

Mediation and the Druze Society: A Way of Life Across Generations

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Abstract

The Druze society is known for its unique social structure, which aims to preserve communal cohesion and resolve conflicts peacefully. It is characterized by a tightly knit social framework based on values of solidarity, mutual respect, and loyalty to the community. Maintaining communal unity is a fundamental principle in Druze culture; thus, there is a clear preference for resolving disputes through peaceful means, employing tools such as mediation, reconciliation, and the intervention of key community figures.

One of the central mechanisms for achieving these goals is the institution of mediation, which is deeply rooted in Druze culture and plays a significant role in preventing conflicts and ensuring communal justice. This article explores the development of mediation in Druze society, its principles, and its impact on social life, while also comparing it to modern mediation practices.

Introduction

Mediation is a process that allows conflicting parties to reach a mutually agreed-upon resolution through the intervention of a neutral third party. In Druze culture, mediation is an integral part of tradition and social life. The history of mediation within the Druze community highlights a longstanding process of preserving and passing down social values across generations, with justice, tolerance, and mutual respect at its core.

Traditional Druze leadership—comprising sheikhs, community elders, and public figures—plays a key role in guiding society toward conflict resolution through agreed-upon means to prevent divisions and maintain communal harmony. This approach strengthens the social resilience of the community and enables it to cope with both internal and external challenges over time.

The Institution of Mediation in Druze Society

Druze mediation is based on several fundamental principles:

- 1. Wisdom of the Elders**

The judgment of community leaders and respected figures, such as sheikhs, plays a crucial role in the mediation and conflict resolution process. These

leaders act as natural mediators, drawing on life experience, traditional wisdom, and a deep understanding of the community's social and religious norms.

The Role of Community Leaders in Conflict Mediation:

- **Moral and Social Authority** – Sheikhs are perceived as authoritative figures with moral weight, making disputing parties more likely to respect their decisions.
 - **Preserving Communal Cohesion** – Their goal is not only to resolve individual disputes but also to prevent divisions and maintain social harmony.
 - **Use of Agreements and Compromises** – The proposed solutions are usually based on reconciliation and compromise rather than unilateral rulings, ensuring that all parties maintain their dignity.
 - **Respect for Tradition and Values** – Decisions are made in accordance with the ethical and religious codes of the community, emphasizing principles such as respect, trust, and loyalty.
2. **Traditional Mediation Processes**
- Typically, the mediation process involves bringing the disputing parties together with respected authorities, listening to each side's arguments, and proposing a balanced solution that considers the needs and emotions of all involved.
 - In some cases, Druze mediation includes a "**Sulha**" (a traditional reconciliation ceremony), during which a public commitment is made to end the dispute.

This approach enables conflict resolution in ways that promote stability and peace while honoring the unique heritage of the Druze community.

3. **Peaceful Resolution** – Preference is given to solutions that do not require resorting to legal proceedings, based on the belief that reconciliation and mutual agreement are superior to confrontation.
4. **Confidentiality and Trust** – Mediation is conducted under strict confidentiality, allowing parties to speak freely and explore creative solutions.
5. **Mutual Respect** – Both mediators and disputing parties act with respect toward traditions, laws, and social norms.

The Impact of Mediation on Druze Society

The institution of mediation has a profound influence on Druze society:

- **Maintaining Social Stability** – Preventing violent conflicts and protecting communal unity.
- **Strengthening Community Leadership** – Enhancing the status of mediators as central figures in social life.
- **Preserving Tradition** – Passing down mediation principles across generations contributes to cultural continuity.
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A Comparison Between mediation in the Druze society and Modern Mediation

While modern mediation is based on legal frameworks and regulations, mediation in the Druze society is founded on tradition and social norms. However, there are commonalities between the two, such as the principle of neutrality, the importance of mutual agreement, and the goal of minimizing conflicts.

Mediation remains an essential part of the Druze community's social identity and continues to function in modern times. The combination of Druze traditions with contemporary mediation methods can serve as a unique model for resolving conflicts through informal means while preserving community values. Future research may explore the role of mediation in Druze society in the age of globalization and its impact on the younger generation.

