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Guidelines for Eid-al-Adha Sacrifice (Udhiya/Qurbani)

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Definition

Udhiya/qurbani (sacrifice) is the animal that is slaughtered on the day of Eid-al-Adha and the three days following it (known as the days of *tashreek*). The sacrifice is performed to please God.

Ruling in Islamic Law

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that the sacrifice is a *Sunnah* (non-obligatory devotional act) for anyone who has the financial means to perform it.

Conditions for a Valid Sacrifice

1. The animal must be livestock, namely: camels, cows, sheep, and goats. It cannot be birds or fish.
2. The animal must have attained the minimum age as follows:
 - 5 years for camels
 - 2 years for cows or buffalo
 - 1 year for goats
 - 6 months for sheep
3. The animal must be free from visible imperfections or defects, such as being blind, one-eyed, having a lame leg, a broken horn, being excessively thin or lean or missing a part of its ear or nose.

Time of the Sacrifice

The sacrifice can be offered from after the conclusion of the Eid prayer and till sunset of the last day of the days of *tashreek* (4th day of Eid). Most scholars permit it to be offered during the daytime and nighttime in this period. One wishing to offer the sacrifice may also delegate the slaughtering and distribution of meat to someone else.

The Purpose and Benefits of the Sacrifice

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- 1- Getting closer to God. “Say my prayers and my sacrifice, my life and death are for God, Lord of the worlds” (An’am:162). It is one of the best devotional deeds that one can do on during Eid.
- 2- Following the example of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
- 3- Reviving the tradition of the prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) when God ransomed his son Ismail, “We ransomed his son with a momentous sacrifice” (Al-Safat: 107).
- 4- Spending generously on family.
- 5- Spreading the joy of Eid among the poor and the needy.
- 6- Expressing gratitude to God for His many blessings. “Then eat from (the sacrifice) and feed those who do not ask, and those who do. Thus, we have subjected them to you that you may be thankful” (Al-Hajj: 36).

Dividing the Sacrificial Meat

It is recommended to divide the sacrificial meat into three parts: a part for one’s own family, a part to give to charity, and a part to share with friends and relatives. It is not allowed to sell any of the sacrificial meat.

The Halal Slaughter

The complete form of *Halal* slaughter involves cutting the trachea, oesophagus, and the two blood vessels on either side of the throat. It is acceptable to cut only the blood vessels on either side of the throat or to just cut the trachea and oesophagus.

As mentioned earlier, the person offering the sacrifice may delegate this to someone else provided the delegate is a Muslim or a member of the people of the book (Jews and Christians).

The one performing the slaughter must say the name of God before making the cut and use a sharp knife.

Animals must be treated humanely throughout their life and during the slaughter process. This includes offering them water before slaughtering, and not allowing animals to see other animals being slaughtered. Further, the prophet advised that the knife not be sharpened in the animal’s presence. The knife must be very sharp to avoid any unnecessary pain.

Modern forms of slaughter involve stunning the animal, especially if it is large, with an electrical current or using a stun gun to the head. This is allowed as long as the stunning does not kill the animal before slaughter. Avoiding stunning is preferable but is permissible if the animal is not killed due to stunning.



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Conclusions

In this paper, we have summarized the most essential Islamic rulings dealing with the issue of Eid-al-Adha sacrifice. It is important for Muslims to practice this tradition, while abiding by and respecting government and health regulations aimed at maintaining the safety of the consumer and the public.