

The Concept of Animal Sacrifice in Islam

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As-Salam `Alaykum. `Eid Mubarak to you all! Since “`Eid Al-Adha” is at the doorstep, many rams, cows, camels, of course, are tied to be slaughtered for feast. This brings to my mind the following question: What is the concept of sacrifice in Islam? Many non-Muslim try to pick fault in Islam, saying that Muslims are no different to idol worshippers, who also offer sacrifices to their gods. We will clarify this point in shaa Allaah.

Actually, there are many misconceptions filling the mind of many non-Muslims, who fail to perceive the significance and wisdom behind acts of worship in Islam. That is why addressing those misconceptions becomes obligatory in order to erase distortions about Islam. Thus, on the case in point, we find it relevant to cite for you the following:

Sacrifice is not a pillar of Islam. We must look at the occurrences in a contextual manner, understanding not only the pre-Islamic institution of sacrifice, the Qur'anic reforms concerning this practice, and the continuance of sacrifice in the Muslim world, but also the context in which the Qur'anic revelations occurred. For it seems that with many people, both non-Muslims and Muslims alike, context is the key that they are missing.

With this in mind, let us start with the situation as it was in pre-Islamic Arabia with regard to animal sacrifice. Not only did the pagan Arabs sacrifice to a variety of gods in hopes of attaining protection or some favor or material gain, but so, too, did the

Jews of that day seek to appease the One True God by blood sacrifice and burnt offerings. Even the Christian community felt Jesus to be the last sacrifice, the final lamb, so to speak, in an otherwise valid tradition of animal sacrifice (where one's sins are absolved by the blood of another).

Islam, however, broke away from this longstanding tradition of appeasing an "angry God" and instead demanded personal sacrifice and submission as the only way to die before death and reach "*fana*" or "extinction in Allah." The notion of "vicarious atonement of sin" (absolving one's sins through the blood of another) is nowhere to be found in the Qur'an. Neither is the idea of gaining favor by offering the life of another to Allah. In Islam, all that is demanded as a sacrifice is one's personal willingness to submit one's ego and individual will to Allah.

One only has to look at how the Qur'an treats this subject, to see a marked difference regarding sacrifice and whether or not Allah is appeased by blood. The Qur'anic account of the sacrifice of Isma`il ultimately speaks against blood atonement. Allah says: **(Then when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: "Oh my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what is thy view!" (The son) said: "Oh my father! Do As thou art commanded: Thou wilt find me, if Allah so wills one practicing patience and constancy!" So when they had both submitted their wills (to Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, "Oh Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision!" Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial and We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice.)** (As-Safat 37: 102-107)

Notice that the Qur'an never says that Allah told Abraham to kill (sacrifice) his son. Though subtle, this is very important, for the

moral lesson is very different from that which appears in the Bible. Here, it teaches us that Abraham had a dream in which he saw himself slaughtering his son. Abraham believed the dream and thought that the dream was from Allah, but the Qur'an never says that the dream was from Allah. However, in Abraham and Isma`il's willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice—Abraham of his son, Isma`il of his own life—they are able to transcend notions of self and false attachment to the material realm, thus removing a veil between themselves and Allah, enabling Allah's mercy to descend upon them as the Spirit of Truth and illuminate them with divine wisdom (thus preventing a miscarriage of justice and once and for all correcting the false notion of vicarious atonement of sin).

For, certainly, Allah, the Ever Merciful, Most Compassionate, would never ask a father to go against His command of "thou shall not kill" and kill his own son in order to be accepted by Him. For the Qur'an teaches us that Allah never advocates evil (see 7:28 and 16:90) and that only Satan advocates evil and vice (24:21). The notion that Allah would want us to do an immoral act runs counter to Allah's justice.

As far as the yearly tradition that has followed this event (that is, the sacrificing of a ram to commemorate Abraham and Isma`il's great self sacrifice), we must understand it and the Qur'anic versus that pertain to animal sacrifice, in relation to the time and place circumstances under which these revelations were received and how people were trying to make a personal sacrifice by sharing their limited means of survival with the poorer members of their community.

That is to say, the underlying implication of Islam's attitude toward ritual slaughter is not that of blood atonement, or seeking favor with Allah through another's death, but rather, the act of thanking Allah for one's sustenance and the personal sacrifice of

sharing one's possessions and valuable food with one's fellow humans. The ritual itself is NOT the sacrifice. It is merely a method of killing where the individuals kill as quickly as possible and acknowledge that only Allah has the right to take a life and that they do so as a humble member of Allah's creation in need of sustenance just like every other species in Allah's creation.

So let us examine some of the appropriate verses in the Qur'an to see what it has to say about sacrifice and how it related to life in 500 C.E. Arabia. (Also included is commentary by Yusuf Ali to show that even someone who was pro-sacrifice with an understanding of animals as subject to humans, did not champion wanton cruelty or notions of blood atonement.) Allah says: **(In them ye have benefits for a term appointed: In the end their place of sacrifice is near the Ancient House.)** (Al-Hajj 22: 33)

"The word 'In them' refers to cattle or animals offered for sacrifice. It is quite true that they are useful in many ways to humans, e.g., camels in desert countries are useful as mounts or for carrying burdens or for giving milk, and so, for horses and oxen; and camels and oxen are also good for meat, and camel's hair can be woven into cloth; goats and sheep also yield milk and meat, and hair or wool. But if they are used for sacrifice, they become symbols by which people show that they are willing to give up some of their own benefits for the sake of satisfying the needs of their poorer brethren." (Yusuf Ali commentary)

Allah also says: **(To every people did We appoint rites (of sacrifice) that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food). But your God is One God: Submit then your wills to Him (In Islam): and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves.)** (Al-Hajj 22: 34)

"This is the true end of sacrifice, not propitiation of higher powers, for Allah is One, and He does not delight in flesh and blood, but a symbol of thanksgiving to Allah by sharing meat with fellow humans. The solemn pronouncement of Allah's name over the sacrifice is an essential part of the rite." (Yusuf Ali commentary)

Allah says further: **(It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him: He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify Allah for His guidance to you: And proclaim the Good News to all who do right.)** (Al-Hajj 22: 37)

"No one should suppose that meat or blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a pagan fancy that Allah could be appeased by blood sacrifice. But Allah does accept the offering of our hearts, and as a symbol of such offer, some visible institution is necessary. He has given us power over the brute creation, and permitted us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name at the solemn act of taking life, for without this solemn invocation, we are apt to forget the sacredness of life. By this invocation we are reminded that wanton cruelty is not in our thoughts, but only the need for food ..." (Yusuf Ali commentary)

It is quite clear from the Qur'anic passages above that the issue of animal sacrifice is in relation to the role animals played in Arabian society at that place and time (as well as other societies with similar climates and culture), in that humans are commanded to give thanks to Allah and praise Allah for the sustenance He has given them and that they should sacrifice something of value to themselves to demonstrate their appreciation for what they have been given (which in their case was the very animals on which their survival was based).

Excerpted, with slight modifications, from <http://www.islamveg.com/sacri.html>

Udhiyah-Qurbaani, Sacrifice a Subservient Submission PHILOSOPHY

All praise is due to Allah The Sustainer, and Protective Guardian of humanity. May His choicest blessings be upon our Master Sayyidina Muhammad and upon his illustrious galaxy of Companions.

We once again commemorate the heroic submission of Ibrahim and the valiant compliance of Ismail u on this day of *Eidul Adha*.

The life of Ibrahim u serves as an epitome of faith, courage, and compassion. His conduct, conviction, and submission are the vital traits patently absent from a society characterized by its indifferent, selfish, self-centered and voracious ethic. "It is neither the flesh, nor the blood [of the animal] that reaches Allah, but it is your Allah-consciousness that reaches Him by obeying what Allaah order us and being away from what Allaah prohibited."

