Series of Lectures Towards a Proper Understanding of Islam (No. 11)

The Effect of Enthusiasm in Islam

By

The Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman

His Eminence
kh Ahmad bin Hamad Al-Khalily

Series of Lectures Towards a Proper Understanding of Islam (No. 11)

The Effect of Enthusiasm in Islam

By

The Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman

His Eminence
Sheikh Ahmad bin Hamad Al-Khalily

CONTENTS:

Introduction	2
Faith is the source of strength	3
Muslims face the Persians and the Romans together	9
Piety is the basis for victory	10
The dignity of the Muslims conquers the pomp and arrogance of the disbelievers	13
The Chinese emperor feared the Muslims	17
Attributes of Muslim soldiers	19
Imam Talibil Haq conquers over the state of injustice	22
The attributes of the truthful and those of the straight path	24
The Muslims Conquer the Spaniards	26
The Spaniards lose once more	34
Finally	36

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious; The Most Merciful

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, whom promised that the final reward will be for the pious, and His wrath will be upon the unjust. I praise Allah Almighty as He should be praised and thank Him and repent to Him from all sins and ask for His forgiveness. I declare my belief in Him and my enmity to those who do not. I declare that there is no deity worth worshipping but Allah alone with no partner, where dignity is achieved by worshipping Him and praising Him whilst humiliation is cast upon whomever disbelieves and disobeys Him. I declare and bear witness that Muhammad, our master and messenger is the Prophet of Allah, whom was sent by Allah to His creations to bring unto them good tidings and to warn them and to be a guiding light by the will of Allah. I also bear witness that the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, delivered the message of his Lord and advised His servants and thus guided them to all that was good and thus dead hearts came alive and blind hearts became aware and deaf ears became able to hear. I bear witness

that Muhammad PBUH became a leader to all that is good, enjoining what is proper, forbidding what is evil, and that Allah granted victory to His religion through His holy Prophet, gave dignity to the humiliated and guided people to the way of Allah Almighty. May Allah be pleased with him, and pray and bring peace unto him, his descendants, companions and all those whom follow his footsteps until the Day of Judgement.

I greet you, dear brothers and sisters with the greeting of Islam: Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah are upon you, and I thank you for this blessed gathering in this mighty fortress and historical sight. I also thank the Ministry of Defence and all the officials who gave me this precious opportunity to meet with you and talk about a significant matter in Islam and a vital issue of religion, which is the effect of enthusiasm in Islam.

Faith is the source of strength

There is no doubt that enthusiasm in Islam stems from the faith and firm belief in Islam. If we wanted understand this effect, we have to firstly define faith (Aqeedah). The Islamic faith is one,

which connects the weak human being with Allah, the ever able; ever mighty, Who is capable of all things on earth and in the heavens. Therefore, it is right for this human who is connected to Allah Almighty to be supported by Him Almighty, dependant upon Him in all matters, in firm belief that if anything effects him, then it is only by the will of Allah, and if anything passes him by, then it is only due to the will and wish of Allah. In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty states:

"Say, nothing will effect us but what Allah has written for us, He is our
Lord and upon Allah believers are to depend".

This belief brought together people whom were lost and scattered; who were belittled by their people due to their weakness, and converted them into forces to be reckoned with by the mightiest of forces and powers. This transformation was due to the arms of faith and the connection to Allah Almighty. You all know the state of the Arabs before Allah blessed them with the message of Islam carried to them by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. They were undoubtedly people of immense courage and bravery. However, these skills and attributes

were lost in the midst of their ignorance which lead them to live a life more comparable to that of the jungle; where the strong would eat up the weak and they dealt with each other in an arrogant and selfish attitude. One of the best descriptions of the Arabs prior to Islam was that they were 'either a caller to worship an idle or a shepherd; either a scholar of non-substance or an ignorant of substance; people who were so evil, they would act as mass destruction weapons, or as elements for the creation of Satan'. However, the faith which was sent by Allah through his servant and prophet Muhammad PBUH saved them and lifted them from the state of loss, gathered them having been scattered and weak, united them having been enemies of each other. Allah Almighty states in the Holy Quran, reminding them of His blessings upon them:

And remember Allah's favour on you, for you were enemies one to anther but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (In Islamic faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah make his signs clear to you, that you may be guided. Quran 3: 103.

