

**English translation of al-ḥājj ‘Umar praise poem: Hosting Ramadan**

In the name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; God’s blessings be upon he after whom there comes no other prophet, his family and companions, and may He grant them eternal salvation.

1. Does Layla have any goal?  
Or does Hind have what to say?
2. What about the pledges of Ḥizām?  
Or vows from Fiṭām?
3. They are all being coquettish  
In estrangement and reproaching.
4. They do not redeem their pledges,  
That is not good for amore.
5. You will discern no faithfulness in them  
Even if you were quiescent thousand years.
6. Renounce then their love,  
And cast them off in the dust.
7. Compose the words in verses  
To be delightful in meter;
8. In praise of virtuous people,  
The generous people of Tetemu,
9. Noble-hearted, magnanimous,  
Prominent among adjudicators,
10. Pious people and believers,  
Judicious in arbitration,
11. Tolerant people and devout,  
Charitable take my word.
12. They crowded around me on Thursday,  
In vestments, in congregation;
13. And young pupils  
Chanting in vibrant tones
14. And praising the Prophet,  
Giving thanks to the Lord of mankind.
15. They were gathered, a large crowd  
Of young ladies and young men,
16. O, they were wonderful the day of consummation!  
O, they have been wonderful throughout my stay!
17. We saw nothing objectionable in their conduct;  
Instead we lived [in their company] in peace;

18. And joy and cheerfulness,  
And merriment and harmony.
19. They send gifts  
To give to me, time after time continuously.
20. You can find none who is stingy.  
They were not miserly:
21. Both rich as well as poor;  
Everyone gave according to means:
22. The wealthy gave out a lot,  
And the poor just enough.
23. Gratitude is owed to them,  
And full praises.
24. May God have mercy on a leader,  
'Uthmān the belated.<sup>1</sup>
25. He was benevolent, he was judicious  
And pious and preeminent,
26. And sedate and reverent,  
And prayerful at night.

### **SECTION**

27. Bravo to Mūwa among the women.  
She is an honorable daughter.
28. She sent to me every day,  
Since I settled, food [of various kinds]:
29. Waffles and pastries,  
And bread with soup,
30. And also cooked rice,  
With fish and meat,
31. Frequently and uncountable;  
And eggs of ostrich.
32. Is there any comparison to this,  
Precedent as well as forthcoming?
33. You will not see anyone equal to Mūwa:  
Awake or asleep<sup>2</sup>.
34. Surely, all people of the era,  
She has surpassed, plainly speaking.
35. Say it aloud without fear,  
Among all people gathered:
36. She has surpassed her peers in virtue

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<sup>1</sup> *Fi al-rijām* , Arabic for “in tombstones.”

<sup>2</sup> dead or alive

- And in providing sustenance;  
37. Among women, she is like the sun  
Among the stars, take my verse for it.  
38. A woman worth a hundred of women,  
All perfect in their houses.<sup>3</sup>

### **SECTION**

39. Listen, O! you people,  
To what I say necessarily.  
40. The people of the *zongo* are generous people,  
Living in prosperity.  
41. In Afunju there are wise people,  
Confidants in association;  
42. They are scholars and men of letters,  
Fond of pouring out like clouds;  
43. They held me in high esteem in their town,  
During the month of fasting;  
44. They presented me with gifts;  
During the night, during the day;  
45. They saw me off the day of my departure,  
All together except the Imam.  
46. They filled all the road,  
With crowds upon crowds;  
47. All of them without exception  
Even the riffraff;  
48. The elderly and the young,  
Children and the sick,  
49. The wealthy and the poor,  
Strangers like twins;  
50. With Muslim women,  
Believing women in splendor,  
51. Pious women repentant women,  
Prayerful during the dark;  
52. May our Lord recompense them with blessings,  
And felicities in the final end.  
53. Greetings from me to you,  
In peace, again and again.  
54. O Lord, be merciful to Malam Abba,  
Host of guests among the crowd.  
55. Be pleased with him O Lord,

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<sup>3</sup> *Fi al-khiyām*, Arabic for “in tents.”

- And forgive him in the tomb;
56. Shelter him in ample shade,  
That scorching day in the multitude;
  57. Protect him from torments of judgment day,  
And be beneficent to him in the resurrection;
  58. And let him drink from the Prophet's trough;  
And endow him with Paradise.
  59. And Lord grant us ultimate bliss,  
All of us on the Final day;
  60. I thank God Almighty,  
Both here and in the course of life,
  61. And then blessings and salvation,  
Be bestowed upon the interceder of mankind.