The concept of Udhiyah-sacrifice-Qurbaani has a profound impact on, our lives. It is relevant today, as it was in the day and age of Ibrahim. Sacrifice, is really a symbolic declaration to sever, unfetter, cut off and dispense with extravagant, self-centered ostentation, miser, sustain sentiments of greed, hatred, cowardice, hypocrisy, and malice.

When he left his wife and infant son at the foot of mount Safa and Marwa, she simply responded saying that: "He [Allah] will certainly never leave us to perish." Likewise, when he concurred with his son about the dream and its implication, his son responded by saying: My beloved father, do as you have been commanded! Allah-willing you will find me from among the patient." What kind of relationship existed between husband, wife, and son? How did Ibrahim command such implicit trust and dedication from his family? How did they so easily identify with his values and purpose?

Demeanor! Communication! Compassion! Three fundamental requirements for the healthy development of a vibrant, happy, and healthy, family. How often do you communicate, teach, and display love, to those around you? Does your conduct warrant emulation?

"The Submission"

"Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my very life, and death is for Allah The Sustainer of the Worlds. He has no partner, and with that (belief) have I been commanded, and I am the foremost of those who submit."

The unparalleled submission of Ibrahim, Hajira, and Ismail lays the basis for our relation with Allah. It highlights the need to identify with the precept of "Divine Rights and Human Obligations" No command of Allah can be made subject to man-made laws. No command of Allah can be measured against the benchmark of common law. How consistent is the *Qurbaani of Ismail, the apparent abandonment of Hajira in the burning sand dunes of Arabia* with the incoherent concept of Human Rights and Gender Equality?

"The Consequences"

The courage, determination, and faith of single women paved the history of the desolate sand dunes of Arabia. The steadfastness of Hajira served as the foundation for the eventual establishment of Makkah. The scorching thirst of an infant led to the miraculous well of *zam zam*. What apparently seemed to be a waste of human life gave rise to the annual pilgrimage since that time till Allaah inhiert the eath and whatever on it. where millions of Muslims converge to pay homage to Ibrahim every year since then.

Too often, we stand petrified of the thunder, oblivious of the potential rain it brings. We forget that dark clouds herald torrential rain.

The Law and workings of Allah are perfect, full of wisdom and are premised on His Mercy and Benevolence. What at first seems to be difficult, crude and burdensome, may really be the beginning of lasting prosperity. Allah says: "Perhaps you may dislike many a thing, whilst Allah has placed abundant good therein." *Qurbaani* is the very antitheses of subjective obedience or convenient compliance. *May Allah Ta'aala imbue our darkened souls with the true spirit of steadfast on His deen.*

Udhiyah-Qurbaani, Sacrifice means an act performed to seek nearness to Almighty Allah and to seek His good pleasure. In precise religious terminology, confined to the sacrifice of an animal slaughtered for the sake of Allah.

The sacrifice of an animal has always been treated as a recognized form of worship in all religious orders originating from a divine book. Even in pagan societies, the sacrifice of an animal is recognized as a form of worship, but it is done in the name of some idols and not in the name of Allah, a practice totally rejected by Islam.

In the ShariĤh of our beloved Prophet (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) the sacrifice Udhiyah of an animal has been recognized as a form of worship only during four days of the month of Dhul Hijjah, namely after the SalaatulEid of the day of Eid, the 10th, 11th and 12th and 13th of the month of Dhul Hijjah. This is to commemorate the unparalleled sacrifice offered by Prophet Sayyidina Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) when he, in pursuance to a command of Allah conveyed to him in a dream, prepared himself to slaughter his beloved son Sayyidina Ismail (Alayhis salaam) and actually did so, but Allah Almighty, after testing the ultimate limits of his submission, sent down a sheep and saved his son from the logical fate of slaughter. It is from that time onwards that sacrifice of an animal became an obligatory duty to be performed by every well-to-do Muslim.

Udhiyah is a demonstration to Allah and proof of complete obedience to Allah's will or command. When a Muslim offers Udhiyah, this exactly what he intends to prove. Thus, the Udhiyah offered by a Muslim signifies that he is slave of Allah at his best and that he would not hesitate even for a moment, once he receives an absolute command from his Creator, to surrender before it, to obey it willingly, even it be at the price of his life and possessions.

When a true and perfect Muslim receives such a command from Allah, his natural instincts stop him from indulging in the futile search for the reasoning behind the command; nor does he make his obedience dependent upon the command's 'reasonableness' as perceived through his limited understanding. He knows that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise and that his own ability to reason cannot encompass the knowledge and wisdom underlying the divine command, even if he cannot find any reason or wisdom behind it.

This is exactly what the Prophet Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) did. Apparently, there was no reason why a father should slaughter his innocent son. But, when came the command of Allah, he never asked about the reason for that command, nor did he hesitate to obey it. Even his minor son, when asked by his father about the dream he had seen, never questioned the legitimacy of the command, nor did he pine or whine about it, nor did he ask for one good reason why he was being slaughtered. The one only response he made was: *"Father, do what you have been ordered to do. You shall find me, God willing, among the patient"*.

The present-day Udhiyah is offered in memory of this great model of submission set before us by the great father and the great son. Udhiyah must be offered in our time emulating the same ideal and attitude of submission.

This then is the true meaning and philosophy of **Udhiyah-Qurbaani-Sacrifice** With this in mind, one can easily unveil the fallacy of those who raise objections against Udhiyah on the basis of economic calculations and lounge statistics and make it out to be a wastage of money, resource and livestock. Unable to see beyond mundane benefits, they cannot understand the spirit Islam wants to implant and nourish among its followers, the spirit of total submission to Allah's will equips man with the most superior qualities so necessary to keep humanity in a state of lasting peace and welfare.

Udhiyah is nothing but a powerful symbol of the required human conduct vis-à-vis the divine commands, however, "irrational" or "uneconomic" they may seem to be in their appearance. Thus, the distrustful quest for mundane economic benefits behind Udhiyah is, in fact the negation of its real philosophy, and the very spirit underlying it.

No doubt, there are, in every form of worship ordained by Allah, certain worldly benefits too, but they are not the main purpose of these prescribed duties, nor should they be treated as preconditions to submission and obedience. All acts of worship, including Udhiyah, must be carried out with the spirit of total submission to Allah, irrespective of their economic, social or political benefits. This is what Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) did, and this is what every true Muslim is required to do.

Rulings of Udhiyah (Sacrifice)

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Praise be to Allaah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions.

Udhiyah is one of the great rituals of Islam, in which we remember the Unity of Allaah, His blessings upon us and the obedience of our father Ibraaheem to his Lord, and in this act of udhiyah there is much goodness and blessing. So the Muslim must pay attention to its great importance. The following is a brief look at this important ritual.

Udhiyah refers to the animal (camel, cattle or sheep) that is sacrificed as an act of worship to Allaah, in the country in which the person offering the sacrifice lives, during the period from after the Eid prayer on the Day of Nahr (Eid al-Adhaa) until the last of the Days of Tashreeq (the 13th day of Dhu'l-Hijjah), with the intention of offering sacrifice. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).” [al-Kawthar 108:2]

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists).’” [al-An’aam 6:162]

“And for every nation We have appointed religious ceremonies, that they may mention the Name of Allaah over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food. And your God is One God, so you must submit to Him Alone (in Islam)...” [al-Hajj 22:34]

Udhiyyah is a confirmed Sunnah according to the majority of scholars (some scholars say that it is waajib or obligatory; this will be discussed in more detail below). The basic principle is that it is required at the appointed time from one who is alive on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and he may include in the reward for it whoever he wishes, living or dead. With regard to udhiyah on behalf of one who is dead, if the deceased bequeathed up to one third of his wealth for that purpose, or included it in his waqf (endowment), then these wishes must be carried out,

otherwise, if a person wishes to offer a sacrifice on behalf of someone who has died, this is a good deed and is considered to be giving charity on behalf of the dead. But the Sunnah is for a man to include the members of his household, living and dead, in his udhiyah, and when he slaughters it, he should say, "Allaahumma haadha 'anni wa 'an aali bayti (O Allaah, this is on behalf of myself and the members of my household" – he does not have to make a separate sacrifice on behalf of every deceased person.

