

THE LOFTY MOUNTAIN

By

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Abdullah Azzam

First Edition

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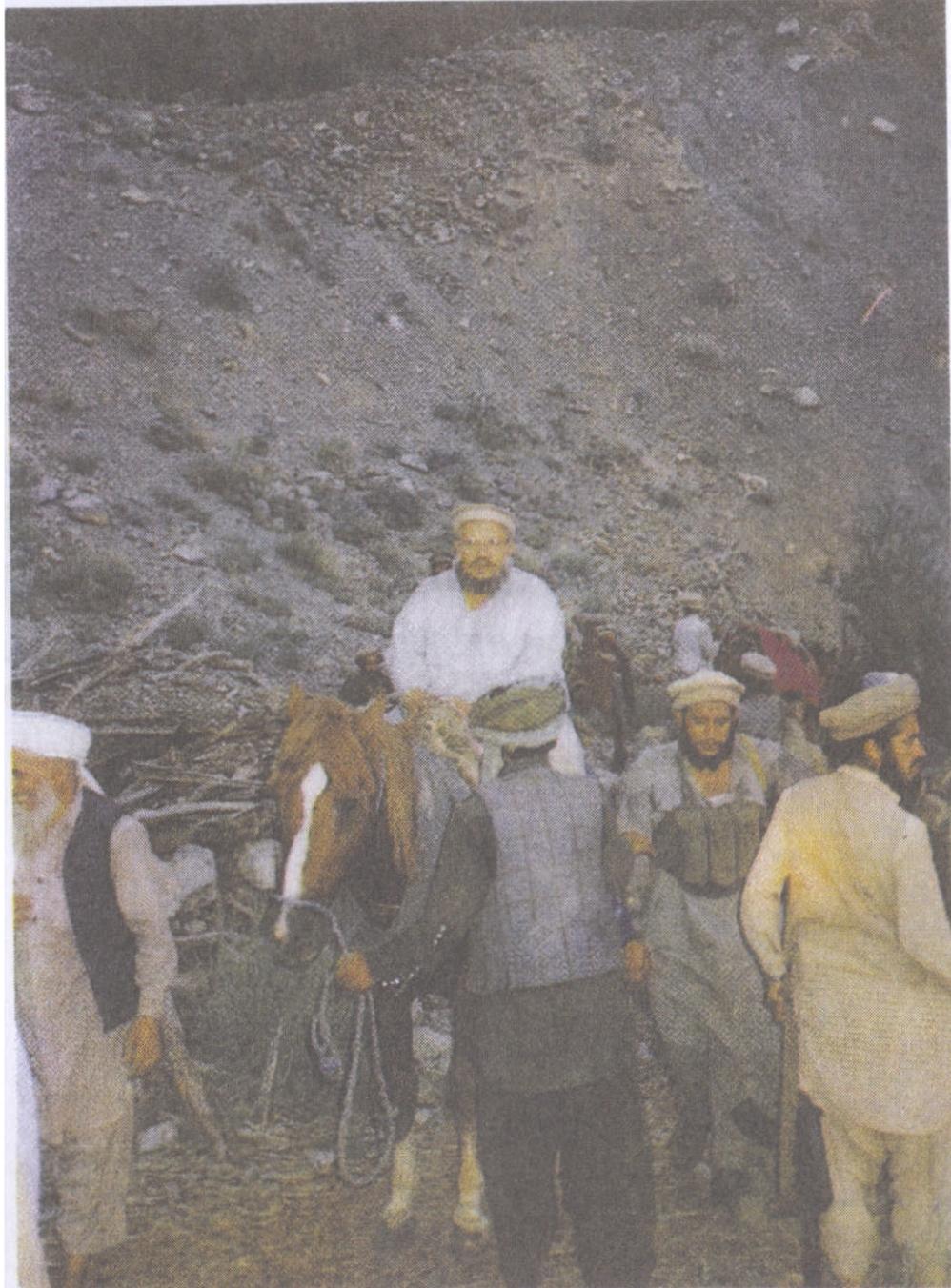
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Dedicated to Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and the Mujahideen of Afghanistan who ignited the flame of Jihad in the 20th Century and launched the vessel of this Deen upon this blessed path, raising its banner high with honour and dignity. Amongst them were those that joined the Caravans of Martyrs and amongst them are those that are still waiting...

"From amongst the believers are men who have been true to the covenant that they made with Allah (i.e. been martyred in His Way) and amongst them are those that are still waiting, but they have never changed in their determination in the least."

[Quran33:23]

“Blood is more valuable than tears.”
[Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani, 1988]



[PHOTO: Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani sitting on a horse in Afghanistan in an undated photo]

Publisher's Foreword

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. The Hereafter is for the pious, and there is no enmity except towards the unjust. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah Alone, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger. May Allah bless him, his pure Household, his noble Companions, and all those who follow them in goodness up to the Day of Judgement.

“Islamic history is not written except with the blood of the martyrs.”
[Sheikh Abdullah Azzam]

The Lofty Mountain contains the translation of perhaps the last book that Sheikh Abdullah Azzam wrote before he was assassinated. It is a unique biography of an individual that is not known to many people: the martyred Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani from Palestine, whose soul left this World in 1989, after accompanying Sheikh Abdullah Azzam in the Afghan Jihad for a number of years.

He says, Exalted is He who said it:

“Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice in a Grace and a Bounty from Allah, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers. Those who answered (the Call of) Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad, Peace be upon him) after being wounded; for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward. Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, ‘Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them.’ But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: ‘Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us).’ So they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the Good Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.” [Quran 3:169-174]

Allah - the Mighty and Majestic — had ordained that men should die in different manners, but that their status after death would depend on their intentions. He ordained that this *Deen* of His be built by the efforts of men and communities and be raised by their skulls and bodies, and according to the efforts which are exercised on the path of this *Deen*. That it is raised by pains which are borne on its Way, and by sustaining the hardships on the path. The result of all of this, then, would be the prosperity of the Friends of Allah. The *Deen* of Allah — the Mighty and Majestic — cannot be victorious by a miracle from the sky; rather man must exercise his efforts and undergo hardships.

The *Deen* of Allah will be victorious according to however much man strives, however much he sheds blood on the way, and however much his limbs fall from his side. The people will bear witness for the blood of the martyrs on the Day of Judgement — blood, the colour of which will be the colour of blood, but the smell of which will be the smell of musk¹. The angels will bear witness for them at the seizing of their souls.

It is on these people that Islam was first raised, and it will not be raised again except by that way which the Prophet (SAWS), the choicest noble Companions, and his helpers from the individuals of this *Ummah* undertook. Whoever thinks that the *Deen* of Allah can be victorious by culture and teaching only, or by political information and analysis, or observing events, or only speeches on the pulpit and guidance and sermons, then these people do not know the nature of this *Deen*, nor do they know the method of the final Messenger (SAWS).

*Kingdoms are not built like the mornings
Nor are truths adopted or enforced
For the killed ones are centuries of lives
And for the prisoners are ransoms and growing old
For the red freedom is a door
Which hammers in every bloodstained hand*

And before the words of poetry are the words of the Lord of Might:

¹ In reference to the *hadeeth*: On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: "No-one is wounded in the Path of Allah, and Allah knows best who is wounded in His Path, except that he will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wounds spurting blood. Its colour will be like the colour of blood and its smell will be that of musk." [Reported by Al-Bukhari, Book 7, No. 441.]

“Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and (also) tests those who are patient?”
[Quran 3:142]

The best men in life, as the Prophet (SAWS) said, are those who stay up when the people are sleeping, and those who cry when the people are happy. They rise up if the people spend the night in frivolous entertainment. These are the knights of this *Ummah*, its virtuous fortifications and its solid structure, who turn to Allah Alone whenever anguishes or misfortunes increase. Thus, as was narrated in the authentic *hadeeth*², whoever protects the land of the Muslims will receive the reward of the prayer of one who constantly prays, the fasting of one who constantly fasts, and the remembrance of one who constantly remembers Allah. This is because without these guards, nobody would be able to grow a beard, or rise at night, or secure their religion, their honour or their wealth.

People are moved by living examples that reside amongst them. Fine examples whose hearts are attached to the Highest Place, but their bodies live between the people, eating like the people eat and drinking like the people drink. Examples that are unique amongst the masses by their attachment to Allah and their love of meeting their Lord. And whoever loves to meet his Lord, his Lord loves to meet him³.

Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani was the last martyr in the book of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, *Ushaaq-ul-Hoor (Lovers of the Paradise Maidens)*, mentioned as *Ash-Shaheed Al-Batal Ash-Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani (The Heroic Martyr Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani)*. The unique thing about him is that Sheikh Tameem was not killed in battle, nor did he die in Afghanistan. Rather, he died of a heart attack in Orlando, Florida, USA. The short-sighted eye and the ignorant heart may immediately say, *"How can someone who dies in America of a heart attack be considered a martyr?"* The answer is clear:

² From the *hadeeth* narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): 'A man came to Allah's Messenger (SAWS) and said, "Instruct me as to such a deed that equals Jihad (in reward)." He (SAWS) replied, "I do not find such a deed." Then he (SAWS) added, "Can you, when the Mujahid goes out to the battlefield, pray without ceasing your prayer and fast without breaking your fast?" The man replied, "But who can do that?" Abu Hurairah (RA) added, "The Mujahid is rewarded even for the foot steps of his horse while it wanders about for grazing tied in a long rope. — [Reported by Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 52, No. 44]

³ From the *hadeeth* narrated by Ubadah bin As-Samit (RA) that the Messenger (SAWS) said: "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him and whoever dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him..." [Reported by Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Book 76, No. 514]

“Those who emigrated in the Cause of Allah and after that were killed or died, surely, Allah will provide a good provision for them. And verily, it is Allah who is indeed the best of those who make provision. Truly, He will make them enter an entrance, with which they shall be well-pleased, and verily, Allah indeed is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.” [Quran 22: 58-59]

Abu Malik Al-Ashari (RA) heard the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) say, *"He who goes forth in Allah's Path and dies or is killed, is a martyr, or has his neck broken through being thrown by his horse or by his camel, or is stung by a poisonous creature, or dies on his bed by any kind of death Allah wishes, is a martyr and will go to Paradise."*⁴

It was narrated from Malik bin Hadam that he said: I heard Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) say, *"What do you see in a group of three, who entered Islam together and emigrated (in the Way of Allah) together, and they did not commit any sins? The first was killed by the plague, the second was killed by an abdominal disease, and the third was killed as a martyr."* It was said to him, *"The martyr is the best of them (in rank)."* So Umar (RA) said, *"By Him in whose Hand is my soul, they will be companions in the next life just as they were companions in this life."*⁵

Whoever emigrated to assist the Jihad or emigrated with his faith to assist the *Deen*, to any country in the World, whoever left his family and Worldly comforts for the sake of Allah's *Deen*, and came to a life of hardships and difficulties and tribulations, he is considered an emigrator in the Way of Allah. And whoever emigrates in His Way is a martyr no matter how he dies, and for him is the Paradise if Allah accepts his Martyrdom.

Furthermore, it is the scholars of the Mujahideen who have more right to explain the rulings of Jihad because they are the most proficient in its knowledge. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was once asked as to what was the best way to memorise knowledge, he replied, *"Practise it."* The scholar who lives the Jihad in his daily life, who sees the whizzing of bullets, feels the moisture of trenches and smells the blood of martyrs, surely he is more worthy of explaining the rulings and laws pertaining to Jihad?

⁴ Reported by Abu Dawud, Book I4, No. 2493, Al-Haakim. Declared *Saheeh* by Al-Albani.

⁵ Reported by Saeed bin Mansoor in his *Sunan*, Vol. 2, No. 2844

Such was the status of Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani in Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's eyes that he dedicated an entire book to him, titled *At-Tood Ash-Shaamikh* (The Lofty Mountain), which many believe was the last book written by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam before he himself was martyred a few weeks later.

We are pleased to present this first edition, which has never before been published in the English language, either on paper or electronically. Translated jointly by Umm Salamah Al-Ansariyyah and *Shaheed* Suraqah Al-Andalusi, this book was compiled and translated over two years. It comprises three parts of which the biography of Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani is Part I.

Part II contains a unique first-hand account of the Battle of the Lion's Den which took place in Jaji, Eastern Afghanistan, in May 1987. This encounter was perhaps the most decisive battle that took place between the Mujahideen and their enemies in the 20th Century. Led by Usama Bin Ladin, a group of only 50 Arab Mujahideen held off a ground and air assault by several battalions of Soviet (including Spetsnaz Special Forces) and Communist forces, consisting of thousands of well-armed soldiers. The account given in this book has been translated from various sources and includes first-hand accounts of the battle from Usama Bin Ladin himself as translated from interviews conducted with an Arab journalist in both Afghanistan and Jeddah, Arabian Peninsula. This material has never before been published in the English language.

Part III contains the biography and last testament of Azzam Publications Correspondent, *Shaheed* Suraqah Al-Andalusi, who was one of the translators of this book and was martyred in the Battle for Tora Bora against American forces in Afghanistan, on 14 December 2001.

May Allah reward the sister, Umm Salamah Al-Ansariyyah, for her countless hours spent in translating and checking the material and for her patience with our never-ending requests. May Allah reward with Paradise and the ranks of martyrs, the other brothers and sisters who helped in publishing this book: the people may not know them but Allah knows them. As for Suraqah, we hope that he is in a better place than us and not in need of our supplications; nevertheless we pray

that Allah accepts his deeds and joins us with him in a state where He is pleased with us.

May Allah bring benefit by means of this book such that perhaps someone who reads this book will be the Sheikh Tameem or Suraqah of tomorrow. May He grant success and victory to all those who fight in His Way in all corners of the World. May He accept their martyrs, release their prisoners and heal their wounded.

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April 2003CE⁶/ Rajab 1424AH⁷

⁶ CE: *Christian Era* as opposed to A.D. (*Anno Domini*, In the Year of our Lord, referring to Prophet Jesus (SAWS))

⁷ AH: *Anno Hijrah*, the date signifying the migration of the Prophet (SAWS) and the Companions to Madi nah from Makkah in 622CE

Who Was Abdullah Azzam?

“Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was not an individual, but an entire nation by himself. Muslim women have proven themselves incapable of giving birth to a man like him after he was killed.”

[Usama bin Ladin, Al-Jazeera TV Channel Interview, 1999]

“He was responsible for reviving Jihad in the 20th Century.”

[Time Magazine]

“His words were not like ordinary people's words. His words were few but rich in meaning. When you looked into his eyes, your heart would fill with Iman and the Love of Allah (SWT).”

[Mujahid Scholar from Makkah]

“There is not a Land of Jihad in the World today, nor a Mujahid fighting in Allah's Way, who is not inspired by the life, teachings and works of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam.”

[Azzam Publications]

“In the 1980's, the martyred Sheikh Abdullah Azzam coined a phrase whose meaning reverberates today across the battlefields of Chechnya. The Sheikh (may Allah have Mercy upon him) described the Mujahideen who were killed in battle as joining ‘The Caravan of the Martyrs.’”

[Field Commander Shaheed Khattab of the Foreign Mujahideen in Chechnya]

Abdullah Yusuf Azzam was born in the village of Asba'ah Al-Hartiyeh, Jenin Province, in the occupied Sacred Land of Palestine in 1941. He was brought up in a humble house where he was taught Islam, and was fed with the love of Allah, His Messenger (SAWS), the Mujahideen fighting in the Way of Allah, the righteous people and the desire for the Hereafter.

Abdullah Azzam was a distinguished child who started propagating Islam from an early age. His peers knew him as a pious child. He

showed signs of excellence during his youth. His teachers recognised this while he was still at elementary school.

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was known for his perseverance and serious nature ever since he was a small boy. He received his early elementary and secondary education in his village, and continued his education at the agricultural Khadorri College, where he obtained a Diploma. Despite being the youngest of his colleagues, he was the most intelligent and the smartest. After he graduated from Khadorri College, he worked as a teacher in a village called Adder in South Jordan. Later he joined the *Shariah* College in Damascus University where he obtained a B.A. Degree in *Shariah* (Islamic Law) in 1966. After the Jews captured the West Bank in 1967, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam decided to migrate to Jordan because he could not live under the Jewish occupation of Palestine. The sin of the Israeli tanks rolling into the West Bank unmet by any resistance increased his determination to migrate in order to learn the skills necessary to fight.

In the late 1960's he joined the Jihad against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, from Jordan. Soon after that, he went to Egypt and graduated with a Master's Degree in *Shariah* from the University of Al-Azhar. In 1970, after the Jihad came to a halt by forcing the PLO forces out of Jordan, he began to lecture in the Jordanian University of Amman. In 1971, he was awarded a scholarship to the Al-Azhar University in Cairo from which he obtained a PhD Degree in the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usool Al-Fiqh*) in 1973. During his stay in Egypt he came to know the family of *Shaheed* Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966).

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam spent a long time participating in the Jihad in Palestine. However, matters there were not to his liking, for those involved in the Jihad were far removed from Islam. He told of how these people used to spend the nights playing cards and listening to music, under the illusion that they were performing Jihad to liberate Palestine. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam mentioned that, out of the thousands in the settlement that he was in, the number of people who offered their *Salah* (Prayer) in congregation were so few that they could be counted on one hand. He tried to steer them towards Islam,

but they resisted his attempts. One day he rhetorically asked one of the 'Mujahideen' what the religion behind the Palestinian revolution was, to which the man replied, quite clearly and bluntly,

"This revolution has no religion behind it."

This was the last straw. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam left Palestine, and went to Saudi Arabia to teach in the universities there. When Sheikh Azzam realised that only by means of an organised force would the *Ummah* ever be able to gain victory, then Jihad and the gun became his pre-occupation and recreation.

"Jihad and the rifle alone. NO negotiations, NO conferences and NO dialogue,"

he would say. By practising what he was preaching, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was one of the first Arabs to join the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union.

In 1980, whilst in Saudi Arabia, Abdullah Azzam had the opportunity of meeting a delegation of Afghan Mujahideen who had come to perform the *Hajj* (Pilgrimage). He soon found himself attracted to their circles and wanted to know more about the Afghan Jihad. When the story of the Afghan Jihad was unfolded to him, he felt that this was the cause for which he had been searching for so long.

He thus left his teaching position at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and went to Islamabad, Pakistan, in order to be able to participate in the Jihad and remain close to it. There he got to know the leaders of the Jihad. During the early part of his stay in Pakistan, he was appointed a lecturer in the International Islamic University in Islamabad. After a while he had to quit the university to devote his time and energy fully to the Jihad in Afghanistan.

In the early 1980's, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam came to experience the Jihad in Afghanistan. In this Jihad he found satisfaction of his

longing and untold love to fight in the Path of Allah, just as Allah's Messenger (SAWS) once said,

*“Standing for an hour in the ranks of battle waged for the Sake of Allah is better than standing in prayer for sixty years.”*⁸

Inspired by this *hadeeth*, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam even brought his family to Pakistan in order to be closer to the field of Jihad. Soon after, he then moved from Islamabad to Peshawar to remain on the doorstep of the land of Jihad and Martyrdom. In Peshawar, together with his dear friend, Usama bin Ladin, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam founded the *Bait-ul-Ansar* (Mujahideen Services Bureau) with the aim of offering all possible assistance to the Afghan Jihad and the Mujahideen, through establishing and managing projects that supported the cause. The Bureau also received and trained volunteers pouring into Pakistan to participate in Jihad and allocated them to the front-lines.

Unsurprisingly, this was not enough to satisfy Sheikh Azzam's burning desire for Jihad. That desire inspired him finally to go to the front-line. On the battlefield, the Sheikh gracefully played his destined role in that generous epic of heroism. In Afghanistan he hardly ever settled in one place. He travelled throughout the country, visiting most of its provinces and states such as Logar, Kandahar, the Hindukush Mountains, the Valley of Panjsher, Kabul and Jalalabad. These travels allowed Sheikh Abdullah Azzam to witness first hand the heroic deeds of these ordinary people, who had sacrificed all that they possessed - including their own lives - for the Supremacy of the *Deen* of Islam.

In Peshawar, upon his return from these travels, Sheikh Azzam spoke about Jihad constantly. He prayed to restore the unity among the divided Mujahideen commanders and called upon those who had not yet joined the fighting to take up arms and to follow him to the Front before it would be too late.

⁸ Reported by Ibn Adee and Ibn Asakir from Abu Hurairah (4/6165). *Saheeh. Saheeh Al-Jaami' As-Sagheer* No. 4305.

As Abdullah Azzam was greatly influenced by the Jihad in Afghanistan, similarly the Jihad was greatly influenced by him since he devoted all his time to its cause. He became the most prominent figure in the Afghan Jihad aside from the Afghan leaders. He spared no effort to promote the Afghan cause to the whole World, especially throughout the Muslim *Ummah*. He travelled all over the World, calling on Muslims to rally to the defence of their religion and lands. He wrote a number of books on Jihad, such as *Join the Caravan*, *Signs of Ar-Rahman in the Jihad of the Afghan*, *Defence of the Muslim Lands* and *Lovers of the Paradise Maidens*. Moreover, he himself participated physically in the Afghan Jihad, despite the fact that he was in his forties. He traversed Afghanistan, from North to South, East to West, in snow, through the mountains, in heat and in cold, riding donkeys and on foot. Young men with him used to tire from such exertions, but not Sheikh Abdullah Azzam.

He changed the minds of Muslims about the Jihad in Afghanistan and presented the Jihad as an Islamic cause that concerned all Muslims around the World. Due to his efforts, the Afghan Jihad became universal in which Muslims from every part of the World participated. Soon, volunteer Islamic fighters began to travel to Afghanistan from the four corners of the Earth, to fulfil their obligation of Jihad and in defence of their oppressed Muslim brothers and sisters.

The Sheikh's life revolved around a single goal, namely the establishment of Allah's Rule on Earth, this being the clear responsibility of each and every Muslim. In order to accomplish his life's noble mission of restoring the *Khilafah*, the Sheikh focused on Jihad (the armed struggle to establish Islam). He believed that Jihad must be carried out until the *Khilafah* (Islamic State) is established so the Light of Islam may shine on the whole World.

He reared his family also, in the same spirit, so that his wife, for example, engaged in orphan care and other humanitarian work in Afghanistan. He refused teaching positions at a number of universities, declaring that he would not abandon Jihad until he was either martyred in battle or assassinated. He used to reiterate that his ultimate goal was still to liberate Palestine. He was once quoted as saying,

“Never shall I leave the Land of Jihad, except in three cases. Either I shall be killed in Afghanistan. Either I shall be killed in Peshawar. Or either I shall be handcuffed and expelled from Pakistan.”

Jihad in Afghanistan has made Abdullah Azzam the main pillar of the Jihad movement in the modern times. Through taking part in this Jihad, and through promoting and clarifying the obstacles which have been erected in the path of Jihad, he played a significant role in changing the minds of Muslims about Jihad and the need for it. He was a role model for the young generation that responded to the Call of Jihad. He had a great appreciation for Jihad and the need for it. Once he said,

“I feel that I am nine years old: seven-and-a-half years in the Afghan Jihad, one-and-a-half years in the Jihad in Palestine, and the rest of the years have no value.”

From his pulpit Sheikh Azzam was always reiterating his conviction that:

“Jihad must not be abandoned until Allah (SWT) Alone is worshipped. Jihad continues until Allah's Word is raised high. Jihad until all the oppressed peoples are freed. Jihad to protect our dignity and restore our occupied lands. Jihad is the way of everlasting glory.”

History, as well as anyone who knew Sheikh Abdullah Azzam closely, all testify to his courage in speaking the truth, regardless of the consequences. On every occasion Sheikh Abdullah Azzam reminded all Muslims that,

“Muslims can never be defeated by others. We Muslims are not defeated by our enemies, but instead, we are defeated by our own selves.”

He was a fine example of Islamic manners, in his piety, his devotion to Allah and his modesty in all things. He would never adulate in his relations with others. Sheikh Azzam always listened to the youth, he was dignified and did not allow fear to penetrate his brave heart. He practised continual fasting, especially the alternate daily fasting routine of Prophet Dawud (SAWS). He strongly counselled others to practise fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. The Sheikh was a man of

uprightness, honesty and virtue, and was never heard to slander others or to talk unpleasantly about an individual Muslim.

Once a group of disgruntled Muslims sitting in Peshawar declared him to be a *kafir* (disbeliever), who was squandering the wealth of the Muslims. When this news reached Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, rather than go and argue with them, he sent them some gifts. Despite these gifts, some of them continued to abuse and slander him whilst Sheikh Abdullah Azzam continued to send gifts to them. Many years on, when they realised their mistake, they would say about him:

"By Allah, we never saw anyone like Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. He would continue to send money to us even though we were swearing at him and abusing him."

As the Jihad in Afghanistan went on, he was succeeding in uniting together all the various fighting groups in the Afghan Jihad. Naturally, such a pride to Islam caused great distress to the enemies of Islam, and the CIA and KGB jointly plotted⁹ to eliminate him. In November 1989, a lethal amount of TNT explosive was placed beneath the pulpit from which he delivered the Sermon every Friday. It was such a formidable quantity that if it had exploded, it would have destroyed the mosque, together with everything and everybody in it. Hundreds of Muslims would have been killed, but Allah provided protection and the bomb did not explode.

The enemies, determined to accomplish their ugly task, tried another plot in Peshawar, shortly after this in the same year. When Allah (SWT) willed that Sheikh Abdullah Azzam should leave this World to be in His Closest Company (we hope that it is so), the Sheikh departed in a glorious manner. The day was Friday, 24 November 1989 and the time was 12.30pm.

The enemies of Allah planted three bombs on a road so narrow only a single car could travel on it. It was the road Sheikh Abdullah

⁹ Western accusations that Usama Bin Ladin had a disagreement with Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and thus plotted to assassinate him are fictitious and far from the truth as Bin Ladin himself has publicly praised Sheikh Abdullah Azzam many times.

Azzam would use to drive to the Friday Prayer. That Friday, the Sheikh, together with two of his own sons, Ibrahim and Muhammad, and with one of the sons of the late Sheikh Tameem Adnani, drove along the road. The car stopped at the position of the first bomb, and the Sheikh alighted to walk the remainder of the way. The enemies, lying in wait, then exploded the bomb. A loud explosion and a great thundering were heard all over the city.

People emerged from the mosque and beheld a terrible scene. Only a small fragment of the car remained. The young son Ibrahim flew 100 metres into the air; the other two youths were thrown a similar distance away and their remains were scattered among the trees and power lines. As for Sheikh Abdullah Azzam himself, his body was found resting against a wall, totally intact and not at all disfigured, except that some blood was seen seeping from his mouth.

That fateful blast indeed ended the Worldly journey of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam which had been spent well in struggling, striving and fighting in the Path of Allah (SWT). It also secured for him, the real, eternal life in the Gardens of Paradise - we ask Allah that it is so - that he will enjoy along with the illustrious company of ***“...those on whom is the Grace of Allah: the Prophets, the Sincere ones, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And what an excellent Company are they.”*** [Quran 4:69]

It was in this way that this great hero and reviver of Islam departed from the arena of Jihad and from this World, never to return. He was buried in the Pabi Graveyard of the *shuhadaa* (martyrs) near Peshawar, where he joined hundreds of other *shuhadaa*. May Allah accept him as a martyr and grant him the Highest Station in Paradise.

The struggle which he stood for continues, despite the efforts of the enemies of Islam. There is not a Land of Jihad today in the World, nor a Mujahid fighting in Allah's Way, who is not inspired by the life, teachings and works of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam (may Allah have Mercy on him, a Plentiful Mercy).

We ask Allah (SWT) to accept the deeds of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and reward him with the Highest Paradise. We ask Allah (SWT) to raise up for this *Ummah* more scholars of this calibre, who take their knowledge to the

battlefield rather than confining it to the pages of books and the walls of mosques.

With this biography, we record the events of Islamic history in the 20th Century which took place in the decade from 1979 to 1989, and continue to happen. As Sheikh Abdullah Azzam himself once said,

“Indeed Islamic history is not written except with the blood of the shuhadaa, except with the stories of the shuhadaa and except with the examples of the shuhadaa.”

“They seek to extinguish the Light of Allah by their mouths. But Allah refuses except to perfect His Light, even if the disbelievers hate it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with the Guidance and the True Religion, in order that He may make it prevail over all other religions, even if the polytheists detest it.” [Quran 9:32-33]

Part I: The Lofty Mountain

Introduction

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan. I begin in the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful:

"And if you are killed or die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all that they can amass." [Quran 3:157]

"Those who emigrated in the Cause of Allah and after that were killed or died, surely Allah will provide a good provision for them. And verily, it is Allah who is the Best of those who make provision. Truly, He will make them enter an entrance with which they shall be well-pleased, and verily, Allah indeed is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing." [Quran 22:58-59]

All Praise is for Allah Alone, and Peace and Blessings on he after whom there is no Prophet.

Suddenly, this Lofty Mountain became absent: a peak of honour and glory, pride and eminence. We were taken by surprise at the event – we were not at all prepared for it. Fate rained upon us a shower of calamities and disaster. I looked at the road and the people around us, and there I found grief, sorrows and pain, blended with tears and sweat.

*The only friend in every town
When the goals increase, the helpers decrease*

Of course we continued our lives, but new disasters would scrape the scabs from the old wounds, which had not yet had a chance to heal...

*Calamities, disasters and spears
Are all allies and companions, whether they are imposed or relieved*

The truth is that writing about Sheikh Tameem like this fails to give him his due, for I truly have never met anyone like him — we consider him thus and we do not sanctify anyone above Allah. It is not enough to have books written about him, singing his praises, nor is it enough for pious men

to persevere in praising him, or the riders to entertain themselves by recollecting his anecdotes on their travels and journeys,

"And grant me an honourable mention in later generations." [Quran 26:84]

His sudden heart failure distressed us immensely, but the Prophet (SAWS) said in an authentic *hadeeth* narrated by Abdullah bin Ubaid bin Umair (RA) when Aisha (RA) asked him about the sudden death, *"The sudden death is a sad, angry taking for the disbeliever, and a mercy for the believer."*¹⁰

My Acquaintance with Sheikh Tameem

Sheikh Tameem and I knew each other through the Jihad. Our bonds of brotherly love were built on a land of burning fire, where souls prepared themselves for death, were near to their Creator and looked forward to meeting their Lord. I first met him in 1982 when he visited me at my home in Jordan during the summer. Our ties of friendship strengthened through this blessed Jihad, in which his blessings and influence affected most of the individuals and nations living in the Islamic World at the time. By the year 1408AH (1988CE), Sheikh Tameem had devoted himself entirely to the Jihad.

I never saw a man the age of Sheikh Tameem, who was also of his character. Nor did I ever see the saying of the Prophet (SAWS) about yearning for Martyrdom, represented in any man as it was in Sheikh Tameem: *"Of the men, he lives the best life who holds the reins of his horse (ever ready to march) in the Way of Allah, and flies on its back. Whenever he hears a fearful shriek or a call for help, he flies to it seeking death at places where it can be expected."*¹¹

Writing these few words hastily about Sheikh Tameem, indeed fails to give him his due, for entire volumes can be filled on the subject, no doubt. But still, it is necessary to write a few lines detailing some of the main points of his life. May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Tameem. We must here

¹⁰ Reported by Ahmad, No. 93782. *Saheeh*.

¹¹ Reported by Muslim, No. 4655

comment that in presenting a mere summary of his life, we are depriving him his full due.

Youth

Sheikh Tameem was born in Jerusalem in 1942. His father was the most famous of Palestinian poets, Muhammad Al-Adnani. He entered a contest with the poets of Palestine, including Ibrahim Tooqan, and he came first. His father's poetry is extremely eloquent but Allah did not decree for him to be influenced by the Islamic Revival. Rather, he was influenced by Nationalism and by Jamal Abdul-Nasir. Sheikh Tameem's grandfather, Khurshid Pasha, was the Governor of Jerusalem from before the Uthmanid Rule. It was Allah's decree for him to be raised in Aleppo, Syria where he learnt from its learned scholars. After he completed Secondary School, his father sent him to study Politics and Economics, for he hoped for his son to be a man of Politics. His wish came true, for Sheikh Tameem did become a man of Politics...and Jihad and Religion, for Islam encompasses both politics and worship.

The truth about Sheikh Tameem is that Allah had chosen him for this role from a very young age. Sheikh Tameem was different to the rest of his family, as he was inclined towards religion rather than nationalism. He even grew a beard in Secondary school! Disagreements arose between Sheikh Tameem and his father concerning his beard. His father would say to him, *“O my son, you are only in Secondary school and in the prime of your life! How can you grow your beard in this manner – you resemble the old men? This is shameful, now you will not be married!”*

But still, Sheikh Tameem insisted on keeping his beard. He said, *“We went to visit this Sheikh, Ahmad Al-Haroon once, when I was 15 or 16 years old. I greeted him with the rest of the men, and he looked at me and said, ‘O my son, do not make your father angry - obey him and shave your beard’”* Sheikh Tameem was astonished at this, and said, *“This was an issue which was only between me and my father in Aleppo, how did this man know of it when he was in Damascus! It was as though he was saying to me, ‘You are still young, and the beard will create many problems for you in your youth.’”*

The important point is that since his earliest youth, Sheikh Tameem was in such a state of devotion to Allah and His *Deen*. Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – later honoured Sheikh Tameem by allowing him to be educated by the eminent scholars of Aleppo. One particular Sheikh who taught him, (the *Scholar of Aleppo* as he was known), Sheikh Abdul-Fattah Abu Ghidda, was a specific source of pride for the young Sheikh Tameem. The Sheikh was most influenced by Abdul-Fattah Abu Ghidda, and he was of his top students.

