34293 - Mistakes made when going to ‘Arafah and in ‘Arafah itself

the question

What are the mistakes that some of the pilgrims make on the day of ‘Arafah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It was narrated that on the day of ‘Arafah the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stayed in Namirah (which is a place near ‘Arafah) until the sun had passed its zenith (which is the beginning of the time for Zuhr), then he rode, then he stopped at the bottom of Wadi ‘Arnah (which is a wadi or valley between Namirah and ‘Arafaat), where he prayed Zuhr and ‘Asr, shortening them to two rak’ahs and joining them together at the time of Zuhr, with one adhaan and two iqaamahs. Then he rode on until he came to the place of standing, and stood there. He said, “I am standing here but all of ‘Arafah is the place of standing.” Then he remained standing, facing the qiblah, raising his hands, remembering Allaah and calling upon Him, until the sun had set completely, then he went on to Muzdalifah.

Some of the mistakes that some pilgrims make in ‘Arafah are as follows:

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Some pilgrims pass you and you do not hear them reciting the Talbiyah. They do not recite the Talbiyah out loud on their way from Mina to ‘Arafah. It was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) continued to recite the Talbiyah until he had stoned Jamarat al-‘Aqabah on the day of Eid.

-2-

One of the most serious mistakes that some pilgrims make is to stop outside ‘Arafah, and they stay there until the sun goes down, then they leave for Muzdalifah. Those who stand in these places have not performed Hajj, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Hajj is ‘Arafah.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (889) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Irwa’ al-Ghaleel, 1064). Whoever does not stand in ‘Arafah in a place that is part of it, and at the time specified for the standing, his Hajj is not valid, because of the hadeeth referred to. This is a serious matter.

There are markers that clearly indicate the boundaries of ‘Arafah, and they are not hidden except for one who is careless and negligent. Every pilgrim must look for the boundaries so that he will be sure that he is standing in ‘Arafah and not outside it.

I wish that those who organize the Hajj would announce to the people via a means that would reach all of them, in numerous languages, and tell the mutawwifeen (Hajj guides) to warn the pilgrims about that, so that the people would be aware of this issue and perform their Hajj in the proper manner.

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Some people busy themselves with du’aa’ at the end of the day, so you see them facing towards the mountain by which the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood, even though the qiblah may be behind them or to their right or their left. This is also ignorance and a mistake. What is prescribed for du’aa’ on the day of ‘Arafah is for the person to face the qiblah, whether the mountain is in front of him or behind him, or to his right or his left. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) only faced this mountain because the place where he stood was behind the mountain. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) faced towards the qiblah, and because the mountain was between him and the qiblah, he had not choice but to face it too.

-4-

Some people think that they have to go to the place where the Messenger of Allaah (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood, beside the mountain, and stand there. So you see them putting themselves through a great deal of trouble to reach that place. They may be walking and may be unfamiliar with the routes and getting hungry and thirsty if they cannot find food and water, and getting lost, and suffering a great deal of harm because of this mistaken notion. It was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “I am standing here but all of ‘Arafah is the place of standing.”

It is as if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was pointing out that no one should go to the trouble of standing in the place where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood, rather people should do what is easy for them, because all of ‘Arafah is the place of standing.

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Some people think that the trees in ‘Arafaah are like the trees in Mina and Muzdalifah, i.e., it is not permissible to cut a leaf or branch from them, and so on, because they think that cutting the trees has to do with ihraam, like hunting. This is a mistaken notion, because cutting trees has nothing to do with ihraam, rather it has to do with the place. Whatever trees are within the boundaries of the Haram are sacrosanct, and should not be cut and no leaves or branches may be cut from them. Whatever is outside the boundaries of the Haram may be cut, even if a person is in ihraam. Based on this there is nothing wrong with cutting the trees in ‘Arafaah… (With regard to trees that have been planted by people, they are not covered by the prohibition on cutting the trees in the Haram, but it may be haraam to cut them for another reason, namely transgressing the rights of the people who planted them, and transgressing the rights of the pilgrims too, if these trees were planted to reduce the heat and to shade people from the sun.

