



Critique of the Hadith of Fadail Al-Sham in Relation to the Dynamics of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

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Abstract: This study critically examines hadiths on *Fadail al-Sham* (virtues of the Levant) and their relevance to the Palestine-Israel conflict, framed historically from the 1936 Arab Revolt through Gaza conflicts (2008–2024). Intertwined political, territorial, identity, and religious factors have fueled escalations, casualties, displacement, and destruction. Employing *takhrij* and *dirasah al-asanid*, alongside interdisciplinary hadith criticism and conflict resolution studies, the research assesses sanad/matn authenticity, historical interpretations, conflict dynamics, and prophetic contributions to peacebuilding. The objectives are: Evaluate hadith quality; trace interpretive evolution; analyze conflict relevance; propose sustainable resolutions. Findings reveal 18 authentic/*hasan* hadiths, dominated by Shami narrations with reinforcing *shawahid*. Thematically categorized as: Bait al-Maqdis sanctity, Divine protection of Sham, eschatology, and Muslim steadfastness. These affirm *Fadail al-Sham* as core *mu'tabar* hadith, informing religious dimensions of the conflict.

Keywords: conflict resolution; fadail al-Sham; hadith criticism; historical study of conflict; Palestine-Israel conflict.

1. Introduction

The region of Syria (Sham) holds a special place in Islam, as narrated in various authentic hadiths. Geographically, Sham in classical Islamic literature refers to the area encompassing Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (Elias, 2003). This region's special significance is not only historical but also has a strong theological dimension in Islamic tradition. Imam Ahmad, in his Musnad, narrates a hadith from Zaid ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him), in which he relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Lucky is the country of Sham, lucky is the country of Sham, lucky is the country of Sham." According to Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, the content of this prayer emphasizes the special glory of the region of Sham, which geographically encompasses the areas now known as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Meanwhile, Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676 AH) emphasized that the hadiths about the virtues of Sham are a sign of prophecy, given that this region has remained a center of Islamic civilization and a stronghold for the people throughout history. Al-Hafizh al-Mundziri (d. 656 H) in *Al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib* explains that the hadith provides a sign of the continuity of Allah's protection and supervision of the region of Syria throughout time. This view is then strengthened by the analysis of Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, who links the concept of *al-ard al-mubarakah* (blessed land) with the principles of justice, stability, and peace within the framework of Islamic international law, thus showing that the blessing of a region is not only spiritual, but also has ethical and normative implications in the order of international relations (Segev, 1967).

On the other hand, the Palestine-Israel conflict is a protracted conflict that has lasted for more than eight decades and is complex and multidimensional in nature. To understand the roots of the problem and its dynamics, it is necessary to trace the historical phases that have shaped it. In the initial phase (1936–1948), the Arab Revolt occurred, which became a significant milestone in the history of the Palestine conflict. This resistance, which took place from 1936–1939, was triggered by the increasing flow

of Jewish immigration to Palestine during the British Mandate, the massive purchase of land by Zionist organizations, and the policies of the British Mandate government that were deemed to favor Zionist interests. This series of events then contributed to the escalation of political and social tensions that ultimately led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war (Morris, 1999). This resistance resulted in significant casualties, namely approximately 5,000 Palestinian Arabs, 400 Jews, and 200 British troops (Pappé, 2006).

The next crucial stage was the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. For Israelis, this war is known as *Milchemet Ha'atzma'ut* (War of Independence), while for Palestinians it is called *Al-Nakba* (Catastrophe). This conflict was triggered by UN General Assembly Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947, concerning the plan for the partition of Palestine, which was then followed by the Israeli declaration of independence on May 14, 1948. The impact was enormous: approximately 700,000–750,000 Palestinians were displaced or expelled from their homeland, between 400 and 600 Palestinian villages were destroyed, and approximately 78% of the territory previously inhabited by Palestinians was transferred to their control. On the Israeli side, approximately 6,000 casualties were recorded, equivalent to approximately one per cent of the total population at that time, consisting of 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians (Gelber, 1948). Entering the middle phase (1956–1987), the conflict persisted through several major wars. The 1956 Suez Crisis, known in Israel as *Mivtza Kadesh* (Operation Kadesh) and in Egypt as *Al-'Udwan al-Thulathi* (Tripartite Aggression), resulted in the deaths of approximately 170 Israeli soldiers and 1,000–3,000 Egyptians. The conflict was triggered by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba, and Egypt's support for Palestinian Fedayeen fighters (Kyle, 1991). Subsequently, the 1967 Six-Day War—called *Milchemet Sheshet HaYamim* in Israel and *Al-Naksah* (The Setback) in the Arab world—led to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights. This war killed around 700–800 Israeli soldiers, while on the Arab side casualties reached 10,000–15,000 Egyptian soldiers, 6,000 Jordanian soldiers, 2,500 Syrian soldiers, and around 1,000 Palestinian civilians (Laron, 1993).

