

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE ERA OF SALAHUDDIN AL-AYYUBI'S LEADERSHIP

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Article Info

Submitted: June 12, 2023

Revised: June 29, 2023

Accepted: Augustus 23, 2023

Keyword:

Islam

Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi

Leadership

Abstract

Studying Islamic history is essential to understanding its rise and decline, including the roles of education, intellectual thought, and leadership, as valuable lessons for Muslims in facing contemporary challenges. The purpose of this study is to explain and describe the rise and decline of the Muslim community. The research was conducted through a literature review, with data sources including articles, books, magazines, and news reports. This qualitative study employed a library research method with data collection techniques based on document analysis. Findings show that the decline of Islamic civilization was caused by internal factors such as the closure of the gate of *ijtihad*, sectarian conflicts, poverty, and weakening solidarity. External factors like Western imperialism, Zionism, and capitalism further worsened the condition. Meanwhile, Europe's rise in science and technology was greatly influenced by Islamic civilization, particularly from Muslim Spain. Muslim scholars such as Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina made significant contributions to the European Renaissance. Salahuddin al-Ayyubi became a symbol of just and wise leadership, bringing Islamic glory through his courage, commitment to justice, and defense of the people. Conclusion: Studying Islamic history has a positive impact on Muslims, especially in strengthening their piety.

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A. INTRODUCTION

History, as events that occurred in the past, is organized according to various remnants of numerous incidents. According to Ilmu Khaldun, history refers to special or significant events that took place at a certain time (Rohani, 2019). Islam, despite facing internal conflicts from the beginning, has been widely accepted in Indonesia due to its teachings, which remain relevant across time and bring blessings to all of humanity and the universe (Harmakaputra, 2014). Islam certainly played an important role in the progress of nations. However, Islam also

embodies pluralism, both in its teachings, its followers, and its religious symbols (Sholikhudin, 2017).

The decline of Islamic education began with a shift in the mindset of the Muslim community between traditionalists and rationalists, who previously complemented each other in seeking both religious and general knowledge during Islam's golden age (Tambak, 2015). The study of Islamic education is crucial and continues to evolve, reflecting the dynamics of the Muslim community, which determines the rise and fall of civilization, alongside the influence of historical achievements and challenges posed by Western progress (Meriyati, 2018). Saladin al-Ayyubi spread Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah in Egypt, replacing Shia, uniting Islamic lands, advancing Islamic education, and played a significant role in the Crusades, which impacted social and cultural progress (Rini et al., 2022).

In the 18th century, Muslims experienced a great decline, which led to various intellectual and socio-political movements in response to Western modernization, known as revivalism, activism, militancy, and others (Tarigan et al., 2023). Islam has had a prominent role in the development of human civilization on this earth, and much history has been experienced by the Muslim community from the initial introduction of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula to its period of greatness when it ruled one-third of the world under the leadership of Muslims at that time. Although Islam once experienced great success, it is undeniable that Islamic civilization also faced a period of decline after its peak. In studying history, it is important to understand that the term "history" itself has a specific meaning, especially among historians.

Each generation has its own strengths and weaknesses, and this should serve as a valuable lesson for today's academics. The history of the rise and decline of the Muslim Ummah during the leadership of Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi offers many lessons about struggle, leadership, and strategies in facing challenges. Great leaders like Salahuddin succeeded in uniting the Muslim community and overcoming various hardships, making his story an inspiration to face the challenges of today's world. By studying his struggle, academics are expected to apply these values in daily life, both personally and socially.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher considers it important to analyze the rise and decline of the Muslim Ummah during the leadership of Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi, with all the challenges and limitations faced. This study is expected to open the minds of historians, academics, and individuals in need to reframe the path of the Muslim Ummah's revival in various aspects such as education, social, economic, and political. Therefore, the study of the rise and decline of Islam can broaden our understanding of Islamic civilization and serve as a

comparison for Muslims, especially to enhance their self-quality and act wisely, ensuring Islam remains relevant in the present era.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a library research method, which is an approach that relies on various literary sources as the primary material for data collection. In other words, the researcher does not conduct direct field observation but instead gathers information and data from books, scholarly articles, historical records, and relevant scientific reports. In the context of this study, the literary sources are focused on examining the leadership era of Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi, particularly concerning the rise and decline of the Muslim Ummah under his leadership, as well as the challenges and limitations faced during that period. The researcher collects various historical data and scientific analyses that discuss strategies, policies, military struggles, and the socio-political conditions of the Muslim community at that time.

