

Research Article

Mapping the Prophecy: A Geographical and Textual Identification of the "Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq"

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Abstract. This research analyzes the authentic Hadith on the Maseeh al-Dajjal emerging from a "Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq." It argues this is not a vague path, as often assumed, but a specific region, long obscured by modern political geography. The objective is to prove, via textual and geographical-historical evidence, that the "Khallah" is Al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) by linking it to prophecies of "Al-Mashriq" (the East) and the tribes of "Rabia and Mudar." The qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology synthesizes textual analysis (tahlil nassi) of Hadith collections with a historical-geographical review of classical geographers to establish the pre-modern, consensus boundaries of Al-Sham, Iraq, and Al-Jazīrah. Classical geographers demarcate Sham's border at the Euphrates and Iraq's at the Tigris, making the "gap" (Khallah/Mahallah) unequivocally Al-Jazīrah. This is corroborated by Hadiths linking "Al-Mashriq" and *fitna* to the tribes of "Rabia and Mudar," whose

lands (Diyar) classical geographers identify as Al-Jazīrah. The Dajjal's trials (controlling rain and livestock) also specifically match this region's demographic (the *Faddadin*). Scholars of Islamic eschatology should prioritize classical geographical definitions over modern maps. This methodology resolves contradictions and provides a more precise eschatological framework.

Keywords: Khallah, Al-Jazīrah, Maseeh al-Dajjal, Diyar Rabia, Al-Mashriq

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Maseeh al-Dajjal is unequivocally one of the greatest trials (*fitan*) that humanity will face and stands as one of the major signs of the Hour (*Ashrat al-Sa'ah al-Kubra*). The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) warned his Ummah about him with such frequency and detail that no other Prophet had warned his people before.¹ Among the most critical details provided in the corpus of authentic Sunnah is the location of his emergence (*khuruj*). A foundational Hadith narrated by Nawas ibn Sam'an (r.a.) and recorded in *Sahih Muslim* states: "He will emerge from a *Khallah* (a gap/path) between Sham and Iraq, and he will wreak havoc right and left (*fa 'aatha yaminan wa 'aatha shimalan*)."²

Research Problem: The research problem lies in the vagueness and subsequent misinterpretation of the term "Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq." In the modern era, the borders of "Sham" (Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon) and "Iraq" are defined by 20th-century political agreements, such as the Sykes-Picot accord. These modern boundaries bear little resemblance to the classical, administrative, and geographical definitions understood by the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions and early Islamic scholars. Applying modern maps to this prophecy obscures its meaning, leading to confusion. Does "Khallah" mean a desolate desert road, or does it refer to a substantive region? This ambiguity has hindered a precise geographical and demographic analysis of the Dajjal's initial theatre of operations.

Research Importance: Identifying this location is not merely an academic exercise; it is essential for a coherent understanding of the eschatological timeline and map. A precise identification allows for the synthesis of multiple, seemingly disparate, prophecies—those concerning the 'Mashriq' (East), 'Najd', 'Iraq', the tribes of 'Rabia and Mudar', and the specific nature of the Dajjal's trials. This study provides compelling evidence that the "Khallah" is, in fact, the well-defined classical region of Al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia).

Research Objectives: This research aims to achieve the following objectives: 1). To demonstrate the interchangeability of the terms 'Al-Mashriq', 'Najd', and 'Iraq' in the eschatological context as the direction of *fitna* east of Medina. 2). To establish, using classical Islamic geographical sources, the precise historical borders of Al-

¹ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Fitan; *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah.

² *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Fitan; *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah.

Sham (ending at the Euphrates River) and Iraq proper (Ardh al-Siwad), whose demarcation from Al-Jazīrah is defined by the Tigris River. 3). To prove that the "Khallah" or "Mahallah" (region) between these two classical entities is geographically and historically identical to Al-Jazīrah, 4). To link this identification to the authentic Hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* that name 'Diyar Rabia' and 'Diyar Mudar' (the core of Al-Jazīrah) as the land of the *Faddadin* (pastoralists) and the source of *fitna*, 5). To analyze how the Dajjal's specific trials (control of rain and livestock) are perfectly suited to this identified region and its demographic, 6). To reconcile this finding with other narrations mentioning Isfahan, positing a multi-stage *khuruj* (emergence).