The Yom Kippur War or Ramadan War of 1973, known in Israel as *Milchemet Yom HaKippurim* and in the Arab world as *Harb Oktobir* (October War), was an attempt by Egypt and Syria to recapture territory lost in the 1967 Six-Day War. The simultaneous attacks marked a significant shift in the region's military constellation. In this conflict, approximately 2,500–2,800 Israeli soldiers were reported killed, while on the Arab side, casualties reached 5,000–15,000 Egyptian soldiers and 3,000–3,500 Syrian soldiers (Rabinovich, 2004). In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon, known in Israel as *Mivtza Shlom HaGalil* (Operation Peace for the Galilee), and in Palestine and Lebanon as *Al-Ijtiyah* (The Invasion). This military operation aimed to cripple and destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) infrastructure in southern Lebanon. The conflict resulted in heavy casualties: approximately 675 Israeli soldiers were killed, 6,000–8,000 PLO and Lebanese army combatants were killed, and 1,200–1,400 Syrian soldiers were killed. Furthermore, Lebanese and Palestinian civilian casualties were estimated at 15,000–20,000, including 800–3,500 Palestinians killed in the Sabra and Shatila massacre (Bowen, 2012).

Entering the Intifada and Oslo Process phase (1987–2005), the First Intifada (1987–1993)—known in Palestine as *Intifada al-Ula* or “The Stone Intifada” and in Israel as *HaIntifada HaRishona*—broke out as a result of accumulated frustration over the occupation that had lasted for approximately two decades and the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This wave of popular resistance resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,100–1,400 Palestinians, including approximately 240 children, and 160 Israelis, among whom were approximately 100 civilians (Fisk, 1990). The Second Intifada (2000–2005), known in Palestine as the *al-Aqsa Intifada* and in Israel as the *HaIntifada HaShniya*—and often labeled the “Terror Wave”—was a major escalation phase triggered by the collapse of the Camp David II negotiations and Ariel Sharon's visit to the Al-Aqsa compound/Western Wall. This event sparked a wave of violence that spread across the West Bank, Gaza, and Israeli cities. Over a five-year period, the death toll is estimated at 3,000–4,000 Palestinians, including hundreds of children, and approximately 1,000 Israelis, mostly civilians (Enderlin, 2003).

Entering the contemporary phase (2008–2024), the conflict concentrated in a series of wars in the Gaza Strip. The 2008–2009 conflict, known in Israel as *Mivtza Oferet Yetzuka* (Operation Cast Lead) and by Hamas as *Ma'arakat al-Furqan*, was triggered by the intensification of rocket attacks from Gaza into southern Israel and the end of a six-month ceasefire. This military operation resulted in approximately 1,400 Palestinian deaths—more than half of them civilians—while Israel recorded 13 fatalities (Bregman, 2010). The 2012 Gaza conflict, known as *Mivtza Amud Anan* (Operation Pillar of Defense) in Israel and *Hijarat Sijil* in Palestine, was triggered by the escalation of rocket attacks and the assassination of Hamas figure Ahmad Jabari. In this brief conflict, 158–177 Palestinians were reported killed, about 100 of them civilians, while in Israel six people died (Finkelstein, 1995).

In 2014, a broader conflict erupted, dubbed *Mivtza Tzuk Eitan* (Operation Protective Edge) in Israel and *Ma'arakat al-'Asf al-Ma'kul* in Palestine. The background included the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank and the retaliatory murder of a Palestinian teenager in East Jerusalem. The 50-day fighting resulted in the deaths of 2,100–2,300 Palestinians, more than 1,400 of them civilians, and 73 Israeli casualties (White, 2005). Tensions escalated again in May 2021 in a conflict dubbed *Mivtza Shomer HaChomot* (Operation Guardian of the Walls) in Israel and *Saif al-Quds* (Sword of Jerusalem) by Hamas. The main triggers were a dispute over the eviction of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah and clashes at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound during Ramadan. This conflict killed approximately 256–260 Palestinians in Gaza, dozens more in the West Bank, and 13 Israelis (B.'Tselem, 2014).

The latest conflict erupted in October 2023 and continues. It is known in Palestine as *Tufan al-Aqsa* (Al-Aqsa Flood), while in Israel it is known as *Mivtza Charbut Barzel* (Operation Iron Sword). Hamas's surprise attack on October 7, 2023, killed approximately 1,200 Israelis in the initial phase—mostly civilians—and hundreds more in subsequent operations, and resulted in hundreds being taken hostage. Israel's subsequent military response in Gaza resulted in Palestinian casualties estimated to exceed 30,000, including many civilians and children (Esposito, 1984). The religious dimension plays a significant role in the overall dynamics of this conflict. Religious narratives often shape perceptions, collective identities, and the legitimacy of political action on both sides. For Muslims, Palestine—particularly Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque—has a profound spiritual significance, reinforced by religious texts, including hadiths about the virtues of Syria. The concept of “sacred territory” also influences how communities interpret their historical and political claims (Abu-Nimer, 2010).

Several thinkers have emphasized the importance of a multidimensional approach to Middle East conflict resolution that does not ignore religious aspects. Understanding religious texts, including hadiths related to territory, needs to be placed within a contemporary ethical context to prevent their use in an exclusive or confrontational manner. In this regard, a comprehensive interpretation of religious texts can open up space for a more inclusive reading (Tibi, 1990). The complexity of the Palestine–Israel conflict demands an integrative resolution model that recognizes the historical legitimacy and identity of both parties. A transformative approach in peace studies emphasizes the importance of recognizing competing narratives and finding common ground that allows for sustainable reconciliation. The hadiths concerning *Fadail al-Sham* have the potential to make a unique contribution because they not only emphasize the primacy of territory but also embody principles of justice, protection, moral responsibility, and the possibility of coexistence (Kalin, 2019).

