بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HEROES OF ISLAM

SERIES 17

MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM

The Young Commander Who Opened Sind, According to the Qur'an, Authentic Hadith and the Books of History

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ وَٱلنِّسَآءِ وَٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾

"And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allāh and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper"?"

Surah An-Nisa' 4:75

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who commands us to defend the weak and the oppressed. May blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, upon his family and Companions, and upon those who followed his path in excellence — among them Muhammad ibn al-Qasim, the conqueror of Sind.

This book is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This seventeenth book of Heroes of Islam tells the story of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim al-Thaqafi: the young commander who answered the cry of captive Muslim women, opened Daybul, defeated King Dahir, granted religious freedom to the people of Sind, and finally died in the prison of Wasit as a victim of political turmoil. His story is told with honesty about its sources, including the stories that are not established. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih — knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows ***the Indus River delta*** in Sind at sunrise, with morning mist over the water, date palms and sand dunes along the riverbank.

In the distance stand ***the walls and gate of a port city*** — recalling Daybul — and beside them ***the foundations and pillars of an early mosque***. The ruins of Banbhore near Karachi, believed to be the site of Daybul, hold among the oldest mosque foundations in South Asia.

In the foreground, on a stone by the riverbank, rest ***an iron helmet***, ***a spear*** and ***a leather bag with rolled letters*** — a symbol of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim's correspondence with al-Hajjaj and his peace agreements with the people of Sind. The ships at the jetty recall the military equipment sent by sea.

The ***dark blue band*** at the bottom, framed by ***fine gold lines***, is where the author's name appears — the same as on the covers of Series 1 to Series 16, so that all the covers of Heroes of Islam match.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison.com.

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MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM

The history books relate that a ship carrying Muslim women from Sarandib (Sri Lanka) was seized by pirates near the port of Daybul in Sind. One of the women cried out: ***"O Hajjaj!"*** That cry reached Iraq, and a few years later a young commander of Banu Thaqif arrived in Sind to free the captives. That commander was ***Muhammad ibn al-Qasim al-Thaqafi***.

He is said to have been only about seventeen years old when he led the army. Within about three years (92–95 AH / 711–714 CE) he opened Daybul, crossed the Indus River, defeated King Dahir, and reached Multan. More importantly, he treated the Hindu and Buddhist inhabitants justly and allowed them to practise their religion. Yet in the end he was recalled, imprisoned and died while still young — a victim of the political turmoil that followed the death of al-Hajjaj.

This eBook is the seventeenth in the ***Heroes of Islam*** series. The story of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim comes from the history books, especially Futuh al-Buldan by al-Baladhuri (3rd century AH) and the later Chachnama. For this reason the source and grade of every story are stated honestly — including the story of King Dahir's daughters, which is not established — and its lessons are grounded in the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

The story of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim is the story of a young man who answered the cry of the oppressed, ruled with justice, and bore the injustice done to him with patience.

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WHO WAS MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM?

His full name was ***Muhammad ibn al-Qasim ibn Muhammad al-Thaqafi***, of the tribe of ***Thaqif*** in Ta'if. He was born around 72 AH (about 695 CE). He was a close relative of ***al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi***, governor of the eastern provinces of the Umayyad Caliphate, who entrusted him with military command despite his youth.

Before Sind, he is said to have been appointed to command troops in the province of Fars (Persia). His exact age when he led the conquest of Sind differs between sources, but most describe him as still in his teens or early twenties.

NAME AND TITLES

NAME OR TITLE	EXPLANATION
Muhammad ibn al-Qasim	His real name
Al-Thaqafi	Of the tribe of Thaqif in Ta'if
Fatih al-Sind	Conqueror of Sind (today's Pakistan)
The young commander	Led an army while still a youth, according to most sources

LESSONS

Age is not the measure of ability. Islam opens the way for capable young people to carry great responsibility.