Previous Studies: Classical exegetes and Hadith commentators, such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Imam al-Nawawi, and Al-Khattabi, have extensively discussed the meaning of 'Al-Mashriq' and 'Najd', often linking them to Iraq and its surroundings. Similarly, classical geographers like Ibn Hawqal, Yaqut al-Hamawi, and Al-Sharif al-Idrisi have provided meticulous definitions of the regions of Sham, Iraq, and Al-Jazīrah.

However, a significant gap exists in scholarship that *synthesizes* these two fields. While the geographical definitions have been preserved and the Hadiths have been commented upon, there has been a lack of research that systematically overlays the eschatological prophecies onto the classical cartography. Specifically, the direct identification of the 'Khallah' from the Hadith of Nawas ibn Sam'an with the 'Diyar Rabia wa Mudar' from the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) has not been fully developed. This research bridges that gap, arguing that these are not separate prophecies but two descriptions of the exact same location and event.

DISCUSSION

Al-Mashriq as the Epicenter of Fitna

To understand the specific location of the *Khallah*, one must first establish the broader geographical theatre of eschatological *fitan* (trials). The prophetic tradition is clear that the "greatest *fitna*," the Dajjal, will emerge from the East, or 'Al-Mashriq'.

Numerous authentic narrations affirm this. Ibn Umar (r.a.) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), while facing the East, say: { أَلَا إِنَّ الْفِتْنَةَ هَا هُنَا، مِنْ } "Behold, the *fitna* is from here, from where the horn of Satan rises."³ In another narration from Ibn Umar (r.a.), the Prophet (ﷺ) stood beside the minbar and said, "The *fitna* is from here," pointing towards the East.⁴

These narrations interchange three key terms: Al-Mashriq (the East), Najd (the highland), and 'Iraq. In a Hadith from Ibn Abbas (r.a.), a man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to pray for "our Iraq," to which he (ﷺ) replied: { إِنَّ بِهَا قَرْنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَتَهِيْجُ الْفِتْنِ، وَإِنَّ }

³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Fitan, Hadith 7094

⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Fard al-Khumus, Hadith 3104

{الْجَفَاءَ بِالْمَشْرِقِ} "Indeed, in it is the horn of Satan, the *fitan* will be stirred, and hardness of heart is in the Mashriq."⁵ This Hadith explicitly equates Iraq with the Mashriq and the horn of Satan.

The use of these three terms for the same unblessed region requires careful analysis, particularly to avoid sensitivities regarding modern political states. The evidence strongly suggests that 'Iraq' and 'Najd' are used here as geographical and topographical descriptors for the East, not as indictments of a specific modern nation or its people.

The most famous narration on this topic is the Hadith of Najd, also from Ibn Umar (r.a.), where the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, "O Allah, bless us in our Sham! O Allah, bless us in our Yemen!" The people said, "And in our Najd, O Messenger of Allah?" He (ﷺ) repeated his prayer for Sham and Yemen. When they insisted, "And in our Najd?" he (ﷺ) said the third time: {هَذَاكَ الزَّلَازِلُ وَالْفِتَنُ، وَبِهَا يَطْلُعُ قَرْنُ الشَّيْطَانِ} "There are the earthquakes and the *fitan*, and from it rises the horn of Satan."⁶

Classical scholars and linguists have clarified that 'Najd' linguistically means any elevated land, in contrast to 'Ghawr' (lowland). Al-Khattabi, as cited by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in *Fath al-Bari*, definitively resolves this:

"Najd is in the direction of the east. For one who is in Medina, their Najd is the steppe of Iraq (Badiyat al-Iraq) and its environs, which is the east for the people of Medina... The root of 'Najd' is what is elevated from the earth..."⁷

This scholarly consensus establishes that the 'Najd' which the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated as the source of *fitna* was the 'Mashriq' relative to Medina, namely the lands of Iraq and its surrounding territories.

This interchangeability is powerfully demonstrated by an authentic *mawquf* narration from Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. It directly parallels the famous prophetic hadith about "Khorasan" but explicitly substitutes the word Iraq for al-Mashriq. It is narrated that Abu Bakr asked, "'Is there a land in Iraq called Khorasan?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Verily, the Dajjal will emerge from it.'"⁸

This narration, whose chain of narrators meets the standard of Bukhārī, provides compelling evidence that in early eschatological discourse, "ʿIrāq" functioned as a *metonym* (a substitute term) for the broader prophetic Mashriq. This usage is analogous to how ancient mariners referred to the entire Indian Ocean as *Baḥr al-Fārs* (Persian Sea) or *Baḥr al-Hind* (Indian Sea), though it was all one body of water.⁹ Similarly, ʿIrāq, being the most prominent part of the Mashriq for the early

⁵ Al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*. Al-Haythamī stated in *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid* that its narrators are trustworthy (*rijāluluḥu thiqāt*).

⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Hadith 1037, 7094; Al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*, Hadith 3953; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith 5988.

⁷ Al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Sharḥ Kitāb al-Fitan.

⁸ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf fī al-Aḥādīth wa-al-Āthār*, Hadith 38626.

⁹ Al-Ḥamawī, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, 1:335.

Muslims of Medina, could be used to refer to the entire eastern direction of tribulation.

This is further substantiated by narrations such as the statement of Ibn Umar (r.a.): "I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pointing with his hand towards Iraq, saying: 'Behold, the *fitna* is from there,' three times."¹⁰

This foundation is critical: the primary direction of the Dajjal's emergence is Al-Mashriq. This region is identified in the Sunnah by the metonym 'Iraq', a broad geographical term not limited to the modern state but encompassing the 'steppe of Iraq and its environs'. The evidence from Abu Bakr (r.a.) further suggests the boundaries of this *fitna* are not limited to Iraq proper, which allows this study to pinpoint a precise location *within* this greater Mashriq: the Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq.

Demarcating the 'Khallah': The Classical Borders of Sham and Iraq

The prophecy of the *Khallah* is a geographical statement. To understand it, we must drain it of modern political connotations and refill it with its original, classical geographical meaning. The "gap *between* Sham and Iraq" can only be identified by first defining the classical borders of Sham and Iraq themselves.

The Historical Western Border of Iraq: The term "Iraq" in classical texts primarily refers to 'Ardh al-Siwaḍ' (the Land of Blackness, for its rich soil) or the 'Sawad of Kufa'. Its boundaries were meticulously documented by Islamic geographers. The region was defined by the two great rivers, but its western limit—the border it shares with Al-Jazīrah—was consistently identified as the Tigris River.

Geographers described the boundaries of Iraq as extending in length from 'Abbadan to Mosul, and in width from 'Al-Udhayb' (near Qadisiyyah) to 'Hulwan' (in the Zagros mountains).¹¹ Critically, this definition places the entirety of 'Ardh al-Siwaḍ' *east* of the Tigris river system or in the lowest part of the plain between the two rivers. The land *west* of the Tigris, in the upper part of the plain, was considered a separate entity. As we will see, the Tigris River serves as the definitive boundary separating Iraq proper from Al-Jazīrah.¹²

The Historical Eastern Border of Al-Sham: Similarly, "Al-Sham" (Greater Syria or the Levant) was a vast and well-defined province. Its western border was the Mediterranean Sea (Bahr al-Rum) and its southern border was the Sinai desert, ending at Al-Arish.¹³ Its crucial *eastern* border, which separated it from the Badiyah (steppe) and Al-Jazīrah, was unequivocally the Euphrates River.

¹⁰ bn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad*, Hadith 5937. Graded *Sahih* by Shaykh al-Albānī in *Faḍā'il al-Shām*.

¹¹ *Al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik*, Al-Bakri; *Al-Buldan*, Ibn al-Faqih.

¹² *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq*, Al-Idrisi.

¹³ Yaqt al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, entry for "Al-Arish".

Ka'b al-Ahbar (r.a.) is reported to have defined the "blessed" land of Sham as that which is "from the Euphrates to Al-Arish."¹⁴ This definition is the consensus of classical geographers. Ibn Hawqal (fl. 10th c.), in his *Surat al-Ardh*, provides a comprehensive definition:

"And as for Al-Sham, its west is the Sea of Rum (Mediterranean), and its east is the Badiyah (steppe) from Ayla to the Euphrates, then from the Euphrates to the border of Rum... Its last border from the side of Egypt is Rafah, and from the side of Rum... Malatiah, Al-Hadath, Mar'ash... Adhana, and Tarsus."¹⁵

Imam al-Nawawi (d. 1277), in his commentary on *Sahih Muslim*, affirms this directly when discussing the Euphrates, stating: "It is the divider between Al-Sham and Al-Jazirah."¹⁶

The lines are now drawn with indisputable clarity from classical sources:

1. Al-Sham lies west of the Euphrates River.
2. Iraq (al-Siwad) lies east of the Tigris River (in its upper course).

The geographical and political entity that lies *in the gap* between the Euphrates and the Tigris is, by definition, Al-Jazirah.