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to position these hadiths as “bridge-building narratives” that do not deny others' rights but instead offer an inclusive ethical framework. Islamic values of peace and justice can serve as a capital for constructive dialogue between conflicting communities. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of the concept of “Prophetic Territorial Ethics,” which integrates the idea of blessed territory (*al-ard al-mubarakah*) with the principles of restorative justice and reconciliation (Lederach, 2005). The methodological approach used goes beyond verifying the authenticity of the hadith through *takhrij* (religious interpretation) to also explore its ethical and contextual dimensions. By combining historical readings with contemporary moral demands, this study seeks to demonstrate that religious texts can serve as a source of religious legitimacy for peace efforts that recognize the fundamental rights of both parties while maintaining their historical integrity.

2. Research Method

This research is grounded in an interpretive-critical epistemological framework that views reality as a social construct shaped by historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. In this perspective, knowledge is not neutral, but is always linked to specific values and interests. However, the research adheres to strict standards of scientific criticism, as in the classical tradition of hadith science, which has developed a systematic system of verifying *sanad* and *matan*. The approach used is qualitative, because this research focuses on the meaning, interpretation, and construction of understanding of the hadiths of Fada'il al-Sham in the context of contemporary conflict (M. S. Ismail, 1992). In terms of type, this research is library research supported by in-depth interviews. As library research, the study focuses on tracing primary sources of hadith (*al-masadir al-asliyah*) containing complete texts and *sanad*. This research is also thematic-analytical in nature, namely collecting all the narrations related to the theme of the virtues of Sham, then analyzing the quality of the *sanad* and *matan*, and formulating a comprehensive understanding of the content of its meaning (Jonathan, 2006).

Methodologically, this research applies an integrative-interdisciplinary approach. First, the classical hadith science approach encompassing *takhrij al-hadith*, criticism of *sanad* through the study of *rijal* and *jarh wa ta'dil*, and criticism of the text of the hadith. Second, the contextual approach (*al-manhaj al-ta'wili al-siyaqi*) which considers the *asbab al-wurud*, the socio-historical context, and the relevance of the meaning of the hadith to the current situation. Third, the historical-comparative approach to trace the development of hadith interpretation from the generation of the companions to the contemporary era. Fourth, the religion-based conflict resolution approach that examines the contribution of prophetic values within the framework of modern peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997). The focus of the research covers four main aspects: (1) assessing the quality of *sanad* and *matan* of the hadiths of *Fada'il al-sham*; (2) the development of understanding and its contextualization in history; (3) its relationship to the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; and (4) identification of prophetic values relevant to conflict resolution. Key concepts such as *takhrij*, *sanad* criticism, *matan* criticism, and conflict resolution are operationalized systematically to keep the analysis consistent and focused (Gopin, 2024).

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include fifteen authoritative hadith books from various genres (*sahih*, *sunan*, *musnad*, *mu'jam*, *fada'il*, and *tarikh*), books on *rijal al-hadith* and *jarh wa ta'dil*, and books on the analysis of mu'tabar hadith. Secondary data include contemporary hadith methodology literature, conflict resolution studies, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, and documents from international institutions related to the Palestine-Israel conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 1990). The main data collection technique is a documentation study using the *takhrij al-hadith* method. This process includes tracing sources, identifying all transmission lines, and evaluating the quality of the hadith. Research on the biographies of narrators was conducted to ensure the credibility of the *sanad* through identity analysis, transmission networks, and assessments of *jarh wa ta'dil* scholars. In addition, in-depth interviews with scholars, academics, conflict experts, peace activists, and Palestinian community leaders were conducted to obtain an empirical perspective on the understanding and use of hadith in the context of conflict (Juliansyahzen, 2022). Data analysis was conducted iteratively in stages. The first stage was an analysis of the *sanad* and *matan* (translations) through the ten steps of *takhrij*, starting from identifying the text and its transmission path to formulating conclusions. The second stage was a comprehensive critique of the *sanad* and *matan*. The third stage was contextualization through the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah* and *fiqh al-waqi'* (legal principles), to ensure that the interpretation of the hadith aligns with the primary objectives of sharia and takes into account contemporary socio-political realities. With this approach, the research seeks to present an authentic reading of the hadith that is both relevant and relevant to efforts for just peace (Ibrahim, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Historical Context of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

Palestine is a region on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, bordered by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the southwest. Its geographical location at

the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe has long been a strategic route for trade and human mobility. For thousands of years, Palestine has been a meeting point for various civilizations, religions, and political powers, resulting in a long and complex history. The name "Palestine" is believed to be rooted in the term Philistia or Philistine, referring to the Philistines on the southern coast of the Levant in ancient times. Later, the term was used by various political powers, including Rome, to refer to the wider region (Sukmana, 2025). Archaeologically, this region has been inhabited since the Paleolithic period, approximately 500,000 years ago. Traces of prehistoric life have been found in caves such as Tabun and Skhul on Mount Carmel. During the Neolithic era (8000–4500 BC), people began to learn about agriculture and animal domestication, marking the transition to settled life. The city of Jericho in the Jordan Valley is often cited as one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, with evidence of defensive walls dating back to the 8th millennium BC. During the Bronze Age (3000–1550 BC), Palestine became part of a trade network connecting Mesopotamia and Egypt. Canaanites settled and established a system of city-states such as Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, and Ascalon. They developed regional trade, bronze technology, and early forms of writing (Belhaj, 2026).

