34420 - Mistakes Made When Stoning the Jamarat

the question

What are the mistakes that some pilgrims make when stoning the Jamarat?

Summary of answer

Common mistakes by people when stoning the Jamarat:
1. Believing that collecting pebbles from other than Muzdalifah renders stoning invalid.
2. Washing the pebbles before using them, either for fear that someone may have urinated on them, or because believing that it is better to clean them.
3. Some people believe that they are actually stoning the devil himself.
4. Not making sure that the pebbles land in the pit around the Jamarat.
5. Believing that the pebbles must hit the pillar in the pit.
6. Some people delegate someone to stone on their behalf though they are able to do it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Why was stoning the Jamarat prescribed?

It was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he stoned Jamarat Al-`Aqabah which is Al-Jamarah Al-Quswa which is closer to Makkah, with seven pebbles, during the morning of the Day of Sacrifice, saying “Allahu akbar” with every pebble which was a little bigger than a chickpea.

Ibn Majah (3029) narrated that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to me on the morning of Al-`Aqabah when he was standing atop his camel: “Come and pick up for me.” So I picked up pebbles for him which

were a little bigger than a chickpea. He put them in his hand and said, “With pebbles like this stone (the Jamarat)… and beware of going to extremes, for those who came before you were destroyed because of going to extremes in religion.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Ibn Majah, 2455)

Ahmad and Abu Dawud narrated from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Tawaf around the House, [Sa`i] between As-Safa and Al-Marwah and stoning the Jamarat have been prescribed to establish the remembrance of Allah.” This is the reason why the stoning of the Jamarat has been prescribed .

Mistakes made when stoning the Jamarat

There are many mistakes committed by some pilgrims when stoning the Jamarat .

- Some people think that the stoning of the Jamarat is not valid unless it is done with pebbles from Muzdalifah . Hence you will find them going to a lot of trouble to gather the pebbles from Muzdalifah before they go to Mina. This is a mistaken idea, because the pebbles may be taken from anywhere, from Muzdalifah, from Mina, or from any place. The point is that they should be pebbles.

There is no report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) picked up the pebbles from Muzdalifah, so that we could say that this is Sunnah. It is not Sunnah, and it is not obligatory to pick up the pebbles from Muzdalifah, because the Sunnah is either the words or actions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), or what he approved of – none of which apply in the case of picking up pebbles from Muzdalifah.

- Some people, when they pick up the pebbles, wash them, either for fear that someone may have urinated on them, or to clean them, because they think that if they are clean, this is better. Whatever the case, washing the pebbles is an innovation (Bid’ah), because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do that, and worshipping Allah by doing something that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do is a kind of bid’ah. If a person does that without the intention of it being an act of worship

then it is foolishness and is a waste of time.

- Some people think that these Jamarat are devils, and that they are actually stoning devils, so you may see them becoming very emotional and very angry, as if the Shaytan himself is in front of him, and this leads to the following grave errors:

1. This is a mistaken notion. We stone these Jamarat as an act of remembering Allah, following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as an act of worship. If a person does an act of worship and does not know its benefits, but he does it only as an act of worship for Allah, this will be more indicative of his humility and submission to Allah.
2. A person may become very angry and emotional, so you see him disturbing people greatly, as if the people in front of him are vermin and he doesn't care about them or the weak among them, he just goes forward like a crazy camel.
3. A person may not remember that he is worshipping Allah by stoning these Jamarat. Hence he neglects to say the dhikr prescribed in sharee'ah and says words that are not prescribed in shari`ah, such as saying, "O Allah, we are angry with the Shaytan and are pleased with Al-Rahman (the Most Merciful)," even though this is not prescribed when stoning the Jamarat ; rather what is prescribed is to say "Allahu Akbar," as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to do.
4. Based on this false belief you will see some people picking up large rocks and throwing them, because they think that the bigger the rock, the greater the effect and revenge on the Shaytan. You also see them throwing shoes, pieces of wood and the like, which are not prescribed for throwing.

So if we say that this belief is false, what do we then believe about stoning the Jamarat? We believe that we stone the Jamarat as an act of veneration and worship of Allah, and following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

- Some people are careless and do not care whether the pebbles land in the pit around the Jamarat or not .

If the pebbles do not land in the pit around the Jamarat, then the stoning is not valid. It is sufficient

for the person to think it most likely that the pebbles have landed in the pit around the Jamarat, and it is not essential to be certain, because certainty in this case may not be possible; if one cannot be certain that he should act on what he thinks is most likely. Islam allows a person to proceed on the basis of what he thinks is most likely, if he is uncertain as to how many rak'ahs he has prayed, three or four, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Let him decide what is most likely the case, then complete it on that basis." (Narrated by Abu Dawud, 1020)

This proves that in matters of worship it is sufficient to base one's actions on what he thinks is most likely the case. This is because Allah wants to make things easy because it may not be possible to be certain.

If the pebbles land in the pit around the Jamarat, then the duty has been discharged, whether they stay in the pit or roll out of it.

- Some people think that the pebbles must hit the pillar in the pit. This is a mistaken notion, because it is not essential for the stoning to be valid that the pebbles should hit this pillar. This pillar is only there as a marker for the pit in which the pebbles land. If the pebbles land in the pit that is sufficient, whether they hit the pillars or not.
- One of the most serious mistakes that are made is when some people take the matter of stoning the Jamarat lightly, and delegate someone else to do it on their behalf even though they are able to do it. This is a serious mistake, because stoning the Jamarat is one of the rituals of Hajj. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad), the Hajj and `Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allah." [Al-Baqarah 2:196]

This means completing Hajj with all its rituals in full. So each person must do them himself, and not delegate someone else to do it on his behalf.

Some people say, "The place is too crowded and it is too difficult for me." We say to them, "If the

crowding is too bad when the people first come to Mina from Muzdalifah it will not be so bad at the end of the day, or at night. If you do not manage to stone the Jamarat during the day, then you can do it at night, because night is also the time for stoning, although the day is preferable. But it is better for a person to come and do the stoning at night in a calm, dignified and humble manner than to come during the day fearing that he may die because of the overcrowding, and he may throw his pebbles and they may not land in the pit. The point is if someone uses the overcrowding as an excuse, we say to him: Allah has given plenty of room for manoeuvre, so you can stone the Jamarat at night.

Similarly if a woman is afraid of something if she stones the Jamarat with the people, she can delay it until the night. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not allow the weak ones among his family – such as Sawdah bint Zam'ah (may Allah be pleased with her) and those like her – to forego stoning the Jamarat and to delegate someone else to do it on their behalf; rather he gave them permission to leave Muzdalifah at the end of the night, to stone the Jamarat before the place became crowded. This is the greatest evidence that a woman should not delegate this task just because she is a woman.

Yes, if a person is disabled and unable to stone the Jamarat by himself, either during the day or at night, then in this case it is permissible for him to delegate it to someone else , because he is incapable of doing it. It was narrated from the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) that they used to stone the Jamarat on behalf of their children, because the children were unable to do it.

Whatever the case, being careless with regard to this matter – i.e., delegating the stoning of the Jamarat, except for those who have excuses which mean that they are unable to do it – is a serious mistake, because it is carelessness with regard to an act of worship, and negligence with regard to a duty.

And Allah knows best.