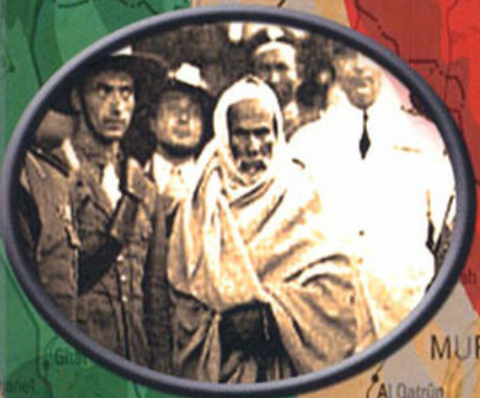
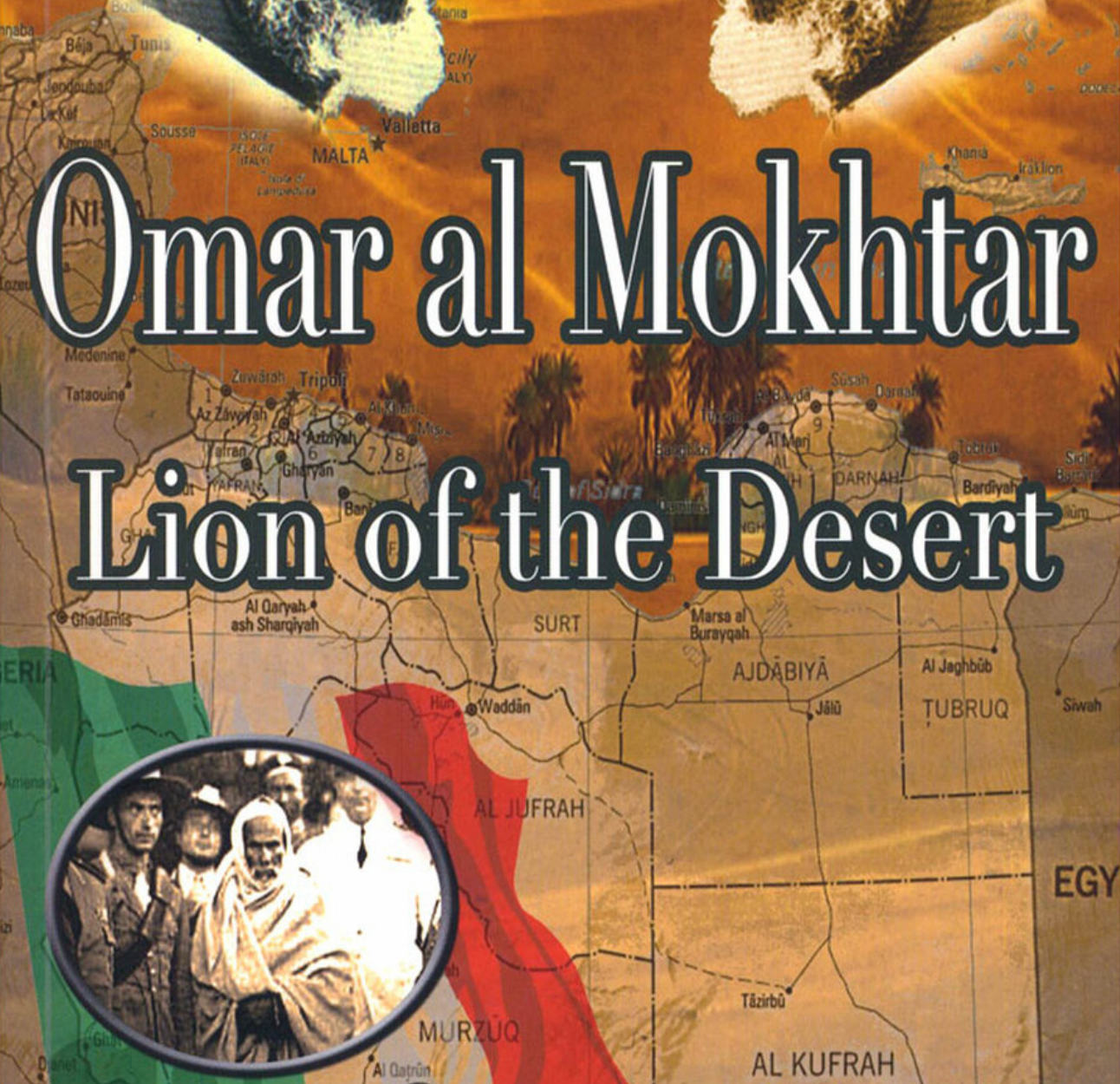




Omar al Mokhtar

Lion of the Desert



Islamic History in North Africa
The Sannusi Movement in Libya

The Biography of Shaikh
‘Umar al-Mukhtar

By Dr. ‘Ali Muhammad As-Salabi

Published by
Al-Firdous – London

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2010: First Edition.

Cover design by :

ISBN : 1 874263 69 7

Typeset & Layout by :

Dawnstar IT Ltd. – UK

Email: dawnstarit@yahoo.co.uk

M: (0044) 079 4960 5774

Published and Distributed by:

Al-Firdous Ltd.,

10 Fonthill Road, London, N4 3HX

Email: al_firdous@hotmail.co.uk

Printed by:

iMAK OFSET

Merkez Mah, Ataturk Cad, Gol Sok, No. 1,

Yenibosna 34192, ISTANBUL - TURKEY

All praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, we seek His Support, Guidance and Forgiveness. We seek refuge in

Allah ﷻ from the evil of ourselves and from our sins. He whom Allah ﷻ guides will never be misguided by anyone and he whom Allah ﷻ misguides will never be guided by any one. I testify that there is no God but Allah ﷻ Alone, and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ, is His Servant and Messenger.

The Great Shaikh
‘Umar al-Mukhtar,

May Allah’s Mercy be upon him

His Upbringing, Activities and Martyrdom

Content

Chapter One: His Upbringing and Work

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Chapter Three: The Last Days of His Life, His Imprisonment and His Death Sentence.

Introduction

Shaikh ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was born of righteous parents in 1862 (or as it has been said in 1858). His father Mukhtar bin ‘Umar was from the tribe of al-Manfat, and he was born in al-Batnan in the al-Jabal al-Akhdar region. He was brought up in a house that was full of dignity and generosity, surrounded by the high-mindedness of the true Muslims and their sublime character, which they inherited from the teachings of the Sannusi Movement, based upon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

His father died on his journey to Makkah to perform the obligation of Hajj. However, before his death, he entrusted his companion, Mr Ahmad al-Ghariyani (a brother of the Shaikh of the Jenzur Zawiyah, a Sufi sect on the east of Toabruq*), to inform his brother that he was authorized to care for the upbringing and education of his two sons, ‘Umar and Muhammad.

Effectively, Shaikh Hussain al-Ghariyani took charge of their education, fulfilling the wish of their father. He registered both of them in the Qur’an School within the Zawiyah[1], then ‘Umar al-Mukhtar joined the Institute of al-Jaghbubi to study with sons from other tribes.[2]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar suffered the torment of orphanhood at an early age, yet only good reached his heart, as it was filled with faith and love for Allah and His Messenger.

The exceptional faculties of young ‘Umar were discovered by his Shaikhs in al-Jaghbub institute, which was a ‘minaret of knowledge’ and a meeting place for such scholars, writers, and educators, who were in charge of educating prominent Muslim students and preparing them to carry the everlasting Message of Islam. These students were later sent to various tribes in Libya and around Africa to teach people about the principles of Islam.

‘Umar spent eight years in al-Jaghubi institute learning about all the different types of Islamic knowledge, such as Islamic jurisprudence, *Ahadith* and *Tafsir* (Interpretation of the Qur’an).

Some of the most prominent of his Shaikhs were Mr az-Zarwali al-Maghribi, Mr al-Jawani, the great scholar Falih bin Muhammad bin ‘Abdillah al-Dhahiri al-Madani. They witnessed his talent and aptitude, his sound character, and love for da’wah to Islam.

He was known for his seriousness, firmness, and patience. His virtues drew the attention of both his teachers and fellow students.

His teachers used to inform Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi about the news of the students and the virtues of each of them, and he was very impressed with the qualities and potential of ‘Umar.

Indeed, ‘Umar had extensive knowledge of his environment and was aware of the tribal events and the dates of each occurrence, along with their causes, as well as the bonds linking each tribe with one another. He also knew their habits, customs, geographical locations, and how to settle disputes between them. He also became an expert of the desert terrain and the routes which people used to travel between Barqah, Egypt and Sudan from outside, and between al-Jaghub and al-Kufrah from inside.

He also had knowledge of the plants, with all their varieties, in Barqah. He learnt about the diseases that used to afflict the cattle in Barqah and the different ways of treating them, as a result of the experiences passed on from the country people. He knew the sign of each tribe which they brandished in their livestock (camels, sheep and cows) to determine their ownership. All this information was proof of ‘Umar’s cleverness and talent from a young age.

DESCRIPTION OF ‘ UMAR AL-MUKHTAR

He was a medium to tall in height, with neither a fully muscular body nor a slight one. He spoke with a husky voice with a country tone, his speech was sound, clear, and not tiresome in any way, combining his words with an innocent smile or a gentle laughter, if need be. He had a thick beard which he grew from an early age. His appearance and attitude showed his dignity, sobriety, soundness in speech, and commitment to his principles.

‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR’S RECITATION OF THE QUR’AN AND WORSHIP

‘Umar al-Mukhtar had a strong determination to perform his prayers on time, and to recitate the Qur’an daily. He used to complete the recitation of the whole Qur’an each week, as he advised to do this by Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi as Sannusi: “O ‘Umar, observe your daily recitation of the Qur’an”.

The story of this encounter was highlighted by Mohammed at-Tayyib al-Ashhab who reported that ‘Umar once asked for permission to see the Imam in a place called “Bi’r as-Saarah”, on the desert road linking al-Kafrah to Sudan. While he was there, the Imam handed him a copy of the Qur’an, saying and said: “Do you want anything else?” ‘Umar replied: “O Sir, many brothers recite a *wird*^[3] which you have advised them to read, but I only recite the short *wirds* after every prescribed prayer. I ask of you to recommend them with something.” So the Imam said: “O ‘Umar, observe the recitation of the Qur’an as your daily *wird*.” ‘Umar said: “I kissed his hand and went out carrying this gift, which is kept with me, all the time. I observed the recitation of the Qur’an such that I was able to complete its thirty sections once every seven days.

His observing the recitation of the Qur’an and worshipping Allah □ with devotion is a proof of the power of faith in ‘Umar. It was his great faith which was manifested in the form of some of his beautiful attributes, such as trustworthiness, bravery, truthfulness, and fighting all aspects of oppression and tyranny.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar obeyed Allah’s Command:

□ Surely, as-Salah (prayer) is a timed ordinance for the believers. □^[4]

He used to worship Allah ﷻ by obeying His Commandments and performing them for the total pleasure of His Lord. He observed the Sunnah of salat ad-Duha[5], and always kept himself in ablution, even outside prayer times. Once, it was reported that he said: “I can’t remember a time when I was ever not in a state of ablution while meeting a master of the Sannusi movement, and I was honoured by Allah to be related to them.”[6]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar, being a pious servant of Allah, was dedicated to his spiritual well-being; reciting the Qur’an daily and performing the night prayers regularly, until his martyrdom.

The *mujahid* Mahmud al-Jahmi, who used to fight under the leadership of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and accompany him often, wrote in his diary: “I have never seen him sleep continuously through till the morning. He used to sleep for just two or three hours, at the most, and then he would perform his ablution, recite the Qur’an, and perform salah. He displayed some sublime characteristics, being distinguished by his with righteousness and piety, and the attributes of the righteous mujahidin.”[7]

As for the honourable teacher Muhammad at-Tayyib al-Ashhab, he said: “I had a good relationship with him, which enabled me to get closer to him. I used to sleep in his tent next to him, and the thing which I disliked most, at that time while I was very young, was that he would not let us sleep for the whole of the night. He used to get up early and then wake all of us up to perform ablution, despite the cold conditions and the fatigue of the travel, to spend the rest of the night praying and reciting the Qur’an.”[8]

It is as if I am looking at him, back in time, as he stands to worship the Lord of the Worlds, in the rivers and mountains of al-Jabal al-Akhdar, wrapped up in his white garment in the darkness of the night, reciting the Holy Qur’an with a sad voice, while tears drop to his cheeks in awe of Allah ﷻ .

Allah ﷻ says (translation of meaning):

ﷻ Surely, they who recite the Book of Allah, and keep up prayer, and spend out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, hope for a gain which will not perish ﷻ[9].

The Prophet ﷺ gave his advice to Abu Dhar ﷺ saying: “Observe the recitation of the Qur’an, for it is a light for you on earth and a good provision for you in heaven.” The Prophet ﷺ also warned those who did not read or learn the Qur’an saying: “The one in whose heart there is nothing of the Qur’an is like a ruined house.”[\[10\]](#)

The habit of reciting the Qur’an, and the implementation of its teachings was one of the main causes behind the firmness of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, until the last moments of his life; because the Holy Qur’an is the source of the right guidance. It contains the stories of the Prophets with their people; It informs us about the destination of the righteous people and that of the atheists and disbelievers.[\[11\]](#)

‘Umar al-Mukhtar indeed maintained his constant recitation of the Qur’an, and even as he was led to his execution, he recited the Verse:

ﷻ O soul that are at rest! Enter among My Servants, and enter into My Garden ﷻ[\[12\]](#)

HIS BRAVERY AND GENEROSITY

This wonderful attribute appeared in the life of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar at a very early age. In 1311A.H (1894), it was decided for him to travel to Sudan, heading a delegation that included Mr Khalid bin Musa, Mr Mohammed al-Masalusi, Qarjeelah al-Majbari, Khalifa ad-Dabar az-Zawy, a member of the Zawiyat Waw-Bifzan (the reporter of the story). In al-Kafrah, the delegation met a caravan of traders from the al-Zawyah and al-Majbirah tribes, and other businessmen from Tarabulus (Tripoli) and Benghazi, preparing for their trip to Sudan. The delegation joined those businessmen who were experts in guiding the trip through the desert tracks. When they reached the heart of the desert, near Sudan, some businessmen who were familiar with those roads, said that they were about to take a very dangerous route – which was inevitable on a journey to Sudan – where there were often lions awaiting prey from caravans that passed by. Therefore, the caravan people used to leave a camel behind for the lion(s), in the same way that a person gives a piece of meat to dogs and cats – so they could traverse the route safely. The speaker suggested that the all members of the caravan should contribute for the price of a cheap camel to leave for the lion, but ‘Umar al-Mukhtar strongly objected to the proposition, saying: “The tax which was unjustly imposed by the strong upon the weak was cancelled, so how could it be right for us to give it to the animals now. Surely, this is a sign of humility and disgrace. We will fight off the lion with our weapons if it stands in our way.” Some travellers tried to make ‘Umar change his mind, but he replied to them: “I would feel ashamed, after having refunded to say that I had left a camel behind for an animal that blocked my way. I am prepared to protect my belongings, and so should everyone be a guardian over his possessions”. As the convoy was approaching the narrow crossing, a lion emerged from a spot on the side of the path, and so one of the terrified businessmen said: “I am prepared to surrender one of my camels. Please do not attempt to fight the lion. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar jumped with his Greek made rifle, and fired the first bullet which was not fatal; so then the lion tried to attack the convoy, and ‘Umar fired a second

bullet that killed it immediately. Then ‘Umar insisted on skinning the animal so that the convoys would see it, and so he did so.”[13]

This incident tells us about the bravery of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. Every one was amazed, they spoke about it in their gatherings. Mr. Mohammed at-Tayyib al-Ashhab asked ‘Umar al-Mukhtar himself in the camp of al-Magharibah, in the tent of Mr. Mohammed al-Fa’idi, to which he replied: “O son, do you want me to boast about my kill?” He said me what an Arab countryman said to his competitor who had killed a lion: “Do you boast before killing an insect?” ‘Umar al-Mukhtar refused to boast but simply recited the Verse:

□ You threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw □ [14]

The reply of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar with the above Verse is proof of his deep attachment to the Qur’an. He learnt that people who have Iman (faith) and *Tawhid*[15], in their profound view of the truth of existence and their aspiration to the Hereafter, relate all their merits back to Allah □ , the Exalted the Omnipotent. They do not refer their success back to themselves. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar often recited the supplication of Prophet Yusuf □ , in the Verse:

□ My Lord! You have given me of the sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of sayings: Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Guardian in this world and the hereafter; make me die a Muslim and join me with the good. □ [16]

He was a person who had learnt a profound lesson from the biography of Dhu al-Qarnayn, which is necessary for one to become a devoted leader as, in Allah’s Verse:

□

□ He said: “This is a Mercy from my Lord”. □ [17]

When he had built a barricade to prevent oppression against the weak people and, he referred all the merit back to his Lord □ .

