

Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi, Historical Stories For Children 1

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Book one of the historical stories for children series describes in short the personality of one of the most bloodthirsty governors of Iraq and Iran. His name was Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi. He was appointed to power by the merciless tyrant-king of Banu Ummayah.



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Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Our aim for the publication of these series is to introduce some aspects of biography from the history of Islam. These biographies include both types of individuals who either played a good and useful role or a bad and harmful role. We had always cherished the idea that we would be able to produce a short sketch of hard facts from the history of Islam in this field to be written exclusively to capture the interest of young children and teenagers.

We pray to the Almighty Allah to assist us in proving our present and future efforts to be accomplished facts — thus making a useful contribution to the learning of young children and teenagers and help us in this cause.

He is the Best Guide and the Best Helper.

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Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ath-Thaqafi

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Hajjaj was the bloodthirsty governor of Iraq and Iran. Unlike the rest of mankind he refused to take his mother's breast after being born. It is said that Shaytan (Satan) appeared in human form and said he should be given the blood of animals and insects for four days.

After this, Hajjaj accepted his mother's breast. It was this incident which caused him to become a mean and merciless man; indeed, for as long as he lived, he never once stopped killing people.

For twenty years he held the position of governor of Iraq and Iran. He was appointed by the merciless tyrant-kings of the Banu Umayyad family.

Hajjaj, like his masters thirsted after the blood of his opponents. Hajjaj, this bestial tyrant was especially eager to kill the followers of 'Ali, 'alayhi 's-salam (peace be upon him), and his progeny.

His most pleasurable hours were spent torturing to death any of the friends and supporters of 'Ali who were brought captive before him.

He enjoyed watching his innocent victims being dismembered and slowly bleeding to death before his pitiless eyes. During his rule, treachery, plundering and killing became so commonplace that one noted scholar has observed: If all the nations of the world were to each select their most despicable and hated criminals, either from modern times or past ages none would be baser, none more savage than Hajjaj.

Hajjaj was the enemy of mankind, the enemy of all that is fine and noble in man. He was a man who was appointed governor by those who themselves had usurped the caliphate of the Muslims. He was the enemy of Islam, the Prophet and especially and his supporters.

He was the source of the treachery and bloodshed committed by all the so-called Muslim rulers after him; and although he was, in reality, the bitterest enemy of the family of the Prophet, he tricked the people of that time by going to the mosques, giving advice to those present and even praying in congregation and in the Friday (jum'ah) prayers.

His prison consisted of merely four walls — roofless and so open to the burning sun of summer or the bitter cold of winter.

The innocent prisoners, all Muslims, Shi'ahs and supporters of the struggle to establish Islam as a way of life were confined between these four walls and forced to endure the rigours of the climate!

Even the surrounding rocks and hills trembled at their cries of pain and anguish; the hearts of Hajjaj and his torturers remained stonily impassive. Whenever the prisoners tried to move out of the burning heat of

summer and seek the shelter of the shade cast by the walls, the merciless guards hurled stones and rocks at them or prevented them from approaching by stabbing at their defense— fewer bodies with their spears.

The prisoners were fed on bread mixed with ashes. After torturing and harassing the prisoners, most of whom were Muslims leading the struggle to establish true Islam, he had them put to death in the most brutal way. At the time of Hajjaj's death there were thirty-three thousand men and women, sixteen thousands of whom were naked without even a blanket to cover themselves, still in his prison.

Hajjaj the tyrant — executioner had so many spies within the Muslim community that no one dared to even mention the name of 'Ali, 'alayhi 's-salam, or the members of his family.

Like Mu'awiyah, Yazid and the rest of the Banu Umayyah leaders he was extremely sensitive to the name of 'Ali. He reacted in like manner even to the names of the important amongst the Shi'ah community. It was Hajjaj who tortured and killed the dearest and closest companions of 'Ali, 'alayhi 's-salam, such as Kumayl, Qanbar (the servant of 'Ali) and Sa'id to name, but a few of the many hundred victims.

From the very beginning the government of Banu Umayyah retained their political power through tyrannical oppression, torture, killing, corruption and plundering; their blue-print for government was based on the vilest desires and ambitions of man.

