Daniyal

Daniyal – Depopulated Palestinian Village of Ramla

Daniyal was a Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict and the Lydda administrative district during the British Mandate. It stood on flat terrain in the central coastal plain, approximately 5 kilometers east of Ramla according to PalQuest, while other Palestinian geographical sources give a distance of about 6 kilometers.

The village had an average elevation of about 100 meters above sea level. Two secondary roads connected it with Lydda and Ramla, while dirt tracks led to Jimzu, 'Innaba, Kharruba, Khirbat al-Duhayriyya, and other nearby communities.

Daniyal's population reached 410 in the official 1944/45 statistics, and its lands covered 2,808 dunums. The economy depended primarily on rain-fed cultivation, including wheat, olives, and citrus. The village also had a drinking-water well and an elementary school founded in 1945.

Units of the Yiftach Brigade entered Daniyal on 10 July 1948 during the first phase of Operation Dani. Walid Khalidi's account states that the villagers either fled or were expelled during the assault, without establishing which circumstance applied to every resident.

Basic Information

Field	Information
Name	Daniyal
Arabic forms	دانيال / دنيال
Subdistrict	Ramla
Administrative district	Lydda
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 5 km according to PalQuest; about 6 km in other Palestinian geographical sources
Average elevation	Approximately 100 m above sea level
Palestine Grid	143/148
Population in 1922	277, all Muslims
Population in 1931	284, all Muslims
Houses in 1931	71
Population in 1944/45	410
1948 population estimate	476 – later estimate, not an official census
Total land area	2,808 dunums
Occupation and depopulation date	10 July 1948

Field	Information
Military operation	Operation Dani – first phase
Military unit	Yiftach Brigade
Cause of depopulation	Flight under attack and/or expulsion during the entry of Israeli forces; the source does not resolve the experience of all residents
Destruction	Most of the built environment was later demolished, while the shrine, school, and seven substantial stone houses survived
Post-1948 settlement	Kefar Daniyyel, established on the village site in 1949

Name and the Shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal

The village took its name from the Prophet Daniyal, commemorated locally at the shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal.

Palestinian Muslims historically venerated a number of prophets known from earlier religious traditions, and shrines commemorating such figures existed throughout Palestine.

The shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal was the village's most prominent religious landmark. In the late nineteenth century, the Survey of Western Palestine described Daniyal as a small settlement built around the shrine.

The presence of the maqam should not by itself be treated as archaeological proof that the historical prophet was buried at the site; Palestinian shrines could mark a supposed tomb or preserve a local religious tradition.

Location and Geography

Daniyal stood on flat land in the central coastal plain, east of Ramla and southeast of Lydda.

Two secondary roads linked it with Lydda and Ramla, while dirt tracks connected

the village with Jimzu, 'Innaba, Kharruba, Khirbat al-Duhayriyya, and neighboring communities.

Palestinian mapping places Lydda to the northwest, Khirbat al-Duhayriyya and Dayr Abu Salama toward the north and northeast, Jimzu to the east, 'Innaba to the southeast, al-Barriyya to the south, and Ramla to the west.

Built Environment

The houses were built of adobe brick or stone and arranged along an east-west axis in a rectangular village plan.

A small number of shops occupied the center. Construction increased during the final years of the Mandate while largely preserving the original layout.

The built-up area covered 15 dunums in the 1944/45 statistics.

Population

Year	Population	Status
1922	277	Official Government of Palestine census; all Muslims
1931	284	Official census; all Muslims, in 71 houses
1944/45	410	Official Mandate-period estimate
1948	476	Later demographic estimate, not an official 1948 census
1998	2,921	Later Palestine Remembered estimate of refugees and descendants

One Palestinian secondary source gives 287 inhabitants for 1922, but census-based references give 277. This article therefore uses 277.

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Note
1931	71	Official census figure
1948	119	Later estimate, not an official house census

Land Ownership, 1944/45

Total	2,808
Ownership Category	**Dunums**
Palestinian	2,728
Transferred to Zionists	0
Public	80

The figures balance exactly: 2,728 + 80 = 2,808 dunums.

No land was recorded in the Jewish ownership category.

Land Use, 1944/45

Total	2,728	80	2,808
Land Use	**Palestinian**	**Public**	**Total**
Cereals	2,599	0	2,599
Plantations and irrigable land	37	0	37
Built-up area	15	0	15
Non-cultivable land	77	80	157

The categories reconcile exactly with the total village land area.

Economy and Agriculture

The villagers relied primarily on rain-fed agriculture.

Cereals dominated land use, occupying 2,599 dunums in 1944/45.

Wheat, olives, and citrus were among the principal crops, while 37 dunums were irrigated or used for orchards.

Palestinian geographical sources note that the village's agricultural produce was marketed particularly in Lydda and Ramla.

Water

A village well supplied the inhabitants with drinking water.

The nineteenth-century Survey of Western Palestine likewise recorded a well west of the shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal.

No extensive independently documented list of named village springs or wells was located, so additional names are not introduced without evidence.

Education

An elementary school was founded in Daniyal in 1945.

Khalidi and PalQuest record approximately **45 pupils at the time the school was established**.

A Palestine Remembered summary field gives 55 pupils, but the Khalidi text reproduced by the same site gives 45. This article therefore uses 45 while noting the discrepancy.

The school was one of the village buildings that survived after 1948.

Shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal

The shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal was the village's most prominent religious landmark and remained standing after the village was depopulated.