‘Umar al-Mukhtar had a heart strongly attached to Allah □ . He was not over excited by his success against the lion and the fear it imposed over people. But

rather he referred all the merit back to his Creator, so that is why he answered the question, quoting the Verse:

□ You threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw □ [18].

The distinguished personality of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was shown in his brave struggle against the French, in Chad, and the Italians in Libya. History has preserved the letter which ‘Umar al-Mukhtar sent as a reply to the message of al-Sharif al-Gharyani who was forced by the Italians to mediate in a peace agreement with ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to stop the war:

He said, after giving the Salam greeting and prayer for the Prophet □ , who said that Paradise is under the shades of swords:

“To our brother Mr al-Sharif al-Gharyani, may Allah protect him and guide him: Peace be upon you. We would like to inform you that if the Italians want to discuss any matter with us – which is in their interest and our interest – they only have to get in touch with the person in charge of the matter, Mr Muhammad Idriss bin Muhammad al-Mahdi bin Muhammad Sannusi, may Allah be pleased with all of them. He is the one able to discuss the matter with them or reject it. You should not ignore this fact, for you know his position in Egypt. As for me, and my *Mujahidin* brothers, we are no more than part of his soldiers; we do not disobey his command, and we ask Allah □ that we do not disobey him, may Allah safeguard us and you from any errors. We have no task but to fight the enemies of Allah and our country. We do not have any other responsibility in this matter. If our leader orders us to stop the fighting, we will do so. But if there is no such order, we will continue following his command, and we are not scared of the jetfighters of the enemy, nor their canons, tanks, and infantry consisting of Italians, Africans, and some Libyan traitors. We are not worried even of the poison which they have placed in some of the wells and sprayed on the vegetation. We are part of the soldiers of Allah, and the soldiers of Allah are conquerors. We do not recommend that you do what the Christians are persuading you to do. We still think good of you. May Allah □ help us and guide us to the right path, in the service of the Muslims...” (Dated 13 Rabi al-Thani 1344 A.H. by the commander of the mountainous region, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar).[19].

The evidence in this message is his saying: “*We are not scared of the jetfighters of the enemy, nor his canons, tanks, and infantry consisting of Italians, Africans, and some Libyan traitors. We are not worried even of the poison which they have placed in some of the wells and sprayed on the vegetation. We are part of the soldiers of Allah, and the soldiers of Allah are conquerors.*” The attribute of bravery is always linked to that of generosity, just as cowardice and stinginess are inseparable. History has preserved for us a beautiful phrase, which ‘Umar al-Mukhtar used to quote when among his guests: “We do not withhold (front giving) whatever is present nor are we sorry for (the loss of whatever is) missing.”

The divine texts of the Qur’an and the Sunnah are abundant in praising the virtues of generosity and spending in the path of Allah, but condemning stinginess and miserliness; for Allah ﷻ has said :

ﷻ Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (benevolently) out of whatever We have given them. So, no soul knows what is hidden, for them, of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did. ﷻ[20]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar’s concern was not to make money, even though he had inherited some cattle from his uncle; for he left them in the care of some of his relatives. He left his native place when he was sixteen, and all of his expenses were paid by the management of the al-Jaghbub institute, where he resided. When he got married and made a family, his source of income was what he received from the revenue of the few animals in his possession. He was never a man to work hard in order to make a fortune; but rather, he endeavoured to learn Islamic knowledge and perform *jihad* in the Way of Allah. He lived a simple life and was satisfied with what Allah ﷻ had provided for him. He used to do all he could to please his guests and his soldiers, and was never anxious about spending whatever he had, preferring to satisfy the needs of other people before himself.

HIS CALL TO ISLAM AND HIS JIHAD BEFORE THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

‘Umar al-Mukhtar was successful with his fellow associates, due to his attributes such as the assuredness of his character, the soundness of his intellect, and his love for making *da‘wah* [21]. His ability was emphasized to the second incharge of the Sannusi movement, Muhammad al-Mahdi as-Sannusi; so he preferred him over other and invited him on his famous trip from al-Jaghbug to al-Kafrah, in 1895. In 1897, Mohammed al-Mahdi issued an order to appoint ‘Umar al-Mukhtar as the Shaikh to the Zawiyat al-Qusur in al-Jabal al-Akhdar, near al-Marj. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar duly assumed his new responsibility with perfection. He started by teaching people the matters of their religion; he contributed in settling the disputes between the tribes, and managed to unite them to work for good. He left a good impact among his people, with his good personality, as he displayed all the characteristics of a righteous preacher, with forbearance, patience, mercifulness, knowledge, and ascetism.

What should be stressed here is that the appointment of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar as the new leader of the Zawiyah was intended by the leadership of the Sannusi Movement, because that Zawiyah, in the land of the ‘Abeed tribe, was known for its vigorousness and strength; and Allah ﷻ made ‘Umar successful with the policies he implemented with the tribe and his conduct in dealing with its affairs.

The period spent by ‘Umar al-Mukhtar in the Zawiyah of al-Qusur indicates that he was indeed, a devout preacher, who called to Islam with right guidance and conviction. He entered the field of dawah after keenly acquiring much Islamic knowledge.

When the French colonialists approached the centres of the Sannusi Movement in Chad, the movement reorganised itself and prepared for *jihad*. It selected proper commanders for the job, and ‘Umar was one of them.

He fought by leading his battalion against the French in Chad, striving hard to defeat them, until he gained the admiration of the Sannusi leadership, when Muhammad al-Mahdi said: “Had our movement ten like ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, it would be sufficient for us.”[\[22\]](#)

‘Umar al-Mukhtar stayed in Chad working for the spread of Islam, by teaching people the principles of Islamic faith, together with his *jihad* against the French. He carried the Book of Guidance in one hand and the sword that protected him in the other. The degree of his Bravery and heroism was manifested in his defence of the Muslim lands. The regions that were under his charge remained a French free-zone, and this was all due to his true qualities as a Muslim leader and his obligation towards his religion and his nation.[\[23\]](#)

Four thousand camels were used to transport the supplies and equipment of the *Mujahidin* that were essential in moving through the country. Thus, when they were stricken with scabies, the leader of the Sannusis was concerned about finding a remedy, so he assigned ‘Umar al-Mukhtar with the task of taking them to a place called ‘Ain Kalek, where there was abundance of good water. ‘Umar was also responsible for taking all the necessary measures to defend his people against any surprise attack from the enemy; so he chose his best group of *Mujahidin* and succeeded in this great task, to the admiration of his master Muhammad al-Mahdi.[\[24\]](#)

In 1906, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar returned, following an order from the Sannusi leadership, to al-Jabal al-Akhdar to carry on with his work in Zawiyat al-Qusur, but this did not last long, as serious fighting erupted between the Sannusi movement and the British in the regions of al-Barda, Musa’id, and al-Sulum near the border of Libya and Egypt. The year 1908 witnessed the fiercest battle that ended with the annexing of the land of al-Sulum as Egyptian territory, due to under the pressure of Britain on the Ottoman state.

When ‘Umar al-Mukhtar returned to the Zawiyah al-Qusur, his personality manifested among the Shaikhs of other Zawiyahs and leaders of other tribes. His

potential was witnessed by all people; his management of affairs, and his help in settling the problems between the tribes, and in the field of the general reform.

He had private relationships with many leading figures of some tribes in Barqah, the leaders of some cities, and even the leaders of al-Bara'isah who were not among the tribes that followed his Zawiyah. He had a brotherly relationship with Shaikh Sannusi al-Ashhab, leader of Zawiyat Masus, Shaikh 'Imraan al-Sukuri, leader of Zawiyat al-Marj, Abdu Rabih Boshnaf al-Shikhi, and al-Hasan al-Ghamari, leader of Zawiyat Daryanah. [\[25\]](#)

THE FIRST BATTLES OF SHAIKH ‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR AGAINST THE ITALIAN OCCUPAYERS

When the battle of the Libyan against Italians erupted in 1911, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was in the oasis of Jalu; so he rushed to Zawiyat al-Qusur and enlisted for *jihad* everyone who was capable of taking up arms from the al-‘Abeed tribe, an adherent to Zawiyat al-Qusur. The people responded to his call and more than a thousand fighters came forward with their necessary gear. There were only three days to go before the holy feast of al-Adha (the feast of Sacrifice), but ‘Umar al-Mukhtar could not stay to share the feast with his family; so he set off with his army and spent the feast day on the road, sacrificing his own animals and distributing them among the *mujahidin*. The group, which was led by ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and accompanied by Mr Ahmad al-‘Issawi, reached Benninah, the camp of all the *mujahidin*, who were very pleased to receive the support of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and his fighters. They immediately started attacking the enemy, day and night, and their spoils were beyond count.[\[26\]](#) (I shall explain the role of the Zawiyahs in their *jihad* against the Italians in the Second Part about the Sannusi Movement, under the little “The Biography of the two Leaders: Mohammed al-Mahdi as-Sannusi and Ahmad al-Sharif”).

Shaikh Mohammed al-Akhdar al-‘Issawi who was close to ‘Umar al-Mukhtar in the battle of as-Sallawi, in 1911, described some of the events of the battle, by saying: “The enemy attacked us by surprise and so our *mujahidin* riders confronted them. As the enemy fired their canons, we were forced to move to a lower area which was planted with barleycorn. Then we spotted an even lower place and wanted ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to take refuge there, as we were worried about him; but he strongly refused, until one of his followers, named Sayyid al-Amin, pushed him below for his safety. He tried to come out, so we all stopped him.”[\[27\]](#)

Shaikh Mohammed Al-Akhdar pointed to the admiration of the Turkish officers for ‘Umar’s bravery and well reasoned opinions, which sounded as if they were coming from an excellent officer graduated from military college. His arrival at the camp of the *mujahidin* was very encouraging and a good spiritual incentive.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar was a close companion of Shaikh Ahmad al-Sharif. When the latter emigrated, ‘Umar stayed close to the *Amir*, Mohamed Idriss, and fulfilled all his duties. When the *Amir* left for Egypt, ‘Umar assumed the command of the military in al-Jabal al-Akhdar, and then he started preparing his fighters for the confrontation against the enemy. He toured the region to link up with the people and their leaders, as a first step in his task of rallying the population against the enemy. He opened the way for the volunteers to join his army of *mujahidin*. People from the region of al-Jabal were very keen to participate in the *jihad* against the Italians, and a committee, made up of the leaders of the tribes of al-Baraghith, al-Harabi, and al-Murabitin, was helping ‘Umar al-Mukhtar with this huge task. They included: Abu-Shdiq Abu-Maziq Haduth, as-Sayyaf Abu-Farwa, Muhammad Abu-al-Qasim Jalghaf, Hamd al-Saghir Haduth, Dallaf Abu-‘Abdillah, Mohammed al-‘Alwani, Swiker ‘Abdul-Jalil, Musa Abu-Ghaydan, al-Gharyani ‘Abdu-Rabbih Abu-Shnaq, ‘Abdullah al-Khurasani, ‘Awad al-‘Ubaidi, Rajab Bousiha, Riwaq Bodarman, Karim Bouraqi, Qatit al-Haassi, and many others from the elite of the people. ‘Umar visited most of the regions of al-Jabal and al-Batnan. When he ended his tour, he decided to go to Egypt to inform the *Amir*, who arrived there in January 1923, about his work and to receive the necessary guidelines.[\[28\]](#)

‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR’S TRIP TO EGYPT

He made the trip, in March 1923, in the company of ‘Ali Basha al-‘Abeedi, leaving his companions in Bi’r al-Ghaby to wait for him. He managed to cross the Egyptian borders to meet his master Idriss. ‘Umar had a strong allegiance with the Sannusi movement and its leaders. In fact, when the people from his own tribe, who expatriated in Egypt wanted to meet him, he scolded them when he learnt that they had not seen his Shaikh first.

Some Italian agents tried to contact ‘Umar in Egypt and offered to provide him support, on the condition that he agreed to settle in Benghazi or al-Marj, and staying indoors under the care of Italians, whose government was willing to appoint him as the main personality in Libya, ahead of all the prominent people who enjoyed their status with the Italians in Tarabulus (Tripoli) and Benghazi. However, if he decided to stay in Egypt, he would have to cut all ties with Shaikh Idriss Sannusi, but then, the Government in Rome was willing to give him a big salary to live a luxurious life. The Italians guaranteed to the discretion of the deal, and also asked him to persuade people to renounce the idea of trying to resist their occupiers.

‘Umar acknowledged the Italian contact when he was asked about it, while he was in Egypt and said: “Believe me, I was not an easy morsel to swallow, by whoever wanted it. Whoever one tries to change my faith, opinion, or direction, Allah would disappoint them. I was never one of the ignorant, to claiming that I would do something in Barqah, and I was never a deceiver, asking people to surrender to the enemy. I take refuge with Allah that I do not one day become an agent for the Italians and urge people to give up fighting. If ever, may Allah forbid, I become a defeated person, the people of Barqah would never obey an order from me calling to lay down arms.”[\[29\]](#)

The Italians continued to tempt ‘Umar with many big offers so as to get him to change his mind, but he was a believer in a faith that takes its inspiration from the Book of Allah (the Qur’an) and the *Sunnah* of his Prophet ﷺ. He clearly understood the meaning of the Verse:

□ **Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign him to hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. But whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it, as he ought to strive, while he is a believer; (as for) these, their striving shall surely be accepted.** □ [30]

When ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was about to leave Egypt, to continue his *jihad* in Barqah, some elite people from his tribe, who were in exile in Egypt, met him in an attempt to make him change his mind, under the pretext that he was too old to continue fighting, and that the Sannusi movement could easily find another leader to lead the *jihad* in Barqah. ‘Umar became quite angry and replied to them: “Anyone who says these words to me does not wish good for me, because I am on the path of good, and no one should divert me away from it, so whoever does so is indeed an enemy to me.” [31]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar had a strong belief that his *jihad* was a religious obligation that was inevitable for him. It was for this reason that he was most sincere in his activities, and used to increase his supplications to Allah ﷻ to grant him martyrdom for His sake. He insisted on staying in his country to fight the enemy, saying: “I will not leave this country, until I go to meet my Lord, and death, which I sense is very near, is the only means to achieve my wish.” [32]

He also stated: “Jihad is an obligation upon every Muslim; it is not a favour, and it is not for the sake of people but for Allah Alone.” [33]

These words were recorded with golden ink in the pages of our glorious history were derived from the understanding of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar of the Verses of Allah:

□ **What! Do you make (one who undertakes) the giving of drink to the pilgrims and the guarding of the Sacred Mosque like him who believes in Allah and the latter day and strives hard in Allah’s way? They are not equal**

with Allah; and Allah does not guide the unjust people. Those who believe, and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way are of much greater worth in Allah's Sight. These are they who are triumphant □ [34]

In addition from his understanding of the Prophet's Sayings:

“He who fights so that the Word of Allah is the highest, his fighting is for the Path of Allah.” [35]

“He who is killed while protecting his property is a martyr, and he who is killed while defending his family, or his blood, or his religion is a martyr.” [36]

These Holy Verses, and Prophet's Sayings, were the foundation of faith and intellect upon which the leaders of the *mujabidin* were brought up with in the Sannusi Movement.

Amir Idriss and 'Umar al-Mukhtar agreed about the details of the plan to be carried out by the *Mujabidin* in their fight against the enemy. The camps were set up and the right commanders were selected for their roles, while the high remained in the hand of 'Umar al-Mukhtar himself. They agreed that Amir Idriss stayed in Egypt to lead the political work from there in order to put pressure on the Egyptian and British governments to allow free movement of the *mujabidin*, in and out of Egypt, and to send all the necessary instructions to 'Umar in al-Jabal, and to deliver the supplies for the *mujabidin*. After appointing al-Hajj at-Tawati, as the link between the Amir and 'Umar al-Mukhtar, the latter left Cairo and when he arrived at as-Sallum, he found his companions waiting for him. They took the necessary provisions for their trip and carried on to Barqah.

