

Abu Hurayrah narrated that



the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever comes to this House and commits neither lewdness nor wicked conduct returns as pure as on the day of his birth.**⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Perform to their completion both the pilgrimage and the 'umrah purely for God's sake.﴾ (2: 196)
- ﴿The pilgrimage takes place in the months appointed for it. Whoever undertakes the pilgrimage in those months shall, while on pilgrimage, abstain from lewdness, all wicked conduct and wrangling. Whatever good you do God is well aware of it. Provide well for yourselves: the best provision of all is to be God-fearing. Fear Me, then, you who are endowed with insight.﴾ (2: 197)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

A perfect hajj wipes away all past sins. Whoever performs the hajj, committing nothing of the sins that spoil the hajj, returns home with his slate clean, like it was on the day of his birth.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1820; Muslim, 1350.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) points out one of the best ways to erase one's past sins, namely a perfect hajj, or pilgrimage to the Ka'bah. He tells us that whoever performs the hajj well, will have his sins erased. He returns home as pure as he was on the day he was born. A perfect hajj is one during which the pilgrim does not violate any of the restrictions that apply during the hajj, such as sexual intercourse and foreplay with one's spouse, or any transgression that involves committing a sin.

2

The hadith applies to both the hajj and the 'umrah, or mini-pilgrimage, as Muslim's version of the hadith speaks of 'whoever comes to this House'. Moreover, the Prophet says: 'One 'umrah to another wipes away [the sins] committed in between them. And a perfect hajj earns no lesser reward than [admittance into] Heaven'.⁽¹⁾

3

The forgiveness mentioned in these hadiths applies to what is due to God, Mighty and Exalted, as He wipes such sins away. As for the rights of human beings, these cannot be erased except through satisfying one's opponents or returning whatever one owes to their rightful owners.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1773; Muslim, 1349.

Implementation



The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the simile of being free from sin 'as on the day of one's birth' to emphasize the meaning of forgiveness and the wiping away of sins. Using such an expressive style to explain one's meaning, is recommended



The Prophet points out a splendid way of ensuring forgiveness of past sins, namely, a perfect pilgrimage. Needless to say, every one of us needs a way to erase our sins and faults.



The hadith emphasizes the importance of good manners, which can be a cause of the acceptance or rejection of one's good deeds.



Beware of being unjust to other people or taking their rights unfairly. Sins related to people's rights cannot be erased except through returning their rights and obtaining their pardon. As for offences related to God's rights, all these, apart from associating partners with Him, are subject to God's will. He may forgive them or punish the one who commits them.



One of the objectives of the hajj is to remind people of the life to come. A pilgrim abandons his fine attire and puts on instead garments that look like the wrappings of a deceased body. The pilgrim also keeps away from the pleasures of life. He attends at Arafat as one of millions of pilgrims, in a gathering similar to that of the Day of Judgement. All are equal, with no distinction between young and old, king and subject. When a pilgrim appreciates all this, he returns home caring little for the present life, eager to ensure a good prospect in the life to come.

