

WHAT ARE YOU SLAUGHTERING?

Qurbaani time is a very exciting time. As the big day draws closer, the entire community is abuzz with Qurbaani talk and activity. One of the common questions posed during this time is: "What are you slaughtering?"

Regardless of whether one is slaughtering a humble sheep or a raging bull, the important aspect is that if qurbaani is waajib upon any person, he is fulfilling his obligation. Together with fulfilling this duty he will also be performing an action that is unmatched in its reward and significance during the days of qurbaani. Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) clearly declared: **"There is no action performed on the Day of Sacrifice which is more beloved to Allah Ta'ala than shedding the blood of the sacrificial animals"** (Tirmizi #1493). The qurbaani performed becomes a means of the forgiveness of one's sins and one is rewarded equivalent to the number of hair or strands of wool on the body of the animal.

NOT A MERE RITUAL

Subhanallah! Such a great action! But ... is it just a ritual to be over and done with? Is it just a time for enjoyment and merry-making (within the limits of deen)? Or does qurbaani teach us any lessons which we should remember and uphold even after the animals have been slaughtered and the meat digested? Indeed qurbaani has many deep lessons. Unfortunately we generally fail to reflect upon and act upon the lessons we are taught by the shedding of the blood of the animals.

Again, we should ask ourselves the same question posed above: "What are you slaughtering?" If the answer is "a sheep", very well. When slaughtering the sheep for Allah Ta'ala, did one also take the lesson of always "slaughtering one's sleep" for Allah Ta'ala at the time of fajr, "slaughtering" one's occupations, business, etc. at the time of zuhr and asr and "slaughtering" all the obstacles that prevent one from any salaah? Qurbani is a *waajib* sacrifice. It teaches us the lesson of making the daily sacrifice of whatever comes in the way of fulfilling any *fardh* (compulsory) action of deen.

SLAUGHTER A BULL

Likewise, it is excellent and very rewarding to slaughter a bull, but the question to ask oneself is: "Have I also slaughtered the bully in me (the bully within one which makes one oppress the spouse, deal with employees in a harsh and ruthless manner, trample those who cannot defend themselves, etc.)?" When subduing the massive animal, has one also subdued one's raging anger – the anger which is vented even on parents and other near and dear ones? When toppling the mighty cow, has one also toppled one's pride? When the throat of the ox is slit, has one also slit one's ego?

CONSIDERATION

One of the emphasised aspects with regard to qurbaani is to treat the animals kindly. The animal must not be dragged to the place of slaughter by its hind legs, it must not be kept hungry or thirsty even though it will be slaughtered shortly, the knife must be very sharp and one animal must not be slaughtered in front of another. These guidelines highlight the lesson of CONSIDERATION for an animal. After having taken pains to adhere to all these directives and giving the best consideration to the animals, which is a part of our deen, have we also taken the lesson of consideration for HUMANS in general? And what about the humans who are our parents, spouse, children, other family members, neighbours, etc.? What about consideration for the poor and needy?

BREAK HEARTS

Among the lessons of consideration for the animal is that one should not even sharpen the knife in front of it, since this will distress the animal and "break its heart". *Subhanallah!* Our beautiful deen teaches us not to even distress ANIMALS and break their hearts. Has this taught us to totally

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SLAUGHTER

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refrain from distressing HUMANS and breaking their hearts - by calling them names, or by mocking, ridiculing, degrading, demeaning and humiliating them???

UN-SLAUGHTER

Qurbaani is the most beloved action to Allah Ta'ala on the day of 'Eidul Adha, as discussed above. However, it is amazing that on the day of slaughter, something even more beloved to Allah Ta'ala is, in a sense, to *un-slaughter*! Hazrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbaas (radhiyallahu 'anhuma) reported that once, on the day of 'Eidul Adha Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "There is no action more virtuous than the spilling of blood (qurbaani) on this day - *except the joining of family ties* (that have been "slaughtered")" (at-Targheeb). Alhamdulillah, qurbaani is carried out with great enthusiasm and zeal and with a happy heart since it is a great 'ibaadah. It is then only logical that the even greater 'ibaadah of joining family ties be carried out with even greater zeal and enthusiasm.

TOTAL SUBMISSION

Qurbaani is not a mere ritual. It is the reminder of the total submission of Nabi Ebrahim ('alahis salaam) and his son Nabi Ismaa'eel ('alahis salaam). It teaches us to also submit ourselves totally to our Creator and Master, Allah Ta'ala, in every aspect of life. May Allah Ta'ala enable us to "slaughter" every sin and totally submit ourselves to Him.

FREE COWS

FREE COWS AND SHEEP EVERY WEEK! HURRY ... ONLY FOR THOSE WHO COME EARLY. Imagine if one live camel, cow and sheep were to be distributed at every masjid to the first three people who enter the masjid for jumu'ah. The masjid car parks will be filled with people camping overnight in order to try and be among the first to enter the masjid the next day.