Education

His father wanted to educate his son to a high level, but the question was, where should he send him for his education? He decided on sending him to Cairo. Those were the days when Jamal Abdul-Nasir was in power, so his father said to him, “*Study Economics and Commerce, for those are the subjects which are gaining respect.*” Sheikh Tameem said, “*So I was enrolled in the College of Economics. A while later, the Socialist Union held a fair and invited the College students to attend*” Since Sheikh Tameem's grandfather was Khurshid Pasha, a Governor of Jerusalem in the Uthmanid (Ottoman) Empire, and his father was the famous Palestinian poet, Muhammad Khurshid Al-Adnani, also a well-known Nationalist and Socialist, it was on this basis that Sheikh Tameem was specifically invited to attend the Socialist fair. When Sheikh Tameem entered, he said to himself, “*There are also women here (i.e. a mixed gathering).*” He then began to speak out against Socialism, saying, “*I spoke about Socialism and Nationalism, that there is no Socialism and no Nationalism in Islam.*” When Sheikh Tameem remembered this, it made him laugh his famous laugh, “*HoHoHoHo!*” and you all know it very well! He said, “*I sabotaged their fair, and they eventually were able to get rid of me with great difficulty, by kicking me out of the camp in a semi-tactful manner!*”

This took place in a time when nobody in Egypt was able to utter anything concerning Islam. Trust me, I saw it with my own eyes. During the last days of Jamal Abdul-Nasir's rule, I was completing my Master's degree in Egypt. At this time, our brothers in Egypt were not allowed to enforce the wearing of Islamic dress upon their wives. It reached a stage where any house in which a woman wore long clothes would be under Secret Services surveillance. At this time, there were

approximately 40,000 girls studying in Alexandria University, not a single one of which observed the wearing Islamic dress, except one.

There was a girl in the College of Literature, who happened to be the niece of Sayyid Qutb – may Allah have mercy on him. She wore Islamic dress, and was eventually able to convince one of her classmates to start wearing long clothes also. However, when she did so, her family went crazy, and said to her, “*You will cause a calamity to befall us! Where did you get these clothes from?*” The girl had had a dress sewn, or had taken it from the niece of Sayyid Qutb. On the day of her first exam, which was at 8.30 or 9am, her family took her *jilbaab*¹² and threw it into some water so that she would not be able to wear it, thus they could force her to go to the exam wearing shameful clothes. Therefore, she telephoned her friend and simply said, “*Bring me your other jilbaab when you pick me up, so I can wear it to university.*” The atmosphere in Egypt at that time was tense, nobody was allowed to talk about Islam at all. Islamic knowledge had died out so drastically among the masses that we used to have a maid who would come to help Umm Muhammad¹³ at home. Umm Muhammad said to me one day, “*Can you believe that there could be a woman who doesn't know that menstruation annuls fasting? She is fasting while she is menstruating.*” It was forbidden for anyone to talk about Islam at all.

His Ties to Marwan Hadeed

In Cairo, he became acquainted with Marwan Hadeed¹⁴ – may Allah have mercy on him. His name indeed reflected his character; he really was *Hadeed* (iron).

*He would shout while difficulties were staring at him
And he is unique in the field of time
A Muslim, O difficulties, you will not overcome me,
My severity is cutting, and my determination is iron*

¹² *Jilbaab*: single cloth worn by Muslim women that covers the head and chest

¹³ Umm Muhammad: the wife of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam

¹⁴ Marwan Hadeed from Syria. The founder of the *At-Tali'ah Al-Muqatilah* (*The Fighting Vanguard*) group, in Hama, Syria, in 1965, that was one of the first Islamic groups to fight the Ba'athist Syrian regime. He died in a Syrian prison in 1975.

Marwan was even bolder than Sheikh Tameem and the only person I have ever met who was bolder than Sheikh Tameem was Marwan Hadeed. These two Sheikhs were so alike in their enthusiasm, in opposing evil, in their reactions to the pains of this *Ummah*, in their liberation from any chains of fear or apprehension, and in their reliance on Allah – the Mighty and Majestic. Their reliance was in everything, from issues of sustenance to the time of their deaths. Both, also, searched for death wherever it may be. They travelled to the Jihad and lived within the Islamic Revival. Likewise, both divorced the World, with its glitter and possessions.

I saw both of these lions, and they were the bravest of beasts I have ever seen in my life. They combined courage and activity, with manners, humility and honour, and with mercy and kindness to the Muslims.

"Humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers..." [Quran 5:54]

One year, the Arab Summit Conference was to be held in Cairo. At that time, Sheikh Tameem was a student of Sheikh Marwan. It was either the first or the second Arab Summit Conference to take place in Cairo. Marwan Hadeed, together with his students, wrote a leaflet for this Summit Conference, which said words along the lines of, *'You must rule by Islam, not Western Secularism. You must do such and such.'* His students took the leaflet to the Conference, even though at the end of the leaflet it said *'Written by Marwan Hadeed, of (such and such) address'*!

Thus when Jamal Abdul-Nasir read this, he was furious, so he passed Sheikh Marwan's address on to the Secret Services and said to them, *"Keep a close eye on him."* Thus he was kept under surveillance by the Secret Services – they would follow him wherever he went. This did not decrease Sheikh Marwan's boldness. For example, Sheikh Marwan used to attend the College of Agriculture in Ain Shams University. When he stood waiting for the bus in the morning, the Secret Services Agent would wait with him. Now you all know what the buses are like in Cairo: they are always so packed that it is difficult to find a space to stand let alone sit! So when the bus came, there would be people hanging from its doors. Thus, both the Agent and Sheikh Marwan would ready themselves to jump on the bus as soon as the others got off. However, sometimes, only the Agent would be able to jump on, due to lack of space. Therefore, what Sheikh Marwan would do was

hold the arm of the Agent and pull him off the bus, saying, *“Wait for the next Bus!”* Sheikh Tameem learnt this kind of philosophy from Sheikh Marwan. Sometimes he too would ride the bus, and his own surveillance Agent would also ride it. Sheikh Tameem would take out his money to pay the fare, and would say to the conductor, *“Here is one fare for me and one fare for that Secret Services Agent who is sitting there.”* The Agent's face would redden, and after dismounting the bus, he would say to him, *“You exposed me on purpose!”* Sheikh Tameem would reply, *“No, I just wanted to relieve you of the burden of paying your fare!”*

So anyway, Sheikh Marwan – may Allah have mercy on him – wanted to return to Syria. He managed to complete his studies, even though it came to the point that his books would remain closed until the night before the exam, when he would read a few pages, and pass! He was too busy spreading the message of Islam and visiting brothers. He wanted to travel, but it was impossible with the Secret Services constantly following him, day and night. The Agent would stay with him until he retired to his room for the night, then he would go home. In the morning before *Fajr* he would again be sitting at the door of the flat. If Sheikh Marwan even went to the mosque, he would go with him. Still, he asked his brothers to book his flight for Friday. When Friday came, he said to them, *“Take my suitcases to the airport, as I want to go to the mosque to pray first.”* He said, *“The Agent was waiting for me...I entered the mosque and started to pray so then this Agent entered and started to pray too. I quickly ended my prayer and sneaked out from the mosque while he was praying, and then I took a taxi straight to the airport!”* By this time, the Agent had completed his prayer, but he could not find Sheikh Marwan so he was furious. Now, in Egypt, any foreigner who leaves Egypt needs an exit visa, but Sheikh Marwan did not have one. At the airport he was asked, *“Where is your exit visa?”* He replied, *“Look, I have finished studying and want to return to my own country. Do you want me to stay here or something?”* Eventually, they allowed him to leave without an exit visa. He thus returned to Syria.

The Syrian-Egyptian Solidarity took place in 1958, so Abdul-Nasir visited Syria. The whole of Syria went to greet the leader of the Arab Nation!! Sheikh Marwan also went. He said, *“I stood on the pavement and the topless car which was carrying Jamal Abdul-Nasir passed me by. It was moving very slowly as the crowds of people were huge! When he became*

parallel to me, I said to him, 'Go! May Allah damn you!' His look could have killed! The funny thing is, the next day he attacked the Socialists in his advocacy because he thought I was a Socialist! He was always calling for Arab Nationalism." Then Marwan himself passed to his Lord.

The Stories He Told

Sheikh Tameem used to talk about Sheikh Abdul-Fattah, and about Abul-Yusr, one of the famous scholars who taught many youth in Aleppo. He said about him:

"The Earth had become barren and the sky had become dry, so the people came and asked the Sheikh to perform the prayer for rain. Therefore, he said to the youth who were with him, 'Purify your souls, and then purify your hearts, so that we can supplicate to Allah with humility and sincerity.' So we went outside and prayed the rain prayer and the Sheikh began to supplicate, for there was not a single cloud in the sky. Upon the completion of the prayer, the rain began to pour down from the sky! The Sheikh sat down after *Maghrib*, and gave a talk to a group of traders. He said to them, *'O Youth! O my Children! Do you know what made the rain come?'* They replied, *'Yes, it was Allah.'* He said, *'But it was also due to the intention and actions of one of the brothers amongst you.'* Then he began to say, *'O brothers! You must be sincere, for that is the secret of success.'*

He began to narrate the story of this brother, without mentioning who he was, *'Amongst you there is a wealthy brother who leaves his house at night searching for the needy. We were surprised one day when a poor man said to us, "A veiled man comes to us every night in his car, which is like a relief plane, as it carries cans of food. He knocks at the door, then gives us two dishes: one containing meat and one containing something sweet. When he gives us the full dishes, he collects the empty ones from the previous night. We asked him his name, but he refused to tell us it. – O Allah, grant us Humility!"'* The Sheikh went to this man's house one night to try and discover who this veiled man was; this man who sought 60 families every night that he could feed. The trader knocked at the door. It opened and suddenly the Sheikh saw that this man was one of his own students! The Sheikh grabbed him and said, *By my life! Are you him? Is he you?'* The nameless man made his teacher swear to Allah

that he would not mention his name. The Sheikh then said to his congregation, *So whilst I am telling you this story, I am unable to tell you who this man is, even though he is sitting amongst you, for he made me swear by Allah that I would not do so!*”

Working Life

Sheikh Tameem completed university then went searching for work. In those days, the only real possibility of working as an accountant was in a bank. His sister’s husband, who was also his cousin, happened to be the Director-General of many banks in the Arab World, so he said to him *“O Sheikh Tameem, I would like to offer you a job with my bank. After a while I will promote you, and you will become, God willing, a deputy for the Director of the bank with many branches in the Arab World.”* Although it was a very tempting offer, Sheikh Tameem declined the offer. He would not even drink tea in his sister's house for a very long time, because her husband worked in a bank! Thus, he and his sister became more alienated. He would say to her, *“I will not be of those who consume Usury, or those who consume its products. Your husband deals with Usury and Allah cursed whoever consumes Usury or deals with it, or gives it, or receives it. Allah said they are all equal. Now, do you still want to feed me?”*

Sheikh Tameem told me, *“When I used to visit her, she would bring me the best food, but I would not take it from her.”* Thus, he refused to work in a bank and found a job instead, as a teacher. He was fluent in English because his father made sure he learned it, for in those days English was very sought after. There was a private school in Jenin, I can still remember its name - *Al-Madrassah Al-Arabiyyah* – which was for both boys and girls. Sheikh Tameem began to work there as an English teacher. I myself heard at that time, for I was in Jenin, a rumour that a man named Tameem Al-Adnani is teaching English in this school and he is very good at his subject.

Marriage

He noticed Umm Yasir amongst the other girls, for she was modestly dressed and seemed religious. The reason he was able to notice her was that Islamic dress was forbidden in Syria at that time. So to him, this girl wearing a skirt which covered her knees, long socks, and covering her hair,

showed her inclination towards the *Deen*. He asked around concerning her family background and was told that she came from *Arabiyy*, from the family of *Sinan*. So he went to her family and asked for her hand in marriage and they were married. This caused tension and disputes between him and his family, for his family wanted him to marry a girl from a distinguished family, like the families of Khurshid and Al-Adnani. What is more is that they wanted him to marry a girl who would at least wear short sleeves! But to wear long clothes, and to even go outside wearing long socks, was a great shame upon them! I can believe it, for at that time I never saw a single student or a teacher in Secondary School covering all her flesh, even with socks!

In fact, I remember one of my Islamic teachers telling me that he sent his niece to Secondary School, but he made her school dress long. When the Headmistress saw a girl wearing a long dress, - when it was only supposed to come down to the knee at most (!) - and covering her hair, she sent for the girl and asked her, *“Why are you wearing long clothes?”* The girl replied, *“This is how my family wants it.”* The Headmistress said to her, *“Get out!”* She sent her out into the sun when she should have been in classes, to punish her for dressing this way! The second day was also spent outside in the sun, so the girl went back to her uncle and told him about the Headmistress’s reaction. He said to his niece, *“If she sends you out one more time, I will go and complain about her to the Ministry of Education. She should not think that the law is on her side because just as short clothes are a personal freedom, so are long clothes a personal freedom.”* When the Headmistress was told that the uncle was prepared to lodge a complaint against her, she did not bother the girl any longer.

A Wide Sustenance

When Sheikh Tameem was married, he used to get paid very little. After that, however, Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – ordained for him to travel to Saudi Arabia. Due to his proficiency in English he obtained a post in a British airplane company as an interpreter and his salary thus increased. The Director of this English company happened to be looking for a Purchasing Manager. Therefore, he set Sheikh Tameem a little ‘honesty test’. He told him to go to the market and buy him a vacuum cleaner. Sheikh Tameem did so and found the best bargain in the market. He

asked for a receipt from the shopkeeper, who then said to him, *“Shall I write a higher price on it?”* (so that Sheikh Tameem could claim more money from the company than he paid). He replied, “No.” The shopkeeper was astonished at his honesty and exclaimed, *“Why?! Everyone does it!”* Sheikh Tameem replied, *“I will not wrongly claim back more than I paid.”* He went back to his boss with the receipt and the leftover money. His boss asked him how much he paid for it and where he bought it from, then he went to the same shop himself and asked the shopkeeper how much Sheikh Tameem had paid for the item. The shopkeeper replied, *“He paid the price quoted on the receipt. I asked him if I should make the receipt price higher, but he refused.”* Thus the Director realised that he was trustworthy, and appointed him as the Purchasing Manager.

The company then became contracted with the Dhahran Airbase and Sheikh Tameem was posted to work there. He was given a company house and his salary increased to SR21000 (approx US\$6000) a month. Sheikh Tameem’s routine was that he would go from home to the mosque then to work, then he would return home. The managers of the Airbase noticed his sobriety and piety, so they placed him in charge of the Dhahran Airbase Mosque and appointed him to deliver the Friday sermons. He was not a scholar, but Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – caused his words to touch the hearts. He told me, *“There were many young brothers who attended the mosque, who had a profound knowledge of the Sunnah, and knew the strong and weak hadeeths by heart. They began to drive me crazy, for whenever I finished a talk and came down from the pulpit to greet the people, all I would hear was, ‘Sheikh Tameem, you cited a weak hadeeth. It has so-and-so in its chain, and he is deemed unreliable.’ So I told them one day, ‘You have driven me crazy! I don't know about the science of hadeeth! So bring me the authentic hadeeths and I will use only them in my lectures!’”*

Sheikh Tameem would say whatever was in his heart, due to which his mosque became a centre of attraction for the people of Eastern Arabia. His congregation increased so much that the authorities were forced to extend the mosque four times its original size. Sheikh Tameem would see football being played (during *Salah* time), so he would talk about the evil of football. Then the authorities would come to him and say, *“Sheikh Tameem, don't talk about football. You are a good man; keep your topics within the mosque.”* Then he spoke

about Usury, and again, they would say to him, “*O Sheikh Tameem, you are in an Airbase, don't talk about these kind of topics.*” So he turned to them and asked, “*So what do you want me to talk about? Shall I talk about anything?*” They meekly replied, “*Sheikh Tameem, you are in a sensitive area, a military base. And in a sensitive area you cannot touch on sensitive topics. Your salary is SR21,000 and mine is less than that even though I am in charge of you. We give you SR3, 500 extra, and for that I implore you to protect your position and your centre.*” He replied, “*By Allah, my salary is not from you - it is from the Lord of the Worlds. Whenever He wills, He will take it away. He opened the door of sustenance and whenever He desires, He will close it again.*”

The Call of Afghanistan

Whilst in Dhahran, Sheikh Tameem heard of the Afghan Jihad. He recognised that it was the Truth, so he began to react to it and speak of its miracles. This drew the crowds even more, and the people began to donate money to the Afghan Jihad. The first year he was able to collect around SR200,000 (approximately US\$50,000) and he brought it to Afghanistan in his annual holiday, which he spent with the brothers. There was not an office in those days to unite the Arab Mujahideen, for they were only a small group commanded by Sheikh Sayyaf¹⁵ in Jaji. They all inhabited a single tent, nicknamed the ‘*Arab Tent*’. Sheikh Tameem stayed here on his second and third visits.

Anyway, his salary was SR21,000 plus SR3,500 for the Friday sermons, and a free furnished house. However, he said to the officials when they would remind him of his salary, “*Three thousand five hundred Riyals are from Allah. Allah sent this money. I swear by Allah, not a dirham of it goes in my pocket: it is for the Mujahideen in Afghanistan. It came from Allah and will return to Allah. It was a bonus on top of my salary, and Praise be to Allah, my salary is sufficient for me.*” He would collect it at the end of the month and keep it with him to give to the Jihad.

¹⁵ This was written before Abdu Rabbir-Rasool Sayyaf joined the Northern Alliance and the Americans against the Taliban

Upon his return to Dhahran from Afghanistan, Sheikh Tameem delivered the lecture, *'My First Journey to Afghanistan.'* It was received with enthusiasm and due to this, he was able to collect an even greater amount of money, and he brought it to Afghanistan in his second annual visit. This visit was spent with Sheikh Sayyaf in the *Arab Tent*.

In the second year, then, he collected close to SR1 million (approximately US\$275,000) and brought it to Sheikh Sayyaf. He went to the *Arab Tent*: this was the tent in which Noorudeen Al-Iraqi was martyred, and all in the tent can bear witness that the smell of his blood was like that of musk. You were in that tent, were you not Abu Ahmad Al-Jaza'iri, and you too, Abdul-Qadir Al-Jaza'iri? Abul-Hassan and Abu Hamza, you were also there that year. Anyway, Sheikh Tameem was with Sheikh Sayyaf that year. It was the year in which Jaji was badly burned by the bombers. In this year, Sheikh Sayyaf devoted himself to the struggle. He was stationed for four whole months that year. Sometimes he would issue himself with anti-aircraft missiles¹⁶, and in those four months the Mujahideen on this front brought down 24 enemy planes. It was a great victory from Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

Sheikh Tameem was very pleased and excited about what he saw that year in Afghanistan, so he again returned home and recorded his second cassette, *'My Second Journey to Afghanistan'*. It was a huge success.

Therefore, in the third year, Sheikh Tameem announced at the beginning of *Shaban*, *"Insha-Allah, I am going to Afghanistan soon, so whoever wants to donate anything to the Mujahideen, I will give it with this very hand to Sheikh Sayyaf."* The money began to flow in and he told the people that he was leaving a couple of days before *Rama dan*.

¹⁶ There is a myth that the CIA donated Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to the Afghan Mujahideen, which enabled them to defeat the Soviets. The truth is that the Saudi Arabian Government paid the US Government US\$1 million each for the Stinger missiles, which were then sent to Pakistan. Pakistani Intelligence then sold the Stinger missiles to the Mujahideen for prices ranging from US\$70,000 to US100,000. Sheikh Tameem Al -Adnani himself saw the invoices from the purchase of these missiles. The other point to mention is that the first Stinger missiles did not reach Afghanistan until 1986, so what explains the Mujahideen victories in the first six years of the war, 1980-1986?

This posed a problem, for the Saudi Arabians only pay their *Zakah* in *Ramadan*, so they did not want to give him their money before that. He assured them, *“I will take the money from you here, in Shaban, but I will not give it to the Mujahideen until Ramadan, so it will be counted as your Zakah.”* Every Friday, the money flowed in with abundance. Sheikh Tameem said, *“By Allah, the Officials would come to my house at night and say to me, ‘O Sheikh Tameem, here is fifty thousand Riyals’ or ‘Here is a hundred thousand Riyals. But we don’t want anyone to know that we gave you any money.’”*

In this way he collected SR4million (approximately US\$1.1million) by Wednesday 12 *Shaban*. The P.I.A. (Pakistan International Airlines) flight to Pakistan was every Wednesday. The Officials came to him and said, *“We have received orders that you are to hand the money to us and that we are to deliver it to the Mujahideen ourselves.”* Sheikh Tameem replied angrily, *“By Allah, you will not take a single Riyal.”* The Officials were shocked, *“What? An order came from high places and you are disobeying it?!”* He said, *“By Allah, you will not take a single Riyal, except over my dead body. I promised the people in the mosque that I would deliver it to Sheikh Sayyaf myself.”* They questioned him, *“Are you disobeying orders? Orders from high places?”* He replied, *“The orders of our Lord are higher, and they tell me that I must deliver the money to Sheikh Sayyaf myself!!”* Sheikh Tameem looked at this man who was interrogating him, who then said, *“O Sheikh Tameem, we are not able to oppose orders!”* Sheikh Tameem said, *“He and I were in the room alone, and I went crazy. I thought to myself ‘How can he take the money of the Mujahideen without me knowing what he is going to do with it?’ So I got up, grabbed hold of his neck and said to him, ‘Sheikh Sulaiman – fear Allah, fear Allah!’”* He feared that Sheikh Tameem would strangle him, for he saw him roaring and thundering and getting angrier, *“Allah will ask you about this money of the Mujahideen!”* The Official said to him, *“O Sheikh Tameem! O Sheikh Tameem! I swear to Allah that I love Allah, and I swear to Allah that your cassettes are in my house. O Sheikh Tameem, my wife listens to your cassettes, and my daughters send donations to the Mujahideen.”* Sheikh Tameem continued, *“Fear Allah! Fear Allah! Fear Allah! ...”*

Rumours then began to spread that Sheikh Tameem stole the money and had no intention of giving it to the Mujahideen, so the Officials

came and made him account for every Dirham and Riyal, and made him give receipts for the gathered monies. He said, *“By Allah, if they had found a single Riyal unaccounted for, they would have disfigured me.”* The next day, they said to Sheikh Tameem, *“Beware...make your journey a secret, for they (i.e. the Saudi Government) may prevent you from going.”* So when Sheikh Tameem delivered the Friday sermon, he said, *“My fourth journey to Afghanistan is after midnight on such-and-such day, from Dhahran Airport, flying with P.I.A. So whoever wants his mother to lose her child, or to make his children orphans, or to make his wife a widow, then follow me to Dhahran Airport!!”*¹⁷ The next day some Officials came after him saying, *“Sheikh Tameem! What is this? Are you defying the State? Making our women widows and our children orphans?!”* He said to them, *“No, I meant make the Socialists' women widows, and their children orphans, not yours.”* The only answer the Security Officials could find for this man was, *“Go, Sheikh Tameem, may Allah not refuse your request. May Allah not refuse you, so that we can be relieved of you!”* He humbly replied, *“With the Permission of Allah I will not be refused. May Allah answer your dua and take me as a Shaheed.”*

Sheikh Tameem came to Afghanistan, and delivered the money to Sheikh Sayyaf. He entered into battles, where the airplanes would change their positions, so Sheikh Sayyaf would say to Sheikh Tameem, *“Get down to the floor! Stand up! Get down to the floor! Stand up!”* Sheikh Tameem said, *“He saw me throwing myself down and getting up again, and he laughed and said, ‘Sheikh Tameem didn't appear like he was getting down to the floor because his length and his width were the same!’”*

In Afghanistan

Sheikh Sayyaf spoke about Sheikh Tameem saying, *“Sheikh Tameem accompanied me to Kabul and we were with Sheikh*

¹⁷ A similar statement to this was said by Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) to the Quraish on the day he was making *hijrah* from Makkah to Madinah. He went to the Sacred Mosque and announced publicly, *“If Allah wills, Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) will be making hijrah to Madinah on such-and-such day. So whoever wants his mother to lose her child, or his children to become orphans, or his wife to become a widow, then let him meet me in such-and-such place at such-and-such time.”*

*Rabbani*¹⁸. When we reached Azrow, we began to ascend a high mountain. Sheikh Tameem was not able to manage the climb to its summit, for he weighed over 155 kg. Yet he still insisted on the ascent, so we brought him a horse, but when he mounted the horse, his weight brought fear into the horse!" So when Sheikh Tameem dismounted the horse, it would kick whenever it saw him again to prevent him from remounting it, because he was heavier than the maximum load it could carry!

Sheikh Sayyaf said, *"I swear by Allah that I was humbled by Sheikh Tameem's courage and his determination. By Allah, however much money I would have been paid, I would not have been able to ride a horse on this path. The path was no wider than one foot (30 cm) so if the horse slipped at any place, it meant than Sheikh Tameem would fall with the horse and plunge to the bottom of the valley and be smashed into pieces!"*

While we were ascending the mountain, a man came to us shouting, *"Sheikh Tameem has fallen from the horse!"* So I said to myself, *"Allah is Sufficient for us!"* How would we now rescue Sheikh Tameem's body from the bottom of the valley for its burial? But upon my arrival at where the incident had occurred, I found that a mound of sand, deposited by Allah, had saved Sheikh Tameem from plunging deep into the mountain pass! This close encounter with death did not quell Sheikh Tameem's desire to ascend the mountain on horseback, for he once again insisted on mounting the horse. By this time, the night had lowered its curtains. The horse trudged on with breathless sighs. It passed under a low-hanging branch of a tree, which caught on Sheikh Tameem's neck and flung him backwards. He continued to hold on to the horse's reins, causing the horse to fall onto his chest. He hurled it from his ribs with both hands, but it was decreed by Allah that his knee should be smashed in the process. The herald once again alerted Sheikh Sayyaf and Sheikh Rabbani. Upon the sight of Sheikh Tameem lying on the floor, Sheikh Rabbani laughed heartily, and said in jest, *"This is your punishment; you wanted to squash many people, so Allah caused the horse to squash you!"*¹⁹

¹⁸ This was written well before Burhanudeen Rabbani allied himself with the Communist Northern Alliance and the Americans against the Taliban

¹⁹ It was well-known of Sheikh Tameem that he would jokingly threaten to squash his fellow Mujahideen, for example, when the young Mujahideen would be lazy in getting up for the *Fajr* Prayer

A similar incident occurred once when Sheikh Tameem went to visit the brave commander, Jalaludeen Haqqani²⁰. He had a horse, which Sheikh Tameem wanted to ride. When he mounted it, this horse too, found on its back a load heavier than it could carry, which was 140 kg. So after Sheikh Tameem dismounted the horse, the horse looked at him and memorised his appearance. Thus, whenever he tried to mount it after that, the horse began to neigh and raise its tail in protest!

The Guarding

One thing I will never forget is his guarding which took place throughout the year, despite the heavy snows in the Lion's Den Camp. He would wait calculat ingly, surrounded by boys no older than his son, and display the type of enthusiasm by which his character distinguished. Enthusiasm which stemmed from an anguish which ate at his heart and soul, and which was caused by the pains and sufferings of the Muslims. Enthusiasm which stemmed from a heart that was overwrought with emotion, and from a soul which aspired for Martyrdom by any means.

He partook in a few military operations in Afghanistan, where he was particularly impressed by the bravery of one of Jalaludeen Haqqani's commanders, Muhammad Hassan. He witnessed some miracles with him. For example, Sheikh Tameem said, *“I went on an expedition to invade a fort and Muhammad Hassan wanted to ride on his horse, barely 100m away from the enemy fort. I said to him, ‘O my brother, they will see you. They will kill you.’ But he would reply, ‘O Sheikh Tameem, **“And no person can ever die except by Allah's Leave and at an appointed term.” [Quran 3:145]”***

He learnt from Muhammad Hassan, *tawakkul* (reliance) on Allah. Sheikh Tameem said, *“We went on an expedition to invade a fort and were at a distance of only 100-200m from the fort. Muhammad Hassan was riding high on his horse, thus being apparent to any of the enemy in the fort. So I said to him, ‘Can't you at least lower your head, or else move further away from the fort?’ He replied, ‘Don't worry, they cannot see us, for I read the*

²⁰ Sheikh Jalaludeen Haqqani: based in the Paktia Province of South-Eastern Afghanistan, one of the bravest and most fearless of the Afghan Mujahideen commanders and former Taliban Chief of Staffs, who inflicted crippling defeats on both the Russians (1979-1989), Communists (1979-1992) and Americans (2001+)

verse, “And we have put a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see.” [Quran 36:91]”

Sheikh Tameem learned this verse from him, so that he could use it whenever he wanted a person or enemy not to see him. Whenever he wanted Allah to ease a matter for him, he would read this verse. And believe me, my brothers, he recited this verse with such conviction that it always worked! I can give you the example of the security checkpoints. On the road to Sada were several checkpoints manned by the enemy. They were particularly harsh on the Arabs in their searching and questioning. They particularly posed a problem for the Arabs who were being questioned in Pushto or Farsi, but could not reply as they did not know these languages. Thus they would be sent back in the direction from which they came. I myself was sent back from this gate twice, after sunset. I had travelled all the way from Peshawar and I had almost reached my destination, Sada, when they sent me back!

What some of us used to do to get around this problem was to search for alternate routes. There was a mountain nearby, so our Afghan driver would drop us off at the base of the mountain, then he would drive on through the checkpoint. We would pass the checkpoint on foot by traversing the mountains or crossing a river, then meet the driver somewhere on the other side. Sheikh Tameem never had to do this a single time: he always just stayed in the car. Before he reached the point he would recite: **“And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they can not see.” [Quran 36:91]** and a barrier would be placed between them, for he was never sent back!

After witnessing Muhammad Hassan's attitude, Sheikh Tameem increased in boldness and began talking about the miracles of Muhammad Hassan and Sheikh Jalaludeen Haqqani.

One of the brothers who was in the tent said, *“By Allah, I prayed the prayer of Istikharah²¹, and afterwards I said, ‘O Allah, if Sheikh Sayyaf is on the Truth, then bring down an airplane now.’ This was because two months had passed and not a single plane had been brought down. After ten or fifteen minutes, a plane came and attacked. Sheikh Sayyaf began to fire*

²¹ *Istikharah*: prayer for seeking Allah's guidance on a matter

on the DShk or the Zakoyak, and within fifteen minutes the plane was brought down. I knew it was from Allah.”

After this year, Sheikh Tameem's devotions fully turned to the Jihad. He came, he took up positions, he prepared himself, he trained, he fought, and he incited the Muslims to fight. May Allah have Mercy on him.

*I sacrificed myself and what my right hand possesses
Knights, in whom I trust my doubts
Knights who do not fear death
If war broke out, there would be violent deaths*

His Courage

One day Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin had to travel back to Saudi Arabia so he looked for someone to replace him in his absence. He found Abu Hajar²², who used to lead them in prayer and said to him, “*O Abu Hajar, you will be the Ameer (leader) in my absence.*” After Usama left, Sheikh Tameem went to Abu Hajar and said, “*O Abu Hajar, we want to attack one of the fronts.*” Abu Hajar replied that he could not make such a big decision in the absence of Abu Abdullah. Sheikh Tameem, however, kept on at him, urging him to take the initiative and allow them to set out, until he finally was able to convince Abu Hajar that it was necessary to go into battle in the Way of Allah before Abu Abdullah returned.

They prepared themselves, and Sheikh Tameem left with some other brothers. When they were halfway to their destination, Abu Abdullah returned from his trip and asked of Sheikh Tameem's whereabouts. He was told that he was on an operation and so Abu Abdullah was absolutely flabbergasted. He ordered their immediate return. Abu Hajar contacted Sheikh Tameem on the radio and, “*Abu Abdullah has ordered you to return.*” Sheikh Tameem replied, “*Tell him that I will not return.*” He tried to convince him, but it was of no use. The problem was that if the enemy opened fire, it would be difficult for Sheikh Tameem to escape. They

²² Abu Hajar Al-Iraqi, real name Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, was the Imam of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, having been blessed with a beautiful voice. Cassettes of his recitation are sold in the Arab World and his recitation is also online at Islamway.com. He is currently imprisoned in New York, having been extradited there from Germany in 1998.

were at the lowest part of the mountain — the younger men were like gazelles in their ability to bound up the mountain and climb it, but Sheikh Tameem could not do this. So when Sheikh Abu Abdullah heard Sheikh Tameem's reply, he grabbed hold of the radio and said to him, "*Sheikh Tameem, return at once! If you do not, then you will be sinful, for I am your Commander and I am ordering you to return!*" As soon as Sheikh Tameem heard the words, "*you will be sinful,*" and "*I am your Commander,*" he returned, but he swore that he would not eat or drink until he took part in an operation. Abu Abdullah did not agree to let him participate in an operation, and thus he was unable to eat or drink, so as not to break his promise!

After three days had passed without Sheikh Tameem consuming any food or water, he naturally became weak. Thus, Sheikh Abu Abdullah was compelled to arrange an operation for him, just so he could fulfil his oath! They went to a mountain peak near the enemy posts, and fired a few mortars and machine guns; and so Sheikh Tameem kept his promise!

An Arduous Test

When Sheikh Tameem returned to Dhahran, he found that the situation there had changed. Firstly, they stopped him from giving the Friday Sermons. However, he still made preparations to record his third cassette, '*My Third Journey to Afghanistan.*' However, now the problem arose of where he would deliver this lecture? The actions of the authorities did not deter his determination: all he did was to put a tape recorder in his house and record the tape at home. He then presented it for distribution and even this tape spread like wild fire. When the authorities heard of what he had done, they reclaimed his house. Thus the tension between him and the authorities became more intense.

The final order was given that Sheikh Tameem could no longer work in Saudi Arabia and he must leave the country immediately. He protested that it would interrupt his children's schooling, so they replied, "*Your children may finish school, after which you must agree to leave the country calmly and peacefully.*" Now normally when someone is evicted from the country, the authorities will stamp in their passport, words to the effect of, "*Expelled from the country,*" in that they will not allow him to enter again after that, but they did not do this for Sheikh Tameem. They

continued to allow him to enter Saudi Arabia. He agreed to leave, but the problem arose of where he should now go. The Qataris said to him, *“You are welcome to come to Qatar. We will embrace you and accommodate you.”* Therefore, he went to Qatar, where once again he attracted swarms of people.

