

# In-depth Analysis

## Rumiyah

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This document is an in-depth analysis of the visual constructions and techniques used in few portraits that could be categorized as as being part of more than one sub-thematic.



The fighter in this photograph is Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the official spokesperson and a senior leader of the Islamic State who was killed in August 30 2016 .

At a first glance, it is clear that the portrait of al-Adnani, as well as the IS flag are montaged. His figure is cut out from the photograph that is seen on the cover of the same issue of Rumiya, which is on the previous page. Al-Adnani is placed in front of the flag, in the center of the composition of the page, both the flag and al-Adnani are shot at a light-low camera angle (a low-angle shot has the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening, and gives the allusion of grandeur), and are placed above the title "Stand and Die: Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died". Centering al-Adnani within the black background draws attention to maintain the focus on the subject. The title automatically gives a hint that the topic of this article is about martyrdom. Thus, the black background behind al-Adnani, who is wearing black and the black Islamic State flag reinforce "mourning".

Upon closer inspection of the photograph, we notice the edges of the poorly and unprofessionally cut out of al-Adnani's figure, there seems to be an extruding light, which suggested that al-Adnani was an "enlightened" believer and a "righteous man", thus glorifying the martyr. My suggestion is reinforced by the following excerpts from the article:

The people of falsehood constantly attempt to make the deaths of righteous men and their slayings by the enemies of Islam – the mushrikin and the apostates – into a sign foretelling the breaking of the muwahiddin. But those fools do not realize that Allah ﷻ has ordained for each soul its set term before He created the heavens and the earth. Allah ﷻ said, "And each nation has its set term. They can neither delay it for an hour nor advance it" (Al-Araf 34). In this decree, all people are equal, including prophets and righteous people as well as disbelievers and tyrants.

the death of any person. If it would have been damaged by anything, it would have been by the death of the Prophet ﷺ and those of his noble Companions. But the religion remained long after their departure, as Allah established its foothold and spread it on the earth. He preserved it and employed His righteous slaves in its service. "He loves them and they love Him; humble to the believers and mighty against the disbelievers, they wage jihad for His cause and do not fear the blame of any blamer" (Al-Maidah 54).

Those fools do not realize that Allah ﷻ preserves His religion however He wills, and this religion will remain established and will not be damaged by

As for the learned who revere Allah as He should be revered, worshipping Him as He should be worshipped, when one of the righteous from among them die, they remind their

"The people of falsehood constantly attempt to make the deaths of **righteous men** and their slayings by the enemies of Islam – the mushrikin and the apostates – into a sign foretelling the breaking of the muwahiddin" (Rumiya issue 1 2016, 2).

"As for **the mujahidin in Allah's cause** – and they are the elite of His creation, those of His slaves whom He has chosen to become martyrs and whom He subjects to favorable tests – then the death of their leaders and commanders who stormed ahead of them into battle, running head first into hardships for their religion, only increases their firmness and determination in fighting the enemies of Allah" (Rumiya issue 1 2016, 3).

"We consider them [as in, other IS martyrs including al-Adnani] to be those who emerged as fighters for Allah's cause, seeking shahadah without turning back" (Rumiya issue 1 2016, 3).

Interestingly, even though the "poorly" photoshopped figure of al-Adnani lowers the quality of the photo, I question the intentionality of this element and if this was a conscious decision taken by the designer to highlight the "righteous" and "enlightened" man, who is considered a martyr.

The typeface used for the title of this article is a sans serif.





This article “The Religion of Islam: And the Jama’ah of the Muslims”, which a series (reoccurring in the following issues of Rumiya), claims to have its purpose “to clarify the the reality of Islam and the necessity of the Jama’ah” (Rumiya issue 1 2016, 4). Jama’ah means “prayer in congregation” - a group of people assembled for religious worship. The meanings of the text and the photograph are multiple folds.

To begin, the composition of this page, as a whole, is divided into two equal and interplaying parts: the right side consisting of the Islamic State fighters’ arms holding the Islamic State flag up high - shot with an extreme-low camera angle (a low-angle shot has the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening, as well as gives the allusion of grandeur). Cross-culturally clenched hands in a team-like manner, both in secular and religious ideologies including jihadi visuals, stands for unity, community, and action (Holtmann 2013, 46; Brachman et al. 2006, 112).

In Islamic history, the black flag is highly significant. Different jihadi militant groups including the IS adopt the black flag representing the black battle standards carried by Muslim forces in some of the earliest armed conflict in Islamic history; this mirrors the groups’ sensibilities towards the early ummah (Ostovar 2017, 88). The battle flags of both Muhammad and the 8th century Abbasid Caliphate, which overthrew the corrupt rule of the Umayyad replacing it with a new orthodox Islamic centered caliphate based in Iraq are said, to have been black (Brachman et al. 2006, 95; Ostovar 2017, 90; Holtmann 2013, 37). Thus, the usage of the black flag today represents jihad and the reestablishment of the Islamic Caliphate tracing roots to the very beginning of Islam (Brachman et al. 2006, 105). Moreover, the Islamic State flag depicts the first phrase of the Shahada (at the top) “La Illah Ilallah”, which means “No God but Allah”. And the white circle represents the second phrase of the Shahada, “Mohammad rasulullah” which means “Mohammed, the Messenger of Allah”, in the form that according to a statement by the IS in jihadi discussion forums about the design of the flag is the historically accurate seal of Mohammed as contained in the Ottoman records, and the order of the words (from top to bottom: god, messenger, Mohammed) developed by following Islamic oral traditions describing the seal of Mohammed (Ostovar 2017, 89-90). The IS flag could furthermore suggest a representation of territory control, a marking of the organization’s territory, advertisement and an announcement of the presence of its forces in a specific location (Ostovar 2017, 87-88); there is no landscape in the back, therefore, I suggest that is not the case for this portrait. Therefore, in this case, it refers to religious legitimacy and Islamic identity.

The left side consists of the text, which is superimposed with a black background on the photograph. If we look at the page as a whole, again, and then at the Islamic State flag, we can see that the Golden Ratio composition technique is applied. This means that the IS flag is given

high importance in the whole composition and is aimed to be the focus and attraction for the viewer. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the background surrounding the flag is degraded white colour as if the flag is softly emitting light - playing with the notion of the "purity of the Caliphate". This flag is held up high by IS fighters wearing military uniforms. The military uniform, in its turn, attempts to reinforce the symbolism of the authority and strength of the Caliphate. Moreover, in relation to the Jama'ah having said this suggests to connote that unification of Muslims under the group could bring victory. To confirm my suggestion, if we look at the third paragraph, the article quotes the Quran:

"Allah said, "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved Islam as the religion for you" (Al-Maidah 3). He also said, "Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam" (Al 'Imran 19). **He also said, "And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers"** (Al 'Imran 85)" (Rumiyah issue 1 2016, 4).