Druze society has successfully maintained social and cultural balance over the years, upholding principles of mediation and inclusivity in various situations. Historical examples include the Druze commitment to loyalty to the countries they reside in while preserving their cultural and religious identity. For instance, during Israel's wars, Druze individuals chose to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), contributing to the state's continuity while maintaining their communal belonging. Another example is the preservation of close ties with other communities in the Middle East to maintain political stability while upholding religious principles that do not infringe on human rights.

These characteristics highlight the Druze community's ability to practice modern mediation based on mutual understanding, fostering connections between different populations, and maintaining a balance between group identity and active participation in the public sphere. The way in which the Druze have maintained positive relationships with diverse groups has helped them avoid social rifts and prevent conflicts, serving as a strong example of how mediation can improve intergroup relations in contemporary society.

Mediation Throughout Different Historical Periods

Druze and the State of Israel

At the time of Israel's establishment, the Druze community made critical decisions. Unlike most Israeli Arabs, the Druze chose to cooperate with the new state. In 1956, they even accepted mandatory conscription into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), a move that set them apart as a unique minority in Israel. This decision granted them a privileged status in many ways but also placed them in a complex position within the broader Arab world.

The mediatory dimension during Israel's establishment is particularly evident in the Druze decision to collaborate with the new state despite being part of the broader Arab population in the Middle East. Their decision, which began in the 1940s and culminated in formal recognition and military conscription in 1956, represented a significant step that balanced their Arab identity with the political and military realities of the emerging Israeli state.

Key mediatory elements in this period include:

1. **Integration into the State of Israel** – The Druze bridged their Arab national affiliation with integration into Israeli institutions and the military. Unlike most Israeli Arabs, who largely refrained from cooperating with the new government, the Druze sought to maintain their local and cultural identity while advancing their status within Israel. Their decision to serve in the IDF reflected a compromise between loyalty to their religious and cultural framework and their commitment to the new ruling authority.
2. **Recognition in Defense and Cooperation** – The Druze decision to collaborate with Israel not only secured political and military achievements but also acted as a bridge between the new state and its Arab minorities. By choosing to work with Israel, the Druze contributed to the country's defense while serving as a model for potential cooperation between Arab minorities and a Jewish state, all while maintaining their cultural and religious independence.
3. **Conflict with the Broader Arab World** – The Druze's cooperation with Israel placed them in a complex position within the wider Arab world. Their decision to support Israel was not universally accepted, and they faced alienation and internal tensions. They found themselves mediating even within Arab society, as their choice to align with Israel required balancing internal loyalty with their political situation in a foreign state.
4. **Relations with Jewish Society and the IDF** – The Druze became mediators between the Arab and Jewish populations in Israel. Their service in the IDF not only contributed militarily but also demonstrated that an Arab community could integrate into Israeli institutions, helping to reduce tensions between the two groups. This decision represented a form of mediation between different ethnic and cultural identities.

Conclusion

The mediatory aspect during this period is particularly evident in the Druze decision to collaborate with Israel. This move positioned them uniquely between the Jewish population and other Arab minorities, serving as a means to preserve their identity and culture while forging connections with the new state.

The Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990)

During the Lebanese Civil War, the Druze, under the leadership of Kamal Jumblatt and later his son, Walid Jumblatt, maintained their political and military strength amidst the chaos of the conflict. They participated in various struggles, sometimes aligning with the Palestinians and at other times opposing Christian forces. Over time, they adapted to regional changes to ensure their political survival.