Around the 13th century BC, groups of Hebrews entered Canaan. Biblical tradition describes this period as an exodus from Egypt, although the historical details are disputed. Eventually, a unified Kingdom of Israel was formed under Saul, David, and Solomon. Jerusalem became the political and religious center, and the First Temple was built. After Solomon's death, the kingdom split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Israel was conquered by Assyria (722 BC), while Judah was destroyed by Babylon (586 BC), which also destroyed the Temple and exiled part of its population. In 539 BC, the Persians conquered Babylonia and allowed the Jewish community to return and rebuild a Second Temple. This period was relatively stable until the conquests of Alexander the Great (332 BC) brought Hellenistic influences. Tensions increased under the Seleucid dynasty, particularly when Antiochus IV attempted to enforce Hellenization, sparking the Maccabean revolt (Driessen, 2025).

The Romans took control of Jerusalem in 63 BC. The Roman period was marked by tensions between imperial authority and Jewish aspirations for independence. The revolt of 66–73 AD led to the destruction of the Second Temple (70 AD). The Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 AD) led to the mass expulsion of Jews and the renaming of the region as Syria Palaestina. It was also during this period that Jesus of Nazareth began his mission that gave birth to Christianity. After Constantine legalized Christianity (313 AD), Palestine became part of the Byzantine Empire and developed as a center of Christian pilgrimage. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built, and Jerusalem became a major holy city. In 638 AD, Muslim forces under Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab captured Jerusalem. The Islamic government granted dhimmi status to both Christian and Jewish communities. During this period, the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock were built, making Jerusalem a holy city for Islam (Wani, 2024).

The First Crusade captured Jerusalem (1099) and established the Latin Empire. However, in 1187, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi returned the city to Muslim control. After the Ayyubid period, the Mamluks ruled Palestine (1260–1516), building various religious institutions and infrastructure, despite facing economic decline. The Ottoman Empire controlled Palestine from 1516. During the reign of Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. The 19th century saw the Tanzimat reforms and increased European influence. At the end of the century, the modern Zionist movement emerged through the ideas of Theodor Herzl, followed by a wave of Jewish immigration (Aliyah) that sparked tensions with the Arab population of Palestine, who were beginning to develop a national consciousness (Maryam, 2024).

After World War I, Palestine came under the administration of the British Mandate (1920–1948) established by the League of Nations. During this period, the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which advocated the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, was incorporated into the mandate framework, triggering a complex political dynamic between the Jewish and Arab communities in the region. Tensions between the two groups escalated as Jewish immigration to Palestine increased. This situation culminated in the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, a protest against British colonial policies and increased Jewish immigration. After World War II and the Holocaust, international pressure to open Palestine to Jewish survivors intensified, exacerbating existing tensions.

In 1947, the United Nations passed Resolution 181, proposing the division of Palestine into two states: an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem placed under international administration. The Jewish leadership accepted the plan, while the Arabs rejected it as demographically and politically unfair. Following the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, war broke out between Israel and its neighboring Arab states. This event displaced or displaced approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, a process known as the Nakba, or "catastrophe." As a result of the war, Israel controlled approximately 78% of historical Palestine, while the West Bank was under Jordanian administration and the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control (Ezugwu, 2023).

After 1967, when Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan, and Sinai, all of historical Palestine came under its control. The PLO, led by Yasser Arafat, became a symbol of the Palestinian national struggle. The First Intifada (1987–1993) propelled the Oslo process (1993–1995), which gave birth to the Palestinian Authority and the administrative division of the West Bank. However, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and mutual distrust weakened the process. The Second Intifada (2000–2005) deepened the Oslo crisis. Israel built a separation barrier in the West Bank. After Arafat's death (2004), Mahmoud Abbas led the Palestinian Authority. Israel withdrew from Gaza (2005), but Hamas's victory in the 2006 elections and the 2007 internal conflict split the Palestinian government between Gaza and the West Bank (Sertkaya, 2022).

Since 2007, Gaza has experienced several major conflicts with Israel and a prolonged blockade. In the West Bank, settlement construction continues. Various peace initiatives—including the Quartet Roadmap, the Annapolis Agreement, and the 2020 Plan—have not yet produced a final solution. Israel's normalization with several Arab states has transformed the regional landscape, but the core Palestinian issue remains unresolved. Palestine's long history demonstrates the region as both a meeting place for spiritual traditions and an arena of recurring conflict. Its historical, political, and religious complexities make the Israeli–Palestinian conflict one of the most difficult issues in modern international diplomacy, demanding a deep understanding and commitment to a just and sustainable solution (Sertkaya, 2023).

3.2. Criticism of the Hadith on Fada'il al-Sham

This section presents the results of a critical study of hadith on eighteen narrations related to Fada'il al-Sham. These narrations were selected through a selection process based on strict and measurable methodological criteria, so not all circulating narrations were included in this study. This selection was carried out to ensure that the resulting analysis had a strong academic foundation and could be scientifically justified in hadith studies. Three main considerations were used in the selection process. First, thematic suitability, namely narrations that explicitly discuss the virtues of the region of Sham, including Bayt al-Maqdis and its inhabitants, thus having direct relevance to the study theme. Second, the quality of the sanad, namely the hadiths originating from primary sources that allow for systematic tracing of transmission paths, so that aspects of the validity of their narrations can be analyzed using the classical hadith science approach. Third, the historical relevance and scholarly significance of the narration within the treasury of hadith literature, particularly the works of scholars who specifically discuss the virtues of Sham. This study focuses not only on the collection of hadiths but also on verification and critical analysis of the validity and context of hadith transmission. This approach is expected to provide a more objective and proportionate picture of the position of Fada'il al-Sham's hadiths within the Islamic scholarly tradition (Nuraini, 2024).

