

Al-Udhiyah / The Sacrifice

Why do you perform the Sacrifice oh muslim?

The First Khutbah

Servants of Allaah;

We are currently at the onset of a great season from the seasons of goodness and blessings, virtuous and noble days. Allaah Ta'ala specified this period granting it a high rank amongst other days. So all praise is for Allaah, Who caused us to reach this this period and granted blessings in the length of our lives – We ask Him to enable us to obey Him and to accept from us our deeds during this time.

I refer to the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, about whose virtue the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said 'No deed done in other days is better than this ten', they asked, 'Not even Jihaad?', He replied 'Not even Jihaad, unless a man goes out with himself and all his wealth and returns with nothing' (Al-Bukhaaree). And in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad, 'There are no days greater to Allaah than these ten days, and no action more beloved than that done in them – so be abundant in your saying Laa Ilaaha Illallaah (There is nothing worthy of worship in truth except Allaah), Allaahu Akbar (Allaah is the greatest), and Al-Hamdulillaah (All praise belongs to Allaah)'. Meaning, we should praise Allaah excessively by extolling these statements.

The 9th of these ten days is the Day of Arafah, and what will illustrate for you what this Day of Arafah is!? It is that very day when Allaah sent down to His Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the ayah:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

'Today I have perfected your religion for you, and completed my favour upon you, and I am pleased with Islaam for you as your religion' (Al-Qur'aan 5:3)

So it is the day of the completion of the religion and the favour of Allaah, it is a day of forgiveness of sins, the overlooking of wrongdoings, and freedom from the Fire. As the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said 'There is no day wherein Allaah frees his servants from the Fire more than the Day of Arafah. Indeed He brings the angels close and questions them on the servants behalf, saying 'what do those servants want?' (Muslim). The 10th of these days is the Day of Sacrifice (Nahr), and what will illustrate to you what the Day of Sacrifice is!? Indeed it is the day of the great Hajj, the day that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed us of its virtue: 'Indeed the greatest of days according to Allaah is the day of sacrifice (Nahr), then the day of Al-Qarr' (Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Al-Albaanee declared it Saheeh). And the day of Al-Qarr is the day after the day of Sacrifice (Nahr). Then the virtue of these days does not stop when they finish, rather it continues with the days of Tashreeq, which are the 11th, 12th, and 13th. So the Day of Sacrifice and the following days of Tashreeq are 4, and they are the blessed days of Eed Al-Adhaa, the days of the Eed for the people of Islaam. As the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said 'The days of Tashreeq are days of eating, drinking, and the remembrance of Allaah' (Muslim). And in a narration from Imam Ahmad 'Whoever is fasting should break the fast, for indeed these are days of eating and drinking'. So these are the numbered days about which Allaah says:

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ

'And remember Allaah in the numbered days' (Al-Qur'an 2:203)

Oh Muslims:

These great virtues and noble merits are related to the 5th pillar of Islaam, the Hajj. Hajj has specific places which are sacred plains; Al-Masjid Al-Haram, Arafah, and Mina, so this pillar with its virtues cannot be completed except by one who Allaah honours with the efforts of travel to those pure lands where they will perform the rites of Hajj and Umrah, establishing their symbolic acts. Certainly, these merits which the pilgrim gains are not shared except by one who Allaah provides the blessing of Hajj for – and they are only few, a selected number of the Muslims each year from the East and West of the earth. Therefore it is from the wisdom and kindness of Allaah, from His softness and His favouring, that He makes all the Muslims share in the virtue of these great days with remembrance, supplication, and fasting (specifically the day of Arafah), and with all other pious deeds – the greatest of them in this season is the Udhiyah, the sacrifice.

Indeed Allaah enabled the remaining Muslims in general to share with the pilgrims of His Sacred House, by means of a great flag bearing deed – the sacrifice. So on the day of the great Hajj, the Day of Sacrifice, the pilgrims begin slaughtering their selected sacrificial animals, and so do the rest of the Muslims wherever they may be. In fact, Allaah placed some similarities and conciliations between the pilgrim in a state of Ihraam, and the one who slaughters, in some specific issues. So it is not permissible for the one who intends to sacrifice to cut his nails or hair until after the animal has been sacrificed. This is likening them to the pilgrims who are naturally unkempt due to having been in Ihraam. The Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said 'If you see the crescent of Dhul-Hijjah and you intend to sacrifice, then one should hold back from (cutting) the hair and nails', and in another wording '...then he should not touch his hair or nails with anything' (Muslim).