During the visit of 'Umar al-Mukhtar, the *Mujabidin* fought against the Italians in two great battles, in Bi'r Bilal and al-Bareeqah, during the month of Dhul-Qi'dah 1341A.H / 1923CE. The *mujabidin* defeated the Italians in the battle of Bi'r Bilal, under the command of the *Mujabid* Qajah 'Abdullah as-Sudani. There were a few martyrs among them, such as al-Mahdi al-Harnah, Shaikh Nasr al-A'ma and others. The expenses for that battle were provided by the *mujabid* al-Fudail al-Muhashhish. There was also the Battle of Bareeqah, four days after that of Bi'r Bilal, and among the martyrs was Ibrahim al-Feel. [37]

Despite these victories, the Italians managed to conquer some places in Barqah, and marched towards the camp of al-‘Awaqeer in the al-Badeen area. After a fierce battle, which witnessed many losses on both sides, the *mujahidin* moved their camp to a place called Ijdabiyah. The Italian’s advance continued to chase the *mujahidin* until they engaged with the fighters from the camp of al-Maghribah in az-Zwitiniyah. The defence of the camp did not last; so, it was not long before the Italians occupied and pursued their march to conquer Ijdabiyah, in April 1923.

THE BATTLE OF BI'R AL-GHABIY

Some informants, working for the Italians, were watching the movements of 'Umar al-Mukhtar in his return to Barqah, but they failed to get to him before he joined his companions. Before he reached Bi'r al-Ghabiyy, he was surprised by the number of Italian armoured vehicles, as he reported himself:

“It was Ramadan, the month of fasting, and we were gathering to answer the questions of the *mujahidin* (a group of no more than fifty persons including Shaikhs and fighters) about the health of the Amir, when we noticed seven Italian vehicles heading towards us. We were very worried because their advance took us by surprise, as we had not heard about their assault on the camps of the *mujahidin* and their occupation of Ijdabiyah. We started preparing discretely, while the Italian vehicles were slowly approaching our positions. ‘Ali Basha wanted to fire his rifle first, but I stopped him, saying that we should first discover the reason behind the coming of these vehicles to this region. As we were discussing the matter, the vehicles started to disperse in a well organised plan, intending to surround us. We noticed their machine guns aiming at us, so we showered them with a hail of bullets, and they began to flee to a nearby spot. Then they quickly returned covering their front with thick raw wool to protect themselves from our bullets. But in a record time, the battle was concluded with the defeat of the Italians, as all their vehicles were completely burnt, except one which managed to flee the battle field; we gained all their weapons as spoils.”[\[38\]](#)

The *mujahidin* continued their march until they reached al-Jabal al-Akhdar and arrived at Zawayat al-Qatufiyah (the place of the camp of al-Magharibah). They were met by Salih al-Atyush and al-Fudail al-Muhashhish. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was then informed about the events of the Battle of al-Bareeqah and the state of

the *mujahidin*; then he pursued his march to Jalu, the residence of Mr Muhammad ar-Rida, to get the instructions which the latter had from the Amir.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar met Mr. ar-Rida and they agreed on organising a movement of *jihad*, by setting up military camps for the *mujahidin* in the region of Jabal al-Akhdar. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar recommended that ar-Rida should send his son as-Siddiq to the camp of al-Magharibah and that of al-‘Awaqeer, under the command of Salih al-Atyush and ‘Abdullah as-Sudani, respectively, since both camps were close to each other. Then ‘Umar left Jalu toward al-Jabal al-Akhdar and started setting up camps for the *mujahidin*, like the camps of al-Bara’isah, al-‘Abeed, and al-Haasah.

The hard and long *jihad* began and continued relentlessly for eight years. The years 1924 and 1925 witnessed many skirmishes and bloody confrontations, as the *mujahidin* extended their activities in Jabal al-Akhdar and the name of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar sparkled as an amazing commander, who mastered attack and retreat tactics and was very influential among the tribes. In fact, all the tribes began supplying the *jihad* movement, with manpower, provisions and weapons.

The camp of al-Baragheet was the command centre and abode of the general commander ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. This centre was the principle headquarters for the three camps in Jabal al-Akhdar. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was named the deputy chief, while Mr Yusuf Bourheel was his representative, and so on. A government system was organised, in that vast territory, by setting up judicial courts and financial institutions. The three camps continued their cooperation together, to wage more attacks on the enemy and defend their camps, when the enemy attacked each of them.

Since their occupation of Ijdabiyah, the Italians could not control any other region; so they showed their interest in Barqah, focusing their efforts, during the period between 1923 and 1927, on the camps of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, who never ended a battle without engaging in another.

In 1927, the general commissioner, Mr Rida al-Mahdi as-Sannusi, was captured by way of treason and deception, and so many parts of the region of Barqah gradually fell under the control of the Italians.

The command of the Italian army in Barqah changed and a new chief, in the person of “Mizetti”, was appointed to carry out the new plan, aiming at

surrounding and restricting the *jihad* movement in Jabal al-Akhdar. The governor of Benghazi, Mombili, was replaced by general Tirots, who was a leader in the Fascist party. He supplied Mizetti with many army officers to help him in his battles in Barqah. In the same year, the Italian forces marched from Tarabulus (Tripoli) under the command of general Graziani, and they managed to occupy the oasis of al-Jafrah and the great part of Fazan, where they fought against the tribes of al-Magharibah, who were led by Saleh al-Atyush, the tribes of Aoulad Sulaiman, who were led by Abdul-Jalil Saifu-Nasr, and some people from the tribes of al-'Awaqeer, led by 'Abdu-Salam Basha al-Kazah and Shaikh Sulaiman Raqraq. All these tribes engaged in battle, in the region of al-Khashah, where the Italians had the upper hand. So the *mujahidin* headed towards the region of al-Haruj, in the desert, where they engaged the enemy in fierce combat, in the battles of al-Haruj, Jabal as-Sawda', and Qarrah 'Afiyah. Among those who attended the last battle was Mr Mahmud Abu Qwitin, the Amir of the brigade and general commander of the protection force at Barqah. This was during the time of the United Kingdom of Libya, with Mr as-Sannusi al-Ashhab.

The Italian authority was very keen to occupy Fazan; so in January 1928, two forces set out from Gdames and Jabal al-Akhdar, under the command of Graziani, which met the *mujahidin* in a bloody encounter that lasted five days. It ended with the defeat of the Italians who left the battle field without their equipment and weapons. Another Italian contingent headed towards the region of Fazan, but the *mujahidin* knew about the contingent's mission three days earlier and moved inside the mountains to lay an ambush for the Italians, in a place called the Black Mountains. The Italian command decided to flee in their cars, leaving their army to the mercy of the *mujahidin* who captured and killed them all. After this a huge contingent was sent from many regions to attack the camps of the *mujahidin*, but once again they faced a great defeat and left an abundance of equipment.

In February 1928, the Italians set out from al-Jafrah, with a huge army, to occupy Zellah on 22nd of February, and they continued their march to occupy the Wells of Taqraft on 25th of February. The military operations continued, with the control of all the surrounding areas such as Muradah, Jalu, and Awjalah. It was the fall of al-Jaghub which had helped the Italians to control those areas, along with their policy of breaking the rows among the tribes, using their Libyan

agents, whom they had bribed with money and the promise of high status; and with this strategy they succeeded.

The occupation of al-Jaghbug, Jalu, Awjalah, and Fazan had kept ‘Umar al-Mukhtar in complete isolation in Jabal al-Akhdar; yet he kept launching attacks on Dernah, and the areas around it, to force the Italians to come out fighting. He faced them in a battle which lasted two days and ended with the defeat of the Italians, who escaped leaving the battlefield full of their weapons and vehicles.

The tribes used to cooperate with the leaders of the *jihad* movement, by supporting them with men, provisions, and information. For example, there was the case of Hamid ‘Abdul-Qadir al-Mabrouk, a Shaikh from the tribe of al-Masamir, who used to supply ‘Umar al-Mukhtar with important information, and to participate with men from his tribe in *jihad* operations, without the knowledge of the Italians. The leaders of the tribes, who were affiliated with the Sannusi Movement, used to assemble the *zakat* fund and spend it on *jihad*, despite the fact that most of them were under the control of the Italian Authority. Indeed, the Italian secret services failed to detect the committees responsible for the financial supply of the *mujahidin*, who would have been sentenced to death if caught. The herds of sheep and cows were the main financial source for the *mujahidin*; and most of them were gained as spoils in the battles against the Italians, as at the Battle of ar-Raheeba in March 1927.

Every family had taken an obligation upon themselves to supply the *mujahidin*, with necessary equipment and garments, to be sent to the camps on a monthly basis.

The Amir Idriss used to wait for any opportunity to deliver the supplies to the *mujahidin* from Egypt. A convoy was sent which included Sulaiman al-‘Ameeri (from the tribe of Awlad ‘Ali) and Abu Mneeqer al-Manfi (a friend of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar), carrying a message from the *Amir*. The convoy also carried rice, flour, sugar, tea, and some clothes. In 1928, another convoy headed towards Jabal al-Akhdar with the supplies, but the Italians knew about it and sent their armed vehicles to attack it. The *mujahidin* nevertheless launched an their assault on those vehicles, managing to destroy all of them.

The *mujahidin* benefited a great deal from those resources, as they used to buy what they needed from the markets, in towns and villages. The supporters used to collect information about the movements of the enemy and informed the followers of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. Volunteers entered the camps of the *mujahidin* with their own weapons and means of transport.

The roles of the camps were as follows:

1- Each camp had the duty of providing all the necessary equipment for its members, who usually belonged to the same tribe. There were people in the camp responsible of collecting the *zakat* funds, by written order from ‘Umar al-Mukhtar himself.

2- Each camp replaced its martyrs with new conscripts from the same tribe, so that the camp would not be weakened by any losses. After each battle, the martyrs were counted and identified as to which tribe they belonged, then each tribe was asked to provide new members to replace its martyrs. If it could not provide the requested number, it had to pay the *mujahidin* around 1000 francs for every martyr, in order to help enlist the required number from else where.

3- Groups from different tribes competed to offer sacrifices, to avoid being ridiculed by the other tribes. A Libyan *mujahid* would feel most annoyed and saddened for having missed out on any battle. Ibrahim al-Fil al-‘Areebi was once such *mujahid* who missed the famous Battle of Bilal and so felt very distressed. However, his leaders assured him, that there were many days of *jihad*. On the following day, he participated in the Battle of al-Bareeqah, attacking an enemy convoy of vehicles with his horse, and fought until Allah blessed him with martyrdom.

4- The system of the camps was tribal; each one was a governmental, military, and social unit, headed by a district officer, who represented the military and administrative authority. He would also be aided by one or more commanders, depending on the size of the camp and the tribes associated with it.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar used the Ottoman military method, where the promotion of the officers was based upon their degree of contribution in the battlefield. The high committee, which was presided by ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, included the

following members: Yusuf Bourheel, Hussin al-Jweefi, al-Fudail Abu-‘Umar, Muhammad as-Sarkasi, Musa Ghaidan, Muhammad Maziq, Muhammad al-‘Alwanim Jarbou’ Swiker, Qatit al-Haassi, and Riwaq Derman. However, when of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was absent, the committee was presided by Yusuf Bourheel.

THE BATTLE OF UM AL-SHAFATEER

The *mujabidin* continued their insurgency against the Italian forces in *Jabal al-Akhdar*, achieving some great victories, such as the Battle of ‘the Day of ar-Raheebah’ on 28th March 1927, near Jardas al-‘Abeed. Other fierce battles followed such as the one in Bi’r az-Zaitun on 10th July 1927, and the battle in Ras al-Jallaz on 13th October 1927.

The Italians wanted to avenge their dead from the battle of ar-Raheebah, which included six officers and 312 soldiers and mercenaries, in an attempt to raise their falling morale after that crushing defeat. So they prepared a large army to take Jabal al-Akhdar as a base, according to the following deployment of soldiers:

- 1- General Mazetti, the supreme commander of the Italian army, was to be the commander of one of the battalions on top of Jabal al-Akhdar, together with four Eritrean squadrons, one Libyan, and four cavalry groups.
- 2- Colonel Aspira was to have four Eritrean contingents, one Libyan contingent, one Battery Libyan force, and a non-governmental force.
- 3- Colonel Mantari was to have with one Eritrean force, and a non-governmental force.
- 4- Major Bole was to have a force of armoured vehicles, and two groups of snipers in tanks.

There was also the use of fighter planes which set out from their bases in al-Marj, Marawah, and Salnatah.

The Italian forces were huge and well equipped, proving their fear of the strength of the *mujahidin*.

The *mujahidin* numbered between 1500 and 2000; among them were 250 cavalry, who moved with some 12 thousand camels carrying their women, children, elderly people, and gear.

The Italians knew, by way their spies, about the position of the *mujahidin* in ‘Um al-Shafateer, and wanted to lay a siege on them. Therefore, they advanced towards al-‘Aqeerah, in a two-day march, to encircle the *mujahidin* from three sides, using 5000 soldiers.

The *mujahidin*, on the other hand, began to prepare their plans to confront the enemy by digging trenches around the battlefield, and other trenches to protect their families (women, children, and old people). They separated into groups, according to their tribal affiliation, and the families of each tribe were placed under the protection of their own male fighters. The commander of that battle was a righteous man, Shaikh Hussein al-Juwaifi al-Bar’asi. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was also present.

Shaikh Hussein al-Juwaifi was dedicated to the *jihad* in the Path of Allah, seeking His Mercy, as he used to say: “I want neither leadership nor status; I only want to perform *jihad* to achieve the Reward of Allah □”.[\[39\]](#)

He was a brave man, well respected by his brothers. His superior in command, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, said of him, after his martyrdom: “I remember Hussein al-Juwaifi when facing the enemy; when he used to recite the Qur’an.”[\[40\]](#)

He was also known as a great fighter, who never dismounted from his horse to collect the spoils of the enemy; out of abstinence, as he used to leave them for the *mujahidin*. He was always contented and satisfied with what he owned in terms of money and property.

The battle command was assigned to him, due to his knowledge of all the routes in the area in which he lived, as well as being one of the *jihad* commanders, a consultant of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, and a previous governor of al-Bara’isah and ad-Darsah. During the battle, he was moving to the right and left, distributing bullet

cases to the fighters, and calling out words of encouragement, to inspire these at the battle fronts to be steadfast in their fighting.

Many martyrs fell in the battle, as it grew more intense with such continuous firing that it heated the rifles in the hands of the *mujahidin*, who had to use wet clothing to cool the butts. Some of the *mujahidin* carried two rifles, using one for a while, then putting it down to cool while using the other one.

Commander Hussein assigned a group exclusively to confront some armoured vehicles attacking from the south. The group was led by the great *mujahid* Sa'd al-'Abeed as-Sudani, who played an amazing role and showed great bravery, as he managed to destroy most of the Italian vehicles, and his men removed the Italian flag from the top of one of the armoured vehicles. The Italian officers were so frightened that they seized the first chance to flee the battlefield to save their lives.

As for the *mujahidin*, their degree of moral was high, with strong faith, despite the air bombardment of by the enemy fighter planes. Their losses amounted to some two hundred martyrs, among them was a leader, Muhammad Abu Najwi al-Mismari, who died on the third day of the battle from a lethal injury. He had had a great impact on the minds of the *mujahidin*, along with 'Umar al-Mukhtar's father-in-law, whom 'Umar mourned with great sorrow.

The *mujahidin* lost a great number of their cattle in that battle, and many tents were burnt by air strikes. They spent the whole night burying the martyrs and transporting the injured, leaving the place before sunrise in order to prepare and set up new fighting positions, while the Italian forces were so exhausted – as stated by Tirossi – because of their constant movement and non-stop fighting. [\[41\]](#)

The battle of Umm al-Shafateer was a starting point for 'Umar al-Mukhtar to adopt a new strategy, which was the necessity of re-organising the *mujahidin* into small groups to fight the enemy directly, when necessary, and preoccupy their soldiers him most of the time. The plan was to reduce the casualties among the *mujahidin* and increase the losses among the enemy in a well organised insurgency.

'Umar al-Mukhtar perceived the new fascist policy of the enemy to destroy everything in the land, in an unprecedented genocide, so he undertook measures to dispatch the women and children and old people to the region of as-Sallum to protect them from air strikes and ease the free movement of the *mujahidin*.