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A YOUNG COMMANDER: LEADERSHIP IS NOT MEASURED BY AGE

Some may wonder at a youth being given command of an army. Yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself appointed the young ***Usamah ibn Zayd*** to lead an army that included senior Companions, and defended the appointment:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4469

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَعَثَ بَعْثًا وَأَمَّرَ عَلَيْهِمْ أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ، فَطَعَنَ النَّاسُ فِي إِمَارَتِهِ، فَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ " إِنْ تَطْعُنُوا فِي إِمَارَتِهِ فَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَطْعُنُونَ فِي إِمَارَةِ أَبِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ، وَايْمُ اللَّهِ إِنْ كَانَ لَخَلِيقًا لِلإِمَارَةِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ لَمِنْ أَحَبِّ النَّاسِ إِلَىَّ، وَإِنَّ هَذَا لَمِنْ أَحَبِّ النَّاسِ إِلَىَّ بَعْدَهُ ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent a force and appointed Usamah ibn Zayd as its commander, and people criticised his leadership. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up and said: ***"If you criticise his leadership, you used to criticise the leadership of his father before. By Allah, he (Zayd) was worthy of leadership***, and he was among the dearest of people to me; and this one (Usamah) is among the dearest of people to me after him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Malik ibn Anas, from 'Abdullah ibn Dinar, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions, Hadith No. 4469.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:4469

Ability and trustworthiness are the true measures of a leader. But we must also be honest: Muhammad ibn al-Qasim's appointment came through his relative al-Hajjaj, and his fate would later be tied to al-Hajjaj's fate.

LESSONS

Capable young people deserve a chance; the measure is fitness and trustworthiness, not age alone.

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SIND AND KING DAHIR

HISTORICAL NOTE: A LAND BEYOND THE FRONTIER

Sind is the region around the Indus valley, in the south of today's Pakistan. At that time it was ruled by ***King Dahir***, a Brahmin king, with his capital at ***al-Rur*** (Aror). Its people were Hindus and Buddhists.

Before Muhammad ibn al-Qasim, the Muslims had sent several expeditions to Sind, among them those of 'Ubaydullah ibn Nabhan and Budayl ibn Tahfah al-Bajali — both failed, and both commanders were killed.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

LESSONS

Earlier failures did not stop the effort. Bitter experience became a lesson for more careful preparation.

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THE CRY "O HAJJAJ!"

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE SHIPS FROM SARANDIB

Al-Baladhuri relates that the king of Sarandib (Sri Lanka) sent al-Hajjaj ships carrying Muslim women — daughters of Muslim merchants who had died there. The ships were seized by pirates in the waters of Daybul. A woman of Banu Yarbu' cried out: ***"O Hajjaj!"*** When the news arrived, al-Hajjaj answered: "Here I am for you!" He asked King Dahir to free the captives, but Dahir replied that the pirates were beyond his control.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:
Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Chachnama.

Defending one's oppressed brothers and sisters in faith is a duty taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2442

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، أَنَّ سَالِمًا، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لاَ يَظْلِمُهُ وَلاَ يُسْلِمُهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرُبَاتِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he does not wrong him nor abandon him (to harm).*** Whoever fulfils the need of his brother, Allah will fulfil his need. Whoever relieves a Muslim of a hardship, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever covers (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will cover him on the Day of Resurrection."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from Al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from 'Uqayl ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Salim ibn 'Abdullah, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Oppressions, Chapter: A Muslim Does Not Wrong a Muslim nor Abandon Him, Hadith No. 2442.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:2442

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The Qur'an also calls the Muslims to defend the weak:

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:75

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ وَٱلنِّسَآءِ وَٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾

And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allāh and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper"?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:75

LESSONS

A Muslim does not leave his brother to be wronged. The cry of one weak woman moved a whole province to her defence.

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FREEING THE CAPTIVES

The first aim of the expedition was to free the captives. The history books mention that after Daybul was opened, the Muslim captives held there were freed. Freeing captives is a command of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3046

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " فُكُّوا الْعَانِيَ ـ يَعْنِي الأَسِيرَ ـ وَأَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ ".

TRANSLATION:

Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Free the captive, feed the hungry, and visit the sick."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir, from Abu Wa'il Shaqiq ibn Salamah, from Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Chapter: Freeing the Captive, Hadith No. 3046.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3046

LESSONS

Freeing those unjustly held captive is among the greatest of good deeds, like feeding the hungry and visiting the sick.