From Qatar he came to Afghanistan, and he wanted to devote himself entirely to the Jihad, but he needed to support his family in his absence. Thus brother Usama Bin Ladin – may Allah reward him – assured Sheikh Tameem, *“I will look after your family financially, don't worry about that. Just come and fight with us.”* Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin was the one who constructed the camp in Jaji, and by Allah, whenever I remember those days, Sheikh Tameem rises a degree in my eyes. He fought alongside young men who were the age of his children, one of which was sometimes his commander. Once it was Saifudeen Al-Maghribi and another time it was Abdur-Rahman, but whoever it was, Sheikh Tameem would still be there in the snow, sacrificing himself for Allah's reward, and remaining obedient to his leaders.

His Travels

Sheikh Tameem toured a group of countries speaking about the Afghan Jihad; as this was the only problem that his soul could consider. It commanded his feelings, his senses, and his soul. He travelled to Nigeria to open an exhibition there on the Afghan Jihad and he gave lectures in English, which he spoke fluently. In Nigeria, Sheikh Tameem became the talk of the town; all of the newspapers and television channels broadcast his speeches.

He used to gather gold from women to give to the Mujahideen. Once he collected some gold in Jordan and put it in a bag. At this point, a brother phoned Afghanistan from Sweden saying, *“Where is Sheikh Abdullah Azzam? I want to speak to him because he promised to send us Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani to deliver some lectures here in Sweden.”* He was in so much demand that while he was in the middle of one event, he would be required for the next. Anyway, Sheikh Tameem wanted to bring this gold to Peshawar. He went from Jordan to Saudi Arabia by car, and at the Saudi Arabian border they search everything, for fear of any type

of smuggling, especially drugs. Their searching was so thorough that they would sometimes even dismantle the car frame! Naturally, this also happened to Sheikh Tameem: the whole of the car, even inside the tyres, were searched; everything, that is, except the one bag that contained the gold! He took it from Saudi Arabia to Qatar, and then to Peshawar, where he gave it to the Mujahideen!

Another time we were together in the United Arab Emirates. There Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – made the hearts of the people accept his words fully. His speeches used to reach the hearts very quickly. He would say to the women, *“I will make dua (supplication), and I will tell the Mujahideen to make dua, for every sister who contributes her jewellery to them.”* Thus, through approximately three lectures that he gave only for women, he gathered about 4 kg of gold earrings, bracelets, and the like! We put them in a bag, and I said to him, *“O Sheikh Tameem, shall we take it with us?”* He replied in the affirmative so I said to him, *“But to take this amount of gold into the country is forbidden.”* He said, *“Don't worry, I will read on it, ‘**And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see,**’ [Quran 36:9] and it will be allowed through. Our intention, insha-Allah, is pure, for all we want is to serve the Jihad and the Mujahideen. We want this gold to go through for the sake of the Mujahideen.”* And so it happened. I was with him and we had a bag containing 4kg of gold. In Peshawar Airport, they searched our luggage, but allowed the bag to pass through, without even opening it. If Sheikh Tameem ever believed in something, he would observe it to the letter.

Courageous Stances

Sheikh Tameem – may Allah have Mercy on him – used to take up such stances, that by Allah, I never knew anyone who was able to stand these stances with such boldness. For example, when he went to one of the Persian Gulf states and was going through Immigration, there was a Palestinian man behind him who did not have an entry visa, so the officials forbade him from entering the country. After him, a Western man also went through Immigration, but did not have a visa. The officials asked for his passport and then said to him in English, *“Which country are you from?”* When the Western man replied, the official stamped his passport and allowed him to pass. When Sheikh Tameem saw

the injustice which had happened, he grabbed both passports from the hands of their owners, ran to the issuing desk, stood on top of it and shouted, *“Come and see! Look what is happening! This Palestinian man was prevented from entering, while this Western Kafir was permitted to enter. Where is Islam?”*

Whatever Sheikh Tameem – may Allah have Mercy on him – believed to be the truth, came from his mouth, and no blame can fall on him Islamically for doing so. When he considered a situation, he considered it only if it would please Allah or not please Him; if it pleased Allah he would perform it, whatever the outcome.

Sheikh Tameem – may Allah have mercy on him – was very blunt with those around him. Once Sheikh Sayyaf reproached him saying, *“Sheikh Tameem, at one time you used to come and visit us every night, now you don't even come once a month.”* So Sheikh Tameem replied, *“I am like the man who is married four times. I am married to so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so,”* and he mentioned the names of four Commanders, so Sheikh Sayyaf laughed and said to him, *“O Sheikh Tameem. He who has married four women will go to each one every four nights, but we don't even see you one night in a whole month!”* They would take whatever Sheikh Tameem said, to be the truth, however much they did not like it.

The Battle of the Lion's Den, Jaji, Afghanistan, 1987

Then 17 *Shaban* 1407 AH (April 1987CE) came. It was the first operation that was undertaken by the Arabs without the help of the Afghans, and it was led by our beloved brother, Usama Bin Ladin. Sheikh Tameem said to him, *“I want to take part in it,”* but Abu Abdullah said to him, *“O Sheikh Tameem, stay here and fire the mortars.”* He and Abdur-Rahman were placed in charge of the mortars on the high ground. By Allah, I will not forget the sight of Sheikh Tameem when he was bidding farewell to the young soldiers as they left the Lion's Den on their way to the battle. He would embrace them and cry with every embrace. In this battle, Ahmad Az-Zahrani was killed.

One month after this battle, the Battle of *Ramadan* happened, where Russia attacked full on with all of its horses and men. On that day, Sheikh Tameem

felt that he could smell the Paradise and that the breeze of its trees had drawn near, so he turned to Allah asking for Martyrdom.

Searching for Martyrdom

On 26 *Ramadan* 1407AH (May 1987CE), the enemy forces attacked. On 30 *Ramadan*, Sheikh Abu Abdullah ordered the group to break their fast so they could go out and fight, but Sheikh Tameem refused, saying *“I am in the front-line of fire. Maybe Allah now will grant me Martyrdom whilst I am fasting!”* The Soviet Commander advanced his troops and a fierce battle ensued. The Soviet Generals had defied Gorbachov. He had ordered them to withdraw from Afghanistan but they said to him, *“If we withdraw now, in this lowly, despicable manner, we will not give you that magical stick which you shoved into the face of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation).”* This frightened Gorbachov, so he asked them what they wanted. They replied, *“Give us just this summer to attack the borders of Afghanistan and seal them off, then after that we will throttle the Jihad in Afghanistan.”* He gave them permission to do what they wanted until the end of summer, so they arranged this sweeping attack.

Simultaneously, they launched offensives on Nangarhar, Kandahar and Paktia (at Jaji) provinces. The offensive on the Mujahideen Lion's Den Camp at Jaji was so fierce that it was the first operation the Muslims actually wanted to end. Even though we were on top of the mountain, it was shaking under our feet! The enemies of Allah had twenty-six 21-barrel BM-I3²³ Katyusha rocket launchers, which fire 21 rockets at a time. They brought the Communist Gardez Division, the Grozny Division, and three of the Kabul Divisions. Five regular Soviet Army battalions participated, in addition to two elite Spetsnaz Special Forces battalions.

The habit 'of the Russians was to first attack for three or four days with the airplanes bombing day and night so that the Mujahideen flee the area. Therefore, they bombed from 26 to 29 *Ramadan*. Then the tanks, the rocket launchers and the artillery began to fire, so the shells came from every

²³ BM-I3 'Katyusha' MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), capable of firing 21 rockets at a time, each of calibre 132mm

direction. The sky was raining bombs and the Earth was erupting volcanoes. Finally, on 30th Ramadan, the Russians advanced. Sheikh Tameem said to Abu Abdullah, *“I want to be in the front-line of fire!”* But he replied, *“No, you stay in the Radio Control Room with Abu Mahmood As-Soori.”* Sheikh Tameem replied, *“Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best of Judges,”* as a measure of his dissatisfaction with this command.

He sat at the door of the Control Room, which was underground. A tree marked the entrance, so he sat under this tree and began to recite the Quran. Meanwhile, the shelling continued like rainfall: bombs, planes, and mortars rocketed in from all sides. With all of this taking place around him, Sheikh Tameem was saying,

“O Allah, grant me Martyrdom for Your Sake on 30 Ramadan! O Allah, do not forsake me of Martyrdom on the last day of Ramadan.” He said to me, *“The bullets passed in front of my nose, in front of my ears, and I thought to myself with surety, ‘Now Martyrdom will come.’ Whenever I came across a verse of the Quran mentioning Paradise I would repeat it twice, three times, so that perhaps the bullet might hit me upon the mention of Paradise. I completed reading five Juz²⁴ whilst volcanoes were erupting from above and below and the whole World seemed to be in flames. It was an attack, the like of which was never before witnessed in Jaji. When I finished five Juz, I said, ‘O Allah, if you are not going to give me Martyrdom, then at least give me a single wound, O Lord!’ I read the Sixth Juz, the Seventh...for four continuous hours I had been reading, but Martyrdom did not come. The branches of the tree above me began to break and fall on me. I eventually thought that if I had not been martyred yet, I would not be. The airplanes now began to attack and drop huge bombs.*

The Control Room under me shook, causing Abu Mahmood to come out of the room and say in his Syrian accent, “O Sheikh Tameem, for the sake of Allah! Fear Allah, Sheikh Tameem! Come down here at once, Sheikh Tameem! Don't do this, Sheikh Tameem!”

I replied ‘Martyrdom, O Abu Mahmood,’”

²⁴ Juz: one thirtieth part of the Quran

Thus, Sheikh Tameem finally went down into the Control Room, saddened that he was not killed! After a while, Abu Abdullah Usama came and found that his men would most surely all be killed if they did not withdraw, for the bullets were coming in like rain. I remember that on that day I felt a thirst that I had never felt before in my whole life because it was so hot. I had left Peshawar in the morning and I arrived in Jaji in the heat of the late afternoon. Abu Abdullah therefore ordered his men to retreat, so they all went to the vans. All except Sheikh Tameem. They called out to him, “*O Sheikh Tameem! We are retreating!*” He cried out, “*What?! We are leaving the Camp?!*” and he began to pull at his beard and hair, and cry and shout, “*Leave the camp?! After we built it, after we spent six months in it? After we put our sweat and blood into it?!*”

Abu Abdullah said to me later, “*By Allah, I thought he was possessed by Jinns²⁵, for he began to pull at his beard and his hair and cry and scream. I said to him, ‘O Sheikh Tameem, the men are in the car: if a single one of them is killed, the sin will fall on your neck and you will be responsible for his blood on the Day of Judgement,’*” So Sheikh Tameem was forced to go to the van, crying.

We later found him in the Den at Barooja. There, Sheikh Sayyaf was in charge of the battle so Sheikh Tameem, Abu Abdullah Usama, Abul-Hassan Al-Madani and I went to Sheikh Sayyaf. I held Sheikh Sayyaf’s hand and I said to him, “*O Sheikh Sayyaf is it really necessary to protect the Camp? I mean, should we have our brothers killed for the sake of a piece of land?*” Sheikh Sayyaf said, “*Yes, we need to protect the Camp because it has become known in the Islamic World, and its loss would be a moral loss to the honour of the Mujahideen.*” I then said to him, “*Then hold onto these men and forbid them from leaving you.*” Therefore, Sheikh Sayyaf said to them jokingly, “*O Abu Abdullah, Abul-Hassan and Sheikh Tameem, you are forbidden from leaving here.*” Abu Abdullah said, “*Not even for one day? Will you not allow Abul-Hassan and I to leave on Eid?*” He said to them, “*Okay, you can go.*”

Sheikh Tameem then stood up and began to kiss the hand of Sheikh Sayyaf, “*For the sake of Allah, O Sheikh Sayyaf will you also allow the same for me?*” Sheikh Sayyaf said to him, “*You, Sheikh Tameem, are forbidden to*

²⁵ *Jinn*: lifeform made of smokeless fire who have a free-will and will be judged on the Day of Judgement. It is part of a Muslim's belief to believe in the existence of Jinn and that they can possess human beings.

even move! Sit here!” Sheikh Tameem protested, *“O Sheikh Sayyaf I will kiss your hand, I will kiss your foot, just let me return to the Camp and fight.”* He replied to him, *“It will be in vain. I forbid you from moving from here.”* He said, *“Allah is Sufficient for me and He is the Best Provider!”* Therefore, he stayed at the side of Sheikh Sayyaf. Abu Abdullah went the next morning and returned with a group of around thirty brothers, and the battle began. On *Eid* day, seven of our brothers were martyred and on the following day around six. Thus, thirteen Arab brothers were killed in this battle, during which Sheikh Tameem was at the side of Sheikh Sayyaf. Later, the Pakistani military brothers surprised us with astounding statistics. They said, *“Do you know how much of the enemy's resources you destroyed in this battle? 122 tanks, a fuel tanker, an armoured vehicle, nine planes were shot down and 1500 men were killed. They do not know exactly how many were wounded, but the hospitals of Kabul were filled with men.”*

Preparation and Training

After Sheikh Tameem returned from Jaji, he said to me, *“Okay, now I want to train properly, and I will outdo everyone in my training!”* Therefore, we sent him to the Training Camp in Sada. His trainer there, Sheikh Abu Burhan, made him wear furs for a while. This was how they emaciated racing horses: they covered the horses with a cover in a hot environment to make them sweat, and reduced the horse's intake of food, thereby causing them to lose fat. Sheikh Abu Burhan had some furs in his possession, so he said to Sheikh Tameem, *“Sheikh Tameem, you must wear this fur coat every morning and go out to the top of the mountain and then return. When men do this only wearing a shirt, they come back drenched in perspiration, so what about the one who wears a fur coat? Even if it was snowing outside he would still sweat!”* Sheikh Tameem did as he was told, and in two days he lost 3kg. Thereafter he would lose 1.5 kg everyday.

To the Front Once More

After losing some weight he came back and said to me, *“I want to go to the battlefield where Abu Anas is stationed.”* I replied, *“Sheikh Tameem, you are not fit enough to traverse seven mountains. For 14 days you will remain suspended between the sky and the Earth!”* He said to me, *“I put my trust in*

Allah.” And that he did. Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri²⁶ took Sheikh Tameem together with 26 Arab brothers, and they made their way to the Front. The men crossed mountain after mountain with little problem, but Sheikh Tameem was delayed on one of the mountains. There were seven mountains all together in Nooristan, which were covered in snow for more than six months a year. They stayed suspended for 14 days between the sky and the Earth. The locals on the route were not helpful either. If you wanted to buy bread or eggs from them, they charged five times what they charged someone else. Therefore, it became difficult to find adequate food for the men. When the men were halfway, to their destination, a snowstorm occurred and it covered the road completely. One of the men, an Iraqi named Ali, was so thin that he did not even weigh 60 kg. He became very weak and tired, so he said to the others, *“Leave me here to die in the snow.”* He stayed there in his sleeping bag for three days, waiting to die. Then Allah sent a caravan which was returning from Afghanistan and it saved him. As Ali said to me – and I pray to Allah that he spoke the truth – *“While I was sleeping one night, in my sleeping bag on the snow, I heard a voice from the sky saying, ‘Have patience, for Allah is with you.’”*

When all of the 26 Arabs were on their way back, I was told that Sheikh Tameem was still in Tiraal. However, some of the brothers were caught by the Police at the border and thrown into prison. Therefore, the remainder went to Sheikh Tameem and said, *“Sheikh Tameem, so-and-so was captured from us, can you maybe speak to the Police Officer and try and have them released?”* He went to the Policeman and spoke to him in English, *“Why did you imprison the men who work with me?”* The Policeman said to him, *“Who are you?”* He replied, *“Don't tell me you don't know Tameem Al-Adnani? Don't you read the Pakistani newspapers? Haven't you seen my picture in them?”* That Police Officer began to apologise, saying *“Sorry, sorry, you must excuse me, I didn't know...”* Anyway, he said to him, *“You must release them now for I am the Minister of Education in the Hilal (Red Crescent) Society.”* Thus, he was able to organise the release of the imprisoned brothers. Thereafter we offered him the running and management of the Mujahideen Services Bureau in Peshawar, and he accepted, thus freeing us of much work, may Allah reward him for it. He travelled to Qatar and America, to Saudi Arabia and

²⁶ Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri, from Egypt, a deputy to Usama Bin Ladin, who was drowned in a ferry accident near Kenya in 1996, may Allah have mercy on him

Jordan. There is not a youth associated with the Islamic Awakening in these places who does not know Sheikh Tameem.

His Personality

He was kind and affectionate to his children, and treated them like friends or brothers. He taught them by action which was observed in his character, and his children were able to take him as their example.

His mention extended to the horizons, due to the many activities he performed; he collected money for the Jihad, he prepared himself, he incited others, he fought, and he took up powerful stances. Personally, I will never forget the year in which Sheikh Tameem lay in the snow between men no older than his sons. Some of these men were his commanders, and despite their age he would obey them and be proud of their position over him. Upon seeing Saifudeen Al-Maghribi, he would lovingly state, *“This was my Commander in the camp.”*

When he opposed injustice and disbelief, he was like a roaring lion, a leaping panther, a snarling beast. However, when he was with his brothers, he would lower his wings of mercy to them, and become a copious well of sympathy, compassion, mercy, and love. Sometimes he would be seen crying like one bereaved of a child, with affectionate, passionate tears, and heartfelt sincerity. He possessed rare courage, honour, and unequalled generosity which never dismissed a request.

In my opinion, – and Allah knows best – Sheikh Tameem did not just exhibit one or two personas, but he had many different dynamic ones: for raising morales, igniting a sense of power in the souls of the leaders and moving the souls of crowds. He preached in Bangladesh, in Karachi and in Islamabad and he produced such an exhilarated feeling in the crowds that they rushed forward afterwards to raise him on their shoulders. When he spoke about the American Muslim youth, he spoke of their greed and their lack of embarrassment in crowding around him, for each would compete with another to hear

his words, disregarding all others, and would book him for series of lectures which would last over two months. They did this in an effort to keep him with them to revive their dead souls and to kindle a fire in the chests of the Muslim youth.

Once, his son Yasir said to him, *“I want to take the Jihad magazines to Qatar to distribute them.”* So they filled one suitcase with hundreds and hundreds of magazines and they filled another with twenty or so magazines, in between Yasir's belongings. He then said to his father, *“O my father, read for me, ‘**And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see.**’ [Quran 36:9]”* Sheikh Tameem replied to his son, *“You read it,”* but his son replied, *“I want you to read it.”* Therefore, Sheikh Tameem settled on a compromise, *“First, you read it and then I will read it.”* Yasir read it over both bags, but Sheikh Tameem was in a hurry so put his hand on the suitcase full of magazines – about 1000 of them – and read only over this one. At Doha Airport, when opening the bags to search, they only opened the bag with the twenty or so magazines. From what they saw in this bag, they did not see the necessity of searching the second. Such a blessed man was Sheikh Tameem!

I was drawn to him by his immense sense of honour concerning all things Islamic, and by his actions and reactions to Islamic events. If I ever spoke to him about the tragedies of the Muslims, it was as if those tragedies were happening to him. He would cry much, and was very soft-hearted, emotional and sentimental. Whenever he heard about the famine in Herat, he would cry. Whenever he heard about the raping of women in Afghanistan, he would cry...he would act as though each tragedy was happening inside his own house. It was as though he was replying to each happening with the lines of Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak²⁷,

²⁷ Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, lived 118-181AH (728-791CE), one of the greatest scholars of knowledge and Imams of Jihad in his era. Adh-Dhahabi said about him in *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa'*: *“He was the scholar of Islam, the leader of the pious, who spent his life seeking knowledge, participating in battles, conducting trade, spending from his plentiful wealth on his ^{br}others, the students of knowledge. He would sponsor them for Hajj and would support them in their study of knowledge and being steadfast on the methodology of the Truth.”*

*How should a Muslim settle and be calm
While the Muslim women are with the assaulting enemy?
Saying, if we feared a scandal
Through the rumours, "If only we were not born."*

His Last Journey

His last journey took him from Nigeria to Egypt to Yemen to Qatar to America, and it was in America that he decided to remain for three months. He said to me, *"I will only come back to Afghanistan when my weight is down to 90 kg, for I want to participate in battles. Then, perhaps, Allah will grant me Martyrdom on the Land of Glory and Honour, during combat on the battlefield"* He used to phone us now and again, reassuring us that all was well and he was losing weight, *"I lost 10 kg / 5 kg / 20 kg,"* he would say. In America, he also taught the young Muslims and they began to compete to book him for lectures in the Islamic centres in their localities. It reached a point where he was booked for conference programmes which were to be held every weekend until the middle of October. The conferences sold out, and many people could not obtain tickets, even though they were trying to book months in advance!

We sent him to Nigeria to inaugurate an exhibition on the Afghan Jihad. There he became the talk of the town. Nigeria only ever heard about the Jihad from the mouth of Sheikh Tameem. He began to be broadcast on the television, and was written about in the newspapers. From Nigeria, his plane stopped in Egypt. There, he was taken by the security officials for questioning, for they noticed he had many Pakistani visas in his passport. They asked him, *"What do you do in Pakistan?"*

Sheikh Tameem replied, *"I am not in Pakistan, I am in Afghanistan. I work with the Mujahideen there. I am a frank person so ask what you like and I will reply frankly."* They said, *"Are there any Egyptians there?"* He replied, *"Many."* They asked, *"What are their names?"* He replied, *"Take notes: Abu Hurairah, Abu Musab, Abu Anas..."* They said, *"O Sheikh Tameem, are you trying to make a fool out of us? We want their real*

names.” He said, “By Allah, I do not know their real names, and by Allah, even if I did know them, I would not give you a single name. Am I mad to give you the names of the men who fight with me in the Jihad?!” They said, “What do you think we are we going to do to them? Why are you scared to give us their names?” He replied, “I know what you will do: you will throw them into prison for many months and torture them. There used to be a brother with us called Abu Haneefah. He came to you and you put him in prison for four months. That is what you will do to the others.” They asked, “Where is Abu Haneefah now?” Sheikh Tameem replied, “He returned to Afghanistan to fight with us.” They said, “So you see, Sheikh Tameem, we released him.” He replied, “Only after you did what you did to him.”

Then they said to him, “Do you know Muhammad Shawqi Al-Islambuli?²⁸” He replied, “Who doesn't know the brother of the heroic martyr Khalid Al-Islambuli?!” They said, “Heroic martyr?” He said, “Yes, heroic martyr.” Bear in mind that he was saying all of this to the security officials in Cairo Airport, who had his passport and who had him under their control. Then he became bolder and said, “I want a licence from you to speak about the Afghan Jihad in the mosques of Egypt.” They said, “The situation of the country does not permit it.” He said, “Then give me the address of Sheikh Kishk and Sheikh Al-Mahlawi.” They said, “We do not know their address.” And imagine the reaction of the Secret Services – instead of him being under their control, they fell under his control! When he died, - may Allah have Mercy on him – by Allah, it was as though many strong frontlines had been brought down and destroyed. It was as though my right hand was cut off. The news of his death struck on my heart like a thunderbolt, for nobody could take the place of Sheikh Tameem.

In Egypt, he went searching for the mosque of Al-Mahlawi in Alexandria. He finally found it, so he went and prayed with him the Friday Prayer. After the prayer, he held the microphone in his hand and gave a speech which lasted an hour-and-a-half, about the Afghan Jihad. The masses of Alexandria began to gather around him like the waves of the pounding sea. He said, “I never saw this reaction for one of my speeches, in my entire life....the

²⁸ Brother of Khalid Al-Islambuli, the Egyptian Army Officer who assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and was subsequently executed

people ...how they poured around me." He left Egypt the same day, so by the time the Security Officials came looking for him, he was already gone.

From Egypt, he went to Yemen and also delivered lectures there. However, there he caught Malaria, which interrupted his scheduled lectures. From Yemen he moved to Qatar. From Qatar he phoned me and said, *"My weight has increased again, and to be honest with you, I cannot stay in Peshawar, for I want to enter the battles instead. My weight, however, is preventing me from fighting in the Way of Allah so I have to go somewhere to reduce my weight. The brothers here in Qatar have found me a doctor in Czechoslovakia that will help me accomplish this. I am 155kg now, and I want to go down to 90kg so that I can take part in battles."*

I thought about it and said to myself, *'If Sheikh Tameem goes to Czechoslovakia for three months, where there is no Islamic community, no youth, no Islamic centres, then he will feel lonely. And Sheikh Tameem is not the type who is able to remain silent; he will talk against Communism and he will attack Russia.'* So I said to him, *"Sheikh Tameem, I cannot see you going to Czechoslovakia. Some brothers have told me that they know who you are in Russia, but as for Czechoslovakia we do not know, they may also know who you are. If they do, they will hand you over to Russia. By Allah, this factor cannot be eliminated from your decision. But more importantly is the fact that you will be living alone for three months, cut off from the World, with no connection to the Muslims. This is another problem. Instead, I advise you to go to America, for there are thousands of brothers there who know you and love you, and who would race to serve you. You will find companionship with them, and they will delight in your staying amongst them."*

Thus, he went to America. He visited most of the States there, delivering lectures to the Muslim youth. Then he telephoned me and said, *"The brothers in Canada want me to give lectures there, as do the brothers in Venezuela and Brazil."* I told him that he could go wherever he liked, so he went to Venezuela, and found that people there had not even heard of Islam. He found communities which had forgotten Islam totally. There was a virtuous Saudi man working as an Ambassador in Venezuela – may Allah keep him in goodness – Sheikh Bakr Khamees, who knew Sheikh Tameem.

He welcomed him and sent him a car to meet him at the airport, and he left the car at his disposal during his stay.

Most of the Islamic community in Venezuela were Palestinians, and Palestinians tend to love Abu Ammar (Yasir Arafat) and his organisation. Sheikh Tameem intended to go there to speak about the Islamic Jihad and Hamas, not about Yasir Arafat and the PLO. The Muslims there were very ignorant about Islam, to the point that this Saudi Ambassador had built a mosque and called it *Masjid Al-Quds (Mosque of Jerusalem)*. The Palestinians, however, changed its name to the *Palestinian Association*, and turned it into a recreation centre, rather than a mosque! When Sheikh Tameem saw this, he addressed the issue in his lectures, *“The name of this mosque is Masjid Al-Quds and Al-Quds (Jerusalem) is both the heart and spiritual centre of Palestine.”* They asked him his opinion on Abu Ammar, and he was the type of person who could not conceal what was in his heart, so he replied, *“Who is this Abu Ammar? He is a political deceiver.”* They asked him, *“Why do you say this?”* He replied, *“First and foremost, Abu Ammar is a secularist, he does not call for Islam. Hamas are the Palestinians who call for Islam. So if you want to support anyone, support Hamas.”* Furthermore, Sheikh Tameem only left Venezuela after the mosque was returned to being a mosque and was once again called *Masjid Al-Quds*.

It was then that I received a call from America saying, *“A conference has been organised in San Francisco for Muslims, and we would like to invite you to attend it.”* I told them, *“I cannot attend it, for I have work to do here. I will send you Sheikh Tameem instead, inshaAllah.”* So Sheikh Tameem went to America to reduce his weight, and to attend the conference. The brothers there said to him, *“We will find you a doctor here, who will see to your weight loss, inshaAllah, but we want to arrange a programme for the whole of the United States which will see you travelling to a different State every weekend to deliver a series of lectures.”* He agreed, and thus he travelled every weekend to a different state. He went to Arizona, to Tuscon...last weekend his lectures were in Orlando, Florida. It was in this journey that his eternal journey began.

A Soul Parts this World

He had taken his family to America with him, and Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – decreed that his death should come to him in Orlando, Florida. On 17 *Rabi Al-Awwal* 1410AH (18 October 1989), the series of lectures he was giving in Orlando was interrupted by a fatal heart attack. He was making his way to the venue where he was scheduled to give his lecture, but he had a heart attack on the way there. They called out to him, but he did not respond, so they took him to hospital. He had only been out of hospital for less than 24 hours, for the previous day he was also in hospital. The first time he suffered a heart attack was in Qatar, but it was very minor and, Praise be to Allah, he recovered from it the same day. This was a month and a half ago. A few days later in Qatar he suffered another minor heart attack, then he went to America. In America, it would seem that he overexerted himself with all the travelling and lectures, so he had a heart attack. He was taken to hospital, where he was restored to health, but he still insisted on delivering his scheduled lecture the following day. However, on the way there, he had another heart attack and was once more taken to hospital. By the time he arrived at the hospital, his soul had been seized by the Angel of Death - may Allah have Mercy on him and accept him amongst the righteous.

I was in Sada the day before, so when I heard of the news of Sheikh Tameem's death, I went to Sheikh Sayyaf immediately and told him the sad news. He responded, "*The loss of Sheikh Tameem is more hurtful to me than the destruction of an entire battlefield.*" Whoever observed the Sheikh – may Allah have Mercy on him – and paid attention to his influence on the Islamic World, and whoever saw him defending the Jihad, would understand the words of Sheikh Sayyaf: the fall of this Lofty Mountain was, indeed, greater on the Mujahideen than the destruction of an entire battlefield.

Florida, Allah granted you your desire and you passed on to Him. Amongst you now are people who witnessed the events which took place when his wife stood by his side bidding farewell. There is Abu Tariq, who saw everything with his own eyes. Umm Yasir stood by the lifeless body of her husband and said. "*To the Paradise, O Abu Yasir! We will meet there.*"

You departed from this World with an envious position. You left us as orphans and widows. O hero of Islam, O you who affected the people and protested against their injustices. You have departed, a departure after which there is no turn.” Abu Tariq said, *“The eyes of Sheikh Tameem's body filled with tears, and they began to fall down his face. His wife began to dry the tears from his face, and then I came and I dried the rest.”*

*The only friend in every town
When the aims increase, the helpers decrease*

Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) heard a woman saying on the day that Khalid bin Al-Waleed (RA) died:

*You are better than a thousand, thousand men
When the faces of men suppress
Courage, you are more courageous than a lion
Atrophied sadness, father of his cubs
A hunter who moves in the mountains*

Umar – may Allah be pleased with him – asked, *“Who is she?”* He was told that she was Khalid's mother. So he turned to her and said, *“You have spoken the truth. Abu Sulaiman (the nickname of Khalid bin Al-Waleed) was indeed as you described him.”*

It was also narrated from Umar (RA) that he was approached by men who told him, *“The women of the Al-Waleed family have gathered in Khalid's house and are crying and lamenting his death. If only you would reproach them.”* Umar (RA) replied to them, *“There is nothing wrong with the women of the Al-Waleed family shedding their tears over Khalid, as long as they are not putting sand on their heads or screaming with loud voices.”*

As Umar – may Allah be pleased with him – said, then may Allah also bless Abu Yasir, for he too was as Umm Khalid described, and there is nothing wrong with the women of the Al-Adnani family shedding their tears over Abu Yasir, as long as they are not putting sand on their heads or screaming with loud voices.

Another of the miracles that occurred was the emission of a perfumed smell from his body, which diffused through the entire area. The second day after his death, whilst the body was still in America, it was

placed in a house and was emitting a perfumed scent. People who visited the house said to the house-owners, *“It looks like you have used some perfume or scent on the body?”* They replied, *“No, by Allah, we have not applied anything like that to the body.”*

In Pakistan, we telephoned Sheikh Bin Baz and Sheikh Abdur-Razzaq Al-Afifi to ask if it was allowed for us to bury him in a coffin. It had been on a journey of 42 hours, from Orlando to New York to Islamabad to Peshawar. Sheikh Bin Baz said that if his body has changed or is emitting a smell, then there is nothing wrong with burying him in a coffin. Sheikh Abdur-Razzaq Al-Afifi said that it was obvious that the body must have changed by now and would be emitting an odour, so out of respect for the dead person, it is better to bury him in a coffin. I used to fear that on this fifth day, his body would change and become hard, but all Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, it did not change.

His body was received at Peshawar Airport by multitudes of people and then brought to the Pabi Graveyard of Martyrs. A large assembly of Arab and Afghan Mujahideen accompanied his funeral procession. Sheikh Sayyaf prayed over it then gave a brilliant speech, in which he commented, *“The news of his Martyrdom affected my soul more than the news that a strong front-line had fallen.”*

May Allah have Mercy on Sheikh Tameem, and gather us with him in the Highest Garden of Paradise. We pray that Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – protects his soul in Paradise, in the hearts of green birds that fly wherever they desire, and then retire to lamps under His Throne. I say these words of mine and I seek Allah's Forgiveness for me and for you. All Glory and Praise is to You, I bear witness that there is no god but You, I seek Your Forgiveness and I turn to You in Repentance.

Sheikh Tameem and Martyrdom

Sheikh Tameem's greatest hope, which teased him in his dreams, and never left his mind, was for Allah to seal his life on this World with Martyrdom.