The scholars agreed that sacrificing the animal and giving its meat in charity is better than giving its value in charity, because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to make the sacrifice, and he did not do anything but that which is best and most befitting. This is the opinion of Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad.

The virtues of udhiyah and the best of udhiyah

A sheep is good enough as a sacrifice for one man and the members of his household and his children, because of the hadeeth of Abu Ayyoob: "At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man would sacrifice a sheep on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and they would eat from it and give some to others." (Reported by Ibn Maajah and al-Tirmidhi, who classed it as saheeh)

The kinds of animals prescribed for sacrifice are camels, cattle and sheep. Some of the scholars said that the best sacrifice is camels, then cattle, then sheep, then a share in a she-camel or cow, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said concerning Friday prayers: "Whoever goes to [Friday prayers] early, it is equivalent to him sacrificing a camel."

This is the opinion of the three imaams Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad. On this basis, a sheep is better than one-seventh of a camel or cow. Maalik said that the best is a young sheep, then a cow then a camel, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sacrificed two rams, and he never did anything but that which was the best. The response to that is that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) always chose what was more appropriate out of kindness towards his

ummah, because they would follow his example, and he did not want to make things difficult for them. (Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz).

A camel or cow is enough for seven people, because of the report narrated by Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "We sacrificed at al-Hudaybiyah with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a camel for seven and a cow for seven." According to one version: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to share camels and cattle, each seven men sharing one animal." According to another version: "So a cow would be sacrificed on behalf of seven men and we would share it." (Reported by Muslim)

Ruling of udhiyah:

Udhiyah is one of the rituals of Islam. It is mentioned in Jawaahir al-Ikleeel Sharh Mukhtasar Khaleel that if the people of a city or country neglect udhiyah, they should be fought, because it is one of the rituals of Islam.

(Rasaa'il Fiqhiyyah by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 46). There are two scholarly opinions on udhiyah:

that it is waajib (obligatory). This is the opinion of al-Oozaa'i, al-Layth and Abu Haneefah, and it is one of the two opinions narrated from Imaam Ahmad. It was also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, and is one of the two opinions in the madhhab of Maalik, or is what seems to be the madhhab of Maalik. Those who favour this opinion take the following as evidence:

The aayah: "Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)." [al-Kawthar 108:2]. This is a command, and a command implies that something is obligatory.

The hadeeth of Jundub (may Allaah be pleased with him), reported in al-Saheehayn and elsewhere, who said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Whoever slaughtered his sacrifice before he prays, let him slaughter another one in its place, and whoever did not slaughter a sacrifice, let him do so in the name of Allaah.'" (Reported by Muslim, 3621)

The hadeeth: "Whoever can afford to offer a sacrifice but does not do so, let him not approach our place or prayer." (Reported by Ahmad and Ibn

Maajah; classed as saheeh by al-Haakim from the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him). It says in Fath al-Baari that its men are thiqaat).

(B) that it is a confirmed Sunnah (sunnah mu'akkadah). This is the opinion of the majority, and it is the madhhab of al-Shaafa'i and the better-known opinion of Maalik and Ahmad. But most of those who favour this opinion stated that it is makrooh (disliked) for the one who is able to offer a sacrifice to neglect to do so. They base their opinion on the following:

The hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) in Sunan Abi Dawood, where he said: "I prayed on Eid al-Adhaa with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and when he finished (the prayer), he was brought two rams, and he sacrificed them. He said, 'In the Name of Allaah, Allaah is Most Great. This is on behalf of myself and any member of my ummah who did not offer a sacrifice.'" (Sunan Abi Dawood bi Sharh Muhammad Shams al-Haq Abaadi, 7/486)

The hadeeth reported by all the famous muhadditheen apart from al-Bukhaari: "Whoever among you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not take anything from his hair or nails." Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, may Allaah preserve him, said, following his discussion of those who say it is obligatory and those who say it is Sunnah, "Each point of view has its evidence, but to be on the safe side, the one who is able to offer a sacrifice should not neglect to do so, because of what is involved in this act of reverence towards Allaah, remembering Him, and making sure that one has nothing to be blamed for.

Conditions of udhiyah

The animal should have reached the required age, which is six months for a lamb, one year for a goat, two years for a cow and five years for a camel.

It should be free of any faults, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There are four that will not do for sacrifice: a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious, a sick animal whose sickness is obvious, a lame animal whose limp is obvious and an emaciated animal that has no marrow in its bones ." (Saheeh, Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 886). There are milder defects that do not disqualify an animal, but it is makrooh to

sacrifice such animals, such as an animal with a horn or ear missing, or an animal with slits in its ears, etc. Udhiyah is an act of worship to Allaah, and Allaah is Good and accepts only that which is good. Whoever honours the rites of Allaah, this has to do with the piety (taqwa) of the heart.

It is forbidden to sell it. If an animal has been selected for sacrifice, it is not permissible to sell it or give it away, except in exchange for one that is better. If an animal gives birth, its offspring should be sacrificed along with it. It is also permissible to ride it if necessary. The evidence for this is the report narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw a man leading his camel and told him, "Ride it." He said, "It is for sacrifice." He said, "Ride it" a second or third time.

It should be sacrificed at the specified time, which is from after the prayer and khutbah of Eid – not from when the time for the prayer and khutbah starts – until before sunset on the last of the days of Tashreeq, which is the 13th day of Dhu'l-Hijjah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sacrifices before the prayer, let him repeat it." (Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim). 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The days of Nahr (Sacrifice) are the day of al-Adhaa and the three days following it." This is also the opinion of al-Hasan al-Basri, 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabaah, al-Oozaa'i, al-Shaafa'i and Ibn al-Mundhir, may Allaah have mercy on them all.

What should be done with the sacrifice?

It is mustahabb (liked, preferable) for the one who has made a sacrifice to not eat anything on that day before he eats from it, if this is possible, because of the hadeeth, "Let every man eat from his sacrifice." (Classed as saheeh in Saheeh al-Jaami', 5349). This eating should be after the Eid prayer and khutbah. This is the opinion of the scholars, including 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbaas, Maalik, al-Shaafa'i and others. The evidence for this is the hadeeth of Buraydah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would not go out on the day of Fitr until he had eaten, and he would not eat on the day of Adhaa until he had

slaughtered (his sacrifice).” (Al-Albaani said: its isnaad is saheeh. Al-Mishkaat, 1/452).

It is better for a person to slaughter the sacrifice himself, but if he does not, it is mustahabb for him to be present when it is slaughtered.

It is mustahaab to divide the meat into three: one third to be eaten, one third to be given as gifts and one third to be given in charity. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas’ood and Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them). The scholars agreed that it is not permissible to sell anything from its meat, fat or skin. In a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever sells the skin of his udhiyah, there is no udhiyah for him (i.e., it is not counted as udhiyah).” (Classed as hasan in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 6118). The butcher should not be given anything of it by way of reward or payment, because ‘Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded me to take care of the sacrifice and to give its meat, skin and raiment (covering used for protection) in charity, and not to give anything of it to the butcher as a compensation . He said, ‘We will give him something from what we have.’” (Agreed upon). It was said that it is permissible to give the butcher something as a gift, and that it is permissible to give some of it to a kaafir if he is poor or a relative or a neighbour, or in order to open his heart to Islam. (Fataawa al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz).

Question: what should the Muslim avoid in the first ten days of Dhu’l-Hijjah if he wants to offer a sacrifice?

The Sunnah indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must refrain from taking anything from his hair, nails or skin from the first day of Dhu’l-Hijjah until he offers his sacrifice, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When you see the new moon of Dhu’l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not remove anything from his hair or nails until he has offered his sacrifice.” According to another report: “Let him not touch any part of his hair or nails.”

