



# الحجُّ رِحْلَةُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

Hajj: A Journey of Forgiveness

*Id al-Adha Khutbah*

June 2023

Imam Dr. A. Rashied Omar



CLAREMONT  
MAIN \* ROAD  
MOSQUE



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Dispenser of Grace

*'Id al-Adha Khutbah 2023  
Claremont Main Road Masjid  
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## Hajj: A Journey of Forgiveness

Imam Dr. A. Rashied Omar

الله أكبر، الله أكبر، الله أكبر، الله أكبر والله الحمد

Allah is Greater than

Allah is Greater than

Allah is Greater than

All Praise, Thanks & Gratitude belongs to Allah

## Celebrating 'Id al-Ada with Makkah

We begin by expressing our praise, thanks and gratitude to Allah, *Rabb al-Hidayah* (the Lord of Guidance), for having guided us to celebrate *Īd al-Aḍḥā* today in unison and solidarity with the pilgrims (*hujjaj*). By celebrating *Īd al-Aḍḥā* the day after these blessed *hujjaj* have paused and stood on the sacred plains of 'Arafat (*wuquf al-`Arafah*) we are giving this great day of happiness and joy its true meaning and significance.

In the same way that *'Id al-Fitr* is inextricably linked with fasting in Ramadan, so too is *Īd al-Aḍḥā* inextricably linked with the fifth and final pillar of Islam, the *hajj*. Celebrating *Īd al-Aḍḥā* is one of the most significant ways in which non-pilgrims (*ghair al-hujjaj*) can participate vicariously and share in the great blessings of the *hajj*. It is only within the context of the *hajj* that the real meaning and significance of our celebrations and joyful festivities of this day can be understood and truly appreciated.

Hence, we have gathered here this morning to vicariously celebrate the great achievement of the pilgrims (*hujjaj*) who have successfully completed the main rite and highlight of the pilgrimage (*hajj*). Yesterday, these blessed *hujjaj* returned from their ceremonial halting and pausing known as *wuquf* on the sacred plains of 'Arafat in compliance with the most important symbolic rite pertaining to the pilgrimage (*hajj*). For the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's everlasting peace and blessings be upon him) proclaimed in an authentic tradition (*hadith*) which can be found in the *hadith* collection of Imam Ahmad:

الحجُّ عرفة

## The Pilgrimage is 'Arafah

[Reported by the companion 'Abdurrahman bin Ya'mur (may Allah be pleased with him) and recorded in the *hadith* collections of the Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Sunan al-Nasa'i]

At the very heart of the symbolism of the *hajj* and the pausing and halting (*wuquf*) at the sacred plains of `Arafat is the pilgrim's acknowledgement of their human frailty and imperfections and their great need for Allah's Divine Grace and Forgiveness. This is the climax of the *hajj* that all *hujjaj* prepare themselves for.

As part of the preparation for this journey, we have a wonderful tradition here in Cape Town, where the *hujjaj* greeting to family and friends includes seeking forgiveness from them for any hurt or transgressions the *hujjaj* may have caused them, wittingly or unwittingly. This is a major step towards seeking the forgiveness of Allah – for if you cannot humble yourself to seek the forgiveness of your fellow human beings, how will you find the humility to seek the forgiveness of your Lord and Creator. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) teaches us that if the offence committed harms our fellow human beings, forgiveness, reparation, and healing can only occur once the offender receives a clear and precise acquittal from the offended party. (see *Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Mazalim, Bab al-Qisas*).

## The Significance of `Arafat and Seeking Forgiveness

It is no accident that *wuquf*, this time of ceremonial pausing, that calls for deep introspection, humility and submission to the Divine Mercy of Allah, takes place on the sacred plain of `Arafat. For this is the same place where our ancestral parents, Adam and Hawwa (peace be upon them), reunited after their Fall from heaven. They had been beguiled by Satan to eat from the forbidden tree with a false promise of infallibility i.e., a sinless and angelic existence and immortality i.e., to live forever (*Surah al-Baqarah, 2, 19-22*).

Like the ancestral mother and father of humanity, *hujjaj* repent for their sins and pray for Allah's mercy and forgiveness on *Jabal al-Rahmah* (the Mount of Mercy), around which the sacred plain of `Arafat is located. *Hujjaj* repeat the humble plea and supplication of Adam and Hawwa (peace be upon them) which is recorded in the Glorious Qur'an as a reminder of the great significance of repentance and forgiveness in Islam:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

'O Our Sustainer! We have sinned against ourselves - and unless Thou grant us Forgiveness and bestow Thy Mercy upon us, we shall most certainly be lost!' (*Surah al-A'raf, 7:23*).

Through Allah's Grace and Mercy, our ancestral parents Adam and Hawwa, were released from Satan's clutches and pardoned and forgiven by Allah, the Lord of Mercy and Forgiveness. This too is what *hujjaj* aspire to when they supplicate on the plain of `Arafat.