Oh servants of Allaah;

Indeed the sacrifice is a great symbol from the symbols of Islaam, and millions of Muslims continue to establish this deed all over the world, however many of us do not realise the reality of this tradition of Ibraheem, and tradition of Muhammad. Many do not seek to achieve the true meaning of the worship in performing it. For many it has become a mere habit or custom which is connected to the day of Eed – So much so, that unfortunately some Muslims in the Muslim lands may even take interest bearing loans from banks so that they can perform the Udhiyah, and some do not pray the salaah, nor do they refrain from major sins, and yet they insist on sacrificing. So every muslim who wishes to perform the sacrifice must ask themselves why they are doing it, and every muslim who reminds and advises should mention the question to his people, why are you performing the sacrifice oh muslim?

Know, oh brother of Islaam, that slaughtering is from the greatest forms of worship, it is a kind from the kinds of worshipping your Lord, humbling yourself to Him, and seeking His nearness – Just like Salaah, Zakaah, Fasting, and all other forms of worship. Like Allaah said:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say, indeed my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allaah, the Lord of the worlds, He has no 'partner. I was commanded to this, and I am the first of the Muslims' (Al-Qur'an 6:162/3

The word 'Nusukee' in the ayah, means 'my sacrificial slaughter'. In our Islamic Sharee'ah, it may be from camels, cows, and goats/sheep. So in this ayah, Allaah mentioned two great worships alongside each other – Prayer, and Sacrifice. As Allaah says in another ayah:

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ * فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ

'Indeed We granted you the Kawthar, so pray to your Lord and perform the sacrifice'

(Al-Qur'an 108:1/2)

It is for this reason that performing the sacrifice for other than Allaah Azza wa Jall, is from the greater Shirk, a breaker of the foundation of Tawheed. So whoever sacrifices for other than Allaah is a Mushrik, of the type of Shirk which causes one to leave Islaam – and we seek refuge with Allaah from that. This rule applies regardless of whether one sacrifices for one of the angels, the prophets, khaleefahs, pious ones, scholars – all of that is Shirk with Allaah and takes one out of Islaam. It is necessary for every individual to fear Allaah in himself, and to save himself from falling into Shirk in all its forms, about which Allaah says:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

'Indeed, one who commits Shirk with Allaah, then Allaah has made Paradise forbidden for him, and his abode will be the Fire. And there are no helpers for the wrongdoers' (Al-Qur'an 5:72)

And the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said 'May Allaah curse the one who sacrifices for other than Allaah' (Muslim).

Oh servants of Allaah;

Indeed this great and ancient worship dates back as long as humans do on the earth. The prophets and messengers taught it to their peoples, as Allaah says:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ

'And for every nation we appointed a rite (of sacrifice) that they may take the name of Allaah over that which He provided them of (sacrificial) animals. So your God is One God, so submit to Him, and give glad tidings to the humble' (Al-Qur'an 22:34)

The scholars of Quranic explanation say that this ayah means that Allaah gave each group of believers from every nation a sacrifice to perform, and He specified that these be the type of animals to be sacrificed for the purpose of seeking reward not just for eating by using the words 'Baheematul-An'aam', referring to the larger four-legged animals mentioned above. The benefit we take from the ayah is that sacrificing animals is not exclusively for this nation, rather it is something prescribed for the believers since the early nations, and taking the name of Allaah over them was always prescribed.