Permission was granted for one of the mujahidin to emigrate from Libya, represent the case of the Libyan people and disturb the Italians on the international level, thus the formation of the Libyan minorities abroad. [42]

The Italians were convinced of the irrelevance of the military operations against the *mujahidin*, which led to a cease fire that lasted most of the year in 1928 [43], for which Mussolini stated: "We are not fighting wolves, as stated by Grazziani; we are rather fighting lions who bravely defend their country... this war will last even longer..." [44]

THE MARTYRDOM OF HUSSEIN AL-JUWAIFI AND AL-MUKHTAR BIN MOHAMED IN THE BATTLE OF ABYAR AZ-ZUZAT 13-08-1927

Sheikh Hussein al-Juwaifi who was the leader of al-Bara'isah tribe, was highly regarded by al-Mukhtar[45]. He was a man who always tried to do good deeds and had a strong desire for martyrdom in the Path of Allah. He was always keen to go out fighting, despite his illness, until he was told to rest by 'Umar al-Mukhtar, during one battle, when he said: "There will be more fighting than the previously. The Italians will not stop fighting us, and we will not cease attacking them; so you will have more of that fighting." [46] 'Umar was deeply affected by the loss of this great leader, Hussein al-Juwaifi, and mourned him by his grave.

In fact, 'Umar lost many of his fellow *mujahidin*, one of whom was al-Mukhtar, the son of his brother Muhammad, who used to take care of all his personal and family affairs like his own son, who was still young, at that time.

'Umar had been accustomed to the company of al-Mukhtar, since 1916, and then he became was one of the heroes in the *jihad* against the Italians.

He said to his fellow *mujahidin* that every one of them was like his late companion al-Mukhtar, that all of them filled his missing place. He quoted some verses of a popular Libyan poet, who stated the fact that Allah is the Holder and Owner of the whole world and that everything would come to an end.

He forced himself to stop weeping, because the end was also on its way to him; for the destiny of all mankind is just a hole in the ground (i.e. the grave).

CONTINUATION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AND NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES

In September 1927, groups of *mujahidin* from the Zawiya al-Jukhrah, Marsa Bareeqah, Jalu, and Awjalah attacked the Italian forces, causing them many losses. The resistance in Jabal al-Akhdar was very strong, despite the Italians' occupation of the plains and the important Sannusi centres. There was an obligation for the Italians to reconsider their plan once again; a fact which resulted in a big crisis in Rome.

The Italian government started preparing new political plans to suppress the popular resistance shown by the *mujahidin*. First came the resignation of the Italian Minister of the Colonies, Fedrezoni, the Governor of Tripoli, Dibono, and the governor of Barqah, Tirozi, in December 1928. Then came the appointment of Dibono as the Minister of the Colonies, while Marshal Badoglio was appointed ruler of Tripoli and Barqah, in January 1929.

The arrival of Badoglio in Libya became the beginning of a new critical phase of *Jihad* for the *mujahidin*. His new program was to reduce his army to the size that was capable of undertaking a guerrilla warfare and to try to preserve of the government's authority. He had the means to extend the roads as far as Jabal al-Akhdar, thus easing the military transportation and from that important region.

He planned an all-out-assault on the *mujahidin* to annihilate them for good; therefore, the government tried to negotiate with 'Umar al-Mukhtar to calm the situation down and to buy time for Badoglio to strengthen his occupied zones.

Badoglio wanted to exert his influence on public opinion, so he announced his grace to everyone who surrendered themselves and their weapons, willingly, to the government, but on the other hand, he warned that those who rejected his offer would face harsh punishment. His statement was released by aircraft as an air drop upon all the towns and villages of Libya. This was to have a direct effect on people. Indeed, some Libyan leaders in Tripoli interpreted the statement as a sign of weakness within the government, so they dispatched some fighters to Jabal al-Akhdar to strengthen the ranks of the *mujahidin* and force the government to employ a moderate tone when negotiating with ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and his companions.

In mid February 1929, the *mujahidin* set off from al-Haruj al-Aswad to attack al-Nufiliya from one side and Ijdabiyah from another. They assembled in al-Jeefah, dividing into three groups. They first confronted the Italians at the battle of Qarrat as-Suwaid, on the 5th of March; second, they fought in the Battle of al-Nufiliya, on the 14th of March, while the third headed towards the region of al-‘Aqeelah, on the 23th of March, led by Abdul-Qadir al-Atyush. They settled in the Sultan Mountain, but were later forced to retreat to River al-Farigh, when faced with a huge Italian army.

Those activities influenced Badoglio to make immediate negotiations with the *mujahidin*, as he wanted to put his broader plan into action. Indeed, Colonel Parilla requested a meeting with ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to discuss a peace deal, and set a fixed date for it. However, he did not wait for a reply from ‘Umar al-Mukhtar; he wanted to take the initiative, while the *mujahidin* were concerned about future negotiations and were preparing for ‘Id al-Fitr. The Italians attacked the Muslims as they were performing their prayers on ‘Id day (1347A.H), however, the *mujahidin* managed to drive them back. The skirmishes caused by Salih al-Atyush and his group, and the steady fighting in other parts, forced Badoglio to go on with his peace deal; so he appointed the Governor of Dernah, Dodiacci, to pave the way for negotiations with ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. He contacted the *mujahidin*, requesting ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to attend a meeting on the 2nd March at the home of ‘Ali Basha al-‘Abeedi to discuss a peace deal. But ‘Umar al-Mukhtar insisted that the Italian Government should show good will in the matter and release Muhammad Rida, and then return him to Barqah. The Italians yielded to ‘Umar’s demands and brought Muhammad

Rida back to Benghazi from his exile in Ostica. Then ‘Umar al-Mukhtar met Dodiacci, the government’s delegate, in the house of ‘Ali al-‘Abeedi on 20th March. The meeting was attended by a great number of Shaikhs, as well as elite people from the country, and the negotiations were postponed for a week. Another meeting was held in Saniyat al-Qabqab, but both sides failed to come to any agreement. Later, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar met Parilla in al-Shiliyuni, in al-Akhdar Mountain, on 6th April but failed again to reach an agreement. The negotiations continued on 20th April, in Bi’r al-Maghara, and that meeting was attended by the following personalities: Muhammad Rida, al-Sharif al-Ghariani, Khalid al-Hamri, ‘Abdullah Farkash, Ruwaifi’ Farkash, ‘Ali Basha al-‘Abeedi and ‘Abdullah Bal’un. The government delegate offered ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to choose one of three options:

To go to the Arabian Peninsula or Egypt, or to stay in Barqah. If he should choose to stay in Barqah, the government would offer him a huge salary and treat him with respect. However ‘Umar rejected the offer, while Mr Rida was subjected to close surveillance to prevent him from communicating with ‘Umar.

The negotiations continued at a place called Qandulah, near Ruwaifi, and the meeting was attended by Parilla, Cambiani and a number of officers. The Italians had intended to capture ‘Umar in that meeting, but he was very alert, taking precautions, and so the meeting come to anything.

On 22nd May, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar attended a meeting at a place near al-Qabqab, where the negotiations centred on the content of a statement made by Badoglio. Indeed, Dodiacci presented the conditions set by the government, as follows:

- 1- The return of Idriss Sannusi, Ahmad Sharif, Safi-Eddine, and all the members of the Sannusi family to the country, to come under the supervision of the government. Their return should take place with permission from the government, as immigrants desiring to return to their homeland, while the government pledged to treat them in a manner suitable to their status, just as it did with Mr. Muhammad Rida.

- 2- Respect for the *Zawiyas* and its endowments, and payment of salary to its Shaikhs.

3- Return all the Sannusi family funds and property.

4- Tax exemption for all the Zawiyahs and Sannusi funds.

5- The *mujahidin* should hand over half their weapons, in return for a thousand lira for every rifle. The rest of the *mujahidin* were to join organisations to be created and supervised by the government, for a period determined by the government, until it prepared a place for their settlement, wherein to supply them with necessary provisions, without tightening control over them.

6- Keeping all the Sannusis away from all the religious schools, while the government promised them suitable wages for their staff.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar refused the handover of weapons and the cancellation of the Qur’anic schools. He insisted that the schools should remain under the supervision of Mr Hassan Rida, while the government should only keep a general supervision over them, and his opinion was supported by ‘Abdul-Hamid al-‘Abbar.

Dodiacci rejected the suggestions of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and the meeting ended with Dodiacci promising to present that solution to Sichiiani himself, as requested by ‘Umar to the delegate of the Governor of Barqah.

Four days later, Dodiacci requested to meet ‘Umar al-Mukhtar in Qandulah (30 May). ‘Umar came to the residence of ‘Ali al-‘Abeedi, the Shaikh of al-‘Abeedat Tribe near al-Qabqab, in the company of Mr Hassan Rida, al-Fudail Abu ‘Umar, ‘Abdul-Hamid al-‘Abbar, Hamid al-Qammas, and others, with a bodyguard of fifty riders. The government was represented by Dodiacci and Parilla. ‘Umar expressed his willingness to make a deal as long as it preserved the dignity of the Sannusis, and the Libyan people in general, and that he would sign an agreement with the Italian Authority, on the condition that there would be the presence of a delegate from the Egyptian Government, as well as one to represent the Sannusi Government, as proof of goodwill from both sides. Dodiacci rejected the conditions, claiming that the Italians were known to keep their word and honour their deals. But ‘Umar al-Mukhtar replied to him, mentioning the atrocities committed by general Mitzetti against the al-‘Abeedat Tribe, who were one of the

tribes that had a peace agreement with the Italians; they took all their property, even pulling out women's earring! He also mentioned what they had done to another peaceful tribe, al-'Awaqeer, when Lowillo detained forty of its men and had them shot by machine guns. Then their bodies were mutilated by running them over with their vehicles several times.

Some of the people who were present intervened to calm the situation down, but al-Mukhtar firmly defended the rights of the Sannusi leadership, and all the Libyan people, and insisted that the Libyan state should benefit from all the same privileges, enjoyed by its neighbours, Egypt and Tunisia. 'Umar spoke alone while his *mujahidin* kept silent, then he decided to go to his camp, saying that if the Dodiacci wanted to speak, he should do it at another appointment.

A few days later, 'Ali al-'Abeedi contacted 'Umar who agreed to carry on with the negotiations. A meeting was held on 7th June in the presence of Dodiacci, Parilla, and Siciliani who attended as a delegate from Marshal Badoglio in order to try to reach an agreement with the Arabs. Again, the Italians presented their previous offers, while 'Umar stood firm by his demands and showed his willingness to conclude an agreement as long as the Italians met his demands.

On 19th June, the famous meeting took place in Sidi Rahouma, in the presence of Badoglio, Siciliani, and a number of Italian officers and Libyan personalities, such as al-Sharif al-Gharyani and 'Ali Basha al-'Abeedi. 'Umar al-Mukhtar stuck to his condition of the attendance of two delegates from the Egyptian and Tunisian Governments, and Then he presented his final terms in the presence of the Governor of Libya. Al-Fudail Abu 'Umar read the conditions, which the Italians agreed to honour. Badoglio promised to invite the two foreign delegates at a future meeting. Both sides agreed about a two months truce to enable both parties to contact their superior authority. Badoglio even said that he was ready to accept the return of the Amir of the country, Muhammad Idriss as-Sannusi to Barqah, as long as 'Umar al-Mukhtar and all the *mujahidin* maintained their claim.

The conditions set by 'Umar al-Mukhtar guaranteed the preservation of the identity faith, and language of the Libyan people.

The deal guaranteed the safeguarding of the *Zawiya*' endowments, and gave 'Umar al-Mukhtar the right to collect the religious *Zakat* from the tribes.

The most important conditions were:

1- The government should not intervene in the issues of the religion of the Libyan people. The Arabic language was to remain as the official language, recognised by all the government's offices.

2- Special schools should open to teach Islamic courses in *Tawhid*, *Tafsir*, *Ahadith*, *Fiqh*, and all other study disciplines.

3- To cancel the law issued by the Italian government that stated the non-equality in rights between the Libyans and the Italians.

The *mujahidin* also demanded that all usurped property be handed back to the local people, and to give them the right to own their own weapons, importing them from abroad if the government refused to supply them. They insisted on having their own leader to preside over their committee of scholars, so as to supervise the affairs of the nation, and a Muslim judge to settle their disputes.

'Umar demanded the declaration of a general amnesty for all those regarded by the Italians as political criminals, whether inside Libya or abroad; freedom to all prisoners; and the withdrawal of all the military posts and stations built by the Italians during the war, including those in al-Jaghbug and Jalu. He insisted that the Muslim leader should have the right to punish anyone who turned against his religion, mocked its teachings, or neglected his religious obligations.

In his life, 'Umar refused to submit to any authority, except the Supreme Authority of Allah ﷻ. This was made very clear in his conditions, as he always insisted on implementing the Islamic *Shari'ah* among the Muslims, whilst he rejected any man-made laws in his negotiations.

Badoglio manifested his acceptance of all the conditions set by 'Umar, but he broke his promises when he immediately commenced his evil plan to climate the *mujahidin*.

The Italians began by planting the seeds of dissension in the ranks of the *mujahidin*, so as to weaken their power. In a meeting held in Sidi Ruwaifi, Sicciliani claimed that the final deal could not be concluded, except in Benghazi.

The *mujahidin* wanted to foil the plan of the Italians, so they agreed that the Benghazi meeting should be attended by al-Hassan Rida Sannusi. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was convinced about the worthlessness of that meeting, but he was forced to attend it. Al-Hassan returned carrying the Italians’ unfair conditions, which were immediately rejected by the *mujahidin*. Then ‘Umar dispatched a message to the representative of the governor, informing him of the categorical rejection of the unjust Italian demands, and reminded the Italian Government of the conditions set by the *mujahidin* which had been earlier to Marshal Badoglio by ‘Umar himself. He insisted that those conditions were not to be disregarded, if a final deal was to be achieved. He also requested a final meeting with General Sicciliani, otherwise, things would have to be reset to the pre-negotiation period. The Italians replied, expressing their willingness to proceed with the negotiations and that there was no need to declare war again. [47]

When al-Hassan bin Rida went to Benghazi, he was influenced by the words of the Libyans who were working with the Italian Government, and thus accepted to sign the peace treaty which opposed the demands of the *mujahidin*. He later split from the *mujahidin* council and took his group of three hundred fighters to another spot, near the stations of the Italians, in Marawah. [48]

Besides his firm faith, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar had great insight and perception of the world around him, and he was well aware of all the problems that their *jihad* was going through. This attitude enabled him, with the Help of Allah ﷻ, to adopt authenticity in his opinions and his position, which earned him the respect of both his enemies and friends.

It is extremely vital that faith should be adopted to knowledge of the outside world. This was very clear with regard to the position adopted by ‘Umar al-Mukhtar with his enemies, and even clearer regarding his awareness of the insignificance of the political negotiations. [49]

THE FINAL CALL

‘Umar al-Mukhtar addressed the *mujabidin*, saying: “Every *mujabid* should know that the intention of the Italian Government is to spread intrigue and machinations among us, to tear apart our unity, and conquer our legal rights, as it happened on a vast scale during the truce. But it was thanks to Allah that they did not succeed in their plot. The whole world should witness our good intentions in seeking our freedom, while the intention of the Italian Government is to destroy any movement that calls for the renaissance of the Libyan people, and their progress. It is out of the question that the Italians reach their goal, as long as our hearts know that freedom comes at a good price.

Therefore, we are not responsible for the present static situation, as it is, until our enemy uses frankness in his negotiations, instead of deceit and treason.”[\[50\]](#) Some Egyptian newspapers published this speech on 2nd January 1929.

Indeed, it was impossible for a man who considered himself as a servant of Allah ﷻ, to accept the concept of becoming a slave of the polytheist government, or its whims and desires.

BETRAYAL AND TREASON

The government violated the agreements it had made and acted treacherously towards the *mujahidin*; the first victim of this betrayal was Mr al-Hassan Rida. In fact, when a group of people from the family of ‘Areef left the mountain, the Italians seized the chance and asked al-Hassan to go with the group towards the region of Marawah, which he did accordingly. However, the government dispatched a huge force to confiscate the weapons of his followers, on the pretext that his men had attacked some people in Marawah. Al-Hassan and his men put up a firm resistance to giving up their arms, but their stand only confirmed to the Italians – according to their allegation – that the group and its *Zawiyah* was a centre for dangerous Sannusi propaganda. They decided to end the existence of the *Zawiyah* and turned against al-Hassan, especially when he refused their earlier request earlier to move to Benghazi. It all resulted in a fierce attack by the Italians on the compound, resulting in the killing of many *mujahidin*, while others were detained. Al-Hassan was captured on 10th January 1930; he was transferred to Benghazi, then to the Isle of Ostica, and then to Florence where he stayed in exile until his death in 1936.