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CAREFUL PREPARATION

HISTORICAL NOTE: AL-HAJJAJ'S PLANNING

Learning from earlier failures, al-Hajjaj prepared very carefully. Muhammad ibn al-Qasim was given about ***6,000*** Syrian cavalry and a camel corps. Heavy equipment, including a great mangonel (stone-thrower) named ***al-'Arus*** that is said to have needed 500 men to operate, was sent by sea. Al-Baladhuri also relates that al-Hajjaj soaked cotton in strong vinegar and dried it, so that the army could make vinegar in Sind by soaking the cotton in water. Muhammad ibn al-Qasim also corresponded constantly with al-Hajjaj throughout the expedition.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Chachnama.

LESSONS

Trusting Allah does not mean neglecting preparation. The success in Sind was built on careful planning and lessons from past failures.

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THE OPENING OF DAYBUL

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE FIRST PORT

Muhammad ibn al-Qasim reached ***Daybul***, the main port of Sind, around 92–93 AH (711–712 CE) and besieged it. The mangonel al-'Arus brought down the great flagpole of the city's temple, and the city was finally opened. He then built a mosque in Daybul and settled about ***4,000*** Muslims there.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Chachnama.

Archaeologists believe that the ruins of ***Banbhore***, near today's Karachi, are the site of Daybul. The foundations of a mosque found there are considered among the oldest in South Asia. However, the earliest inscription found in that mosque is dated 109 AH (727 CE), after the time of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim, so it cannot be confirmed whether the building is the mosque he built or one rebuilt later.

LESSONS

Building a mosque after the opening shows that the real aim was to establish Islam, not merely to conquer.

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CROSSING THE INDUS: THE BATTLE AGAINST DAHIR

HISTORICAL NOTE: RAMADAN 93 AH

After Daybul, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim advanced north through Nirun and Sehwan; many cities surrendered through peace agreements. He then crossed ***the Indus River*** on a bridge of boats and met the army of King Dahir, which used war elephants. In a great battle near Rawar in ***Ramadan 93 AH*** (June 712 CE), King Dahir was killed and his army defeated.

Status of the report: The victory over King Dahir in 93 AH is agreed upon by historians; the details of the battle come mostly from the Chachnama and differ between sources.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh; Chachnama.

LESSONS

Great obstacles — a wide river and war elephants — can be overcome with wisdom and patience.

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THE STORY OF DAHIR'S DAUGHTERS: BETWEEN FACT AND LEGEND

SOURCE NOTE: A STORY THAT IS NOT ESTABLISHED

The Chachnama relates that two daughters of King Dahir were sent to the Caliph and falsely claimed that Muhammad ibn al-Qasim had dishonoured them. According to this story, the caliph ordered Muhammad to be sewn into a raw ox-hide until he died, after which the princesses confessed that they had lied to avenge their father's death.

This story is ***not found*** in al-Baladhuri, the earlier source. It appears only in the Chachnama, a Persian book compiled in the 13th century CE, and has many features of legend. Al-Baladhuri gives a different and more plausible reason: Muhammad was recalled and imprisoned because of the political turmoil after the death of al-Hajjaj (see Chapter 13).

Status of the report: Weak and not established; mixed with legend.

REFERENCES:

Chachnama; Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; modern historical studies of the sources on the conquest of Sind.

LESSONS

A dramatic story is not necessarily true. We choose the report of the earlier and more plausible source, even if it is less exciting.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE OF SIND

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE TEMPLES OF BRAHMANABAD

After ***Brahmanabad*** was opened, its people asked permission to rebuild their temples and continue their worship. Muhammad ibn al-Qasim wrote to al-Hajjaj, who replied that since they had submitted and paid the jizyah, they were to be treated like the Christians, Jews and Magians: ***left to worship their gods***, with no objection to rebuilding their temples. Brahmins were also appointed to help with administration.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Chachnama.