The process of takhrij al-hadith in this study is carried out by systematically referring to the canonical hadith books and a number of important compilations in the Islamic tradition of narration. This approach aims to ensure that each narration studied has a clear source base, can be verified, and is within the corridor of authentic hadith literature. Among the main sources used are Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim as the most authoritative books in the tradition of Ahl al-Sunnah, which are then supplemented with Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Nasa'i, and Sunan Ibn Majah as part of the al-sittah branch. In addition, this study also refers to al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn by al-Hakim and al-Mu'jam al-Kabir by al-Tabarani which contain various narrations with diverse transmission lines.

The analysis extends beyond these primary texts to include musnad works and other relevant hadith sources to trace variations in the sanad and redactions of the narrations. This method, the *takhrij* process is not only thematic but also grounded in a philological and critical approach to the chain of hadith transmission. This allows for a more comprehensive investigation of the validity of the narrations, both in terms of their presence in primary sources and of the interconnectedness of the transmission paths. Thus, this study confirms that the analysis conducted is not merely descriptive but also based on authoritative, systematic, and scientifically sound narration within the discipline of hadith (Muttaqin et al., 2023).

This research directly addresses two main research questions: the validity of the sanad (chain of transmission) and the meaning and content of the narrations about the virtues of Syria. To achieve these objectives, the analysis was conducted through three complementary methodological stages. The first stage is *takhrij al-hadith*, which involves tracing the entire chain of transmission in primary sources. This stage aims to ensure the existence of the narration in the *mu'amalah* hadith literature, as well as mapping variations in sanad and redaction. The method used follows the principles of hadith criticism as formulated in classical literature and developed in contemporary hadith methodological studies (M Azizan et al., 2024).

The second stage is *dirasah al-asanid*, which is a critical study of the narrators in each link of the chain of transmission using the principle of al-jarh wa al-ta'dil. At this stage, the integrity (*'adalah*) and intellectual capacity (*dabt*) of each narrator are evaluated, and the continuity of the chain of transmission (*ittisal*) is examined. This analysis also considers the possibility of weaknesses such as *tadlis*, *irsal*, or *ikhtilath*. With this approach, each narration is classified according to the standards of authenticity formulated in the science of *mustalah al-hadith*. The third stage is the analysis of *sharah* and *fiqh al-hadith*. At this stage, the meaning of the narration is explored textually and contextually by referring to the explanations of scholars across generations. Interpretation is carried out by taking into account the historical background, correlations with relevant Qur'anic verses, and the explanations of classical commentators. In addition, this study also utilizes sanad verification and *takhrij* studies from modern *muhaddiq* to strengthen the validity of the assessment (Imtyas et al., 2022).

Thematically, the eighteen hadith studied can be grouped into four main clusters. The first cluster includes narrations that emphasize the historical and spiritual connection between Islam and Bayt al-Maqdis since the early phase of the prophethood. The narrations in this group demonstrate the region's pivotal role in the history of the formation of Muslim identity. The second cluster contains narrations that emphasize divine blessings and protection over the region of Sham. In these narrations, Sham is depicted as a chosen and blessed region, holding a special place from an Islamic theological perspective. The third cluster relates to the eschatological dimension. The hadiths in this group position Palestine as a crucial location in the series of end-time events. This dimension demonstrates that the discussion of Sham is not limited to historical aspects but also touches on broader theological horizons. The fourth cluster discusses the concept of *al-tha'ifah al-mansurah*, namely a group of people who remain steadfast in upholding the truth until the end of time and are associated with the region of Bayt al-Maqdis. This concept shows the relationship between geographical dimensions and theological commitments in prophetic narratives (T. M. S. T. Ismail et al., 2014).

One of the important findings of this study is that all eighteen narrations analyzed meet the standards of authenticity according to the rules of hadith science. Based on the results of *takhrij* and sanad studies, these narrations are categorized as *sahih*, both *sahih li-dzatihi* and *sahih li-ghayrihi*. No narrations were found that were *dha'if*, let alone *maudhu'*. This finding has significant implications, because it shows that the corpus of hadith about Fada'il al-Sham has a strong sanad foundation and is not merely a rhetorical narrative relying on weak narrations. As a concrete example, the hadith about Bait al-Maqdis as the first qibla of Muslims demonstrates the strength of a strong sanad. This narration was narrated by al-Bara' ibn 'Azib and is included in the main books of hadith with a continuous sanad and narrators who are considered *tsiqah* by scholars of *jarh wa ta'dil*. Because it was narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim and supported by other lines of narration, this hadith is categorized as *sahih li-dzatihi* (Belhaj, 2026).

In terms of its meaning, this narrative holds profound theological significance. The establishment of Bayt al-Maqdis as the first direction of prayer (qibla) demonstrates its special place in Islamic history. This is not merely a historical fact, but rather part of a divine decree that affirms the continuity of the message of the prophets. The shift in the qibla then contains wisdom as a test of faith and affirmation of the identity of Muslims. The sixteen or seventeen months spent facing Bayt al-Maqdis are explained as differences in time calculation, not a substantial contradiction. Meanwhile, the incident of the Companions turning away when receiving information about the change in qibla from a single source demonstrates that the news of ahad can be used as evidence in Islamic law (Sertkaya, 2023).