During the war, the Druze played a significant role in political and military struggles, often mediating between rival factions, sometimes even between opposing groups. The mediatory element during this period was evident in several ways:

1. **Bridging Conflicting Factions** – Under Kamal Jumblatt’s leadership, the Druze maneuvered between different forces and conflicting political positions. Jumblatt maintained his political and military power by forming shifting alliances with various groups and nations. At times, they allied with the Palestinians, while at other times, they cooperated with Christian Maronite forces. These dynamic alliances required mediation between political and regional adversaries, shaping Lebanon’s war landscape.
2. **Adapting to Regional Political Changes** – The war created a highly unstable political environment, requiring the Druze to mediate between local forces and external influences. Countries like Syria and Israel were directly or indirectly involved, and the Druze maintained diplomatic relations with multiple sides, sometimes for their own interests and at other times to avoid direct involvement that could endanger their status. Their ability to avoid full-scale war with any single group required continuous mediation between opposing forces.
3. **Struggle to Maintain Political and Military Status** – Amidst the war’s chaos, the Druze preserved significant political and military influence in Lebanon. They fought not only for survival as a minority group but also as key players in seeking solutions to the ongoing crisis. Their later integration into Lebanese politics and their continued influence as a Druze political party resulted directly from their ability to mediate between warring factions.
4. **Creating Alliances with Different Groups** – As mentioned, the Druze participated in various conflicts, sometimes cooperating with the Palestinians and at other times confronting Christian forces. Throughout the war, both Kamal and Walid Jumblatt demonstrated an ability to build bridges between rival factions, not only militarily but also politically.
5. **Internal Conflicts Within the Druze Community** – Even within the Druze community, there were internal disagreements about how to handle the political and military situation. Some supported cooperation with the Palestinians, while others opposed it. Jumblatt’s ability to lead the Druze through this period stemmed from his internal mediation skills, which helped maintain unity within the group.

Conclusion

Mediation played a crucial role during the Lebanese Civil War, as the Druze, under the leadership of Kamal and later Walid Jumblatt, skillfully maneuvered between conflicting political and military forces. Their ability to form strategic alliances and act as mediators helped them retain their political and military standing.

The Druze Revolt in Syria (1925–1927)

Under the leadership of Sultan al-Atrash, the Druze led a significant revolt against French rule in Syria, known as the "Great Syrian Revolt." The uprising began in Jabal al-Druze and spread to other areas, including Damascus. Despite being militarily outmatched, the Druze inflicted heavy losses on the French and made it clear that they would not surrender easily. Ultimately, the French suppressed the revolt, but the Druze community managed to preserve its status in Syria.

The mediatory dimension of this period can be interpreted in several ways:

1. **Unifying Struggle** – Although the revolt was primarily led by the Druze, Sultan al-Atrash successfully incorporated various ethnic and religious groups in Syria, including Sunni Arabs, Shiites, and Christians. Mediation between these groups was crucial, as the Druze did not fight solely for their own interests but advocated for broader national unity. Al-Atrash sought to create a united Syrian front against French rule, emphasizing the necessity of cooperation despite ethnic and religious differences.
2. **Negotiations with Other Forces** – During the revolt, there were efforts to find political solutions to reduce tensions between the Druze and other groups or to establish alliances with local factions also suffering under French rule. The Druze engaged in both military struggle and political diplomacy, applying pressure on regional leaders while pushing for a united liberation movement.
3. **Impact on Relations with the French** – Given the intensity of the rebellion and the pressure exerted by the Druze and other Syrian groups, the French authorities not only responded with force but also initiated dialogue with various leaders. There were periods when attempts were made to resolve conflicts through diplomacy, with figures like Sultan al-Atrash not merely acting as adversaries but also engaging in political negotiations.
4. **Preserving National Identity and Independence** – The revolt was not only a struggle against colonial rule but also a fight to maintain Syria's national identity. Al-Atrash led the uprising with the goal of preserving Syria's independence, demonstrating a willingness to compromise on political details in order to reach broader agreements.

Conclusion

The mediatory element in the Druze Revolt (1925–1927) was evident in Sultan al-Atrash's efforts to foster national unity against French rule. By creating alliances with diverse Syrian groups and applying both military and political pressure, the Druze played a bridging role in the broader struggle for Syrian independence.