This paragraph, indeed does reinforce the idea of victory, and further suggesting that the way the IS fighters are holding the IS flag gives the notion of victory against the losers, who do not accept the group's version of Islam.

Again upon closer inspection of the photograph, we notice that there the arms of the fighters (possibly the flag as well) are also a cut-out, and there is a piece forgotten to be removed (from the previous background) by the designer. This time, I doubt that this is a conscious decision taken by the designer. Therefore, I question the time frame of the production of this issue, and the designer's skills and techniques.

Moving on to the left part of the page - the text - we notice that the title of the article is decorated with arabesques<sup>[3]</sup> in two shades of the color blue. The use of arabesques, which is a fundamental element of Islamic art, emphasizes the Islamic identity through the use of art. Floral patterns are used to represent nature.

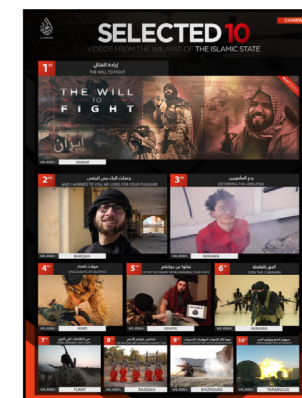
The typeface used for the title of this article is: Adobe Garamond Pro.



issue 1 / page 4 issue 2 / page 14

In this photograph, yet again, we have the same fighters' hands and the same IS flag for the third time, but this time placed in front of a blurry background that seems to be a photograph of a tree leaves. The intensity of the blurriness reduces the quality of the photograph, whereas, if we look at the united hands holding the flag in issue 1 page 4 and issue 2 page 14 placed in front of the solid background, they are easier for the eye to look at. When we zoom in, on the top-right, we can see that the designer has placed another photo but has not cleaned the edges to merge properly with the black and grey gradient background.

issue 3 | page 16



This is photomontage of the selected as the 1st must watch video titled "THE WILL TO FIGHT" from the province of Anbar, from the "Selected 10" videos from the wilayat (provinces) of the Islamic State of issue 1 of Rumiya.

As a whole, this photomontage, which seems to consist of a narrative, features 5 different images creating a banner similar to that of a Hollywood movie.

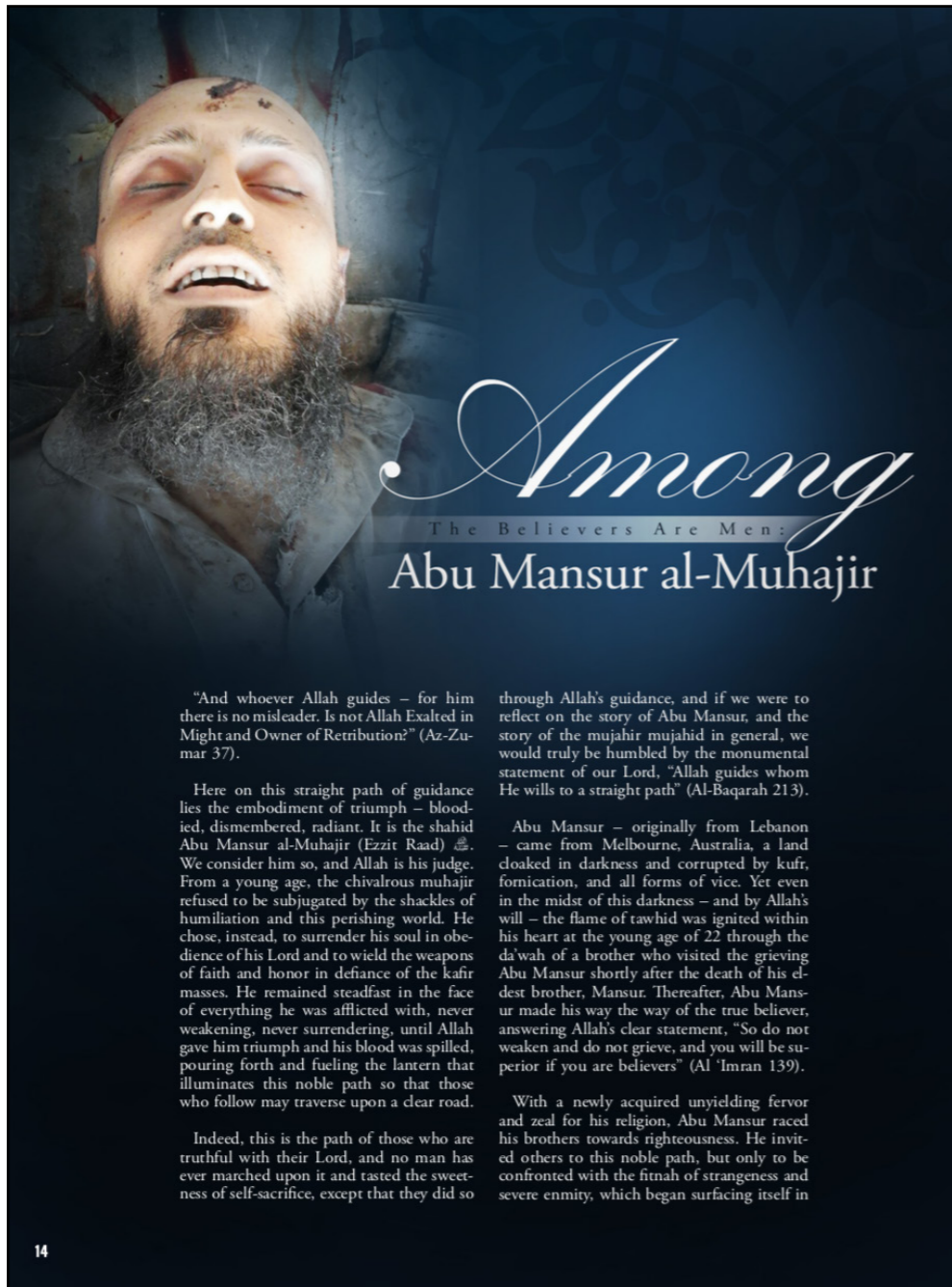
On the top-left of the photomontage, there is the title of the video written in upper case letters, and in white and gray gradient colors: the words "THE WILL" and "FIGHT" are separated with the preposition "TO" and a red line - this separation gives further emphasis to the separated words. Behind the title, there is the depiction of a shadowy fighter on a truck with his machine gun. This might have been an added effect to make the title more visible.