(Reported by Muslim with four isnaads, 13/146). This command implies obligation and the prohibition implies that it is forbidden, according to the most correct opinion, because these are absolutes with no exceptions. If a

person deliberately takes something (from his hair or nails), he must seek the forgiveness of Allaah, but he does not have to pay any fidyah (penalty), and his udhiyah is still valid. Whoever needs to remove some of his hair or nails because leaving it will cause him harm, such as a torn nail or a wound in a site covered by hair, should remove it, and there is no sin on him if he does so. This is not more serious than the muhrim (person in ihraam for Hajj or 'Umrah) who is allowed to shave if not doing so will cause him harm. There is nothing wrong with men and women washing their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) only forbade removing hair, and because the muhrim is allowed to wash his head.

The wisdom behind the prohibition on removing hair and nails is because the one who is going to offer a sacrifice is like the one who is in ihraam for Hajj and 'Umrah with regard to some rituals, which is the offering of a sacrifice in order to draw closer to Allaah. Thus some of the rulings of ihraam apply to the one who wants to offer a sacrifice, so he should not touch his hair and nails until he has slaughtered his sacrifice, in the hope that Allaah will release him from the fire of Hell. And Allaah knows best. If a person removes some of his hair and nails during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah because he is not planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides to sacrifice, he should refrain from cutting his hair or nails from the moment he takes the decision.

There are some women who delegate their brothers or sons to do the sacrifice on their behalf so that they can cut their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is making the sacrifice, whether he or she delegates someone else to do the actual slaughter or not. The prohibition does not apply to the person appointed, it applies to the person who wants to offer a sacrifice on behalf of himself, as is indicated by the hadeeth. As for the person who is doing the sacrifice on behalf of another, whether because of a will or because he has been delegated to do so, the prohibition does not apply to him.

It is apparent that this prohibition applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, and does not extend to his wife or children, unless one of them is offering a sacrifice on his or her own behalf. The Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to sacrifice on behalf of the family of Muhammad, and it was not reported that he forbade them to remove anything of their hair or nails.

Whoever is planning to offer a sacrifice, then decides to go for Hajj, should not remove anything of his hair or nails when he wants to enter ihraam, because this is Sunnah only when there is a need for it. But if he is doing Hajj "tamattu'" [where one performs 'Umrah, then ends ihraam and enters a new state of ihraam for Hajj], he should shorten his hair when he finishes 'Umrah because that is part of the ritual.

The things that are forbidden for the person who wants to offer a sacrifice are reported in the hadeeth quoted above. It is not forbidden for him to wear perfume or to have intercourse with his wife or to wear sewn garments and so on . And Allah knows best.

Is Islamic Slaughtering Cruel to Animals?

By [Dr. Aisha El-Awady](#)

02/02/2003

Islam's stance on what is permissible to eat and what is not is clear. There are strict rules when it comes to meat regarding what is allowed and what is forbidden. In Surat Al-Maida (The Table) Allah says: *"Forbidden to you [for food] are: Al-Maytatah (the dead animals -cattle-beasts not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been [partly] eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it [before its death] and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on AnNusub[(stone altars). [Forbidden] also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, [all] that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion, so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you*

Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin [such can eat these above-mentioned meats], then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The Islamic practice of slaughtering animals by means of a sharp cut to the front of the neck has frequently come under attack by some animal rights activists as being a form of animal cruelty, the claim being that it is a painful inhumane method of killing animals. In the West, it is required by law to stun the animals with a shot to the head before the slaughter, supposedly to render the animal unconscious and to prevent it from reviving before it is killed so as not to slow down the movement of the processing line. It is also used to prevent the animal from feeling pain before it dies.

German Research Studies Pain

It therefore may come as a surprise to those who have made such acclimations to learn of the results of a study carried out by Professor Wilhelm Schulze and his colleague Dr. Hazim at the School of Veterinary Medicine, Hannover University in Germany. The study: *'Attempts to Objectify Pain and Consciousness in Conventional (captive bolt pistol stunning) and Ritual (halal, knife) Methods of Slaughtering Sheep and Calves'* concludes that Islamic slaughtering is the most humane method of slaughter and that captive bolt stunning, practiced in the West, causes severe pain to the animal.

In the study, several electrodes were surgically implanted at various points of the skull of all animals, touching the surface of the brain. The animals were allowed to recover for several weeks. Some animals were then slaughtered by making a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck cutting the jugular veins and the carotid arteries as well as the trachea and esophagus (Islamic method). Other animals were stunned using a Captive Bolt Pistol (CBP). During the experiment, an electroencephalograph (EEG) and an electrocardiogram (ECG) recorded the condition of the brain and the heart of all animals during the course of slaughter and stunning.

The results were as follows:

I – Islamic Method

1. The first three seconds from the time of Islamic slaughter as recorded on the EEG did not show any change from the graph before slaughter,

thus indicating that the animal did not feel any pain during or immediately after the incision.

2. For the following 3 seconds, the EEG recorded a condition of deep sleep - unconsciousness. This is due to the large quantity of blood gushing out from the body.

3. After the above-mentioned 6 seconds, the EEG recorded zero level, showing no feeling of pain at all.

4. As the brain message (EEG) dropped to zero level, the heart was still pounding and the body convulsing vigorously (a reflex action of the spinal cord) driving a maximum amount of blood from the body thus resulting in hygienic meat for the consumer.

II - Western method by C.B.P. Stunning

1. The animals were apparently unconscious soon after stunning.

2. EEG showed severe pain immediately after stunning.

3. The hearts of animals stunned by C.B.P. stopped beating earlier as compared to those of the animals slaughtered according to the Islamic method resulting in the retention of more blood in the meat. This in turn is unhygienic for the consumer.

Western-Style Slaughtering and Mad Cow's Disease

Not only is this method of stunning animals before the slaughter severely painful as shown by the previous experiment, but there is also a rising concern that this method may be a factor in the spread of mad cow's disease from cattle to humans as it was discovered in recent research carried out at Texas A&M University and by Canada's Food Inspection Agency, that a method called pneumatic stunning (which is the firing of a metal bolt into the cow's brain followed by a pulverizing burst of 150 pounds of air pressure) delivered a force so explosive that it scattered brain tissue throughout the animal. This news is disturbing since the brain tissue and spinal cord are the most infectious parts of an animal with mad cow disease, which causes fatal Swiss cheese like holes in the brain of the infected animal. It is more disturbing to find out that around 30 to 40 percent of American cattle are stunned by pneumatic guns.

Islamic Regulations for the Slaughter

As one can see from the previous studies, Islamic slaughtering of animals is a blessing to both the animal and to humans alike. In order for the slaughtering to be lawful, several measures must be taken by the one performing the deed. This is to ensure the highest benefit to both the animal and the consumer.

In this regard, the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) said: *"God calls for mercy in everything, so be merciful when you kill and when you slaughter: sharpen your blade to relieve its pain"*.

The object used to slaughter the animal should be sharp and used swiftly. The swift cutting of vessels of the neck disconnects the flow of blood to the nerves in the brain responsible for pain. Thus the animal does not feel pain. The movements and withering that happen to the animal after the cut is made are not due to pain, but due to the contraction and relaxation of the muscles deficient in blood. The prophet (peace be upon him) also taught Muslims neither to sharpen the blade of the knife in front of the animal nor to slaughter an animal in front of others of its own kind.

The cut should involve the windpipe (trachea), gullet (esophagus), and the two jugular veins without cutting the spinal cord. This method results in the rapid gush of blood draining most of it from the animal's body. If the spinal cord is cut, the nerve fibers to the heart might be damaged leading to cardiac arrest thus resulting in stagnation of blood in the blood vessels. The blood must be drained completely before the head is removed. This purifies the meat by removing most of the blood that acts as a medium for microorganisms; meat also remains fresh longer as compared to other methods of slaughtering.

Therefore accusations of animal cruelty should very rightly be focused on those who do not use the Islamic way of slaughtering but prefer to use those methods which cause pain and agony to the animal and could also very well cause harm to those consuming the meat.