The pilgrim's supplications at the sacred plain of `Arafat follows the path towards repentance, which is the sincere seeking of forgiveness and committing to a path of personal restitution. Accessing Allah's ever-available forgiveness and mercy is the key. Allah's grace and mercy is always available to

us if we are willing to recognize our transgressions, adapt our behaviour, and embark on a corrective path of reconciliation and living in submission to Allah's guidance.

## Forgiveness as a Divine Attribute

Seeking forgiveness defines our relationship with our Lord and Sustainer, (*Rabb*), and this, in turn, should define our relationship with one another. Forgiveness is a fundamental dimension of the Islamic faith and defines the relationship of unconditional love, grace and forgiveness, between Allah and humanity.

This relationship is exemplified in the Divine attributes of Allah. In the Qur'an, the Divine attribute of Allah, *Al-Ghafur* (the Oft-Forgiving) is most often paired with the Divine attribute, *Al-Rahim* (the Most Merciful). *Al-Rahim* is the Divine attribute that actively bestows unconditional love and when it is paired with *Al-Ghafur*, this intimates to us that forgiveness is intrinsically related to the experience of unconditional love.

In order to underscore this central teaching of Islam, Allah, commands the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Qur'an to make this known to all of humanity by proclaiming:

نَبِيُّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

(O Prophet) Inform my servants that I am the All-Forgiving (*Al-Ghafur*), the Most Merciful (*Al-Rahim*) (*Surah al-Hijr*, 15:49).

This is the Allah that we must come to know. What this means is that if we know Allah as the Merciful and the Forgiver of all sins, then we must aspire to reflect the same Divine qualities in our relationships with our families, friends, and strangers. The Divine attributes of Allah is what we, as frail human beings can only aspire to. We must be merciful with ourselves and with others, and we must seek forgiveness and be more forgiving of the wrongs of others.

## Overcoming our Human Frailties

To do this however is not easy because we are human, we are prone to forgetfulness and to falling into the traps of our egos. We can find ourselves stuck in arrogance, pride, grudges, hurt, resentments, cruel judgments, anger, and the desire to wound others when we ourselves are wounded. These human frailties often make us incapable of seeking forgiveness from those we have wronged or from forgiving those who have wronged us. And while we allow ourselves to hold onto our pride, our arrogance, our hurt, we still expect Allah to be the most Merciful, the most Forgiving.

This expectation is underscored in a prophetic tradition (*Hadith Qudsi*), in which the Prophet (pbuh) informs us that Allah, the Most High proclaims:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
 قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى  
 يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ  
 عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَلَا أَبَالِي  
 يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ  
 ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ وَلَا أَبَالِي  
 يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطِيئًا  
 ثُمَّ لَقَيْتَنِي لَا تُشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا لَأَتَيْتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

O human being! I will forgive without bounds whatever you ask of Me. Even if your sins reach up to the skies and you seek My forgiveness, I will forgive you. Even if you come to Me with enough wrongs to fill this earth, but you have kept your faith in Me, I will meet you with enough forgiveness to fill this earth.

[Reported by the companion Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) and recorded in the *hadith* collection of Jami` al-Tirmidhi]

This is how great Allah's magnanimity and mercy is towards us frail human beings. How often do we say or think 'I will never forgive', and yet Allah, the All Powerful, tells us that Allah will always forgive if we repent. I call upon myself first and you, to reflect on times when we stand in judgement and refuse to forgive even when our transgressor asks for forgiveness, and yet we repeatedly seek Allah's forgiveness and Compassion that is limitless.

How then can we strive to make forgiveness and mercy an intrinsic part of our being and interactions with Allah's creation?

## The Prophetic Example

Let us briefly look at how the Prophet (peace be upon him), the one who was sent only as a Source of Compassion and Mercy to All the Worlds (*rahmatul lil `alamin*), understood and accepted the human condition of frailty, and how he tamed his own ego by manifesting forgiveness, mercy and unconditional love.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gave us, by his personal example, the guidance we need to be able to bring the qualities of forgiveness and mercy into manifestation. The companion Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would seek Allah's forgiveness and repent more than 70 times each day:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَاللَّهِ  
إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

(The above hadith can be found in the collection of Imam Bukhari)

Imagine, the one whom we know as the noblest of characters sought forgiveness from Allah more than 70 times a day. Such was the humility of our Prophet (pbuh). Do we have the humility and consciousness to recognise when our hearts are covered by darkness, to turn to our Lord for forgiveness? How many times a day do we have to do so to reach the station of our Prophet (pbuh)? If we develop this consciousness, we may find ourselves faltering and failing often as we come face to face with our habitual thoughts and emotions. However, if our intention is to seek the pleasure of Allah, then we just have to keep seeking forgiveness from Allah, over and over again without shame, without guilt, without despair.