Below it, there is the portrait of an imam. The Iranian flag behind him, as well as, the superimposed word Iran in Arabic suggest that he is an Iranian imam thus Shi'ite Muslim. The designer has placed a target on his head reinforcing the enmity between Iran, Shiism, and the Islamic State, which is a Salafi Sunni jihadi group. Next to this depiction, the designer has placed an illustration of a plane, which seems to refer as written to a B-1B Lancer, a heavy bomber used by the United States Air Force - another enemy of the Islamic State. If we look next to the plane illustration, we can see another fighter - shot with a neutral camera angle - pointing his machine gun towards the Iranian imam.

Almost in the middle of the composition, the designer has placed a frowning, confident looking fighter with a straight posture holding his gun, and who is photographed at an extreme-low camera angle giving the illusion of grandeur. A low-angle shot has the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening.

The right side of this fighter's figure is contoured in orange as if conveying the emission of light from him. Furthermore, on the left and right sides he is separated from the rest of the photos with dashed orange and yellow lines, as if emphasizing on this fighter thus furthermore reinforcing his central position in the composition and reinforcing his impressiveness. On the right side of the photomontage, the designer has placed the sepia colored portrait of another fighter - shot with eye-level camera angle - with his gun - this time with a full smile. The background of this photograph is the landscape of what might be from the province of Anbar, and a smoke from possibly a fighting or an explosion scene. The fighter's smile is contradictory to the attitude of the fighter in the center. Nevertheless, this smile is of high importance because it suggests that the Islamic State fighters are happy to willingly fight for the Caliphate.

The typeface used for the title of this article is a sans serif.



# Among

The Believers Are Men:

## Abu Mansur al-Muhajir

“And whoever Allah guides – for him there is no misleader. Is not Allah Exalted in Might and Owner of Retribution?” (Az-Zumar 37).

Here on this straight path of guidance lies the embodiment of triumph – bloodied, dismembered, radiant. It is the shahid Abu Mansur al-Muhajir (Ezzit Raad) ؓ. We consider him so, and Allah is his judge. From a young age, the chivalrous muhajir refused to be subjugated by the shackles of humiliation and this perishing world. He chose, instead, to surrender his soul in obedience of his Lord and to wield the weapons of faith and honor in defiance of the kafir masses. He remained steadfast in the face of everything he was afflicted with, never weakening, never surrendering, until Allah gave him triumph and his blood was spilled, pouring forth and fueling the lantern that illuminates this noble path so that those who follow may traverse upon a clear road.

Indeed, this is the path of those who are truthful with their Lord, and no man has ever marched upon it and tasted the sweetness of self-sacrifice, except that they did so

through Allah’s guidance, and if we were to reflect on the story of Abu Mansur, and the story of the mujahid in general, we would truly be humbled by the monumental statement of our Lord, “Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path” (Al-Baqarah 213).

Abu Mansur – originally from Lebanon – came from Melbourne, Australia, a land cloaked in darkness and corrupted by kufr, fornication, and all forms of vice. Yet even in the midst of this darkness – and by Allah’s will – the flame of tawhid was ignited within his heart at the young age of 22 through the da’wah of a brother who visited the grieving Abu Mansur shortly after the death of his eldest brother, Mansur. Thereafter, Abu Mansur made his way the way of the true believer, answering Allah’s clear statement, “So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are believers” (Al ‘Imran 139).

With a newly acquired unyielding fervor and zeal for his religion, Abu Mansur raced his brothers towards righteousness. He invited others to this noble path, but only to be confronted with the fitnah of strangeness and severe enmity, which began surfacing itself in

Abu Mansur al-Muhajir, who is placed at the top left of the composition is shot in an extreme-low camera angle. A low-angle shot has the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening; in this case powerful due to his martyrdom - also giving the allusion of grandeur. Parallel to his figure, the designer has placed an arabesques in a very subtle way. The use of arabesques, which is a fundamental element of Islamic art, emphasizes the Islamic identity through the use of art. Furthermore, floral patterns are used to represent nature, which in this context could suggest the nature of jihad and its association with martyrdom.

Below the arabesques, the designer has placed the title of the article: “Among The Believers Are Men: Abu Mansur al-Muhajir”. The “Among” written in a bigger font size than the rest of the title, is a cursive script font with a fluid stroke giving a calligraphy look, which invites a personal touch. Nevertheless, the breaks between the letter A and m, as well as between the letter o and letter n, give a cheap look. The rest of the text in the title is using Adobe Garamond Pro, as the text of the article even though the font size of the martyr’s name “Abu Mansur al-Muhajir” is smaller than “Among” but bigger than “The Believers Are Men:”. This difference in typeface as well as the size of the word give emphasis to the preposition “among” and the martyr. Furthermore, this suggests giving importance to the meaning of the preposition itself, which means being “surrounded by”, which in its turn connotes the group as whole being united, and giving importance to this unity. Furthermore, “Among” and Abu Mansur al-Muhajir, who is the martyr discussed in this article, are written in white color, which is associated with light, goodness, and purity. This association further stresses on the notion that the Islamic State (unity) and the martyr fighting for Allah’s cause are of goodness and purity. The word choices used in a section from the article’s second paragraph confirm this suggestion:

“From a young age, **the chivalrous muhajir** [Abu Mansur al-Muhajir] refused to be subjugated by the shackles of humiliation and this perishing world. He chose, instead, to **surrender his soul in obedience of his Lord** and **to wield the weapons of faith and honor** in defiance of the kafir masses. **He remained steadfast** in the face of everything he was afflicted with, never weakening, never surrendering, until **Allah gave him triumph and his blood was spilled, pouring forth and fueling the lantern that illuminates this noble path** so that those who follow may traverse upon a clear road” (Rumiyah issue 1 2016, 14).

The use of the blue color is also important because of its connotation in Islamic culture, and is often used in mosques. For example, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque also called the Blue Mosque found in Istanbul, Turkey, or the Blue Mosque found in the center of Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan. In the middle of both Islamic and jihadi cultures, blue evokes the notion of hope, and again paradise and its excess of water (Holtmann 2013, 41;

Brachman et al. 2006, 17), and in particular in jihadi visuals it represents the hope jihadis place in jihad and martyrdom (Holtmann 2013, 41).