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What Should Be Done With the Sacrifice? *

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1. It is *mustahabb* or preferable for one who has made a sacrifice not to eat anything on that day before he eats from it, if this is possible, because of the Hadith, **"Let every man eat from his sacrifice."** (Sahih Al-Jami`, 5349). This eating should be after the `Eid Prayer and *khutbah* (sermon). This is the opinion of the scholars, including `Ali, Ibn `Abbas, Malik, Ash-Shafi`i and others. The evidence for this is the Hadith of Buraydah (may Allah be pleased with him): **"The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) would not go out on the Day of *Fitr* until he had eaten, and he would not eat on the day of *Adha* until he had slaughtered (his sacrifice)."**
2. It is better for a person to slaughter the sacrifice himself, but if he does not, it is *mustahabb* for him to be present when it is slaughtered.
3. It is *mustahabb* to divide the meat into three: one third for consumption, one third to be given as gifts and one third to be given in charity. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas`ud and Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). The scholars agreed that it is not permissible to sell anything from its meat, fat or skin. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) is reported to have said: **"Whoever sells the skin of his Udhiyah, there is no Udhiyah for him (i.e., it is not counted as Udhiyah)."** (Sahih Al-Jami`, 6118). The butcher should not be given anything of it by way of reward or payment, because `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: **"The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded me to take care of the sacrifice and to give its meat, skin and raiment (covering used for protection) in charity, and not to give anything of it to the butcher as a compensation. He said, 'We will give him something from what we have.'"** (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). It was said that it is permissible to give the butcher something as a gift, and that it is permissible to give some of it to a non-Muslim if he is poor or a relative or a neighbor, or in order to open his heart to Islam.

Praise be to Allah Who has created time and has made some times better than others, some months and days and nights better than others. This is in a sense that rewards are multiplied many times than the case in other periods of time.

This reflects Allah's overflowing mercy towards His servants, and it encourages them to do more righteous deeds. It makes them more eager to worship Him, so that the Muslim renews his efforts to gain a greater share of reward, prepare himself for death and supply himself in readiness for the Day of Judgment.

This season of worship brings many benefits, such as the opportunity to correct one's faults and make up for any shortcomings or anything that one might have missed. Every one of these special occasions involves some kind of worship, through which the servants may draw closer to Allah. They also involve some kind of blessing, through which Allah bestows His favor and mercy upon whomsoever He wills.

Happiness and success are for the one who makes the most of these special months, days and hours, and draws nearer to his/her God during these times, through acts of worship and righteousness. The Muslim needs to understand the value of his/her life, increase his/her worship of Allah and persist in doing good deeds until the moment of death.

Allah says in the Qur'an what means:

{And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty.} (Al-Hijr 15:99)

Scholars explain: "The 'certainty' means death."

Then, among the special seasons of worship are the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, which Allah has preferred over all the other days of the year..."

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) has said:

"There are no days during which good deeds are more beloved by Allah than these [ten] days." (Al-Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi and others)

For this reason, all the good deeds we can do should be done during these days with more vigor and piety. In particular, fasting and *dhikr* (repetitive remembrance of Allah by both heart and tongue) need to be given special importance.

Prophet Muhammad exhorted his followers to do more righteous deeds, during this period, because of the virtue of these days. He has commanded us to recite more *tasbih* (saying *subhan* Allah: 'glory be to Allah'). This is as well as to *tahmeed* (saying *al-hamdu lillah*: 'all praise be to Allah') and *takbir* (saying *Allahu Akbar*: 'Allah is Greatest').

Abdullah ibn `Umar reported that Prophet Muhammad said:

"There are no days greater in the sight of Allah and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him than these ten days. So, during this time, recite a great deal of *tahlil* (saying *La ilaha illa-Allah*: 'there is no god but Allah'), *takbir* and *tahmeed*." (Ahmad)"

The Day of `Arafah

The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah include the days of Hajj. Of particular importance is the Day of `Arafah, on which Allah perfected His religion. Fasting on this day is one of the most important *sunnah* fasts, which can expiate the sins of two years. Fasting on all these days, however, is not obligatory, nor was it a constant practice of the messenger.

One of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah's messenger used to fast the [first] nine days of Dhul-Hijjah, the day of `Ashura', and three days of each month." (Abu Dawud)

The day of `Arafah is the day when the pilgrims stand in worship on the Mountain of `Arafah. This has been called the best day of the year.

The Prophet Muhammad has been quoted as saying:

"Fasting the day of `Arafat expiates the sins of two years: a past one and a coming one. And, fasting the day of `Ashura' (the tenth of the lunar month of Muharram) expiates the sins of the past year." (Muslim)

The Day of `Eid Al-Adha

The tenth of Dhul-Hijjah is `Eid Al-Adha or the day of *an-Nahr* (sacrifice). It marks the conclusion of the major rites of Hajj. It also commemorates Allah's bounty on His messenger Ibrahim (peace be upon him), when He gave him a ram to sacrifice, as ransom for his son Isma`il, (peace be upon him).

`Eid Al-Adha is a day of festival for Muslims who do not perform Hajj. While the pilgrims complete their rites, other Muslims continue with their `Eid celebrations. Here, they are prohibited from fasting. These are days of fun, happiness, eating, drinking and glorifying of Allah.

The Sacrifice

Allah has mentioned the duty of the sacrifice together with the first and foremost worship in Islam, namely prayer. This obviously signifies its great importance. In the Qur'an, Allah says what means:

{Therefore pray to your Lord and sacrifice.} (Al-Kawthar 108:2)

Sacrificing an animal, as part of `Eid observance, is an important *sunnah*, and a worship enjoined by the law of Allah. The sacrifice is not only to be enjoyed by the one who sacrifices and his family. A main reason behind this ritual is to provide for the poor and let them share this moment of happiness. It is to give charity to the poor and give them portion of what you eat in your own house. Thus, becoming one big family, sharing the same belief, as well as the same joy.

All About *Udhiyah*: Rulings and Conditions

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

Udhiyah is one of the great rituals of Islam. It is *sunnah mu'akkadah* (confirmed Sunnah) according to the majority of jurists for one who can afford it. When one intends to sacrifice an animal, one is to observe that the animal to be sacrificed has reached the required age, which is 6 months (or more) for sheep, 2 years (or more) for cattle, and 5 years (or more) for camels. If the meat of a species of the required age is not as good as its younger counterpart and the latter has more meat, the specification of age may be disregarded in this case so long as there is no better species of the required age.

To throw light on the rulings of *udhiyah* in total, the eminent Muslim scholar **Dr. `Abdul-Fattah Idrees**, Professor of Comparative Jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University, states the following:

Udhiyah is Sunnah Mu'akkadah

Offering *udhiyah* during `Eid Al-Adha is one of the Islamic rituals that are confirmed by various pieces of evidence of Shari`ah. For example, Almighty Allah says: **[Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him only]]** (Al-Kawthar 108:2).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) offered two big, fat, black and white rams, and both were horned and castrated. He (peace and blessings be upon him) placed his foot on the sides of one of them and said, **"In the Name of Allah. Allah is the Greatest. (Here I offer this animal for Allah's sake) on behalf of Muhammad and his kith and kin."** Then, he (peace and blessings be upon him) placed his foot on the sides of the other animal and said, **"In the Name of Allah. Allah is the Greatest. (Here I offer this animal for your sake,) Oh Allah; on behalf of Muhammad and his nation, those who witness that there is no god but You and that I have conveyed the Message You have sent me with."**

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also recommended that Muslims offer *udhiyah*. `A'ishah, Mother of the Believers, reported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as having

said, "No deed is more beloved to Almighty Allah on the Day of `Eid Al-Adha than offering sacrifices (for His sake). The animals sacrificed will come on the Day of Judgment with their horns, hair and hoofs [to testify to the sincerity of the people who have offered them]. The blood of these animals takes its place in Almighty Allah's sight before it is dropped on the ground. So, be pleased on offering them."