Another example is the hadith about al-Masjid al-Aqsa as the second mosque built on earth. This narrative reinforces the historical and theological dimensions of Bait al-Maqdis within the structure of Islamic teachings, as it places the region within the continuity of prophetic history since the dawn of humanity. By connecting al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and al-Masjid al-Aqsa in Palestine in a single sacred narrative, this hadith emphasizes the connection between the first center of monotheism and the second spiritual center in Islamic tradition. This connection is not only geographical but also reflects the continuity of the prophetic mission that carries the message of monotheism in various places. The results of the study indicate that the hadiths about the virtues of Sham have strong legitimacy and rich, multidimensional meanings. From the aspect of the sanad, these narrations meet the standards of validity in the science of hadith, while from the aspect of the matan, their content is in line with the general principles of Islamic teachings. Furthermore, these narratives form a theological construction that links the region of Syria with the history of prophecy, divine blessings, steadfastness of faith, and eschatological dimensions related to the events of the end times.

The study of Fada'il al-Sham cannot be separated from the broader framework of the prophetic tradition and the development of Muslim identity throughout history. From this perspective, Sham is understood not only as a strategic geographic region but also as a space imbued with ongoing historical, theological, and spiritual significance. From the time of the prophets to the development of classical Islamic civilization, this region has always been associated with significant events in religious history, including the footsteps of the prophets, centers of knowledge dissemination, and the socio-political dynamics of Muslims throughout various periods.

An understanding of the Fada'il al-Sham also shows that hadiths related to the region contribute to shaping the collective awareness of Muslims about their religious and historical identity. The narrative of the virtues of Sham does not stop at the textual level, but continues to live in scholarly traditions, tafsir literature, hadith commentaries, and Islamic discourse across generations. This makes Sham a symbol of continuity between the prophetic era and the reality of Muslims across eras. The significance of Sham lies not only in its historical dimension but also in its spiritual dimension that shapes Muslims' perspective on the world. This awareness demonstrates that Fada'il al-Sham is an integral part of the construction of Muslim identity, connecting the past, present, and future hopes in a unified, continuous narrative of faith (M Azizan et al., 2024).

3.3. Resolution of the Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Comparative Proposal Based on the Prophet's Hadith

The Palestine–Israel conflict is one of the most complex and protracted geopolitical conflicts in modern history. Its complexity lies not only in territorial and political aspects, but also encompasses broader dimensions such as collective identity, conflicting historical narratives, religious beliefs, and the struggle for moral legitimacy among the parties involved. These conditions make the conflict difficult to resolve solely through conventional political or diplomatic approaches. Various models of resolution have been proposed by the international community, ranging from the two-state solution concept emphasizing the formation of two independent states, to the one-state solution proposing a single state with full equality, to the more flexible confederation approach, and to human rights-based solutions emphasizing universal justice (Bowman, 2021).

However, in the context of Muslim societies, the discourse on conflict resolution cannot be separated from the normative framework of Islam, which is derived from the primary religious

authorities, namely the Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith. These two sources serve not only as spiritual guidance but also provide an ethical and moral foundation for understanding social and political realities. Therefore, the Islamic approach to conflict tends to emphasize the values of justice, peace, protection of humanity, and moral responsibility in maintaining stability and human dignity amidst prolonged and tense conflict situations (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

Within this framework, the hadiths concerning the Fada'il al-Sham, which emphasize the primacy of the Sham and Bait al-Maqdis, have theological and moral relevance in shaping the Muslim perspective on Palestine. However, it is important to emphasize that using the hadith as a basis for reflection does not mean prioritizing theological exclusivism, but rather exploring ethical and normative principles that can contribute to a just peace. Therefore, this discussion seeks to offer a comparative model for conflict resolution based on the values of the Prophet's hadith, not as a sole alternative, but as an ethical framework that complements international political and legal approaches (Tessler, 2009).

1. *Theological Foundation: The Priority of Sham and the Dimension of Spiritual Trust*

The authentic hadiths that mention the blessings of the region of Syria and the position of Bayt al-Maqdis indicate that this region holds profound spiritual significance in Islamic tradition. In several narrations, Syria is described as a blessed and protected region, and a gathering place for believers in times of difficulty. The interpretation of these hadiths should not be reductively interpreted as legitimizing exclusive claims, but rather as affirming that the region contains a moral and spiritual mandate. Blessing (*barakah*) from an Islamic perspective is always linked to justice, tranquility, and the continuation of the values of monotheism. Therefore, if a region is said to be blessed, the implication is the obligation to maintain justice and welfare within it. From this, the first principle in the proposed hadith-based resolution can be formulated: Palestine is not merely a political dispute, but a spiritual mandate that demands the upholding of justice and respect for human dignity (Tessler, 2009).