It is suffice to observe the state of the Ansar whom sheltered the message of Islam and supported it with their lives, wealth and arms, and sheltered the Migrants (Muhajireen) and gave them accommodation. One wonders about the state of the Ansar prior to the message of Islam reaching them and making them the people and the force that they became. Animosity was rife amongst them and thus, wars and battles between them were common practices and ongoing events for more than one hundred and twenty years. These wars exhausted their youth and their wealth and lead to their lives becoming a continuous catastrophe. In addition, they were severely weakened and became easy prey for outsiders and their enemies.

If we cast a view upon other Arabs, we find that the situation was the same and their state of living was identical to that of the Ansar aforementioned. Ja'far bin Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin described this state so eloquently before Najashi, the Emperor of Abassynia, when describing the state of the Arabs before the message of Islam was revealed: "They were ill-mannered and uncourteous to their

neighbours. They would consume the carcasses of dead animals and sever their blood ties. Evil and wrong-doings became rife and shameless acts became wide-spread and publicly acknowledged. They used to drink alcohol and commit adultery whilst paying no attention nor regretting all the wrongs that they were committing day and night. But then Allah Almighty, sent a Messenger from amongst them, whom they know well and fully acknowledge his roots and his sublime mannerisms. The Messenger enjoined what is good and prohibited what is evil and called upon them to worship Allah alone rather tan prostrate to idles and statues. He called upon them to observe and respect their family and blood relations, to be kind to their neighbours and to treat the weak and the poor in a respectful and kind manner". This briefly describes the state of the Arabs, and with the message of Islam, the transformation was radical and tremendous, as they became one solid and strong nation who roamed the earth to spread the word of Allah. They were never callers nor instigators of war, but makers of peace. They were never creators of evil but promoters of good. They carried the sword to safeguard this message which aims to rescue the weak and

transform people from a state of darkness to a glorious state of light and guidance. For this, martyrdom in the way of Allah became an aim and a dream, more dear to their hearts than any other. Thus, they roamed the earth looking to uproot all promoters of evil and all arrogant tyrants, and they did not stop until they had stripped the tyrants of their crowns and thrones. All this simply because they had derived their enthusiasm and spirits from the true faith, and thus a Muslim soldier would fight for the sole aim that the word of Allah becomes the highest and that of the disbelievers, the lowest and the most ridiculed. They wanted no elevation in this life for themselves, nor did they seek corruption, as they held high the verse in the Holy Quran

Verily Allah will help those who help His (cause). Truly Allah is All Strong, All Mighty. Those who, if We give them power in the land, they establish prayer, pay Alsmdue, Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and with Allah rests the end of all matters. Quran 22:47-48

Their desire was to pray to Allah alone and to pay the Zakat (alms). They aimed to enjoin what is good and forbid whatever was evil. They

sought not to dispossess people of their wealth for their own benefit or interest, nor did they seek to humiliate anyone, but those who sought to humiliate the message of Allah. Their sole aim was to make most prominent the word of Allah on this earth, so that the guidance of Allah spreads into people's hearts and souls.

Muslims face the Persians and the Romans together

In their battles, the Muslims produced wonders as they came face to face with the most two most powerful forces of the time, namely, the Persians and the Romans. Despite that, they always attributed their victories to the might and support of Allah alone. The Persians and Romans ruled the civilised and developed world then known, similar in our days to the United States and Russia. A source of amazement that they did not face one of the powers backed by the support of the other, as some do today. In addition, they did not face one in full commitment and devotion, indifferent or oblivious to the other, but faced and fought both at the same time and achieved a resounding victory, by the grace and will of Allah Almighty. Khaled bin Al-Waleed would be leading

the Muslim contingent against the Romans of the West, whilst Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas would be facing the Persians of the East. The Romans were then controlling large areas of Turkey, the Balkans, Greece, the Sham region (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine) Egypt and North Africa to the Atlantic Ocean. The Persians was even more powerful than the Roman Empire, which later divided into two states: Western and Eastern Byzantine. The Persians controlled, Iran, Iraq, Yemen as well as significant parts of India and Afghanistan. They also controlled large parts of what is today called the Soviet Union up to Siberia, whilst its Eastern borders connected with the borders of China.

