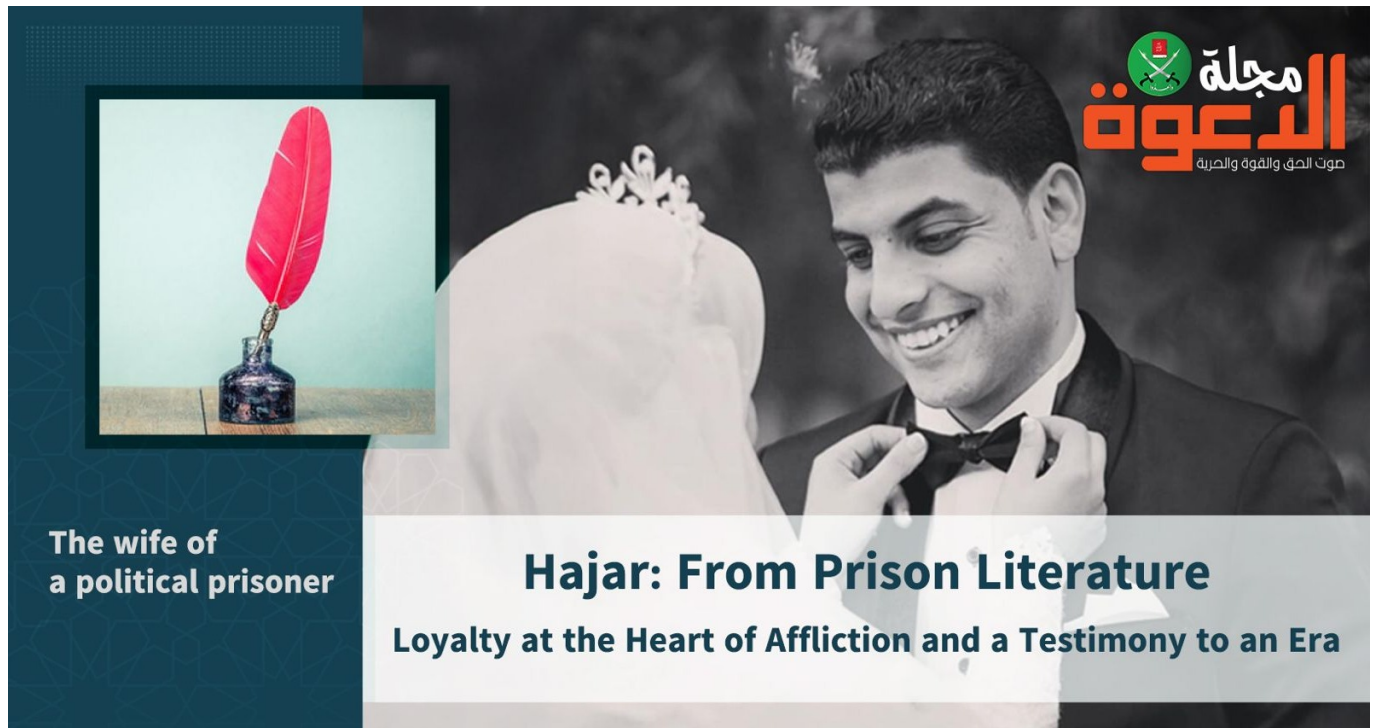


Hajar: From Prison Literature Loyalty at the Heart of Affliction and a Testimony to an Era



(From the Tales of Women Who Persisted in the Face of Injustice and Tyranny)

In this article, we open a window onto one of the most profound manifestations of prison literature, a narrative of suppressed pain, in which politics intersects with emotions and conscience, and human dreams intertwine with the hopes of nations for freedom.

This human narrative deserves to be told, not only because it reflects a woman's grief over losing her lifelong companion, but also because it serves as a testimony that captures an era in Egypt's history that started with the military coup in 2013 and is still ongoing.

This story, written by the wife of an Egyptian detainee, is one of thousands that exemplify the patience and loyalty of the faithful Egyptian woman in the face of oppression and deprivation, as well as her steadfastness alongside her partner on the journey of sacrifice.

We chose to publish this living testimony as it was presented, for its humane and moral significance, capturing the reality of abuse, torture, and repression against political detainees, and for the splendor of pure love and deep faith

it reflects amidst injustice and the despair of justice.

As we share this story, we affirm that prison literature is not just a depiction of darkness, but also a reflection of truth and a record of the heroism of those without a voice. They are, yes, outside bars, but they are also imprisoned, bound together with those inside.

This story is one among hundreds, even thousands, of stories endured by the wives of detainees, persecuted, and exiled. But it is told with honesty and a lively pulse, more eloquent than sermons and more powerful than pleas. When we publish this, we are not just documenting an individual's suffering, but capturing the characteristics of an entire era marked by systematic injustice and the intentional targeting of men who remained faithful to their pledge to God, and women who bore the trust with patience and steadfastness.

Hajar wrote:

Our story in brief

And what was hidden was even greater, by God.

"Five minutes and he'll come back to you!"

An officer told me this 60 days after our marriage, on April 2, 2017, when he came to pick up Ahmadi. He was trying to get him to walk with them, and Ahmadi patted me as if he knew that the "five" the officer was talking about would not be five minutes, five days, or even five years! It had become nine years!