The Druze and Their Relations with the Ottoman Empire

During the period of Ottoman rule in the Middle East, the Druze maintained a complex relationship with the Ottoman authorities, which included both cooperation and resistance, depending on the circumstances. The figure of Fakhr al-Din II (1585–1635) exemplifies how the Druze were able to employ mediation and diplomatic politics to maintain their control and advance their interests, even when this required maneuvering between local forces and the Ottoman authorities.

The element of mediation during this period is evident in several ways:

1. **Maneuvering Between the Ottoman Authorities and Local Forces** – Fakhr al-Din was an exceptionally skilled political leader who exploited local conflicts and understood the need to mediate between different forces to preserve relative autonomy. On the one hand, he cooperated with the Ottoman authorities when it served his interests, while on the other hand, he rebelled

against them when he perceived their rule as a threat to his local authority. His mediation was both political and military—he formed alliances with Ottoman officials while simultaneously maintaining local independence.

2. **Relations with European Powers** – Fakhr al-Din was also a brilliant diplomat who knew how to navigate between the Ottomans and European powers, particularly France, which sought to expand its influence in the region during times of instability. He recognized the potential of collaborating with European powers, a move that required mediation between major global forces and the local Ottoman administration. This mediation was not only political but also economic and military—he sought external support to retain control over the territories under his rule.
3. **Rebellion Against the Ottoman Rule** – When Fakhr al-Din opposed Ottoman rule, his primary goal was to preserve the Druze's local autonomy and his own status as an independent ruler. In this struggle, he used his mediation skills to garner support from various factions within the empire while also preventing internal conflicts that could weaken his position. In essence, his rebellion was a form of internal mediation between the Druze and the Ottomans, where he balanced avoiding direct confrontation with maintaining local independence.
4. **The Politics of "Rebellion and Agreement"** – Fakhr al-Din lived during a time of power struggles between the Ottoman authorities and local factions, which often required mediation between rival groups. He was capable of reaching agreements with local Ottoman officials and military leaders who could provide temporary support, all while preserving the distinct identity and autonomy of the Druze.

In conclusion, the element of mediation during Fakhr al-Din II's era is reflected in his ability to avoid direct conflicts with the Ottoman authorities when possible while maintaining regional control and fostering relations with external forces, including European powers, to ensure the local independence of the Druze.

The Druze in the Syrian Civil War (2011–Present)

The war in Syria placed the Druze in a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, they did not want to be seen as opponents of the regime and risk retaliation from Assad's government. On the other hand, they also did not trust the Syrian opposition, which included extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Nusra. Throughout the war, the Druze managed to maintain control over their territories (primarily in Jabal al-Druze) and defended themselves against extremist attacks while adopting a cautious policy of relative neutrality.

During the Syrian Civil War (2011–present), the Druze found themselves in a politically complex situation, requiring them to employ mediation strategies to navigate between conflicting factions while maintaining their independence and protecting their interests. The mediation aspect of this period is evident in several ways:

1. **A Policy of Careful Neutrality** – The Druze, especially in Jabal al-Druze, adopted a policy of relative neutrality, not necessarily out of support for the

Assad regime but out of a desire to protect themselves from attacks by both sides of the conflict. They avoided openly joining the opposition, particularly due to the presence of extremist groups like ISIS and al-Nusra. Here, mediation was necessary to balance the need for independent survival with the risk of open rebellion, which could provoke retaliation.

2. **Avoiding Internal Conflicts** – Within the Druze community in Syria, there were disagreements about how to approach the war. Some Druze supported remaining loyal to the Assad regime, while others were more open to siding with the Syrian opposition. Mediation played a crucial role as the Druze leadership sought to maintain internal unity and prevent the escalation of divisions, carefully balancing external influences.
3. **Protecting the Druze Communities** – The Druze successfully defended their territories (mainly in Jabal al-Druze) against attacks by extremist groups, including ISIS and al-Nusra. They exercised caution to avoid direct military confrontations with these groups while maintaining their local military strength. This required a delicate mediation strategy between the need for self-defense and the desire to avoid being drawn into full-scale warfare.
4. **Maintaining Relations with the Syrian Regime and Local Forces** – Throughout the war, the Druze maintained ties with the Syrian regime while also avoiding excessive alignment with it. At the same time, they engaged with other local factions to ensure their survival and security. The diplomatic and mediation skills of Druze leaders were essential in managing this complex situation.
5. **The Risks of a Two-Sided Relationship** – The Druze had to navigate a challenging political reality where any move they made could have severe consequences. They had to mediate between their aspiration for stability and the need to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of war and political struggles.