Once the data is gathered, the researcher reads and analyzes it thoroughly using a descriptive analysis method, which involves explaining and describing the data systematically and factually according to the content of the sources. This step is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the Muslim Ummah experienced a phase of revival, the supporting factors, and the causes of the subsequent decline. The results of the analysis are then organized and presented using a deductive method, beginning with a general theory or understanding of leadership and Islamic civilization, followed by conclusions drawn from the findings in the literature review. This approach allows the researcher to draw connections between general theories and the historical reality faced by Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi and the Muslim Ummah at that time.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Decline of Islamic Civilization

When tracing the history of Islamic civilization, it is evident that Islam has gone through phases of both progress (revival) and decline. More specifically, these phases can be divided into four periods: the first phase, the rapid growth of Islam from the birth of the Prophet Muhammad until the end of the Umayyad period (6 H - 9 H / 570 CE - 850 CE); the second phase, the period of revival during the Abbasid Dynasty (9 H - 12 H / 850 CE - 1258 CE); the third phase, the decline following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongol army (13 H - 18 H / 1258 CE - 1848 CE); and the fourth phase, the intensive renewal period since the early modern era (18 H - present / 1849 CE - present). The cycle of Islamic



civilization from its period of glory and regeneration can be broadly divided into two factors: internal and external (Nasbi, 2016).

Internal Factors, the internal factors refer to those originating within the Muslim community itself. These factors include: First, the decline of Islamic thought occurred after the closure of the Ijtihad gate due to disagreements among Muslims regarding issues of khilafiyah (disagreement) and the restriction of legal thought to the four madhabs (schools of thought) Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanafi, and Hanbali (Sholikhudin, 2017). At the same time, theology was dominated by Ash'ari thought, while Sufism was dominated by the philosophy of Imam Al-Ghazali. Additionally, Greek philosophy, with its deductive methods and logic, contradicted the previous syllogism of Islamic thought based on the Quran, resulting in weaknesses that shifted the sources of Islamic intellectual thought (Nasbi, 2016). The closure of the Ijtihad gate had a devastating impact, leaving the Muslim community without a high scientific worldview or logical reasoning. Muslims were forced to rely on aphorisms, which led to repetition of previous writings without innovation or new discoveries that could advance the times. In relation to this decline in Islamic thought, contemporary Muslim thinkers have called for the reopening of the Ijtihad gate, emphasizing the importance of reform in this regard.

Second, the emergence of foreign influences outside the Muslim world that affected Islamic civilization. Before the 19th century, many Muslims lacked a deep understanding of their religion, which allowed external elements to shape their thoughts, leading to beliefs and practices outside the boundaries of Islam, such as bid'ah (innovation), tahayul (superstition), and tasyayul (imagination) (Hamsah et al., 2021). Thinkers like Muhammad Abduh, who was followed by his disciple Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, and KH. Ahmad Dahlan in Indonesia, were part of the Islamic Reform Movement. They focused on eliminating superstition and innovation among Muslims. One key point here is that external factors were the most significant, while internal factors had already existed long before the modern Islamic era. The backdrop for the emergence of reform ideas in Islam stemmed from the fact that modern Islamic thought was inconsistent with traditional ideas, thus continuing the legacy of classical reform movements (Sholikhudin, 2017).