Udhiyah, according to the majority of scholars, is *sunnah mu'akkadah*. Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"There are three things that are obligatory for me but voluntary for you. These are the Witr Prayer, sacrificing animals (on `Eid Al-Adha), and the two [Sunnah] rak`ahs of Fajr Prayer."** Umm Salamah, Mother of the Believers, also reported that he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"When the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah start and one of you wants to offer an *udhiyah*, let him not cut a thing of his hair or nails until he has sacrificed it."** The Prophet's saying here **"and one of you wants to offer an *udhiyah*"** indicates the *udhiyah's* being a voluntary act, as an obligatory one would not be left for one's choice as these words denote.

The Proprieties to be Followed by the Person Offering *Udhiyah*

According to the majority of scholars (the Malikis, the Shafi`is, and some Hanbalis), it is disliked for he who intends to offer a sacrifice to cut his hair or nails when the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah start, as indicated from the prohibition form of **"Let him not cut..."** in the above hadith. But though undesirable, it is still permissible, as `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was reported to have said, "I twisted with my own hands the garlands for the *budn* (cattle selected for sacrifice) of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon) who garlanded and marked them, and then made them proceed to Makkah; yet no permissible thing was regarded as impermissible for him then." This denotes the permissibility of cutting hair and nails.

One Sacrifice Is Sufficient for the Whole Family

It is sufficient for the head of the household to offer one animal on behalf of himself and the members of his family, as it was proved that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) offered a she-goat on behalf of himself and his kith and kin. However, one may also offer a whole camel or cow as sacrifice on behalf of one, and seven people can share in offering one cow or camel, whether they belong to the same family or not. In this regard,

according to Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions shared during the Hudaybiah year in offering sacrifices: seven of them would share in offering one camel or cow.

Conditions of *Udhiyah*

The animal to be sacrificed should have reached the required age, which is 6 months (or more) for sheep, 2 years (or more) for cattle, and 5 years for camels. It is desirable that the animals offered for sacrifice be fat (that is, have more meat), big, and free of the faults that may affect the quantity and quality of their meat. That is why it is not sufficient to offer an animal that is one-eyed or has lost a great part of its horn. Al-Barra' reported that the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said, **"There are four that will not do for sacrifice: a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious, a sick animal whose sickness is obvious, a lame animal whose limp is obvious and an emaciated animal that has no marrow in its bones."**

As for the point raised in the question concerning the hybrid cattle of 2 years or more whose meat may not be as good as their counterpart under 2 years, if there are no cattle that meet the specifications of *udhiyah* but this hybrid type, and the cattle under 2 years have more meat, the latter may be sufficient in this case. This is because the latter here meets the purpose of Shari`ah with regard to *udhiyah*, which is affording much more meat in the interest of the poor, and it makes it easier at the same time for the people who offer sacrifices.

The Time for Offering *Udhiyah*

The specified time for offering *udhiyah* is during the period from after the `Eid Prayer on the Day of `Eid Al-Adha until the last of the Days of Tashreeq (13 Dhul Hijjah). Al-Barra' reported that on `Eid Al-Adha, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would say, **"He who offers our prayer (meaning the `Eid Prayer) and observes our ritual (sacrificing an animal) in that day, has done right; and whoever sacrifices before the Prayer, let him repeat it."** He (peace and blessings be upon him) was also reported to have said, **"The first ritual to be observed on this day (`Eid Al-Adha) is to offer (the `Eid) Prayer and then slaughter the animals for sacrifice. So whosoever offers a sacrifice before the `Eid Prayer, he or she just slaughters an animal**

for meat; it has nothing to do with the ritual of slaughtering." It follows from this that it is not right to slaughter before the `Eid Prayer and he who does so should offer another sacrifice.

Being Present While the *Udhiyah* Is Slaughtered

It is desirable for he who offers a sacrifice, if he is not to slaughter it himself, to be present at its slaughtering. Ibn `Abbas reported that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"When you have your *udhiyah* slaughtered for you, be present there, as you are forgiven with the first drop of its blood."** It was also reported that he (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his daughter Fatimah, **"Watch your *udhiyah* (while it is slaughtered) as you are forgiven with the first drop of its blood."**

It is as well desirable that one says upon slaughtering one's *udhiyah*, "In the Name of Allah. Allah is the Greatest." One may also add, "O Allah! This is from You and for You. O Allah! Accept it from me or from so-and-so." It was reported in this respect that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was brought a ram to slaughter. He (peace and blessings be upon him) placed his foot on its sides and said, **"O Allah! Accept it from Muhammad, the kith and kin of Muhammad, and the nation of Muhammad."** Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) started slaughtering. It was also reported on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would say on slaughtering, **"O Allah! This is from You and for You. O Allah! Accept it from Muhammad and his nation. In the Name of Allah. Allah is the Greatest."** Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) would start slaughtering.

Distributing the Meat of *Udhiyah*

It is desirable that one keeps one third of the *udhiyah* for oneself and the family, and distribute the other two thirds, one among the poor and needy of one's relatives and neighbors, and the other among the people who come to ask for meat. Allah Almighty says: **[Eat thereof and feed the beggar and the suppliant]** (Al-Hajj 22:36). It was also reported that Ibn `Abbas said that the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) would keep one third of the *udhiyah* for his family, distribute another third among his poor neighbors, and keep the remaining third to distribute among those who come to beg him for food. Ibn `Umar was also reported to have said about

the distribution of *udhiyahs* and the slaughtered animals as *sadaqah* (charity), "One third thereof is to be kept for one [and one's household], another third for one's relatives and the remaining third for the poor and needy."

If one has the *udhiyah* slaughtered by a butcher, one is not to give any portion thereof to the butcher as fee. However, one may give the butcher a part thereof as a gift or charity if the latter is poor. `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was reported to have said in this regard: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered me to watch over a camel while it was slaughtered and to distribute its meat and skin; he (peace and blessings be upon him) also ordered me not to give the butcher something thereof saying, "**We will give him (his fee for slaughtering it).**"

It is not permissible for one to sell something from the *udhiyah*, whether meat, skin, or anything else. But it is unanimously agreed upon that one may make use of the skin or the droppings of the *udhiyah* for oneself.

In conclusion, based on the above, it becomes clear that the reason behind specifying a certain age for *udhiyah* is that it contains more meat by this age so that it could be distributed among a greater number of the poor. But if there is an animal under the age specified for *udhiyah*, and this animal has much more meat than the one of the specified age, one may slaughter this animal instead, especially in the case of the hybrid cattle, when there is no cattle of another species to sacrifice.

The Best Kinds of Animals for *Udhiyah*

[IOL Shari`ah Researchers](#)

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger. Muslims slaughter animals during `Eid Al-Adha following the Sunnah of Prophet Ibrahim who was about to slaughter his son, Isma`eel in a show of obedience to Allah, when Isma`eel was redeemed by a ram brought to Ibrahim by Angel Gabriel. There are certain conditions that should be observed in the sacrificial animal. The animal should be in a good state and it should be free from physical defects.

Here, we would like to cite for you the following fatwa: The best type of animals for *udhiyah*

are camels, then cattle (i.e., cow, bull)—if sacrificed on behalf of one person—then sheep, then goats, then one-seventh of a camel, then one-seventh of a cattle. The best type of animals are those that are fat and have more meat, and are physically complete and look good (i.e., healthy and undeformed).

It is narrated from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to sacrifice two horned rams that were white speckled with black.

It was narrated that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sacrificed a whole (i.e., not castrated), horned male sheep, with a black face and black (circles) round the eyes, and black legs.”

It was narrated that Abu Rafie`, the freed slave of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) offered a sacrifice, he would buy two fat rams.” According to one version, “castrated rams” (Ahmad).

Fat means an animal that has a lot of fat and meat. Castrated means one that has had its testicles removed. This is usually better than an uncastrated animal with regard to the taste of the meat, but the uncastrated animal is more complete in a physical sense. These are the best kinds of sacrifice with regard to type and characteristics.