The use of the color black also has its intentions. Cross-culturally, the color black is regularly used as a color of protest (Ostovar 2017, 100). In Islamic history, black as well as the black flag hold further significance. The battle flags of both Muhammad and the 8th century Abbasid Caliphate are said to have been black (Brachman et al. 2006, 105; Holtmann 2013, 37). The Abbasid Caliphate, which aimed at installing an orthodox Islamic centered ruling came to power by overthrowing the Umayyad Caliphate that was seen as religiously wayward (Brachman et al. 2006, 95). Today, different jihadi militant groups adopt the black flag representing jihad and the reestablishment of the Islamic Caliphate thus tracing roots to the very beginning of Islam (Brachman et al. 2006, 105). And so, in Islam the color black is associated with war and conquest, and messianic visions of the Judgement Day in jihadi culture. Therefore, black is associated in Islam with “war” and “conquest” (Holtmann 2013, 37). Furthermore, in jihadi culture black stands for messianic visions of the Day of Judgment and the fear aimed at instigating in the enemies (Holtmann 2013, 37-38). It suggests operating in secrecy and working from the shadows to attack the enemy (Ostovar 2017, 96). But in this case, it could also give the feeling that the martyr, who was surrounded by darkness is enlightened through jihad and martyrdom—therefore, giving the feeling to the viewer that he can also attain that enlightenment.





At a first glance, this page looks like a poster for an Action/Comedy movie. Looking at the title "The Shuhada of the Gulshan Attack" creates a contradiction as I read the word Shuhada meaning "martyrs" in Arabic, and the word "Attack".

The composition of this page is vertically divided in half with the top part depicted with the Islamic State banner, and the lower part with 5 men wearing black identical uniforms and a Keffiyeh covering their hair, who stand next to each other with machine guns. Yet their watchful gaze at the camera with full smiles, and the machine guns pointed downwards give a sense of discomfort. Even though they seem at ease with themselves and happy, the contradiction of holding a machine gun creates the sense of uneasiness. The strong light shining on their faces gives a sense of being under the spotlight. And the way they are standing calls to mind Western boy bands with the lead-singer in the middle front, or the lead character of a movie standing in the middle front, and the secondary characters on the sides. We gather, from the elaborate space the Islamic State banner is taking on the page, as well as its top-centre positioning that not only they are protected by it but also they are protecting it. Below the portrait, we fall in a filled black space, where the designer has placed the title in white in the centre. There is an apparent difference in type size in the title, in which "The Shuhada" is bigger than "of the Gulshan Attack". This difference in "The Shuhada" emphasizes martyrdom and particularly these 5 depicted men, who are clearly "The Martyrs". Below, the rest of the title comes secondary as it is placed on the second line as well as in smaller font size. The text situated in the bottom indicates the author of this exclusive article: Abu Dujanah al-Bengali (Tamim Chowdhury, the former Head of Military and Covert Operations of the Soldiers of the Khilafah in Bengal, as stated) - which looks as if he is the director of the "movie".

Upon reading the article, we can see that it discusses the attack committed by these 5 Islamic State soldiers: they opened fire on Holey Artisan Bakery restaurant in Gulshan, Dhaka on 27th Ramadan 1437 in Islamic Hijri calendar (October 2 2016). The article encourages collective attack against "mushrikin" (sinners who do not worship Allah); it quotes the Quran as follows:

"He also said, "And fight against the mushrikin collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allah is with the pious" (At-Tawbah 36)" (Rumiyah issue 2 2016, 9).

The author calls them "Soldiers of the Khilafah in Bengal" and "five shahadah knights" (Rumiyah issue 2 2016, 9). He furthermore, dedicates a short biography section of each of the men, stating virtues and glorifies them with adjectives such as: steadfast, sincere, brave, soft-spoken, soft, humble, loving, kind, and obeying. Additionally, the author confirms

my observation about the man in the middle, Abu Rahiq al-Bengali, who was in deed the leader of the group (Rumiyah issue 2 2016, 10; ISS Risk 2016, 5). Looking back at the photograph, I suggest that the strong light shining on these men not only gives a hint about the topic of the article but also suggests that they are virtuous and pious men, and that Allah's guidance is with them to light their heavenly path through martyrdom; and for this reason, they are happy with big smiles.

The typeface used for the title of this article is a serif font: Adobe Garamond Pro.



Allah ﷻ created His slaves and made tribulation something constant for them, so that the pure become distinct from the corrupt, and that those who perish may perish upon clear proof and that those who live may live upon clear proof. Thus, there will be no consolidation without trial, no victory without hardship, and no ease without difficulty.

The path to Allah ﷻ and what He prepared for the believers therein of immense reward is a costly path, and these costs cannot be expended except by true believers, those whose hearts are attached to Allah alone, who are steadfast upon the methodology of the Prophet ﷺ and his noble companions. These – the true believers – are not confused by famous men and popular names. They seek the truth and recognize its people. And the people of truth are not those whose reputation in “jihad” circulated for decades, only to distance themselves therefrom, to deteriorate and regress, eventually becoming people who desert jihad and deny it. Nor are they those who spent their lives reading and writing about jihad, but when the herald called, “The Islamic State has been established, so come and follow up your knowledge with action,” they turned in arrogance, as if they were hard of hearing.

Describing the path to the gardens of eternity, Ibnul-Qayyim ﷺ said, “How far are you from the path? It is the path upon which Adam became exhausted, upon which Nuh

cried [in prayer], upon which Ibrahim was cast into the fire, upon which Isma’il was laid down for slaughter, upon which Yusuf was sold for a meager price and spent years in prison, upon which Zakariyya was sawed in half, upon which Yahya was butchered, upon which Ayyub faced harsh illness, upon which Dawud wept greatly [in fear of Allah], upon which ‘Isa walked with wild beasts, and upon which Muhammad ﷺ faced poverty and all kinds of abuse” (Al-Fawa'id).

So if this was the condition of the Prophets ﷺ, among whom were those of utmost determination, who met what they met for the sake of Allah ﷻ, had patience, and were steadfast despite the great harm they endured due to their da’wah to tawhid, never slackening or becoming weak, then what about those who are lesser than them? Are they not tried so that they might become pure? Are they not tested so that they might become sincere? Ash-Shafi’i ﷺ was asked, “Which is best for a man, to be granted consolidation or to be tested?” He said, “He will not be granted consolidation until he is tested” (Al-Fawa'id).

Indeed, one who does not have a scorching beginning will not have a shining end. So there is no consolidation until the trials are intensified and the constraints are tightened, as Jannah is only promised to the truthful men and women. Therein they shall gaze upon Allah’s face, which is the highest of blessings and the dearest of hopes. Could that be at-

The photograph is a kitschy digital collage of the fighters’ portrait and arabesque. Even though the arabesque has the same desert color palette as the photo (the soil color that takes a large space), it nevertheless creates a distraction from the actual portrait and acts as a frame through which the viewer looks into, therefore, as if creating a safety distance between the fighters in the portrait and the viewer. Below the portrait is another arabesque that extends towards the text of the article, and frames the title “GLAD TIDINGS OF IMMINENT VICTORY TO THE PATIENT”. Many portraits of the IS fighters - such as this one - are a digital collage with added Arabic calligraphy and/or arabesque. Using Arabic calligraphy and arabesque intends to touch the emotions of IS’s audience by playing on the religious and identity factors and their legitimacy. This portrait depicts IS fighters on convoy, which could be considered as portrayal of modern victory parades suggestive of victory and announcement of the presence of its forces in a particular region; this depiction asserts the idea that unity brings victory.