Third, disagreements in religion, particularly the disparity among different madhabs (schools of thought), are visible and tangible, leading to differences in religious mass organizations. Although the core of faith is Islam, there are numerous sources of interpretation and understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah that have led to internal inconsistencies among the Muslim community (Ushuluddin et al., 2018). Fundamentally,

humans always think differently. When one looks at civilization and culture, these differences become even more apparent. This disparity arises from differences in various philosophical, social, economic, and other movements. When we consider the causes of these differences and how far they extend, it is difficult to quantify them due to the multitude of factors involved (Salim et al., 2019).

Therefore, here are some factors contributing to these differences: First, Arab nationalism (fanaticism) is a cause of division among the Ummah. Islam itself strongly condemns fanaticism, as stated in the Quran in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13): "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "He is not one of us who calls for fanatical partisanship." He further said: "Each of you is from Adam, and Adam is from dust. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab (Ajam) except through piety."

Second, the discord in political perspectives among Muslims, particularly regarding who has the right to lead after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and govern the Ummah. This disparity became especially apparent after the death of the Prophet. The Ansar said, "We have supported and helped (you, the Muhajirun), so we are more deserving of being the caliph." The Muhajirun argued, "We are the first to embrace Islam, so we are more entitled to be the caliph." Is it more rightful for the people of Quraysh in general or for the descendants of Ali in particular? Or should all Muslims, regardless of ethnic or familial background, have the right to be caliph? The fact is, all people are equal in the sight of Allah (SWT). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab (Ajam) except through piety." The Ansar believed they had a claim to leadership due to their role in supporting and aiding the Muhajirun, while the Muhajirun asserted their claim based on their status as the first to accept Islam (Campbell, 2018).

Third, there is a relationship between Muslims and followers of other religions, and the conversion of some individuals to Islam. It is important to note that although they have embraced Islam, the mindset of their previous religion may still persist in their thoughts. This can lead to the development of new, misguided ideas and propaganda, as seen with the zindiq (heretics) and other deviating groups. The main reason many of these groups left Islam was because Persia held power in the region, which had a significant influence on other nations. They felt superior and believed they were the children of gods, while

viewing others as slaves. When their empire collapsed at the hands of the Arabs, who were considered insignificant by the Persians, the loss was overwhelming, and they had to endure numerous wars. Allah SWT always grants victory to the truth. Many people, though claiming to be Muslims, inclined toward Shiism and the family of the Prophet (Ahlul Bayt) and called for the death of Ali. Eventually, they were excluded from Islam.

Fourth, the presence of Mutashabihat (ambiguous) verses in the Quran. Allah SWT states in Surah Al-Imran:7, "It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Some of its verses are clear and precise they are the foundation of the Book and others are ambiguous (Mutashabihat). As for those in whose hearts is deviation, they will follow that of it which is ambiguous, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation. But none knows its interpretation except Allah. And those firm in knowledge say, 'We believe in it; all is from our Lord.' And none will be reminded except those of understanding." From this verse, it is clear that the Mutashabihat verses in the Quran serve to test the strength of the Muslims' faith. The presence of these ambiguous verses has caused controversy among scholars as they attempt to determine the exact meaning of these verses. Many people, when trying to interpret them, have engaged in debates and even disagreements over their true meaning.

Fifth, there is the concept of Istinbat (juridical inference) in Sharia law, which involves deriving authentic Islamic legal rulings from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The texts of the Quran and the Sunnah are clear and complete in their teachings, but the events that occur in life are never fully accounted for. Therefore, it is necessary to perform Istinbat, which is the process of deriving legal rulings from these texts to address specific individual cases. While the texts provide general guidelines, they do not always offer detailed rules for every situation, thus necessitating a process of analysis and observation (Mutakin, 2017). The core of Islamic law, which is rooted in the Quran and Sunnah, serves as the fundamental basis for Islamic jurisprudence. These sources are authoritative and are used by scholars and Islamic jurists to determine Islamic laws and regulations. The Quran is considered the direct revelation from Allah SWT to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the Angel Jibril. It provides moral guidance, ethics, legal principles, and religious teachings. The verses in the Quran are considered perfect and unchangeable laws. The Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) refers to his actions, words, and silent approvals, which were recorded by his companions. This includes the explanation, application, and development of the teachings found in the Quran. Hadith, or reports of the Prophet's actions and sayings, is a key component of this source. However, while these sources provide a framework for Islamic law, they do not always provide detailed rules for

every possible situation. This is why *Istinbat* is necessary: it is the process of deriving or inferring legal rulings from the principles outlined in the Quran and the Sunnah to address individual cases or situations not explicitly covered in the texts.