“Whoever sought Martyrdom with sincerity will be ranked by Allah among the martyrs even if he died on his bed.”²⁹

We pray that Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – accepts him as a martyr. Sheikh Tameem emigrated and took up battle stations. He fought, aspired, prepared, trained and toured the World, inciting the believers to spend in the Way of Allah, to unite and to travel to the land of Jihad. There are many *hadeeth* which speak of he who emigrated in the Way of Allah being accepted as a martyr, no matter how he died. One example is the *hadeeth* of Fadal bin Ubaid (RA):

“On the authority of Abdur-Rahman bin Shareeh (who took it from Sulaiman bin Amir, who took it from Abdur-Rahman bin Jandam), that Fadal bin Ubaid went on a sea expedition. A catapult missile came and hit one of the men, and another of them later died (of natural causes). When they reached the shore, the men buried the two of them, after which Fadal bin Ubaid sat at the grave of the latter. Those around him said to him: ‘You left the Shaheed and did not sit at his grave.’ To this he replied: ‘I am indifferent to which of the two graves I sit at, for Allah said,

‘Those who emigrated in the Cause of Allah and after that were killed or died, surely, Allah will provide a Good Provision for them. And verily, it is Allah who is indeed the best of those who make provision. Truly, He will make them enter an entrance, with which they shall be well-pleased, and verily, Allah indeed is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.’ [Quran 22:58-59]³⁰

It was narrated from Malik bin Hadam that he said: I heard Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) say, *“What do you see in a group of three, who entered Islam together and emigrated (in the Way of Allah) together, and they did not commit any sins. The first was killed by the plague, the second was killed by an abdominal disease, and the third was killed as a martyr.”* It was said to him, *“The martyr is the best of them (in rank).”* So Umar (RA) said, *“By Him in whose Hand is my soul, they will be companions in the Next Life just as they were companions in this Life.”*³¹

²⁹ Reported by Muslim, No. 4695

³⁰ Tafseer Ibn Katheer 3/201. Ibn Al-Mubarak transmitted this *hadeeth* in ‘*The Book of Jihad*’ Section 96, Page 2, and it was also transmitted by Ibn Abi Hatim. Ibn Jareer transmitted a similar *hadeeth*.

³¹ Reported by Saeed bin Mansoor in his *Sunan*, Vol. 3, No. 2844

Abu Malik Al-Ashari heard the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) say, “*He who goes forth in Allah's Path and dies or is killed, is a martyr, or has his neck broken through being thrown by his horse or by his camel, or is stung by a poisonous creature, or dies on his bed by any kind of death Allah wishes, is a martyr and will go to Paradise.*”³²

*Verily, I am at my death with anxiety
With my love and longing I am constant
Allah gifted you with happiness like the sea
And fulfilment of your wishes, O Tameem!*

Thus you passed, O Abu Yasir, whilst we were in our greatest need of you - after the Lord of Power. You left us behind on the Path, and we pray to Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – to grant you your desire and your aim, and award you Martyrdom, because the Lord of Honour equates the people who are killed and who die on the Way of Jihad, “***And if you are killed in the Way of Allah or you die, Forgiveness from Allah and His Mercy are better than all that they can amass. And if you die or are killed, verily to Allah you will be gathered.***” [Quran 3:157-158] So either being killed or dying in the Path of Allah – both of their rewards are Forgiveness from Allah, and Mercy, which are better than this World and all it contains. Being killed in the Way of Allah or dying, their rewards are in the text of the Noble Quran: they are rewarded with a beautiful sustenance and a pleasing admittance (into Paradise):

“Those who emigrated in the Cause of Allah and after that were killed or died, surely, Allah will provide a Good Provision for them. And verily, it is Allah who is indeed the best of those who make provision. Truly, He will make them enter an entrance, with which they shall be well-pleased, and verily, Allah indeed is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.” [Quran 22:58-59]

Tribute to Sheikh Tameem

The news hit my heart like a thunderbolt, in my room in Sada. My head was in my books; I was absorbed in studying the books of *hadeeth* and *fiqh*, delving into the depths of the seas of knowledge and gathering up

³² Reported by Abu Dawud, Book 14, No. 2493, Al-Haakim. Declared *Saheeh* by Al-Albani.

their pearls. Abu Ubadah entered the room and sat down opposite me silently. Then he recited the verse, **“Every soul shall taste death...” [Quran 3:185]** He then said, *“Sheikh Tameem has passed away after a heart attack in America,”* and from then on the Voice of Truth speaking out for the Jihad was suddenly silenced, and it passed to Allah.

Did that lion, known to its Den after living between bullets and guns and under the shower of pellets, really spend four continuous hours between the jaws of death on 30 *Ramadan* 1407AH, asking for Martyrdom? Yet it still passed you by even after the branches of the tree that shaded you were broken? What shall we say? The shock of the news has silenced our tongues.

You Will Not Die:

They said to me, *“Sheikh Tameem died.”* I said to them, *“Sheikh Tameem did not die,”* for Allah said, **“And say not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah, ‘They are dead’. Nay, they are living, but you perceive it not.” [Quran 2:154]**

How can he, whose cassettes are heard all over the World, die? How can he, who participated in reviving the Age of the Jihad, die? How can he, whose name is linked to the most holy of all Islamic struggles on Earth, die? The struggle of Afghanistan, by which Allah has honoured the Islamic Nation! How can he, who has left a beautiful and lasting memory in the hearts and souls of people, die?

How will you die when your memories fill our lives and shake us from our depths? Your voice, which roars on the cassettes, is sufficient to shake the World of Allah's enemies, and the chords of their hearts tremble by it. He does not die for whom there remains in this World positions; positions which the great people, the callers to Islam and the scholars shrink in front of.

He does not die who wandered the World carrying with him the most noble of problems. Problems that affected his heart and ignited his chest with a flame. A flame that he spread to others through passionate speeches

and fiery, impassioned words, which originated from the heart and therefore reached the hearts - with the Permission of the Knower of the Unseen.

You were not a writer with a bewitching style, but your words had magic that captured hearts. You were not a scholar with extensive knowledge of *fiqh*, but Allah taught you what would benefit you and what He could benefit the people with, through you. Whatever traces you left in the age of the Awakening, the masses of scholars fell short of.

You were not the horseman who mounts horses in the fields, yet the horsemen stand dwarfed in front of your courage. What can I say about your bravery? Or the stances you maintained in the faces of the people of this World? How many times did I hear you say, *“By Allah, I do not fear anyone in life other than Allah.”*

One incident I will not forget is when you gathered a million dollars for the Mujahideen. The Saudi officials asked you for the money. Your reply? – *“I swear by Allah that even if you cut me to pieces, you will not take a single dollar. I desire Martyrdom, so kill me and take the money.”* Nor did you keep the incident hidden in your heart. Rather you roared and thundered on the pulpit, saying, *“Whoever desires to make his mother childless, his children orphans, or his wife a widow, should come with me to Dhahran Airport on Wednesday, when I will be leaving for Afghanistan!”* In Afghanistan, you took the million dollars and gave it to the Islamic Union for the Mujahideen of Afghanistan.

Nor will I forget the reply you gave to the intelligence officials at Cairo Airport two months ago. They asked you if you knew Muhammad Shawqi Al-Islambuli. You said, *“Is there anyone who doesn't know the brother of the heroic martyr, Khalid Al-Islambuli?”* So they asked you for the names of the Egyptians in Afghanistan. You swore an oath that even if you knew their names, you would not disclose a single one. And how can I forget your boldness when you asked the intelligence services of Egypt to give you a licence to give lectures on the Jihad in Afghanistan? Even *they* could not believe this kind of boldness, as they opened their mouths in amazement. Even though they did not grant you a license, you went to Sheikh Al-Mahlawi's mosque in Alexandria and began your speech after the Friday Prayer, bursting with enthusiasm and overflowing with

vitality. For an hour-and-a-half, crowds of men flowed in to the mosque like waves of the copious sea, listening to you as if watching birds circling overhead. And why do we not sing of your bravery:

*Less distressed in calamities than an arrow
And wiser than the nobles between the ranks
The most cherished son of this World, and a lion when opposed
You are a sword, and calamities are for swords
You settle with the battles in every dwelling
As though you are a kinsman of every sword*

These few lines speak nothing of the feelings for you, which are harboured in people's hearts. You possessed an honest heart and a pure nature, none of which had been corrupted by greed for the World, nor polluted by the crooked nature of society.

My opinion of you is that you had a nature which was as pure as that of a three year-old child³³, a soul which burst with the enthusiasm of a 20 year-old youth, and a generosity which turned nobody away, be they needy or not - it gave as does one who has no fear of poverty. You possessed a rare type of truthfulness, and unfaltering determination, untainted by despair.

Your days amongst us were not many: you were only 47 years old. I have never met anyone like you. Your departure weighed heavily upon our souls; it was as though my right hand had been cut off. I now repeat with bitterness:

*Are all the calamities with me, every one?
Then how did you arrive from amongst the crowds?
I was wounded by a wound in which there does not remain
Any place for swords or arrows*

Allah vitalised your heart with a love of this religion and with the love of His worshippers, with a love of the Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet –

³³ Usama Bin Ladin said about Sheikh Tameem: "*Sheikh Tameem, may Allah have Mercy on him, had a pure soul and a nature as innocent as a two year-old child.*"

Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him. Will they then say you have died?

We can no longer be recluses because of you, Abu Yasir; how can we be so when your memories stir us in our midst? When they enliven our dying souls? When they ignite a fire in our hearts against the enemies of Allah? And when they urge us on when an obstacle blocks our path or hinders our journey? How, O Abu Yasir, can we then live as recluses? Such are your qualities, your effects, and your stances. Such are your words which resound, and will continue to resound, in our ears.

The Search for Martyrdom

Sheikh Tameem passed to Allah and left behind him his sons: Yasir, Ahmad, Husam and their sisters. He also left behind him Umm Yasir. We pray that Allah protects these youth in the faith of their father – we consider him thus, nor do we sanctify anyone over Allah. We pray that you will be with your Lord in an honourable position. We pray that Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – joins us with you in the Highest Garden of Paradise.

Indeed if you had died, your death was in the Way of Allah. Umar (RA) said, when Uthman bin Madhoon (RA) died, *“I see his fate before me. He was the first of the Emigrants (Muhajireen) to die in Madinah.”* Umar thought to himself that if Allah wanted Uthman (RA) to attain a high rank with his Lord, He would have made him be killed in battle. Umar then said, *“Then Allah's Messenger, (SAWS) died, and Abu Bakr died, and I found that the best amongst us were dying. So death is not an indicator of a lessened status with our Lord.”*

You searched for Martyrdom wherever you could find it, and asked for it with sincerity - so we considered and we do not sanctify anyone above Allah. And whoever asked for Martyrdom with sincerity will be granted it, even if he dies on his bed: *“Whoever sought Martyrdom with sincerity will be ranked by Allah among the martyrs even if he died on his bed”* ³⁴

³⁴ Reported by Muslim, No. 4695

This final journey of yours to America was itself an attempt to reduce your weight so that you could enter into battles. And what drove you to do this was Martyrdom in Allah's Cause.

As Khalid bin Al-Waleed (RA) said, *“There is not in my body a single handspan which has not been hit by an arrow or stabbed by a spear or struck by a sword, and here I am, dying on my bed like a camel. May the eyes of cowards never find rest in sleep!”* But his death in this manner does not decrease him from the station of the Martyrs whose death was on the floor with blood gushing from between their eyes.

A Martyrdom of Truth

Sheikh Tameem emigrated and did not desire the World in the least: to this we can bear witness. I once jokingly said to him, *“O Sheikh Tameem! Why don't you return to your job that was paying you 25,000 Saudi Riyals (approximately US\$6,000) a month? In it there is goodness in this World and the Next.”* He replied,

“By Allah, even if they gave me one million Riyals a month, I will not return to the Worldly Life, I will not return to my job. Have I lost my mind to trade a million Riyals for the whole World and all it contains? The Prophet (SAWS) said: ‘A single endeavour of fighting in Allah's cause in the forenoon or afternoon is better than the whole World and all it contains’³⁵ How can I leave this kind of salary for only a million riyals?!” May Allah have Mercy on him, for his moral courage was that of a lion:

*A lion, the blood of the lion is a dye
A unique lion, from whom death thunders*

What can we say about you, O Abu Yasir? You achieved what you dreamt of achieving, and for that we pray to Allah that He accepts you into the Highest Paradise. What shall we say? Shall we speak of your youth; you were young in age, yet mature in devotion – you grew your beard whilst you were only in Secondary school, at a time when the whole World was submerged in the darkness of Ignorance! Shall we speak of your piety and fear of Allah - when you forbade yourself to drink even a cup of tea in your

³⁵ Reported by Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 52, No. 50. Narrated by Anas bin Malik (RA)

sister's house because her husband worked in a bank! Shall we speak of your courage and bravery - Sheikh Sayyaf himself has already testified to what he saw? It was not just he who saw it either, for we saw the same thing. We saw you in a multitude of stances, which, by Allah, were enough to dwarf the greatest of men. Once you set yourself a goal, no obstacle could stand in the way of its realisation. You did not bother about the World, and you relied on Allah for your sustenance, in life and in death. Thus, you would focus your efforts instead, on searching for death wherever it may be found. I never saw the saying of the Prophet (SAWS) about requesting Martyrdom represented in any man as it was in Sheikh Tameem:

*“Of the men who lives the best life is he who holds the reins of his horse (ever ready to march) in the Way of Allah. He flies on its back whenever he hears a fearful shriek or a call for help, he flies to it seeking death at places where it can be expected.”*³⁶

You toured the whole Earth, East and West, urging and inciting the Muslims to partake in the Jihad. You collected whatever money and jewellery you could, to support the Jihad, with truthfulness, sincerity, passion and love. You tied yourself to this Path, and we pray that you meet your Lord with the same pledge on which your soul was taken: *‘La ilaha Muhammadr Rasoolullah.*’ Sheikh Tameem's effect on the souls was a wonder and thus throughout the last week the women tired us with their telephone calls, *“Is Sheikh Tameem there?” “Why?”* we asked them. *“We want to speak to him. We heard his cassettes and want to contact him to tell him...we want to come to the Jihad.”*

Sheikh Tameem passed away, taking with him his enthusiasm. This Lofty Mountain was no longer among us; the shining star has set. By Allah, we have never met anyone like you before, nor have I ever cried over a person the way I cried over you. Our only consolation at your loss is that we believe that you are in a better position than us, and we pray that Allah makes you as we believe you to be, and better. Do not forget, O Sheikh Tameem, the maxim by which you departed from the World: *‘There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh’.* We pray that Allah forgives us all and grants us Martyrdom in His Way. We pray that Allah establishes that State which you were striving for, the State which

³⁶ Reported by Muslim, No. 4655

you hoped would one day protect you under the shade of its rule – the Islamic State. It is coming, insha-Allah. We pray that Allah makes our feet firm so they do not falter, and that He seals us with Martyrdom, and that we meet you in the Highest Paradise.

Words on Sheikh Tameem by Abu Hafs Al-Misri³⁷

Sheikh Tameem was a simple-minded individual, with a clean heart free from evil or wickedness. He possessed a burning desire for the *Deen* and longed for Martyrdom in Allah's Path. During the Battle of Jaji, he recited six or seven *juz* of the Quran under continuous, uninterrupted shelling. When Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin gave the orders to withdraw, he was very sad and began to weep.

During the Battle of Jaji, I was at the bottom of a valley surrounded by two mountains surrounding the Den along with a group of about eight other brothers, including Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri, Abu Sahl Al-Misri, Abul-Fadl and Muhammad Salah. We managed to make it to the top of one of the peaks with the intention of attacking the Russians. If we were to leave them alone, the Russians would have dug in, making the situation more difficult. I radioed Abu Abdullah Usama and said to him that we must attack the Russians now, but Abu Abdullah refused and asked us to stay in our place.

As the course of the battle changed, the Russians began to get the upper hand and Abu Ubaidah was injured, Abu Abdullah radioed us to withdraw immediately to the rear position that he had reached. We finally made it to Abu Abdullah after an arduous journey, under constant gunfire. The shelling from the enemy was still continuous and that was when Abu Abdullah decided to send a small group of brothers to outflank the Russians and attack them from another direction. At that point, in his desperation to go with this group, Sheikh Tameem, may Allah have Mercy on him, began to kiss the hands of Sheikh Sayyaf, pleading with him to allow him to join the group. Sheikh Sayyaf refused to let him join the group and Sheikh Tameem was extremely upset at that, so he began weeping like a child.

³⁷ Abu Hafs Al-Misri, Muhammad Atif, Military Commander of the Mujahideen and Deputy to Usama Bin Ladin

The Martyrs in Reality

He says, Exalted is He who said it:

“Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision.

They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve.

They rejoice in a Grace and a Bounty from Allah, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers.

Those who answered (the Call of) Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad, Peace be upon him) after being wounded; for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward.

Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, ‘Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them.’ But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: ‘Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us).’

So they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the Good Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.” [Quran 3:169-174]

Allah - the Mighty and Majestic – has ordained that men should die in different manners, but that their status after death would depend on their intentions. He ordained that this Religion of His be built by the efforts of men and communities, be raised by their skulls and bodies, and according to the efforts which are exercised on the Path of this *Deen*. That it be raised by pains which are borne on its Way, and by sustaining the hardships of the Path. The result of all of this, then, would be the prosperity of the Friends of Allah. The *Deen* of Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – cannot be victorious by a miracle from the sky, rather man must exercise his efforts and undergo hardships.

The *Deen* of Allah will be victorious according to however much man strives, however much he sheds blood on the way, and however much his limbs fall from his side. The people will bear witness for the blood of the martyrs on the Day of Judgement – blood, the colour of which will be the

colour of blood, but the smell of which will be smell of musk³⁸. The angels will bear witness for them at the seizing of their souls.

It is on these people that Islam was first raised, and it will not be raised again except by that way which the Prophet (SAWS), the choicest noble Companions, and their helpers from the individuals of this *Ummah* undertook. Whoever thinks that the *Deen* of Allah can be victorious by culture and teaching only, or by political information and analysis, or observing events, or only speeches on the pulpit and guidance and sermons, then these people do not know the nature of this *Deen*, nor do they know the method of the final Messenger (SAWS).

*Kingdoms are not built like the mornings
Nor are truths adopted or enforced
For the killed ones are centuries of lives
And for the prisoners are ransoms and growing old
For the red freedom is a door
Which hammers in every bloodstained hand*

And before the words of poetry are the words of the Lord of Might:

“Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and (also) tests those who are patient?” [Quran 3:142]

The best man in life, as the Prophet (SAWS) said, is he who stays up when the people are sleeping, and he who cries when the people are happy. They rise up if the people spend the night in frivolous entertainment. These are the knights of this *Ummah*, its virtuous fortifications and its solid structure, who turn to Allah Alone whenever anguishes or misfortunes increase. Thus, as was narrated in the authentic *hadeeth*³⁹, whoever protects the land

³⁸ On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: "No-one is wounded in the Path of Allah, and Allah knows best who is wounded in His Path, except that he will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wounds spurting blood. Its colour will be like the colour of blood and its smell will be that of musk." Reported by Al-Bukhari, Book 7, No. 441

³⁹ On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), a man came to Allah's Apostle (SAWS) and said, "Instruct me as to such a deed as equals Jihad (in reward)." He replied, "I do not find such a deed." Then he added, "Can you, while the Muslim fighter is in the battle-field, enter your mosque to perform prayers without cease and fast and never break your fast?" The man said, "But who can do that?" Abu Hurairah added, "The Mujahid (i.e. Muslim fighter) is rewarded even for the footsteps of his horse

of the Muslims will receive the reward of the prayer of one who constantly prays, the fasting of one who constantly fasts, and the remembrance of one who constantly remembers Allah. This is because without these guards, nobody would be able to even grow a beard, or rise at night to pray, or secure their religion, their honour, or their wealth.

“Permission to fight is given to those (i.e. believers against disbelievers) who are fighting them, (and) because they (believers) have been wronged, and surely, Allah is Able to give them (believers) victory.

Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah.' – For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down. Verily Allah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.” [Quran 22:39-40]

Therefore, it is with the defence of these people, and the fighting of Muslims against the enemies of Allah, that the mosques with their minarets are protected, and that these places of worship will remain. And if you doubt this, then ask Bucharest, and Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia and Germany and others – what has happened to their mosques? Where are their worshippers whose recitation used to resound in the mosques like the buzzing of bees? Where are their Qurans and their scholars?

Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – chose people to partake in the Jihad. If their intention was pure and they were firm on the Path, they would be of those whom Allah has chosen to carry the message to reach the World.

*They prepared you for a decree, if you understood it
For you are deemed far above being left to graze with cattle*

As I mentioned previously, the Prophet of Allah (SAWS) described that the best life of man is the horseman who takes the reins of his horse and rushes to the thick of the battlefield: *“Of the men who lives the best life is he who holds the reins of his horse (ever ready to march) in the Way of Allah. He*

*while it wanders about (for grazing) tied in a long rope.”*Reported by Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 52, No. 44.

*flies on its back whenever he hears a fearful shriek or a call for help, he flies to it seeking death at places where it can be expected.”*⁴⁰

Allah decreed for me to undertake the journey of the *Ansar*⁴¹ who came to Afghanistan to assist this blessed Jihad: this Jihad, through which Allah rescued the Islamic *Ummah* and shook it out of its coma. He also blessed me with the acquaintance of the individuals of this *Ummah* who came to present their souls, hoping for the favour of Allah and asking for the Paradise. I call these people *Ushaaq-ulHoor*⁴² (Lovers of the Paradise Maidens). I witnessed the battles of the Lovers, the battles of the Lovers of the *Hoor*. I found through my observations that our Lord chooses those who we think of as the best in this life, for Martyrdom. I also saw that the martyrs had common characteristics, the main ones of which are: little speech but plenty of action, thinking well of the Muslims, and racing to serve them. You will see that the martyr's actions teach more than his words. This is as Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Companions, while he was saying that Allah entrusted him with them, and that he is not the best of them: *“I am not your teacher except by actions, so I will leave my actions to teach you more than my words.”*

The Fine Examples

People are moved by living examples which reside amongst them: fine examples whose hearts are attached to the Highest Place, but their bodies live between the people, eating like the people eat and drinking like the people drink. They are unique amongst the masses by their attachment to Allah and their love of meeting their Lord. And whoever loves to meet his Lord, his Lord loves to meet him.⁴³

⁴⁰ Reported by Muslim, No. 4655

⁴¹ *Ansar*: literally 'helpers', used in reference to Foreign Mujahideen

⁴² *Hoor*: Virgins or maidens of Paradise

⁴³ On the authority of Ubadah bin As-Samit (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: *“Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah (too) loves to meet him and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah (too) hates to meet him.”* Aisha, or some of the wives of the Prophet said, *“But we dislike death.”* He said: *“It is not like this, but it is meant that when the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of Allah's Pleasure with him and His blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what is in front of him. He therefore loves the meeting with Allah, and Allah (too) loves the meeting with him. But when the time of the death of a disbeliever approaches, he receives the evil news of Allah's Torment and His Requital, whereupon nothing is more hateful to him than what is before him. Therefore, he hates the meeting with Allah, and Allah too, hates the meeting with him.”* Reported by Al-Bukhari, Book 8, No. 514.

Death began to choose the cream of the crop from amongst us. The events became so difficult upon us that it came to a point that whenever I bade fare well to one of the martyrs, it was as if I was bidding farewell to a piece of my heart, or parting with one of my children. And with every one of them who was killed, I was belittled in front of these giants, and I felt that I was less than them, for why had Allah not chosen me just as He chose them? But Martyrdom is a choice and a selection, and is not on par with the stations in this life, nor is it on par with the paper certificates which societies are now raised on. Whenever I remembered those who preceded me on the Path, for example, Sad Ar-Rasheed, Abdul-Wahab Al-Ghamidi, Abu Dujanah Al-Misri, Abdul-Jabbar, I realised that in those times Martyrdom did not suddenly come like the gleaming of an active sword, but for some reason, in this year, the amount of examples whose souls Allah bought, increased.

“And so that He may take martyrs from amongst you.” [Quran 3:140]

Many men were taken this year. I do not know many of their names, and I only came to know them after they were taken to the eternal and beautiful Abode, with the Permission of the Lord of the Worlds. As Sad bin Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote after the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), *“O Amir-ul-Mumineen, Sad bin Ubaid Al-Qari was martyred, as was so-and-so... We do not know many of them, but Allah Alone knows them. If the night darkened around them, they produced a sound like the sound of bees, whilst they were reciting the Quran. But if they appeared in the field of battle, they were like lions, nay they were braver than lions.”*

Those who emigrated in the Way of Allah are those who would achieve Martyrdom if their intentions were pure, as the Prophet (SAWS) said in the authentic *Hadeeth*: Abu Malik Al-Ashari heard the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) say, *“He who goes forth in Allah 's Path and dies or is killed, is a martyr, or has his neck broken through being thrown by his horse or by his camel, or is stung by a poisonous creature, or dies on his bed by any kind of death Allah wishes, is a martyr and will go to Paradise.”*⁴⁴ This *hadeeth* is *Saheeh*, and there are many transmissions to this effect.

⁴⁴ Reported by Abu Dawud, Book 14, No. 2493, Al-Haakim. Declared *Saheeh* by Al-Albani.

Whoever emigrated to assist this Jihad or emigrated with his faith to assist the *Deen*, to any country in the World, whoever left his family and Worldly comforts for the sake of Allah's *Deen*, and came to a life of hardships and difficulties and tribulations, he is considered an emigrator in the Way of Allah. And whoever emigrates in His Way is a martyr no matter how he dies, and for him is the Paradise. In this last month Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – chose as martyrs men whom I knew and lived with: Abdullah An-Nuhami, Abu Muslim As-Sana'ani, Ali Abdul-Fattah, Awad Al-Arada and others. But He also chose three men whom I used to secretly think of as the best of people: Dr Salih Al-Libi, Ahmad Al-Mubarak As-Somali, and Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani – may Allah have Mercy on them. As for two of them, Allah chose them on the battlefield, these being Dr. Salih and Ahmad Al-Mubarak As-Somali. Whilst observing them externally, I used to feel that what was inside their souls was purer than what was outside, and that what they hid was more superior than they made known.

Dr. Salih was the first doctor who came to Afghanistan before the Arabs had a central base. He left his studies in London and entered Ghazni, where he stayed with the Mujahideen for eight months, eating as they ate and drinking as they drank, despite the vast difference between a luxurious, fine life in London and a life of hardships and trials, which most of the Mujahideen used to, and still do, live. Dr. Salih continued to return to Afghanistan from London, so he became known to us. A brother from Mazar-i-Shareef came to us because he had seen a crew of nine Christian, French medical staff opening up a hospital in Balkh. Balkh was once the land of Scholars and Litterateurs, but they were expelled from the area. Dr. Salih reproached the inhabitants there, saying, “*How can you accept these French amongst you?*”

The answer was immediately silencing, “*We are only beginning to see the Arabs now. The French came four years before you. They live amongst us like we live, with biting hunger. They endure it as we endure it. In fact, they burden themselves with more severities and hardships and do not accept any of our own medicine. They bring us presents and sweets to our houses, where they sit on the bare floor just as we sit. And you want us to not like them after they have done all of this for us?*” Then they added, “*Bring us a single Arab doctor and we will dispense of these people.*”

Therefore, brother Abdullah came to us from Mazar-i-Shareef and said, *“We need only one Arab doctor to expel the French team from there.”* We chose Dr. Salih as this doctor. Before he reached Mazar-i-Shareef, three Arabs arrived there. This was the first event of its kind in Mazar-i-Shareef. When the Arabs arrived, it was as if a miracle had happened which shook the whole area! All the people of Mazar left their homes in excitement and walked for days in the snow to meet these people. Even a very old man, carrying a stick which he leant on in his right hand, and his grandson in his left hand, went to meet them. He wanted to show the Arabs to his grandson, because he himself was never before blessed with seeing an Arab. So as soon as Dr Salih arrived in Mazar-i-Shareef, the front-line Commander there, Abdullah, who was in charge of over 1000 Mujahideen, issued a *fatwa* saying that it was no longer permissible for a Muslim to sit with the French, speak to them or be treated by them, for now the Arabs had arrived. Thus, all of a sudden, the land shunned the French and it became a different land. Before, the French had been welcomed with the hearts of the Afghans, but now they were discarded and distanced like the distanced camels. They began to sense the tension so they said to the locals, *“Are we right in thinking you no longer want us?”* The reply they received was, *“Yes, you are right, we do not want you.”* Therefore, the French decided to leave and take their hospital equipment with them. The Afghans were indifferent to their departure.

Before Dr Salih came to the area, there was a particular young man who had been hit by shrapnel in his spinal cord, thus paralysing half of his body and rendering him unable to move even from his bed. He was presented to these French doctors, and when they saw him they said - and Allah is far Exalted above what they say – *“Even if the Lord of Power came, He would not be able to cure him.”*

The Miracles of Dr Salih

When Dr Salih arrived, they brought him this same patient to see if he could do anything for him. When he saw him he said to me, as was his nature, *“I felt sorry for him when I saw him broken physically and mentally. The same man who used to cause the Earth to shake under the feet of the Russians, could not find anyone to help him with his needs, and so he was urinating, excreting, eating and drinking in his bed. He could not even*

turn his body to lay on his other side.” Regarding the treatment of this man, Dr. Salih's reply was, as he always said, “*Baseetah, baseetah (it is not a problem, it is not a problem). Allah willing, he will be cured.*” Dr Salih said this with full knowledge of the field of medicine, where the law is ‘*Whoever is injured in the spinal cord can never be cured.*’ However, Dr. Salih had his own law for treatment: supplications to Allah, then the administering of food, followed by the administering of medicine. In less than a month of following this routine, this man was restored to full health and was fighting alongside the Mujahideen!

After this incident, all the inhabitants of the region began to repeat, “*A Salih (righteous) friend has come to us. His name is Dr Salih.*” Moreover, the whole of Mazar-i-Shareef surrounded him and went to him for their treatment. This one man single-handedly replaced a team of nine Frenchmen. Such was the Afghans' love for him, that the same people who used to despise their daughters being married to someone outside their own tribe, would offer him their daughters so that they could gain the effects of his blessings. As for Ahmad Al-Mubarak, he truly was as his name described him (*Mubarak* means ‘blessed’).

The Sincere Man

As for Sheikh Tameem, whatever good words you speak of him, I will believe you. I never saw a man with a purer soul than his. I used to say to myself, “*This man is in his forties, but as pure as he was when he was created, or as though he is three years old. He is like a twenty year old who flows with enthusiasm and vitality.*” He would always say, “*By Allah, I am not afraid of anyone except the Lord of the Worlds.*” Due to this, I felt that he would later adopt stances that not many people, myself included, would be able to adopt.

In the past week, women from the Islamic World have been phoning my house and saying, “*Where is Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani? We want to speak to him. We have heard his cassettes and we want to tell him that we want to come to the Jihad.*” This effect was not brought on by a magical rhetoric, but by sincere words. They were the magic which came from the heart and thus reached the hearts of the people and

enveloped them⁴⁵. He was not a scholar, but he produced for this Jihad and its honour what masses of scholars could not produce. Sheikh Tameem did not die...

“And say not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Nay, they are living, but you perceive it not.” [Quran 2:154]

Sheikh Tameem did not die after leaving behind him what he left, and we pray to Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – to gather us with him in the Highest Paradise and we will not say other than what our Prophet (SAWS) said, *“O Allah, reward us in our trial and replace it with something better.”*

Sincerity

Sheikh Tameem was not a well-known *faqih*⁴⁶, nor was he a noted scholar, but I found in him a quality - as I perceived it to be, and Allah knows best – which made his speech accepted in the hearts of the people. This quality was sincerity, and Allah knows best. Sincerity is the spirit of words, and the life of examples, because with sincerity and truthfulness, the words exit from the heart and so they reach the hearts with their passion and with their influence. Sheikh Tameem was a normal man, in his manners, in his knowledge, in his *fiqh*, but Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – blessed his words such that the problem of Afghanistan became a Worldwide problem. Those who contributed to causing this transition were the brothers who partook in the Jihad, the main one of which was Sheikh Tameem (may Allah have mercy on him). He was the first who brought the issue to the Arabian Peninsula. Abul-Hassan Al-Madani (Wa'il Jaleedan) said,

“Before I came to the Jihad, I visited Sheikh Tameem to speak with him about the Jihad, may Allah have Mercy on him and bless him with whatever good deeds he presented and may He forgive him for his errors and wrongdoings. Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, gave the Sheikh this position in the mosque, and due to that, his lectures on cassettes were passed between the young Muslims. His cassettes spread like a light in

⁴⁵ The scholars of the *Salaf* used to say: *“Words that come from the mouth stop at the ears, but words that come from the heart, reach the heart.”*

⁴⁶ *Faqih*: scholar of Islamic jurisprudence

darkness, like fire in the woods. The truth is that I found some verses I wrote in the flames of battle to be extremely fitting for the Sheikh:

*Less distressed in calamities than an arrow
And older than the nobles between the ranks
The most cherished son of this World, and a lion when opposed
You are a sword, and calamities are for swords
You settle with the battles in every dwelling,
As though you are a kinsman of every sword."*

His Love for Fighting

He always used to rejoice in taking part in battles, as Abu Tayyib says:

*If you lived long, you made the war a mother
And the spear a brother, and the sword a father
For all his ruggedness, he meets Death smiling
As if there was a wish for his killing
On the mountain pass, the neighing horse almost threw him
From his saddle, happy at the invasion and joyful
If the Wish met them, it started
Its frivolity, accusing both the Courage and the flight*

He really was a wonder in his courage and love for battles:

*The sound of the clashing is joy to my ears
And my soul is delighted by the trickling of blood
For how can I have patience to the cunning of the enemy?
And how can I bear their presence?
The soul of the honourables have two goals
The arrival of death and attaining their desire*

In closure, we will voice our grief through the verses your father, the poet Muhammad Al-Adnani composed for you:

*I long for your embrace O Tameem
A longing spoken by the breeze
And echoed in the cave of my breast*

*My pallor is drawn out and it does not leave
In your name my heart finds meaning
And my thirsty soul hovers about you
It calls, O Tameem! But there is no reply
With it am I healed, for my grief to be dispelled
It is said of you 'He who brings wishes to life,
And he frees from the weak omens'*

I pray that Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – records goodness for you, and accepts you in the Highest Paradise. O Allah, do not forget to bless us as you blessed him, and do not deprive us of his reward, and forgive him and us both. We pray that Allah makes us firm on His Path, and on the Jihad in His Cause. We pray that He resurrects us amongst the righteous and seals our lives with Martyrdom, and we pray that He gathers us with our Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). May Allah have Mercy on you, O Abu Yasir, and may He enter you in the highest ranks. May He gather us with you in the Highest Paradise. Verily, He is the All-Hearing, All-Near, All-Respondent –Ameen! All Praise is for You, I testify there is no god but You, I seek Your forgiveness, and I turn to You in repentance.