In conclusion, the element of mediation during the Syrian Civil War is reflected in the Druze's ability to maintain political and military independence while maneuvering between hostile factions and a turbulent political landscape. They balanced the need for self-preservation with the necessity of avoiding direct confrontations with extremist groups while maintaining complex relations with both the Syrian regime and the opposition.

The Druze During the Crusader Period (1099–1291)

During the Crusader period (1099–1291), the Druze, who primarily resided in the mountains of Lebanon, Galilee, and Jabal al-Druze in Syria, had to adopt mediation strategies to navigate the various political and military forces in the region. The mediation element during this period is evident in several ways:

1. **Avoiding Direct Confrontation with the Crusaders** – The Druze, who lived mainly in mountainous and isolated areas, often chose neutrality to avoid direct conflicts with the Crusaders. They sought to maintain their autonomy while preserving their religious and social traditions. This approach required

mediation between maintaining internal independence and avoiding provocation or clashes with foreign forces.

2. **Occasional Cooperation with the Crusaders** – In some cases, the Druze cooperated with the Crusaders, particularly when their interests aligned. For example, there were instances where the Crusaders formed alliances with the Druze to protect isolated mountain regions from common enemies, such as Muslim forces. Mediation here involved balancing cooperation with the Crusaders while maintaining their distinct religious and cultural autonomy.
3. **Alliances with Muslim Forces** – Historical records indicate that the Druze, whose religious and cultural foundations were tied to Islamic principles, did not always view the Crusaders as a beneficial force. In certain periods, they allied with Muslim rulers and participated in the struggle against the Crusaders. Thus, the Druze maintained a balance between collaboration with the Crusaders and loyalty to the local Muslim authorities.
4. **Maneuvering Between Different Rulers** – The Druze frequently had to navigate between various rulers, some Muslim and some Crusader, to preserve their autonomy and local authority. Often, they engaged in political "mediation," ensuring they did not become trapped between rival rulers while maintaining regional stability and their internal status.
5. **Culture and Religion as a Mediating Factor** – Despite sometimes facing persecution or being misunderstood by the Crusaders, the secrecy surrounding the Druze faith helped them maintain a distinct and independent identity. This enabled them to preserve their unique status even when they had to cooperate or negotiate with foreign rulers.

In conclusion, the element of mediation during the Crusader period is reflected in the Druze's ability to maneuver between political, military, and religious forces while maintaining internal autonomy. They did not take a definitive side but acted according to political, social, and religious interests that ensured their local stability.

Participation in the Battle of Hattin (1187)

The Druze cooperated with Saladin in the Battle of Hattin in 1187, in which the Crusaders were defeated. The battle took place near Tiberias, close to the tomb of Jethro (Nabi Shu'ayb), a central figure in the Druze faith. Following the victory, Saladin built the tomb of Jethro as a tribute to his Druze soldiers.

The Druze participation in the Battle of Hattin (1187) and their cooperation with Saladin stood out as a significant act of mediation in the political and military context of the time. The battle was a pivotal event in the conflict between the Crusaders and the Muslims, and the Druze played a vital role in this strategic alliance. The mediatory element of this period was evident in several ways:

1. **Joining the Muslim ranks against the Crusaders** – Although the Druze were a minority group that emerged from Islam, they were not always directly involved in the conflicts between Muslims and Crusaders. However, in the Battle of Hattin, they chose to align with Saladin. This collaboration, which occurred near the tomb of Jethro, symbolized an effort to integrate their religious and cultural identity with the political and military interests of the

Muslims. By doing so, the Druze bridged their faith with their participation in a decisive military campaign.