Battles continued between the *mujahidin* and the Italians in the al-Akhdar Mountain, where the Italian fighter planes bombed the compounds of the *mujahidin*. The fighting spread all over the mountainous region, until all the roads in the area became blocked.[\[51\]](#)

THE APPOINTMENT OF GRAZZIANI AS RULER OF BARQAH AND AS A DELEGATE TO THE GENERAL RULER, MARSHAL BADOGLIO

General Grazziani, who was a prominent leader of his people, was also a Christian who hated towards Islam and Muslims. He committed some heinous military activities in Fezzan, as he managed to eliminate the *jihad* movement there, when he entered the town of Ghat on 25 February, 1930. He was summoned to Italy to be honoured for his success, during his continuous nine year period in Libya and his brutal occupation of Fezzan. He mentioned in his notebook: “Farewell O Tripoli, the land of my pains and suffering; yet it remains in my spirit. Inside my mind, there are memories of every stone, on your mountains and in your vast desert. My pains and suffering would never be extinguished for the sake of you, Africa nor you, Tripoli.

“In Rome, I was treated with the celebrations amply desired by any sincere soldier who enjoyed the good grace of “Il Duce” (the leader), Mussolini. I benefited from his grace as he applauded me with the Nation’s Council during a meeting on 21st March 1930. It was the best reward of my life. I have renewed, in myself, the love of sacrifice for the sake of the great task that was waiting for me in Libya. When I received the high instructions, I set off on a ship to Barqah, and on 27th March, 1930, I arrived at Benghazi, which I had left in 1914, during the First World War, as I was then a first lieutenant in the Italian army.

“The instructions issued on behalf of the Duce, by Master De Bono and Marshal Badoglio, focused on destroying the national movement in Libya by any means:

- 1- “Break all links between the supporters of the Italians and the rebels, both at personal and business levels.

- 2- Provide security for the supporters, yet keep a supervision over all their activities.
- 3- Keep the supporters away from the Sannusi influence and prevent anyone from collecting the religious taxes (*Zakat* and *sadaqat*).
- 4- Constant and careful surveillance in the markets, and closure of the Egyptian borders, in a firm manner, to prevent any supply for the enemy (i.e. the *mujahidin*).
- 5- Cleansing local circles of all elements that preached nationalism, beginning with big cities, such as Benghazi.
- 6- Creating unofficial organisations, made of locals, as anti-*mujahidin* forces to keep the regions clear of any rebellion.
- 7- Fast and swift movement of all our armed forces, in the area, against all the religious schools and compounds, to inflict them with heavy losses and give them the impression that our forces are constantly present and ready to attack.
- 8- Fast drift towards the complete occupation of all the Barqah territory.”

These were the instructions issued by the Butcher of Libya, Grazziani, who came with firm willingness to execute the orders of his masters, in the Catholic Fascist city of Rome.

Since the return of Grazziani to Benghazi, the new vice-governor began to put his program into action, without any delay, saying: “I will execute, with utmost loyalty, the instructions of the fascist state, and will follow its principles.”[\[52\]](#)

General Grazziani was known for his tyranny and arrogance, so the first thing he did in the civilian circles, after his arrival, was to replace all the Italian employees with others, who had enjoyed his trust when he was working in Tripoli.

He said in a speech, given from the balcony of his palace, in Benghazi: “There is, under my command, a ship in the docks in which I could transfer anyone I judge right to Italy, and this would be the least punishment for anyone.”[\[53\]](#)

In another speech, he said: “I have three conditions for you: the ship in the port, the four metre posts above the ground (i.e.gallows), or the bullets of our soldiers.”[\[54\]](#)

Grazziani and his government had mobilized huge military forces to destroy ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, in a manner that cost the Italian treasury, in one year, not less than the expenses sustained by a powerful state in its confrontation against another similar powerful state for many years.

The Deputy Foreign Secretary, Senior Fetiti, said: “Truly, what happened in Libya had caused us a lot of hardships. When the Italian policy was affected in the past, by the British one, before the era of Fascism, we were deceived by England and France, as they occupied the richest countries in Africa, and incited us to invade Libya in 1911. Despite all the efforts and the heavy losses, in lives and money, we found in it nothing but bullets and sand, and we earned nothing but the anger and hatred of the Arabs and the Muslims.”[\[55\]](#)

THE “FLYING” COURT

It was not long before Grazziani arrived on the scene that he instituted, in April 1930, what was known in the history of Italian colonialism, as the 'tribunale volante,' a military flying court, going from place to place to try and execute all who had any dealings, of any kind, with the guerrillas. The authority given by the court allowed the opening of many detention centres in every town and village in Barqah; it took away the property of the Muslims, without any reason, and erected gallows in al-'Aqeelah, Jadabiyah, Bengehazi, Sallouq, al-Maraj, Shehat, Dernah, 'Ain al-Ghazalah and Tabreq. Executions were conducted for the slightest petty allegation made concerning the locals; such as the following Imams, may Allah have mercy upon them: Shaikh Bahih al-Subhi, 'Ali Bawis al-'Arabi, his son 'Abdu-Rabih Bomosakh, Khayr-Allah Halil, Muhammad Yunus Boqadem, 'Ali Hamid Abu Dafeerah, Muhammad al-Haddad and his son Bengehazi, 'Abdu-Salam Mahbub, Sulaiman Sa'id al-'Arfi in al-Maraj, and fifteen others from 'Ain al-Ghazalah. [56]

SECLUDING THE *MUJAHIDIN* AND PLACING TRIBES IN COLLECTIVE DETENTION CENTRES

Grazziani began by segregating the subjugated local people from the *mujahidin*. He detained the Sannusi brothers from the Imams of the *Zawiyas*, and the Qur'an teachers with their families, and anyone who had any kinship or link with the *mujahidin*. They were assembled and taken to the torture centres to be submitted to an atrocious campaign of pain and suffering, regardless of their age or disability.

Grazziani wanted to take revenge against those tribes that had supported the *mujahidin*. He gathered the population of the region of al-Akhdar Mountain in vast concentration camps enclosed by wires, where all kinds of atrocities took place at the hands of the Italian soldiers, or their mercenary army of Ethiopians...

The historian Yusuf Salim al-Barghati did significant research in this matter, under the title "*The Detention Centres and the Damage Caused by the Italian Invasion*". He provided a detailed report about the sad events, with historical statements from people who, had witnessed that critical period, endured by our brave people." [57].

The first concentration camps, of January 1930, were found to be located too near to the places of military operations; for the prisoners, in spite of close surveillance, still managed to supply the guerrillas with some of their requirements; so most of the Bedouins were deported to Barqah. Hunger, disease, and sadness were common amid the imprisoned population. Loss of livestock was also great, for the beasts had insufficient grazing, near the camps, on

which to stay alive, and the herds, already decimated by the fighting, were almost wiped out by the camps.

The guerrillas thus found themselves cut off from local sources of supply, and forced more and more to rely on Egypt for the bare necessities of life, and the means to fight a war. For years, a considerable amount of their supplies had come from there, paid for by Bedouin produce; money raised by customs charges, and funds collected throughout the Arab and Muslim world. Supplies came through the port of al-Sallum, and the Egyptian Frontiers Administration must have closed its eyes to supplies going into Libya, as well as to refugees leaving of it. The Marmarica had been declared amilitary zone by Grazziani, its people were being deported to concentration camps, and the closed frontier was patrolled by armoured cars and planes, with instructions to destroy any caravans they spotted, but, in spite of these precautions, supplies continued to reach the patriots. Grazziani, therefore, decided to erect a fence of barbed-wire, from the sea to Jaghbub and then into the dunes to the south of it, a distance of over 300 km. The work was completed by early September, 1931, and patrol along the wire fence was operated from fortified posts, a telephone system, and aviation camps.

A correspondent from a German newspaper described the concentration camps, in which Grazziani detained more than eighty thousand people, saying: "The criticism directed today, by the French and the British, towards the Fascist plan in Barqah was directed first and foremost towards the measures undertaken by General Grazziani to evacuate eighty thousand people from their lands, without considering the spiritual condition of those countrymen nor the effect of those restrictions on them. Indeed, no one was allowed to leave outside the area at night, and every tribe leader had to assume full responsibility for his followers.

We could say that this despicable situation was beyond all imagination. The number of dead children reached 90; while eye diseases that would eventually lead to blindness were common among all the people there. They were suffering deeply from being surrounded by those barbed-wirefences, the symbol of detention.

The crimes committed against the people of al-'Aqeelah, al-Bareeqah, and other areas, in those concentration camps, have made all activists, from around the world, denounce and criticise the Fascist colonialism in Libya. 'Abdu-Rahman

'Azzam said, describing the state of the detainees: "People look at information about Andalusia and how the Spanish treated the Muslims there, but why is there this interest about Andalusia, during the middle ages, while there is Libya, now, in front of their eyes. Let them go to witness these crimes, that are not less than those that were committed in Andalusia."[\[58\]](#)

Grazziani expressed himself concerning the tragedy, which was greater than his cruel heart, saying: "It all resulted in the emigration of most of the people to Egypt, Tunisia and Sudan; leaving their relatives behind them... I have had self-criticism on my conscience... a fact which has made me lose sleep, most nights."[\[59\]](#) He said in an attempt to justify his horrible crimes: "We cannot create a 'new present' unless we eradicate the 'old past'."[\[60\]](#)

‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR CHANGES THE WAR STRATEGY

The compounds of the *mujabidin* used to be close to the villages, and so it was easy for the *mujabidin* to collect duties and acquire weapon supplies and provisions. However when the tribes were grouped in concentration camps, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar had to change his plan, by improving his fighting tactics to a new phase of *jihad*. He relied upon the factor of surprise, in confronting the Italian army, after having gathered information about its movements.[61]

Grazziani said: “Despite expelling the population that was under our authority, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar continued his fierce fighting, pursuing our forces everywhere.”[62]

He also added: “‘Umar al-Mukhtar would never surrender, because his way of fighting is not like that of other leaders. He is a champion in spoiling plans; his swift moves make it impossible to determine his position, so that we could aim lethal strikes against him and his soldiers. As for other so-called leaders, they move quicker than lightning when they sense danger...they escape to Egypt leaving behind their soldiers to their destinies. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar is totally the opposite; he keeps fighting to the maximum of his ability, yet if he feels unable to continue, he changes his plan and attempts to achieve whatever progress is possible to lift the fighting spirit, until God concludes a matter, which was already to be done; and then he submits his matter to God, as a Muslim who is sincere to his religion.”[63]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar was at the centre of stage in all *jihad* activities. The *mujabidin* rallied around him as he continued his work, with his sound leadership, and the support of his aides, such as Yusuf Abou-Raheel, al-Fudail Abu Omar, Osman al-Shami, ‘Awad al-‘Abeedi, ‘Isa al-Wakwak al-‘Urfi, Abdullah Abu Sallum and Abdul-Hamid al-‘Abbar.

The attitude of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar pointed to his excellent leadership skills and personality, at the most difficult times. Once, after the Italians took revenge against one of the local compounds which was supporting the *mujahidin*, some tribal leaders remonstrated their protests to ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, asking him either to surrender himself to the Italians or to leave their region, or they would fight against him to avoid any future revenge by the Italians.

When he received that warning, he called for a meeting in the area of Qasr al-Jamaheer, where the discussion was very intense so as to avoid a civil war between the *mujahidin* and the Libyans who resided in the territories under Italian rule. Some *mujahidin* thought it would be right to emigrate to Egypt so that the local people would not be subjected to a campaign of revenge from the occupiers. But ‘Umar al-Mukhtar made an oath before all the gathering that he would never cease fighting the Italians, and that he would never leave the al-Akhdar Mountain, until victory was achieved or martyrdom was attained. At the same time he announced to the *mujahidin* that they all had the freedom either to stay or flee to Egypt. When the *mujahidin* witnessed the stand of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, they dropped their claims and decided to stay with their leader to preserve the unity of their group.[\[64\]](#)

Grazziani continued his military plan, and by the 14th July, the Italians managed to take control of the entire region of al-Faidiyah, and disarmed the locals of 3,175 rifles and 60,000 bullets.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar decided to move his *jihad* operations to the Eastern side, in al-Difna, because of its closeness to the Egyptian border, where it would be possible for him to send cattle, brought by supporters, to Egyptian markets in exchange for other needed provisions. Grazziani, on the other hand, decided to set up a barbed-wire fence all along the eastern borders, and said of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar: “He wanted to be assured about the distant lines of his supplies, so he gave his orders to his forces everywhere not to annoy the Libyans, who are under our authority, so that they would not turn against his movement. This way, he appeases his conscience as a true Muslim. We add to your information that the construction of barbed-wire fencing along the Egyptian border is nearly finished; it will keep pressure on him until he falls in to a trap which will be set up for him.

Egypt remains the refuge for thousands of Barqah people, who are related to the main tribes which have significant human and materialistic resources. They also have great effect on many people, who are easily recruited to fight, with the conviction that they are defending the religion of Islam against us, whom they consider as aggressors their rights. Those who are outside the law become a second means to supply the revolution with weapons, provisions, and men, for all tasks, despite the precautions undertaken by the government. Furthermore, there is a lot of money being collected, as charity, in all the Arab countries to help the rebels who are waging a holy war, on al-Akhdar Mountain, in Barqah; and despite the measures taken against those under our authority to keep them away from scene, the rebels are still powerful enough to attack us everywhere.”[65]

Grazziani managed to build a long fence of barbed-wires along the Egyptian border, set up by the occupiers, at a distance of 300km from the Mediterranean Sea to a region past al-Jaghbug. It cost the Italian State over 20 million Lires of their currency, at the time, and it helped them achieve the following aim, as mentioned by Grazziani himself in his book:

- 1- Ending the insurgency.
- 2- Stopping the trafficking of weapons, goods, and all sorts of illegal trade, and also the Italian government’s revenue would be increased by taxes and customs returns.
- 3- Ending the supply movements coming from Egypt to the *mujahidin* by way of immigrants.

THE MARTYRDOM OF AL-FUDAIL ABU OMAR

Fighting continued between the Italians and the *mujahidin*, and one of the most famous battles was that of “Karsah” which took place on 20th December, the day of the martyrdom of Shaikh al-Fudail Abu Omar, who was the right hand aide of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. He was known for his great bravery and sincerity, during the course of his participation in the *jihad* events ever since the Italian invasion in 1911.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar mentioned the details of this battle in one of his letters, saying: “The enemy attacked the compound where al-Fudail was the commander. About forty *mujahidin* died as martyrs, together with their leader al-Fudail. We found about five hundred enemy soldiers, in the battlefield, including a major colonel and three other officers. Thereupon, the Italians intensified their military operations in al-Akhdar Mountain, and continued their attacks on the *mujahidin*’s positions, but without any result.

In October 1930, the Italians confronted the *mujahidin* in a great battle; and when the fighting ended, they found the spectacles of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar and his horse, named “Mujandala”. They were then certain that ‘Umar was still alive; so Grazziani was encouraged to issue a statement, in which he included this incident, in an attempt to destroy the myth of the undefeated ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, saying: “Today we have taken the spectacles of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, and tomorrow we will bring his head.”[\[66\]](#)

Despite the firm grip of the occupier on the cities, the locals still managed to perform their holy duty. The Italian secret service was able to arrest many Libyans who used to supply the *mujahidin* with provisions and information. They were later executed, and Grazziani mentioned some of them in his book,

saying: "I hereby present some important cases of some Libyans who were executed, following a rule by a special court on 14th June 1930. The court sentenced Citizen Hamd Abu Abd-Rabih al-Darsi to death in a public place, because he had been a traitor to the Italian State. He was a Shaikh of his tribe al-Darsah and was very respected by our authority, but he was later discovered, by our secret services, to be a traitor who supported the rebels (the *mujahidin*) with provisions and weapons. His tents, which exceeded twenty, in the area of "Qasr bin Qaddin", acted as resting spots for the rebels. He was executed by firing squad in Shehat, before the public, but a week later, the rebels conducted a revenge attack, in broad daylight, at the same place, killing a number of our soldiers...and a businessman in the area.

"In September 1930, security forces discovered, in al-Barakah area in Benghazi, that Citizen Muhammad al-Haddad, one of the prominent businessmen of the city, used to support the rebels by supplying them with provisions and weapons. The special court quickly came to the scene and sentenced al-Haddad and his son to hanging, in front of the public whom the Italian authorities brought to witness the execution.