With regard to those that are *makruh* (disliked), they are as follows:

1. Those who have had one half or more of their ears or horns cut off.
2. Those whose ears have been slit crosswise from the front.
3. Those whose ears have been slit crosswise from the back.
4. Those whose ears have been slit lengthwise.
5. Those whose ears have had a hole made in them.
6. Those whose ears have been cut until the ear channel is visible; or those that are so emaciated that there is no marrow in their bones.
7. Those whose horns have been removed entirely.
8. Those that are completely blind even though the eyes are still present.
9. Those that do not follow the flock and join it unless they are herded and driven to do so.

These are the animals that it is *makruh* to sacrifice, as narrated in the hadiths that forbid sacrificing those that have these faults or enjoin avoiding such animals. This is understood as

meaning that it is *makruh*, when these reports are taken in conjunction with the hadith of Al-Bara' ibn 'Aazib (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was asked, 'What should be avoided in the sacrificial animals?' He gestured with his hand and said, '**Four: a lame animal that is obviously lame; a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious; a sick animal whose sickness is obvious; and an emaciated animal that no one would choose**'" (Reported by Malik in *Al-Muwatta'*).

Animals with similar faults are also added to this list, so it is *makruh* to sacrifice the following kinds of animals:

1. Camels, cattle, and goats that have had half or more of their tails cut off.
2. Those that have had less than half of their fat tails cut off. If half or more has been cut off, then according to the majority of scholars it is unsuitable for sacrifice. If it was born that way, however, there is nothing wrong with it.
3. An animal whose penis has been cut off.
4. An animal that has lost some of its teeth, whether incisors or molars. But if it was born like that it is not *makruh* to sacrifice it.
5. An animal whose teats have been cut off. But if it was born like that it is not *makruh* to sacrifice it. If its milk has stopped flowing but its teats are intact, there is nothing wrong with it.

If these five are added to the nine mentioned above, the number of *makruh* animals reaches fourteen.

The above quotation is based on *Risalat Ahkam Al-Udhiyah* by Sheikh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him). Source: www.islam-qa.com

Donating the Money Allocated for *Udhiyah*

[Yusuf Al-Qaradawi](#)

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

We implore Allah, from the depth of our hearts, to guide the baffled Muslim Ummah to the safe shore, and to bless and accept our good deeds, Amen.

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, states the following: Slaughtering the animal is more preferable than donating the money allocated for it, for that is part of Islam's rituals and a mode of seeking Allah's Pleasure, as Allah said, (**...So pray unto they Lord, and sacrifice...**) (Al-Kawthar 108: 2)

Muslims slaughter animals during *`eidul-dha* in emulation of Prophet Abraham who was about to slaughter his son, Isma'eel (Ishmael), to show obedience to Almighty Allah, when Ishmael was redeemed by a ram brought to Abraham by Angel Gabriel. The Angel then conveyed to him Allah's Command to slaughter the ram instead.

This act henceforth became a Prophetic Sunnah followed by Muslims. So to slaughter the animal in the *`eid* is better than donating the money, for if all Muslims were to do that, this virtuous tradition will become obsolete.

However, a donation can be made posthumously on behalf of a person who dies before fulfilling a religious duty of offering a sacrificial animal, if it will be useless to present a sacrificial animal due to, say, for instance, people are not in need of meat.

In short, it is preferable to slaughter animal where you live and offer monetary donation abroad if possible.

The Sacrifice *

Rulings and Conditions

By Shari'ah Staff

What is meant by sacrifice and what are its rulings?

Sacrifice is the act of slaughtering. Some of the rulings concern the persons who are slaughtering and others concerned when the slaughter should take place.

Who should sacrifice and what are the conditions?

First, one must have the intention (niyyah) of sacrificing before doing so. The sacrifice has to meet certain conditions, the first of which is the intention. The person who sacrifices must set his or her intention before slaughtering. The sacrifice is not accepted without it because slaughtering is done for different reasons: It could be done for the meat or to get closer to Allah. If the slaughtering is done to seek closeness to Allah, then the intention has to precede the act. It is not required that the person who is actually doing the slaughter mention on whose behalf he is slaughtering because the intention will suffice.

Second, the person who does the slaughtering should be a Muslim. It is preferable that a Muslim do the slaughtering because the sacrifice is an act of worship for the purpose of pleasing Allah Almighty. Therefore it is better if a Muslim does the slaughtering himself or herself. If a Muslim delegates a non-Muslim to slaughter on his behalf, it is acceptable but hated

(makruh). This is the opinion of the schools of Ibn Hanbal and Ash-Shafi'i, Abu Thawr, and Ibn Al-Mundhir.

On the other hand, Imam Ahmad and Imam Malik forbid the non-Muslim to slaughter the sacrificial animal; Imam `Ali, Ibn Abbas and Ghabir said it is hated (makruh) for a non-Muslim to slaughter. But Ibn Qudamah argued that if it is permissible for a non-Muslim to slaughter for Muslims for the meat, why should he not be permitted to slaughter for the sacrifice? If a non-believer is permitted to participate in the building of mosques for Muslims, why should he not also be permitted to slaughter the sacrifice for them?

Third, it is preferable for the person who sacrifices to slaughter the sacrificial animal himself or herself. It is preferable for the person sacrificing-be it a man or a woman-to slaughter the animal with his or her own hands. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) slaughtered two rams with his own hands.

Fourth, one should say "Bismillah" (In the name of Allah) before slaughtering. It was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to say when slaughtering, "Bismillah, Allahu Akbar" (In the name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest). Ibn `Umar and Qutadah said they don't know anyone who disagrees with the foregoing. If one has forgotten to utter these words, the sacrifice will be acceptable; and if one adds to it the following supplication it would be even better according to many scholars: "O Allah, This is from You and unto You, so please accept it from me or from the person on whose behalf I am slaughtering."

The Time of Sacrifice

The earliest time to slaughter is after the `Eid Prayer and sermon; the latest time is the end of the second Day of Tashreeq (the days following `Eid). The slaughtering days, therefore, are three: the `Eid and the two days following it, i.e., 10, 11, and 12 Dhul-Hijjah. This is according to `Umar, `Ali, Ibn `Umar, Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurayrah, Anas, and the opinion of Ibn Hanbal.

Read more on the concept of Islamic slaughtering:

[The Concept of Animal Sacrifice in Islam](#)
[Udhiyah: Rules and Significance](#)
[The Sacrificial Animal: Cruelty or Mercy?](#)

What to Do with the Sacrificial Meat

The person who is sacrificing should take one-third of the meat for his or her family, give one-third as a gift, and give one-third to the poor. If he or she keeps more than one-third it is all right. The followers of Ibn Hanifah say the more you give to the poor the better.

Paying the Butcher

The followers of Ibn Hanbal declared that the butcher should not be paid with the meat of the sacrificed animal instead of with money. Ash-Shafi'i and the scholars of his school supported this opinion but said that if the butcher is a poor man, it is all right to give him part of the meat as a present the same as others, especially when he has slaughtered the animal and seen the meat that he is deprived of .

Selling the Meat or Skin

The followers of Abu Hanbal declared that it is forbidden to sell any of the meat or the skin of the sacrificial animal, whether this animal is slaughtered to fulfill a vow or slaughtered voluntarily. Imam Ahmad and Imam Shaf'i forbade selling its meat or any part of it. Al-Hasan and An-Nukha'i permitted selling the skin and buying with the money something beneficial to oneself and others; thus he differentiated between the meat and the skin.

Abu Hanifah said to sell the meat and donate the money to the poor. It was reported that Ibn 'Umar said to sell the meat and donate the money. Ibn Qudamah, on the other hand, forbid selling the meat and the skin because they are part of one another, but one can use it or donate it as one does with the meat. It was known that 'Alqama and Masruq used to tan the skins of their sacrificial animals and use them as prayer rugs.

How to Slaughter

Local health or animal rights laws may restrict where the actual slaughter may take place. Please check with your local mosque for information. If this is the first time you will be doing the slaughtering with your own hands, have someone experienced in this with you to advise and assist.