Al-Jazirah: The Geographical Identification of the 'Khallah'

With the borders of Sham and Iraq established, the identification of the *Khallah* becomes self-evident. The vast, inhabited, and strategically critical landmass located between the Euphrates and the Tigris is Al-Jazirah (literally, "The Island" or "The Peninsula").

This is not a modern deduction; it is the explicit definition provided by the same classical geographers. Al-Sharif al-Idrisi (d. 1165), as quoted by Al-Tifashi, states:

"From the east [of Sham], Al-Jazirah is situated between Sham and Iraq... and it is called Al-Jazirah because it lies between the Tigris and Euphrates. This is the land wherein lies Nineveh, the homeland of Yunus (a.s.)... Its center today is Mosul, and its parts include Al-Raqqa, Nasibin, Diyar Rabia, and Bani Taghlib. Al-Jazirah is the border region that separates the boundaries of Sham and Iraq, and its borders are the two rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates."¹⁷

This testimony is definitive. The "gap" or "strip" between Sham and Iraq is Al-Jazirah.

This understanding is further strengthened by a variant narration of the Dajjal's emergence. While the *Muslim* narration uses the word *Khallah* (gap/path), a narration recorded by Naim ibn Hammad in his *Kitab al-Fitan*—from Abu Umamah al-Bahili (r.a.) with a chain of reliable narrators—uses a different, but clarifying, word:

¹⁴ *Ithaf al-Akhisaa*, Al-Suyuti; *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, Yaqut al-Hamawi.

¹⁵ Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ardh*.

¹⁶ Al-Nawawi, *Al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Fitan.

¹⁷ Al-Tifashi, *Surur al-Nafs*.

{يَخْرُجُ الدَّجَالُ مِنْ مَجَلَّةٍ بَيْنَ الشَّامِ وَالْعِرَاقِ} "The Dajjal will emerge from a *Mahallah* (region) between Sham and Iraq."¹⁸

A *Mahallah* is not just a path; it is a place, a district, a region, or a locality. This variant strongly suggests the intended meaning was always a populated territory, not merely a desolate road. This *Mahallah* is Al-Jazīrah.

Therefore, the Hadith of Nawas ibn Sam'an (r.a.) is a precise geographical prophecy: "He will emerge from [Al-Jazīrah], the region between Sham and Iraq, and he will wreak havoc right and left..." The Dajjal's first great campaign of *fitna* will take place within this very territory.

The Prophetic Correlation: Al-Jazīrah as 'Diyar Rabia wa Mudar'

The identification of the *Khallah* as Al-Jazīrah is a powerful conclusion in itself. However, it becomes an unassailable proof when synthesized with another, independent line of authentic prophecies that identifies the *same region* as the source of *fitna*, but using different names.

A Hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, narrated by Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.), reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) pointed towards Yemen and said, "Faith is from here... and harshness and thick-heartedness are in the *Faddadin* (the loud-voiced plowmen/herders), the people of camel-hair tents, near the tails of their camels, from where the two horns of Satan rise: in Rabia and Mudar."¹⁹

This Hadith is a "conclusive evidence." It explicitly links the "horns of Satan"—the *exact same phrase* used to describe Al-Mashriq/Iraq in the Ibn Umar Hadith—to two specific tribes: Rabia and Mudar.

Other authentic narrations confirm this is not a coincidence.

- A narration in *Musnad Ahmad* states: "Faith is in the people of Hijaz, and the thickness of hearts and harshness is in the *Faddadin* in the people of Al-Mashriq."²⁰
- Another from Jabir (r.a.) states: "Harshness and thickness of hearts is towards Al-Mashriq, in Rabia and Mudar..."²¹

The prophetic equation is thus complete: Al-Mashriq (of *fitna*) = The land of "Rabia and Mudar"

The final step is to ask the classical geographers: Where is the land, or *Diyar*, of Rabia and Mudar? The answer is unanimous and perfectly aligns with our findings.

¹⁸ Naim ibn Hammad, *Kitab al-Fitan*.