He once told me that he broke down in tears when he saw a photo of my ID card being brought in for his visit! He had not expected that I would be able to reach him so easily, when in his eyes, I was "the girl," his twenty-year-old bride, pregnant with twins, and completely dependent on him!

He said to me, "I was so worried about you! How were you going to come to the station and deal with informants, visitors, queues, and all the other things that come with it? I married you to honor you, not to fire you out!"

And now, after nearly nine years in prisons and detention centers, and after visiting Ahmadi in:

(Kafr Saqr, Zagazig, Minya al-Qamh, Minya al-Qamh again, 10th of Ramadan, 10th of Ramadan again, 10th of Ramadan again, 10th of Ramadan again, Wadi al-Natrun, Wadi al-Natrun Annex, Gamasa, Borg al-Arab, Zagazig General).

I was unable to visit him at:

(Zagazig Security Forces, Zagazig Security Forces again, Zagazig General Prison, Zagazig First Police Station, Kafr Saqr Detention Center, Kafr Saqr Detention Center a second time, a third time, and, sorry, another time, Kafr Saqr, Kafr Saqr again, Minya al-Qamh Detention Center, Takhshibat al-Khalifa, May 15 Deportation Center, Sadat Police Station Detention Center, Alexandria Security Directorate Detention Center, Zagazig Deportation Center).

Can anyone comprehend that Ahmadi was deported over 100 times in nine years?! And appeared before prosecutors and judges more than 120 times... Oh my God!

All this renewal and extension of prison terms, visits, handcuffs, and cells... He told me that he has been in 18 different cells so far, from Burj Al Arab to Gamasa, and from Wadi El Natrun to Kafr Saqr!

He surprised me once when I caught him counting my visits! In 2021, he told me that I had visited him 200 times and prepared food for over 1,500 detainees, from Aswan to Cairo, and from Salloum to Sinai!

Over nine years, they fabricated nine cases against Ahmady. He served three years in prison, after which he was acquitted! He was then remanded in custody eight times, and between each case, he would "disappear" for about 30 days!

He once went to the Kafr Saqr Prosecution Director in 2021 and was surprised when he said, "Oh! You have not gone home yet! Sit down, sit down while we write the report."

He went to a criminal court judge and recounted his tragedy. The judge nodded and said, "May God release us and you."

Once, he became angry with another judge who wanted to grant him release, but Ahmadi refused! He was tired of the deportations, the fabricated cases, and the sound of handcuffs. His only goal was to remain in prison until God would release him! Arguments erupted, to the point where the judge changed his mind and extended their detention!

He told me about Gaza:

"How happy they are! They are bombed and die! But we are not bombed and do not die! They scream and people hear them! But we do not scream, and no one remembers us! They go to God as righteous martyrs! And here we are... some of us are panicking, some are driven mad, and those who resist cannot be safe from temptation! How fortunate is he who is killed as a martyr and is not tempted in prison!"

One time I decided to look for him...

I went to the police station. They told me, "Ahmedi left these things for you."

I went to the prosecution. The prosecutor said, "I can't sign this report."

I went to the public prosecutor. His secretary replied, "If he's political prisoner, forget him... It is easier!"

I knocked on the door of the State Security branch. They said, "Not here!"

{They vowed, "Let us swear by Allah that we will take him and his family down by night. Then we will certainly say

to his closest heirs, ‘We did not witness the murder of his family. We are definitely telling the truth.’} (Al-Naml, 49)

Ahmadi and I are going through a period of deep grief, which started with the loss of our twins and Ahmadi's father. He is overwhelmed by the fear that he will lose his mother while he is in prison, as she is nearing eighty.

Our consolation is that we are resisting, with nothing in our hands but ourselves. The amazing thing is that we are resisting simply to live, not to prove or deny anything...

In prison, Ahmadi memorized the Quran and was certified with a chain of transmission that traces back to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He then obtained certification in Tajweed and its texts, memorized the Forty Hadiths of Nawawi, and started teaching others.

(100) is the number of people who benefited from his lessons in Tajweed, the Quran, raising children, preparing teachers, and establishing digital Quran projects. Praise be to God, I was one of those hundred.

He invented a new method for teaching Tajweed, tested it, and then helped me establish Alhalqa – The Circle. He taught me, as always, and now, thanks to him and God, I am a Quran teacher for English speakers. I offer workshops he prepared in his prison cell, including:

- The Ten Memes: For mothers, teachers, and girls aspiring to become teachers.
- Raising Children: Coming soon, covering kids from birth to age 24. This content will be available through (Hager Fathy.)

Every time they fabricate a new case for him, he surprises me with a new course, an innovative idea, or a new digital project!

They fabricate cases, while he plans to pursue a master's degree or a new specialization!

He searches for hope like he searches for a needle that has fallen from him into the darkness of the ocean!

{And so they made a plan, but We too made a plan, while they were unaware.(50) See then what the consequences of their plan were: We utterly destroyed them and their people all together... (51)} (Al-Naml)

And yet... we are exhausted!

Truly worn out from prison! We miss all of life, and we are sensitive to everything that reminds us of chains!

Ahmadi and I are in a constant state of loss... that never seems to end!

It is enough for me to miss him, and it is enough for him to miss me!

We long for a home that unites us... Hands that intertwine on the road...

Children, we cuddle them and they annoy us...

And the mark we leave in this world...

It is enough for me that he misses me, I miss him, and it is enough that God knows, and God will not let our faith go to waste...

He is enough for us, and to Him we are yearning.