

# RITUAL SLAUGHTER (UDHIYYAH/QURBANI)

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The following are the rules with regards to the worship of Qurbani (also known as Udhiyyah).

## Virtues of Qurbani

- ***"So turn in prayer towards your Lord and sacrifice (animals)". (108:2)***
- There is nothing dearer to Allah during the days of Qurbani than the sacrificing of animals. The sacrificed animal shall come on the Day of Judgement with its horns, hair, and hooves (to be weighed). The sacrifice is accepted by Allah before the blood reaches the ground. Therefore sacrifice with an open and happy heart. (Tirmizi, Ibne Maajah).
- Zayd Ibne Arqam (radhiyallahu anhu) relates that the Companions (radhiyallahu anhum) asked, "O Rasoolullah! What is Qurbani?" He replied, "It is the sunnah of your father Ibraaheem alayhis salaam." They asked again, "What benefit do we get from it?" He answered, "A reward for every hair (of the sacrificed animal)." "And (what reward is there for animals with) wool, O Rasoolullah?" they asked. "A reward", he said, "for every fibre of the wool." (Ibne Maajah).
- When a person slaughters a Qurbani animal, he is forgiven at the fall of the first drop of blood, and verily, the animal shall be brought forward on the Day Of Judgement with its blood, meat etc., and shall be increased in weight seventy times more than its own weight, and thereafter it will be placed on the scale of deeds. (Kanzul 'Ummaal).

## Who is Required to Perform Qurbani

- Every adult Muslim, male or female, who owns 612.36 grams of silver or its equivalent in money, personal ornaments, stock-intrade or any other form of wealth which is surplus to his basic needs, is under an obligation to offer a ritual slaughter (Qurbani/Udhiyyah).
- Each adult member of a family who owns the above mentioned amount must perform his own Qurbani separately. If the husband owns the required quantity but his wife does not, then slaughtering will be obligatory on the husband only and vice-versa. If both of them have the prescribed amount of wealth, both should perform the Qurbani separately.
- If the adult children live with their parents, Qurbani is obligatory on each one of them possessing the prescribed amount. The sacrifice offered by a husband for himself does not fulfil the obligation of his wife, nor can the Qurbani offered by a father discharge his son or daughter from their obligation. Each one of them should care for his/her own Qurbani.

- However, if a husband or a father, apart from offering his own ritual slaughter, offers another on behalf of his wife or his son, he can do so with their permission.

### **The Time of Qurbani (Udhiyyah)**

- Qurbani is only valid during three days of Dhul Hijjah, 10th, 11th, and 12th. Qurbani cannot be performed in any other day of the year.
- Although Qurbani is permissible on each of the three days, the first day (10th of Dhul Hijjah) is the most preferable and desired day. Generally, Qurbani is not allowed before Eid Salah.
- If Qurbani is performed at a place where Eid Salah is not performed, the slaughter should commence after the completion of Eid Salah in the nearby town / city where it is performed.
- Qurbani can be performed during night time. However, it is preferable to perform it during the daytime.

### **Conditions for the Qurbani Animal**

- The animals eligible for Qurbani are goats, sheep, cattle and camels, male or female. No other type of animal is allowed for Qurbani.
- Castrated animals may be used for Qurbani.
- Barren animals may be used for Qurbani.
- Goats and sheep have to be at least one year old. However, a healthy sheep that looks one year old may also be used, provided it is above six months old.
- Cattle must be at least two years old.
- Camels must be at least five years old.

### **Rulings on Defects in the Qurbani Animals**

- An animal that was born without horns or the horns had broken off from the middle, is eligible for Qurbani. If the horn has broken off from the root, or the horn has been uprooted, then it will not be eligible for Qurbani.
- Those animals that are totally blind or have lost one-third or more of their eye-sight, or one-third or more of one ear is cut, or one-third or more of the tail is cut, are not eligible for Qurbani.
- An animal which limps and walks on three legs and cannot put the injured (4th) leg onto the ground, or it is able to put the injured leg onto the ground, but is unable to walk on it, is not eligible for Qurbani. However, if it is unable to walk on it, but can still take support from it, then it is eligible for Qurbani, even though it is limping.
- Animals having no teeth at all are not eligible for Qurbani. If an animal has lost some teeth only, and has most of the teeth, it is eligible for Qurbani. If most of the teeth are lost, it is not eligible for Qurbani.