Sixth, poverty, oppression, and hunger were prevalent, making the situation of Muslims worldwide among the worst globally. Muslims were also the poorest and most backward compared to other nations. If we were to consider Muslims in the context of nation-states, Muslims were the most disadvantaged during that period. Muslims were spread across the globe, and their situation varied significantly from one country or region to another. Some countries had advanced economies and rich natural resources, while others faced serious economic challenges. Therefore, it is important not to generalize that all Muslims were poor or unfortunate. Some Muslim-majority countries faced negative influences from colonial histories, political conflicts, or internal divisions, which affected their economic and social development. These factors impacted the condition of Muslims in some regions. Many Muslim-majority countries were among the poorest in the world, making poverty and backwardness internal threats. Poverty here refers to poor nutrition, food, and housing conditions, while wealthy countries had abundant resources, palaces, and even islands and beaches. Ironically, while the Quran teaches us that we are one nation, in reality, there is a gap that divides us into two categories: the poor and the rich. In our sermons about Islam, we always recite the verse that there is a clear right in the wealth of the rich for the poor and needy. In principle, Islam teaches that we are a united community, brothers and sisters, helping one another, and that wealth belongs to Allah, entrusted to us, and should be used responsibly not hoarded or exploited (Hakim & Syaputra, 2020).

External factors also contributed to the decline of the Muslim world. These include imperialism, Zionism, and capitalism real threats to Islam's existence today. Imperialism manifests in various forms, such as economic imperialism, through multinational corporations; cultural imperialism, through Westernization, which aims to destroy national creativity and erase historical roots; and military imperialism, through foreign military bases in Arab and other Eastern countries. Zionism is also perceived as a threat to global Muslims, not only in terms of Palestinian liberation but also in its expansion to neighboring countries. Zionism shares its ideas among Arab-Muslim intellectuals, involving them in social and other movements. Capitalism, an economic system based on free-market competition, profit, and rent, also promotes destructive values and hedonistic

utilitarianism (Bashri, 2015).

Second, the relationship between the Islamic world and the West has evolved since the 16th century, when the West entered a new historical phase. This period marked the rise of modern thinkers who promoted the advancement of science and successfully dismantled the power of the church. As a result, Western civilization has continued to dominate the world. Meanwhile, the Islamic world, which was in decline, began to see the importance of progress and started pushing for a return to the promotion of Islam, as it had once done in its golden age (Bashri, 2015).

2. The Rise of Islamic Civilization

When Islam began to decline, Europe rose from its backwardness. The revival was not only seen in the political sphere, as Europe's success in defeating Islamic kingdoms and some parts of the world was notable, but particularly in the fields of science and technology. European Muslims had significant advancements in knowledge and technology, supporting this development due to political success. This progress in Europe is inseparable from the Islamic rule in Spain. Islamic Europe greatly contributed to the pursuit of knowledge, with Spain being a central hub. During the classical period, when Islam reached its golden age, Spain was a crucial center of Islamic civilization, competing with Baghdad in the East. Many European Christians studied at Islamic universities there, and Islam became a teacher for Europeans, leading to the birth of Islamic civilization in Spain, which has attracted the attention of historians (Nugroho & Jannati, 2021).

