

HAJJ STORIES

HAJJ'S HEART OF GOLD

JANUARY 2025

'Why did he not simply tell me he was unable to assist?' I wondered. I was having a conversation with a friend on Mina about a very prominent businessman. It was the first day of Hajj and we were extremely grateful to have been blessed to be a tiny part of the small fraction of living Muslims to be in the valley. Most Muslims spread throughout this world will never see the Kaba'a in Makkah, stand on the plains of Arafat, or be able to visit the Kabr of our beloved Prophet (SAW) in Madina during their temporary abode on this planet. Most cannot afford the fifth pillar of Islam even if they strive all their lives to financially save for it. For others, reasons such as war, displacement or medical impairments makes the journey impossible. Allah, in infinite mercy, withdraws the call of Hajj from them so that they do not depart this world burdened with an unfulfilled obligation.

“They must go on Hajj,” the businessman said.

The obligation may then not be there, but the desire and prayers to perform the sacred journey will always constantly keep the few embers of the fire of hope stoked. The businessman was fully aware of what Hajj means in the broader sense. Before he embarked on his Fard Hajj, he experienced the community involvement of those who came to greet, advise and wish him with a blessed and accepted Hajj. Capetonians truly go as representatives and ambassadors of the whole community. Duaas are made for those at home by the pilgrims and whatever was requested by the non-travellers is tried to be fulfilled. Conversely children, business and other interests of the pilgrims become the willing responsibility of immediate family and society at large. 'Do not worry about anything or anyone, just keep all of us in your Duaas,' is frequently the last departing and reassuring words expressed to the pilgrim.

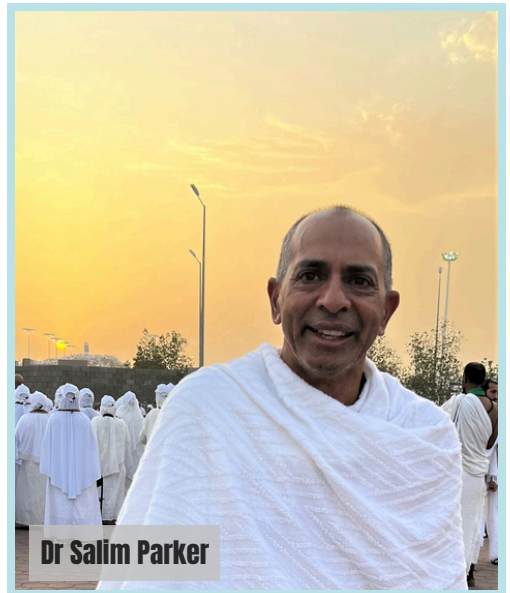
'The businessman had a really tough time in the last year,' my friend told me as we sat on Mina. 'Firstly, one of his major and very well-established outlets was summarily changed by the landlord leading to a dramatic drop in turnover. Secondly trusted colleagues swindled him out of a substantial amount of money,' he added. I was dumbstruck. I met the businessman on a number of occasions, and he never ever alluded to any financial constraints. In fact, he always spoke of being content and blessed by our Creator. I was aware that he put in a substantial contribution towards a needy school before I departed for Hajj. I just happened to be in the same room as the person dealing with his generous contribution as he never boasted of any of his charitable activities. In fact, he often made every attempt to not be known as a benefactor.

I thought of a conversation I had with him a few days before the cutoff date for final Hajj payments were due for this particular year. In retrospect he must have been in deep financial trouble already. I tried getting hold of him for a days already but he was out of town and returned my call when back in town. I informed him of a couple who wanted to postpone their Hajj till a future year as they had sudden unforeseen business and financial calamities. They had already paid more than half of the funds due and the agent was aware of their predicament and was willing to refund them. I was made aware of their plight and asked the agent to give me a few days to see what I could manage. The businessman was the first I called, and when I could not get hold of him initially, I called a few others. All approached indicated to me that they'll revert within a few days.

'They must go on Hajj,' the businessman said when he returned my call. There was no hint of any hesitation. 'What amount are we looking at?' he asked. I elaborated on the finances and also indicated that I had approached other potential donors due to the substantial amount involved. 'Tell the agent to forward the banking details please, and also by when he needs the money,' he said. 'They must go on Hajj, they must not miss this opportunity,' he again repeated. For some reason the agent was extremely generous and gave an extra two weeks for the sum to be procured, and I thought I'll wait till all those I have approached had responded. On the same day one of them reverted, pledging about a third of the sum involved. About two days later another came with a similar contribution. Two others could not assist. I called him to indicate that only about a third was needed.



Every person has a unique journey to Arafat



Dr Salim Parker

'It is all sorted,' he said when I contacted him about the developments. In fact proof of payment of the balance was forwarded to me as we were still chatting. I thanked him and indicated that I knew the recipients of his generosity well and assured him that he'll be in their Duaas. 'There is no way that I would have let them postpone or cancel this journey,' he said. 'Please contact me if any other issues arise,' he told me. I had no indication that he was in financial distress and his sole concern, despite all his other responsibilities, was to ensure that the pilgrims involved would be performing Hajj without economic worries. He still asked whether I had enough medication to take with me and whether he could contribute any funds. I indicated that we were fully funded.

The next day, on Arafat he was in my Duaas. I am sure he was remembered by many others who were the beneficiaries of his generosity. I remembered someone once saying that he still had more than enough to give to the needy even though he lost three quarters of his fortune due to unscrupulous business partners. 'As long as I have enough to give, I'll continue giving,' that person told me. This businessman had the same vision and we made Duaa that his fortunes will turn around completely. All the Hujjaaj left the plains of Arafat just before sunset and made our way to Musdalifah. The next day I was in Makkah in the Haram completing the compulsory Tawaaf of Hajj. Due to the crowds, the security guards herded us off briefly for a few minutes. I sent him a message whilst we waited to restart our Tawaaf.

'Salaam. I am busy with a Tawaaf and am amazed at what your heart of gold is doing. I only recently heard of your challenges. You are in my Duaas as I am making Tawaaf. Today is the first day of the start of everything only getting better,' I wrote. 'Wasalaam my beloved brother. Alghamdulillah. We are always going to be tested. We are completely satisfied Alghamdulillah. Shukran so much for the heartwarming greetings and Duaas from the MOST MUBARAK PLACE ALGHAMDULILLAH,' was his response. We were then allowed back on the Mataaf to continue our Tawaaf. I had on previous occasions circumambulated right next to Kaba'a, virtually touching it most of the time. This time around I was on the further reaches of the Mataaf. I was thankful just to be there. AllahuAkbar!