Part II: The Battle of the Lion's Den, Afghanistan, 1987

Introduction by Usama Bin Muhammad Bin Ladin

The famous Battle of Jaji was where Allah gave victory to the People of Truth over the People of Falsehood. This battle will go down in history as one of the great battles of contemporary Islamic times and by so doing, it joins the long list of great victories for the people of Islam, which include Badr, Yarmuk⁴⁷ (fought against the Romans under the command of Khalid bin Al-Waleed), Al-Qadisiyyah⁴⁸ (fought against the Persians), Hitteen⁴⁹ (fought against the Christians when Masjid Al-Aqsa was occupied, and led by Salahudeen Al Ayyubi), Ain Jalut⁵⁰ (fought against the Mongols and led by Muzaffar Qutuz).

Jaji goes down in history as a decisive and conclusive battle towards the end of the 20th Century, during the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union at the time, had in its possession the largest army of the World, which symbolised the might of the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet forces entered into Afghanistan in 1979CE (1399 AH). These dates, in both calendars, signify the latter part of each respective century.

The Battle of Jaji was a great victory and miracle by the Grace of Allah. It was the ultimate confrontation pitting the Muslims against the leading idol-power at the time, which had in its possession the latest and most advanced military technology and hardware. The Muslims, in comparison, had very little in terms of military resources and, in some cases, nothing at all. The leaders of the Muslim countries had become preoccupied with the bounties of the Worldly life, they abstained from the implementation of the *Shariah* and consequently halted the Jihad effort. Not

⁴⁷ Battle of Yarmuk, August 636CE, in which a Muslim army of 40,000 soldiers led by Khalid bin Al-Waleed, defeated a Roman army of 200,000 soldiers led by the Roman General, Gregory

⁴⁸ Battle of Qadisiyyah, May 636CE, in which a Muslim army of 25,000 soldiers led by Sad bin Abi Waqqas, defeated a Persian army of 150,000 soldiers led by the Persian Commander Rustum

⁴⁹ Battle of Hitteen, July 1187CE, in which a Muslim army led by Salahudeen Al-Ayyubi defeated a Crusader army led by King Louisian, many times its size

⁵⁰ Battle of Ain Jalut, September 1260CE, in which a Muslim army led by the Mamluk, Muzaffar Qutuz, defeated a huge Mongol army led by Hulagu Khan, signalling the first defeat of the Mongols after conquests that spanned half the Globe

satisfied with this clear level of deficiency towards the Religion of Allah, they went a step further and imprisoned all those who wished to re-establish the *Shariah* and wage Jihad in the Path of Allah.

The Soviets at the time had tens of thousands of troops, thousands of tank regiments and hundreds of fighter aircraft squadrons. This huge Superpower colluded with the Government of Afghanistan at the time to spread Communism and then instigated an internal military coup at the hands of Babrak Kamal. Thus, towards the end of 1979, the Red Communist Army entered Kabul. This incident sent shock waves throughout the entire Muslim and Western World. The Muslim World drew in a sharp breath recognising the danger of this latest development. An unchecked Soviet presence in Afghanistan and in the Indian Subcontinent would ultimately lead to the fall of the entire Arab World into the hands of the Communists.

This move was not only a threat to the Middle East, but also represented a threat to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and Western intentions of World domination in a time that can be regarded as the peak of the Cold War era. NATO and the Western World had spent over \$450 Billion in building bases and fortifications in Europe for preparation against anticipated Russian attacks, once the Soviets had invaded Eastern Europe. The Soviet Army could move with great speed, taking mere hours to complete the invasion of a country, as in the case of Hungary and Romania in the 1960's. Anyone refusing to submit to the rule of Communism would soon face the threat of Russian tanks. The large Russian military planes would transport the entire Soviet military machine overnight to the target country, to the extent that the inhabitants of that country would wake up the following morning to be informed that they had become part of the Warsaw Pact.

This so-called 'Great Russian Bear', surprised the World in 1979 by invading Kabul with its military machine, via routes from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The situation at the time was one of a clash between Western Capitalism and Soviet Communism. The Soviets succeeded in convincing many of the Islamic and Arab states to accept their corrupt

ideology. This race between the two Superpowers to achieve World domination is commonly referred to as the 'Cold War'.

Nobody had anticipated that the small state of Afghanistan, with its meagre resources, would be able to resist the advance of the Red Army. The Mujahideen, however, not only resisted the advance, but they also defeated, smashed and pulverised the Red Army, causing it to order its troops to an embarrassing retreat and withdrawal. This loss had greater ramifications and there shortly followed a complete collapse of the Soviet Union Superpower. This was largely as a result of the huge economic drain that the Jihad had placed on the Soviet economy and a magnificent blow to the morale of the Communist mindset.

The ideology of Communism came into the Arab World under the guise of Socialism and social equality. Iraq was swept along by the Socialist tide and dutifully entered under the submission of the Great Russian Bear. The ruling Ba'ath Party began to spread its evil claws amongst the Muslim population and started teaching them to worship and submit to Ba'athism, a new false Lord.

This infectious disease also afflicted Syria such that the Socialist motto spread amongst all the strata and spheres of society, apparently representing: *'Unity, Freedom and Socialism.'*

Southern Yemen entered wholeheartedly into the ideology of Communism. The Soviets continued their relentless and ruthless advance and recruited Somalia during the reign of the doomed Ziyad Bari. When the Prime Minister of Somalia wished to implement Communism on the land, ten scholars who refused to compromise their religion for the sake of a few miserable dollars, resisted him. They refused to give Islamic backing to this ideology, recognising how it completely contradicted the pillars of Islam. Ziyad Bari gathered them in Mogadishu and burnt them all in front of the gathered masses, may Allah's Mercy be upon these scholars of Truth. Eritrea followed after this. The Soviets were able to affect a military coup in Ethiopia through its local Communist Party, thus taking control over a key area in North Africa. The Soviet machine was moving through the Middle East, devouring one state after the other.

At this time, America and its allies were preoccupied with the protection of Western Europe after the fall of Eastern Europe into the hands of the Soviet Union. The Communists even had Eastern Germany under their influence and control since the Second World War. The Western World was living in constant fear of this Soviet threat.

Latin and Central America were also not free from this Worldwide Russian invasion. Cuba came into the hands of the Soviets. The strategic value of a country only a mere 100 miles from the shores of the USA resulted in the Americans living in a continuous state of fear.

During this time, the World also witnessed a military and nuclear arms race, as a result of ongoing Cold War politics. Billions of dollars were spent so that each side could maintain and further its dominance through a larger, more advanced and effective military arsenal.

The Soviet Prime Minister at the time of the Afghan invasion was Brezhnev, who decided to deal the ultimate strike and play his leading card by invading Afghanistan. The aim was to open a route to the Indian Ocean via Pakistan, and in turn have direct access to the Arabian Gulf and the World's largest oil and gas reserves.

Many of the Western European countries are dependent upon the crude oil of the Arabian Gulf States in order to drive their economies, as they have little or no oil reserves of their own. Thus, it had been a strategic dream of the Russians, going back many decades to the time of the Tsars, in gaining control over the Arabian Gulf States.

Hence, Brezhnev gave the command and Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan; a fateful move, which would prove to have a disastrous effect on the Soviet empire. Political analysts immediately saw that the Soviet objective behind this daring manoeuvre was the oil of the Arabian Gulf. If the Arabian Gulf states fell into Soviet hands, this would effectively imply total Soviet domination of the Middle East and Arab World.

The Americans did not have anyone in the area to repel the Soviets. Their military bases, where existent, were small and not up to this great task of repelling the Soviet Army in full force. American agents in the Middle

East and South-Central Asia were the Arabian Gulf states and the Shah of Iran. The Shi'ite Revolution had overthrown the Shah and the Americans abandoned him, not even giving him political asylum. An important lesson had been learnt here and those today in the Arabian Gulf who solely rely on America for protection, are intellectually and Islamically committing suicide.

In Islamic terms, this existent status quo in the Gulf is not permissible. The kings of these oil rich states have sold their lands and taken the disbelievers as friends and protectors. There is no other word for this other than disbelief, which causes the one guilty of such to exit from the fold of Islam. Furthermore, in rational terms, these kings are committing suicide because the Jews and the Christians are from the enemies of Islam. Their presence in the area is not, as they claim, to protect these kingdoms, but rather it is to loot and pillage the riches of these lands and corrupt the minds of the Muslim population with their Satanic culture. By the Permission of Allah they will leave the Arabian Gulf as a result of the strikes of the Mujahideen.

Returning back to Soviet domination, we saw that the Pakistani region of Balochistan had been invaded intellectually by the Soviet Union as a result of the activities of the local Communist Party. There was not a village, town or city, from Quetta to the Gulf of Oman, except that the red flag of the local Communist Party fluttered menacingly in the air. The pictures of Kamal, Lenin and Stalin were placed on the walls of the meeting points of tribal leaders. On the 27th of December of each year, the date of Soviet entry into Afghanistan, the Balochi Communist Party would lead mass celebrations in the streets. The mood was not one of resistance to the Soviet presence, but one of welcoming and anticipation to the arrival of the advancing Soviet Army.

Had Allah not blessed this *Ummah* and bestowed His Favour upon the Muslims of Afghanistan, the Soviets would have taken the Arabian Gulf states effortlessly. The Afghans were able to repel the largest invasion in recent times, by the forces of disbelief against Islam. We ask Allah to reward them with the best of rewards. However, this victory did not come without a price. Afghanistan's infrastructure was destroyed; an uncountable number of children were orphaned; thousands

of women were widowed and hundreds and thousands were killed and injured.

Having seen the Soviet Army defeated, in a move of amazing treachery and cold heartedness, the Gulf states turned their backs to Afghanistan. They left the Afghans to fend for themselves and to cope alone, whereas this was the crucial time that this proud and resourceful nation needed the support of the Islamic World.

The Communist Party had arisen in Afghanistan and began to invite people to clear and manifest disbelief. Some of the scholars and youth tried to respond to this with *Dawah* activities, but their financial resources were very limited and they were unable to repel this threat. Therefore, Allah blessed the Mujahideen leadership with the ability to raise the banner of Jihad. Hence, it is important to acknowledge the important role played by the leaders of the Jihad such as Hekmatyar, Sayyaf, Rabbani, Yunus Khalis, Sheikh Muhammad and Mujadidi. Even though they may have erred afterwards, credit must be given to where it is due.

The withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan was accompanied by an almost immediate breakout of fighting amongst the Afghan factions. There existed differences between the various leaders. Political differences in Islam that divide the Muslims are considered evil and it is not possible for Islam to be established in their midst. Defeating an enemy may be possible whilst differences exist, but Islam cannot be established on the land with these differences.

On the authority of Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA), the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) said⁵¹: *“Whoever departs from the Jama'ah (united body of Muslims) by even the length of a handspan, then he has removed the pledge of Islam from his neck.”*

He, (Peace and Blessings be upon him) also said⁵², on the authority of Harith Al-Ashari (RA): *“I command you to five things of which Allah*

⁵¹ Reported by Muslim

⁵² Reported by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi No. 3694

has ordered me: Jama'ah (the united body of Muslims), to listen, to obey, Hijrah and Jihad.”

Allah blessed Sheikh Muhammad Yunus Khalis, by keeping him clear from this difference and infighting. The Arabs left Afghanistan during the problems of the factional infighting but Sheikh Yunus Khalis welcomed them back. Then, Allah blessed the Muslims of Afghanistan by uniting them around a relatively unknown personality by the name of Mulla Muhammad Umar Mujahid. By the Grace of Allah, 95% of the land of Afghanistan lies in his hands today⁵³, as a result of the gathering of the people around him and the *Jama'ah*.

During the Communist era of Afghanistan, the Arab Mujahideen used to be killed by the Afghans as a result of the cunning deception of the media and the rulings of the scholars and kings, which used to accuse the Mujahideen of being rebels against the state and leader (*khawarij*). The leader was a Communist disbeliever, but he fooled the people who said that he permitted them to pray, so he was a good man.

However, when the people of Afghanistan saw the actual presence of the Soviet Red Army in their land, they awoke and realised that they had now been invaded militarily by Communism, in addition to being intellectually ruled and dominated by this wicked ideology. Hence, the Afghans rose to fight this force of disbelief and they answered the call of the scholars such as Muhammad Yunus Khalis, Jalaludeen Haqqani and others. Consequently, the Call of Jihad reverberated throughout the land of Afghanistan.

On the 20th of January 1980, US President Jimmy Carter said: “*The United States will not permit the Soviet Union to enter the Arabian Gulf*” He added that they would use military force as necessary. However, this was an empty threat because the Americans did not possess a single sympathetic state in the area which would allow them to carry out this threat. This was especially so after the fall of the American stooge in Iran, the Shah.

Had it not been for the Grace of Allah and the people of Afghanistan, the Arabian Gulf States would have fallen into the hands of

⁵³ This was written during the Taliban rule from 1996-2001

Communism. We thank and praise Allah that the *Ummah* is with Jihad and repelling the aggressing enemy.

The Pakistan Army Generals convened as soon as news reached them of the Soviet invasion. The fall of Afghanistan into the hands of the Soviets would be swiftly followed by the fall of Pakistan. India was sympathetic to the Soviet Union and thus there was a great threat to the state of Pakistan. The Pakistan Army began to think how they could avert this imminent disaster. They discussed the need for military preparation and tried to establish how much time they had. They knew that they could not repel India even on its own, so a combination of India and the Soviet Union would easily defeat Pakistan. It was suggested that the Afghans would not be able to hold back the Soviet Union for more than a week. The most optimistic opinion put forward suggested that the Afghans might be able to resist for a maximum of two months, after which the Soviet forces would gain total land superiority in the country.

Two months after the invasion, a group of Pakistani military officers went into Afghanistan to check the situation of the war. They found a population whose morale was high and who were committed to fighting the Russians. The Afghans had in their possession the rifles which their grandfathers and great grandfathers had used to fight the British. The Afghans were even selling their sheep in order to buy ammunition for their rifles.

When the Western World saw that the Afghan people had high resolve, they decided to finance the Afghans to fight against the Russians. America sent out instructions to its agent states in the Middle East to begin publicising the news of the Afghan Mujahideen. The government newspapers and publications in the Gulf began to give extensive coverage to the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, to the extent that Saudi radio would cover the topic in its five daily broadcasts, speaking about the heroic stance of the Mujahideen fighters. Consequently, charity organisations were established throughout the Saudi Kingdom, to gather money for the people of Afghanistan and the Mujahideen. Orders were sent to all organisations to support this Jihad effort and *fatawa*⁵⁴ were issued by scholars, regarding the obligation of Jihad. However, this was only done

⁵⁴ *Fatawa*: legal Islamic verdicts given by Islamic scholars

after the permission of the *Wali-ul-Amr* (leader of the country/authority) of Saudi Arabia, King Fahd, who in turn had received the go ahead from *his Wali-ul-Amr*, Jimmy Carter. Saudi Arabian Airlines were given orders to give a 75% discount to anyone flying to Pakistan with the intention of fighting in the Jihad.

The fear of the Americans, its allies and the Arabian Gulf states was such that they failed to see the possible long-term effects of pursuing such a strategy. This short sightedness was to prove to have disastrous consequences for the American alliance after the Afghan Jihad. The only thing that the Americans could see was the advancing Soviet Bear, and it seemed that they were prepared to do anything to halt the Soviet Army in its tracks. All doors were opened for the Muslims to travel to Pakistan to join the Mujahideen. This was a great chance for the Muslims to rise, because the shackles against travelling for Jihad had been removed, but even as this was the case, hardly any key Islamic figures responded to fulfil this obligation. Those who did respond to the call, however, were the high school and university students. They responded and set off immediately to give victory to the banner of '*There is no god worthy of worship except Allah.*' The only notable personality from amongst the scholars of the *Ummah*, who bothered to make a move, was Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, may Allah accept him and his two sons from amongst the martyrs.

The Soviets acknowledge that at the end of the war, they had spent over US\$70 Billion on the Afghan campaign. The outcome of the Battle of Jaji was what prompted the Soviet Prime Minister, Mikhail Gorbachov, to withdraw his troops from Afghanistan.

The whole Muslim World could not believe that it was possible for the Afghans to stand up to the Soviet Union. People had lived in a complete state of fear from this seemingly 'invincible' Soviet military machine. This disease was not only present in the minds of the masses but also amongst the ranks of the scholars. This defeatism and pessimism was such that the scholars would advise any of their students who wished to join the Mujahideen, that the Soviets were impossible to defeat. Even after the Battle of Jaji, when the indicators seemed to suggest a Soviet withdrawal, the Muslims still refused to believe this could happen because of the severe defeatism and cowardice that had overwhelmed the Muslim minds. Even

when the Soviets announced that they were thinking about withdrawing, the masses of the Muslims said that this was a trick and the Mujahideen were 'crazy' to think that they could defeat the Soviet Union. The people would say to the Mujahideen that the Soviet Union could end the war in 24 hours if it wished, but it was prolonging the war as part of its long term strategy in the region.

After the Battle of Jaji, Gorbachov gathered his ministers in Moscow and they suggested that a withdrawal from Afghanistan would be a huge embarrassment to World Communism, the Soviet Union and the Red Army. Gorbachov explained to them that the war had bled the Russian economy dry and that they could no longer afford to fund this expensive war, which they could not see an end to.

The Communist states around the World: East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, etc., sent delegations to Gorbachov pleading with him to renounce his decision to withdraw Soviet troops. They claimed that a withdrawal of Soviet troops would cause great turmoil throughout the entire Communist empire. Intelligence reports revealed that if people saw that the poor, barefooted Afghans could defeat the Communists, then they could do so as well and the Communist states around the World were at threat of being overthrown. Gorbachov was aware of this, but he affirmed that he could no longer afford to keep funding the war effort.

The Soviets entered Afghanistan on 27 December 1979 and they left, defeated and humiliated, on 15 February 1989. The war had lasted approximately ten years. Later that year, on the 25 December 1989, the Soviet flag was taken down from Soviet embassies and institutions Worldwide and was replaced by the Russian flag. By the Grace of Allah, the Soviet Union and its flag were thrown into the dustbin of history and it was split into 15 states.

Impressions of an Arab Journalist in Afghanistan

by Isam Diraz

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah (i.e. they have gone out for Jihad, and showed not their backs to the disbelievers), of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e. have been martyred), and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed (i.e. they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allah) in the least.” [Quran 33:23]

“Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision.” [Quran 3:169]

“And you (Muhammad SAWS) threw not when you did throw but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair trial from Him. Verily, Allah is the All-Hearer, All-Knower.”[Quran 8:17]

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: *“By Him in Whose Hands my soul is! Whoever is wounded in Allah's Cause, and Allah knows well who gets wounded in His Cause, will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wound having the colour of blood but the scent of musk”*⁵⁵

*“The martyr receives six good things from Allah: he is forgiven at the first shedding of his blood; he is shown his abode in Paradise; he is preserved from the Punishment in the Grave; he is kept safe from the greatest terror; he has placed on his head a Crown of Honour, a ruby of which is better than the World and what it contains; he is married to seventy-two wives of the Maidens of Paradise with large dark eyes; and is made intercessor for seventy of his relatives.”*⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Reported by Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 52, No. 59

⁵⁶ Reported by Ahmad, Ibn Hibban and At-Tirmidhi. *Saheeh. Saheeh* AlJaami No. 5058

Dedicated to the Mujahideen everywhere...

“To everyone who helped me achieve my task of spreading the message of the Jihad ... to serve the Afghan Jihad ...and to the souls of the Arab and Afghan martyrs.”

In face of the significant events through which the Arab and Islamic nation lives, where a man is betrayed and stabbed in the heart by his own brother, are an *Ummah's* dreams of its families. The only thing left for us to do is to search for rays of light to guide us through this darkness and ruin. It was for this reason that I compiled this treatise, which speaks about the experiences of a group of believing Arab men – men who fought the forces of tyranny, disbelief and infidelity in Afghanistan. I am not only speaking with reference to the past, nor am I only speaking about Afghanistan the place. Rather I am discovering the rays of hope in our lives; I am trying to unveil the rays of strength in ourselves, and to discover the weapon which is in us all so that we may confront the oppression and aggression with all our strength, resolution and alertness, and with boundless trust in Allah's help, Exalted be He, to us.

The Dangerous Bottle and the Plane Attacks

This story actually took place when the *Ma'sadatul-Ansar (Lion's Den of the Foreign Mujahideen)* was located in the mountain of *Thamar Khail*, 10km from Jalalabad. Battles were taking place around us, and Usama Bin Ladin had built a trench between two raised mountains to guard against the rockets and missiles that were recklessly being fired between the Afghan Mujahideen and the Communist Government Forces. On this particular day, the doctor in charge of the Den had come from Peshawar. He was an Egyptian doctor, known for his efficiency and piety. He had come to follow up news of the war, as well as to check up on medical matters, including the medical state of Usama Bin Ladin (Abu Abdullah); for he used to suffer from very low blood pressure which would sometimes render him unable to move and he would thus remain lying on the floor for many hours on end. He also needed to be given intravenous (I.V.) infusions, such as glucose. The doctor came to Usama Bin Ladin's trench, and took out a cannula by which to treat him. Abu Abdullah was in a lot of pain and extremely fatigued, and he was lying on the floor. This was after he had exerted his efforts to follow through the establishment of new locations

for the Arab brothers, on top of buying weapons and establishing plans for surveillance and attack. The doctor brought a bottle of glucose from a case which was outside the trench, and began to assemble a metal pole which was to act as a carrier for the bottle. He attached the I.V. tube that was attached to the bottle and fixed the cannula onto the end of it. Abu Abdullah uncovered his arm so the doctor could insert the cannula.

At this moment, just before the insertion, we heard the noise of a plane flying at a low altitude, followed by the sound of terrifying explosions around us. It was a tense moment. We left the trench to see what had been hit, but all Praise be to Allah, the bombs had fallen on the peaks of the hills and rocks surrounding us, but nevertheless there was thick smoke and dust around us. We entered the trench and Abu Abdullah sat back in his place. Some rocks had fallen on the trench, and the pole which was carrying the glucose bottle had fallen.

A few minutes passed in silence. The planes sometimes drew nearer, but then we would hear explosions in the distance, and we would know they were further again. After a while, we felt that the situation had somewhat calmed down (in terms of the state of battle, but obviously the bombing continued). By now, the doctor was standing in his place, and had begun to once again assemble the pole which carried the bottle of glucose. He fixed the bottle in its place in the holder, and began to stretch out the I.V. tube, which had now become entangled. He brought out a new cannula, following the contamination of the previous one after falling on the floor. He then said, in a loud voice, "*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*" Abu Abdullah stretched out his hand, and rolled his sleeves above his arm.

During the same moment in which the doctor was inserting the cannula into Abu Abdullah's arm, we again heard a terrifying noise, which this time caused us to cover our faces while we were in the trench. We then heard a series of explosions that ripped out the rocks around us. Some of the rocks fell, as did some of the wooden beams that surrounded the trench, and the trench filled with dust and the smell of the explosions. We raised our heads, and suddenly there were more violent and stronger explosions, causing us to dive for cover, for this time the bombs had actually fallen on the door of the trench. We felt as though the mountains around us had been torn from their place, and that we were unable to raise our heads. We

remained like this for a few minutes, until we heard that the planes had flown further away. When the explosions calmed, we stood up and looked around us, finding it hard to believe we were still alive. We were silent for a few minutes, after which some of the brothers went outside to examine our losses. We started to contact the other locations of the brothers, to find out how much damage this attack had caused, but there were none worth recalling. A few more minutes passed. The doctor was sitting in his place. Abu Abdullah contacted the other brothers via radio to assure himself of their safety, and everything calmed down. The bottle had again been flung to the ground by the explosions, and its holder had been tossed into a corner of the trench, while the I.V. tube lay in another corner entirely. The doctor rose calmly, trying to smile, and he said, "*Rejoice, all is well.*"

Abu Abdullah was lying in his place, unable to move. He smiled at the doctor, who then moved away to bring back the pole and pick up the bottle from the floor. At this moment, we were all, coincidentally, looking at the bottle as though there were something magical in it; something strange that was linked to the planes coming to bomb us. We all, again coincidentally, said in unison "*Isn't there any other bottle?*" The doctor laughed and said, "*Yes, there are other bottles. But why change this one?*" We all glanced at each other's eyes, and read that we were all thinking the same thoughts. The doctor noticed, and cuttingly replied, "*Do not take it as an evil omen, it is merely a coincidence.*" Thus, we could tell that he was thinking the same thing as us! We didn't understand what he meant, but one of the brothers said bravely, "*O brother! Destroy this bottle! Ever since the morning, the same thing has continued to happen – as soon as we begin to assemble it and fix it in place, they attack! It has happened over five times now!*" The doctor replied assertively, "*Fear Allah, O Sheikh! Do you believe such idle talk? What is the relationship between a bottle of glucose, such as this one, and the planes?*" The doctor rose and began to once again erect the pole. He fixed the bottle in its place, and attached the I.V. tube.

He opened his case and took out a new cannula to replace the other one, which had become contaminated by dirt, and attached it to the I.V. tube. Usama Bin Ladin submissively stretched his arm out, and calmly repeated, "*O men, do not repeat such idle talk - it is a coincidence.*" The doctor then said with confidence and resolution, "*They are all coincidences, and everything is by the Will of Allah.*" He then began to fix the pole firmly into

the ground, sat down by the mattress of Usama Bin Ladin, and said – but this time in a purposefully raised voice in order to silence us, *"In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful!"* At that very moment, before inserting the cannula, we again felt as though the ground beneath our feet was being torn apart. Powerful explosions, smoke, the smell of gunpowder, stones flying everywhere! A section of the trench's ceiling was torn down, all of us had unconsciously fallen to our faces, and we were reciting verses of the Quran.

The explosions continued fiercely around us, in a manner of which there was no likeness. One of the Mujahideen called out saying, *"They're cluster bombs!"* We felt that it was impossible for us to stay alive with such terrifying explosions around us. They continued for a few minutes, a few minutes that felt like an eternity. The bombing then calmed down and the sound of the planes dimmed as they grew more distant, but we remained on the ground of the trench, in the same positions. It was only until one of the Mujahideen came and said, *"They are attacking with poisonous gasses!"* that we arose – and we could actually smell something permeating through the air, so we covered our noses with gas masks. A few minutes passed, and Usama Bin Ladin was lying on his back still in pain. The doctor began, once again, to fix the bottle on its holder, and stretch out the I.V. tube. We were all again looking at the bottle as though it was a living entity with a secret. As the doctor extracted another cannula from his case and attached it to the I.V. tube, and as Usama Bin Ladin was lying down on the floor and again stretching out his bare arm submissively and calmly, waiting for the insertion of the cannula into his veins, we found ourselves – everyone in the trench – shouting involuntarily and in coincidental unison, *"Throw the bottle outside! Don't touch it!"* and suddenly we all burst into continuous laughter.

Abu Abdullah then told us, *"Do not see it as an evil omen, my brothers, for evil omens are forbidden in Islam."* However, we all cried out again, *"We have to throw this bottle out! The planes come as soon as it is touched; throw it outside the trench!"* Another wave of laughter befell us, and when the doctor tried to once again fix the bottle on the pole, Abu Zubair Al-Madani⁵⁷ (may Allah have Mercy on him) stood up laughing. He took the bottle and held it with his fingertips as though he was carrying a bomb on the verge of detonation. We laughed again, and he flung the bottle

⁵⁷ Abu Zubair Al-Madani from Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, martyred in a battle against Serb forces at Sarajevo Airport in Bosnia, in October 1992

outside the trench without uttering a single word. The doctor rose from his place and prepared to leave amidst our laughter, with Abu Abdullah still silently lying in the same position, smiling.

I found no better story than this one to begin the story of The Lion's Den of the *Ansar* for it touches on the gentleness of the deep human and brotherly bond which tied the 'Brothers-in-Arms' who fought Jihad with truthfulness, love and *Iman* around Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin.

Establishment of the Den

Usama Bin Ladin came to Pakistan early in January 1980, after hearing of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, only seventeen days after the invasion occurred. He had never before heard of Afghanistan, despite it being a Muslim country and having excellent horses (Usama Bin Ladin loved horses). Abu Muhammad As-Soori says about Usama Bin Ladin's first trip, *"Usama Bin Ladin came to Lahore and the same night he went to the leader of the Jamat-e-Islami in Pakistan. He gave the leader a considerable sum of money as a donation to the Mujahideen, who in turn gave his word that this money would reach the Mujahideen. In a following visit, the leader informed Usama Bin Ladin that the money had been handed to the leaders of the Afghan Jihad - Rabbani⁵⁸ and Hekmatyar - because at that time, they were the only people in that field of work."*

When Usama Bin Ladin came to know where exactly the Mujahideen were in Peshawar, he went to see them. Every time he went to Pakistan, he used to befriend one of the brothers there, because the Arabs at that time used to come to Peshawar alone. In 1984CE (1404AH), Abu Abdullah Usama decided that there should be an organised Arab presence in Pakistan. He had defined goals for the Arabs to play a more effective role in the Jihad, so he opened an office to receive the Arab brothers coming from abroad, to prepare them and to send them to Afghanistan. Abu Muhammad As-Soori said about the experimental Mujahideen Services Office (*Maktab Khidamat lil-Mujahideen*), *"This Office had both positive and negative aspects to it. The main manager of the office was Sheikh Abdullah Azzam (may Allah have Mercy on his soul), and the first person to be responsible for this office was a young Jordanian brother*

⁵⁸ Sayyaf was in prison at the time. Rumours that he was released in 1980 are incorrect.

called Abu Akram. He stayed for a few months and then returned to Jordan, partly due to the continual complaint that there was no organised system in the Office. Thus, the lack of a defined authority and headquarters was the main complaint of whoever was consequently responsible for the Office, such as Abu Usama Al-Falastini, Abu Hajar Al-Iraqi, Abu Dawud Al-Urduni, Abu Muhammad As-Sudani, and Abu Muhammad As-Soori, who was one of the founders of the Lion's Den of the Ansar (Foreign Mujahideen). However, despite the many minus points, its plus points were undoubtedly greater, for it was this Office which developed the Arab Mujahideen to the stage at which they reached, in terms of an increase in their number, and more effective participation in the battles."

The Formation of the Mujahideen Services Office

The Services Office was originally tantamount to a large guesthouse. The brothers had rented out a villa where the Arab brothers could live or stay for a temporary period. The administrative side was divided into a number of sub-committees, namely the Military Committee, the Administrative Committee, the Training Committee, and the Dispatching Committee (specifically for dispatching caravans of brothers to Afghanistan). Usama Bin Ladin used to donate about half a million rupees for the Office's monthly expenditure (i.e. approximately US\$25,000 per month). However, when the rent increased in 1985 - 1986, he decided to have a permanent building built for the purpose. He only used to visit now and again, but he preferred to undertake actual projects that would help the Mujahideen infrastructure, rather than simply giving monetary contributions to the Jihad. Thus, he set about building roads through the mountains, and digging tunnels and huge hideouts to protect the Afghan Mujahideen from Soviet aerial attacks. These projects were in co-ordination with his brothers in Saudi Arabia, who were the owners of the huge Bin Ladin Corporation, and who helped him by sending digging equipment, huge Caterpillar bulldozers and electricity generators to Afghanistan. Abu Abdullah selected a group of brothers and trained them to help him in this task, after which they began working, in August 1986, to build roads and dig out trenches and caves, in a place that they nicknamed 'The Den', in the vicinity of Jaji in Eastern Afghanistan. The Den (*Ma'sadah*) later became known as *Ma'sadatul-Ansar* (Lair or Lion's Den of the *Ansar*).

The Story of the Lion's Den of the Ansar, as Narrated by its Commander, Usama Bin Ladin

Usama Bin Ladin recounts, during a long interview I conducted with him at numerous times in Afghanistan and Jeddah:

"All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and Peace and blessings on our Prophet Muhammad and on his Family and Companions. What I will say in the course of our discussion will speak of the blessings which Allah, Exalted is He, bestowed on us in inciting the believers to tread this Great Path. In 1399AH (1979CE), we heard news that the Russians had invaded Muslim land in Afghanistan. Immediately after hearing this news, I went to Pakistan to try to help our Muslim brothers in Afghanistan, where I stayed until Allah blessed me with the chance to enter Afghanistan itself. The state of the Mujahideen was weak compared to that of the enemy, in terms of preparation and training for battle. I thus felt that we were failing to fulfil the rights our Afghan brothers held over us, by shirking our responsibility, or not taking it seriously. I decided that the best thing that would make up for such a dire failure would be for the Muslim to be killed whilst in battle for the Sake of Allah."

Sheikh Usama continued talking about the state of the Afghans saying,

"The situation continued without much change, and it was by the Grace of Allah that the Mujahideen were able to eventually enter Afghanistan. I felt that the Muslims were betraying their brothers, because the Russian Communists were helping the Afghan Communists in their fight."

I asked Sheikh Usama about the formation of the Lion's Den, and he replied,

"I noticed the Afghan's concern and joy at the Arabs amongst them. Seeing the Arabs was a means of increasing the Afghans in strength and belief and it would raise their morale to a high degree. Due to the strong love of the Afghans for the Arabs, they would treat them as guests, in that they would not impose any military or combat duties upon them. However, the Arab men wanted to be Mujahideen, and to do the work of the Mujahideen: they did not come to Afghanistan as guests. Due to this, I came up with the idea

of forming a place where the Arab brothers could be received and trained to fight.