This policy is in harmony with the principle of the Qur'an:

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:256

لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّۚ فَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤۡمِنۢ
بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسۡتَمۡسَكَ بِٱلۡعُرۡوَةِ ٱلۡوُثۡقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٥٦

There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:256

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And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a severe warning to anyone who kills a non-Muslim who has a covenant with the Muslims:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3166

حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسُ بْنُ حَفْصٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ، حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَمْرٍو، حَدَّثَنَا مُجَاهِدٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهَدًا لَمْ يَرَحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا تُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Whoever kills a mu'ahad (a non-Muslim under covenant) will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance can be found from a distance of forty years' travel."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qays ibn Hafs, from 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Ziyad, from Al-Hasan ibn 'Amr, from Mujahid ibn Jabr, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jizyah, Chapter: The Sin of Killing a Mu'ahad Without Cause, Hadith No. 3166.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3166

LESSONS

Islam is not imposed. The people of Sind who did not embrace Islam were protected in their lives, property and places of worship — and many of their descendants later embraced Islam willingly.

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JUSTICE TOWARD THOSE WHO DO NOT FIGHT

Historical reports mention that Muhammad ibn al-Qasim kept many local officials in their posts, fixed taxes at set rates, and gave a share of revenue to the local religious class. This policy led many cities to surrender without a battle.

Allah does not forbid the Muslims from being good to those who do not fight them:

SURAH AL-MUMTAHANAH 60:8

لَّا يَنْهَىٰكُمُ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِكُمْ
أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/60:8

LESSONS

Justice to all people, Muslim or not, is part of Islam's teaching — and it opens hearts more effectively than the sword.

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AL-RUR AND MULTAN

HISTORICAL NOTE: AS FAR AS THE PUNJAB

After the victory over Dahir, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim opened ***Brahmanabad***, then the capital ***al-Rur*** (Aror). He continued north until he opened ***Multan*** around 95 AH (713–714 CE). In Multan there was a great temple filled with gold, so that the city was called "Farj Bayt al-Dhahab" (the frontier of the house of gold). The spoils sent to Iraq are said to have exceeded the entire cost of the expedition.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

LESSONS

Rapid success requires wisdom to manage it. The opening of Sind was not only a military victory but also an organised administration.

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A CHANGE OF POWER AND THE PRISON OF WASIT

HISTORICAL NOTE: A VICTIM OF POLITICAL TURMOIL

In 95 AH al-Hajjaj died, and in 96 AH the Caliph al-Walid ibn ‘Abd al-Malik also died. The new caliph, ***Sulayman ibn ‘Abd al-Malik***, was a bitter enemy of al-Hajjaj and his family. He appointed a new governor to Sind and ordered Muhammad ibn al-Qasim to be brought back in chains. Muhammad was imprisoned in ***Wasit***, Iraq, under the governor Salih ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, who bore a grudge against al-Hajjaj’s family, and was tortured until he died in 96 AH (715 CE), still a young man.

Al-Baladhuri relates that as he was taken away, he recited the famous verse: ***«***□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□***»*** — “They have wasted me — and what a young man they have wasted — for a day of battle and for guarding the frontier.”

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:
Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ reminded us how grave injustice is:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2447

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ الْمَاجِشُونُ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " الظُّلْمُ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***“Injustice will be darknesses on the Day of Resurrection.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Yunus, from ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Majishun, from ‘Abdullah ibn Dinar, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Oppressions, Chapter: Injustice Will Be Darknesses on the Day of Resurrection, Hadith No. 2447.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:2447

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LESSONS

Political turmoil can destroy the innocent. The rulers' injustice toward Muhammad ibn al-Qasim is a historical wrong that must be acknowledged honestly, not hidden.

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PATIENCE IN TRIAL

The historical reports do not mention that Muhammad ibn al-Qasim rebelled or resisted the caliph's order, even though he commanded a large army in a distant land. He accepted the decision and returned. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught that every state of a believer is good for him:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2999

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ الأَزْدِيُّ، وَشَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِشَيْبَانَ - حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " عَجَبًا لأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ " .

TRANSLATION:

Suhayb narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"How wonderful is the affair of the believer! All of his affairs are good for him, and this is for no one except the believer. If something pleasing befalls him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if harm befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid al-Azdi and Shayban ibn Farrukh, from Sulayman ibn al-Mughirah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, from Suhayb al-Rumi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening of Hearts, Hadith No. 2999.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:2999

LESSONS

Victory is tested with gratitude, and injustice is tested with patience. Muhammad ibn al-Qasim experienced both in a short life.