"There was also the case of Sulaiman Sayyid, the Shaikh of al-Tarsh Tribe; he was a member of the House of Representatives He carried the medal of the Italian star for the colonies, with the grade of officer. He used to wear the burnoose of honour that was specifically for Libyan deputies. We used to rely on his opinions and we never suspected that one day he would be against us. The court sentenced him to death, because he used to exploit his prestige and authority to provide support for the rebels...

"There were many other cases which could not all be reported here. In fact, the "flying court" conducted 250 executions in a very short period of time. Yet, the Libyan people continued their incessant support for the rebels."[\[67\]](#)

The Italians found themselves fighting a population that dispatched all its potential to the fields of war and sacrifice; everyone participated, with everything they owned, in the holy *jihad* movement.

THE OCCUPATION OF AL-KAFRAH

After detaining the tribes of al-Barqah region in vast concentration camps, Grazziani started the construction of the long barbed-wire fence along the Mediterranean Sea past the region of al-Jaghbub, to disconnect al-Barqah from Egypt. He then began assembling a huge army, made up of different Italian army units and other units of mercenaries, with all types of military equipment in order to occupy al-Kafrah.

The points of concentration for the troops were al-'Aqeelah, Muradah, Jadabiyah and Jalu. The Italians gathered a huge number of camels to carry their provisions, in addition to many army vehicles, for the preparation of the Italian Authority in Barqah. As for the Italian Command in Tripoli, they also prepared a similar campaign led by Colonel Calina, and their point of concentration was the Oasis of Zella. The central command of the whole campaign was in the hand of General Ronkiti, who reported directly to General Grazziani.

The Italian army set off from Tripoli and Barqah, at the same time, taking the desert road towards al-Kafrah. They all gathered on the 29th Shaaban, 1349, in a place called al-Hawari, where their first battle took place against the *mujahidin* in an unequal fight. A division of the Italian air force took part in the battle, together with more than 20 military fighter planes.

The fighting continued for three hours, where many Italian soldiers were killed. There was a force of the *mujahidin* who strived hard to hold back the Italian aggression, in an attempt to give the locals time to flee to the Sudanese and Egyptian borders. They all fought with bravery and courage, until their last shots. Tens of them were martyred, while only thirteen warriors fell as prisoners.

The Italians collected a hundred rifles as spoils, occupied al-Kafrah and violated the sanctity of the locals in a manner never witnessed before in history.

Grazziani had recorded his interest in the occupation of al-Kafrah, and the preparations undertaken by the Italian Government for that campaign, in more than 45 pages. He admitted to the power and courage of the *mujahidin* who had fought the Italians all along the great desert. He said: "It has cost us heavy losses, but we were so keen on achieving victory at any price, as the *mujahidin* forces were not equal to ours. However, they were strong and patient fighters, who were unshaken by the heavy fighting, even if it meant their total extinction. They were firm believers in their case".[\[68\]](#)

"The enemy admitted that the provision of the *mujahidin* basically consisted only of dates and wheat, but they still managed to humiliate the Italians in many encounters. Among the leaders who massacred the enemy, there was Abdul-Hamid Abu Matari, who assumed the leadership of the *Zawiya* and, at that critical period, Salih al-Atyush and Said an-Nasr, about whom Grazziani had said: "Salih al-Atyush and Saif an-Nasr came to the region, accompanied by those who migrated from at-Tarabulsi province, and the situation had become very critical, because al-Atyush was a very experienced and stubborn fighter."[\[69\]](#)

The great warrior Salih al-Atyush was one of the great *mujahidin* who contributed to the defence of the Muslims. His enemy *had* testified to his bravery and strength, and we, in our part, ask that Allah's Mercy be upon him and upon all his *mujahidin* brothers, who gave the best example, of bravery and heroism, in the defence of our great religion.

The family of al-Atyush was a decent one, which had many Shaikhs from the al-Maghariba Tribe. They were a typical example of a prominent Libyan family that endured hardships during the long struggle against the Italian occupiers.

It is known that al-Kilani al-Atyush, who was nominated by the Turkish Governor as the Chief of al-Kafrah in 1910, died the following year, on his way to Jalu, to join the Turkish resistance fighters against the Italian occupiers. His brother Said died in an Italian prison cell in al-'Aqeelah; one of his nephews was hanged by the Italians, while the other ('Abdullah) died in the Battle of an-Nufiyah. Two more brothers, 'Ali and Ahmad, died in the Battle of Sert, in

1918. In fact, many people died indiscriminately by air strikes, as they tried to flee from al-Kafrah, and many more died of thirst after they got lost in the desert.

It is these sad reports that give us the clearer picture of the sufferings of the Libyans, who fled the brutal onslaught of Grazziani on al-Kafrah. The Islamic world was deeply affected by the news from the Libyan families, forwhom Allah ﷻ had decreed their safety.

Shakib Arsalan had performed a much appreciated role in writing about the atrocities, endured by the Libyan people, under the ruthless Fascist regime of Italy. He wrote some sad articles in newspapers during that miserable period in the history of the Islamic Ummah, describing the cold-blooded crimes of the Italian soldiers against the poor unarmed Libyan people. It was necessary for these facts to come to light, as they were witnessed not only by Muslims but also by some Europeans who condemned them.

A LETTER FROM 'UMAR AL-MUKHTAR TO SHAKIB ARSALAN

When the *mujahidin* received the news about the efforts made by Shakib Arsalan in revealing the war crimes committed by the Italian army against the Libyan people, their leader, 'Umar al-Mukhtar felt obliged to send him a letter of gratitude for his actions: "This is a letter from the servant of the Muslims, 'Umar al-Mukhtar, to the *mujahid* and prince, our brother in Islam, Shakib Arsalan, may Allah safeguard him; peace and mercy of Allah be upon you. We have read your writings about the atrocities committed by the Italians, and their aggression, in this land; therefore, I and all my *mujahidin* brothers would like to thank you for all your efforts. Everything you have mentioned about the crimes committed by the Italians is just a little account of their numerous atrocities. If the world knew about every aggression of the enemy, they would readily accept the details of all the massacres, because of the Italians' constant reports that they never took place. But the truth – and Allah and His Angels are witnesses– is that they are all true, and that we are adamant in defending our religion and our country, and we rely in Allah □ in this struggle; for He □ says:

□ It was due from us to aid those who believed. □[\[70\]](#)

And peace and mercy of Allah be upon you."

Written on 20th Dil-Hijjah, 1349 A.H.

Shakib Arsalan made a comment about that letter, saying: "What was noticed by the martyred ('Umar al-Mukhtar) was the utter truth; for it is difficult for people to imagine the bulk of atrocities perpetrated by the Italians in Tarabulus (Tripoli), especially the fascists among them."[\[71\]](#)

The letter of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to Shakib Arsalan reflected his modesty and pride in acting in the line of duty for the Muslims. He described Arsalan as the “dangerous *mujahid* prince,” because of the latter’s previous participation in *jihad* for the Libyans, with the Turks, against the Italians. In fact, the letter shows ‘Umar’s interest in the use of Islamic expressions: he never used the term “defender” or “rebel”, but he carefully chose the word “*mujahid*”, because of its deep meaning in Muslim circles. He described him as “dangerous” because of his powerful articles, which were more piercing than bullets in the hearts of the Italians, as they contributed to creating an Islamic and Arabic sympathy for the Libyan case. He also addressed him as “a brother in Islam”, referring to the strong Islamic creed that unites Muslims as brothers.

He went on to support the articles written by Shakib about the Italian atrocities and confirmed their perpetration against the Libyan people.

The letter stressed the great importance of continuing to perform *jihad* to defend the religion and nation, by relying on Allah □ .

The Muslim Youth Association in Egypt published a statement about the extirpation policy undertaken by Italy in Tripoli. This statement was signed by most of intellectuals of Egypt at that time, before it was sent to the United Nations organisation and spread throughout the Islamic world. It highlighted the following colonial policies of the Italian occupiers:

1- The policy of exile:

Egypt had witnessed a scene that humanity could not disregard. Indeed, scores of young and old men and women were forced to leave their homes to flee the oppression of the cruel occupiers. If it were not for the valour and sense of honour of the Egyptian desert people, who set out looking for them, they would have perished through thirst and hunger, in the vast desert lands.

2- The policy of killing and throwing in the sea:

Our tears have not stopped from the atrocious scenes we have witnessed in the land, until the waves (of the Mediterranean Sea) brought for us another horrible sight, as the sea offloaded some thirteen bodies from Tripoli, all bound together with one chain.

3- The Italians' savage actions in al-Kafrah:

News was reported from al-Kafrah about the suffering of its devout people. They were subjected to constant air raids from the Italians, who dropped many types of bombs on their villages and hills, before they conducted a ground assault on the remaining population to violate their sanctity, steal their property, and even mutilate their bodies.

4- The killing of scholars:

During the raid on al-Kafrah, many prominent scholars were killed, such as Shaikh Abu Shannah, his nephew Shaikh 'Umar, Shaikh Hamid al-Haamah, Shaikh Abdu-Salam Abu Sriwil, Shaikh Muhammad al-Manshuf, his nephew 'Ali bin Hussein, Shaikh Muhammad al-Arabi, Shaikh Muhammad Abu Sajadah, Shaikh Ahmad al-Jaluli and Shaikh Khalifah ad-Dalayah.

5- The killing of the masters of Zawiyat al-Kafrah:

When the old masters of the Zawiyat al-Kafrah went to see the Italian commander, pleading with him to cease the atrocities, he ordered their immediate execution before him, as through they were slaughtering a herd of sheep.

6- The killing of innocent people by dropping them from military aeroplanes:. This evil method of killing was used against Shaikh Sa'd, as well as fifteen other men.

7- Confiscating lands after expelling their owners:

In al-Akhdar Mountain, the Italians expelled the residents – around 80,000 men and women – to the desert area of Sirt, then they propagated the news, by way of their Consulate in Argentina, that the Government in Tripoli and Barqah was offering fertile land to every Italian who wanted to settle there. The land surface usurped by the Italians was more than 200,000 hectares; all its residents were forced to move to the Sirt desert, however whoever was unable to walk was just executed on the scene by firing squad.

8- Expatriating the children to Italy for their christening:

The Italians assembled children, aged between 3 and 14, to be shipped to Italy, under the pretext of educating them. They also took young men, aged between

15 and 40, to be enlisted in the army and used to fight their own people (the *mujahidin*) and their own country.

9- Spreading missionaries among the local population:

The Italians' contempt of Islamic values reached its peak when they sent their missionaries to mingle with the local population. They also sent strict orders to Muslim preachers in the mosques to make supplications for the Italian king, during their Friday sermons in the pulpits.

After detaining all the people of Barqah and occupying the oasis of al-Kafrah, there was nothing left for the murderer of al-Kafrah to do, except to finish the installation of the barbed-wire fence, in order to completely isolate Barqah from Egypt. He set out to complete his task at a rapid speed, using all available means; calling in private companies from Italy to work under the supervision of the military leadership, which placed all its architects in the service of those contract companies. The Italian Government had imported other equipment from Germany, in addition of what had been brought from Italy, especially for this border project. Thousands of workers were transferred from the camps to the desert to fix the barbed wire fencing along three hundred kilometres, from the Mediterranean Sea to al-Jaghbub.

The *mujahidin*, at that time, continued their *jihad* against the Italian Forces that were equipped with armoured vehicles, tanks, canons, and fighter planes.

Grazziani recorded in his book that the fighting never ceased. He claimed that he had confronted 'Umar al-Mukhtar in a hundred and sixty battles during eighteen months of conflict, beginning from his mission to Barqah, until the capture of 'Umar al-Mukhtar.

The *mujahidin* spent most of their time getting ready to inflict heavy losses on the Italians. The murderer of Barqah (Grazziani) felt confused and desperate since all the measures he had taken had proven to be unsuccessful in stopping the *mujahidin*. His only hope in prevailing in his mission was to wait for the natural death of 'Umar al-Mukhtar, as he reported to his superiors: "Umar al-Mukhtar is an old man and he is going to die, sooner or later; therefore, we have to wait for that hour, hoping it won't be long."

Grazziani was at the head of a great army by land, sea ,and air, imposing a tyrannical rule in Barqah, with prisons and execution centres for the prisoners. Yet, he stood weak before the power of the *mujahidin* and their great leader ('Umar al-Mukhtar). His desperate mind led him to consider burning the forests, after burning the bodies of the population. He suffered a mental breakdown, due to his failure to subdue the *mujahidin*, and he was about to resign, if it had not been for Divine Fate which had decreed the arrest of 'Umar al-Mukhtar. [72]

THE LAST DAYS IN THE LIFE OF 'UMAR AL-MUKHTAR: HIS DETENTION AND EXECUTION

1- Ahmad al-Sharif sent Muhammad Asad to gather news about the *mujahidin*: Muhammad Asad, the author of the book “The Road to Makkah”, had met Ahmad al-Sharif while staying in al-Hijaz (Arabia) and was deeply affected by him. He stated: “There was no one in all Arabia whom I loved more than Sir Ahmad, because there is no one who sacrificed his whole life for such a sublime purpose more than he did. He stood all his life, as a scholar and fighter, to revive Islamic society spiritually, and struggle for the cause of political independence, because he knew that the first would not be achieved without the other.”^[73]

Muhammad Asad made his acquaintance with Sir Ahmad al-Sharif through the Indonesian *mujahid* Haji Agus Salim, who represented the control centre for the *Jihad* in Indonesia against its enemies.

He used to spend hours with him, in the company of Mr Muhammad al-Zawi, discussing the case of Libya and the condition of the *mujahidin* there. Meetings continued every evening, for a week, to agree on a way to bring support to the Libyan people in their struggle against the Italian occupiers.

Shaikh Muhammad al-Zawi considered that only casual supplies for the *mujahidin* would not solve the problem. He believed that the oasis of al-Kafrah in the south of the Libyan desert should have become the centre of any future military operations, assuming that al-Kafrah was far from the control of Italian Forces.

Muhammad Asad spoke of the reason for his interest in the Sannusi case, saying: “My deep interest in the fate of the Sannusis did not stem from my admiration of their continuous heroism in their just cause. Rather, what interested me was the impact of the possible victory of the Sannusis upon the Arab world. In fact, I could not see, in the whole Islamic world, but one movement that strived sincerely to establish a pure Islamic society; it was the Sannusi movement, which was fighting for its survival at the time.

“When Sir Ahmad became aware of my strong sympathy for the Sannusi case, he turned to me and said: “Would you go to Barqah on my behalf and see what could be done for the *mujahidin*? Perhaps you would see things more clearly than my own people...”[74]

After entering al-Akhdar Mountain, from the side of the Egyptian desert, with the help of the *Mujahidin*, who were sent by ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, Muhammad Asad found himself face-to-face with the leader of the *Jihad* Movement. He described him in this meeting, saying: “He was surrounded by two men and followed by a number of others. When he reached the rocks, where we were waiting, his men helped him to get off and I could notice some limping in his walk (I came to know later that he was injured in a skirmish ten days earlier). Under the moonlight, I could see his features clearly: he was of a moderate stature, with a powerful body. He had an icy white beard surrounding his sad face. His eyes were profound, and by exploring them you could tell that they are cheerful in other circumstances; however, there was nothing left in them except darkness, pain, and bravery. I approached to greet him and I felt the power of his hands in mine. ‘Welcome my son!’ he said as his eyes were exploring me. His eyes were those of a man to whom danger was his daily meal!

I handed him the letter I carried from Sir Ahmad, and when he read it, he said: ‘Sir Ahmad has praised you in his letter. You are willing to help us, but we don’t know where help can really come to us, except from Allah □ . We are truly on the verge of our extinction...’

“I replied: ‘But what about this plan put forward by Sir Ahmad? Could it not be a new beginning? If it is possible to manage the acquisition of supplies and provisions from al-Kafrah, on a regular basis, would it not be possible to stop the Italians?’

“I have not seen, in my life, a smile that indicates the extent of bitterness and despair as the smile that accompanied the answer of Mr ‘Umar: ‘al-Kafrah...? We have lost al-Kafrah. The Italians have occupied it for nearly two weeks now...’ [75]

“I was stunned by the news, because since the previous months, Sir Ahmad and I had been making our plans with the assumption that al-Kafrah could become the assembly point for strengthening the resistance...

“I asked: ‘How did al-Kafrah fall to the hands of the enemy?’