I sought permission from the leader of the Islamic Union for the Mujahideen of Afghanistan in 1404AH (1984CE), to form a military camp close to the Pak-Afghan border for the brothers to train in. At that time, about 100 brothers joined the camp, which was a small number. The reason for this was that the young Arab men had been raised in their country in a life far removed from the reality and honour of the Jihad, and defending the religion of Allah, thus many men used to regard the Jihad as merely a recommended, voluntary act. The brothers would come in the summer and when the summer ended and their studies started up again, most of the brothers returned to their own countries to complete their education, despite the fact that those who came were some of the best brothers. Only a very small number of brothers remained on a permanent basis, less than ten altogether. However, Allah bestowed His Favours upon us and we found a suitable location for the camp in Jaji, inside Afghanistan."

Beginning the Work Inside Afghanistan

"We formed a training camp in Jaji, and we began to train ourselves by any means available to us at the time. There were now about 50 of us, but again, when winter broke in, most of the Mujahideen left and returned to their home countries. There seemed not to be a complete awareness amongst the brothers, of the importance of making this Deen victorious, and of the necessity of fighting the disbelievers until the Religion is all for Allah Alone. At the end of the year 1406AH (1986), and the beginning of 1407AH (1987), we resolved to stay in Jaji, no matter how few of us there were. There were only eleven of us at that time, most of us from Al-Madinah Al-Munawarrah, the City of the Prophet (peace be upon him). I remember from amongst them: Shafeeq bin Ibrahim Al-Madani (may Allah have mercy on him), Talib Abdul-Aziz An-Najjar, Abu Qutaibah As-Soori AlHamawi Al-Madani, Usama bin Mulla Haider (Azmarai) Al-Madani⁵⁹ (whose ethnicity was from the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan), Muadh As-Sa'di, who was resident in Al-Madinah but was originally Palestinian, Abu Raja' Hassan Al-Ansari also from Al-Madinah, Abdou Ahmad Hamood Uthman, and Ahmad Hussain Bakhsi, also from Al-

⁵⁹ Usama bin Mulla Haider, Azmarai, (also known as Wali Khan Amin Shah) from Al-Madinah Al-Munawarrah. Currently serving life imprisonment in USA.

Madinah. There were eleven of us, and we began building roads and tunnels in the hearts of the mountains, and hideouts in order to protect the Afghan Mujahideen. We had placed Shafeeq (may Allah have mercy on him) and Usama Mulla in charge of surveillance of the area. It is worth mentioning that all of these brothers were about 20 years old, may Allah honour them. They had left their studies and had come to perform Jihad in the Way of Allah.

Thus the work continued. Shafeeq and Usama Mullah informed us that there was a mountain overlooking enemy territory, which was free from any forces. I visited the area and found that it was a strategically vital location, so I enquired as to the reason that the Mujahideen had not, as of yet, occupied this area despite its importance. I was told that in the winter, the rain and ice block the roads and prevent supplies from reaching the area. We had intended to set up a camp specifically for the Arabs, and thus decided to take this area for its location. By the time we began our work, only three brothers remained - Shafeeq, Usama Mulla and myself. The rest of the brothers were either on holiday or had been assigned other work. However, due to this location being extremely isolated and very far from the Mujahideen, but close to the enemy, we were in dire need of extra brothers to help us with our work, as well as keeping guard. One of the visiting brothers tried to dissuade us from our plans, but he failed to dissuade both Shafeeq and Usama. Allah then granted to us two more brothers, who were headed for another battlefield in Afghanistan, but had come to visit us. One of them was called Abudh-Dhahab, and he was Egyptian of Sudanese origin. Before he was due to leave, he came to me and said, 'We would like to stay here with you.' This made me extremely happy, and of course I agreed.

By this time, we were working hard in the construction of the Camp. The terrain was open and exposed to enemy eyes, so they used to bomb us frequently. We thus decided to relocate to another place nearby, less exposed, which later came to be known as the Lion's Den of the Ansar. This period, when we were positioned close to the enemy, was one of the most beautiful times that we spent in the Jihad, may Allah accept it. We lived in one tent, built roads and dug trenches. We prayed together, we lived together and we ate together. We took turns standing guard, but felt extremely lonely because the place was frightening for both sides - for the enemy, because we overlooked them, and for us, because it was so isolated

and we were so few in number. None of us was able to venture too far out from the tent because there were many dense forests around us, and we were very close to the enemy.

We stayed like this for a long time, but then the continuous guarding exhausted us, so we asked one of the other brothers to join us. Salih Al-Ghamidi came, and was later followed by another brother, which brought our total up to seven. Despite that, we remained cheerful and optimistic that our numbers would increase, and within only two months, there were 40 of us. We were later joined by Abu Haneefah, Hussain Ajib and Muhammad As-Sakhri, who was a very resolute, unhesitant brother. I first met Muhammad As-Sakhri in the Prophet's Mosque in Al-Madinah, after the Fajr Prayer. I was about to travel to Afghanistan and Abu Haneefah told me that there was one brother who also wanted to go, after he finished his education the following summer. Therefore, I met him and we spoke for a few minutes, after which he resolved that he would leave with us the following day. He knew that it was an obligation on him, so he left his studies and his degree - and the World - and stayed with us in Afghanistan for four years, until Allah granted him Martyrdom in Jalalabad, may Allah accept him from the martyrs."

I asked Usama Bin Ladin, "How did you choose the name The Lion's Den of the Ansar'?" He answered,

"We consulted each other on the name, and ended up with a number of different names, but we finally settled on calling it the Lion's Den - a name which we took from a line of poetry composed by one of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with him) of the Messenger of Allah (SAWS)- in which he praises the Prophet (SAWS), saying:

*Whoever likes the type that confuse one other
Like the confusion of burning pride
Then let him come to a Den, which sharpens its swords
With the provisions, and beams of the trench*

Abu Haneefah returned back to Al-Madinah to incite the youth to come for Jihad. He was absent from us for 23 days, and he returned with 23 men, after which our number continued to increase and we began to feel the importance and magnitude of our gathering. The brothers here would

later ask me, 'What caused your group of brothers to excel?' There were actually many reasons. Our brothers would come from their own countries, and they would be overwhelmed by their experience here and all the factors it included - such as the Jihad, the strange language, the harsh climate and hostile topography."

Background to the Battle of the Lion's Den, Ramadan 1407AH (May 1987)

By the beginning of *Ramadan* of 1407AH (April 1987), the Den was still premature in its construction. It was then that we received a tip-off on the enemy's tactics, but the information was not enough. Thus, we continued to dig the trenches, and planned to launch a pre-emptive attack on the enemy around 14 *Ramadan*. The Afghan leader Gulbudeen Hekmatyar was already in the area, and then Sheikh Sayyaf arrived, so we changed our attack date to 26 *Ramadan*. When the day arrived, we attacked the area directly below us, and the Russians retaliated from a distance using BM-21 Missile Launchers. This marked the beginning of the long battles that lasted for three weeks. The enemy was prepared for it, but we were only prepared for a battle that would last one day. Our aim in the attack was to totally destroy this enemy base. The road to Jaji, however, was closed, and being one of the main supply roads in Afghanistan, it was to cause some problems. The battle of 29 *Ramadan* was the fiercest day, the attacking forces being made up of about 10,000 men, comprising three Russian regular army battalions and a battalion of *Spetsnaz*⁶⁰ Commandos.

The Battle of the Lion's Den - A First Hand Account

Introduction

The Battle of the Lion's Den began in Ramadan 1407 AH (May 1987). The Russian Minister of Defence had asked for a separate budget to enable him to cut off the supply routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan. He took a pledge alongside other senior generals that this budget would allow them

⁶⁰ *Spetsnaz*: Elite Soviet Special Forces

to strike a decisive blow to the Mujahideen at a time when they were tired and morale was very low.

The Pak-Afghan border route was a means of transporting weapons, food and other supplies in Afghanistan as well as allowing the passage of the Mujahideen between the two countries. The Russian Ministry of Defence affirmed that this new budget would cut off all supply routes into Afghanistan. From amongst the most important supply routes was the one from Parachinar in Pakistan, to Jaji in the Eastern Afghan province of Paktia. This route would normally carry around 60% of supplies into Afghanistan and the Russians were suffering from heavy losses throughout the country as a result of this supply line. Therefore, the Russians intended to cut off these border supply routes and force the commanders inside Afghanistan to surrender.

Allah, Glorious and Most High, willed the Afghan-Arab Mujahideen to have a key role in this decisive battle. The Arab Mujahideen occupied the front-line positions and it was they who incited the enemy into commencing battle. The battle continued for 21 days, with Russian artillery and firing directed at the Arab Mujahideen positions and their base camp, the Lion's Den of the *Ansar*.

The Russians were based in a fortress called Chowni, of 1000m by 500m in dimension, and their other fortified positions were close to a nearby mountain. This area consisted of dense forestation and was 300m above sea level. In the winter, the entire area would be covered with snow and it was not possible to survive these conditions, which existed for six months every year, without a gas heating facility.

The Russian positions in the mountains were about 2-3km away from the Mujahideen positions. However, there were no Arab positions in between and when the Arabs asked the Afghans why this was so, they replied that during the winter, the amount of snow made these routes inaccessible. However, Allah blessed the Mujahideen and they were able to open a route through the snow after they brought over bulldozers and heavy machinery. They established an underground camp for the Afghan Mujahideen near the enemy lines. The number of Arabs present at this time was very small and because of this, they viewed their role as being one of opening routes and digging of tunnels in the mountainside. The Arabs hoped

that the Afghans would allow them to join in some of the military operations from time to time.

However, to the astonishment of the Arabs, the Afghans did not wish to occupy positions that close to enemy lines. The distance from the Lion's Den camp to the main camps of the Mujahideen was 13km and it was 14km from the Lion's Den to the tunnels. The Arabs thus decided that they would occupy these close positions themselves, and so it became the first camp for the Arabs inside Afghanistan. Thereafter, they began to look for individuals to guard the camp, whilst all the heavy machinery was returned. There were only three individuals guarding the camp: Usama Mulla Azmarai, Shafeeq Ibrahim Al-Madani and Usama Bin Ladin. Usama Azmarai and Shafeeq were both high school students in Al-Madinah. Usama Azmarai was originally from the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan, whereas Shafeeq was born in Al-Madinah but originated from Sindh, Pakistan. The third individual is a personality who needs little introduction. These three individuals were positioned in the Den, facing an entire nearby Russian battalion. At around *Asr* (late-afternoon prayer) time, the three were preparing to set off towards the Den from another Mujahideen camp, when they met two individuals, Dhabeeh from Taif and Abudh-Dhahab from Egypt, as mentioned earlier. In the eyes of these three brothers, the arrival of but one person was as if reinforcements numbering a thousand had been sent.

These two new arrivals had intended to join the Afghan commanders in the area. They sat, prayed *Asr* and drank tea with the group of three. Having finished praying, they felt at ease in the presence of these three and asked if they could join them in what they were doing. Hence, the first group to run the Lion's Den consisted of a group of five brothers.

Brother Ali, witness to the battles of the Lion's Den, said,

"I travelled to Afghanistan for the first time with Shafeeq Al-Madani, and we went to the Mujahideen Services Office in Peshawar, where we stayed for about two months. I then returned to Saudi Arabia, only to return to Pakistan the following year, and again undertook a period of training lasting two months. There were a number of training centres in Afghanistan at that time, and the one I attended was the Maru Camp in Jalalabad. After my training, I again returned to

Saudi Arabia. My third visit to Afghanistan was in 1407AH (1987CE), by which time the Den had been formed, and when I went there, in the beginning of 1407AH (1987CE), I found only about seven or eight brothers present. There was at that time only one tent, and a room for the Afghans who shared the location with us.

Most of the Arab brothers were not trained sufficiently, for two reasons. Firstly, there was a lack of organised training courses at the time, and secondly, men themselves used to come to Afghanistan only to fight, and they wanted to do only the most basic training so that they could go to the front-line as soon as possible. Thus, they formed new training sessions to overcome this.

The construction of the Den progressed and Usama Bin Ladin instilled love in the hearts of the brothers for each other. He trained them to have patience with the lack of activity, but it was very hard convincing them, as was it hard on the men to continue their work, building hideouts and preparing reinforcements for seven months, without actually performing any operations. Thus, the brothers used to beg Usama Bin Ladin to plan some operations, even if they be small ones. Eventually, one such operation actually took place together with the Afghan Mujahideen. The Soviet forces were in the middle of celebrating the anniversary of their Party's formation, and the Mujahideen shelled them and disturbed their celebrations.

The Den developed, and soon also included a Central Command room, the Badr Centre, the Zakoyak Room (for anti-aircraft defence), the Taif Room, a food storehouse, a weapon warehouse and a kitchen.

On 17 Shaban, the brothers decided to perform another operation, despite the Den still not being fully complete. Again, the aims of this operation were not achieved, for a number of reasons. One such reason was a lack of ammunition, despite the brothers working night and day without rest in the days prior to the operation, trying to transport ammunition to the mountain peaks by mule. The Commander of this operation was Yaseen Al-Kurdi (may Allah have mercy on him), and he was one of the brothers who worked to transport the ammunition on time."

Thus, on 17 *Shaban* 1407AH (17 April 1987CE), there took place a confrontation between the Mujahideen (Afghan and Arab) and the Russian forces, which was good in terms of experience for the brothers. The Mujahideen then began to prepare for an offensive towards the end of *Ramadan*. This preparation was a co-ordinated effort between the main party leaders (Hekmatyar, Sayyaf and Rabbani), the front-line commanders and the Arabs. The intention was to attack the Russian positions where their forces consisted of about one thousand men. At the same time, the Mujahideen were unaware that the Russians were preparing to attack them too, wipe them out completely and eventually cut off the most important supply route into Afghanistan.

The First Military Encounter - Operation 17 Shaban

Abu Muhammad As-Soori narrates the first military encounter embarked upon by the men of the Lion's Den of the *Ansar*, in which he himself participated and was injured. He said,

"The first battle which the Arabs fought as a single group was in Ramadan 1406AH (May, 1986) in Khost. They formed a battalion called The Battalion of Al-Khurasā⁶¹. This battalion fought some fierce battles, in which a large number of the Arabs were injured and others martyred. This took place before the Den was formed. When Usama Bin Ladin began building the roads and tunnels, and digging the trenches, he sent Shafeeq, Usama Azmarai and Abu Qutaibah to explore the area. They informed Abu Abdullah Usama of a mountain which overlooked the enemy's stronghold of Chowni, by which the Russians protected themselves, and which presided over the valley on the borders of Pakistan. Abu Abdullah Usama went to view this mountain for himself and chose it as the location for forming a base specific to the Arabs. Winter was approaching, and the snows prevented any movement in the mountains. Usama Bin Ladin had asked the leaders of the area to coordinate their activities, so he contacted a well-known leader called Abdus-Sami, whose camp was about halfway to the enemy's stronghold. Usama Bin Ladin requested the Afghan leader not to retreat this winter, and to stay firm in his place, and that he would take it upon himself to build retreats to protect the Afghans from the snow.

⁶¹ According to Abu Hajar Al-Iraqi it was called The Battalion of Ad-Dhurafa

Abdus-Sami, however, refused, because the snow was too thick to allow any form of life, let alone supplies, to pass through. Usama Bin Ladin then offered to supply them with water and all the other necessary supplies, on the condition that they do not leave the area in winter. Abdus-Sami finally agreed to this, and on 24 October 1986, Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin erected the first tent of the Lion's Den of the Ansar: the same date on which they bought their first weapon from the Pakistani markets - a Gorjunov SG-4362⁶² machinegun which was given to Azmarai."

Abu Muhammad continued the story,

"I reached the Den with Sheikh Abdullah Azzam (may Allah have Mercy on him) a month after it was formed, and there were 14 people there at the time. I had gone to train in the area of Sada, close to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, but it was decided that we should go straight to the Den to gain proper training on Afghan terrain. When we reached the Den, there were some guests visiting, who tried to discourage our activities, and told Usama Bin Ladin and his men that the enemy would come and capture them alive, but Allah made their hearts firm upon the Deen. Our group, however, returned to Sada without any training, where we underwent a short training course before returning to the Den. Winter was coming and the snow had begun to fall, so the Den began to store its supplies and complete as much construction as possible to prepare for the winter. In only five months, a further seven or eight rooms were built, which were used by about 70 Arab men, who were preparing themselves for sacrifice and Martyrdom.

During this period, the brothers were urging Usama Bin Ladin to organise a military operation in which they could partake. He, in turn, was trying to calm them down, and convince them of the necessity of establishing their base firstly, and preparing all the necessary reinforcements. In reality, it was a very calm period, out of which a deep spiritual bond developed between the brothers. When the winter ended, and the snow began to melt, the brothers prepared themselves to perform operations against the enemy, the main aim of which was to gain experience in practical combat. The first operation organised, prepared, and performed by the 'Lions' of the Den, was on Friday 17 Shaban 1407 AH (17 April 1987CE), in which

⁶² Gorjunov SG-43 medium machinegun, of calibre 7.62mm, with the ability to fire at 500-700 rounds per minute

120 men participated, including myself. We were divided into two groups – one in the front, commanded by Abu Khalid Al-Misri, which was to penetrate the enemy bases, and one supporting from behind, commanded by Abu Burhan As-Soori, which was to shell the enemy with artillery. A few days after the planning was complete, the operation began at 6pm on the Friday.

Sheikh Sayyaf came to the Den especially to witness this operation, for it was a new experience for the Arabs. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was present, as was Sheikh Tameem Al-Adnani (may Allah have mercy on them both), and of course Usama Bin Ladin, who was the overall commander. There were some touching moments before the battle, when the brothers bade farewell to each other, not knowing if they would be alive to see one another again, with each of their souls longing for Martyrdom."

Abu Muhammad As-Soori continued,

"I was in the attacking group. The plan was to penetrate the target that we nicknamed 'The Mother of All Trenches.' When we reached a distance of 30-40 metres from the target, we were surprised to find that the enemy was fully awake.

There were 16 targets that the Afghan Mujahideen were attacking altogether, all of which engulfed this area, except the two bases that we had planned to attack. However, their guard was awake: we saw him and we noticed that he saw us – or some shadows moving near him. He thus fired a few rounds of bullets at us, and as we drew nearer, the bullets rained down on us. We returned fire, but when the cross-fire erupted, we could not lift our heads until night descended. Both of my legs were hit as soon as they began to fire on us with a Gorjunov SG-43 machinegun from an open hill to our left. This took us by surprise because we did not know that they had Gorjunov machineguns. Thus, we were given orders to withdraw to a base nearby, which had reinforcements. We had named it The Frontal Base. Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin was there, and he was the one who issued the order to withdraw, fearing that his brothers would be hit by shrapnel, once the attack had been discovered by the enemy. However, nobody was able to implement the order until after dark, so that their withdrawal would not be noticed. It was nightfall when the brothers carried

me back to the Den. There were five supporting groups in all - four returned but one got lost and remained missing till midnight.

Ahmad Az-Zahrani from Taif, was the first martyr of the Den, killed in this operation. He was firing a heavy machine gun, when he was hit by a mortar round. He was an excellent brother, may Allah have mercy on him. Idris As-Saudi was injured in this battle, as was I. However, all in all, the Battle of Shaban was an important landmark in the history of the Den, from which the brothers learnt many lessons which were to help them in future battles. After this operation, the brothers performed other operations, to gain more experience in direct combat with the enemy. It was during this period that brother Abudh-Dhahab was also martyred, when a mortar round fell between three brothers during a reconnaissance mission, instantly killing Abudh-Dhahab and injuring Azmarai. For a full month, operations, skirmishes and battles continued under the command of Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri (may Allah have mercy on him).

The Battle of the Lion's Den: May 1987

Then came the Battle of 17 *Ramadan* (22 May 1987): an operation that the brothers thoroughly prepared for. Despite their preparations, however, the brothers were unable to conquer any bases because their commander, Abu Khalid Al-Misri, was injured right at the start of battle, by shrapnel from a RPG-7 rocket. Abu Sahl Al-Misri⁶³ (may Allah have mercy on him) was also injured, which created another obstacle in the smooth flow of the operation. The group nearest to the enemy was Shafeeq Al-Madani's group, who had with him eight Mujahideen, and returned with four of them injured. The entire operation was conducted under the chief command of Abu

⁶³ Abu Sahl Al-Misri, Ayman Sabri, was martyred later in the War. He was an example of reliance upon Allah, patience and truth. One day before his Martyrdom, he had a dream in which he saw himself in a huge crowd of people standing outside the gates of Paradise. There was an angel with a register in his hand who would announce the full name of an individual, then that individual would step forward towards the angel. The angel would give him a card and with that card, that individual would enter Paradise. Abu Sahl waited and waited but his name was not called out. After that, he resolved to himself that he would step forward at the next name that the angel announced, even if it was someone else's name. Incidentally, the next name that the angel announced was Abu Sahl's name, so he rushed towards the angel, took his card and entered Paradise with it. Once he entered Paradise, he saw two brothers: one who had been martyred a year earlier and another one, Dr. Salih who was not martyred until two years after this dream. Abu Sahl was killed the next morning, may Allah have mercy on him.

Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri. Usama Bin Ladin and myself were in Peshawar at the time, and when we came to know of the operation, we quickly rushed to the battlefield on 17 *Ramadan* in order to participate in the battle. We arrived in the evening and sat in the Den following the news of the battle. From that day on, I stayed in the Den, to live through the most famous battles of the Arabs in Afghanistan. In these battles, a total of 45 Soviet soldiers and officers surrendered themselves to one of the commanders of Hekmatyar's Islamic party, mainly due to the heavy bombing directed at their bases by the Mujahideen.

On 15 *Ramadan* 1407 (20 May 1987), Russian fighter planes (Sukhoi's and MIG's) flew over all Mujahideen positions in the area. The Mujahideen responded immediately with anti-aircraft fire using DShk⁶⁴ and Zakoyak⁶⁵ heavy machine guns, forcing the planes to retreat. The aim of this manoeuvre was to enable the Russians to establish the location of Mujahideen heavy weaponry with pinpoint accuracy, so that when the Russians began their offensive they would know what positions to bomb.

On 23 *Ramadan* 1407 (28 May 1987), two Russian helicopters descended to a low altitude, surprising the Mujahideen. The Zakoyak anti-aircraft gun is not designed to fire at targets below a horizontal elevation of zero degrees; thus the helicopters were out of firing range. Three of the Arabs were nearby so they assigned one brother to load an RPG-7 rocket launcher and be on standby to fire at the helicopters if they approached. The Mujahideen later learnt that the Russians wished to view the positions of the Mujahideen heavy weaponry at close deciphering range, so as not to totally rely on the aerial photographs they had.

Soon afterwards, news reached the Mujahideen that two Russian units numbering nine to ten thousand troops, had been deployed and were moving towards the area. The units arrived at an area called Nara, which was to be their point of gathering, whilst others entered the Chowni Fortress.

On 27 *Ramadan* 1407 (01 June 1987), the Russians deployed their artillery and multiple rocket systems towards the Mujahideen positions. One of

⁶⁴ DShk-38 heavy machinegun, of calibre 12.7mm, with the ability to fire up to 600 rounds per minute

⁶⁵ ZPU-1 'Zakoyak' anti-aircraft machinegun, of calibre 14.5mm, with the ability to fire up to 600 rounds per minute

these rocket systems was the BM-14⁶⁶ (referred to as the *Chiloyak* by the Afghans), which fired its rockets (all 16 of them) towards a point in the Den called Hunain. Most of the brothers here were from Taif and they were very keen to engage the enemy. The rockets landed in a mountain behind the Den but succeeded in surprising those Mujahideen present in the area, because of their deafening noise, tremendous force and intensity of explosion. A short while elapsed (a matter of minutes) and then a large, dark rain cloud came across the clear summer sky (June had just begun) and rested over the Den. Then Allah (SWT) commanded it to send forth a frightening wave of thunder and lightening, so heavy and intense in volume that the Mujahideen were made to forget the rockets that had just flown over their heads. This miraculous sign spread a wave of *Sakeenah*⁶⁷ into the hearts of the brothers. Then, soon afterwards, hailstones began to fall from the sky over the Den. The brothers ate the hail and felt the earlier fear disappear from their hearts. This was from the first of the miracles that the brothers witnessed during this battle.

On 28 *Ramadan* 1407 (02 June 1987), the battle began with full intensity. The Russians sent a squadron of over 24 fighter planes to bomb the region around the Den. They would circle the area after each bombing run and return to drop further bombs. The area encompassing the Den was a distance of 400m by 800m and yet the bombs being dropped were leaving craters of more than 12 metres in diameter. The craters were seen to be very close to each other, indicating an intensive targeting of the area by the Russians. These craters are still present in the area today.

On top of this, the Russians were shelling the area with D-30 artillery⁶⁸, 120mm mortar shells and cluster bombs. The area was totally blitzed, with not a single tree escaping damage from the shrapnel of these bombs. By the Grace of Allah, all the Mujahideen positions were underground and had been well camouflaged at ground level. This heavy bombing continued for the entire 21-day duration of the battle and by the Grace of Allah, the enemy was not able to destroy a single Mujahideen

⁶⁶ BM-14 MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), capable of firing, in a total of only eight seconds, 16 x 140mm rockets, to a maximum range of 10km

⁶⁷ *Sakeenah*: tranquility and inner peace granted to Mujahideen by Allah, as in the verse of the Quran: "***He is the One who sent down sakeenah into the hearts of the believers that they may increase in Iman upon Iman. And to Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the Earth. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.***" [Quran 48:41]

⁶⁸ D-30 122mm towed Howitzer artillery, capable of firing 122m rounds, with warheads of 21 kg, up to a distance of 15km

position. One vacated position was struck but not destroyed and another bunker received a hit from a 120mm mortar shell. The 40cm or so of sand and soil above the bunker was successful in absorbing the shock of the blast and the Mujahideen in that bunker escaped safely, all Praise is due to Allah.

The shelling continued on 28 *Ramadan* until the late-afternoon time of the *Asr* Prayer, when the Russians deployed eight tanks that began to advance towards the Mujahideen positions. Once the tanks came into range of the Mujahideen's limited firepower, the brothers began to fire. The Mujahideen were facing the might of the Soviet Superpower Army, the most powerful army in the World, with only three 82mm mortars, a BM-21⁶⁹ rocket system, two 4x4 pick-ups and a truck carrying the BM rockets, at their disposal. The Mujahideen that were sent to help the Arabs had an additional four pick-up trucks. Sayyaf sent 20 of his troops with his commander, Kochai, in charge to aid the brothers in the Den. The total number of Mujahideen present at the beginning of the battle was 70; similar to the number present at the historical Pledge of Aqabah⁷⁰ and the number of Prophet Musa's (peace be upon him) companions.

The 70 Mujahideen were split into two groups of 35. One group was placed in some tunnels around the perimeter of the Den and the other half of the fighting force were positioned inside the Den itself. These two groups would swap duties every 24 hours to enable the group inside the Den to take some rest from the continuous day and night shelling. The human soul cannot tolerate this type of 24 hour continuous shelling without resting and it is all from the Grace and Favour of Allah that the Mujahideen were able to divide their force in this way to allow the brothers to get some much needed rest.

The Russians presumed that after such heavy bombardment, any human being in the area would have long fled the vicinity. Hence, as mentioned earlier, they approached the area around the Den with eight tanks and 12 armoured personnel carriers. As they advanced forward slowly, they continued to shell Mujahideen positions. The Mujahideen did not return fire

⁶⁹ BM-21 'Hail' GRAD MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) that has the ability to launch, in a total of only 20 seconds, 40 x 122mm rockets with an average length of 2.8m and an average warhead mass of 19 kg (depending on the type of warhead used), to a maximum range of 20km-30km, depending on the type of rocket used

⁷⁰ Pledge of Aqabah where 70 Muslims from Al-Madinah pledged allegiance to the Prophet (SAWS), laying the foundations for the first Islamic State

and waited until the entire convoy was within range of their mortars. The 82mm mortar has a maximum range of 5km so the Mujahideen had to wait until the enemy was in range before they could open fire. Usama bin Ladin was observing the advancing enemy movements, waiting to give the brothers the signal to commence firing. As soon as the Russian tanks entered into range, Usama shouted "*Allahu Akbar!*" and ordered the brothers to start firing. A brother named Abu Abdur-Rahman was in charge of the BM-21 rocket launcher, which is not intended for achieving accurate direct hits on a target, but is rather used for general bombardment of an area. However, by the Grace of Allah, the rockets and mortars that were fired from the Mujahideen were landing directly on the advancing convoy. The brother's spirits were elated and they were shouting "*Allahu Akbar!*" with each successive hit.

An ambulance approached to pick up the Russian injured and dead. As the ambulance was approaching the carnage, a mortar landed in the road in front of it. The soldiers driving the ambulance turned the vehicle around and fled for their lives. The brothers were all in a state of elation and total ecstasy. The Mujahideen continued to shell the convoy until sunset and when they intercepted the Russian communications, they found the Russians blaming and insulting each other with the most obscene of phrases.

As night fell, the Mujahideen stopped firing since the Russian targets had been covered with darkness. However, the Russians persisted in bombing the Mujahideen positions, and so the brothers were unable to rest during the night. A Russian plane would approach the area and drop flare bombs to illuminate the atmosphere and then the plane following it would come and bomb the Mujahideen positions. This situation continued for the remainder of the night of the 28th and throughout 29 and 30 *Ramadan*. The Russians believed that there was a large Mujahideen troop presence and hence it was imperative to thoroughly 'comb' the area. They were unaware that there were only a few dozen Mujahideen that were facing their might.

During these three days, the brothers became physically and emotionally exhausted. All the brothers in the Den had broken their fast, as was the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), who ordered the Companions to break their fast before the Conquest of Makkah⁷¹.

⁷¹ Yahya related to me from Malik from Sumayy, the freed slave of Abu Bakr bin Abdur-Rahman, from Abu Bakr bin Abdur-Rahman from one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), that

On 30 *Ramadan* 1407 (04 June 1987), the Mujahideen were expecting very heavy shelling from the Russians, so they left the Command Bunker (that was located in the centre of the Den) and went to a small cave (about 6m deep). There was a group of ten brothers present there, from amongst them were:

Khalid Al-Kurdi from Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah
Khidr Al-Haili from the Eastern Province of the Arabian Peninsula Dhabeeh
At-Taifi from Taif, Arabian Peninsula
Abul-Fadl Al-Misri from Egypt
Abu Haneefah Al-Misri from Egypt
Abu Azzam
Abu Sahl Al-Misri from Egypt
Usama Bin Ladin from Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

The brothers chopped down two trees and positioned them in a manner to cover the entrance of the cave. Khalid Al-Kurdi was so tired that he went inside the cave and fell asleep immediately. By the time the brothers had completed camouflaging the caves, sunset was approaching and they noticed the presence of Russian fighter jets in the sky. They could see the reflection of the sunrays off the jet's metal bodywork. Soon after, the jets started to drop their bombs over the Mujahideen positions. These bombs weighed up to 1000kg and by the Grace of Allah, the bombs were landing in the bottom of the valley, whilst the brothers were high up in the mountain. However, the intensity of the bombs made them feel as if they were landing on top of them. The severity of the explosions was such that the entire mountain shook and the dust thrown up by the explosions actually entered the cave where the Mujahideen were.

The Mujahideen brothers remained in the cave and all of them were making supplications to Allah, Glory and Praise be to He, that He protects them from the evil of the Russians. These events occurred on 30 *Ramadan* 1407 (04 June 1987) and by now, the brothers were completely exhausted from the exertions of the previous five days.

the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) ordered everyone to break the fast on the journey he made in the Year of the Conquest saying, "*Be strong for your enemy.*" *Saheeh*. Reported by Malik in his Muwatta, Book 18, Number 18.7.22.

Saifudeen Al-Maghribi was stationed in one of the Den's observation posts and it was then that he saw groups of Soviet Spetsnaz Special Forces advancing through the hilly forests surrounding the Den, in groups of eleven. The Mujahideen had agreed in advance that if three rounds of the Zakoyak were fired, then this was a sign of an impending enemy attack. One of the Mujahideen fired the three rounds.

There were 40 Mujahideen present to defend the Den (five other Mujahideen had joined the previous 35 stationed at the Den). The ten brothers in the cave, largely high school and university students, decided to set off to engage these Special Forces commando units. They had the advantage of being on higher ground, whereas the Russians were climbing upwards. One Mujahid was stationed to counter a flanking manoeuvre by the enemy and other Mujahideen were positioned at different places along this route. Their field of vision was highly restricted because of the heavy forestation and it was only possible to see between the trees at a distance of up to ten metres. The remaining Mujahideen: Usama bin Ladin, Khidr Al-Haili and Mukhtar, moved to a point, which was a suitable place to wait for ambushing the enemy.

The Mujahideen took out their grenades and prepared to engage the enemy. Just as they were about to do so, Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheeri, the military commander of the Den, arrived with Dhabeeh At-Taifi. The Mujahideen could sense that the Russians were in close proximity to them, but they were unable to see them because of their camouflage clothing. The Mujahideen did not have such clothing, putting them at an immediate disadvantage. One of the Russians spotted this group of three and opened fire with his AK-74 Kalakov assault rifle. One of these bullets flew between Usama and Abu Ubaidah, whilst the next struck a rock behind them and the third one struck Abu Ubaidah. The Russians had become aware of the Mujahideen presence and consequently the brothers had lost their element of surprise. The Mujahideen were anxious to open fire, but they could not see anyone nor could they hear any noise from the enemy. Suddenly, a hail of mortar shells began to fall on the Mujahideen. This continued with heavy intensity for about half an hour. The time between one shell exploding and the next was the time it took to say '*Subhanallah*' (Glory be to Allah). The advancing commando units had informed their colleagues that they suspected an

ambush by the Mujahideen, so they retreated a little and requested that the area be swept with a 120mm mortar in order to flush out the Mujahideen.

The shelling was of such ferocity that none of the brothers thought that they had a chance of surviving. There followed a short respite for less than a minute. Abu Ubaidah wanted to move, but Usama said that they should wait. A few seconds later, another shower of mortars landed in the area. The Mujahideen then decided that they would make a move at the next short period of respite.

The Mujahideen in the lines behind were communicating with the brothers in the Den via walkie-talkies. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was weeping and asking Allah to protect these Mujahideen brothers.

