



Jamarat Stoning Ritual Time Shortened

What is the objective behind this decision and will it help the Pilgrims or cause further chaos?

The Ministry of Haj and Umrah in Saudi Arabia has announced a 12-hour ban on grouping of regular pilgrims from their tents in Mina to the Jamarat area to throw pebbles at the pillars symbolizing Satan during the three days from Dhul Hijjah 10-12 (Sept. 11-13).

The ministry said the procedure was taken to ensure the safety of the pilgrims and prevent overcrowding.

According to the ministry, during the first day of the ritual, there will be no grouping of pilgrims to the Jamarat from 6 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. while on the second day the ban will be from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on the third and final day it will be from 10.30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

After 5 years of campaign to encourage people to perform the 'stoning' ritual even after the *Shariah* preferred timing of performing it before the sunset on all the 4 days of the stoning ritual, the Saudi government has now announced that stoning at *jamarat* will be banned for certain hours during the 4 days.

The initial campaign was aimed at easing congestion and the scholars cited various evidences from Sunnah to prove that this relaxation was based on evidences and this is why the government and the Saudi scholars were encouraging people not to overcrowd at the *jamarat* during the day and rather opt to perform it in the night when the *jamarat* locations would be less crowded. This is despite opposition from many learned scholars that such an act was not allowed in *Shariah* except in extreme circumstances which have been outlined in the *Shariah* law.

Citing the 2015 stampede as the reason the Saudi authorities said that Pilgrims this year would not be able to conduct the stoning ritual at select hours every day.

The decision obviously has been made while keeping in mind that in 2015 the stampede at *jamarat* happened when the routes leading to *jamarat* had been blocked by the security forces to allow way for a certain member of the Saudi ruling family. A convoy of hundreds of cars of the prince is what had actually led to the stampede and not overcrowding at the *jamarat* which has already undergone massive renovation resulting in a well managed infrastructure and system that can not lead to over crowding easily.

Jamarat infrastructure now includes 4 floors where pilgrims are diverted to based on congestion levels on any floor and the floors are 100 meters wide at places and fully air conditioned.

This argument that the ban on stoning ritual is so as to avoid overcrowding makes little sense, to the layman and the crowd management expert.

If the Saudi authorities were sincere in ensuring congestion free experience for *jamarat* they should have allocated time for people coming from various regions instead of placing a blanket ban on the stoning ritual itself. This itself shows the hypocrisy behind the reasoning of the rule.

The worst part is that this decision will affect the pilgrims' ibadah directly. The scholars of islam have a concensus that the stoning on the first day i.e. the day of Eid

starts from the time of fajr prayer and continue till the time of *zawal* (when the sun reaches its zenith)¹. However, the new *jamarat* rules mean that people will not be able to participate in the stoning ritual until after 10:30 am which means all the pilgrims will rush towards *jamarat* at 10:30 am so as to be able to finish the ritual before *zawal* which is approximately at 12pm.

So what people were able to undertake in over 6 hours now will be forced to do in 1 hour and 30 minutes. This is only going to result in more problems both for the people and the security forces.

This is obvious as day and night that the Saudi authorities seem to be barely interested in ensuring that the ibadah happens in the right way rather are ensuring that the ruling class is able to travel without the little hassle that it faced in 2015.

The Saudi authorities should realize that they had a great responsibility in their hands to fulfill by ensuring that the pilgrims' ibadaat are conducted in the right way, and this is something they are failing in again and again. And they are leading themselves to receive the wrath of Allah (swt) as pilgrims rituals are done in the wrong manner due to the rules made by the authorities. And they should know that for Allah (swt) to replace them it will not take a moment, for He (swt) says

﴿إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

“Verily! Our Word unto a thing when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: "Be!" and it is.” [TMQ An Nahl: 40]

And let's not forget,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَالٍ﴾

“Verily! Allah will not change the good condition of a people as long as they do not change their state of goodness themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah). But when Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning back of it, and they will find besides Him no protector.” [TMQ Raad: 11]

The consistent belligerence against Allah (swt) by not applying his rules and misapplication and twisting His (swt) rules and His Prophet's Sunnah will not continue for long. This is something the Muslim Ummah already realizes and raises its voice against and will continue to do so.

Very soon the ruling class of Saudi and those who support it will be replaced with a Khilafah Rashida, by a class of people who are sincere and fear Allah (swt) and obey Him (swt) and His Messenger (saw), a ruling class who will be subservient to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw) and will not consider itself elite and above the Ummah (saw) rather will be in the service of the Ummah day and night helping it perform its ibadah and attain the pleasure of Allah (swt).

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هُوَ قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا﴾

““When will that be?” Say: "Perhaps it is near!"” [TMQ Al Israa: 51]

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¹ <http://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=Fatwald&Id=6843>