Sir ‘Umar made a tiring nod to one of his men to approach, and told me: ‘Let this man relate to you what happened in al-Kafrah... he was one of the few people who managed to flee from al-Kafrah, and he was only able to reach me yesterday.’

“The man from al-Kafrah sat next to me and related his account, with a face that reflected all the horrible scenes he had witnessed:

‘They attacked us with three divisions, from three sides. They had armoured vehicles and heavy canons. Their fighter planes flew at a very low level and pounded all the houses, mosques, and palm gardens. We only had a few hundred men who could take up arms; the rest were women, children, and old men. We defended ourselves house by house, but they were more powerful than we were. In the end, there was nothing left but the village of al-Hawari. Our rifles could do nothing against their armoured vehicles; so they overwhelmed us and only a few of us managed to escape. I hid myself in the gardens of the palm trees, watching for a chance to break through the Italian lines. All through the night I could hear the moaning of women who were being raped by the Italian and Eritrean soldiers. The following day, an old woman brought some water and bread for me and told me that the Italian general had gathered all the people, who had survived the massacre, before the grave of Sir Muhammad al-Mahdi and tore a copy of the Qur’an up in front of their eyes, then he threw it on the ground and stepped on it, shouting: “Ask your prophet to help you now, if he can!” He ordered the cutting of all the trees in the oasis and destruction of all water wells. He burnt all the books in the library of Sir Ahmad al-Badawi, before executing all the Shaikhs and scholars by dropping them down from a flying

aircraft. I sneaked in darkness to the desert and found an erring camel that helped my escape...'[76]

When the man had finished his horrifying story, Sir 'Umar drew me next to him and gently repeated his words: 'You can see, now, my son, that we are truly coming to our end.' He added: 'We are fighting because it is our duty to fight for the sake of our religion and our freedom, until we expel the invaders or die; we have no other choice. We belong to Allah and to Allah we shall return. We have sent our women and children to Egypt for their safety.'

"I said: 'But Sir, would it not be better for you and the *mujahidin* to withdraw to Egypt, as long as the road is still open before you? It could be possible, in Egypt, to assemble many immigrants from Barqah and reorganise a powerful army. Fighting should stop inside Libya to allow men to strengthen themselves... I know that the British in Egypt do not appreciate the existence of Italian forces in the area; so they might turn a blind eye about your preparations if you convince them that they are not your enemies..."

He replied: "No my son, it is of no avail now. What you said was possible fifteen or sixteen years ago, before Sir Ahmad had attacked the British to help the Turks – who did not help us... but now it is useless... the British would not move a single finger to help us. The Italians are adamant to fight us to the end and destroy any possible means of resistance in the future. If I and my followers leave for Egypt now, we will not be able to come back again; and how could we leave behind our people, without any leadership, for our enemies to annihilate them?"

- What is the opinion of Sir Idriss Sannusi?

- Sir Idriss is a good man... a good son of a great man, but Allah did not grant him a heart that could bear such conflict...[ZZ]

Both 'Umar al-Mukhtar and Muhammad Asad agreed on the manner of supplying the *mujahidin* with provisions and weapons, through the road used by Muhammad Asad, and establishing some secret stores at one oasis. 'Umar al-Mukhtar had always doubted the possibility of escaping from the Italian surveillance, in this manner, for a long time. Indeed, his doubt proved to be right. After few months, a convoy that carried the supplies managed to reach the *mujahidin*. However, the Italians discovered the road used by the convoy

between al-Jaghbug and Jalu, so they set up a fortified centre in Bir Tarfawi, half an hour distance from the two oases; and besides the constant air surveillance, any similar attempt to bring the supplies was too dangerous. [78]

It was then decided that Muhammad and his companion Zaid al-Shamri should return to al-Hijaz (Arabia), with the help of the brave *mujahidin*, who undertook the operation to protect their noble guest well.

Mohamed Asad said: “We bid farewell to ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, and we did not see ever since, because eight months later, he was caught by the Italians and executed.”

Muhammad Asad described his last meeting with Sir Ahmad Al-Sharif, he saying: “I stood before the Imam of the Sannusis and saw the face of that old warrior. I kissed the hand that carried the sword for a long time, until it could not lift it any more. He told me: “May Allah bless you, my son... a year has gone since our first meeting, and this year has witnessed the end of our hopes, but all thanks to Allah for everything...”

It was really a tragic year for Ahmad. The eagle landed. He sat clenching a pillow, wrapped by his white garment, as if seeking warmth. He whispered: “If only we could save ‘Umar al-Mukhtar... if only we could have convinced him to flee to Egypt while there was plenty of time for that...”

I told him: “No one could save Sir ‘Umar. He did not want to be rescued. He preferred to die whilst unable to defeat his enemy. I witnessed this when I left him...” [79]

THE “LION” IN CUSTODY

‘Umar al-Mukhtar kept on fighting the Italians, despite the difficulties facing him and his men. Each year he would move from his centre of residence to other centres to check the conditions of his *mujahidin* brethren. He used to prepare well for such moves, taking with him a force that was sufficient enough to protect him from the enemy. However, in that year Allah □ had decreed martyrdom for him, and ‘Umar made the trip with only forty riders, instead of the usual hundred. In al-Akhdar Mountain, there was a great river which was very difficult but necessary to cross. When ‘Umar and his men managed to traverse it; they stayed two nights there ; but news about his whereabouts was supplied to the Italians by their informants. The Italian army quickly surrounded the river on all sides, using all the contingents it could assemble at the time. ‘Umar and his men immediately felt encircled and decided to face the enemy and fight their way out or meet their Lord as martyrs. The battle began and many Italian soldiers fell to the bullets of the *mujahidin*, who also lost some of their warriors. ‘Umar was injured in his arm, and his horse fell to the ground with a fatal shot, but his sound arm had become trapped under the body of his fallen horse. His injured one could do little to help, so he surrendered to his fate, accepting Allah’s Decree.

The great *mujahid*, Ben Qawiresh turned back and saw the sad scene, so he shouted at his brothers, who managed to break through the siege, saying: “The useful thing has stayed behind” referring to ‘Umar al-Mukhtar. They returned to free their leader, but the Italian bullets hit all of them. Then the enemy soldiers moved to arrest the injured ‘Umar; he was not recognised at the first, but then one of the traitors knew him; so they sent for the governor of Derna, Commander Dawud Patchi, to identify their prisoner. He was swiftly taken to the port of Sousa, surrounded by a great number of Italian officers. All measures were taken to ensure a safe journey of ‘Umar to Sousa, where he was then transported to Benghazi by sea.

General Grazziani said: “‘Umar al-Mukhtar was a Muslim leader who believed in his cause. He had a great impact on his followers. They fight with sincerity and loyalty; and I say so because of my long experience in war. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar was different from others with his strict religiousness. He is very attached to his religion and is merciful when victorious. His sole offence was that he hated us and our policies. He never showed any weakness nor tended to himself sell out. He was firm to his principles, and that was why he was highly respected by us, despite some of his behaviour against us.”[\[80\]](#)

This was a neat description of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar by his arch enemy, who witnessed his potential – given by Allah – that permitted him to assume serious responsibilities and endure for so many years, performing *jihad* against the enemies of Islam.

‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR IN THE PRISON OF BENGHAZI

When the prisoner arrived at Benghazi, no journalist was allowed to spread the news. Crowds of people were waiting for him on the pavements of the port, but no one – whatever their status – was able to approach the convoy, which was surrounded by heavily armed soldiers. He was transported by prison van, escorted by an armed force with machine guns. He was detained in a small cell, segregated from the rest of the political prisoners, and guarded well by a new security force.

The translator of the book “*Calm Barqab*”, Mr. Ibrahim Salim ‘Amer, said: “I was one of those who were fortunate to talk to the hero of *jihad*, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, during his stay in prison. When ‘Umar came to Benghazi prison, they replaced the local guards with Eritrean soldiers, and the employees with Italians from the Fascist Party. In his prison cell, there was a wooden bed and a ragged material on the floor. ‘Umar pulled the material near the wall, sat on it with his back on the wall and stretched his feet on the floor. When the prison master made his usual inspection of the prisoners, he noticed ‘Umar sitting on the ground, but he could not speak to him in Arabic. So he called me and asked me to translate his question to ‘Umar, who answered with a roaring voice like a fierce lion: “Tell him I know where to sit. He should not worry about that, as it is not his business.”

The prison director was struck by the answer so his face turned pale. He ordered me to go back to my place, but I was overjoyed to hear such a firm reply. May Allah have mercy upon ‘Umar al-Mukhtar; he was a great man in his freedom and even greater in his detention.[\[81\]](#)

General Grazziani said: “During the trip from Sousa to Benghazi, he gave us some important information about the manner of his capture, saying that when his horse fell to the ground, his arm was fractured, and yet he tried hard to conceal himself behind a tree in the forest, but our cavalry caught up with him and he was identified by a member of our forces. He was deeply sorry for the fate of his brothers who came back to rescue him, but failed because they were outnumbered by the enemy and were short of ammunition. He confirmed that his capture would not stop the *jihad*, and that there were four other leaders who would take over his leadership: Shaikh Hamd Abu Musa, ‘Uthman al-Shami, ‘Abdul-Hamid al-‘Abbar, and Yusuf Abu Raheel al-Masmari. The latter was the closest to ‘Umar and his right hand man. He exaggerated the number of his soldiers, claiming that his contingent was made up of 500 normal fighters and 400 riders. He insisted that his arrest would not affect the course of the battle, but rather would raise its intensity. He added that he had fought the fascist Italians not because he hated the Italian people, but because his religion commanded him to perform *jihad* against them because they were enemies of his country.” [82]

I (the author) say: I do not know of any sincere Muslim who has any love for the Christians in general; those who claim that God is the third of three and claim that Jesus is God!

The statement of Grazziani that ‘Umar al-Mukhtar did not hate the Italian people is an assumption on his part.

‘Umar al-Mukhtar was a man who asserted that his religion commanded him to wage *jihad* against the Christian invaders, and his hatred for the ‘crusaders’ was that of a true believer. Allah ﷻ said:

□ They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no deity, except The One Deity (Allah). If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them. □ [83]

□ They say: "(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" Certainly you have made an abominable assertion ; Whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the

earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins; That they ascribe a son to the Beneficent (Allah). □ [84]

The above clear Verses should prevent any devout scholar from saying that he did not hate the enemy of the religion, the protectors of the Cross.

Grazziani added: “Umar al-Mukhtar said some historic words: ‘My arrest is a confirmation of the Decree of Allah; that is already in His Knowledge. Now, I am in the hands of Fascist Italian regime and its prisoner, but Allah does with me whatever He wants. I would like to tell you for certain that I have never thought of surrendering you, to whatever the difficulties maybe, but it is Allah’s Will and there is no stopping it.” [85]

This is exactly the belief in Divine Predestination and Divine Decree, which is one of the main principles of faith in Islam. It is the acceptance of Allah’s Decree, as is defined in the following Verses:

□ No misfortune can happen, on earth or in your souls, but is recorded in a Decree, before We bring it into existence: That is truly easy for Allah; In order that ye may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favours bestowed upon you. Allah does not love any arrogant boaster □ [86]

‘Umar al-Mukhtar was brought up to believe in the *Hadith* of the Prophet □ : “Know that even if the Nation (or the whole community) were to gather together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you with anything except that which Allah has already recorded for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with something, they would not be able to harm you with anything except that which Allah has already recorded against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried. ” [87]

UMAR AL-MUKHTAR COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH GRAZZIANI

It was the Will of Allah □ that the hero of *jihad*, who bewildered the Italian State and spread terror in the hearts of its soldiers, should come to stand before the despicable and wicked man, General Grazziani. He was one of commanders of the Italian Army who supported the rise of Mussolini, and became a fanatic of fascism. He decided to cancel his trip to Paris and head to Benghazi for the trial of ‘Umar. His evil malicious nature urged him to see ‘Umar al-Mukhtar before the trial. He wrote in his memo: “When he was brought to my office, I could imagine seeing in him the personality of thousands of fighters whom I had met during my desert battles. His hands were put in shackles, despite the injuries he had sustained in his last fighting, and he moved in difficulty because of his tiring trip by sea. Overall, I could imagine a man standing before me who was unlike other men, with his awe-inspiring appearance, despite his suffering the bitterness of captivity.

He was standing in my office, as I asked him, and he replied in a calm, clear voice. My loyal translator, Captain Khalifa Khalid al-Gharyani, whom I brought with me from Tarabulus, conducted the translation of the interview:”

Q: Why did you fight the fascist government so fiercely?

A: Because my religion commands me to do so.

Q: Did you hope that one day you would expel us from Barqah with your little means and short number?

A: No. that was impossible.

Q: So what were you hoping to achieve?

A: Nothing but to kick you out of my country because you are invaders; defending our land is an obligation upon us, while victory or loss is from Allah.

Q: But your Book (the Qur'an) says:

□ Castnot yourselves to perdition with your own hands □ [88], Meaning: Do not bring harm to yourselves or others; the Qur'an says so?

A: Yes.

Q: So why did you fight?

A: As I said, for the sake of my religion and country.

Grazziani said: "So, I then asked him: 'You fight for the sake of the Sannusi Movement; an organisation that is responsible for the destruction of the land and its people, together. The organisation takes advantage of people's money and property, and this is why you kept on fighting us, not for the religion, nor the country, as you have claimed'.

'Umar looked at me sharply, like a fierce beast, and then said: 'There is no truth in what you have said. You may believe whatever you think, but the clear truth is that I fight you for the sake of my religion and my country.'

I pointed at him to sit on the chair by my office, and it was then that I could see his face clearly, as the moment of awe had ceased. I wondered how he used to rule and lead the battles. As he was talking in his deep and calm voice, he looked firmly in front of him. I thought of him as a priest, because his speech was about the religion and *jihad*, which proved that he was undoubtedly a sincere believer who talked passionately about religion. I asked him: 'Since you possess this status, you could order the disobedient once (i.e. the *mujahidin*) to submit to our rule and surrender their weapons to us to end the war?'

'Umar al-Mukhtar said: 'As a prisoner, I could do nothing.' Then he added: 'It is of no avail, because we (*mujahidin*) have already sworn to die rather than to surrender or lay down our weapons.'

I decided to end the conversation, since there was no hope of reaching a deal to bring peace and prosperity to the country. I finally asked to him: 'Do you recognise this?' as I showed him his spectacles with their silver frame.

'Umar replied: "Yes, that is mine. I lost it in one of the battles, the Battle of Wadi as-Sania.'

I told him: ‘Since that day, I was certain that you would be captured by my hands.’

‘Umar replied: ‘It was destined to happen.’

I said: ‘Once more, do you consider yourself protected by God and fighting for a sacred, just cause?’

‘Umar said: ‘Yes, without any doubt. Allah ﷻ said:

ﷻ Say: "Nothing will happen to us,except what Allah has decreed for us ﷻ" [89]

“When he was about to leave the office, his *forefront* was so shining, as if some kind of light surrounded him, and my heart shivered from the glorious scene. I, the man who took on the world and desert battles, was nicknamed the “desert lion”, and yet my lips were shivering as I could not utter a single word.

So, I gave my orders for him to be returned to his prison cell to await his trial in the evening. He left my office as he entered, with all my admiration and respect.” [90]

THE TRIAL OF ‘UMAR AL-MUKHTAR

The trial took place on 15th September, 1931, at 17:00, in the parliament building that was prepared by the Italians. The court was very formal, in form and content. The fact is that the Italians, may the Curse of Allah be upon them, had already prepared the place of execution (hanging on the gallows) before the indictment. This may be understood from the end of the conversation between the hero of *jihad* and Grazziani, who told him: “I hope that you could remain brave whatever befalls you.”

Those words released a scent of evil and malice. They meant, in effect: ‘You, ‘Umar, are going to be hanged, so do not be a coward before the gallows.’ I have no doubt that had Grazziani been in the position of our Shaikh, he would have died of fear, even before being led to his execution, by hanging. However our Shaikh, and great leader of *jihad*, stood high and exalted as he said: “By the Will of Allah.”

Dr. al-‘Anizi described the situation, saying: “The Italians brought Mr ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to the court room, chained in shackles and surrounded by armed guards. I was sitting near him. The Italians brought an official translator, whose name was Nasrat Hurmus. When the court was open and the hearing started, the translator was so affected by the scene that he was unable carry on with his task. The court president ordered him to be removed so they chose a Jewish man, Lambrozo, who had been attending the hearing. Mr ‘Umar was open and daring in his interventions; He rectified some of the events, especially those related to the incident of the two Italian pilots, Hoper and Biati.[\[91\]](#)”

“After the interrogation, the public prosecutor, Bidendo, stood and asked the court for capital punishment for Sir ‘Umar.