Soon afterwards, there followed a short period of respite and the brothers decided to make a move. They managed to run for about 50 metres, when another wave of mortar shells began to fall around them. Meanwhile Khidr, who had been in a very forward position, assumed that all the brothers had been killed. He knew there were about 200 Russian Commandos directly in front of him. Khidr was not afraid of dying, but he began to think that he might be captured and tortured and so he became very anxious. He started to make remembrance of Allah and supplicate to Allah, Glory and Praises be to He.

Brother Ali, who was present in the Lion's Den Operation, said:

"The Mujahideen learnt some valuable lessons from the Battle of 17 Shaban, and they began preparing another operation shortly afterwards, for 17 Ramadan. During this time, we were told that large numbers of Russian and Communist Government Forces were advancing. They then began to bomb the Den by air. I was stationed in the Badr Centre at the time, and was defending the Den from its right wing, because the Badr Centre was on the side of the Den bordering the valley. It was a strategic location, and we had expected that the Russian Commandos would advance from that side.

On 25 Ramadan, the bombing increased in intensity. There were about 70 brothers in the Den at that time, each with different levels of training, so

Usama Bin Ladin decided to send those Mujahideen who had insufficient training, to the supporting lines, in order to protect the Den from behind. He also sent some trained brothers with them.

The Commandos continued advancing from the right, as expected, but by the Will of Allah, their whole battalion needed only six brothers to face them - Usama Bin Ladin, Abul-Hassan Al-Madani, Khalid Al-Kurdi, Yaseen Al-Kurdi, Asadullah As-Sindhi⁷² (a Pakistani from Jeddah – may Allah have mercy on him), and Abul-Waleed Muhammad Al-Utaibi. These brothers alone faced all the Russian Commandos, and by the Grace of Allah, the only one to be killed was Abul-Waleed. He was in charge of firing missiles against the Russian tanks and thus had to be stationed on high ground, which was apparently unhidden from the enemy. He was subsequently hit with shrapnel in his back and was martyred instantly. That evening, Abu Yasir Al-Iraqi and myself went to his position to fetch his body, and we buried him in the Den, near the grave of Ahmad Az-Zahrani. He was considered the third martyr of the Battle, with Abudh-Dhahab as the second."

Usama Bin Ladin Narrates the Battle

On 29 *Ramadan*, the Russian and Afghan Government Forces began their attack. Their tanks began to move in, and as soon as they moved into the firing range of the Mujahideen, we said "*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,*" proclaimed "*Allahu Akbar!*" and gave the radio signal for everyone to begin fire. I was following the battle from the observatory and I saw our fire, by the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, land on the enemy vehicles and rip them apart. The cross fire was so severe that it caused the mountains to shake, but by the Grace of Allah, none of the brothers was afflicted with any harm. The battle continued until sunset, after which I left the observatory and met brother Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheeri (may Allah have mercy on him), a man who had memorised the entire Quran.

⁷² Asadullah As-Sindhi, a Pakistani resident in Jeddah, who joined the Mujahideen after being one of the first Pakistanis to donate money to Usama Bin Ladin in Jeddah for the Jihad. He was assassinated in Peshawar in 1997, may Allah have mercy on him.

We knew that the Russians would definitely retaliate after such a defeat, and we expected their attack to be harsher the following day. We thus decided that 35 Arab brothers should return to the Den to protect it from behind (there were about 70 Mujahideen in total during the battle at that time). The following day our expectations materialised, and from the first rays of sunlight, we began to take heavy gunfire from the Russians. There were 35 of us who remained in the Den, and out of that, nine of us were stationed in a cave that we nicknamed the *Frontal Base*. It was a very small cave, unable to withstand heavy bombing. We realised that the enemy planes were firing bombs weighing 1000kg each, which caused the mountains to shake. The brothers had agreed previously on a specific signal - three gunshots from the Zakoyak – to be fired if they felt that there would be an attack on our camp. We suddenly received a radio message from Saifudeen Al-Maghribi, who was in the right wing observatory in the Badr Centre, saying that he had seen approximately 200 Russian soldiers wearing Special Forces uniforms, sneaking towards the camp. Thus, he fired the warning signal. I requested the brothers to carry their weapons and advance, even though we were only nine of us (myself being the tenth), and the enemy was 200. Nor were we trained soldiers - we had all been raised as civilians, but not a single one of us hesitated. The brothers advanced, may Allah bestow His Honour upon them. Everyone took hold of his weapon and advanced.

We wanted to take possession of a high hill between the disbelievers and us. I distributed the brothers so as not to find ourselves surrounded during the operation. I left Dhabeeh and Abu Sahl Al-Misri (may Allah have Mercy on him) with a radio in the *Frontal Base*, and sent Abu Haneefah and some others to the right wing. We then advanced forth till we reached the peak of the hill. There were only three of us left - Khidr (from the Eastern Province of the Arabian Peninsula), Mukhtar (also from the Eastern Province), and myself. I had asked Khalid Al-Kurdi to bring us water, dates and more RPG-7 rockets, so he went off and joined us later with the goods. But how should only three people feel having to face 200 Commandos?

I also knew that the Russians wanted to capture me specifically, and take me as prisoner, but Glory be to Allah, He had made us firm on His *Deen*, and we felt neither worry nor fear. We dispersed on the peak of the hill, so that each of us could see and help the others if needed, and stationed ourselves

approximately 10 metres apart. We stayed like this for about an hour-and-a-half Khidr then came to me and told me that Mukhtar had heard Russian voices from the nearby hill, talking between the trees. At this moment, we were still waiting for reinforcements, which had not yet arrived. However, the Russians had certainly arrived so I issued the command for the other brothers to join us on this hill.

Khalid came, as did Abu Ubaidah, who had organised another group to advance from the direction of the Badr Centre to meet the enemy forces, meaning that we were advancing from the left and the other group from the right. We saw the Russians to our right, on a hill called Az-Zahrani (named after Ahmad Az-Zahrani - may Allah have Mercy on him – who was killed on this hill earlier). As soon as we saw the Russians beginning to advance, we took out our hand grenades to throw at them, since we were in a higher position than they were. However, brother Abu Ubaidah suggested that we distance ourselves until they all reached our throwing range. Suddenly, however, we were joined by four brothers from another camp, who had no idea what was happening. But it so happened that the Russians had heard the sound of their feet treading on the grass beneath the trees, and knew we must be somewhere nearby. Thus, they stopped their advancing and went on guard.

The Russians had not known that there would be any Mujahideen in this location, and had in fact expected everyone in the Den to be wounded as a result of their heavy shelling for five continuous days. Surprised that we were there, they retreated silently without us sensing a thing. However, we heard them talking over the radio (which we later took as booty), and it was clear that they had just informed their artillery, which was combing the land ahead of them, of our presence in this area. At this point, I was still carrying a hand grenade, waiting to throw it on them when they would advance, but I realised that they had already retreated about 200 metres. Suddenly, mortar rounds began to pour on us like rain. The bombing was so severe that we found it impossible to say a word or finish a sentence. The heavy bombing continued for about an hour, and then Allah granted us a gap of less than a minute between the bombings, so we quickly moved to the frontal position of our base and prepared to ambush them. They must have been sure that due to the severity and intensity of their bombing, everyone must have been killed or at least injured. Thus, they ascended the hill assuredly, but when they reached the peak we began our attack. A few of

them were killed and the rest fled. Then came their planes, which returned with such a ferocity, illustrated by the missiles that they dropped on us and the smoke bombs which they let out, that fatigued our brothers mentally and psychologically. We feared that the smoke was poisonous gas, (we later realised they were just smoke bombs), so we decided to withdraw ourselves to a more rear position.

We regrouped at night and a group of Arab and Afghan brothers stayed in the Den. By the Grace of Allah, it was then that some of the Afghan Mujahideen reinforcements arrived, and they fired 35 consecutive RPG rockets on the Russian Commando forces. This gave the message to the Russians that there was still a large fighting force inside the Den (even though there was not), so they stopped their attacks, and remained in their positions overnight, without attacking. In the morning, we divided the brothers into two groups.

We asked the first group to advance, because we knew that the Russians were desperate to attack our base, as they knew it was a key to the whole strategic area. Abu Ubaidah suggested that he and eight brothers should encircle the Russian force and attack them from behind. I asked him, *"Is the left wing empty? Who is still there?"*

I was ill at that time – and I complain only to Allah – so it was difficult for me to walk even a short distance by foot. Thus, I was surprised when Abu Ubaidah asked me to join the left wing. There were only three brothers left with me – Abul-Waleed Muhammad Al-Utaibi (may Allah have Mercy on him), Yaseen Al-Kurdi, and Asadullah As-Sindhi. We were then visited by a guest - brother Abul-Hassan Al-Madani - and all five of us went to the left wing. The enemy surrounded us and we heard many gunshots. Each of us had his finger on his trigger, but we kept advancing towards the left wing. I distributed the brothers to the left and the right.

Abu Ubaidah, who had an RPG-7 rocket launcher, was the only one on the right, and on the left was Asadullah, carrying a Gorjunov medium machinegun. Yaseen Al-Kurdi was in the rear, and I stayed in the centre with Abul-Hassan Al-Madani. As soon as the distribution was complete, we were shocked to discover that the Russian forces were only 70 metres away from the front of the camp. We immediately engaged them

in battle, using our light weaponry. I asked Yaseen Al-Kurdi and Abul-Waleed to advance and attack from the left when I saw them.

The Russians began to retaliate with their AK-74 Kalakov rifles. (The sound of the Kalakov is very distinct from the sound of a Kalashnikov, and it is well known that the Kalakov is used specifically by the Soviet Special Forces. The Kalashnikov, on the other hand, was used by regular Communist Afghan Government soldiers.) We damaged the Commandos in battle on the first day of *Eid*, thus Allah punished them and they began to withdraw group by group, each covering the others' backs. I asked Yaseen and Abul-Waleed to fire at them from a distance of approximately 150 metres, for this was the distance I expected them to have covered by now. I had imagined their attack to come from the left, but when I climbed to the peak of a hill to speak on the radio, I was nearly hit by an enemy RPG, coming from the central axis. It passed by me and exploded nearby, but I was not affected by it at all – in fact, by the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, it was as though I had merely been covered by a handful of mud from the ground. I descended calmly and informed the brothers that the enemy was in the central axis and not only on the left wing.

In these very moments, I was trying to contact the group that had gone to encircle the Russians, commanded by Abu Ubaidah. I was eventually able to contact them, but there was no reply, so I became extremely worried. I had to cease my efforts in contacting them due to the new salvo of bombing which had just started, but I left the radio on just in case they replied. We were in the cave, and we took it in turns to stand guard outside, in case the Russians advanced. We decided that if the mortars began to fall near the cave, we would leave the cave and ascend the mountain. We thus learnt a new lesson from this battle – that it is possible for the enemy to advance while bombing at the same time, because they are able to direct the bombing to areas other than the ones they are in, to a distance of 200 metres ahead of them (during artillery and mortar bombings). I was still very worried for the safety of the brothers with Abu Ubaidah, when suddenly I heard the sound of the radio crackling, which felt like a drink of cold water on a hot day to me. Then came the voice of Abu Ubaidah saying, "*Abul-Qa'qa*"⁷³ – *can you hear me?*"

⁷³ Usama Bin Ladin was using a different nickname on the radio to confuse enemy radio interceptors

I rushed to the radio and replied, *"Yes, I hear you well."* Abu Ubaidah then began shouting in an excited voice,

"Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! I convey good news! We have killed the Russian Commandos! Their bodies are strewn on the ground under our feet as I speak! Allahu Akbar!"

The repetition of *Allahu Akbar* spread through our location amongst all the brothers. We were all overjoyed at the Grace of Allah upon us. The brothers had ambushed the Russians from behind, from a direction which they thought nobody could possibly attack them. Brother Muhammad Al-Azman (Mukhtar), was able to kill six of them in a single attack. They battled with machi neguns and hand grenades, which destroyed the Russian morale. There were only nine brothers against 100 Russian Spetsnaz Special Forces troops, but out of sheer fright and panic in the dense forestry, the Russians were unable to make out the number of brothers. All in all, about 35 Spetsnaz soldiers and officers were killed, and the rest fled for 3km. At the news of this wonderful victory, the morale of the Mujahideen soared, not only in our area but in the whole of Afghanistan – a true gift from Allah to the brothers.

Beneficial lessons from the Battle of the Lion's Den

An experiment such as the presence of the Arabs in Afghanistan, as well as forming an exclusively Arab base there, should not go unanalysed, for there is much benefit to be gained from this. I will summarise some of these lessons of benefit.

One of the most beneficial lessons learnt, is a lesson from the whole of Islamic history: that directly confronting the enemy on a military basis is the best way to put an end to any oppression. Confrontation need not mean hastiness and rash actions; rather what is intended is a resolute confrontation. This should only take place after complete trust has been placed in Allah, the Exalted. This has been clearly illustrated by the Battle of *Ramadan* 1407AH/ 1987CE, when Usama Bin Ladin decided to pull his men back from the Den to a more rear location, after there had been air, rocket and artillery attacks for a number of days from the enemy. The reason behind this retreat was

to minimise losses as much as possible. They then advanced forth to fight the enemy, there being only seven or eight men in the Den that day, including the Egyptians Abu Ubaidah Al-Panjsheri and Abu Hafis Al-Misri (showing complete trust in Allah). It was also illustrated by Usama Bin Ladin's decision to again confront the enemy when he returned with a group of men after the morning *Fajr* Prayer to the centre of the Den. He decided to engage in battle with the Spetsnaz Special Forces, who had not attacked the Den at night out of fear and terror. A complete attack was undertaken by the group in order to encircle the Commandos, commanded by Abu Ubaidah and Abu Hafis.

The decision to withdraw the men from the Den to minimise losses was tactically a wise decision – to firstly minimise losses, and then to ambush the enemy. Usama Bin Ladin decided to confront the Russians, and then returned with the minimum number of men needed to prevent an attack on the Den, by surrounding the enemy and attacking them. This was the key to a solid victory in this specific battle, because it was a manoeuvre unexpected by the enemy. Furthermore, despite the Afghan Mujahideen's support to the Arabs, the Soviet and Afghan Communist Forces had no intention of retreat or withdrawal. They actually advanced to the Az-Zahrani Mountain, which was only 100 metres from the main entrance to the Den. Therefore, the attack on the Commando forces - which were better equipped with men and supplies - was the final chapter of the battle.

Usama Bin Ladin and all of the Mujahideen – Afghan and Arab alike - acknowledge that the battles of Jalalabad were completely different to any previous battles in the War, in the whole of Afghanistan. The terrain was open and the Mujahideen positions were in full view of the enemy aerial forces. It is only logical, therefore, that the operations would be of an entirely different nature. The battles of Jalalabad were a school in themselves for the Arab and Afghan Mujahideen, the most prominent lesson of which was the necessity of thorough reconnaissance before an operation. The availability of information was the main key to the success of any operation; open land gives the enemy a chance to discover all movements early on in battle. Therefore, if the research and surveillance is not precise, any operation is threatened right from

the very beginning, with total failure. In mountainous terrain, attacks and ambush are much easier, but on plain ground, the confrontation is totally different, as are any support operations and the supply of ammunition and food. However, the performance of the Arabs developed greatly in the battles of Jalalabad, to the extent that the Afghan commander of the region relied on the Arabs in many battles after them. The Arabs also participated in a number of conquests following these battles.

The experiences of the Arabs in Afghanistan is a provision for the Muslims, a lesson in how to confront the calamities of the Muslim *Ummah*, and how to support the Jihad in the Path of Allah – which is the only way to resist transgression and injustice. It is a lesson in how to confront the great oppressive Evil as illustrated by the World's governmental systems, which imported the creeds of infidelity, suppressed the leaders of the Islamic nation, and crushed its people. The example of Afghanistan was an invaluable lesson, because the atheistic Communist system of government could only call for help from the Soviet Army to occupy Afghanistan. This was in order to protect themselves against a revolution from the Muslims. One may also look at the criminal governmental systems in the Muslim World, which try to stab in the back any hope of there being an Islamic awakening. On the contrary, they connive with the forces of treachery and tyranny to destroy the main components of Islamic Society today. The Mujahideen will stand against the forces of aggression, they will confront the treachery, and their Jihad will continue to liberate our Islamic land from the forces of infidelity, injustice and oppression, by the Will of Allah the Almighty.

And the last of our prayers are to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

Part III: Biography of Azzam.Com Correspondent Suraqah Al-Andalusi



"O Allah! Do not let me leave these mountains before you have granted me my Martyrdom here!"

Azzam.com correspondent Suraqah Al-Andalusi was martyred by an American cluster bomb in the Battle for Tora Bora, Eastern Afghanistan, on the night of Friday 29 *Ramadan* 1422 AH (14 December 2001 CE). He was 28 years old and left behind him a wife and two young children: a boy and a girl.

Words of Remembrance

Inspiration

Your life did change since you had heard,
The tape, *"In the Hearts of Green Birds,"*
You sought then to invite others,
"Jihadis the way my brothers!"
Rise up and free Islamic land,
From the *kafir* oppressive hand.
You lived the words of Sheikh Azzam,
The scholar, Mujahid, great man.
Your work not limited to your lips,
Translating, writing, making trips,
Your family you left behind,
For *dunya* had not made you blind.
This was not easy as you did,
Love them – but for Allah your bid!
You fasted on the hottest day,
Hoping Allah would guide your way.

Love and Compassion

Compassion that was in your heart,
Took you to the midst of the mart.
Naught for yourself was what you sought,
All for others was what you bought,
For the old and poor man a bike,
For your little one the clothes he'd like,
But for your wife you found nothing,
That was worthy of her liking.
So then you sent her all your love,
And made instead, for her above,
What no man of this World could give,
Even if very long he'd live,
A lovely house in Paradise,
With gifts and flowers very nice.
So dear sister, be patient,
And turn to Allah repentant,
And hold on tight to your *Iman*,
And beware of evil *Shaitan*,
And then be happy and rejoice,
Thank and praise Allah for His Choice!

Action

You loved action, and act you did,
No illness, trouble, could forbid,
You from your mission, even if,
Come mountain, rock, or dangerous cliff.
While bombs and bullets came your way,
You still were firm and did not sway.
You ran uphill and then downhill,
To treat the injured, sick, and ill.
A doctor? No, but better than,
The doctors — are they even men?
Who know the pain and hear the sigh,
Of a brother hurt or a martyr high,
Yet come not they to lend a hand,
Like insects, clinging to the land.

Dua in the Heat of Battle

With shelling, bombing day and night,
Explosions mighty left and right,
No lull, no break, not a respite,
The U.S. showing all its might.
But all this did not lead to fright.
Our brothers continued to fight,
For Paradise was `neath their sight.
That surely was a blessed night,
When you alone stood on the rock,
Your rifle set, bullets in stock.
Your hands you raised up to the sky,
And to Allah let out a cry:
*"O Allah let me leave not here,
Untill get what I hold dear,
That is to be killed in Your way,
My life for You, Allah, I lay."*

Acceptance

Allah took you, in His Mercy,
In the blessed *"Night of Destiny."*
The night better than every night,
You were raised up the highest height,
Of which we can only but dream!
You are that shining light, that beam,
That is shining up to this day,
Lighting our path, showing our way,
Along the road that goes uphill,
Which we do hope to climb until,
We raise our level very high,
And in the Path of Allah die.
We hope then with the likes of you,
In Paradise we will live too!

by Sister AM

From His Brother

As a child, Suraqah was like another kid. He went to a comprehensive school and achieved very high grades in his secondary education. His upbringing was nothing out of the ordinary; his parents attempted to protect his family from the corruption of society and taught their children the fundamentals of Islam. He grew up in an area where there were few Muslims, and none whatsoever at school. When he went to university, his thinking became broader. He met many Muslims who were engaged in Islamic work. This gave a new dimension to his life and he began to attend many study circles and partake in the Islamic work with the Islamic Union at his university. Whilst at university, he met numerous disparate groups and as time passed, he began to realise many of the flaws of each group. He could not find a single one that had the correct balance and gave everything its complete understanding. He felt many were very eloquent, but they lacked the actions which their words necessitated.

One day, he came across an audio cassette called *In The Hearts Of Green Birds*. After hearing this cassette, he realised that this was the path that he had been searching for, for so long. This was shortly followed by various videos showing the Mujahideen from Bosnia. To him, it was as if he had found a long lost friend, from whom he could not depart. *In the Hearts of Green Birds* deeply moved him as it narrated the true stories of men who personified the message that they carried, men who were prepared to give up their most precious possession (life) in order to give victory to this Message.

Then he came into contact with the works of the *Mujadid* (reviver) Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. This was a scholar he deeply respected, as he was not a textbook scholar, but one who truly followed in the footsteps of the Prophets. His preaching was their preaching. He had an excellent character, always ready to sacrifice much and was tribulated by the people of falsehood.

At university, Suraqah would give much encouragement to the brothers on his own course and those around him. He would stay up sometimes late at night speaking to them. The brothers in his year - by the Grace of Allah - began to practise and they would do many activities together, solidifying and building up a strong brotherhood between themselves.

His was a good character and he was very resolute when trying to accomplish anything. The Islamic scene had indeed been an eye opener for him and he was very grateful for the benefits he had gained from it, but many key issues still had not been answered. The issues which vex many a youth today constantly troubled him:

How will true change occur to the *Ummah*?

What is the way forward?

Who are the true inheritors of the Prophets?

What is the ruling upon the regimes that rule the Muslim lands?

The more he researched, the more he saw clear contradictions in the thinking of many peoples and patent double standards in the methodology of many of the callers to Islam. A statement he always clung onto was that of the great Companion of the Prophet (SAWS), Abdullah bin Masood (RA): *"The Jama'ah (body of Muslims) is what agrees with the Truth, even if you are alone."*

Many of those who claimed scholarship were silent in front of unmistakable evil; their silence justified by contortion of Islamic text. Suraqah adhered to his opinions, even if it cost him friends - as the words of Ibn Masood would reverberate in his head. He felt that the worldview of many of the Muslims had lost its true and comprehensive meanings. For instance, the meaning of the *Shahadah* - people would speak about this issue with respect to *Tauheed*, neglecting the first pillar of the *Shahadah*, which is to reject false deities. Suraqah felt that the main false deities of today are the man-made systems in the Muslim World (primarily Democracy), that the Pharaohs of today are their apostate regimes and that whoever preached this statement (*La ilaha illallah*) would surely descend upon himself the enmity of these false deities. Suraqah oft repeated the statement of Waraqah bin Nawfal to the Prophet (SAWS): *"No one came with that which you came with except enmity was shown against them."* The crux of his philosophy was based upon the statement of Imam Abu Bakr bin Ayyash:

"Ahl-us-Sunnah die and memories of them are given life to, and Ahl-ul-Bidah die and memories of them die with them; because Ahl-us-Sunnah revive what the Prophet (SAWS) came with and so they have a portion of

Allah's saying: 'And have We not raised high your fame.' [Quran 94:4] Ahl-ul-Bidah made it hard to revive what the Prophet (SAWS) came with so they had a portion of His saying: 'For he who hates you (O Muhammad) he will be cut off (from posterity and everything good in this World and the Hereafter).' [Quran 108:3]'

Imam Ahmad famously stated at the time of his imprisonment, explaining his stance: *"If a scholar practices tuqiyyah (concealing the Truth that he believes) and the people are ignorant of the Truth, when will the Truth ever be manifest to them?"*

The more Suraqah read and heard about the Prophets and their struggle for *La ilaha illallah*; how the early generations and scholars like Imam Abu Haneefah, Imam Malik, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyyah strived in this path, the more he became convinced that the path to be taken was the path of knowledge and Jihad hand in hand.

Contemporary scholars and callers who had significant impact on his thinking included Sayyid Qutb, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, Fizaze and Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi. Everyone Suraqah would meet, from his relatives to his friends, he would call them to this great path, trying to the best of his abilities to convince the people of the truth of his call. Many a time what he was saying would be rejected; people would ridicule him saying things such as, *"What are you going to do, change the World? What has the path of Jihad changed and what have they achieved?"*

The debates and discussions he had would not be for personal victory, but borne out of his love for the Mujahideen. On one occasion, when he had a lengthy discussion with a close companion, his eyes filled with tears at how people simply brushed his ideas aside.

Despite all this, he did not despair and he continued upon this path. He finally came to understand that to adhere to this path means that you are to be a stranger in this World. He read a book by Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi and was amazed by one of the Sheikh's arguments: *"Two Worlds exist: the apparent World and the World of the Unseen. Actions done in the apparent World are rewarded in the World of the Unseen despite sometimes no change being brought about in the apparent World."* This

statement quelled any of the remaining doubts in his heart about his chosen path.

After completing university, he got married and Allah granted him two children - a boy and a girl. He also started a study circle in his community where he would teach young brothers the fundamentals of Islam and the various milestones on the path.

His wife said that he would get up for *Tahajjud* (voluntary night prayers) and recite Surah At-Taubah, reflecting upon its verses, which continued to increase his determination and solidify his resolve. His children delighted him and whenever he saw them or played with them, he would always quote the statement of Allah, "***Al maalu wal banoona fitnah (your Wealth and your Children are a trial for you).***" His character could best be described as saying that he was very patient and organised. If a job needed to be done, he would do it regardless of what sacrifices were required. Suraqah was very close to his parents; he would look after them and supplicate much for them.

The year before his Martyrdom, Suraqah decided to make *Hajj*, and up to this point, this was the trip that had the most impact on him. Suraqah used to say: "*If anyone wonders why the Ummah is in this bad state, then Hajj will give you the answers.*" There he saw the ignorance of the Muslims: a people whose tongues were filled with expletives as if they were remembrance *duas*, and their failure to understand sharing and generosity when dealing with one another. He saw their innovations and *Shirk* when performing the *Hajj*. He saw outside the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, the interest-based banks in the very same land which 1400 years ago was purified from shirk by the first group of Muslims led by the Prophet (SAWS). His blood boiled at how this sacrifice, purchased for the *Ummah* by the sweat and blood of the Companions - had been affronted by the establishment of interest-based institutions everywhere. This consolidated his commitment to this path.

His Contribution to the Work of Azzam Publications

Suraqah was part of the team that translated and typeset the script for the video, *The Martyrs of Bosnia*. He was also part of the team that conducted interviews, translated and researched the material for the *Jihad Lands* section of Azzam.com, namely the lands of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, East Turkestan (China) and Central Asia. He translated lectures and material on the Battle of the Lion's Den. Furthermore, he translated an entire book on the Jihad in Central Asia by himself, written by a Mujahid in Afghanistan, even though Arabic was not his mother tongue.

From the Friend and Companion of *Shaheed* Suraqah

My dear brother, friend and companion, may Allah have Mercy on him and accept his Martyrdom, his life and departure from this World, reminds me of the words of Allah (SWT):

"O you who believe what is the matter with you that when you are asked to march forward in the Cause of Allah you cling heavily to the Earth. Are you pleased with the life of this World rather than the Hereafter? Little is the enjoyment of the life of this World as compared with the Hereafter, if only you knew." [Quran 9:38] and:

"Do you really think that you will enter Paradise before Allah knows which of you who fought (in His Cause) and which of you are patient?" [Quran 3:142]

The Journey into Afghanistan

The first time I met Suraqah was when we were about to embark on our journey to enter Afghanistan. I can still recall the smile on his face as I approached him and greeted him with *salams*. He was a thin man, of medium height, fair complexion with bright, shining eyes that emanated sincerity. The *noor* (radiant shine) of his face and smile that day was something my heart will never forget. He was patient throughout the journey, remaining alert to any dangers and always looking out for the well-being of his

brothers. At our first stop, I can remember asking him jokingly why he hadn't been eating anything, to which he told me how bad his diarrhoea had been and that he didn't want to risk anything!

He had been very patient despite not having any food for many hours, something that is very difficult on a long journey, but he didn't want to inconvenience anyone, so he bore his hunger in silence. I smiled because he was a new brother and I told him that his stomach problems were only going to get worse when we were inside! He smiled and gave me a determined look, almost as if he knew exactly what he was here for and that no sacrifice was to be too small for his Lord.

En-route we stopped to pray *Fajr*. We had a short break and then set off again. After a while, we reached one of our pre-planned stops and all of us were to rest here before we were to be taken into Afghanistan. We had some food, of which he did eat a little and that made me smile. We had only rested an hour or so, before we were told that we could go in now, and as we were all keen, we agreed to this and set off once again. This was to be the more dangerous part of the journey and we all began to make remembrance of Allah and pray that we would reach our destination safely,

I remember when we had finally crossed the border and I saw him with a big grin on his face. We had entered the one land where every Muslim and Mujahid felt safe; may Allah return that safety to the Muslims in Afghanistan. As our journey into Afghanistan continued, I can remember seeing that he had become a little more relaxed and even light hearted at times. All of us were happy that we had got through safely and I noticed how he was just continuously looking out of the window, admiring the scenery and perhaps thinking about the future this land would hold for him, his family and his religion.

The First Stages of Struggle

How wonderful the lands of Jihad are, in that those who have travelled, lived and been patient together with sincerity, whilst having left their families and materialistic life behind, become of the closest of companions and friends in this World.

We had some preliminary work to do before Suraqah could go and get his training. There was a lot of research, meetings and translations that needed to be done and Allah had blessed him with many skills, all of which were vital to our task. This was the time that I would get to know him properly. During this time, one of our brothers fell very ill and had to return; the rest of the brothers went to those places they had come here for, which left him and I alone to do the work and this is how Allah had destined that we were to spend time together.

Initially, we had been living in a place on the outskirts of the city, where we had a lot of work to do. However, progress was slow and I can remember how much of a testing time this was, since both of us wanted to be in the 'action', but we always exhorted each other to patience. Our typical day during this time was usually uneventful and we would sometimes remind each other of our times back at home and all the things we used to get up to!

One time we were speaking about families and I was telling him how difficult it always is to say goodbye to a tearful mother, not knowing whether you will meet her again in this life. He was silent for a while and then said, *"No, brother, the bond between the wife and husband is a bond that is different than that of the mother and her son. It is something much stronger."* I could sense that he felt a little sad when he said that, for he had told me that he had left his young wife and two young children behind, but I saw from the expression on his face that this was the sacrifice he was willing to give for the honour of this *Deen*.

He would tell me how hard he had to work for the past year so that his family would have enough money when he left. He told me how he hated living in the West and how happy he was to be in this land of Islam. I would always see him reciting and memorising Quran. Once we were speaking about the Muslims in the West and he said: *"What have we to do with the countries of the disbelievers? By Allah, it's like living haram (forbidden things) every day, from the morning you wake up until the night that you sleep in. I had so little time for my prayers, for reading the Book of Allah, for learning this Deen and now I am free to worship Him as he deserves to be worshipped."*

Throughout the times when we had nothing to do but be patient, I would see him reciting Quran or praying to his Lord. I saw in him a man who was determined to do something for this *Ummah*, a man with ambition for this *Deen* and true concern for the honour of this *Ummah*.

He would tell me how much he longed to seriously learn this *Deen* and that he wanted to sit with a certain Sheikh in Afghanistan, and to become a serious student of knowledge. I would talk to him about all the plans we could have for the future and after meeting many important people, he told me how he wanted to migrate here with his family. He loved to see Islam being established in its entirety like he saw in Afghanistan and whenever he heard something of justice or good that had happened, his face would light up in happiness. I was amazed at how quickly he became attached to this place and the people, almost as if Allah had rewarded him for all his efforts of *Dawah* and preparation when he was at home and that He had answered his supplications. Indeed Allah had chosen this as his final destination and brought his precious soul here to honour it with Martyrdom in His Way.

The Character of a *Shaheed*

As the weeks went by, we had started to make some progress, but there was still a lot to do. There came a time where I became lazy in completing the tasks and I would take long breaks of rest due to illness. However, he would always continue from where I had left off and I remember waking up in the middle of the night and saw him typing away at the work. It was because of him that we met our deadlines and Allah Willing, the work he did will continue to inspire many in the future.

There was an Afghani man who would come and give us food and he would spend a lot of time with him, since I wasn't always in the place we were staying in. This man was very poor and he would walk for hours on end just to get to the place where we were staying. Suraqah came to me one day and suggested that we should buy him a bicycle, so that he could be self-sufficient in doing more work and feeding his family. It's as if he was genuinely concerned about this man, and this is from the many things that made Suraqah so special.

I can remember how much of a task it was to get that bike back to the place we were staying at! I remember how much he laughed when we both tried to sit on the bicycle, only to end up puncturing one of the wheels and we got so fed up and tired in the end that we stuffed it in a taxi! Suraqah kept saying that *"this is to help a good man"* and I kept quiet and smiled.

When we used to walk in the streets, we would have many poor children and old women coming to us and asking for money. I had become used to this, but it affected Suraqah in a big way. He couldn't help but give 10 rupees to every child he saw, and this happened on a number of occasions. I asked him as to why he didn't just ignore them, because it only fed their habit. He replied, *"Every time I see these children, it reminds me of my own kids and I can't bear to see their faces so sad."* It was almost as if he relived the memory of his own family through being generous to the people, may Allah have mercy on him.

After meeting many of the Foreign Mujahideen, he had made the intention that he would bring his family here and live a life of a Mujahid. I remember how sometimes he regretted not bringing his family with him. He would always tell me about what he would say to his mother and father especially in trying to convince them to come here and help the Muslims through their skills. As soon as he had intended this, he spent a lot of his free time in writing letters to his wife and his brother. I can remember him smiling as he would write, perhaps this was his way of feeling there was still a physical connection between him and his family - such is the life of a Mujahid.

I can remember that he wanted to get into the 'action' as soon as possible and go to the front-line, but I kept stressing how important this work was and that he should be patient. He was a little frustrated one day and said to me: *"I'm not made for sitting around, I want to go where the action is, this is what my nature is...."* I said to him: *"Be patient, my brother, your time will come..."* He smiled and continued with his work in silence. I could feel how much he wanted to be free and be training and struggling with his brothers for the Sake of Allah. It was almost as if he had been waiting for this all his life and now that he was here, he didn't want to be delayed any longer.