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MOURNED BY THE PEOPLE OF SIND

HISTORICAL NOTE: LOVED BY THOSE HE CONQUERED

Al-Baladhuri relates that when Muhammad ibn al-Qasim was taken away, ***the people of India (Sind) wept for him***, and some of them made an image of him in the town of Kiraj as a memorial. This shows how much they — most of whom were not Muslims — valued his justice and his treatment of them.

Status of the report: Narrated in the histories of the conquest of Sind without an authentic chain. The story is well known and accepted as history, but it cannot be used as proof in the way an authentic hadith can.

REFERENCES:

Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan.

Making images is not an Islamic practice; this report is mentioned only as evidence of how much the people of Sind, who were then mostly Hindus and Buddhists, loved the commander who opened their land.

LESSONS

The measure of a leader's justice is how he is remembered by those he led, including those of a different religion.

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LEGACY: THE GATE OF ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA

Sind later came to be called ***"Bab al-Islam"*** (the Gate of Islam) in the Indian subcontinent. Through merchants, scholars and Sufis, Islam spread from there across South Asia, which today is home to hundreds of millions of Muslims in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. In Pakistan, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim is remembered as one of the earliest figures of Islamic history in the region.

QUALITIES AND CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM

QUALITY	EXAMPLE FROM HIS STORY
Defender of the oppressed	Answering the cry of the captive women
Young but capable	Leading an army as a youth
Careful and disciplined	Preparation and correspondence with al-Hajjaj
Just toward non-Muslims	Religious freedom in Brahmanabad
A wise administrator	Keeping local officials in their posts
Patient and obedient	Accepting his recall without rebelling

LESSONS

A short life can leave a long legacy. Nearly thirteen centuries later, Islam still lives in the land he opened.

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SOURCES OF THE STORIES OF MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM

This table summarises the source and grade of each story, so that the reader can distinguish what is authentic from what is merely well known.

STORY	SOURCE	GRADE
The leadership of Usamah ibn Zayd	Sahih al-Bukhari 4469	Sahih
The cry “O Hajjaj!”	Al-Baladhuri	History
A Muslim does not abandon his brother	Sahih al-Bukhari 2442	Sahih
Free the captive	Sahih al-Bukhari 3046	Sahih
Preparation and the mangonel al-‘Arus	Al-Baladhuri	History
The mosque of Daybul / Banbhore	Al-Baladhuri; archaeology	History; building date uncertain
Victory over Dahir (93 AH)	History books	Agreed upon
The slander of Dahir’s daughters	Chachnama	Not established
Religious freedom in Brahmanabad	Al-Baladhuri; Chachnama	History
Forbidding the killing of a mu‘ahad	Sahih al-Bukhari 3166	Sahih
Imprisoned and died in Wasit (96 AH)	Al-Baladhuri	History
Injustice is darkness	Sahih al-Bukhari 2447	Sahih
How wonderful is the believer’s affair	Sahih Muslim 2999	Sahih
The people of Sind wept for him	Al-Baladhuri	History

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PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMELINE

PERSON	ROLE
Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf	Governor of the eastern provinces, relative and planner of the expedition
Al-Walid ibn ‘Abd al-Malik	Umayyad Caliph at the time of the conquest
King Dahir	King of Sind, killed in 93 AH
Sulayman ibn ‘Abd al-Malik	The caliph who recalled him
Salih ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman	Governor of Iraq who imprisoned him

PLACE	EVENT
Ta'if	Homeland of Banu Thaqif
Daybul (Banbhore)	Port opened; mosque built
The Indus River	Crossed before the battle with Dahir
Brahmanabad and al-Rur	Cities opened; religious freedom
Multan	The northern limit of the conquest (95 AH)
Wasit	Where he was imprisoned and died (96 AH)

YEAR	EVENT
c. 72 AH	Born in Ta'if
92–93 AH	Expedition to Sind; opening of Daybul
Ramadan 93 AH	Victory over King Dahir
93–95 AH	Brahmanabad, al-Rur and Multan
95 AH	Death of al-Hajjaj
96 AH	Death of al-Walid; recalled, imprisoned and died in Wasit

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM

This chapter answers questions often asked about Muhammad ibn al-Qasim. The answers are brief; details are in the earlier chapters.