Piety is the basis for victory

When Omar bin Al-Khattab, May Allah be pleased with him, called on the Muslim forces to prepare to face the Persians, and appointed Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas as leader of the army; he sent Sa'ad and the army away with a valuable and historic advice which must be remembered by all soldiers whenever and wherever they may be called to battle. Omar said: "I call upon you and all your soldiers to fear Allah in every

situation and at all times, as piety and fear of Allah is the best armour for any battle and the best plot for victory. I advise you and your soldiers to be aware and alert against committing sins more so than your enemies, as the sins of the soldiers are more dangerous than the opposing soldiers. Muslims are granted victory because their enemies disobey Allah and commit sins, as our numbers are less than theirs and our weaponry is much less powerful than theirs, so if we are equal in our commitment of sins, then they will be more powerful than us. If we do not beat them by being closer to Allah, we will not beat them by our might and power. Be aware that in your march Allah will send with you angels watching over you, and watching what you, so be shameful of committing a sin which they will witness, and do not disobey Allah whilst you are marching in His way. Do not say that our enemies are evil and thus they will not overcome us, as many a time have people been overcome by who is more evil than them, such as the People of Israel who committed a grave sin and were thus, humiliated as promised by Allah. Ask Allah for victory over yourselves, as you ask Him for victory over your enemy".

This great advice was the military ammunition, which could never be overpowered by any other, as each soldier was armed with this precious advice. Omar also ordered Sa'ad to consult Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) in all matters when facing the Persian Empire. Indeed when the army reached Al-Mada'in, Omar consulted Salman whether to attack or not, and he replied: "Give me until tomorrow and I will answer your question". The next morning Salman said to him: "Attack with the blessings of Allah, as I wondered amongst the soldiers last night, and I found them all either bowing or prostrating to Allah, and by this you will overcome your enemy". Yes, he saw them all praying and invoking Allah; not drunken or spent in nightclubs or in a state of disobedience to Allah Almighty. He didn't even find them in deep sleep and thus realised that this is what will enable them to gain victory over the enemy, as the promise of Allah will always be delivered. Allah stated in the Holy Quran:

Verily Allah will help those who help His (cause). Truly Allah is All Strong, All Mighty. Those who, if We give them power in the land, they establish prayer, pay Alsmdue, Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong,. Quran 22:47-48

The performing of prayer is the basis of all good and the source of all that is constructive. It is also the first gain which the Muslim derives from Allah after being guided to declaring the pure oneness of Allah. That is why Salman felt overjoyed and confident when he saw the state of the Muslim army. Indeed when the two armies met, the comparatively few Muslims with their basic weaponry, but high enthusiasm, easily gained victory over the greater numbers of Persians and their superior battle skills and weapons, but who lacked any spirits and enthusiasm.

The dignity of the Muslims conquers the pomp and arrogance of the disbelievers

The Persian leader, Rustum; who belonged to the ruling family, and thus enjoyed the luxuries of life to the extent that his cape alone cost one hundred thousand Dinars, became frustrated with the events taking place on the battlefield and asked to enter into negotiations with the Muslims. Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas sent to negotiate with the Persians the companion, Rib'I bin Amir along with twenty Muslim horsemen. Rustum planned to

