

The Mug Shot that Spoke His Legacy

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We go back in history to 1862 where a young boy of a poor household was born in a town controlled by the Uthmany Khilafa. This young man was brought under the care and tutelage of one of the Shuyookh in his home town when he was at the ripe age of 16 after the death of his father.

He eventually developed a lifestyle of not sleeping more than 3 hours every night in order to get up to pray to Allah at the last third of the night and recite Qur'an until fajr. He memorized the Qur'an (as all knowledgeable people begin their lives) eventually, and was known to have finished his revisions in its entirety every seven days, regardless of the sufferings he encountered in his life.

His courage and wisdom was pronounced, and was an example for people to follow. This was evident on one of his caravan trails to Sudan as a young man. A lion had deterred the people from entering a particular path. Caravans were veered else where for fear of this lion. To distract this lion, people would resort giving it one of their camels, a most prized possession, so they could pass safely. He learned of this lion during the journey, where upon he consequently took it upon himself to face this crisis head on. Unlike other men in the caravan who were dumbstruck by the situation, he carried his shot gun, rode his horse and went after the lion. He came back with the lion's head much to everyone's surprise and due gratitude. This earned him the name "Lion of Cyrenaica."

An upbringing of courage and upright religiosity had a massive effect on him. His character would not only change the course of his tribe, country and people, but also the world of Muslims in the Post Colonial Era.

In his twenties he was known for his maturity beyond his years as well as his wisdom, for he continued to solve tribal disputes. His people listened to him and took his regardless of village or region he found himself in. His manners were known to be great, for he was eloquent, balanced in his speech, and appealing to those who listened. This uniqueness helped him unite the tribes, and later on gather armies to fend off the colonizers.

His thirties was marked by dawn of the Colonial Era, as it began to spread its cancer to the rest of the world. At the time when the world was being ravaged by European nations, this man stood firm for Islam and faced colonizers with his valor. He fought fiercely against the French with a group called Banu Sanus, who would later be known as the Sanusies. For a brief moment, they also fought the British, who were marked by greed and attempted to conquer their land.

As part of a global feast on the so-called less civilized nations, Italy joined the European nations in causing havoc in the southern part of the hemisphere by colonizing North Africa. It was during this time, this man, in his fifties, gathered his forces in the face of an invasion attack against Libya, his homeland.

To pacify his resistance army, the Italians offered him high ranking positions and wealth. In return, they demanded that he surrendered and followed their Colonial decree. He responded in a famous quote saying, "I'm not a sweet bite of a meal anyone can swallow. No matter how long they try to change my belief and opinion, Allah is going to let them down."

They then offered him to leave his town to live closer to the ruling party complete with a monthly salary, but he again refused by saying, "No, I will not leave my country until I meet my lord. Death is closer to me than anything, I'm waiting for it by the minute."

This man, whose seventy more years of age had not prevented him from fighting, was the soul of his people's resistance against hopeless odds. He gave his people hope against an army thousands more than his own, equipped with more modern weapons, airplanes and armoury while he and his men starved in the mountains with nothing on their backs but their rifles and horses. After his firm position, as the Ummah is always in need of such legends to lead the people, people gathered around him. He successfully began to strike the Italians where it hurt. He hit firmly, swiftly, and harshly those who thought occupying Muslim lands, oppressing, imprisoning, and torturing Muslims, was going be effortless.

Another man in his nineties named Abu Karayyim, from the Jalu oasis, had fought with him in the deep south. Hunger and disease eventually decimated his people. The Italians soon stepped up operations by burning and pillaging villages. Women, children and the elderly were not spared. During their weakest point, people were gathered and placed in concentration

camps.

The Sanusi, Muhammad az-Zaway, who once fought with him against the French, attempted to persuade him to retreat to Egypt with the rest of those who fought against the French. But, this man refused to turn his back on the enemy knowing well that his chances are dim against a force that was swelling by the minute.

When asked why he continued the fight, he stated that he fought for his religion, and he sought no other than to get the occupiers of his lands. As to fighting, he said that was a fard , regardless of the outcome as victory comes from Allah. He used to refuse any peace talks with the colonizers saying we have nothing but to fight the occupying enemies of Allah.

After countless battles, he was wounded and captured alive. He and his men defended themselves until he and one of his companions were left. At last his horse was shot dead under him, causing him to fall to the ground. He was shackled and brought to a city called Suluq, where the Italian military post was established.

This man believed Jihad was ordained upon every able Muslim while his homeland was occupied by the colonizers. With his faith, heroism and courage he earned the respect of even his enemies.

The military officer who interrogated him said, “When he came to my office I imagined to see someone like the thousand of murabiteen who I met in the desert wars. His hands were shackled, he had broken bones caused by fighting, dragging himself barely able to walk. He was a man not like normal men even though the affect that he was apprehended had shown upon him. He stood in my office as we asked him and he answered in a calm clear collective voice. When he gathered to leave, the brightness of his face like a sunshine amazed me and shook my heart. My lips shivered towards the end of the conversation whereby I ordered him back to his cell to stand before a court in the evening.”

He was a legend who was firm in his religion at a time when the leaders of his country emigrated (as they do today) to surrender to the Italians. The biggest scholars of his time from the Sanusies, who previously fought with him against the French and British, did not come to his aid in time. Instead, many of them became loyal to the Italians by giving them Muslim lands in exchange for clemency, montly salaries, and free taxation from the latter. Such is true for Muslims today.

On the contrary, this man took out his Qur’an, held it, he gave an oath to Allah that he would not stop fighting the occupying oppressors even if it meant fighting them alone until victory had been attained or he becomes a martyr. In the last twenty years of his life, he led and personally fought in 1000 battles.

When the Italian general made him a final offer to make him their puppet and be allowed to live like the other leaders of his people, he answered, “I shall not cease to fight against thee and thy people until either you leave my country or I leave my life. And I swear by Him who knows whaht is in men’s hearts that if my ands were not bound this very moment, I would fight you with my bare hands, old and broken as I am..”

It was then that the Italian general laughed and ordered him to be hung after a frontal saving face act of a mock trial. Even before the court was in session a hanging rope outside the court house had already been prepared for him.

His hanging took place before hundreds of tribes in 1931. With the intent to scare the Muslims, the Italians did not succeed in doing this. The opposite had taken place. His hanging shook the entire Muslim world, and numerous resistances took place specifically in North Africa.

May Allah raise his position in paradise.

The Italians took pictures of him in shackles, surrounded by smiling Italian generals, and those who expressed happiness for his hanging. They did not realize that it is those shackles and rope hanging around his neck in the hands of his enemies fighting for the sake of Allah that is the envy of every true Muslim.

The man, whose mug shot spoke his legacy, is none other than Omar AlMukhtar, whose legacy will live until the day of judgement, inshallah. With his blood, he drew the stories of victory, he became a legend of the legends, and a guide for those who wanted to live in honor at a time of humiliation.

The surrendered modernists and disbelieving scholars of his time were not imprisoned nor hung. They died a normal death, possibly even in luxury and wealth, under the protection of the occupying Italians. However, they died and their names died with them. And, jahannam is the abode of those who ally themselves with the kuffar colonizers over the Muslims. Omar AlMukhtar lived, and fought hard in the days of his life. He was shackled, imprisoned, then hung. But his legacy lives on and paradise, inshallah, is the resort of the martyrs.

Omar AlMukhtar was attached to Allah, depending on Him, and accepting that which Allah had written upon him. He asked Allah to become a martyr and this what he has attained, inshAllah.

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