Muslims occupied Spain during the reign of Caliph Al-Walid (705-715), one of the Umayyad caliphs in Damascus. From the moment they first set foot in Spain until the fall of the empire, Islam played a vital role there for over seven and a half centuries (Nugroho & Jannati, 2021). During more than seven centuries of Islamic rule in Spain, Muslims reached their peak. Many of their achievements effectively brought Europe, and subsequently the world, to more complex advancements. These advancements included Spain being a fertile country, bringing high financial prosperity, which in turn led to the emergence of many thinkers. Spain witnessed a revival and several achievements, particularly in science, literature, and development. Additionally, Spain produced great philosophers and scientists in medicine, law, music, and art. Some of the intellectual advancements (Nugroho & Jannati, 2021) include:

Islamic Spain excellently preserved cultural records within the context of Islamic history. It acted as a bridge through which Greek-Arabic science passed into Europe in the 12th century. Interest in philosophy and science began to develop in the 9th century AD,

during the reign of the fifth Umayyad ruler. Scientific and philosophical works initiated by Al-Hakam (961-976 AD) were imported in large quantities from the East, such as to the library and universities in Cordoba, which rivaled those of Baghdad, making it a major center of knowledge in the Islamic world (Nugroho & Riani, 2021; Napitupulu, 2019).

A key figure in the history of Arab-Spanish philosophy was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Sayigh, better known as Ibn Bajjah, along with other prominent figures like Abu Bakr ibn Tufail. Ibn Tufail mentored a student named Ibn Rushd, who, due to his ability to translate and simplify Plato's philosophy, made it more accessible and understandable in Europe. Ibn Rushd became widely known in Europe as Averroes (Junaidi, 2020).

The sciences of medicine, music, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and more also flourished. Abbas bin Firnas was renowned in chemistry and astronomy, while Ibrahim ibn Yahya al-Naqqash was known for his contributions to astronomy. Ahmad bin Ibas from Cordoba, known as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in Europe, was a prominent medical expert. In the fields of history and geography, many famous thinkers emerged from the Western Islamic world. Ibn Jubair from Valencia (1145-1228 AD) wrote about the Muslim countries of the Mediterranean and Sicily, while Ibn Battuta from Tangier (1304-1377 AD) traveled as far as the Samudra Pasai and China. Ibn al-Khatib (1317-1374 AD) authored the history of Granada, and Ibn Khaldun from Tunisia is considered the creator of the philosophy of history. These are just a few of the greatest names in science (Anini et al., 2021).

Islamic Spain also achieved success in music and vocal arts, thanks to the excellence of figures like Al-Hasan bin Nafi, who was known by the name Zaryab. At every gathering or celebration, Zaryab would showcase his musical talents and was famous for transforming songs. His knowledge was passed down to his children and even to his slaves, earning him widespread fame (Nasbi, 2016). Arabic was the administrative language of Islam in Spain, and it was accepted by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Even native Spaniards placed Arabic as their second language. Many experts also mastered Arabic, both in spoken and grammatical skills (Sou'yb, 1975). These included figures like Ibn Sayyidih, Ibn Malik (author of the *Alfiyah*), Ibn Khuruf, Ibn Al-Hajj, Abu Ali al-Isybili, Abu al-Hasan bin Usfur, and Abu Hayyan al-Garnathi. As the language developed, literary works emerged, such as *Al-'Iqd al-Farid* by Ibn Abd Rabbih (Sofyan, 2019).

3. The Role of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi

In the battle at Hattin, Salahuddin proved to be a skilled and brave military leader. Yahya Harun likened Salahuddin's bravery on the battlefield to that of a "lion about to