As we have seen, the reason why they killed all the courageous Muslims who were fighting in the way of Truth was the latter's devoted allegiance to Ali, (A.S.); Hajjaj, the governor of Kufah, Sham (an area roughly corresponding to present-day Syria, Lebanon and Palestine) and Iraq, like all the Banu Umayyah rulers were enraged at the mere mention of 'Ali and his family.

Hajjaj dispatched his spies and agents after Sa'id and others who were still free to have them captured and brought before him. Sa'id took refuge in the large cities of Iran, fleeing from place to place in an attempt to throw off his pursuers.

At first he went to Isfahan later hid in the city of Qum and then moved on to the province of Adharbayjan in the north-west of Iran. From there he went to Iraq and finally sought safety in Makkah (Mecca). The governor of Makkah was a merciless, stony-hearted man like Hajjaj. As soon as Sa'id and a number of noble Muslims tried to seek refuge in Makkah he arrested them and sent them in chains to the town of Kufah. All the

Muslims who were truly devoted to the cause of Islam hurried out to greet Sa'id on his arrival.

The next day Sa'id, his hands and neck bound tight in chains was brought before the blood thirsty Hajjaj.

As soon as the enemy of Allah, Hajjaj saw Sa'id fear struck his heart; summoning up his courage he shamelessly began to question Sa'id: What is your name?

Sa'id replied: Sa'id (that is, the fortunate one).

Hajjaj: No, your name is Shaiyy (the unfortunate).

Sa'id: My mother, who gave me this name must have known better.

Hajjaj: No, the name of both, you and your mother is Shaiyy.

Sa'id: Only the Almighty Allah knows the secrets of the unseen.

Hajjaj: I will have you thrown into the fire of hell in this very world.

Sa'id: If I thought that you were capable of that I would call you God.

Hajjaj: What are your beliefs concerning Muhammad (S)?

Sa'id: Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the merciful Prophet of Allah.

Hajjaj: What kind of man was 'Ali? Is he in Paradise or Jahanna (Hell)?

Sa'id: If I were able to go to Paradise or Jahanna (Hell) I would know who was in Paradise and who in Jahanna (Hell).

Hajjaj: What do you know about the three caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar and 'Uthman)?

Sa'id: What business do you have with them? Are you their defender or representative?

Hajjaj: Who do you love more, 'Ali (a.s.) or the caliphs?

Sa'id: I love whomever Allah loves the most, whomever Allah chooses as the more worthy.

Hajjaj: Which of the two is most loved by Allah?

Sa'id: Only the person who knows the secrets of the heart and that which is normally hidden of man's nature can answer that.

Hajjaj: Why do you not speak clearly, why don't you answer my questions in a straight forward manner?

Sa'id: I do not want to tell you a lie.

Hajjaj: Why don't you smile?

Sa'id: Why should anyone want to laugh when he knows he has been created from dust and dust is burnt by fire.

Hajjaj: Then why do we laugh?

Sa'id: None of you have pure hearts: your hearts are dead and full of darkness.

Hajjaj: Oh Sa'id! Know that what-ever you say I will finally kill you.

Sa'id: In that case I will indeed be fortunate, and the name Sa'id given to me by mother is appropriate.

Hajjaj: How would you like me to kill you?

Sa'id: Oh unfortunate one! Which-ever way you like; your punishment awaits you on the final day.

Hajjaj: Would you like me to forgive you and set you free?

Sa'id: If forgiveness is from Allah I desire it, if it is from you then, no.

Hajjaj had an executioner brought before him and gave the order that the victim's head be cut off — as usual under his pitiless gaze.

The executioner bound Sa'id's hands behind his back and cut off his head as if he were a sheep. In his last moments alive Sa'id said, "Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah, Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah", (I witness that there is no god but Allah, I witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) ; then he turned to face the sky and said: "O Allah! Don't allow Hajjaj any further respite; don't give him the opportunity to kill others".

It was at this very moment that the executioner severed the head from the body of this noble man and so further increased the number of crimes committed by Hajjaj. After this shahadah (a martyr's death in the way of Allah) Hajjaj went into a strange mood and finally became mad. He only lived fifteen days more and during this period was unable to sleep.

His death was slow and painful. He would lose consciousness for a while only regain it and see before him the form of Sa'id.

Such is the fate of the brutal tyrants of the world.

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