

The rulings of *Udhiyya* (sacrifice of an animal)

Muslims are required to perform the sacrifice of an animal on the occasion of Eid al-Adha (10/11/12th Dhu'l Hajj), with the intention of worship. This is called *Udhiyya* in Islam. The purpose of this worship is to remind ourselves of our forefather Sayyiduna Ibrahim (peace be upon him). We are informed in a hadith sharif:

عن زيد ابن أرقم رضي الله عنه قال قال أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا رسول الله ما هذه الأضاحي قال سنة أبيكم إبراهيم قالوا فما لنا فيها يا رسول الله قال بكل شعرة حسنة قالوا فالصوف يا رسول الله قال بكل شعرة من الصوف حسنة (ابن ماجه)

The Companions once asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'What are these sacrifices?' He replied: 'It is the Sunna of your father Ibrahim (peace be upon him).' They asked, 'What is the benefit of it for us?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'For each hair is a unit of reward.' They asked: 'What about wool?' He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: 'For every hair of wool is a unit of reward [too].' (*Sunan Ibn Maja*)

The Ruling of *Udhiyya*

The sacrifice is *Wajib* upon every adult Muslim who is not travelling and who can afford it. The criteria for affordability is the same amount that is set for Zakah.

For this worship to count, an actual sacrifice must take place. A person cannot pay the equivalent price of an animal that is then not slaughtered.

The timing for *Udhiyya*

The sacrifice must be performed after *Salat al-Eid* on the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj. If anyone does it prior to this, then it will not count as the religious sacrifice. He can perform the sacrifice on the tenth, eleventh and twelfth of Dhu'l Hajj.

Which animals are suitable for sacrifice?

*Sheeps; at least one year old, unless it is fat in which case six months is acceptable.

*Camels; at least five years old. (This can be shared amongst seven people)

*Cows; at least two years old. (This can be shared amongst seven people)

*Goats; at least one year old.

The animals that are sacrificed must be healthy and free from physical defects. Our Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) was a mercy not just for mankind but for all animals

too. He was the pioneer of animal rights centuries before the term was even coined in the west.

The distribution of the meat

The best method –which is the one the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged – is to divide the slaughtered meat into three parts (i) one third for the family (ii) one third for friends and relatives (iii) one third for the poor.

If the family is in dire need, then they can keep all of the meat. Muslims are encouraged to utilise all parts of the sacrifice, such as the skin (for leather etc.).

'Sacrifice' as a religious concept

As we perform a sacrifice during this season, it is also the perfect time to symbolically reflect on the importance of this religious concept. What does sacrifice mean?

'When you give up something valuable & precious, for the sake of something which is more valuable and precious.'

If Zaid has £10, something precious to him, but he gives it up for a brand new phone, then this is a worthwhile sacrifice. If, however, he gives up £10 for a packet of crisps, then this is not a sacrifice, but a loss.

Throughout history, we have seen great Islamic figures performing sacrifices in some form or another. Sayyiduna Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was willing to sacrifice his son in exchange for something better, the pleasure of Allah. Sayyiduna Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) loved Makka. He was born there. He was Makki. It was the land of his forefather Sayyiduna Ibrahim (peace be upon him). But he gave that up for something more precious, the utopia of al-Madina al-Munawarra.

Anything a Muslim does for the sake of Allah is a sacrifice. Spend an hour in the mosque and Allah will ensure this was a worthwhile sacrifice. When a believer sacrifices anything for Allah - time, money, pleasure, energy - Allah will always ensure the return is greater. A believer never makes a loss when sacrificing in the path of Allah.

Today, it is unfortunate to see that a large part of our endeavours are marked by loss, not sacrifice. We spend our time gossiping, but what's the outcome? We watch TV dramas and soaps for hours, but is this a sacrifice in order to gain something better?

May Allah guide our hearts to sacrifice everything for His sake alone, Ameen.

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