The conditions for the actual slaughter are this:

1. The animal should be slaughtered by a sharp object which is capable of making it bleed by severing blood vessels, even if the sharp object is a stone or a piece of wood.
2. The slaughtering is to be done by cutting the throat of the animal or by piercing the hollow of the throat, causing its death. The best way is to cut the windpipe, the gullet, and the two jugular veins.
3. No name other than Allah's should be mentioned over the animal at the time of slaughter.
4. The name of Allah should be mentioned while slaughtering the animal. You should say, "Bismillah, Allahu Akbar."

For more details on this, see the section The Conditions of Islamic Slaughtering in The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam by Yusuf Al-Qaradawi.

* [This originally appeared as a section of a longer article, "Al-Ahkam Al-Hajj,"](#) in IslamOnline's Arabic Special Hajj Page. Translated by Magda Azzam. www.islamveg.com

Read Also:

- [Rules and Significance of Udhiyah](#) [Offering Sacrifice: Things to Avoid](#)
- [Conditions of Udhiyah](#) [What Should Be Done With the Sacrifice?](#)
- [The Sacrifice: Rulings and Conditions](#) [The Sacrificial Animal: Cruelty or Mercy?](#) (Special Folder)
 - [Rejoicing the Sacrifice](#)
- [Fatwas on Udhiyah: The Best Kinds of Animals for Udhiyah](#) , [What to Say When Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animal](#) , [Defective Sacrificial Animal: Can It Be Accepted?](#) , [The Sacrificial Animal Was Injured before Slaughtering](#) , [Time of Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animal](#) , [Appointed to Slaughter a Sacrificial Animal: Can I Cut My Hair?](#) , [Authorizing a Non-Muslim to Slaughter the Sacrificial Animal](#) , [Selling Furniture to Buy the Sacrificial Animal](#) , [Can We give non-Muslims any of the Meat of a Sacrificial Animal?](#) , [Slaughtering a Sacrificial Animal or Giving its Price in Charity?](#) , [Donating the Money Allocated for Udhiyah](#) , [Fatwas on Udhiyah and `Eid](#) (Live Fatwa)

Slaughtering Animals in Islam

“I'd like to know which is the position of Islam towards the non-cruelty against animals, since the practices seem to contradict the mercy for the animals expressed in the Qu'ran and by the prophet himself. Since there was a surviving need for eating meat, in the harsh environment of the Arabic desert, Islam allowed it under the condition of a merciful death (the Hallal). But, since nowadays, in many countries, there is no more need to survive on eating animals, isn't there a reason for Islam (according to the animal welfare defended by this religion) not only to allow the Muslims to avoid it but actually to encourage them not to do it (like many Sufists and Shias already do, nowadays)? Thank you for your attention, Nuno Pestana.”

To our dear reader we publish this scientific study and we hope it could convince her of the merciful manner of Islamic slaughtering inshallah.

HOW HUMANE IS THE HUMANE SLAUGHTER ACT?

Two scientists, Professor Schultz and Dr. Hazim both of University of Hanover, Germany, conducted an experiment to compare the Islamic slaughtering with the stunning required in the so-called humane slaughter.

Several electrodes were surgically implanted at various points of the skull of all animals, touching the surface of the brain. The animals were allowed to recover for several weeks. Some animals were then slaughtered by making a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck cutting the jugular veins and the carotid arteries of both sides as well as the trachea and esophagus (Islamic Method). Other animals were stunned using a Captive Bolt Pistol (CBP). During the experiment, electroencephalograph (EEG) and electrocardiograms (EKG) recorded the condition of the brain and the heart of all animals. The results were as follows:

ISLAMIC METHOD:

1. During the first three seconds after slaughtering the EEG did not record any change, thus indicating that the animal did not feel any pain during or immediately after the incision.
2. For the following three seconds, the EEG recorded a condition of deep sleep unconsciousness. This is due to the large quantity of blood gushing out of the body.

3. After this total of six seconds, the EEG recorded zero level, showing no feeling of pain at all.

4.4. As the brain message (EEG) dropped to zero level, the heart was still pounding and the body convulsing vigorously (a reflex action of the spinal cord) driving maximum blood out of the body.

STUNNING :

1. The animals were apparently unconscious soon after stunning but the EEG showed severe pain immediately after stunning.

2. The heart of the stunned animal stopped beating earlier than the one slaughtered the Islamic way thus resulting in the retention of more blood in the meat.

If confirmed, this experiment would have shown that the stunning required in the "Humane Slaughter Act" is not humane. It should be noted that this so called Humane Act may be based more on economics than on Humanness. The main purpose of stunning has less to do with causing a painless death to the animal than with rendering the animal motionless, thus allowing the production line to go at a faster pace and achieving higher efficiency and profits for the meat packing company.

SLAUGHTERING THE HALAL WAY

The Shariah term for Halal Slaughtering is Dhakat. Dhakat in Arabic comes from the root idea of making something become good in smell and taste, and making it complete. Dhakat thus means: "to slaughter an animal in such a way as to make it smell and taste good, because slaughtering releases the blood, enabling the meat to dry faster." (Al Qurtubi V6 / P52) As an Islamic technical term, it means releasing the blood of animals by means of a sharp object from a specific place in a specific manner, doing it for the sake of Allah (SWT) Alone, and mentioning His Name over the animal. Scholars have agreed that the best and most complete way to slaughter is to cut the windpipe (trachea), the gullet (esophagus) and the two jugular veins in the neck. Slaughtering must be performed on the front of the neck without cutting the spinal cord. Scholars, however, have differed regarding what constitutes the minimum amount of cutting, and the exact point on the neck where it should take place. Those who understood the Prophet's (SAW) Hadith to mean

"kill" the animal think that cutting the throat and the windpipe is good enough to achieve the killing; and those who understood them to mean "release the blood" insisted that in addition to that, the jugular veins, or at least one of them, must also be cut. The important point is that some scholars recommended that slaughtering performed from the back of the neck be avoided, because the results in cutting the spinal cord, and thereby killing the animal, before the actual slaughtering.

THE SLAUGHTERING TOOL

The basic tool to be used in slaughtering is, of course, a knife. Any sharp edge, however, can be used except teeth, nails, or bone. Examples of materials giving a sharp edge are: steel, iron, copper, gold, glass, stone, and wood, if it is sharp enough. Kaab ibn Malik (RA) reported that: "They had sheep that were shepherded by a young woman who noticed at one point that a lamb was dying. When she told me, I broke a stone and slaughtered it, but I told them not to eat." (The full version is narrated by Al-Bukhari.) And in the Hadith reported by Raf'a ibn Khadeej (RA), The Prophet (SAW) told the Companions to use **"anything that releases the blood, and mention the Name of Allah over it, but do not use a tooth or a nail, for a tooth is bone, and nails are the knives of the Ethiopians."** (Reported by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others) It is said that Ethiopians at the time used to kill their animals in the fashion to show their courage and strength. In a lengthy discussion of all possible objects for slaughter, Ibn Rushd said: "It does not make sense to differentiate between teeth and bones for he [the Prophet (SAW)] explained that a tooth is not a good tool by the fact that it is made of bone. And it is well agreed upon in our Madh-hab that anything other than iron is disliked (that is, when iron objects are available) because the Prophet (SAW) has said: **"If you slaughter, then slaughter in the best way. One should sharpen his edge and comfort gently his animal."** (Bidaiatul Mujtahid V1 / P433

WHO SHOULD SLAUGHTER

Scholars agree that the person conducting the slaughtering can be a Muslim or one of the People of the Book. If the person has not reached puberty yet, or is drunk or insane, scholars have differing opinions. The Shaafi'ee School says that their Dhabeedah is Halal if they are aware of what they are doing. The Malikites say the boy's Dhabeedah is Halal, but not the drunks or the insane person's because (under the circumstances) they cannot reason. The main issue behind these differences is that of Niyyah (intention). Those who consider it to be a requirement, do not accept their Dhabeedah as Halal, and vice versa. All scholars agree that the Dhabeedah of the Murtadd (one who has chosen to give up Islam) is not considered Halal.