

RULINGS of UDḤIYYA

udḥiyya (أضحية)—the sacrifice of an animal

Muslims are required to perform the sacrifice of an animal on the occasion of *Eid al-Adḥā* (10th to 12th Dhu'l-Hajj), with the intention of worship. This is called *al-udḥiyya* in Islam. The purpose of this worship is to remind ourselves of our forefather Ibrāhīm ﷺ. We are informed in a hadith (prophetic tradition):

زيد ابن أرقم رضي الله عنه قال قال اصحاب رسول الله صلي الله عليه وسلم يا رسول الله ما هذه الأضاحي قال سنة أبيكم ابراهيم قالوا فما لنا فيها يا رسول الله قال بكل شعرة حسنة قالوا فالصوف يا رسول الله قال بكل شعرة من الصوف حسنة

The Companions once asked the Prophet ﷺ, 'What are these sacrifices?' He replied, 'It is the *sunna* of your father Ibrāhīm.' They asked, 'What is the benefit of it?' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'For each hair is a unit of reward... for every hair of wool is a unit of reward [too].'¹

The Ruling of *al-Uḍḥiyya*

- The sacrifice is *wājib* upon every adult Muslim who is not travelling and who can afford it. The criteria for affordability is the same amount set for *Zakāh*.
- For this worship to count, an actual sacrifice must take place. A person cannot pay the equivalent price of an animal that is then not slaughtered.

The timing for *al-Uḍḥiyya*

The sacrifice must be performed after *Ṣalāt al-ʿĪd* on the tenth of Dhu'l-Hajj. If anyone does it prior to this, then it will not count as the religious sacrifice. He can perform the sacrifice on the tenth, eleventh and twelfth of Dhu'l-Hajj.

Which animals are suitable for sacrifice?

- Sheeps; at least one year old, unless it is fat in which case six months is acceptable.
- Camels; at least five years old. (This can be shared amongst seven people)
- Cows; at least two years old. (This can be shared amongst seven people)
- Goats; at least one year old.

1 Set forth by Ibn Mājah.

The animals that are sacrificed must be healthy and free from physical defects. Our Prophet ﷺ was a mercy not just for mankind but all for animals too. He was the pioneer of animal rights too. He was the pioneer of animal rights centuries before the term was even coined in the west.

The distribution of the meat

The best method –which is the one the Prophet ﷺ encouraged – is to divide the slaughtered meat into three parts:

- one third for the family;
- one third for friends and relatives;
- one third for the poor.

If the family is in dire need, then they can keep all of the meat. Muslims are encouraged to utilise all parts of the sacrifice, such as the skin (for leather etc.).