- Animals born without ears are not eligible for Qurbani. Animals with very small ears are eligible for Qurbani.
- Thin and extremely weak animals, unable to walk to the place of slaughtering, are not eligible for Qurbani.
- If an animal sustains an injury whilst being slaughtered, the Qurbani is valid.
- If an animal is purchased in a healthy and eligible state. Thereafter, an accident occurs which renders the animal unfit for Qurbani. In such a case, if the purchaser is not wealthy (Owner of Nisab) it will be permissible to offer the same animal for Qurbani. If the purchaser is owner of nisab, then it is compulsory upon him to obtain another animal in place of the injured animal.
- If an animal purchased for Qurbani gives birth (before being slaughtered), then the newly born animal should also be slaughtered.

### **Specifying Qurbani Animals for the Individual's Qurbani**

Since Qurbani is carried out at abattoirs on behalf of the Muslim community, it is imperative that animals are specified (for them) before slaughter and that the specified carcass finally reaches them. To ensure this takes place whilst recognising the technicalities at abattoirs in this country, the following steps should be adhered to:

- It is important that the animals are purchased before the Qurbani is performed or at least identified and specified for purchase and Qurbani on behalf of the person wishing to perform Qurbani. This should be done in the form of tagging a label that displays the individual's name or an assigned number.
- If the Qurbani orders are placed through an agent (or a butcher), the agent (or the butcher) should list all names with exclusive numbers and keep securely. The agent (or the butcher) should also provide the assigned number to the customer at this stage for their information. Thereafter, the complete list (or at least the exact total number) should be forwarded to the abattoir before Qurbani commences.
- It is then the responsibility of the supervisor or slaughterer at the abattoir to specify animals for each agent (or butcher) according to the number given. Furthermore, a particular animal must be specified for each name or assigned number provided by the agent (or butcher) and labelled accordingly as the examples below:

a) Label or tag marked with name of butcher and name of customer:  
e.g. (Butcher) XYZ & (Name) XYZ.

or to make it easier;

b) Label or tag marked with the name of butcher and specified Qurbani number: e.g. Butcher XYZ Customer No 1, Butcher XYZ Customer No 2, Butcher XYZ Customer No 3, and so forth.

Hence each animal must be at least numbered and this must be done before slaughter and at the latest when bought into the slaughter bay.

- Mere slaughter without specifying is not sufficient although the intent would be to specify and number the carcasses at a later stage e.g. whilst loading.
- Finally, care should be taken that each individual receives the appointed and numbered carcass after slaughter and subsequent processes.

### Case Scenario

Abdullah Butchers has an order of 50 Qurbanis. He would form a list of the names of customers who have placed an order with him and assign a specific number for them, e.g. Muhammad Rashid - 1, Ismail Abdur Rahim - 2, etc. A copy of this list would be given to the slaughterhouse and one copy retained by the butcher. When each animal is about to be slaughtered, the slaughterers or supervisors would specify that this particular animal is for order number x of Abdullah Butchers. The animal would then be labelled specially to distinguish it as that particular Qurbani, so that when the order is collected or delivered, the butcher clearly identifies which customer's Qurbani it is, according to the list he had drawn up.

### **Dhabh (Slaughter) of the Qurbani Animal**

- It is Mustahab (preferable) that the owner of the Qurbani animal slaughters it personally, provided he is able to slaughter properly.
- If the owner is unable to slaughter, it is better to delegate the task to another Muslim who is acquainted with the requirements of Islamic slaughter.
- If the slaughter has been delegated, it is desirable that the owner of the Qurbani animal is present.
- The Islamic slaughter requires that the throat, the external jugular veins and the wind-pipe of the animal to be swiftly and clearly severed with a very sharp knife, together with invoking Allah's name.
- If only two of the passages and veins are cut, the slaughter will be incorrect. If any three of the four are severed, the slaughter will be correct.
- It is Mustahab (preferable) to face the Qiblah while slaughtering.
- It is preferable to sharpen the knife before slaughtering in order to ease the suffering of the animal.
- After slaughtering, the animal should not be skinned or cut up into pieces before it turns completely cold.
- An animal should not be slaughtered in the presence of another animal.
- It is preferable to read the following whilst laying the throat of the animal towards the Qiblah:

*"For me, I have set my face firmly and truly towards Him, Who created the heavens and the earth. And never shall I give partners to Allah. Verily, my worship and my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah; Lord of the worlds. O Allah this sacrifice is from you and is for you."*

- Whilst slaughtering the animal read: "*Bismillah, Allahu Akbar*" ("*In the name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest*").
- If the above are not memorised then make intention of Qurbani and merely recite "*Bismillah*". The Qurbani will be correct.