2. **Defending religious faith and identity** – The battle took place near the sacred tomb of Jethro, a revered figure in the Druze religious tradition. The Druze involvement in the battle in this area can be seen as a fusion between their religious belonging and the political struggle. Their participation was also a tribute to this spiritual figure, merging the sacred with the practical.
3. **Recognition and tribute from Saladin** – After the victory, Saladin built the tomb of Jethro as an acknowledgment of the contributions of the Druze soldiers. This act was a form of mediation between the Muslim rulers and the Druze community, serving as a sign of mutual cooperation and respect for local religious and cultural traditions. By doing so, Saladin not only secured a military victory but also established an alliance with the Druze, granting them an important place in his legacy.
4. **Political maneuvering between enemies** – The Druze, as they had done many times throughout history, maintained the ability to maneuver between different forces. During the Crusader period, they found themselves surrounded by Crusader-occupied territories, and their alliance with Saladin became a strategic mechanism that elevated their regional status. They chose to side with the Muslims while carefully preserving their local identity.
5. **Treatment of Druze soldiers** – Saladin's recognition of the Druze soldiers' contributions highlighted the use of religious history and spirituality not only as a theological basis but also as a political and strategic tool. This allowed the Druze to maintain their standing among Muslims while contributing to the historical and religious legacy of Saladin.

In conclusion, the mediatory element of this period was evident in the way the Druze managed to balance their religious identity with political and military necessities. Their cooperation with Saladin provided strategic value, contributing to military success while strengthening ties between the Druze and Muslims and maintaining their religious identity and honor.

Support for the Mamluks in the 13th Century

In the 13th century, the Druze joined the Mamluk forces in their struggle against the Crusaders and the Mongols. This cooperation strengthened their position in the region and helped preserve their autonomy.

The Druze alliance with the Mamluks in the 13th century highlighted the mediatory element in several key ways:

1. **Avoiding conflict with Muslims** – By this time, the Druze were already integrated into the Islamic sphere and enjoyed recognition from Muslim rulers. Their participation in the struggle against the Crusaders and the Mongols was a means of maintaining political and military stability. The mediatory aspect was evident in their ability to prevent conflicts with Muslim authorities while fostering positive relations with the Mamluks without jeopardizing ties with local Muslims.

2. **Participation in the Mamluks' struggle against the Crusaders** – The Druze, already connected to the Muslim rulers, chose to collaborate with the Mamluks in their fight against the Crusaders. This was a balancing act between maintaining good relations with Muslim leadership and engaging in a common struggle against external enemies. Their participation in the Mamluk campaigns not only provided them military advantages but also strengthened their political position in the region.
3. **Preserving political and social autonomy** – Through their alliance with the Mamluks, the Druze secured their local autonomy and protected their territories. While they did not fully integrate into the Mamluk army, they maintained their independence while supporting the Mamluks against common foes. This mediation allowed them to avoid direct subordination while ensuring regional political stability.
4. **Maintaining local military strength** – The Druze, particularly in the mountains of Lebanon and surrounding areas, retained military capabilities and occupied geographically challenging terrain. Their alliance with the Mamluks did not weaken their local military power; instead, it bridged their support for the Mamluks with their desire for local control.
5. **Strengthening political ties with the Mamluks** – This cooperation enhanced the Druze's status within the Islamic world, as the Mamluks led the fight against both the Crusaders and the Mongols. Their collaboration was driven not only by military needs but also by the desire to secure positive relations with the Mamluk authorities, ensuring their place in the regional political system.

In conclusion, the mediatory element of this period was reflected in the Druze's ability to avoid taking an absolute stance in the conflict between the Crusaders and the Mamluks. They maintained their political and military autonomy while supporting the Mamluks, gaining strategic advantages while securing their independent existence in the region.

The Buhturid Emirate (1147–1516)

The Druze managed to establish a ruling hegemony in Lebanon under the Buhturid Emirate, leveraging conflicts between the Crusaders and the Mongols. They maintained relative autonomy and defended their territories from foreign forces.