So from here we can see that the worship of slaughter was present in most if not all of the previous nations, including the People of the Scripture and the polytheists – this is because it was taken from the prophets, but when they distorted their creed they fell into Shirk and began performing it for other than Allaah Azza wa Jall, such as stones and statues, graves and the dead ones. Then if you know this, oh muslim brother, then know that Udhiyah is not merely a custom or habit, nor for enjoyment and pleasure – rather it is a form of worship, in the same manner that prayer, bowing and prostrating, fasting and other things are worship. The intention of worship is therefore obligatory therein, as Allaah says:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ

'And they were not commanded except that they worship Allaah, placing their religion for Him exclusively, upstanding and righteous' (Al-Qur'an 98:5)

So whoever slaughters without the intention of worshipping Allaah then he has gained meat from this slaughter and not worship.

Oh servants of Allaah;

Indeed we are in an age wherein knowledge has become little and ignorance has taken precedence – I do not mean ignorance in worldly matters for in this matter the doors of knowledge have opened up for the people more so than for those before them. In fact many of them actualise the ayah:

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

'So when they forgot that which they were reminded of, We opened the doors of every good thing for them, until when they rejoiced over what they were given, We seized them suddenly, then they were in despair' (Al-Qur'an 6:44)

We seek the refuge of Allaah from the state of the disbelievers:

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ

'They know that which is apparent of the worldly life whilst they are negligent of the Hereafter' (Al-Qur'an 30:7)

Due to the attachment of the hearts and minds to the worldly life, and granting importance to tangible thinking only, a dangerous mentality has spread throughout the muslims, rooted in, and in reality it the thinking of the atheist, which rejects prophethood – It is indeed the creed and methodology which seeks to grant Islaam a self-benefitting explanation (i.e. constantly explaining Islamic concepts as if their only purpose is to benefit mankind or have some tangible or worldly purpose), which does not look at the aspect of worship for Allaah, and the fact that man is a weak, humble and dependent servant of the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Nor does it pay attention to the fact that Allaah Ta'ala created man for a specific purpose, which is to worship Him and become humble before Him and direct all forms of worship and obedience to Him. Rather, that way of thinking explains the purpose of religion to be ruling the earth, serving the human race and affecting character – that is a distorted view which takes some of the branch benefits of the religion, such as character and dealings, to be the main intended goal. It rejects the purpose and destroys the soul of the religion, placing the true religion and worship as mere means to worldly benefits and social rectification. So they say that prayer is like bodily exercise, fasting is for personal health and social understanding, zakaah is economical interaction and sharing, and Hajj is a business centre and a show of world meeting. Such is how they destroy the reality of the forms of worship and religion.

So when we come to this great form of worship, of seeking nearness to Allaah by slaughtering, they claim that it is for the purpose of feeding the poor – whilst the reality is that this is not the intended goal of sacrificing. Udhiyah is a sunnah, an obligatory sunnah for the resident who is wealthy enough – regardless whether there are poor folk present or not, and regardless whether the one sacrificing the animal is in need of the meat or not – he still has to perform it to establish the worship which is a symbol of Islaam. This worship is not based on it being for this purpose in the first place, neither is any worldly benefit its cause, rather it is done purely for worship. Allaah says:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَائُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَيَسِّرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

'Their meat will not reach Allaah, nor the blood, but piety from yourselves reaches Him. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may proclaim the greatness of Allaah that He has guided you, and give glad tidings to the good-doers' (Al-Qur'an 22:37)

Yes, there is a benefit for the poor in this great symbol, as an extra benefit, from its fruits – Meaning the poor may eat from some of the meat as a result. For this reason it is prescribed in the religion to give in charity with some of it – though there is some difference of opinion amongst the scholars of fiqh in that; The Shafi'ees and the Hanbalees state its obligation, and they base this on the ayah:

فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعَمُوا الْفُقَرَاءَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ

'So eat from them and feed the needy and the beggar' (Al-Qur'an 22:36)

Meaning, whoever asks and does not ask from amongst the poor. Other than these scholars say that the command in the ayah is for permissibility and virtue, not for obligation. The Hanafees say that even if he wanted to give all of it in charity, that would be permissible, and if he kept it all to himself that would also be permissible because the aspect of worship is in the spilling of the blood.

So ponder, oh muslims, over the religion and correct the intentions, make the worship sincere and beware of distorted ways and the corruption of the knowledge of religion and its worship.