Many IS portraits such as this one, stress on togetherness, unity, friendship, brotherhood and community i.e. collective belonging .

The title extends through three lines.

The title of the text uses Adobe Garamond Pro typeface.

The first line “GLAD TIDINGS OF IMMINENT”, which has an archaic language tone to it, is differentiated from the rest of the title:

- It is written in smaller font size than the rest of the title.
- It is written in black.
- It is written in regular font weight.

On the second line, there is only the word “VICTORY”:

- It is written in bigger font size than the rest of the words.
- It is written in desert orange color.
- It is written in bold font weight.

On the third line, “TO THE PATIENT” is written:

- It is written in bigger size than the first line but smaller than the word “VICTORY”.
- It is written in desert orange color.
- It is written in regular font weight.

There are too many variations (two different colors and three different font sizes, and two different weights) and no consistent hierarchy or rule to design of this title, which cheapens its quality.

Upon reading the article, the below section from the third paragraph caught my attention:

“So there is no consolidation until the trials are intensified and the constraints are tightened, as Jannah is only promised to the truthful men and women. Therein they shall gaze upon Allah’s face, which is the highest of blessings and the dearest of hopes” (Rumiyah issue 2 2016, 26).

Reading the article, this section particularly allows a further interpretation of the arabesque framing in relation to the portrait, the camera angle at which the photograph is shot as well as the gaze of the fighter. In this context, the arabesque could be a reference to Jannah (heaven in Arabic), the fighters photographed with a high camera angle suggests to “the truthful men”, who would enter the Jannah through the path of Jihad. The high angle shot can make the subject look small or weak or vulnerable. Furthermore, the gaze of the fighter looking through the frame signifies a path towards Jannah and readiness to gaze upon Allah’s face.



At a first glance, this page looks like a movie poster for a pre-modern historical war movie. It is a kitschy collage of the fighters' portrait combined with an arabesque. The composition of the page is divided into three parts. The lowest part consists of the photograph, the middle part consists of the body text as well as the arabesque, and the top part consists of the title. The title and the body text are placed on a white and grey gradient background, which allow the title and the sub-titles in red to be striking.

In the lowest part, the photograph of the fighters is over exposed and they are shot at a low-angle camera shot, which has the power to make the subject(s) look powerful or threatening, and gives the allusion of grandeur. They are depicted in a pre-modern appearance: on a horse with swords, and one of them is carrying the IS flag. This depiction in a pre-modern appearance suggests notions of Islam's past (Ostovar 2017, 94) specifically associating with the legacy of Islam's founding generations (Ostovar 2017, 95) and their early successful jihadi campaigns, which also grants legitimacy to modern jihad and the group itself. "Horses and horsemen are also an important symbol of virility and warfare" (Cook 2017, 159). Under the legs of the galloping horses the designer has unskillfully attempted to add a light effect, which in its turn suggests "enlightened" believers and a "righteous men". In the background, there are montaged mountain range and forest mountains. According to Brachman et al. (2006), mountains are a common motif in jihadi visual propaganda generally evoking spiritual beliefs and alluding to the grandeur of the divine and aspects of heaven, therefore, also linking to notions of martyrdom and sacrifice (26).

Indeed, this martyrdom notion is seen in the red gradient title written both in Arabic and in English: "THE EXCELLENCE OF JIHAD". The Arabic version of the title, which is written in calligraphy, is a reference to the Islamic culture as well as the Quran. The red color usage in jihadi imagery represents blood and war (Brachman et al. 2006, 108). The red could also be seen in the subtitles of the 6 categories of the Excellence of Jihad.

At the center of the composition, the designer has placed a double arabesque in pastel blue and grey (acting as a shadow) with a verse from the Quran on top of it. The use of arabesques, which is a fundamental element of Islamic art, emphasizes the Islamic identity through the use of art. Furthermore, floral patterns are used to represent nature, which in this context suggests the nature of jihad. According to Brachman et al. (2006), [t]he color blue in jihadi imagery is used to evoke a sense of hope and heavenly paradise (106). They further state that blue is "usually used in conjunction with the color white to amplify both of these sentiments" (Brachman et al. 2006, 106). In addition to the title and the sub-titles, the color red is also adopted in the writing of the verse from

the Quran that states the following: "Allah favored the mujahidin over those who sit back with a great reward" (An-Nisa 95) further emphasizing on blood, war, and jihad. The verse is placed on a white "offset path" of the text that could be accomplished on Adobe Illustrator adding a kitschy effect to the text and devaluing its seriousness.

As for the typeface(s), the title in English "THE EXCELLENCE OF JIHAD" is in a sans serif typeface and all uppercase letters. The 6 subtitles are in lower case serif typeface (different than body text). The body text typeface is Adobe Garamond Pro. At an overall look, there seems to be a lot of elements in the design of this page, which makes it tiring to look at it for a long time.



# AMONG

THE BELIEVERS ARE MEN:

## ABU 'ABDILLAH

AL - BRITANI

Abu 'Abdillah was a very sociable, lively, friendly, gentle person with a soft heart and a blessed smile. He was one of those characters whom everyone liked. He was never arrogant, regardless of whatever position he held. He was always humble towards others and would recognize his own mistakes and faults, and it was for this reason that he was dearly loved by many.

Anyone who saw him could not help but to be reminded of wala and bara and see the love and concern he had for the religion and the Ummah. He was gentle towards the believers and harsh towards the kuffar, with his severity towards kufr and its people being a trait of his that was internationally known, due to his many efforts in giving global da'wah, making him an inspiration for many Muslims around the world. The fact that he was active in da'wah, however, didn't reduce him to being someone who just talked on and on without backing up his words with deeds, as is the case with many du'at nowadays. Rather, he was a man of action who not only "talked the talk," but also "walked the walk."