The mediatory element of this period was evident in several aspects:

1. **Agreements between religious and cultural groups** – The Druze acted as a bridge between different communities, including Muslims, Christians, and Jews. They maintained relationships with various groups and functioned as crucial allies, balancing between Crusader and Muslim powers.
2. **Relations with the Crusaders and struggles with the Mongols** – The Druze did not simply defend their own territories but also built alliances and engaged in diplomacy with different rulers. Rather than outright opposition, they strategically forged partnerships to protect their interests.
3. **Autonomy and diplomatic maneuvering** – Despite external rule (e.g., Ayyubid or Crusader influence), the Druze preserved relative autonomy by

mediating between different powers. They engaged in diplomatic relations while safeguarding their unique political and cultural identity.

4. **Defending their territories** – The Druze balanced territorial defense with political adaptability, maintaining local order and strengthening internal unity to prevent divisions that could weaken their resistance to foreign domination.

In summary, the Druze demonstrated political and social flexibility, mediating between different forces to ensure their autonomy while maintaining diplomatic ties with various ruling entities.

Fakhr al-Din I (16th Century)

Fakhr al-Din I was an important Druze leader in the 16th century. He ruled over areas in Mount Lebanon and Carmel and played a key role in Druze leadership. He was the first Druze leader to establish relations with the Ottoman authorities while striving to maintain local autonomy.

Fakhr al-Din I was both a military and political leader, expanding his rule over different areas in Lebanon and Syria. He not only safeguarded the political interests of his people but also promoted economic growth and infrastructure development.

He is often regarded as a mediator due to his ability to balance diverse religious and cultural groups while maintaining political stability. He promoted religious tolerance, granting freedom of worship to Muslims, Christians, and Druze. He also established diplomatic ties with the Ottomans and foreign powers, skillfully maintaining autonomy.

Overall, he prioritized regional well-being, fostering a stable society where diverse populations could coexist peacefully. His legacy as a mediator stems from his ability to build a harmonious and stable political environment.

Conclusion:

In each of these periods, the Druze demonstrated an exceptional ability to navigate between forces greater than them, exercise political and social judgment, and know when to fight, when to collaborate, and when to maintain neutrality. This is one of the main reasons why the Druze society continued to exist and thrive despite numerous challenges.

The survival and prosperity of the Druze community can be linked to the field of mediation through several key aspects:

1. **Conflict Management and Dealing with External Pressures:**

Throughout history, the Druze have had to deal with external forces stronger than them. Instead of being drawn into inevitable conflicts, the Druze applied strategies of mediation, partial neutrality, and shifting alliances—clear characteristics of mediation. Similar to modern mediators, they sought solutions that allowed the preservation of interests while avoiding long-term conflicts.

2. **Mediation Between Different Groups:**

In countries like Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, the Druze often found themselves caught between ethnic, religious, and national conflicts. Their ability to maneuver, serve as mediators, and often act as unifying agents between rival parties is a living example of the use of mediation techniques at both the community and political levels.

3. **Use of Mediation as a Tool for Social Cohesion:**

One of the central features of Druze society is the maintenance of stable community structures. Within the community, conflict resolution is based on internal mediation mechanisms, where elders and spiritual leaders help resolve disputes in a manner that prevents social rifts. This model of a neutral third party helping to find a mutually accepted solution for all parties is similar to modern mediation practices.

Potential for Further Research:

In the context of mediation studies, it would be interesting to explore how the principles of Druze behavior throughout history can serve as a model for conflict resolution in other communities and countries. Research could focus on:

- Comparing intra-community mediation models between the Druze and other communities.
- Analyzing Druze political discourse as a tool for mediation between rival forces.
- Examining the role of Druze leaders as mediators in regional conflicts in the modern era.

In this way, it can be seen that the Druze's unique ability to maintain their existence and prosperity throughout history is not only the result of political maneuvering but also the application of mediation principles, enabling them to navigate a changing reality while maintaining internal stability.

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