¹⁹ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Maghazi, Hadith 4387; *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Iman, Hadith 51.

²⁰ *Musnad Ahmad*. Graded *Sahih* by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut.

²¹ *Musnad Abu Ya'la*. Graded *Sahih* by Husayn Salim Asad.

Ibn Hawqal, in *Surat al-Ardh*, writes: {فأما الجزيرة التي بين دجلة والفرات فتشتمل على ديار ربيعة ومضر} "And as for the Jazeera that is between the Tigris and the Euphrates, it comprises Diyar Rabia and Diyar Mudar."²²

Ibn Taymiyyah also confirms that the tribes of Rabia and Mudar (descendants of Adnan) "spread in the land, and they took over the land of Sham and Al-Jazirah and Egypt and Iraq... until they settled in Al-Jazirah between the Euphrates."²³

The synthesis is breathtaking in its precision:

1. The Hadith of Nawas ibn Sam'an identifies the *Khallah* (gap) between Sham and Iraq.
2. Geographers identify this "gap" as Al-Jazirah.
3. The Hadith of Ibn Mas'ud identifies the 'Mashriq' of *fitna* as the land of Rabia and Mudar.
4. Geographers identify Al-Jazirah as the land of Diyar Rabia and Diyar Mudar.

The conclusion is inescapable: The 'Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq' is Al-Jazirah, which is 'Diyar Rabia wa Mudar', the prophesied heartland of the Dajjal's initial *fitna*.

This region, classically, includes cities such as Mosul, Tal Afar, and Sinjar (in 'Diyar Rabia', modern day Iraq); Al-Raqqah, Al-Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor (in 'Diyar Mudar', modern Syria); and Harran, Urfa (Al-Ruha), Surooj, Mardin, Nasibin, and Diyarbakir (Amid) (in 'Diyar Rabia/Mudar', modern-day Türkiye). The prophecy thus describes a *khuruj* in a region that starts in modern day Türkiye and stretches down into Syria and Iraq, precisely *between* classical Sham and classical Iraq.

The Trial of the *Faddadin* and the Armies of Iblis

This geographical identification is not merely a topographical curiosity; it is central to the *nature* of the Dajjal's trial. The Hadith of Nawas ibn Sam'an states that upon emerging from this *Khallah*, the Dajjal will "wreak havoc right and left." The lengthy Hadith of Abu Umamah al-Bahili (r.a.) details precisely what this "havoc" entails.

The Trial of the *Faddadin*: The Hadith of Abu Umamah, graded as *Sahih* in its majority by scholars like Shaykh al-Albani due to its numerous supporting narrations, provides a vivid picture. After emerging from the *Khallah* and declaring his divinity, the Dajjal's *fitna* is primarily agricultural and pastoral:

"And from his *fitna* is that he will pass by a tribe, and they will believe in him. He will command the sky, so it will rain, and the earth, so it will grow. Their livestock will return to them in the evening, fatter than they have ever been, with their flanks most extended and their udders fullest. And he will pass by a tribe, and they will reject him... so they will be afflicted with drought, and none of their wealth or

²² Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ardh*. Also echoed in *Al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik*, Al-Istakhri; *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, Yaqtut al-Hamawi.

²³ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Jawab al-Sahih li-man Baddala Din al-Masih*.

livestock will remain... And from his *fitna* is that he will say to a Bedouin: 'What if I resurrect your father and mother for you? Will you testify that I am your Lord?' He will say, 'Yes.' So two demons (*Shayatanayn*) will take the form of his father and mother and say, 'O our son, follow him, for he is your Lord.'"²⁴

This trial is not generic; it is a test *specifically designed* for the *Faddadin*—the very people of Rabia and Mudar.

As classical commentators explain, the *Faddadin* are "those whose voices are loud in their fields and with their animals," "the owners of camels, cattle, and donkeys," and "those who possess hundreds of camels."²⁵ They are, as the Hadith states, "people of camel-hair tents" (*Ahl al-Wabar*). Their entire existence, wealth, and status are tied to their herds and their crops. They are also described as having "jafa" (harshness, distance) because their lifestyle "distracts from the affairs of religion and causes heedlessness of the Hereafter, and with it comes hardness of heart."²⁶

This is the demographic of Al-Jazīrah (Diyar Rabia/Mudar). To this day, the plains of Harran, Surooj, and Al-Jazīrah are vast agricultural and pastoral lands. There are the people whose deepest worldly attachments are their livestock and the rain. The Dajjal will come to them during a time of immense drought and offer them their entire world in exchange for their *Deen*.