baffle the Muslims with the features of lavishness and luxury that the Persians enjoyed, thinking that that would weaken their spirits and lower their morale. He therefore, ordered the golden mattresses to be laid, the guilded vases to be put in rows and the diamond edged chairs to be set. He sat on the most lavish of chairs and Rib'i and his companions arrived but did not dismount from their horses, but trod the golden mattresses with the hooves of their horses. Rib'i then dismounted and tied his horse to one of the great guilded vases and sat next to Rustum, who asked: "What brought you?". Rib'i answered with the confidence instilled in him by his faith in Allah Almighty: "Allah has commanded us to bring whomever He wishes from the state of worshipping human beings to the state of worshipping the Lord of all beings, and from the injustice and corruption of religions to the justice and light of Islam, and from the suffering and tightness of this world to the comfort and pleasure of this life and the hereafter". With this response, Rib'I showed Rustum, whom was fooled by the superficial features of life, that this was actually all part of the suffering and strife of this worldly life, and that the Muslims had come to take their hands into the real comfort of life and

the hereafter by believing in Allah alone. An Islamic thinker commented: "It is not strange that Rib'I said what he did at the beginning of his response, as Islam actually came to free mankind from being subjects of another human being to being subject to the wills and ways of Allah Almighty alone. It is also true that the various religions enslaved mankind and humiliated them, whilst Islam came to free them from those chains. No wonder that Rib'I bin Amir said to Rustum that this freeing of the enslavement of mankind was so that they may leave the tightness and strife of this life to the comfort of the hereafter. However, Rib'I actually said that they wished for mankind to leave the strife of the worldly life to the comfort of this life and the hereafter. One wonders where this comfort lies. after all, the Muslims then had no feast as a meal but would rather survive off a few dates and would then go home to a shabby looking hut, where his bed would be the earth, his pillow a rock and his cover the skies.

The Persians, on the other hand enjoyed the luxury of palaces and mansions, of gardens assorted, of flowing rivers and of beautiful maids. So how can one explain the statement of Rib'I informing Rustum that the Muslims had come to

take them away from that "tightness and strife". Indeed, it is an uncomfortable existence, in fact an unbearable one. Rib'I was looking at the Persians in the same way that we see the pet dog in Europe, held by his master with a golden chain which brings no comfort to the dog, only enslavement, capture and pain. One also remembers the sight of birds that some of us keep in cages to amuse and entertain us. Does it matter if these cages were made from solid gold, or whether his drink and feed was poured into golden bowls? The Persians were indeed enslaved by their desires, lusts and traditions, from which they could not free themselves, unless armed with proper faith which would free them from these chains. An example of a pitiful existence, despite the luxurious features, is Yazdajird, who fled from the swords of Muslims. He had brought with him one thousand cooks, one thousand singers and musicians, one thousand people to care for his falcons and pets and another one thousand servants and maids. Despite this, he said when fleeing: "I am in such a pitiful state today, that I only managed to bring with me such a meager number of servants". Furthermore, when he became thirsty he asked a woman he saw to give him a drink. The woman

saw his apparent nobility and handed him a cup of water. However Yazdajird, felt no consolation and said that he had only drank before whilst listening to a singer, and thus found it difficult to swallow the water without the tunes of music touching his ears! He said: "What strife could be worse that this, and what humiliation could be more than this that I find myself in? Indeed, the Muslim Arabs were enjoying extreme comfort and freedom. The half date, hard bed, rock solid pillow and lack of cover, along with a carefree attitude was the best for of freedom one could enjoy, and that was what the earlier Muslims enjoyed to the full.

The Chinese emperor feared the Muslims

When Yazdajird got tired of the state which he found himself in and tired of suffering consecutive defeats by the few Muslim soldiers following his contingent, he wrote to the Emperor of China asking him to rescue him from the Muslims. He sent his letter with a messenger, who delivered it to the Emperor's court. When the Emperor read the letter, he called for the messenger and began asking him various questions, such as: "Are

these Muslims more or less in numbers that you?", The messenger replied: "Less than us". The Emperor said: "Describe them to me". The messenger replied:

"They are monks (worshippers) at night and soldiers at day".

"So tell me what they eat".

"As little as they need to survive".

"What do they wear?"

"As little as they need to cover their bodies, and say that piety is the

best of clothing".

"How do they treat each other?"