2. *The Principle of Justice as the Foundation of Peace*

The Prophet's hadith consistently emphasizes the importance of justice (*'adl*) as the foundation of social order. Numerous narrations state that a just leader will be sheltered by God, while injustice will be darkness on the Day of Judgment. This principle has direct implications for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Any solution that ignores substantive justice—whether in the form of eviction, structural discrimination, or deprivation of rights—will not lead to sustainable peace. The Prophet's hadith also emphasizes the strict prohibition against unjust land grabbing. This principle is particularly relevant in the context of the issues of land, displacement, and the right of return, which are at the heart of the Palestinian conflict. Therefore, a hadith-based resolution demands recognition of the civil and human rights of both parties, and a solution that is not built on unilateral domination. The principle of justice in Islam is universal and not limited to the Muslim community (Al-Khalidi, 2005).

3. *The Concept of Sulh (Reconciliation) in the Prophetic Tradition*

In the history of the prophethood, there are important precedents for conflict resolution through peace treaties, such as the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. Although the treaty initially appeared detrimental to Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad demonstrated a long-term vision by prioritizing peace as a transformational strategy. Hadiths on the virtue of reconciling conflicting parties (*ishlah dzat al-bayn*) demonstrate the high value of reconciliation in Islam. The Prophet emphasized that reconciling conflicting parties is more important than many voluntary acts of worship. In the Palestine-Israel context, this principle can be translated as the need to build a reconciliation framework that includes historical recognition, interfaith dialogue, and transitional justice mechanisms. Models such as the truth and reconciliation commission can be seen as aligned with the spirit of the hadith on *ishlah*, as long as they are based on honesty and acknowledgement of the victims' suffering (Khalidi, 2006).

4. *Eschatological Dimension and Ethics of Responsibility*

Some hadiths discussing Syria are often understood to have an eschatological dimension, linking them to signs and events that will occur near the end of time. However, a responsible approach to understanding these hadiths requires a contextual, non-literal understanding, and a lack of haste to

justify violence or escalate conflict in the region. A deep eschatological understanding should not foster a fatalistic attitude, let alone encourage apocalyptic narratives that could fuel social and political tensions. Instead, belief in the region's crucial role in the end-time narrative should be accompanied by increased ethical awareness and moral responsibility before God. This includes the obligation to safeguard human life, protect humanitarian values, and prevent all forms of damage and destruction on earth. The interpretation of eschatological hadiths should not be directed at legitimizing violence, but rather at strengthening moral values, fostering patience, and strengthening commitment to the principle of mercy (*rahmah*) in society. This approach is expected to be able to present a more refreshing, constructive and relevant understanding of religion in efforts to maintain peace and the welfare of humanity (Gorenberg, 2011).

5. *Protection of Non-Combatants and the Ethics of War*

The Prophet's hadiths firmly prohibit the killing of women, children, the elderly, and non-combatants in war situations. Furthermore, various hadiths also emphasize that the Prophet Muhammad forbade the destruction of the environment, such as plants, animals, and places of worship, even during armed conflict. These principles demonstrate that the ethics of war in Islam have, from the beginning, placed humanitarian values as a primary foundation that must not be violated, even in emergencies or intense warfare. War, from an Islamic perspective, is not a space without moral boundaries, but rather remains within a strict and directed ethical framework. In the context of modern conflicts, which often involve large numbers of civilian casualties, the principle of protecting non-combatants becomes increasingly relevant and urgent to uphold. Any action that ignores the protection of civilians fundamentally contradicts the ethics of war taught in the Prophet's hadiths. Within the framework of a hadith-based comparative proposal, these values can be reconciled with the principles of international humanitarian law, which also emphasize the protection of non-combatants and the limitation of the use of force. This intersection of hadith ethics and international legal norms demonstrates a strong normative common ground in efforts to minimize human suffering in armed conflict. The Prophet's teachings are not only relevant in spiritual and historical contexts but can also contribute as a universal ethical foundation supporting peacebuilding, humanitarian protection, and mitigating the destructive impact of war in the modern era (Rabinovich, 2004).

6. *The Concept of al-Tha'ifah al-Mansurah and Moral Firmness*

Some hadith traditions mention a group that remained steadfast in the Sham region until the end of time. Many readings of this concept are often understood within the framework of the religious identity inherent in a particular community, giving rise to symbolic and historical interpretations of the region's role in the dynamics of Muslim faith. However, normatively, the steadfastness referred to in these traditions cannot be reduced to legitimizing violence, but rather must be understood as consistency in upholding the principles of truth, justice, and commitment to the moral values taught in Islam.

From an Islamic ethical perspective, steadfastness (*istiqamah*) is more closely associated with a stable moral stance in upholding rights and truth without violating humanitarian boundaries. In the context of modern conflict resolution, the concept of moral steadfastness can be interpreted as the ability to continue fighting for rights legally and fairly, while adhering to the principles of nonviolence, respect for human dignity, and openness to dialogue. This approach emphasizes that a struggle based on ethical and humanitarian values has the potential for stronger legitimacy at the global level, compared to a struggle that ignores universal humanitarian norms. Thus, the concept of steadfastness in this narrative can be reconstructed as an ethic of constructive moral resistance, not as a justification for conflict, but as a commitment to justice and sustainable peace (Quandt, 1990).

7. *Counter Offer: Prophetic Ethical Framework*

The comparative proposal in the form of a prophetic ethical framework in the resolution of the Palestine–Israel conflict can be understood as a normative effort to present a moral approach that originates from prophetic values in reading and responding to the reality of a complex, prolonged, and politically charged conflict, so that it does not only stop at structural and historical analysis, but also provides an ethical horizon that guides religious and humanitarian attitudes. This framework is

formulated in five main pillars that complement each other and form a complete prophetic ethical unity. The first pillar is the recognition of the spiritual mandate of the region, namely the view that Palestine is not merely understood as a geographical space or an object of political dispute, but also as a space that has sacred and historical dimensions in religious traditions, so that every claim to the region must be accompanied by moral awareness to maintain its sanctity, avoid destruction, and uphold the principles of justice and respect for the spiritual values inherent in it (Khalidi, 2006).