Based on this, it is not permissible to cut the trees that are planted in ‘Arafah, not because of the Haram, but because cutting them is a transgression of the rights of all the Muslims).

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Some pilgrims think that the mountain by which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be

upon him) stood is holy and special, so they go to it and climb up it, and seek blessings from its stones and soil. They hang pieces of cloth from its trees, and do other things that are well known. These are innovations (bid'ah). It is not prescribed to climb the mountain or to pray there, or to hang pieces of cloth on its trees, because none of that was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Indeed, such things smack of idolatry, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed by a tree of the mushrikeen on which they used to hang their weapons, and those who were with him said, "O Messenger of Allaah, make for us a Dhaat Anwaat [the name of the tree] like their Dhaat Anwaat." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Allaahu akbar! These are traditions and you are following the traditions of those who came before you. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you have spoken as the Children of Israel spoke to Moosa: 'Make us a god as they have gods.'" Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2180; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Sunnah li Ibn Abi 'Aasim.

This mountain is not holy, rather it is like any other hills in 'Arafah, and the valley in it. But the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood there, so it is prescribed to stand where the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood, if possible, but it is not obligatory, so no one has to make things difficult for himself by going there, for the reasons explained above.

-7-

Some people think that it is essential to pray Zuhr and 'Asr with the imam in the mosque, hence you see them going to that place from far away so that they can be with the imam in the mosque. This causes them a great deal of difficulty and many of them lose their way, which makes Hajj too hard for them, and they crowd one another and upset one another. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said concerning the standing, "I am standing here, but all of 'Arafah is the place of standing." And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also said: "The earth has been made a mosque (place of prayer) and a means of purification for me." So if a person prays in his tent in a calm and dignified manner, without being disturbed or disturbing others, and without trouble that makes Hajj too hard, that is better.

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Some of them leave ‘Arafah before the sun sets, and go to Muzdalifah. This is a serious mistake, and is acting like the mushrikeen who used to leave ‘Arafah before sunset. It is also going against the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who did not leave ‘Arafah until after the sun had set and the yellow afterglow had diminished somewhat, as it says in the hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him).

Based on this, pilgrims have to stay in ‘Arafah, within its boundaries, until the sun sets, because this standing lasts until the sun sets; just as it is not permissible for a person who is fasting to break his fast before sunset, so it is not permissible for the one who is standing in ‘Arafah to leave before the sun sets.

-9-

Wasting time in matters that are of no benefit. So you see people from the beginning of the day until the end engaged in conversations that may be innocent and free of gossip, or it may not be such, because they are slandering people’s honour and eating their flesh. If it is the latter then they are combining two haraam actions:

1-Eating people’s flesh and backbiting about them. This is a violation of the conditions of ihraam, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So whosoever intends to perform Hajj therein (by assuming Ihraam), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj”

[al-Baqarah 2:197]

2-Wasting time

Even if the talk is innocent and does not include anything haraam, it is still a waste of time, but there is nothing wrong with a person passing the time in innocent conversation before the sun reaches its zenith. But after the sun has passed its zenith and the people have prayed Zuhr and

‘Asr, it is better to occupy oneself with du’aa’, dhikr and reading Qur’aan, and speaking beneficial words to one’s brothers for a break from reading and dhikr. So he can say some useful words to them about some Islamic knowledge etc., that will make them feel happy, and give them hope of the mercy of Allaah. But he should make the most of the opportunity at the end of the day and occupy himself with du’aa’, beseeching Allaah and seeking His bounty and mercy, and persist in making du’aa’, and make of lot of du’aa’ in the words narrated in the Qur’aan and saheeh Sunnah, for these are the best of du’aa’s, and du’aa’s offered at this time are more likely to be answered.