"They are all on one man's heart"

The Emperor then replied: "They have only beaten you by virtue of what you have just said in their description. He then wrote a letter to the Persian Emperor, saying: "I have received you letter and asked you messenger about what I wanted to know, and there is nothing that prevents me from sending to you an army so huge, that its head would be in Marw and its tail in China. However, these people whom you have come against will not be stopped by anything. If mountains were to obstruct their path, they would uproot the mountains, and indeed, if they wanted

they would remove me from my throne. So if you wish to survive, surrender".

This was the impression of the far away Chinese Emperor of the Muslims and the enthusiasm and high spirits which they carried within their bodies. He realised that this enthusiasm could never be defeated.

Attributes of Muslim soldiers

A similar event was happening on the other side with the Muslims facing the Roman Empire. When Hercules, the Emperor saw the consecutive defeats his army was suffering on the hands of the Muslims, he called upon his commanders to meet and discuss the reasons for their failure in defeating the Muslims. Hercules asked: "How are these Muslims?"

One said: "They are worshippers at night, soldiers at day. They do not eat what is not lawfully theirs and do not enter on anyone unless they bid him peace. Whoever they fight, they will not leave but dead".

Another responded: "At night they stand in worship and at day they are the bravest of soldiers. They are the best of archers and always

hit their target. If you were sitting amongst them you wouldn't be able to speak to your friend from the loud humming of the Quran and the remembrance of their Lord".

It seemed that everyone knew that these were the reasons why the Muslims had achieved victory after victory over them.

If one pondered into these events; how these two most powerful forces of the then civilised world, and how the few in number and low on ammunition Muslims made them fall to their knees, it would indeed be seen as a legend unprecedented. In fact, a mind entrapped within the mere boundaries of physical probabilities and materialistic measurements, would find it extremely hard to comprehend. It is suffice to search today for the remains of the Romans, which shows the might of the accomplishment which the Muslims managed to realise. If one visits the ancient city of Jarash in Jordan, you would see remains which tell of extreme might and glory, One would find it difficult to believe that such a fortress of a city could be overcome even by means of aircraft and missiles, never mind swords and arrows. It becomes even more of an unbelievable feat when one remembers that the

Muslims were much fewer in number and much less developed in terms of military skill and technical ability as well as weaponry and ammunition. However, all this becomes much less baffling, once we recall the significance and importance of solid faith in Allah Almighty.

We read through the history of the various eras and we come to realise the miraculous impact which the faith in Allah has in the making of events. Time and again, it has been proven that the holding on strongly to and the firm belief in Allah makes the impossible happen and the improbable occur. It is true that the will of Allah cannot be overcome nor can His will be overturned, and Allah has promised that He will grant His servants and His believers victory and dominance. In fact Allah Almighty promised the believers the inheritance of the earth on condition that they believe firmly in Him and do good. Allah Almighty stated in the holy Quran: (p.33).

Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their

religion which He has chosen for them. And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after they fear (provided) they worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with me. But whoever disbelieve after this, they are the rebellious, disobedient to Allah. 24:55

Imam Talibil Haq conquers over the state of injustice

There are various shining examples from Islamic history, which could be mentioned in this meeting, such as the story of the Imam Talibil Haq Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Kindi Al-Hadrami, who sought justice at a time when the Umayyad state reverted to a tradition unknown by the earlier Caliphs. Imam Talibil Haq left Hadramout with 1,600 soldiers who suffered extreme poverty. Abu Hamza described their conditions and said that many would take it in turns to ride one came and would also take it in turns to use one single cover. These soldiers faced 30,000 in battle and gained victory despite their small numbers. But the shining example comes when the Imam Talibil Haq entered the Government house in Sana'a and found treasures which had been accumulated by virtue of the taxes imposed by

Al-Qasim bin Omar Al-Thaqafi, the Umayyad governor who represented Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thaqafi, his relative and parallel in character in terms of his tyranny and injustice. When Talibil Haq found these treasures, and despite his and his companions' poverty and extreme need, he found it unacceptable to take a penny from these monies and said that these monies have been taken as unjust taxes from the people of Sana'a and thus, we shall return it to them and distribute it amongst them.