During the time of the slander against the Prophet's wife Lady `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), her father, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), learned that one of his own relatives, Mistah ibn Uthathah, was engaging in vicious and hurtful gossip about her. This relative was poor and Abu Bakr supported him, so he vowed to cut off his support in retaliation. When the Prophet (pbuh) learned about this decision, he advised his friend to reconsider, but Abu Bakr was too hurt, and would not change his mind. It was in this context and in response to Abubakr's unforgiving retaliation that verse 22 of *Surah al-Nur*, chapter 24 was revealed:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا  
تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Let not those among you of virtue and wealth vow not to give (aid) to their relatives, the needy and the emigrants in the cause of Allah. Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for Allah to forgive you? And Allah is All-Forgiving and Most Merciful. (Q24:22)

Upon hearing this verse, Abubakr came to the Prophet (pbuh) with tears in his eyes and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I would love Allah to forgive me.’ And he reinstated his support for his indigent relative (see *Tafsir ibn Kathir*).

The above examples teaches us that seeking forgiveness and the ability to forgive is the door that leads to the path of maturity and completion of our humanness. It will help us develop noble characteristics such as courage, gentleness, forbearance, honesty, sincerity, and humility in our relationships with others. When we seek forgiveness from others and from Allah, we bring to the Divine our heavy burdens and we are relieved of them by the Divine’s limitless capacity for forgiveness and mercy. And when we forgive others and show mercy to others, we display these Divine attributes that draw us closer to Allah.

## Spiritual Rebirth of the *Hujjaj*

I started this *Id khutbah* with a reminder of how the multitude of *hujjaj* spent the day in supplication and repentance, earnestly seeking Allah’s forgiveness on ‘Arafat yesterday, and I want to conclude my khutbah by returning to the *hujjaj*.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us the following,

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ

The one who repents and seeks forgiveness is like someone who has no sins

[Reported by the companion `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) and recorded in the hadith collection Sunan ibn Majah]

In this regard it is instructive and noteworthy that after spending the entire day at `Arafat earnestly seeking Allah’s forgiveness through prayer and supplication just before sunset, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) requested that Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) summon the *hujjaj* to gather together in attention. Bilal stood up and asked the people to be quiet and listen to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). When they were quiet, the Prophet (pbuh) informed them of the following:

“O People! A little while ago Gabriel (peace be upon him) came to me, gave me salutations from Allah, and informed me that Allah has forgiven all those who spent the Day at `Arafah...” Upon hearing this, Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) stood up and asked: “O Allah’s Messenger, is this for us only?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied: “This is for you, and for all those who will come after you, until the Day of Judgment...”

Umar exclaimed: “How generous and blissful are Allah’s bounties!”

[The above hadith was reported by Ibn Al-Mubarak, from Sufyan Al-Thawri, he from Az-Zubair bin Ali, and he from Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with all of them) and is recorded in the collection of Imam Muslim]

It is no small wonder then that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) proclaimed in a hadith found in both the collections of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim the following:

من حج هذا البيت فلم يرفث ولم يفسق رجع كما ولدته أمه

Whoever performs the hajj to this House, and does so without foul speech and bad actions, will return home like the day his mother gave birth to him/her (i.e., pure and free of sins)

[Reported by the companion Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) and recorded in the hadith of collections of Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Sunan al-Nasa’i, Sunan ibn Majah and Jami` al-Tirmidhi]

On this celebratory day of *Īd al-’Aḏḩā*, I encourage you to continue to nurture and embrace magnanimity, mercy and forgiveness. This great day of *Īd al-Adha* is an ideal time to reach out in love, mercy and forgiveness especially to our family and friends from whom we are estranged. Finally, let us remember all the pilgrims (*hujjaj*) who were on the sacred plain of `Arafat yesterday earnestly seeking Allah’s mercy and forgiveness. At this hallowed time of *Īd al-Adha* please join me in making a special supplication for our *hujjaj*:

## Supplication:

*Ya Mujib ad-Da`wat:* O Allah, the Hearer of all Supplications:

We beseech you to grant all pilgrims who were blessed with being present at `Arafat yesterday an accepted Hajj Mabruur.

*Ya Ghafur al-Rahim:* O Allah, the one who is Ever-Forgiving and Most Merciful:

Forgive the hujjaj all of their sins and trespasses

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُمْ حَجًّا مَبْرُورًا،  
وَسَعِيَهُمْ مَشْكُورًا،  
وَذُنُوبَهُمْ مَغْفُورًا،  
وَعَمَلَهُمْ صَالِحًا مَقْبُولًا،  
وَتِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ،  
يَا نُورَ النُّورِ،  
يَا عَالِمَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ،  
أَخْرِجْهُمْ يَا اللَّهُ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ.  
بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

May you all enjoy festive 'Id al-Adha Mubarak and May you live well and in the Grace and Mercy of the Lord of Forgiveness.

Allahu Akbar! Allah is greater than...!

On behalf of the CMRM Board of Governors I wish you all:

عِيدٌ سَعِيدٌ وَمُبَارَكٌ

وَكُلُّ عَامٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِخَيْرٍ،  
مَعَ السَّلَامَةِ وَالصِّحَّةِ.

*May You Enjoy a Happy and Blessed `Id*

*Kullu 'Am Wa Antum Bikhayr Ma'as-Salamah Was-Sihhah*

***May your entire year be filled with Goodness, Peace and Health***

***Baie Slamats vir Labarang***