 3046
Seeking forgiveness after victory	The first Friday; An-Nasr 110:3
Patience is better than retaliation	Acre; An-Nahl 16:126
Detachment from the world	47 dirhams; Sahih al-Bukhari 2739
Honesty about sources	Unestablished legends

May we follow Saladin: firm against traitors, merciful to the weak, true to our word, and detached from the world.

In sha' Allah, the Heroes of Islam series will continue with the story of Sayf al-Din Qutuz.

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HADITH

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RELATED SERIES ON QURANSCIENCE.MY

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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

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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: 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.

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