Nooruddin Al-Salimi wrote poetry describing this incident:

Talibil Haq in Sana'a governed with truth and virtue,
He did not take despite his need, neither for himself nor for his family,
With dignity did he act and how honourable are the clan,
They would die on the truth which they found, and not change nor deviate.

When Abu Hamza was sent to the two sacred mosques, Allah Almighty blessed them with the dominance of Makka without the need to indulge into battle. He then headed towards Al-Madina and was stopped by thousands of supporters of

the Umayyads. Heavy battle broke out but the 700 soldiers of Abu Hamza conquered the thousands of Umayyads.

The attributes of the truthful and those of the straight path

When Abu Hamza entered Al-Madina, he found the people of the city making fun of him and his companions, saying that they are mere youngsters with wild dreams. Abu Hamza approached the rostrum of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and placed his cheek at the place where the Prophet used to stand, and cried for some time until his beard became wet from the tears he had shed. He then said: "Oh! How many disobedient feet had trodden on the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH". He then ascended one step of the rostrum, in respect of the Prophet Muhammad and the Guided Caliphs and delivered his historical speech in which he illustrated the life and times of the Prophet PBUH and those of the Guided Caliphs. He then compared that with the changes and deviations which took place later, and finally began to defend his companions. He said: "Oh People of Madina, do you mock my companions

and say that they are youngsters. I ask you, were the companions of the Prophet Muhammad but youngsters, but mature youngsters. Their eyes would refrain from looking at what is forbidden, their feet would be slow in approaching evil, active in worship, tolerant to spending whole nights in prayer, they would do what they say and their fasting of the day would be connected to their praying of the night. You would see that the earth had eaten from their foreheads, palms and knees because of their lengthy bowing and prostrating to Allah, their bodies would be yellow from fasting and the lengthy hours of prayer. Allah would witness them in the middle of the night with humped backs reading attentively from the Quran. If they came across a verse mentioning paradise, they would cry in hope and aspiration, but if they read a verse which mentioned hell fire, they would gasp and cry as though actually witnessing its horrors. They would be firm believers in the promise of Allah so that if they saw the arrows of their enemy flying above their heads, their spears aiming towards their hearts, their swords being waved before their faces, they would make mockery of the threats of their enemy in comparison to the oath of Allah, and would meet the tips of the arrows

and the length of the spears with their bodies, necks and chests. You would see them lying dead on the sands where they had fallen off their horses, their faces covered in blood, parts of their bodies eaten by the wild animals and birds of prey. Thus, how many an eyeball ended in a bird's stomach, had previously cried from the fear of Allah many a night. How many arms were amputated had previously supported a worshipper in prostrating in prayer. May Allah have mercy upon those bodies and may he enter their soles the width and breadth of paradise".

These attributes which were illustrated by Abu Hamza were the reason for their glorious victories in the battlefields. For this and more, Allah Almighty gave them dominance and blessed them with one of the two blessings of this world and, by His will grant them paradise.

The Muslims Conquer the Spaniards

Amongst the many examples which illustrate the victory that is achieved by the believers despite them being little in numbers, is that which occurred in the island of Jirba in the 10th Hijri century, in the month of Rabi Al-Awwal of 916AH to be precise. Its events amounted to the totally

unbelievable, and even the Westerners wrote about the extraordinary events which unfolded, whilst attempting to conceal much of the truth and to try to rationalise what happened. However, the undisputed truth remains that when the Muslims of Andalucia lot the path of Allah and occupied themselves with the lusts and desires of this life, the Christian Spaniards managed to eradicate these Muslims and thus the horrific events which followed which resulted in a third of the Muslims being killed, another third being evacuated from the homes and a third taken prisoners and forced to embrace Christianity. The killings were horrific as the Muslims would be sacrificed in churches on Christian anniversaries and occasions. On one day 30,000 Muslims were killed in front of a Church. After these events the Christians began to overwhelm the Muslims in the seas, so if their ships would come across Muslim fishermen or otherwise, they would ambush their boats, capture the men and then sell them as slaves in the markets. This remained the case until the beginning of the 10th century. The Spaniards then started to occupy the Muslim ports in order to tighten the noose around the Muslims' necks. They started by capturing the ports which lay on the southern shores of the Mediterranean one