### **The Meat and Skin of the Qurbani Animal**

- It is allowed for a person who performs Qurbani (Wajib or Nafil), to either eat the meat or to give it to whomsoever he pleases, rich or poor, Muslim or non-Muslim.
- It is preferable that the meat be divided into three parts. One part for the home, one part for relatives and friends, and one part for the poor and needy.
- The meat or skin cannot be sold, or given to an employee or to a butcher in payment of his labour. It maybe given as a gift
- The skin of the Qurbani can be kept for one's personal use or given to anybody else for their personal use.
- The Qurbani skin cannot be given in lieu of any type of services.
- Thus, the skin cannot be given to an Imam or Mu'azzin in lieu of their services.
- If the skin is sold, it is necessary to give the money in charity as Sadaqah
- It is not permissible to eat the meat of the following types of Qurbani:

a) Qurbani that is carried out as a Kaffarah for a Jinaayat (error) committed during Hajj.

b) Qurbani performed for a deceased person due to his Wasiyyah (will).

c) Qurbani performed due to a Nazr (vow) one had made.

- The meat of the above-mentioned types of Qurbani has to be distributed to the poor and needy only.
- The meat of a Nafil (voluntary) Qurbani, for example, for a deceased person, can be eaten by all, similar to one's own Qurbani.
- If more than one person participates in the Qurbani of an animal that has seven shares and each share-holder requests his share of the meat, it is necessary to distribute the meat equally by weight. If one person's share is more than the others, it will not be permissible as this will become interest
- If one person's share of meat is less than the others, but with the meat, he is given the skin or the head or legs of the animal, it will be

permissible. Great care should be taken in order to distribute the meat equally.

### **Distribution of the Meat**

- If an animal is sacrificed on behalf of more than one person, like a cow or camel, its meat should be distributed equally among its owners by weighing the meat strictly and not at random or by mere guess. Even if all the partners agree on its distribution without weighing, it is still not permissible according to Shariah. However, if the actual weighing is not practicable due to some reason, and all the partners agree to distribute the meat without weighing, distribution by guess can be done with the condition that each share necessarily contains either a leg of the animal or some quantity of its liver.
- Although the person offering a Qurbani can keep all its meat for his own use, yet, it is preferable to distribute one-third among the poor, another one-third among his relatives and then, keep the rest for his personal consumption.
- All parts of the sacrificed animal can be used for personal benefit, but none can be sold, nor can be given to the butcher as a part of his wages. If somebody has sold the meat of the animal or its skin, he must give the accrued price as Sadaqah to a poor man who can receive Zakah.

### **No Alternate for Qurbani**

- Some people think that instead of offering a ritual slaughter (Qurbani) they should give its amount to some poor people as charity. This attitude is totally wrong. Actually, there are different forms of worship obligatory on Muslims. Each one of them has its own importance and none of them can stand for the other. It is not permissible for a Muslim to perform Salah instead of fasting in Ramadhan, nor is it permissible for him to give some charity instead of observing the obligatory Salah. Similarly, Qurbani is an independent form of worship and this obligation cannot be discharged by spending money in charity.
- However, if an individual, out of ignorance or negligence, could not offer it on the three prescribed days (10th, 11th and 12th of Dhu'l Hijjah) then, in that case only, he can give the price of a ritual slaughter (Udhiyyah) as Sadaqah to those entitled to receive Zakah. But during the days of Udhiyyah, no Sadaqa can discharge the obligation.

### **Cutting and Clipping the Hair and Nails**

- It is mustahab (desirable) for one who intends to perform Qurbani to refrain from cutting hair or clipping nails from 1st Zul Hijjah to 10th Zul Hijjah, (i.e. until after Qurbani).