

## Muhammad's Other Battle Cries: It's Time for Killing!

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Over the years there have been informative articles written about how the phrase “Allahu akbar” (Allah is greater) has been used since the time of Muhammad as both a Muslim battle cry and for other occasions.<sup>[1]</sup> However, during the time of Muhammad, there were numerous battles in which the Muslims used other battle cries that were quite direct in announcing the impending slaughter of those on the receiving end of the Muslims’ swords. Here are some examples:

In March 625, the Quraysh tribe of Mecca and some of their allies attacked the Muslims in Medina; this was known as the Battle of Uhud. The Muslim army, under Muhammad’s command, had two battle cries that day: “I seek death, I seek death,”<sup>[2]</sup> and “Kill! Kill!”<sup>[3]</sup> The Muslim army sustained heavy casualties, but the Quraysh failed to defeat them.

In December 627, Muhammad led an attack against the Banu al-Mustaliq tribe. The Banu Al-Mustaliq were defeated, and their property, women and children were divided among the Muslims. The battle cry of the Muslims that day was, “O victorious one, slay, slay!”<sup>[4]</sup>

In June 628, Muhammad led a Muslim army against the Jewish community of Khaybar. Muhammad told his warriors, “You will not go out with me unless you desire jihad. As for plunder, there will be none.”<sup>[5]</sup> Fittingly, the battle cry of the Muslims was “O victorious

one, slay, slay!”<sup>[6]</sup>As the Muslims attacked, Muhammad called out, “Allah akbar [sic]! Khaybar is destroyed.”<sup>[7]</sup>

In December 628, Muhammad sent a Muslim raiding party to Najd under the command of Abu Bakr, his father-in-law and trusted friend. Their battle cry was reported as “Amit, amit (put to death, put to death),” and “Kill! Kill!”<sup>[8]</sup> Salamah bin Akwa’, one of the participants in the raid, later described how well they adhered to those battle cries:

*It was narrated from Iyas bin Salamah bin Akwa’, that his father said: “We attacked Hawazin, with Abu Bakr, during the time of the Prophet, and we arrived at an oasis belonging to Bani Fazarah during the last part of the night. We attacked at dawn, raiding the people of the oasis, and killed them, nine or seven households.”*<sup>[9]</sup>

Salamah stated, “I slew with my hand members of seven families of the polytheists.”<sup>[10]</sup>

In June 629, Muhammad sent an expedition under the command of Ghalib bin ‘Abdullah to conduct a surprise attack against the Banu al-Mulawwah in al-Kadayd. The Muslims attacked after the people had gone to sleep. They killed the warriors and took the children as prisoners. The battle cry of the Muslims that night was variously reported as: 1) “Kill! Kill!”<sup>[11]</sup>; 2) “Amit, amit.”<sup>[12]</sup>; and 3) “Slay! Slay!”<sup>[13]</sup>

In May 632, Muhammad ordered an expedition to attack the Byzantines at a town named Ubna (this was known as the Expedition to Mu’ta). Muhammad chose Usama ibn Zayd ibn Harithah to lead the expedition. However, Muhammad’s death on June 7<sup>th</sup> delayed the attack. Soon after Muhammad’s death Usama led his force to Ubna:

*He attacked them and their watch-word was: ya Mansur Amit [O victorious one, kill]. He killed him who met him, enslaved him whom he could, set fire to their boats, and burnt their dwellings, farms and palm-groves which turned into whirl-wind of smoke. He drove his horses into their plains.*<sup>[14]</sup>

Al-Waqidi provided a similar description:

*When Usama reached Ubna and could see it with his eyes, he mobilized his companions and said, “Go and raid...draw your sword and place it in whoever confronts you.” Then he pushed them into the raid. A dog did not bark, and no one moved. The enemy did not know except when the army attacked them calling out their slogan, “O Mansur, Kill!” He killed those who confronted him and took prisoner those he defeated. He set the borders on fire and their houses and fields and date palm on fire.*<sup>[15]</sup>

Remember Muhammad’s other battle cries the next time someone talks about how Islam was “peacefully” spread across the Arabian Peninsula.

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[1] E.g., 1) Robert Spencer, “‘Allahu Akbar’: It Means Almost Everything — Except What The Establishment Media Says,” *Breitbart*, December 25, 2015; accessible at <https://www.breitbart.com/immigration/2015/12/25/allahu-akbar-means-almost-everything-except-establishment-media-says/>; and 2) Yigal Carmon, “‘Allahu Akbar’ – ‘Allah Is The Greatest’ – A Jihadi Battle Cry,” *MEMRI Daily Brief No. 140*, November 1, 2017; accessible at <https://www.memri.org/reports/allahu-akbar-%E2%80%93-allah-greatest-%E2%80%93-jihadi-battle-cry-0>.

[2] Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *The Sealed Nectar* (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2008), p. 308.

[3] Muhammad b. ‘Umar al-Waqidi, *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi’s Kitab al-Maghazi*, trans. Rizwi Faizer, Amal Ismail, and Abdulkader Tayob, ed. Rizwi Faizer (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 115 and 128; and Muhammad ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, trans. Alfred Guillaume (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2007), n. 586, p. 753.

[4] *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, n. 738, p. 768.

[5] *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi’s Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 312.

[6] *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, n. 760, p. 770.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

[8] Abu Dawud Sulaiman bin al-Ash’ath bin Ishaq, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, trans. Yaser Qadhi (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2008), Vol. 3, No. 2638, pp. 275-276; Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Sa’d ibn Mani’ al-Zuhri al-Basri, *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, trans. S. Moinul Haq (New Delhi, India: Kitab Bhavan, 2009), Vol. 2, p. 146; and *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi’s Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 355.

[9] Muhammad bin Yazeed ibn Majah al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 2007), Vol. 4, No. 2840, pp. 88-89.

Iyas (Ayas) further related:

*It was narrated from Ayas bin Salamah bin Akwa’ that this father said: “We attacked Hawazin at the time of the Messenger of Allah with Abu Bakr. He awarded me a slave girl from Banu Fazarah, among the most beautiful of the Arabs, who was wearing an*

*animal skin of hers. I did not divest her of her clothing until I reached Al-Madinah. Then the Prophet met me in the marketplace, and said: 'By Allah, give her to me.' So I gave her to him, and he sent her as ransom for some of the Muslim prisoners who were in Makkah."*

*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 4, No. 2846, pp. 91-92.

[10] *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 146.

[11] Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari: The Victory of Islam*, Vol. VIII, trans. and annotated Michael Fishbein (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 142.

[12] *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 156.

[13] *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 661.

[14] *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 237.

[15] *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 549.