after the other starting from Bijaya the Algerian port to Tripoli in Libya. Having occupied these ports , none of the prominent maritime centres remained unscathed apart from the Tunisian island of Jirba. It was obvious that the people living on the island had nowhere to flee as the sea surrounded them and the seas were governed by the Spaniards. Thus, it seemed that occupying the island would be an easy feat. However, what the Spaniards did not realise was that the people living on the island were true and sincere believers in Allah and that they prayed to Allah at night. When the people would go to their beds having worshipped Allah, there would remain two sheikhs, one who was responsible for the political side of life called Abu Zakariyya Yahya Al-Samoumani and another who was responsible for the religious aspect of things called Abul Najat Yunus bin Saeed Al-Ta'areeti. These two sheikhs would often get together and attempt to resolve the difficult matters in a manner of co-operation and co-ordination. When the first sheikh realised the danger threatening the island, he went to Abul Najat and said: "What do you think we should do?" He replied: "There are only two options: either to fight these people without hope of support arriving from anyone or

anywhere, or to surrender to them. However the Prophet PBUH guided us to what should be when he said "there will be troublesome and enormous tests and tribulations after me. He was asked: what shall relieve us of these tests. He answered: The book of Allah which tells you the stories of those before you, those who will come after you and the rulings of the dealings among you. The book of Allah is the judge, no joke and no mockery." Therefore, let us return to the book of Allah, we shall find Allah swt stating

"How many groups little in numbers gained victory over groups large in number by the permission of Allah".

He swt also states

"Allah shall grant victory to those whom fight for the cause of Allah as He is powerful ever mighty".

Allah also states

"It is a right upon us to grant victory to the believers" and "If you support Allah, He shall

support and grant you victory and shall make your feet steadfast".

Allah Almighty also states

"Allah has given oath to those among you who believe and do good deeds to grant them inheritance of the earth as he granted its inheritance to those before them"

and He states

"The reward shall be for the pious" and "Reward shall be for righteousness".

This is an oath given by Allah and Allah never breaks an oath. We must therefore adapt in order to deserve the fulfillment of this promise and of the victory of Allah Almighty. We have to be true believers carrying sincere piety and fear of Allah in our hearts". The Sheikh replied: "What shall we do then?" He replied: "you have to instruct the people of the island to repent to Allah from all sins that they may have committed and to relieve themselves all from any misgivings and ill-deeds they may have fallen victim to as from the day that they became adults to this day. Then we

must all gather in circles to recite the holy Quran, where each circle must finish reciting the Quran in a week after which they must all raise their hands to Allah and pray for the victory of the believers". Everyone did as they were instructed and repented from all their sins and cleared their hearts from any grudges or ill-feelings towards each other. Martyrdom became dearest to their hearts and they made an oath to Allah they would fight in the way of Allah to deserve his victory and support.

A fleet of twenty ships arrived under the command of Wardo Nobaro, who sent a messenger to the leader of the island as soon as they had arrived at the shore. The message contained the message: either surrender or prepare yourselves for battle. The sheikh said to the messenger: "Tell your master that the people of the island would rather die than surrender".

The commander was extremely angry at hearing the response and decided to punish the islanders. However, the words of the sheikh struck a cord, and the commander feared that the force with him may not be sufficient. So he sailed to Tripoli to expand on the force under his command and returned to the island with one

hundred and twenty ships carrying on board twenty thousand fully armed warriors who landed on the coast with their up-to-date weaponry and ammunition. The islanders' houses were situated away from the coast so the warriors spent the night on the coast awaiting sunrise. The distance separating the warriors and the people of Jirba was around 6 miles, and the latter spent the night praying and invoking Allah Almighty whilst the warriors spent the night singing and dancing and attempting to strike fear in the Muslims' hearts. However, this only lead to the believers becoming stronger and more steadfast and they sent several individuals to see what the enemy was doing. The time of Friday prayers came upon them and the sheikh Abul Najat delivered a speech in which he reminded the people of the importance of fighting in the way of Allah illustrating to them the rewards of the believers and fighters and martyrs in the way of Allah. After the prayers, news arrived that the enemy forces were on their way so the Muslims started to gather their numbers which, according to western sources, amounted to three thousand unskilled warriors carrying the simplest and most basic of weaponry.