The Armies of Iblis: The Dajjal's ability to perform these "miracles" is derived from Satanic support. The Hadith of Abu Umamah is clear that demons (*Shayateen*) will impersonate the dead to deceive the living. This, too, has a profound connection to Al-Jazīrah.

Ka'b al-Ahbar (r.a.) famously warned Umar (r.a.) against residing in Iraq, saying: "Do not do it... for in it are the rebellious Jinn (*maradat al-jinn*), and in it is nine-tenths of magic (*sihr*)."²⁷

This region is the established headquarters of these forces. The delegation of Jinn who first came to the Prophet (ﷺ) to hear the Qur'an, as mentioned in *Surat al-Ahqaf* and *Surat al-Jinn*, were from this exact area.

- Ibn Abbas (r.a.) identifies them as Jinn from Nasibin.²⁸
- Mujahid states they were seven: "three from the people of Harran and four from the people of Nasibin."²⁹
- Other narrations mention they were from Nineveh (near Mosul).³⁰

²⁴ Narrated by Ibn Majah, *Kitab al-Fitan*, Hadith 4077; *Qissat al-Masih al-Dajjal*, Al-Albani. Shaykh al-Albani declared the hadith *Sahih* in its entirety due to its numerous *shawahid* (supporting narrations), even with weakness in this specific chain.

²⁵ Al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*. [See source: 411-412]; Abu Ubaydah, as cited by Al-Baghawi.

²⁶ Al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*.

²⁷ *Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq*.

²⁸ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Kitab al-Tafsir*, Hadith 3858; *Tafsir al-Tabari*.

²⁹ *Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim*.

³⁰ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, commentary on *Surat al-Ahqaf*

Nasibin, Harran, and Nineveh are the cardinal cities of Al-Jazīrah (Diyar Rabia/Mudar). The area's profound association with spiritual conflict is further emphasized by its proximity to ancient Babylon, located immediately south of Al-Jazīrah within the Euphrates and Tigris. This city is identified in tradition as the locus for the descent of the angels Harut and Marut, whose knowledge—a profound test for mankind—was, following the demise of the Prophet Solomon (Sulayman), co-opted and disseminated by the Shayateen as *sihr* (sorcery). This is the land of the *maradat al-jinn*, the center of *sihr*, and the homeland of the Faddadin of Rabia and Mudar. It is, therefore, the perfect stage for the Dajjal's emergence from the Khallah to "wreak havoc right and left," supported by his Satanic armies, to deceive the very people prophetically identified as the "thick-hearted" source of *fitna*.

Reconciling the *Khallah* Emergence with Isfahan Narratives and the Dajjal's Final Path

A critical aspect of this thesis is to harmonize the identification of the *Khallah* (Al-Jazīrah) as the primary emergence point with the authentic narrations that prominently feature Isfahan. Some have posited Isfahan as the *khuruj* (emergence) point, based on the well-known *Sahih Muslim* narration from Anas ibn Malik (r.a.) that, "The Dajjal will be followed by 70,000 Jews from Isfahan, wearing *Tayalisah* (Persian cloaks)".³¹

However, this narration and others like it do not contradict the *Khallah* emergence; rather, they describe a subsequent phase of the Dajjal's campaign. As classical commentators like Imam al-Mubarakpuri have noted, the *Sahih Muslim* hadith is not explicit about his *emergence from* (خروج من) Isfahan, but rather his *followers* (أتباع) from it.³² This describes a mobilization of his army, not an origin point.

The *khuruj* of the Dajjal is best understood as a multi-stage campaign, not a single event. The evidence, when synthesized, points to a clear chronology:

1. The Primary Trial (Al-Jazīrah): The *khuruj* from the *Khallah bayna Sham wal Iraq* (Al-Jazīrah) is the initial stage.³³ This is where he makes his first major public claim and "wreaks havoc right and left" ('*aatha yaminan wa 'aatha shimalan*). It is in this specific region that he performs his miracles of rain and livestock, a *fitna* perfectly tailored to deceive the *Faddadin* (farmers and herders) of *Diyar Rabia wa Mudar*.³⁴
2. The Gathering of Armies (Isfahan): After this initial trial in the northern *Mashriq*, his path moves south-east towards Iran. This is supported by the *Hasan* narration in *Musnad Ahmad* that the Dajjal will descend upon 'Khuz and Kirman' (regions adjacent to Isfahan) with 70,000 followers, whose "faces are like hammered

³¹ *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah, Hadith 2944.