He was very brave hearted, someone who stood firm and remained sincere in what he called for, not fearing the blame of critics. He had a strong determination and stubbornness in following the truth and was swift to sacrifice what he held dear, seeking Allah's contentment, spending both his wealth and his life for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

He was born and raised in Britain, the youngest of five siblings. One can imagine the mischief and cor-

ruption a young man can fall into growing up in the lands of the Crusaders, where evil and corruption is widespread and where the ills of society are glamorized. It was the events of 9/11 that would inspire him to begin studying and practicing his religion. He then began preaching Islam to people, calling them to the tawhid of Allah ﷻ, publically condemning the British government for the many atrocities committed against Muslims both locally and abroad, and calling for the implementation of Allah's Shari'ah and the revival of the Khilafah.<sup>1</sup> Due to his da'wah, he not only became well known in the community, but also became well known to the British authorities. Rather than deterring him or frightening him, however, this only spurred him on and made him more determined to call to the truth.

The Messenger ﷺ said, "He who possesses three characteristics has tasted the sweetness of iman: That Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything else, that he loves a person, only loving him for Allah's sake, and that he hates returning to

<sup>1</sup> This was prior to the Khilafah's eventual revival in the year 1435AH with the appointment of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ﷺ as the Khalifah, an event that Abu 'Abdillah would witness as a soldier of the Islamic State. He thus not only called for the revival of the Khilafah, but translated his words into deeds by fighting to bring it back.

The composition of this page is strangely arranged with the top left part having elements that seem to not serve any purpose as they are simple curvy lines merged in blue color and blue grey gradient on a white background. Below this space the designer has placed the title of the article, "AMONG THE BELIEVERS ARE MEN: ABU 'ABDILLAH AL-BRITANI, in blue color, in three different lines and in four different font sizes: The "Among" written in a bigger font size than the rest of the title - unlike the previous similar article (refer to issue 1 page 14) this "AMONG" is not a cursive script font with a fluid stroke (calligraphy-like), and therefore, does not have a personal touch. Nevertheless, as "AMONG" is written in the biggest font size, there still seems to be emphasis on the meaning of this preposition as mentioned earlier. The font size of the martyr's name "ABU 'ABDILLAH AL-BRITANI" is smaller than "Among" but bigger than "The Believers Are Men:", who is the martyr discussed in this article. The typeface used for the title is an all uppercase serif typeface:

Trajan Pro 3 Regular. Interestingly, as I was exploring what typeface the title had, I came across multiple Hollywood movie posters that have used the typeface Trajan; two examples are Thor and The Last Samurai. The body text is Adobe Garamond Pro. Furthermore the use of the blue color in conjunction with white both suggest martyr's hope and heavenly paradise (Brachman et al. 2006, 106).

On the right side of the page, the designer has placed the over-exposed portrait of the fighter, Abu 'Abdullah al-Britani, and this over-exposure lowers the quality of the page. Abu 'Abdullah al-Britani's body posture holding the gun with a smile on his face portrays confidence, strength, and a thuggish, swaggering behavior. Ironically, he is wearing a baseball cap backwards adopting a Western style gangster look. This shows the British born and raised fighter's influence from the Western world, and nevertheless, the narrators (editors) of Rumiya chose to depict him wearing in a portrait with a Western influenced look. At the bottom of the portrait, the designer has added light effect suggesting he is an enlightened believer and a righteous men. The article further asserts this suggestion and discusses Abu 'Abdullah al-Britani's journey towards joining the Islamic State, and claims that he had love and concern for the religion and Ummah (the community of Muslims), and that he was gentle towards believers and harsh towards the disbelievers. Additionally, it mentions a long list of his positive personality traits (social, lively, gentle, friendly, with a soft heart), and his brave heart, sincerity, and firm standing. The article further asserts his devotion to Allah, jihad, and martyrdom by referring to what he used to always say:

"Imagine on the Day of Judgment you come before Allah having been completely blown to pieces, and then Allah puts you back together and asks you, 'Why did you do this to yourself?' and you answer, 'I did this for You, my Lord'" (Rumiya issue 3 2016, 15).

# JIHAD

## THROUGH DU'A

Du'a is a strong, lasting, and lethal weapon. Through it, afflictions are relieved and destruction is prevented, through it the believer defends against tribulations and the plots of the enemy, through it blessings are obtained and Allah's wrath is avoided, and through it anxieties are relieved and sadness is dispelled. Du'a is one of the unique aspects of worship. Rather, du'a is the essence of worship, for it entails complete love and complete humility towards Allah, the One, the Judge, the Just. In it, the slave confides with his Lord, acknowledging his inability and weakness. It is a consolation for the hearts, a healing for the chests, an ointment for the wounds, and a means of facilitating matters. Du'a is a strong refuge and an impenetrable fortress. Nothing is more honored by Allah than du'a. And the most incompetent of people is he who is incapable of du'a, for it is an easy form of worship, which can be performed day and night, is practiced both on land and at sea, and is legislated both for when settled or traveling. Those who make du'a flee unto the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the All-Knowing, and cling to their Lord, the King, the Pure, the Perfect. You see them, when making du'a, casting themselves before the Most Generous, their prayer cutting them off from the world as they turn towards the Lord of all creation, liberating themselves from the bondage of having need of the people and their favors, being sincere towards their Lord in their appeal, and eagerly seeking that He bestow His bounties upon them.

This is du'a. What is more greatly needed by the Muslim these days when the nations of kufr and its sects and religions have summoned one another against the Jama'ah of the Muslims? Thus, let the mujahid pay attention to the importance of this weapon and the obligation of mastering it and leaving off clinging to anyone other than the All-Hearing, the Responding. Likewise, let every Muslim – male and female – take part in striving against the enemies of Allah with this divine and efficient weapon. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Wage jihad against the mushrikin with your wealth, your lives, and your tongues" (Reported by Abu Dawud and an-Nasai). The jihad of the tongue is not limited to incitement to jihad, praising the mujahidin, vilifying the act of neglecting jihad, and ridiculing the disbelievers. Rather, from the most important forms of jihad by the tongue is du'a, by



With a full bleed image, the composition of this page is divided into two parts: On the left side, we have the text of the article, and on the right side, we have the focus of the photograph. This article's text discusses Du'a, which in Islam means a form of an expression of submission of faith to God and of one's neediness through supplicatory prayers often performed kneeling and accompanied by a gesture of outraised hands with the palms facing up (The Oxford Dictionary of Islam).