While live animals may not be distributed at any masjid, the reward of sacrificing a camel, cow or sheep can be attained every Friday for free, simply by going early to the masjid for jumu'ah. Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: "*On the day of jumu'ah, the Angels stand at the door of the masjid, recording in sequence the names of those who come for the jumu'ah salaah. The one who enters first is conferred with the reward of offering a camel in the path of Allah Ta'ala, the one who comes second is given the reward of the one who offers a cow, the one who follows in thereafter is given the reward of sacrificing a sheep or goat, the one who reaches after him receives the reward of sacrificing a chicken and the one who comes subsequent to him is granted the reward of offering an egg in the path of Allah Ta'ala. Once the imaam comes out to deliver the khutbah, the Angels close their books and listen to the khutbah*" (Thus the names of the latecomers are not recorded in the list of those who attended jumu'ah) (Saheeh Bukhaari).

FASTING FOR ONE YEAR

Another hadeeth also highlights the importance of going early to the masjid for jumu'ah. Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) has mentioned: "*Whoever takes a thorough bath on the day of jumu'ah, sets out early for the jumu'ah salaah on foot without any mode of transport and he takes a spot close to the imaam listening attentively to the khutbah without engaging in any futile talk, for every step taken he will be granted the reward of fasting for an entire year and the reward of standing at night in 'ibaadah for an entire year*" (Sunan Abi Dawood). What a cheap bargain! Furthermore, during any event every person loves to have a seat closest to the stage. Who wouldn't want to enjoy the closest proximity to Allah Ta'ala on the Day of Qiyaamah while others will be at a distance? 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu 'anhu) narrates that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "*On the Day of Qiyaamah, the proximity that people will enjoy with Allah Ta'ala will be in accordance to their times of arrival for the jumu'ah salaah*" (Sunan Ibn Maajah). Hence, the effort made for getting a place in the first *saff* (row) for the jumu'ah salaah reserves one a place in the first *saff* on the day of Qiyaamah.

Nevertheless, advanced preparations and a high level of enthusiasm are vital in order to gain and reap the maximum rewards and benefits, especially when the rewards are based on arriving early.

LEADER OF ALL DAYS

The great virtues mentioned above are just some of the many great virtues of a very great day - the day of jumu'ah. The significance of this day can be easily understood from the ahaadeeth of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) reports that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "*The best day that the sun ever rises on is the day of jumu'ah. Aadam*" (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SOCCKER FANATIC

Q *I am very passionate especially about English football and also follow many other sport. Much of my time and money is spent on my passion. Occasionally it strikes me that this is wrong but I cannot manage to detach myself from it. Please advise.*

A very important word in your question is the word “detach”. A Muslim views everything from the perspective that soon he will certainly be detached from this world. He will very soon be detached from this “transit lounge,” from all his leisure and pleasures, his obsessions and passions, his businesses and occupations as well as from all his wealth and possessions. Once he is detached from this world and “attached” to the sand of the grave, nothing but his imaan and righteous actions will be of any avail to him. A Muslim should be most concerned of what will be of everlasting benefit to him when is detached from this world and what will harm him at that time? Hence consider your sports passion also from this perspective.

There is a very peculiar side to sports that few know about and hardly anyone will admit. Daniel Wann, a leading sport psychologist at Murray State University, writes: *“Shaped by the needs of capitalist systems, spectator sports serve vested interests as a type of ‘cultural anaesthesia,’ ... or ‘opiate’ (drug) that distracts, diverts, and deflects attention from the pressing social problems and issues of the day”* (Psychology Today). A far greater calamity is that often sports become the “religion” of its ardent followers. In the same article the author writes: *“Psychologists are closing in on the conclusion that sport has many of the same effects on spectators as religion does.”*

PRIORITY

Does it then come as any surprise that many people give priority to their sports over friends, relatives, their immediate families and even their deen. How often is salaah missed, or performing it with jamaat in the masjid is neglected due to sports? Let alone missing one salaah, being delayed to the extent of missing the takbeer-e-tahreemah (the first takbeer) with the imaam due to one’s involvement in sports is a greater loss than losing all one’s wealth and possessions!

