41811 - Meaning of the hadeeth: “Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any obscenity …”

the question

What is the meaning of the hadeeth in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any obscenity or commit any evil will go back (free of) sin as on the day his mother bore him”?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This hadeeth was narrated by al-Bukhaari (1521) and Muslim (1350) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any obscenity [rafath] or commit any evil will go back (free of) sin as on the day his mother bore him.”

According to a version narrated by al-Tirmidhi (811): “… his previous sins will be forgiven.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

This hadeeth is like the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The Hajj (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months (i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whosoever intends to perform Hajj therein (by assuming Ihraam), then he should not have sexual relations [rafath] (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj.”

[al-Baqarah 2:197]

The word rafath (translated as “obscenity” above and as “sexual relations” in the meaning of the

verse translated above) refers to obscene speech, or to intercourse.

Al-Haafiz said:

It seems that what is referred to in the hadeeth is more general than that. This was also the view of al-Qurtubi. It is the same as what is meant in the hadeeth: “When any one of you is fasting, let him not commit any obscenity (fa la yarfuth).” End quote.

The word rafath in the hadeeth includes both immoral words and immoral intercourse.

“or commit evil/sin (wa la yafsuq)” means let him not commit any evil action or sin.

What is meant by “as on the day his mother bore him” means, with no sin.

The apparent meaning is that both major and minor sins are forgiven. This was the view of al-Haafiz.

It was also the view of al-Qurtubi and al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad. Al-Tirmidhi said: this applies specifically to sins that have to do with the rights of Allaah, not the rights of other people. This was suggested by al-Manaawi in Fayd al-Qadeer.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: What is meant by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any obscenity or commit any evil will go back (free of) sin as on the day his mother bore him”, is that if a person performs Hajj and avoids rafath, which is intercourse with women, and fusooq which is anything that goes against obedience to Allaah, and he does not fail to do anything that has been enjoined by Allaah, and he does not do anything that has been forbidden by Allaah, then he will emerge from that free of sin, just as when a person emerges from his mother’s womb, there is no sin on him. So if a man performs Hajj and fulfils these conditions, he will be free of sin.

Fataawa Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 21/20.

He also said (21/40): The apparent meaning of the hadeeth is that Hajj expiates for major sins, and

we cannot go against the apparent meaning unless there is evidence. Some of the scholars said that if the five daily prayers do not expiate for anything unless one avoids major sins, and they are more important and more beloved to Allaah than Hajj, then it is more likely to be the case that Hajj does not expiate for anything unless one avoids major sins. But we say that this is the apparent meaning of the hadeeth and Allaah is Wise in what He does, and we cannot use analogies when discussing the rewards of Allaah. End quote.