However, the faith in Allah and His angels had overwhelmed their hearts and a voice raised from amongst the Muslims saying "this is a vital battle and each and every one of us must prepare to die in the way of Allah. The thing no one must consider is to retreat, so either we fight till we gain victory or we die and achieve martyrdom. Even if only one of us remained, he must stay fighting until he joins his brothers. We must also make sure that we cause as mush losses amongst the enemy, so each of us must attempt to kill at least two of them before dying".

The Muslim forces consisted of only one row of fighters in front of the many rows of the enemy. Fighting broke out between the two sides and soon the first row of the enemy was retreating to behind the second row. The invaders would tell those in the second row about how death was strife amongst their soldiers and how each of the Muslims seemed to carry a weapon of death which disregarded the superior weaponry and training of the Spaniards. As this was happening, the son of the sheikh of Jirba, Abul Rabee Sulaiman bin Abi Zakariyya, who was also an intelligent soldier thought that the Muslims were few in number whilst the enemies were much greater in number and therefore, it was vital that

the Muslims created havoc within the heart of the enemy. He thus, took a group of Muslims and approached the enemy from the rear as a result, separated the enemy from their ships. This created havoc amongst the enemy and their soldiers began to fall heavily not only at the front but also at the heart and rear. It seemed that the Muslims had surrounded them from all sides so their only refuge was to head for the ships. They arrived at the shores after dark and having lost three thousand dead and six to seven thousand prisoners as well as a considerable proportion of their weaponry. During that night, many soldiers had nightmares of what had happened earlier that day and one of them started screaming in the middle of the night that the Muslims were trying to kill him. His fellow soldiers woke up terrified and in a state of chaos starting fighting each other and killing themselves. Some decided to swim to the ships and many drowned whilst the remaining numbers who managed to get to the ships were struck by a storm which lasted a week and destroyed eighteen of the enemy's ships. Thus a strange and miraculous victory was achieved.

The Spaniards lose once more

After the events of Jirba, the Spaniards realised that in order to reclaim their reputation and authority they needed to gain victory over the Muslims somewhere, which would wipe out the bitter memories of Jirba. They sent several threats to the Muslims that they would attack one of their strongholds and this alerted the Muslims everywhere. One day, fishermen off the coast of Sfax saw the Spanish fleet in the horizon so they returned in haste to their people informing them of the bad news. The people of Sfax had gained confidence and pride in the events which unveiled in Jirba, so decided that since their brothers in Jirba had run so eagerly to martyrdom in the way of Allah, so shall we. Upon this they all ran out to the shores awaiting the enemy. The Spanish saw the shore bustling with people and thought they had no chance of attacking these many numbers who were actually awaiting their arrival, so they turned their ships and fled. However, they decided to build a base on an uninhabited island and stationed 1000 soldiers on that base. The people of Jirba heard of the Spaniards' plans so they sent 600 fighters to the island. These fighters hid in the jungles of the

island and surprised the Spaniards at night whist they were asleep. All 1000 Spaniards were killed and it took 10 years for the Spanish to rebuild their forces and authority.

In the year 926 AH, ten years after these events, the Spaniards attacked Jirba once again without warning. The fishermen who saw the enemy rushed back to the island to warn the people. The islanders stated that the hearts that had so longed for dying for the sake of Allah a decade ago, were still so, thus, we shall not fear them. Indeed a small contingent of Muslims went to face the 15,000 Christians and stroke hard at them, so that in a few hours, the Spaniards found safest to flee leaving behind them 600 dead.

Finally,

Thus, Allah Almighty enables his servants to retain the leadership and the upper hand on condition that they are true and sincere in their faith and worship and when martyrdom becomes a dear matter to their hearts. I ask Allah Almighty for his success and prosperity and thank you an bid you peace and blessings.