Can sport really become a religion? Consider it in the light of a comparison. A true Mu’min’s heart is filled with the love of Allah Ta’ala and His most beloved Rasul (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), his tongue talks more about things that take him closer to Allah Ta’ala or what is necessary in life, his mind is absorbed in the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala and his passion is serving the deen of Allah Ta’ala. On the contrary, sport obsession overturns all of this. The heart becomes occupied with the admiration of sports stars,

most of who are devoid of imaan. Many fans “make zikr” of (mention) the names of their teams and players dozens of times in the course of the day, especially when a tournament is played, while the name of Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is hardly uttered even a few times! The mind is also occupied in the same utter futility, creating imaginary teams and dreaming of imaginary goals. The eyes read thousands of words of sports news in a day but not even a few words of the Quraan Shareef. Fans know the detail profiles of players, but do not know much about their most beloved Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) who undertook untold sacrifices and cried profusely for their guidance. Supporters will proudly wear the name of a disbeliever sports star on their clothing but will not be able to identify with the Sahaabah (radhiallahu ‘anhum). Thus sport does become like a religion for its ardent supporters.

“WE WON”

Another aspect to dispassionately consider is the following: How has your support for your favourite team, or player, benefitted you in any way? When you jump for joy shouting “WE WON,” have you ever thought of what did *you* really win? The reality is that *you* won nothing. *You* actually lost much. *You* had to part with your hard earned money to support your team. Depending on how fanatical (and “intelligent”) you were, you would have spent a ridiculous amount for a garment with the team colours and on other team regalia. *They* made money out of everything you bought and from all your support, but do not even know who *YOU* are. They have no idea whether you even exist!

GOAL

The bottom line is: What is your goal in life? If your goal is to attain the everlasting success at the time when you will be suddenly detached from this world, then do not be fascinated with people whose futile goal in life is to kick a ball between three posts. Instead, sincerely adopt the company of the pious. In their company you will gain the love of Allah Ta’ala. Once His love settles in your heart, the love of those who oppose Him and the fascination with their futile sports will leave your heart. You will insha-Allah then become fascinated with being obedient to Allah Ta’ala and with following the sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam).

(‘alaihi salaam) was created on this day; he was entered into Jannah on this day and also removed from Jannah (sent to the earth) on this day” (Saheeh Muslim). In yet another hadeeth, Nabi (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is reported to have mentioned: *“The leader of all days is the day of jumu‘ah and it is the greatest in the sight of Allah Ta‘ala, even greater than the days of ‘Eidul Fitr and ‘Eidul Adha”* (Musnad Ahmad).

MULTIPLIED REWARDS

These ahaadeeth signify the virtue and auspiciousness that Allah Ta‘ala Himself attaches to the day of jumu‘ah. When the day itself is so auspicious, one can well imagine the innumerable multiplied rewards that Allah Ta‘ala has kept in store for the deeds carried out on this day. Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “Rewards are multiplied on the day of jumu‘ah” (Tabraani). Among other ‘ibaadat, of special significance on jumu‘ah is that recitation of Durood Shareef be greatly increased and *Surah Kahaf* and *Surah Dukhaan* be recited. Thus the night and day of jumu‘ah are not times to while away. Jumu‘ah is a day greater than the days of ‘Eid and a time to get very much closer to Allah Ta‘ala and be drenched in the showers of His mercy and blessings.

MULTIPLIED SINS

While the rewards are multiplied on special occasions and in sacred places, likewise sins committed in such times and places are also multiplied. The same applies to the sacred occasion of jumu‘ah. Hence how tragic it would be if, due to our indifference, neglect and sins, the very night of jumu‘ah becomes a time of being distanced away from Allah Ta‘ala. May Allah Ta‘ala protect us.

FAQEEHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of *Faqeeul Ummah* Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Saaheb (*rahmatullahi ‘alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islaahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is an answer to a question posed to him.

STEADFAST ON TAUBAH

Bismihi Ta‘ala

Respected Mufti Saheb

Assalamu ‘alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu

My heart has become very hard. It simply does not melt with the remembrance or the fear of Allah Ta‘ala. Please advise as to how I should soften my heart.

Furthermore, with the grace of Allah Ta‘ala and through the barkat (blessing) of being linked to yourself, I have been blessed with the tawfeeq (ability) of quickly repenting from my sins. However I find it very difficult to remain steadfast on taubah (and not repeat the sin). Please help me to overcome these maladies.

Alhamdulillah, I have also returned the money that was given to me for leading the taraweeh salaah.

Summary of Reply:

Bismihi Ta‘ala

Respected Brother/Sister

Assalamu ‘alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu

I was greatly pleased to hear that whatever you were given for taraweeh was returned. May Allah Ta‘ala make you independent of such wealth.

It is necessary to always keep in mind the reality of taubah. The reality of taubah is that one should sincerely regret having committed the sin, as well as firmly resolve to refrain from the sin. The resolve should be such that even if you are thrown into the fire, you will not commit that sin again. One should also constantly make du‘aa to Allah Ta‘ala to grant one istiqamat (steadfastness) on one’s taubah. If any rights (of people) have not been discharged, make an effort to fulfil the same. In this way one will Insha-Allah be blessed with istiqamat.