1902 - Virtues of the Black Stone

the question

What's the importance of the Black Stone in Ka`bah? What does it represent?

Summary of answer

The virtues of the Black Stone include: 1- It was sent down by Allah to this earth from Paradise. 2- It was whiter than milk, but the sins of the sons of Adam made it black. 3- It will come forth on the Day of Resurrection and will testify in favour of those who touched it in truth. 4- The Prophet kissed it, and his Ummah followed his lead in doing so. 5- Touching it is a means of expiating sins.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There are a number of Hadiths etc. about the Black Stone which we will quote for our brother so that he may learn from them.

- The Black Stone was sent down by Allah to this earth from Paradise .

It was narrated that Ibn `Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Black Stone came down from Paradise.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 877; An-Nasa’i, 2935. The Hadith was classed as authentic by At-Tirmidhi)

- The Stone was whiter than milk, but the sins of the sons of Adam made it black.

Ibn `Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When the Black Stone came down from Paradise, it was whiter than milk, but the sins of the sons of Adam made it black.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 877; Ahmad, 2792. Classed as authentic by Ibn Khuzaymah, 4/219. Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar classed it as sound in Fat-h Al-Bari, 3/462)

1. Al-Mubarakfuri said in Al-Mirqah: “This means, the sins of the sons of Adam who touched the stone, caused it to turn black. The Hadith should be taken at face value, because there is no reason not to, either narrated in a report or by virtue of common sense.” (Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi, 3/525)
2. Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar said: “Some heretics tried to criticise this Hadith by saying: How come the sins of the polytheists turned it black and the worship of the people of Tawhid did not make it white?”

I answer by quoting what Ibn Qutaybah said: “If Allah had willed, that would have happened. But Allah has caused it to be the case that black usually changes other colours and it is not itself changed, which is the opposite to what happens with white.”

1. Al-Muhibb At-Tabari said: “The fact that it is black is a lesson for those who have insight. If sins can have this effect on an inanimate rock, then the effect they have on the heart is greater.” (See Fat-h Al-Bari, 3/463)

- The Black Stone will come forth on the Day of Resurrection and will testify in favour of those who touched it in truth.

Ibn `Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said concerning the Stone: “By Allah, Allah will bring it forth on the Day of Resurrection, and it will have two eyes with which it will see and a tongue with which it will speak, and it will testify in favour of those who touched it in sincerity.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 961 and Ibn Majah, 2944)

This Hadith was classed as sound by At-Tirmidhi, and as sound by Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar in Fat-h Al-Bari, 3/462

- Touching, kissing or pointing to the Black Stone – this is the first thing to be done when starting Tawaf, whether it is for Hajj or `Umrah, or voluntary Tawaf.

Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) that when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Makkah, he came to the Black Stone and touched it, then

he walked to the right of it and ran three times and walked four times [around the Ka`bah]. (Narrated by Muslim, 1218)

- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kissed the Black Stone , and his ummah followed his lead in doing so.

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Black Stone and kissed it, then he said: "I know that you are only a stone which can neither bring benefit nor cause harm. Were it not that I had seen the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kiss you , I would not have kissed you." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1520 and Muslim, 1720)

- If a person is unable to kiss the Stone, he should touch it with his hand or something else, then he can kiss the thing with which he touched it.

a. It was narrated that Nafi` said: I saw Ibn `Umar touch the Stone with his hand then he kissed his hand. I said, I have never ceased to do this since I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) do it. (Narrated by Muslim, 1268)
b. It was narrated that Abu Tufayl (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performing Tawaf around the House, touching the corner [where the Stone is] with a crooked staff which he had with him, then kissing the staff. (Narrated by Muslim, 1275).

- If a person is unable to do the above, then he can point to it with his hand and say "Allahu akbar".

Ibn `Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed Tawaf on his camel, and every time he came to the corner [where the Stone is] he would point to it and say "Allahu akbar." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 4987)

- Touching the Stone is one of the things by means of which Allah expiates for sins.

Ibn `Umar said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "Touching them both [the Black Stone and Al-Rukn Al-Yamani] is an expiation for sins." (Narrated

by At-Tirmidhi, 959. This Hadith was classed as sound by At-Tirmidhi and as authentic by Al-Hakim (1/664). Adh-Dhahabi agreed with him).

It is not permissible for a Muslim to annoy other Muslims at the Stone by hitting or fighting. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told us that the Stone will testify in favour of those who touched it in sincerity, which is not the case when a person touches it by disturbing the slaves of Allah.

And Allah knows best.