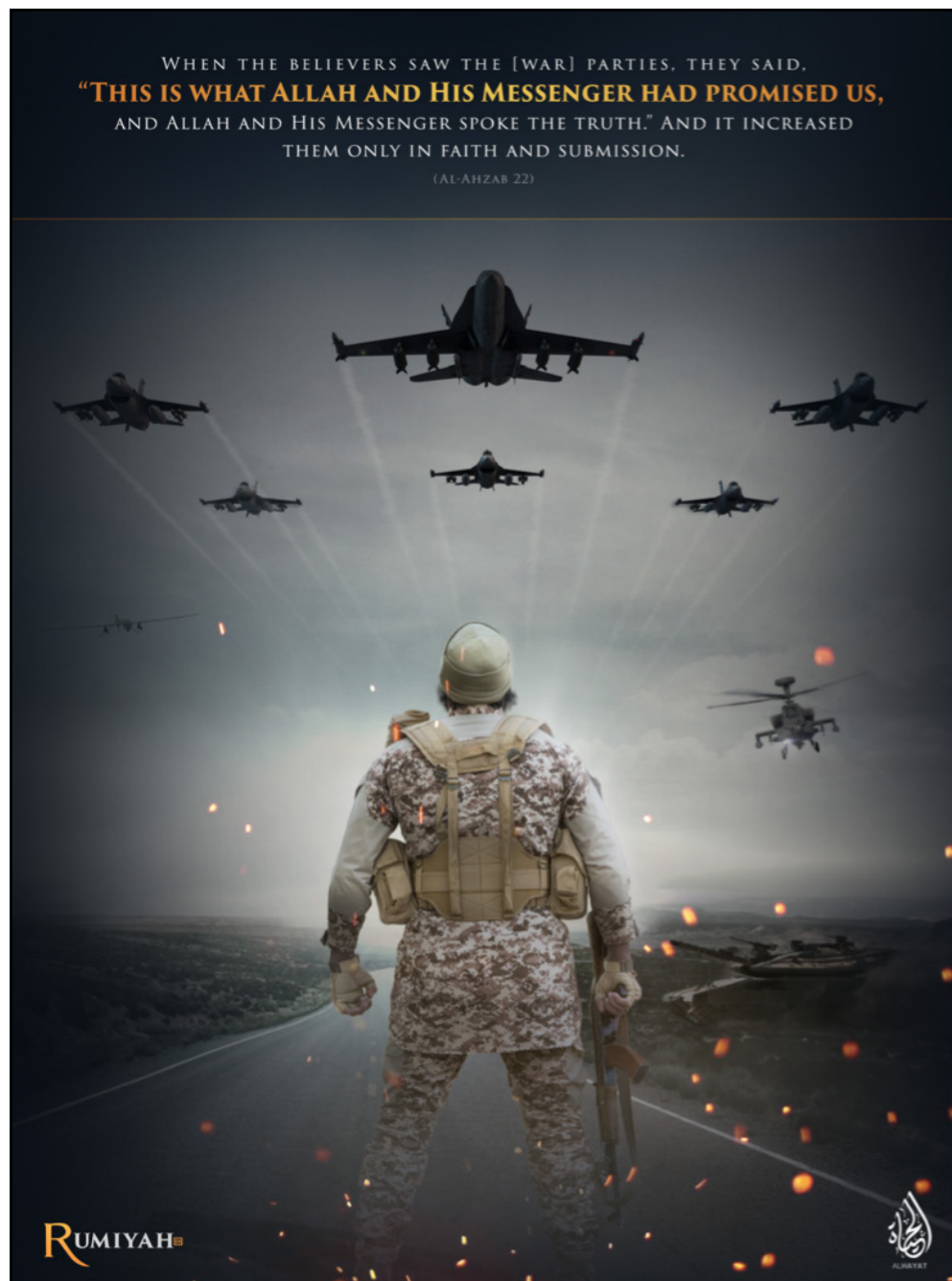
Though we do not see if the subject is kneeling, this expression is visually portrayed in an exaggerated and dramatic extreme low camera angle of his figure. The extreme low camera angle possesses the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening; in this case powerful due to du'a - also giving the allusion of grandeur. His face and hands are over exposed, which suggests that the moonlight is shining on him from above. Drawing the eye and provoking a sense of awe and a layer of intrigue within the viewer is provided by the celestial elements in the photograph. He looks at the night sky, where we can see the stars, the moon, and its light that are covered by clouds. The moon looks enormous and in very close proximity to the subject. This celestial element portrayed has a meaning in jihadi imagery. According to Brachman et al. (2006), a full moon indicates notions of the afterlife, the divine and the power of Allah (12). Furthermore, the moon combined with clouds also suggests the martyr's heavenly reward (Brachman et al. 2006, 12). Additionally, the moon, the moonlight, and clouds, all combined with the sky and the stars, further reinforce the grandeur of the Divine Allah.

On the left side, the title and the body text are set against a dark background<sup>1</sup>, which suggests to evoke mystery (Schneller 2015, 347). The title "JIHAD THROUGH DU'A" written in the Trajan typeface and in two different font sizes is divided into two lines. "JIHAD" in grey color taken from the color of the moon is written in a bigger size thus emphasizes its presence in the composition. Below it, the designer has placed "THROUGH DU'A" in a smaller font size and in the same color as the background of the body text: Blue-grey. The blue-grey color of the text box is taken from the colors of the moon and the clouds.

The exaggerated camera angle of the subject as well as the size of the moon along with the subject gesture of praying and the moonlight render the composition poetic. This visualization is full to the brim with qualities appealing to the emotions of the viewer generating the feeling that the power of du'a profoundly affects an individual and gets him/her close to the Divine.

In this case, the black from the sky of the photograph and the dark blue-grey text box that is placed behind the body text.





### Caption

*WHEN THE BELIEVERS SAW THE [WAR] PARTIES, THEY SAID, "THIS IS WHAT ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER HAD PROMISED US, AND ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER SPOKE THE TRUTH." AND IT INCREASED THEM ONLY IN FAITH AND SUBMISSION. (AL-AHZAB 22)*