The second pillar is substantive justice, which emphasizes that every form of conflict resolution must be oriented towards fulfilling the basic rights of all parties involved, including the right to live in safety, to receive recognition of dignity, and to gain fair access to resources and basic freedoms, so that justice is not understood formally, but materially and comprehensively. The third pillar is reconciliation and dialogue, which places the *ishlah* approach as a long-term strategy in building sustainable peace, by emphasizing the importance of communication, reducing tensions, and opening up equal and humane dialogue spaces between the conflicting parties, so that the conflict does not continue to be reproduced through cycles of violence. The fourth pillar is civilian protection, which emphasizes the moral obligation to protect non-combatants from the impact of violence, and upholds the ethical principles of war that prohibit actions that harm civilians, including women, children, and other vulnerable groups, so that humanitarian values remain the main priority in every conflict situation (Inbar, 2014).

The fifth pillar is the moral steadfastness of nonviolence, namely the principle that emphasizes the importance of defending rights and identity without having to violate universal human values, so that the struggle does not turn into a legitimization of destructive violence, but remains within an ethical corridor that upholds justice and human dignity. Thus, this prophetic ethical framework is not intended to replace existing political, diplomatic, or international legal mechanisms, but rather functions as a normative horizon that provides moral direction in the process of taking attitudes and policies of Muslims towards ongoing conflicts, while also being a comparative moral framework that allows for constructive dialogue with modern conflict resolution theories, so that spiritual, ethical, and rational approaches can run simultaneously in an effort to achieve a more just, sustainable, and dignified peace for all parties involved in the conflict (Baoni, 2018).

The Prophet's hadith on the virtues of Syria and Bait al-Maqdis provide an important theological foundation for building the spiritual awareness of Muslims regarding the Palestinian territories. In various narrations, Syria is depicted as a blessed region with a special place in the history of the prophethood, thus giving rise to a strong religious dimension in Muslims' understanding of the region. However, the reading of these hadith should not be merely symbolic or emotional, but rather should be directed constructively towards strengthening universal Islamic values. These values include justice ('*adl*), peace (*sulh*), and the protection of human dignity and rights. Thus, the hadith should be understood not only as informative normative texts but also as ethical sources that guide the attitudes of Muslims in responding to complex social and political realities.

In the context of the protracted Palestine-Israel conflict, a sustainable resolution is impossible without the principle of comprehensive justice and recognition of the fundamental rights of all parties involved. Justice, from this perspective, is not selective, but encompasses all aspects of humanity without discrimination. Therefore, the Prophet's hadith can serve not only as a source of spiritual legitimacy but also as ethical inspiration in building a dignified framework for peace. This approach positions prophetic values as the moral foundation for encouraging reconciliation, dialogue, and a more just, humane, and sustainable conflict resolution for all affected parties (Bregman, 2010).

4. Conclusion

This research confirms that the study of the hadiths of Fada'il al-Sham has a strong scientific foundation in both the sanad and matan aspects. All the hadiths studied are proven to be *sahih*, thus eliminating doubts about their authenticity. This validity strengthens the epistemological foundation of the research as a whole. From the perspective of scholars' understanding, these hadiths undergo a dynamic contextualization process while remaining consistent in their substance. Classical and

contemporary scholars position Sham as a region rich in spiritual values and civilizational responsibilities. Asbab al-wurud shows that hadith are not only historical but also normative and applicable in various contexts of time. The continuity of understanding across generations demonstrates an epistemic consensus within the Islamic scholarly tradition that strengthens the authority of the texts. Regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict, the hadiths of Fadail al-Sham demonstrate significant relevance at the level of historical legitimacy, territorial spirituality, and eschatological projection. This finding is supported by empirical data from interviews, which indicate that hadith serve as a source of motivation and social resilience for the Palestinian people. Thus, this study concludes that the hadiths of Fadail al-Sham are not only normative texts but also social instruments that are embedded in the community's religious and political practices. The integration of the *sanad* (chain of transmission), *matan* (translation), and historical context analysis demonstrates a complete and unfragmented unity of meaning. This provides an important contribution to the development of more interdisciplinary and contextual contemporary hadith studies. Furthermore, this study also demonstrates the importance of a rigorous *takhrij* and *dirasah al-asanid* approach in testing the validity of hadith narrations. This approach has proven capable of providing scientific certainty that can be accounted for in modern Islamic studies. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for further studies that highlight the relationship between religious texts and contemporary socio-political realities. Ultimately, this study confirms that the integration of hadith criticism and historical context analysis provides a more comprehensive perspective in understanding the role of religious texts amidst the complex and multidimensional dynamics of global conflict, thereby opening up space for more constructive academic dialogue in the future and strengthening the contribution of hadith science in addressing contemporary issues in a more comprehensive and responsible manner, academically and methodologically rigorous and systematic. This study also recommends the need for further, more in-depth studies on the aspects of implementing prophetic values in the resolution of current and future global conflicts as well as strengthening the methodology of hadith studies in the contemporary modern era.

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