pounce on its prey." Under Salahuddin al-Ayyubi's leadership, the Battle of Hattin forced the Crusader forces to retreat and eventually scatter, suffering an overwhelming defeat. Ten thousand Crusaders were killed. Most of their commanders and generals were captured by Salahuddin, including Guy de Lusignan, the King of Jerusalem. Cities such as Acre, Nablus, Jaffa, Beirut, and several other key towns, along with their fortifications, were surrendered to the Islamic forces without resistance. Once Salahuddin had taken control of Jerusalem, he demonstrated his honor and compassion by freeing the prisoners, after they swore to never again resist, and all Crusader authority was handed over to him (Tambak, 2015).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that Salahuddin restored the image of Islam, which had been tarnished, through his successes in defeating the Crusader forces. His victories in successive battles against the Crusaders set a benchmark for Islamic military leaders after his time, in driving out the Crusaders from the lands of Islam. From the First Crusade until the fall of the Crusaders' power in the East, this event remains one of the most significant in history. The story of these events continues to be passed down from generation to generation. The Crusades did not only leave negative outcomes, such as destruction and physical ruin, especially in the Islamic world, but also positive effects, particularly on European nations. Despite their failure to achieve their primary goal the liberation of Palestine from Islamic control (Nofrianti, 2022) the Crusades had lasting impacts on Europe over the course of about three centuries. Some of the positive effects for Europe included:

- a. The expansion of the Byzantine Empire, which was able to slow down and hinder the Seljuk Turks' advance into Europe. If the Byzantine Empire had fallen, the Seljuks would have had a much greater chance of conquering parts of Europe.
- b. The Crusader forces were introduced to the highly advanced Islamic civilization, especially in the fields of science, prompting many Westerners to travel to the East to study and acquire knowledge, which they then spread throughout Europe.
- c. Europeans became more critical and inquisitive about the concept of exploring new lands, a sentiment that later led to Marco Polo's travels to the Americas in the 13th century, which set the stage for Columbus' journey to America in 1492.
- d. Trade contacts between the East and the West grew rapidly. Egypt and Syria became crucial centers for Western trade. The wealth of these kingdoms and societies continued to grow, and as trade routes expanded, this led to a shift of Eastern wealth and progress toward the West.

From the above explanation, it is clear that the Crusades had a more beneficial impact on the Western world, particularly Europe. This war contributed to the advancement of European civilization. On the other hand, while Muslims were successful in defeating and driving out the Crusader armies from the East, they did not benefit from cultural and civilizational development; instead, it brought about destruction, as the Crusades took place in the territories of the Islamic world.

Allah SWT commands in His words: "Indeed, Allah commands you to act justly and to do good." (An-Nahl: 90). As is well known, this divine command concretely calls for justice. Allah SWT also says, "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So do not follow [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to testify], then indeed Allah is ever, over what you do, [fully] Aware." [An-Nisa: 135]. Justice is one of the most prominent qualities of leadership exhibited by Salahuddin al-Ayyubi. He believed that justice was one of the laws of Allah in the universe, and his belief in justice stemmed from his faith. He learned all of this from his teacher, Sultan Nuruddin Mahmud Zanki, may Allah have mercy on him, who revitalized the principles of justice that Salahuddin followed.

Salahuddin opened the doors wide for both parties in dispute, ensuring that everyone—whether young or old, rich or poor, men or women—had an equal opportunity to meet with him. He did this both during his travels and while residing in a particular place. Every moment, he would listen to all the stories that were presented to him to uncover the injustices behind those stories. Every day, he gathered information and opened doors to justice. He never turned away anyone who came to him to seek advice or justice. He would often sit with his scribe for an hour, both in the day and at night, providing a ruling on each issue according to what was settled in his heart by Allah. He never turned away anyone with a purpose or need, all while continuing to engage in remembrance of Allah and consistently reciting the Quran (Hamdani, 2016).

Salahuddin was a leader who loved his people, trusted in Allah, diligently read the Noble Quran, understood its meaning, and practiced its teachings. He never neglected these deeds, may Allah always bless him. Whenever someone came seeking help, he would always pause, listen to their case, uncover the injustices, and study their story (Yasmi, 2017).

Once, a man from Damascus named Ibn Zuhair came to seek Salahuddin's help in dealing with Salahuddin's nephew, Taqiyuddin. The Sultan then sent a letter to Taqiyuddin, requesting his presence in the court. He did not absolve his nephew unless Taqiyuddin could present two witnesses who could testify in his favor, and these witnesses had to be known and accepted for their testimony. Salahuddin then entrusted the case to Qadhi Abul Qasim Aminuddin, the judge of Hama, to handle the lawsuit. Two witnesses arrived, and after the complaint was read, the legal power of the testimony was confirmed, and the opposing party denied the claims.