³² Al-Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi bi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi*

³³ *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah, Hadith 2937

³⁴ *Qissat al-Masih al-Dajjal*, Al-Albani; *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Kitab al-Fitan, Hadith 4077.

shields".³⁵ It is here, in Isfahan, that he gathers his main army from the 70,000 Jews of the city.

The *Hasan* narration from Aisha (r.a.), which states he "emerges *in* (في) the Jewry of Isfahan",³⁶ therefore describes this secondary phase of his public campaign—his consolidation of power among his main followers *before* his final march on the Hijaz.

This timeline is powerfully reinforced by what the narrations state *next*. The Dajjal's path is linear and terminal. From Isfahan, his objective is Medina.³⁷ When the angels bar his entry, they will turn his face towards Al-Sham (Palestine).

Crucially, the Dajjal does not return to the *Khallah*. His journey from Medina is his final one. He proceeds to Al-Sham, where he is fated to perish (*yehlik*) at the gate of Lud at the hands of 'Isa ibn Maryam (a.s.).

This linear, one-way trajectory makes the identification of the *Khallah* (Al-Jazīrah) essential. The specific trial of "wreaking havoc right and left" and deceiving the *Faddadin* with agricultural miracles *must* occur in this initial *Khallah* phase, as he never returns to that region. His campaign in Isfahan is one of military mobilization, and his campaign in Al-Sham is his final confrontation.

CONCLUSION

This research has sought to prove that the "Khallah bayna al-Sham wa al-Iraq," mentioned in *Sahih Muslim* as the emergence point of the Maseeh al-Dajjal, is a precise and identifiable geographical location: the classical region of Al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia).

Findings

1. **Geographical Demarcation:** Classical Islamic geography, as documented by authorities such as Ibn Hawqal, Al-Idrisi, and Imam al-Nawawi, defines the eastern border of Al-Sham as the Euphrates River and the western border of Iraq proper as the Tigris River. The "gap" or "region" (*Khallah* or *Mahallah*) situated between them is unequivocally Al-Jazīrah .
2. **Prophetic Synthesis:** This identification is definitively corroborated by a separate, independent line of authentic prophecies. The Hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* that name the "Mashriq" of *fitna* as the land of the tribes of Rabia and Mudar are, in fact, describing the same location . Classical geographers unanimously confirm that Al-Jazīrah's primary components are Diyar Rabia and Diyar Mudar .
3. **Demographic Correlation:** The Dajjal's primary trials—controlling rain, crops, and livestock—are shown to be perfectly tailored to the *Faddadin* (pastoralists

³⁵ *Musnad Ahmad*. Graded *Hasan* by Hamoud al-Tuwaijri and *Sahih* by Ahmad Shakir.

³⁶ *Musnad Ahmad*. Graded *Hasan* by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut.

³⁷ *Musnad Ahmad* (Hadith of Aisha).

and agriculturalists). These are the exact people (Rabia and Mudar) identified in Hadith as inhabiting this specific region (Al-Jazīrah) .

4. **Eschatological Timeline:** This research clarifies the Dajjal's multi-stage campaign. He *emerges* in the *Khallah* (Al-Jazīrah) to conduct his primary trials. He then moves to Isfahan not just to emerge, but to *gather* his army . From there, his path is terminal: he marches to Medina and is then directed to Al-Sham (Palestine) for his final defeat at Lud . This linear path confirms that his unique *fitna* for the *Faddadin* is exclusive to the *Khallah*.

Recommendations

1. Researchers in Islamic eschatology must make a clear and consistent distinction between modern political borders and the classical geographical definitions (*hudud*) intended by the prophetic narrations.
2. Further research should be conducted by synthesizing other eschatological Hadiths with classical geography to build a more robust and coherent map of future events.
3. This research affirms the *i'jaz* (miraculous nature) of the Prophetic Sunnah, which described, with immense precision, the geography, demography, and supernatural disposition of a region 1,400 years before its fated role in the greatest *fitna* of human history.

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