“When it came to the role of the defence lawyer, for ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, Captain Lontano stood and said: ‘As a soldier, I would not hesitate – if my eyes caught sight of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, in the battlefield, to fire bullets at him to kill him; I would do so as an Italian who hates him. But I have been appointed to defend him; so I ask the court for a verdict, which is according to me more dreadful than execution itself; what I mean is life imprisonment, because of his old age.’”

Thereupon, the public prosecutor intervened, cutting short the speech of the lawyer, and asked the court’s president to prevent him from continuing his defence. He claimed that the defence had strayed off the subject, and that it was not the lawyer’s right to bring ‘Umar al-Mukhtar’s old age into the case.

“The court approved and ordered the lawyer not to lead the case off its course, and to be brief in his defence.

“The lawyer then spoke sharply, saying: “Umar al-Mukhtar, who is in front of you here, was a native of this land before your existence on it. He considers everyone who occupies it by force as an enemy who should be fought fiercely, until he expels him from it or dies doing so. This is a right granted to him by nature and humanity!’

The people present in the court started calling for the lawyer to be expelled from the court, and to issue the verdict on the suspect, as requested by the public prosecutor. But the lawyer ignored the noise and continued his defence, saying that true justice did not surrender to any outside authority; but rather, it should spring from our conscience and our humanity.

“The mob outside the court increased their protest, while the public prosecutor stood to condemn the lawyer. The latter dismissed their call, and warned the judge saying: ‘This suspect, ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, whom I have been assigned unfortunately to defend, is a man who has come of age, and he has nothing left, after passing seventy. Therefore, I ask the court’s justice system to be merciful when issuing the verdict, because he has a right in his case. I warn the court justice system of the judgment of history, because it is not merciful; it is a wheel that turns, recording everything that happens in this disturbed world. I only ask you to reduce the punishment of this man, who was right in defending his religion and his country. Thank you’.

“When the public prosecutor stood up to continue his argument, the judge stopped the hearing and went for the trial conference. After a short time, the judge entered the court room, accompanied with the counsellors and the public prosecutor. The defence lawyer did not attend to hear the judge read the indictment of sentencing ‘Umar al-Mukhtar to be hanged to death. When the sentence was translated to ‘Umar, he laughed boisterously and said, bravely: ‘The real justice is that of Allah, not your fake one! To Allah We belong and to Allah we shall return.’”[92]

The court lasted only an hour and fifteen minutes. It was the Will of Allah □ that the Italians should decide the fate of the hero of the *jihad* in Libya, so that the Will of Allah is completed and Divine Wisdom continues:

□ Your Lord creates and chooses whom He pleases; to choicesis not theirs; glory be to Allah, and exalted be He above what they associate (with Him) □ [93]

□ No kind of calamity can occur, except by the Leave of Allah: and if any one believes in Allah, Heguides his heart (aright): for Allah knows all things. □ [94]

THE EXECUTION OF SHAIKH AL-JIHAD IN LIBYA

On Wednesday, 16th of September 1931, at nine in the morning, the Italians executed, by hanging, Shaikh ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, the hero of *Jihad*, in Salluq, south of Benghazi.

The vileness of the Italians incited them to exert their malice in people’s history. They insisted on assembling masses of people to witness the execution. So they forced the high figures of Benghazi, and a great number of people from the entire neighbourhood, to attend the sad event. They numbered about twenty thousand, as recorded by Grazziani in his book “*Calam Barqab*”.[\[95\]](#)

Dr. al-‘Anezi said: “The Italians compelled the population, and the detainees in Benghazi, to attend the execution. I was one of those who were coerced to witness the trial and summoned to attend the execution, but I was so distressed, like most of my people, that I could not make it there to see the hero, being hanged. The Italians did not relieve me of my attendance, except when they were certain about my sickness and inability to attend.

It was a horrifying hour, in which al-Mukhtar walked, with firm steps and rare courage, towards the gallows, while reciting the Testimony of Faith (*la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rassul Allah*).

His face was jubilant and rejoicing martyrdom, as he displayed his pleasure with the Decree of Allah.

As he stepped on the hanging spot, many fighter planes started flying so low, above the space of the execution area, with an unbearable noise that they prevented the population of hearing any words of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar.

The executioner put the rope (of injustice) around the neck of the hero of *jihad*, and, there, the pure soul went to its Lord, content in His Good Pleasure, as he recited:

□ O soul that is at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him) □ [96]

Allah □ responded to the supplication of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, by granting him martyrdom; death at the hands of the enemies of Islam.

Allah □ says:

□ A soul will not die, but with the Permission of Allah; the term is fixed; and whoever desires the reward of this world, I shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, I shall give him of it, and I will reward the grateful. How many of the prophets fought (in Allah’s Way), and with them (fought) Large bands of godly men? But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah’s way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in. Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast. □ [97]

In the biography, we derive some lessons, to benefit us in our contemporary life. ‘Umar al-Mukhtar, may Allah’s Mercy be upon him, was not the first to fight and die as martyr for the sake of Allah, but his case was that aboutwhom Allah □ said:

□ Those to whom the people said: “Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them.” But this increased their faith, and they said: “Allah is Sufficient for us, and Most Excellent is He in Whom we trust.” □ [98]

The key to his amazing personality is that He had great trust in Allah and the pure meaning of I man (faith) was firmly settled in his heart, to the extent that he feared no one but Allah, Alone. This type of Muslim is the most best witnessed by mankind; it is a ‘free’ man, in the most sublime sense of the word.

He stripped his heart from all the illusions, all the types of misguidance, suspicion, and base desires. He distanced himself from any darkness that would

have prevented him from entering the world of true *tawhid*[99]. His fear of Allah made him entitled to Allah's Support, and that was why he stood defiantly before his enemies.[100]

The exclusivity in his biography is shown by the fact that he revived the true meaning of I man (faith), which many people had abandoned. His life was based on piety and fear of Allah, which earned him the Blessings of Allah, in his life and death.

He was a man who called to Allah; to the religion of Islam. He was brought up by the Sannusis, until he was ready to convey the message of Islam, with faithfulness, especially in his teaching of the Qur'an. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best among us is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it to others." He was a man with true understanding of Islam. He believed that a Muslim should adhere to all the teachings of Islam, not just some of it.

He had the characteristics of youth, fulness with his liveliness and cheerfulness, which is the nature of fighters (warriors) in the Path of Allah, who fear no one but Allah, Alone. He never sought celebrity, but, rather he was sincere in his quest for the Pleasure of Allah.[101]

Therefore, Allah ﷻ blessed him with a good reputation in this world, and we also ask Him ﷻ to bless him in the Hereafter.

His enemies admired his heroic biography of *jihad*. The Times, a British newspaper, published an article on 17 September, 1931, entitled "*An Italian Victory*" that stated: "The Italians have achieved a significant victory in their war against the Sannusi rebels in Barqah. They have arrested and executed the fearful man, 'Umar al-Mukhtar, the Shaikh of the tribe... It is most likely that his execution would disable the resistance of the rest of the rebels. Al-Mukhtar never accepted the financial offers from the Italians. He spent all his property for the sake of *jihad* and lived upon the giving of his followers. He considered all agreements with the unbelievers as mere stories. He was admired for his enthusiasm, loyalty to his religion, and his exceptional bravery.[102]

One of the Italians described him, saying: "Umar al-Mukhtar was dedicated and clever; he was the brain and heart of the revolution in Barqah." Indeed, genuin

merit is that which has been observed by one's enemy.

The life of 'Umar al-Mukhtar, the Shaikh of the *mujahidin* in al-Akhdar Mountain in Libya, was devoted to seeking Islamic knowledge, educating people upon the teachings of Islam, and fighting for the Sake of Allah. He was a leader in the Sannusi Movement, who responded to the call of *jihad*. He never gave in to the pressures of the enemy, but, rather, he fought them bravely, despite the shortage of means and the imbalance in terms of weapons and infantry. He rose high in his strong I man (faith) in Allah and his conviction of Allah's Support in their *jihad*.

The *jihad* of 'Umar al-Mukhtar will remain a landmark in the history of Libya, in particular, and the history of the Islamic 'Ummah, in general. It will remain as a proof that Islam has produced, and will still do so, great examples of heroism throughout the ages, and that true giving is that which comes *coming* from sincere I man (faith).

Shaikh 'Umar al-Mukhtar, may Allah's Mercy be upon him, was a 'school' that deserves study, from all the various aspects of his intellectual, educational, and "striving" personality.

Allah □ knows that I have not given the Shaikh his fair due, or even some of it, in reporting his events. I feel deeply, within myself, that he was greater than what I have recorded (about him), bigger than I have thought, and better than most of the Libyan heroes of jihad I have met.

We ask Allah □ to bless him with His Mercy, Forgiveness, and Pleasure. Amen.

Dear brother in Islam, this is an example of how Islam produces true heroism among its followers in the battlefields and also when standing before oppressors and aggressors; because a sincere believer is moved by his faith, and the Care of Allah that surrounds him.

It is worth recording these famous events from the biography of Shaikh 'Umar al-Mukhtar in golden letters, and teaching them to our younger generations, for a brighter future that is to be manifested on the horizon. Indeed, the signs of this brightness are seen with the return of the Muslim Ummah to its religion, despite

the dangers set up by its enemies; the Jews, Christians, atheists, and the oppressive regimes. However, they are far from extinguishing the Light of Allah, as Allah ﷻ will complete His Light, even though the unbelievers are averse.

We have no choice but to seek Allah's Support in implementing His Commandments on ourselves, our families, the people around us, and all mankind.

Allah ﷻ says:

ﷻ Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them, in the land, inheritance of power, as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish, in authority, their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change their state, from (one of) fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace: They will worship Me, Alone, and not associate aught with Me. If any do reject Faith, after this, then they are rebellious and wicked. ﷻ [103]

ﷻ Surely, Allah will help him who helps His Cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty. ﷻ [104]

ﷻ Whoever desires honour and power, then to Allah belongs all Honour and Power ﷻ [105]

[1] Islamic religious centre

[2] *'Umar al-Mukhtar, his Upbringing and Jihad'* by Dr. Idriss al-Hariri, P. 65.

* Tobruq was part of Egypt historically since the pherous until the Outteman empire – *Publisher*

[3] (a set of supplications and verses of the Qur'an)

[4] Surat an-Nisa', Verse 103.

[5] It is the prayer of *ad-Duha*, two rak 'at which the Prophet ﷺ used to pray in the period between sunrise and midday.

[6] *"Mudbakirat Mujahid"* by Mahmud al-Jahmi and Muhammad Manna'.

[7] Ibid.

[8] *"Barqab al-'Arabiyah"* p. 439.

[9] Surat Fatir, Verse 29.

[10] Recorded by al-Bukhari.

- [11] «*at-Thabat*», by Dr. Mohammed bin Hasan ‘Uqail, P. 12.
- [12] Surat al-Fajr, Verse 27-28.
- [13] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p.39-40.
- [14] Surat al-Anfaal, Verse 17.
- [15] The act of believing and affirming that Allah is the Unique God and He is inherently One
- [16] Surat Yusuf, Verse 101.
- [17] Surat al-Kahf, Verses 39-40.
- [18] Surat al-Anfal, Verse 17.
- [19] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p. 87.
- [20] Surat as-Sajdah, Verses 16-17.
- [21] The call to Islam.
- [22] “*Majallat al-Muslim*”.
- [23] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p.27.
- [24] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” p. 37.
- [25] Ibid, p. 40-41.
- [26] “Umar al-Mukhtar” by Al-Ashhab, p. 6.
- [27] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p. 6.
- [28] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p. 56.
- [29] “Umar al-Mukhtar” by al-Ashhab, p. 58.
- [30] Surat al-Israa’, Verses 18-19.
- [31] “The Sannusi Movement: Religion and State” p. 271.
- [32] “*Umar al-Mukhtar: His Upbringing and his Jihad*” by al-Hissawi, p. 36.
- [33] Ibid, p. 37.
- [34] Surat at-Tawbah, Verses 19-21.
- [35] Recorded by Muslim.
- [36] Recorded by Abu Dawud.
- [37] Ibid, p. 273-274.
- [38] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” p. 64.
- [39] “*al-Buhut*” Magazine, year 6, 1984, Issue 1, p.10.
- [40] Ibid, p. 10-11.
- [41] “*al-Buhut*” Magazine, Year 6, 1984, Issue 1, p 16.
- [42] “The Political Resistance of the Libyans in al-Sham (1920-1950), by Tayseer bin Musa.
- [43] “*al-Buhut*” Magazine, Year 6, Issue 1, p 17.
- [44] “Umar al-Mukhtar, his Upbringing and Jihad” p. 14.
- [45] “The Sannusi Movement, Religion and State” p. 284.
- [46] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p.81.
- [47] “*Umar al-Mukhtar*” by al-Ashhab, p. 111-112.

- [48] *“as-Sannusi Movement: Religion and State”* p 300.
- [49] *“al-Bayan”* magazine, issue 15, Rabi’ the second, Year 1988, p. 87.
- [50] *“The Sannusi Movement, Religion and State”*, p. 303.
- [51] *“The Sannusi Movement, Religion and State”*, p 34.
- [52] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”* by Mahmud Shalabi, p.126.
- [53] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”* by al-Ashhab, p 124.
- [54] Ibid, p.125.
- [55] Ibid, 126.
- [56] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”* by al-Ashhab, p. 126.
- [57] *“Umar al-Mukhtar, his Upbringing and Jihad”* p. 113-149.
- [58] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”* by Shalabi, p. 188.
- [59] *“Umar al-Mukhtar, His Upbringing and Jihad”*, p 145.
- [60] Ibid, p 145.
- [61] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”*, by Mahmud Shalabi, p 127-128.
- [62] *“Calm Barqab”* p. 227.
- [63] *“Calm Barqab”* p. 129.
- [64] *“Umar al-Mukhtar: His Upbringing and Jihad”* p. 71.
- [65] *“Calm Barqab”* p. 229.
- [66] *“The Life of Umar al-Mukhtar”* p. 130-133.
- [67] *“Calm Barqab”* p. 153-154.
- [68] *“Calm Barqab”*, p. 211.
- [69] Ibid, p. 198.
- [70] Surat ar-Rum, Verse 47.
- [71] *“The Present Islamic World”* (2/84).
- [72] *“Umar al-Mukhtar”* by al-Ashhab, p 141.
- [73] *“The Road to Islam”* p. 331.
- [74] *“The Road to Islam”* p. 347.
- [75] Ibid, p. 361.
- [76] *The Road to Islam*, p 362.
- [77] *The Road to Islam*, p.363.
- [78] Ibid, p. 366.
- [79] *The Road to Islam*, p. 370.
- [80] *Calm Barqab*, p. 268.
- [81] *Calm Barqab*, p 274-275.
- [82] *Calm Barqab*, p. 276.
- [83] Surat al-Ma’idah, Verse 73.
- [84] Surat Maryam, Verses 88-91.

- [85] *Calm Barqab*, P. 276.
- [86] Surat al-Hadid, Verses 22-23.
- [87] Recorded by at-Tirmidhi, on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both of them., (i.e. ‘Abbas and hisson)
- [88] Surat al-Baqarah, Verse 195.
- [89] Surat at-Tawba, Verse 51.
- [90] *Calm Barqab*, Verse 285.
- [91] *The Life of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar*, p. 153, 154,155.
- [92] *Calm Barqab*, p 286-287.
- [93] Surat al-Qasas, Verse 68.
- [94] Surat at-Taghabun, Verse 110.
- [95] P. 288.
- [96] Surat al-Fajr, Verses 27-28.
- [97] Surat Al-‘Imraan, Verses 145-146.
- [98] Surat Al-‘Imraan, Verse 173.
- [99] *The doctrine of the Oneness of God, the Concept of Monotheism in Islam.*
- [100] *The Life of ‘Umar al-Mukhtar*, p.190.
- [101] Ibid, p.193-194.
- [102] *Al-Bayan Magazine*, Issue 15, Rabii ath-Thani, 1409, p.82.
- [103] Surat an-Nur, Verse 55.
- [104] Surat al-Hajj, Verse 40.
- [105] Surat Faatir, Verse 10.

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