Our Final Moments

We had to move to another city, for we had many people to meet and liaise with. Suraqah was happy that we were on the move again and that his chance for being in the action was drawing near. I can remember the journey being a very difficult one and a brother with us had become very weak, dehydrated and couldn't stomach anything. Suraqah had studied basic first aid and medicine before, so he would very patiently make some re-hydration preparations for his brothers. Not once did I hear him complain throughout the journeys we had and I would always see him in deep thought and reflection. We would always try and pass the time by being light hearted and if provoked, he could always bring me to tears of laughter! May Allah bless me to join you dear friend so that we may laugh together in the Highest Paradise as we used to laugh in this life.

After we arrived at the city, then, as my time was drawing to an end, it seemed as if Suraqah became more detached from talking and speaking like he used to. He had become very inspired by meeting all the people he had only ever heard about and I saw that he had become much more serious than before.

Throughout the few weeks that we were in this new place, Suraqah started to become regular in *Tahajjud* (voluntary night prayers). I remember waking up in thirst one night and I saw him standing in prayer. He excelled in his memorisation of the Quran and I always found him attached to his personal copy of the Quran. I never saw him leave the remembrance supplications of the morning and the evening and he would be regular in reciting the Quran after the *Fajr* prayer. He had fasted a few days when we were in the previous city but it was here that he became more regular. The days here are very long and Suraqah wasn't used to fasting in these environments. I knew he had stomach problems, but still he continued to fast. There was one day where we were both fasting and it had been a very hot day. In the last hour before sunset, we were just lying on the floor, utterly exhausted, when he said to me, "*Don't you know that the Salaf would cry on their deathbeds in that they wished they had fasted on those days that were long and difficult?*" I can never forget the way he said that to me, may Allah accept all of his deeds.

On another occasion, we had a small journey to undertake and I suggested that he didn't fast so that he wouldn't tire himself out as much. Suraqah looked at me and said, *"It is through these extra deeds that Allah will raise our status and give us the victory, just like the Sahabah...I will not stop fasting."* I thought a lot about what he had said and realised then that this was no ordinary man. It was statements and actions like this that I believe made him so special in front of Allah (and we do not sanctify anyone above Allah), for Allah only takes the best of believers as martyrs.

The Dream

One hot summer's night in August 2001, he woke me up in the middle of the night and said, *"I had a strange dream tonight."* I asked him about what he saw and he said, *"I saw a tall structure that looked like the Eiffel Tower and it had been destroyed and there was a news broadcast saying how thousands of people had been killed"* I joked about the ridiculous nature of his dream and told him to ignore it and go back to sleep, but maybe he had seen what was to happen in the future, Allah knows best, for Allah bestows good dreams to those whom He loves.

Two Companions Part

The time had come for me to leave and Suraqah was to join his brothers in the action. I remember sitting with him a lot and he advised me to come back and give help and victory to the Muslims in this blessed land. We went to the market one day and he was looking for a gift for his wife and children. I remember him joking about how he wouldn't buy just any old clothes for his wife and that nothing was here that she would have liked! He smiled a lot that day. We walked by a shop and he saw some clothes for his children and he asked for the best quality and chose the best colour. He bought them and handed them to me and said, *"I want you to get this to my kids, so that my wife and they know that I haven't forgotten them."* I was taken aback by the way he said that and I can still remember the sad look on his face. I cheered him up and started joking about how we got conned in the market and how terrible his bargaining skills were!

He asked me to get his letters to his brother, whom he always spoke very highly of. I could see that they were close and I can remember him saying how much he wanted him to get married and come here to join him. He

always spoke with such enthusiasm for he had many ambitions for his *Deen* and his family - may Allah rejoin them in the highest of Paradise.

A few days went by and it was time for Suraqah to leave for the action. We sat and talked that morning and I advised him on things to do when he got there and what to do in certain situations. He was so happy that day, for he was finally about to go where he had been longing for all his life. I felt happy for him but sad that we were to part company and that maybe I would never see him again.

His transport came that morning and I embraced him. Since there was nothing more for me to say; I just smiled and asked him not to forget me in his prayers. He smiled back at me and sat in the jeep. I just stood there looking at him and I can remember feeling very sad and thinking as to whether I would see him again. I remember this moment as if it was yesterday and when I found out that Allah had taken him as a martyr, a day hasn't gone by that I haven't thought about my friend.

He was from the sons of this *Ummah*, who fled from the deception of this materialistic life to the honour and light of Jihad. A patient warrior who lived his ambition for the victory of this *Deen* is how this *Ummah* will remember you, my dear friend. May Allah inspire many from the story of your sacrifice and may He join your family, loved ones and companions with you in the highest of Paradise.

The Battle for Tora Bora

Thus began the latest Crusade against Islam and its people on 07 October 2001. When the Taliban decided to leave the cities and withdraw to the mountains, Suraqah was amongst the brothers who withdrew to the lofty mountain range of Tora Bora, in Eastern Afghanistan. In November 2001, the American Crusaders attacked the positions of the Mujahideen in Tora Bora and there commenced some of the fiercest battles of the war to that date.

The Tora Bora mountain range comprises of low foothills and lofty mountains. It was expected for the Americans to land at the lower foothills first. Therefore, the Commander of the Mujahideen gave the order for new

and relatively inexperienced brothers to go to the higher mountains, leaving the experienced fighters at the bottom. Suraqah tried to persuade his Section Commander to allow him to stay at the bottom since he wanted to face the Americans when they arrived. However, he was denied permission and reluctantly made his way up to the higher mountains, in obedience of his leader.

Throughout November 2001 in the month of *Ramadan*, 1422AH, the battle raged, with the Americans dropping bombs indiscriminately on the mountains such that there was no difference between the night and the day: the sky was raining fire and the Earth was erupting volcanoes. Suraqah had with him a personal first-aid kit that he had brought with him. He was not a doctor, but his contribution to the battle was more than what the doctors of the Muslim *Ummah* contributed. Whenever he would hear on the radio that a brother Mujahid had been injured, Suraqah would take his first-aid kit and make the perilous journey to the site of the injured brother, dodging aerial bombs, bullets and mortars. No sooner had he tended to one injured brother that he would hear on the radio that another brother had been injured 2000ft lower. He would rush to tend to the new injury. Thus it was that he spent his battle going up and down the steep mountains of Tora Bora. At times when he would face the enemy, he would bravely face them and not shy away from a fight.

The *Dua* of a Mujahid

The Prophet (SAWS) said: *"The Mujahid in the Path of Allah, the one who performs Hajj and the one who performs Umrah, all are the guests of Allah! He called them and they answered. And they asked Him, and He shall grant them (what they ask for)!"*⁷⁴

Suraqah had been there for a few weeks now and the blessed last ten days of *Ramadan* had arrived. Whilst on the mountain during one night of the battle, a fellow Mujahid saw Suraqah alone, standing on the mountainside. He was in his camouflage clothes wearing his chest rig of magazines and his AK-47 rifle in his hands. Despite the sub-zero temperature and howling icy-cold winds, he was sweating as is normal during intense physical activity. All of a sudden he raised both of his

⁷⁴ Reported by Ibn Majah and Ibn Hibban. *Saheeh*.

hands straight up in the air and shouted at the top of his voice, "*O Allah! Do not let me leave these mountains before you have granted me my Martyrdom here!*"

The Martyrdom

The night was the night of Friday 29 *Ramadan* 1422AH and many of the Mujahideen there testified to the *Lailatul-Qadr* (Night of Power) that year having fallen on the 29 *Ramadan*. The time was approximately 9pm and Suraqah was with a group of 20 Mujahideen who were making their way to another position, on the steep Tora Bora mountain side. Suddenly, the roar of an American B-52 bomber was heard above their heads, followed by the whines of the falling bombs: huge, solid, metal masses of injustice and tyranny. As the cluster bomb exploded into many small bomblets, the sound of explosions similar to that of fireworks was heard. One of these bomblets had the name of Suraqah on it and it was in this glorious manner that this lion and hero surrendered his innocent soul to his Lord, thereby irrigating with his pure blood the land of heroism, bravery, valour and Jihad. His body was found several weeks later by locals and buried in the Afghan village of Markhanai, near Tora Bora. May Allah accept him amongst the ranks of the martyrs.

Dreams Following His Martyrdom

After Suraqah was martyred, his family and friends had numerous dreams about him. His wife saw a dream of a bird on a remote island. The bird's feathers were badly burnt and it was lying prone and immobile. Suddenly, in the distance, another bird flew towards the first bird, and eventually landed next to it. The first bird, which was burnt, then removed its external feathers and from it arose a bird with the most beautiful coloured feathers that she had ever seen. Both birds then rose up and flew away.

His brother had a dream where he came up to someone and asked with great anxiety, "*Where is my brother (Suraqah)?*" The people then pointed to a distant mountain. He asked again, "*Where is my brother?*" and they gave the same response. Then he approached as close as he could

get to the mountain and asked again. The people then pointed to a white mountain.

His sister had a dream in which Suraqah visited his family. There was an immense amount of light shining from him and his size was so large that the people around him had to crane their necks in order to take a look at him.

The Last Will and Final Testament of Suraqah Al-Andalusi

Excerpts from Personal Message to Family:

May Allah bear witness to my love for you, but Islam came to give the limits to this love. Allah says:

"Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight ... are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah)." [Quran 9:24]

Message to the Muslim Ummah:

So we can see that our love of our family and other matters of the Worldly life cannot be such that it is greater than our love for Allah and His Messenger (SAWS) and Jihad in His Path. If our excuse on the Day of Judgement for not answering the call of Jihad is family and loved ones, then we must see what Allah (SWT) warns us of in Surah Abasa:

*"The n, when there comes As-Saak h k h a h (the Day of Resurrection's second blowing of Trumpet),
That Day shall a man flee from his brother,
And from his mother and his father,*

And from his wife and his children.

Every man, that Day, will have enough to make him careless of others."

[Quran 80:33-37]

So here is a grave warning to those who reject Allah's Call, in favour of their loved ones and the other temptations of the Worldly life (wealth, house, etc.). All of these things will be of no avail on the Day of Recompense in serving as an excuse for leaving Allah's commandments.

If we look around us at the reality of the Muslims, we see a regretful state of total humiliation, with very few instances of dignity for the Muslims. The Muslims have generally, as an *Ummah*, abandoned the teachings of this *Deen* and Allah (SWT) has left us at the mercy of the forces of disbelief from the Crusaders, the cowardly Jews, arrogant atheists and evil apostates.

Nothing embodies this more than the state of affairs in Palestine today. Allah (SWT) has placed this small nation of cowardly Jews over the necks of the Muslims. Allah (SWT) is most angry with these people "***Al-magh doobee alayhim (those upon whom is Allah's anger),***" [Quran 1:7] and He (SWT) says about them in Surah Al-Baqarah, "***And verily, you will find them (the Jews) the greediest of mankind for life and (even greedier) than those who - ascribe partners to Allah (and do not believe in Resurrection - Magians, pagans, and idolaters, etc.). Everyone of them wishes that he could be given a life of a thousand years. But the grant of such life will not save him even a little from (due) punishment. And Allah is All-Seer of what they do.***" [Quran 2:96]

Yet these cowards have become lords of the Middle East and this is truly a sign of how far the Muslims have strayed off the Straight Path. We are currently observing the massacre and oppression of a Muslim people in the Holy Land of Palestine and the *Ummah* does nothing: The *Ummah* by its inaction seems to be saying to them: "***Bury your children and your elders and all your dead, and here are a few dollars (to relieve our guilt), and be patient.***"

Subhanallah! This is what has happened to the *Ummah* of Muhammad (SAWS) whom Allah (SWT) describes in the Noble Quran in Surah Ale Imran: "***Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting***

***to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful."* [Quran 3:104]**

The Caliphs in the past used to send out whole armies to avenge the honour of a single Muslim woman, but today the honour of the Muslim women is violated time and time again, and the Muslims are slaughtered and massacred in a most horrible manner, yet the *Ummah* does not move collectively. The reason is clear from the Islamic text. The Prophet (SAWS) said in an authentic *hadeeth*:

*"If you practised Tabaiya Al-Ainiya (i.e. selling goods to a person for a certain price and then buying them back from him for a far lesser price), followed the tails of cows, satisfied yourselves with agriculture, and abandoned Jihad, Allah will cover you with humiliation and will not remove it until you return to your religion."*⁷⁵

The *Ummah* has abandoned the principles of its religion, leaving the most beloved action to Allah (SWT): Jihad in the Path of Allah and therefore Allah (SWT) placed us at the mercy of the people of the Hell Fire.

O *Ummah* of Muhammad, awaken and fear your Lord, as He ought to be feared!

What is even worse is that the small body of courageous Muslims who join the path of Jihad are labelled as extremists, rebels, bandits and terrorists by their own Muslim brethren. It is true that mistakes have been committed in the path of Jihad by some people of Islam, but this is true for many of the acts of worship of Islam. People commit *Shirk* whilst praying and performing *Hajj* (this *Shirk* being the most grave transgression in the Sight of Allah) yet our response to this is not to stop praying or performing *Hajj*, but to engage in these acts of worship which are the pillars of the religion and purify them from innovation and *Shirk* and invite the people to perform these acts of worship in the best way: the way of the Prophet (SAWS) and his blessed Companions.

⁷⁵ Reported by Abu Dawud. *Saheeh*. Silsilah Al-Ahadeeth As-Saheehah No. 11.

And likewise, with Jihad, which is the peak of the matter, how could we abandon Jihad when it was the way of the Prophet (SAWS) and his Companions? If we are to be true followers of the Prophet (SAWS) then we must also follow him in his Jihad. My Muslim brothers and sisters, do not have pessimism and despair and do not approach this path in the Capitalist mindset. We too frequently hear Muslims (both scholars and ignorant) saying that this path has achieved nothing. Allah (SWT) says in Surah Ale Imran:

"Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve." [Quran 3:169-170]

It is clear from this verse, that the losers are not those who die in the Path of Allah but those who stay alive and criticise, because the martyr is ***"indeed alive finding sustenance with His Lord."*** These are the words of Allah (SWT) for the people of contemplation.

Truly it is the people of desires who ignore these clear words. The victory will come from Allah (SWT), but upon us is to obey the commandments and join the path of Jihad and be patient upon this path. Patience, as some believe, is not to sit at home and do nothing in the face of clear transgression and *Kufr Bawah* (clear and manifest disbelief). This, in fact, is nothing more than cowardice and humiliation. Patience is to fight in the Path of Allah, accepting Martyrdom or victory.

Unlike the previous nations whereby Allah (SWT) would destroy the transgressors by a storm of thunder and lightning (Thamud) or a furious wind (Aad) or other signs of the previous powers, the Muslims must fight the disbelievers, atheists, polytheists and apostates and Allah will punish them by our hands as Allah (SWT) says very clearly in Surah At-Taubah, ***"Fight against them so that Allah will punish them by your hands and disgrace them and give you victory over them and heal the breasts of a believing people."*** [Quran 9:14]

Those who doubt this path are well advised to read the speech of Allah to see how much emphasis is placed on this issue and how

many times it is mentioned in the Quran. A study of the Biography of the Prophet (SAWS) reveals battle after battle to raise high the flag of Islam. The four Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the later generations of the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) continued this understanding.

So let us see, my sincere Muslim brothers and sisters, what Allah (SWT) has prescribed for us if we are truly His slaves. Allah (SWT) says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

"Jihad (fighting in Allah's Cause) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know." [Quran 2:216]

So here it is crystal clear - fighting is hated by Man but it has been prescribed for him i.e. obligated upon him by Allah (SWT.) It is interesting to note that the verb ordering the command to fight is the same used to order the believers to fast, "***Ku Te Ba***" in verse 2:183 of the same Surah, "***O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqun.***" [Quran 2:183], yet we see a great discrepancy between the implementation of these two rulings, and Allah is the source of all Help. Allah (SWT) says:

"Will you not fight a people who have violated their oaths (pagans of Makkah) and intended to expel the Messenger, while they did attack you first? Do you fear them? Allah has more right that you should fear Him, if you are believers." [Quran 9:13]

"Fight against them so that Allah will punish them by your hands and disgrace them and give you victory over them and heal the breasts of a believing people." [Quran 9:14]

"Fight against those who (1) believe not in Allah, (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." [Quran 9:29]

"Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight ... are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah)." [Quran 9:24]

"O you who believe (in Allah's Oneness and in His Messenger (Muhammad SAWS)! Verily, the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and in the Message of Muhammad SAWS) are Najasun (impure). So let them not come near Al-Masjid-al-Haram (at Makkah) after this year, and if you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you if He will, out of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." [Quran 9:28]

"Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day would not ask your leave to be exempted from fighting with their properties and their lives, and Allah is the All-Knower of Al-Muttaqun." [Quran 9:44]

"It is only those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and whose hearts are in doubt that ask your leave (to be exempted from Jihad). So in their doubts they waver." [Quran 9:45]

"And if they had intended to march out, certainly, they would have made some preparation for it, but Allah was averse to their being sent forth, so He made them lag behind, and it was said (to them), `Sit you among those who sit (at home)." [Quran 9:46]

This is a clear warning to those who claim to have made the intention for this lonely, yet most beloved path in the sight of Allah (SWT):

"O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah (i.e. Jihad) you cling heavily to the Earth? Are you pleased with the life of this World rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this World as compared with the Hereafter." [Quran 9:38]

"If you march not forth, He will punish you with a painful torment and will replace you by another people, and you cannot harm Him at all, and Allah is Able to do all things." [Quran 9:39]

"March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old and poor), strive hard with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allah. This is better for you, if you but knew." [Quran 9:41]

Finally I incite you with the magnificent verse from Surah At-Taubah:

"Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be the Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, they kill (others) and are killed. It is a promise in truth, which is binding on Him in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and the Quran. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain, which you have concluded. That is the Supreme Success." [Quran 9:111]

The next verse goes on to describe more of the traits of this blessed group:

"(The believers whose lives Allah has purchased are) those who repent to Allah (from polytheism and hypocrisy, etc.), who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast (or go out in Allah's Cause), who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all what Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by Allah (do all that Allah has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden). And give glad tidings to the believers." [Quran 9:112]

Allah is striking a deal with the believers. It is a deal that does not exclude the poor because all mankind is in possession of a soul. Allah (SWT) wishes to purchase the lives of the believers and whatever wealth they can afford and He will give them the Paradise in return, on the condition that they fight in the Way of Allah and they kill and are killed.

O businessmen of the *Ummah!* Pay heed and do not lose out on the deal of your lifetimes. The Prophet (SAWS) said in an authentic *hadeeth*: "*Whoever dies neither having fought (in Jihad), nor encouraging himself to do so, dies on a branch of hypocrisy.*"⁷⁶

The Prophet (SAWS) said: "*The souls of martyrs reside in the bodies of green birds that perch on chandeliers suspended from the Throne and fly about in Paradise wherever they please.*"⁷⁷

The Prophet (SAWS) said: "*Never will there combine in the nostril of a servant, the dust of the battle in the Way of Allah and the smoke of the Hell Fire.*"⁷⁸

The Prophet (SAWS) said: "*He who gets his feet covered in dust (fighting) in the Way of Allah, the Hell Fire will be forbidden from touching those feet.*"⁷⁹

How then, after hearing all this honour and this great status could the *Ummah* turn its back on the path designed to protect Islam, the honour of the Muslims and to unfurl and raise high the banner of Islam over disbelief, polytheism and apostasy?

O believers and pious ones! Fear your Lord as He ought to be feared and if you are sincere to your Lord then evaluate your lives and intentions in the light of these glorious verses from our Creator and the guidance of our beloved Muhammad (SAWS).

Let us listen to the eloquent words of Imam Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak, the famous *hadeeth* scholar of Khurasan who wrote to his devout ascetic friend Al-Fudail bin Ayyadh (who was known as *Abid Al-Haramain* - the Worshipper of the Two Holy Sanctuaries, because of the time he would spend in staying and worshipping there). The verse of poetry expressed Ibn Al-Mubarak's disapproval of Fudail settling in the vicinity of Makkah and neglecting Jihad:

⁷⁶ Reported by Muslim and Abu Dawud

⁷⁷ Reported by Muslim

⁷⁸ Reported by Ahmad. Saheeh.

⁷⁹ Reported by Al-Bukhari

*"O Worshipper of the Two Holy Mosques!
Had you witnessed us in the battlefield,
You would have known that, compared to our Jihad,
Your worship is child's play.
For every tear you have shed upon your cheek,
We have shed in its place, blood upon our chests.
You are playing with your worship,
While worshippers offer your worship
Mujahideen offer their blood and person (life)."*

So, from the words of a pious member of the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) we move to the words of a contemporary scholar, who truly followed in the footsteps of Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak in being a scholar of action rather than just words. This Sheikh is Abdullah Azzam (may Allah have mercy on him) who said: *"Islamic history is not written except with two lines: the black line which is the ink of the scholar and the red line which is the blood of the martyr."*

The words and statements of this scholar are further encouragement to today's Muslims, supplementing what has been quoted from the Quran and *Sunnah* and sayings of the *Salaf*. The pious Sheikh famously said:

"When Allah chooses one of the brothers for Martyrdom or takes the life of one of our beloved children, who have participated with us in this path, I cry for myself because these people have preceded us and this is a sign that we are not yet worthy for Martyrdom. It is a clear proof that we are not yet suitable for this high rank. Allah (SWT) chose these people and I observed that these people shared common traits: good feelings towards the Muslims and awareness of what they say to their Muslim brothers and sisters. You would not find them wasting their time because their deeds occupied them; their faults busied them from the faults of the people, so congratulations for him who busied himself with his faults rather than the faults of other people."

The Sheikh contributed enormously to the Jihad yet had great humbleness and modesty when assessing his own position. Later, Allah (SWT) blessed him with the Martyrdom he sought. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam also said regarding the martyrs:

"These people, O Lord, are your servants. They came out in Your Path seeking Your Pleasure and to give victory to the Deen and to raise Your Banner and to honour Your Shariah and to give victory and assistance to Your beloved ones, so please O Lord, do not disappoint them and please accept them and forgive them. They are emigrants. They left their homes and their wealth not because of poverty or because of need, but only to seek Your Pleasure."

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam said: *"It is with the likes of all these martyrs that nations are established, convictions are brought to life and ideologies are made victorious."*

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam also said: *" 'Do men think that they will be left alone on saying' we believe and they will not be tested?' [Quran 29:2]. A small group: they are the ones who carry convictions for this religion. An even smaller group from this group, are the ones who flee from this Worldly life in order to act upon these convictions. And an even smaller group from this elite group, are the ones who sacrifice their souls and their blood in order to bring victory to these convictions and ambitions. So they are the cream of the cream of the cream."*

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam further said *"It is not possible to reach glory except by traversing this Path. It is not possible for the structures of this Deen to be established, nor for its banner to be raised, nor for its vessel to be launched, except by traversing this Path. This Path is one: the Blessed Path of Jihad."*

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam also said: *"Indeed, the manuscripts of history are not scribed except with the blood of these martyrs, except with the stories of these martyrs, and except with the examples of these martyrs."*

These are the words which lit the burning fire in my heart, making me join the path of Jihad and to seek the honour of Martyrdom (by the Will of Allah).

And finally I warn the Muslim brothers and sisters to expel the Jews and Christians, atheists and their puppet apostates from our three occupied Holy sites.

The Jews have taken Masjid Al-Aqsa from the Muslims and the impure Americans and their accomplices from the traitorous Ale Saud (Saudi Royal Family) walk the Holy Land. Allah (SWT) says in Surah At-Taubah:

"O you who believe (in Allah's Oneness and in His Messenger (Muhammad SAWS)! Verily, the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and in the Message of Muhammad SAWS) are Najasun (impure). So let them not come near Al-Masjid-al-Haram (at Makkah) after this year, and if you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you if He will, out of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise." [Quran 9:28]

So it is upon us to liberate our Holy Sanctuaries from the terrorist, occupying American forces and to purify Masjid Al-Aqsa from the filth of the Jews.

O Muslim Ummah! Rise and answer the Call of your Lord, because Islam is dignity and honour. The Muslims have abandoned Jihad and therefore they have no dignity and honour.

Disbelieve in the Taghoot (false deities other than Allah in its comprehensive meaning) as Allah (SWT) says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghoot and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower." [Quran 2:256]

I advise you to show enmity to the apostate rulers and their allies in the Muslim lands who have replaced the Shariah with evil man made laws, spreading corruption and glorifying oppression.

Disbelieve in Democracy for it is the way of the Shaitan (Satan) and know that revival will come through the methodology of Knowledge, Military Preparation and Jihad. They are not stages but may all occur at the same time. And I warn you to be aware of the scholars at the gates of the apostate rulers - who bend over backwards to accommodate the disbelief and sin of

our leaders. These scholars have strayed by going to the gates of the leaders, thereby opposing the Salaf and have gone astray themselves and sent the people astray. Listen to the scholars who do not fear the blame of the blamers nor the sword of the oppressor.

I ask my family and anyone who knew me to forgive me if I wronged them in anyway. I ask you to pray that Allah accepts my actions and removes pride from our actions and deeds.

Finally I leave you with the words of the martyr Abdul-Wahab AlGhamidi, who was killed in Afghanistan in the 1980's:

"Most people choose the path of life as a way to death, but I have chosen death (Martyrdom) as a path to life (in Paradise)."

O Allah! Accept our actions and forgive our loved ones and us and enter us into the Paradise Most High!

O Allah! Give victory to the Mujahideen and give them victory over their ownelves and aid them in abiding by your boundaries!

O Allah! Liberate our Holy Lands and rid the invading occupiers from the apostate ruling regimes!

O Allah! Grant us Martyrdom!

O Allah! We ask you for the Paradise!

Farewell

Thus we bid you farewell, O beloved brother and friend, with the words of the scholar whom you revered and whom we hope that you are together with, in the hearts of green birds that live in lanterns hanging from the Throne of the Most Merciful:

Taken from the Words of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam:

And it might seem to the short-sighted eye and narrow mind, and to the individual besieged within the bounds of era and location, that it is a story that happened and finished. The mouth of death opened its mouth,

swallowed these martyrs and passed them with its wheel that saves neither old nor young.

However, the clear-sighted eye and the enlightened heart knows that these sacrifices are the provisions of future generations for distant civilisations to come. These stories, these sacrifices and these examples will remain as supercilious signposts upon the entire journey of this *Deen*, for he who wishes to make this journey from those wayfarers, or follow in the footsteps of this righteous elite.

"All these are the ones whom Allah has guided, so follow their guidance..."[Quran 6:90]

Indeed these exemplary individuals from the martyrs broke free from the shackles and fetters of this materialistic life to reach opulence and bliss, and they came to the land of Afghanistan, living in the mountains of Afghanistan, until Allah (SWT) honoured them with Martyrdom.

We ask Allah (SWT) to join us with them in the Highest Part of Paradise, with the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous, and that he blesses us with Martyrdom in His Way, and that he seals us with the Seal of Happiness, O Noble One.'

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam said about Usama Bin Ladin

"We ask Allah (SWT) to protect our brother, Abu Abdullah Usama Bin Ladin; as for this man, my eyes have never ever seen a man like him in the entire World."

"This man represents an entire nation."

"By Allah, I bear witness that I could not find an equal to him in the whole of the Islamic World, so we ask Allah to protect his religion and his wealth, and to bless him in his life."

"He lives in his house the life of the poor. I used to visit him at his house in Jeddah whenever I used to go for Hajj or Umrah and I never found a single table or chair in his house: all of his houses. He was married to four wives and in all four of his houses, I never did see a single table or chair. Any Jordanian or Egyptian labourer's house was better than the house of Usama. At the same time, if you asked him for a million riyals (US\$275,000) for the Mujahideen, he would write you out a cheque for a million riyals on the spot."

"The Afghans would see the Arab as a man who had left his commerce, employment and company behind in Saudi Arabia, or the Arabian Gulf or Jordan, and had come to live a life of stale bread and tea on the peaks of mountains. And they would see Usama Bin Ladin as a man who had left behind his business deal of expanding the Sacred Mosque of the Prophet (SAWS) in Madinah, to his brothers, thereby forfeiting his share of it – SR8 million (US\$2.5 million) – and throwing himself into the thick of the battles."

"Usama went to one of his sisters and presented to her the fatwa of Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah regarding the obligation of spending on the Jihad, so she took out her cheque book and wrote him a cheque of SR8 million (US\$2.5 million) immediately. The people said to her, 'Have you gone crazy? Eight million riyals in a single donation?'"

Many Muslim women tried to dissuade her; many Muslim men tried to discourage her husband and they said to her, 'You live in a rented flat: it will only cost you one million riyals (US\$275,000) to build a house for yourself, so why not spend one million of this donation for your own house?' Therefore, she went to her brother, Usama, and consulted with him about spending one million riyals on building a house for herself so Usama said to her, 'By Allah, not even a single riyal! You are living in a spacious flat whilst others are dying, unable even to find a tent to live in.'"

"Whenever he sits with you, you feel that he is a servant from amongst the servants of the house, with his manners and manhood. By Allah, we have found him to be like that. I said to Sheikh Sayyaf once, 'Keep this man with you and forbid him from entering the battles,' whereas he, on the other hand, was always desperate to go and confront the enemy face-to-face."

"Believe me, whenever he would come to my house in Peshawar and I would need to make a telephone call, he would go and get the telephone and place it in front of me, to avoid me having to move from my place. Manners, modesty, manhood: we ask Allah to protect him."

"The first time he invited me to his house was in Ramadan. At the time of Maghrib, he brought in a plate full of rice containing a few bones with thin streaks of meat on them, and two or three kebabs."

"Sayyid Diya', (an Afghan Commander of the Northern Alliance, a nephew of Sayyaf and one of those who fought against the Mujahideen in the US Crusade on Afghanistan that began in 2001), told a journalist from the French newspaper, Le Monde, 'We knew that Usama was wealthy, but he used to live amongst us a simple and meagre life. He was surrounded by the Russians on two occasions: one of these occasions was during a battle that lasted 24 days, and this is the longest battle that I have ever participated in, in my entire life. Usama was surrounded for seven days, on the peak of a mountain, with 100 of his men. They were being subjected to extremely heavy, continuous shelling from the Russians, so Usama ordered the wide-open plains to be mined in order to cut the supply route of the Russians, and then he attacked the Russians on the seventh day, being victorious in the battle. Usama and the Arabs were really brave, in truth – and since that battle I have never seen a battle of that ferocity. To be honest with you, we were very afraid of the continuous shelling upon us, and we were waiting

inside our trenches for the Russians to approach us, so that we could open fire on them. The Arabs, on the other hand, were leaping up from the trenches and facing the enemy face-to-face: they were eager to fight the enemy hand-to-hand, whereas not a single Afghan was prepared to do that."

Glossary

Ansar: anyone of the Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) from the inhabitants of Madinah, who received and hosted the Muslim immigrants from Makkah and other places

Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jamah: those who follow the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) according to the understanding of the Companions of the Prophet (SAWS)

Alim: scholar or man of knowledge

Amir: chief, commander, leader, master

Amirul-Mumineen: leader of the believers, the Caliph

Ard: all things held in honour: women, family, dignity etc.

Bidah: innovation in religion, any act or practice not found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAWS) or the Quran

Dawah: preaching, inviting, propagating, calling

Da'i: propagator, one who performs Dawah

Faraid: compulsory, obligatory duties; plural of Fard

Fard: compulsory, obligatory duty

Fard Ain: greatest degree of obligation, compulsory on every Muslim, such as five daily prayers, Hajj, fasting Ramadan, etc.

Fard Kifayah: Initially compulsory, but voluntary upon fulfilment of specific conditions, e.g. Funeral Prayer

Fatawa: legal rulings, plural of fatwa

Fatwa: legal ruling

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence

Fitnah: trial, tribulation, temptation, mischief, strife

Hadith: report of the Prophet's (SAWS) words or actions

Hajj: the Pilgrimage to Allah's House, the fifth pillar of Islam
Haram: forbidden according to the Shariah

Hasan: good: second highest degree of authenticity in hadeeth classification, after Saheeh

Hijrah: emigration in the cause of Allāh

Ijma: consensus of the Ulama (scholars)

Iman: belief, faith and action linked to this

Jama'ah: group, gathering, community

Jizyah: head tax imposed by Islam on non-Muslims living under the protection of an Islamic State

Kafir: disbeliever, infidel, non-Muslim, anyone who does not believe in the creed of Islam

Kuffar: plural of *Kafir*

Kufr: disbelief, infidelity, heresy

Mathhab: school of thought in Islamic jurisprudence, the four major ones being: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali

Muhaditheen: Scholars specialising in *hadeeth*

Mushrikun: polytheists, pagans, idolaters, people who practice *Shirk Rakah:* unit of prayer, consisting of one series of prostrations

Ribat: waiting in preparation to meet the enemy, guarding the frontiers, etc.

Saheeh: correct, certified: highest ranking of authenticity in *hadeeth* classification

Salaf: Pious Predecessors: pious people of the first three generations of Islam

Shariah: Islamic law

Shaheed: Martyr in the cause of Allāh

Shaitan: Satan

Sheikh: elder; title usually attributed to man of knowledge

Shirk: associating partners with Allah, worship of false gods/idols

Shuhadaa: plural of *Shaheed*

Sun nah : legal ways, practices, orders, acts of worship and statements etc. of the Prophet (SAWS) that are a model followed by Muslims

Tafseer: commentary, explanation, exegesis, interpretation of Quran

Tahajjud: voluntary night prayer, usually prayed in the last third of the night

Taq wa: fear or consciousness of Allah, piety, devoutness, religiousness

Tauheed: belief in the Unity of Allāh

Ulama: scholars, plural of *Alim*

Ummah: the entire community of Muslims

Zakah: compulsory tax of 2.5% per annum paid by Muslims