Qadhi Ibn Syidad revealed: "When the legal power was declared valid, I instructed Abul Qasim to treat both parties equally in the dispute (Ibn Zuhair and Salahuddin's nephew). He did so, even though Taqiyuddin was one of the Sultan's most esteemed officials. The case was then brought to court, and an oath was required from Taqiyuddin. The trial ended with a ruling. By nightfall, Salahuddin did not intervene in the court's decision, even though Taqiyuddin was the one he loved most and held in the highest regard. Yet all of this did not prevent him from upholding justice in his legal ruling."

Among the many proofs of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi's justice is his willingness to stand alongside his adversary in court without any hesitation or reluctance. In his view, only the truth should be followed. One such incident occurred when a merchant named Umar Al-Khallathi accused him of dishonesty. The story began when Salahuddin took a servant named Sanqar from the merchant, and the merchant accused him of attempting to unlawfully acquire the servant's wealth. When the merchant presented his case to Qadhi Ibn Syidad, Salahuddin displayed exceptional courtesy. He agreed to sit as the defendant in the case. After both sides presented their witnesses and evidence, the court session revealed the falsehood of the accuser's claims. However, Salahuddin did not want the accuser to leave disappointed; instead, he ordered that the merchant be given money and wealth, demonstrating his generosity even when he had every right to seek retribution.

Another example of Salahuddin's justice is his tireless efforts to manage the interests of his people. He would stay up late working to alleviate the burdens on his citizens by removing various taxes and levies that weighed heavily on them, thus eliminating injustice. Ibn Jubair described one of Salahuddin's virtues, noting that he removed many burdens and taxes that had been placed on his people, including taxes on even the smallest transactions. He went as far as abolishing a tax on water from the Nile, which had previously been imposed (Budiman, 2004).

At one time, a tax of seven and a half dinars was levied on pilgrims traveling for

Hajj, and it was used to assist people in the area. The Ubaidid dynasty had been excessively demanding this tax, and those who could not pay faced severe penalties. However, Salahuddin decided to abolish this tax entirely. Instead, he provided a subsidy to the people of Hijaz in the form of money equivalent to the amount previously collected from the pilgrims. By doing this, he relieved the Hajj pilgrims from the heavy burden of the tax, especially since most of them were poor and unable to pay what had been required of them. In this way, Allah protected the faithful through the hands of this just Sultan from a great calamity and dire consequences.

Justice is one of the noblest qualities that a ruler can possess, and it is the most upright trait for a nation. It leads to obedience and fosters unity. With justice, actions are righteous, wealth flourishes, the spirit of the people is uplifted, and goodness prevails. Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, has commanded all beings to uphold justice, and Salahuddin embodied this trait in all his actions.

D. CONCLUSION

The rise and decline of the Muslim ummah during the leadership of Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi were influenced by both internal and external factors. In addition to religious factors, the Crusades were also driven by the political and economic ambitions of Christian leaders. The war lasted nearly two centuries, with alternating victories and defeats between the Crusader and Muslim forces. Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi is known as a wise and courageous Islamic leader, highly respected by his enemies. His success in leading the Muslim forces to defeat the Crusaders and reclaim Jerusalem became a symbol of Islamic glory. Although the Crusades resulted in significant losses for the Muslim world, including physical and social destruction, Europe actually benefited from the civilization and knowledge acquired through contact with the Islamic world. The primary cause of the Crusades was political tension in Europe, which sought to strengthen their position by uniting Catholic Christian countries and maintaining control over Jerusalem. Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi, as a highly influential leader, demonstrated Islamic leadership values, including honesty (sidiq), trustworthiness (amanah), delivering the truth (tabligh), and intelligence (fathanah). He excelled not only in military strategy but also in showing high tolerance towards non-Muslims. His leadership displayed principles of justice and compassion, making Salahuddin a role model in Islamic history.

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