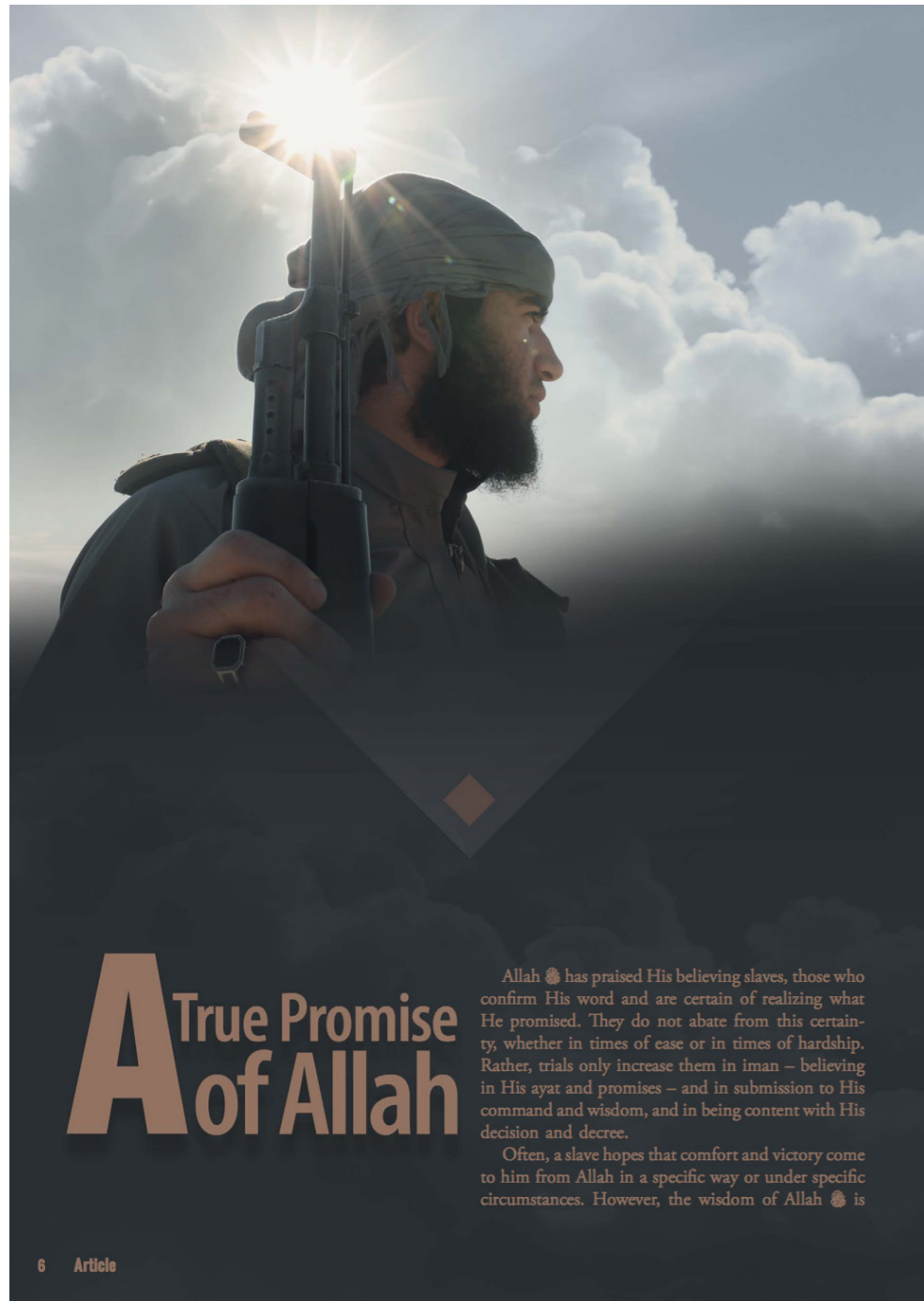
This portrait is an ultimate example of Hollywood inspired IS dramatic portrait depicting heroization of a fighter while employing the sub-thematics "Confrontation with the Enemy" and "Fighter from behind facing the enemy".

In this portrait, the fighter is standing straight in the center of the composition with his legs spread and is looking at the military aircrafts and helicopter of the enemy. His posture evokes notions of bravery, and strength against the enemy's forces. The fighter is holding his gun down instead of shooting at the aircrafts or the helicopter; this depiction can be associated with the Qur'an verse placed above the portrait, which focuses on Allah and His Messenger's promise that increases the fighter's faith and submission. The verse aims to legitimize the cause of the IS: and this is further highlighted with the yellow color used in the text to catch the attention of the viewer.

There is a big color contrast between the fighter and the background, which is darker. The dark contrast of the aircrafts suggest the "evilness" of the enemy. Whereas the brighter fighter in addition to the air emitted from the aircrafts surrounding him like sun rays or halo rays commonly seen in christian iconography of saints, suggest the piety and the religious devotion of the fighter-especially in relation to the Qur'anic verse. He is shot at an extreme low camera angle. A low-angle shot is taken from below the subject's eye-point and has the power to make the subject look powerful or threatening (Baranowski & Hecht 2017, 2). "The more extreme the camera angle, the more likely it is to reinforce or alter the narrative structure" (Baranowski & Hecht 2017, 2).

Furthermore, the background of an open road suggests the path of jihad and the way to martyrdom.

The typeface used for the title of this article is a serif font: Adobe Garamond Pro-that further gives the impressio to the viewer that this page/composition is about a serious topic and requires full attention.



**Title of text**

*A True Promise of Allah*

To entice individuals to respond to the concept of martyrdom by way of joining the IS, the group depicts its fighters, who became a martyr or looking forward to becoming one. This article of this portrait does not claim the fighter to have attained martyrdom yet. Nevertheless, it contains motifs as well as visuals constructions suggesting martyrdom. First, at a first glance, we see half of the composition covered in black with soft feathered edges. The black, which gives a feeling of discomfort, adds contrast against the other half of the portrait of the fighter, who is illuminated by the sun rays and clouds. He is shot at an extreme low camera angle, which conveys notions of power reinforced by the weapon he carries, as well as of grandeur in the religious sense i.e. piety. This notion is further reinforced by the sun that is shining on him, and clouds motifs. In jihadi imagery, the sun and thus sunlight is generally used to evoke association with the divine, legitimizing themselves spiritually as well as religiously, and it also evokes association with the afterlife (Brachman et al. 2006, 10-11).

His gaze into the distance is a depiction often seen throughout history. One of the most iconic photographs with this construction is Guerrillero Heroico picture of Che Guevara, which is often accompanied by the famous quote "Hasta la Victoria Siempre" that reinforces the meaning of the gaze past the camera suggesting looking into the future. Moreover, shooting the subject from a low camera angle, which is often the case, glorifies the subject as if looking up to the person in admiration (Jackson as cited in Galloway 2006). This visual construction could also be seen in portraits of Communist leaders, to some of USSR's propaganda posters, and Nazi propaganda posters (figures x, x, x respectively). In IS portraits of fighters, this suggests making plans by fighting to ensure the future success of the caliphate. Moreover, the articles of Rumiya associated with these portraits adopt vocabularies that reinforce the heroization, glorification of the IS fighters, and the planning for the future of the caliphate.

The color brown used for the title and the text of the article connotes stability and security (Holtmann 2013, 41). Moreover, In Islamic dreams interpretation, it is said that reddish-brown (maroon) represents dignity, nobility, and power (My Islamic Dream; Islamic Dream Interpretation 2019).

The typeface used for the title of this article is a sans serif font, which contradicts the seriousness suggested in the previous portrait. We can see inconsistency of typeface usage through the Rumiya issues.