1. WHO WAS MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM?

A young Umayyad commander of the tribe of Thaqif who opened Sind (92–95 AH).

2. HOW OLD WAS HE WHEN HE LED THE ARMY?

Most sources say he was still a youth, about 17 years old; his exact age differs between sources.

3. WHY WAS THE EXPEDITION TO SIND SENT?

Among the reasons: a ship carrying Muslim women from Sarandib was seized by pirates in the waters of Daybul.

4. WHAT WAS HIS RELATIONSHIP TO AL-HAJJAJ?

He was a close relative of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, who planned and financed the expedition.

5. WHEN WAS KING DAHIR DEFEATED?

In Ramadan 93 AH (June 712 CE).

6. HOW WERE THE HINDU AND BUDDHIST INHABITANTS TREATED?

They were treated as people of dhimmah, allowed to worship and to rebuild their temples.

7. IS THE STORY OF DAHIR'S DAUGHTERS TRUE?

It appears only in the later Chachnama, is mixed with legend, and is not established.

8. HOW FAR DID HIS CONQUEST REACH?

From Daybul in the south to Multan in the Punjab.

9. WHY WAS HE RECALLED?

Because the Caliph Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik was hostile to al-Hajjaj and his family.

10. HOW DID HE DIE?

He was imprisoned in Wasit and tortured until he died in 96 AH (715 CE).

11. HOW DID THE PEOPLE OF SIND REMEMBER HIM?

Al-Baladhuri relates that they wept for him when he was taken away.

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12. WHAT IS THE GREATEST LESSON FROM HIS STORY?

Defending the oppressed, being just to all, and being patient when wronged.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The story of Muhammad ibn al-Qasim begins with the cry of a woman held captive at sea and ends with a young man dying in the prison of Wasit. Between the two, the gate of Islam opened in South Asia.

LESSON	FROM THE STORY OF MUHAMMAD IBN AL-QASIM
Leadership by merit	The story of Usamah ibn Zayd
Defending the oppressed	"A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim…"
Freeing captives	"Free the captive…"
No compulsion in religion	Al-Baqarah 2:256; Brahmanabad
Protecting those under covenant	The warning against killing a mu'ahad
Injustice is darkness	The end in the prison of Wasit
Patience in trial	"How wonderful is the affair of the believer…"
Honesty about sources	The story of Dahir's daughters, not established

May we follow Muhammad ibn al-Qasim's example: answering the cry of the oppressed, being just to all, and being patient when tested.

In sha' Allah, the Heroes of Islam series will continue with the story of another hero of Islam.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa‘id and ‘Ali bin Hujr, from Isma‘il bin Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ bin ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيد - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa‘id and ‘Ali bin Hujr, from Isma‘il bin Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ bin ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

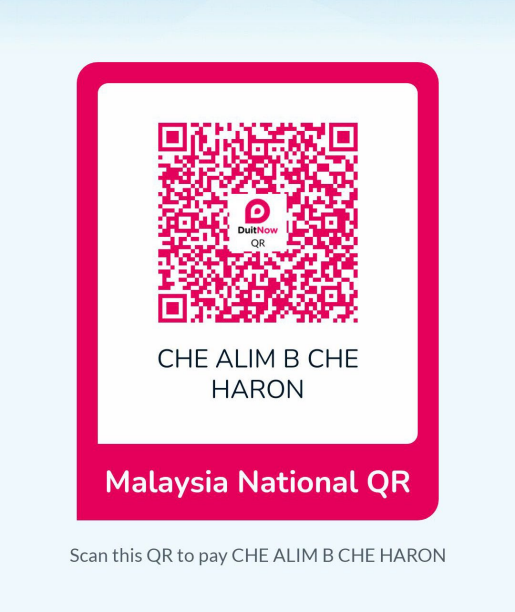
REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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