Later fieldwork described it as a stone building with arched doors and windows on the ground floor and a partial upper storey containing a porch and rectangular

window.

Local Palestinian documentation also associates a waqf and cemetery with the shrine, although details concerning its administration and associated Sufi tradition derive primarily from local history.

Daniyal before the Nakba

In the late nineteenth century the Survey of Western Palestine described Daniyal as a small settlement clustered around the prophet's shrine.

By the final years of the Mandate, house construction had increased, an elementary school had been established, and several shops stood in the center.

Agriculture nevertheless remained the principal livelihood, with close commercial links to Lydda and Ramla.

Operation Dani

Operation Dani began on 9 July 1948 and ended on 18 July.

It was one of the largest offensives conducted during the Ten Days between the two truces and was intended to expand the Israeli-held corridor toward Jerusalem while capturing Lydda, Ramla, and their hinterland.

The operation unfolded in two stages: the first, from 9 to 12 July, focused on Lydda and Ramla; the second, from 13 to 18 July, extended toward the Ramallah-al-Latrun road.

Daniyal was occupied during the first stage.

Occupation of Daniyal – 10 July 1948

According to the account used by Walid Khalidi, units of the **Yiftach Brigade** entered Daniyal on 10 July 1948 during the first phase of Operation Dani.

Nearby Jimzu was occupied at the same time because the two villages formed part of the rural approaches protecting the Lydda-Ramla area from the east.

Yiftach forces then continued their advance toward Lydda.

Military Unit

Several brigades participated in Operation Dani at the operational level, including Har'el, Yiftach, Kiryati, Alexandroni, and armored formations.

The village-specific Daniyal account, however, directly identifies the **Yiftach Brigade** as the force that entered the village.

The other brigades should therefore not automatically be listed as direct participants in Daniyal's occupation.

No village-specific battalion is securely identified in the principal source used here.

Cause of Depopulation

Khalidi states that Daniyal's inhabitants either fled or were expelled during the assault.

The surviving village-level record does not establish how many residents experienced each of these circumstances.

The most accurate formulation is therefore: **the 10 July military assault caused the depopulation of Daniyal through flight under attack and/or expulsion as the forces entered.**

Destruction: What Is Actually Documented?

Some secondary summaries imply that Daniyal was destroyed on 13 September 1948. The underlying evidence is more limited.

On 13 September, David Ben-Gurion included Daniyal among fourteen villages in a

request to a ministerial committee proposing partial demolition.

Khalidi notes that the source he cites does not establish whether that request was implemented or exactly when demolition occurred.

Later fieldwork also demonstrates that the village was not completely erased: the shrine, the school, and seven well-built stone houses survived.

The more accurate formulation is therefore: **most of Daniyal's built environment was demolished after depopulation, but the timing and extent of demolition at each stage remain incompletely documented.**

Ethnic Cleansing in Source Classification

Palestine Remembered classifies Daniyal using the term “complete ethnic cleansing.” The phrase is retained here only as an attributed source classification.

The more specifically documented facts are the village's occupation by Yiftach forces on 10 July 1948, the flight and/or expulsion of its Palestinian population, absence of permanent collective return, and later destruction of most village buildings.

Occupation Chronology

Date	Event
9 July 1948	Operation Dani begins.
10 July 1948	Yiftach Brigade units enter Daniyal during the first phase of the operation; Jimzu is occupied at approximately the same time.
10 July 1948	The villagers flee under attack and/or are expelled during the occupation; the village-level record does not resolve the balance between the two.
10–11 July 1948	Yiftach forces continue toward the Lydda area as Operation Dani advances.
12 July 1948	Ramla is occupied during the first phase of Operation Dani.

Date	Event
13 September 1948	Ben-Gurion includes Daniyal among fourteen villages proposed for partial demolition; Khalidi's source does not establish when or whether the request was implemented in that form.
Later period	Most village buildings are demolished, while the shrine, school, and seven stone houses survive.
1949	Kefar Daniyyel is established on the village site.

Israeli Settlements Established on Daniyal's Lands

Kefar Daniyyel was established in 1949 directly on the site of the depopulated Palestinian village.

This is the post-1948 settlement directly identified by Walid Khalidi and PalQuest on Daniyal's village site.

Daniyal Today

According to the field description used by Walid Khalidi before the publication of All That Remains in 1992, the principal surviving structures were **the shrine of al-Nabi Daniyal, the village school, and seven well-built houses**.

The abandoned stone shrine stood among weeds and several trees. Its lower floor contained arched doors and windows, while part of the structure rose to a second storey with a porch.

The former school was later used by residents of Kefar Daniyyel.

The surviving village houses were built of stone and had flat roofs, with a mixture of arched and rectangular openings. One was used as a warehouse.

Cactus, cypress, olive, Christ's-thorn, and castor-oil plants grew across the village site, while surrounding land was under cultivation.

PalQuest's field photographs date to July 1987. Palestine Remembered also contains later Palestinian community documentation, including photographs from 2014 of surviving village houses and the shrine.

These materials constitute important historical and community documentation but not a comprehensive archaeological or cadastral survey of the entire Daniyal village area in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Daniyal
- PalQuest – Operation Dani
- Palestine Remembered – Daniyal, Ramla Subdistrict
- Palestine Remembered – Daniyal entry from Walid Khalidi's All That Remains
- Palestine Encyclopedia – Daniyal, Ramla Subdistrict
- Palestinian Villages Encyclopedia – Daniyal
- Our Palestine – Daniyal, Ramla Subdistrict