***Rules of the Sacrifice***

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Scholars agreed that offering a sacrifice is one of the rites of Islam and a great pious action that draws men near to Allah. Allah said: "Therefore to your Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice." The Prophet peace be upon him offered a sacrifice and ordered and urged others to do the same. Makhnaf bin Sulaim said that we were standing with the Prophet peace be upon him at 'Arafat and I heard him saying: "O people, each family must offer a Sacrifice every year."

Scholars disagreed about the rules of the Sacrifice:

-The first opinion: Offering a sacrifice is dutiful; that is the opinion of Abu Hanifah and Ibn Taimiah agreed with him.

-The second opinion: Offering a Sacrifice is a stressed supererogation; that is the opinion of most scholars, Abu Bakr and 'Umar may Allah be pleased with them.

Ibn Hazm said: No one of the Companions of the Prophet reported that the Sacrifice is dutiful. Also most scholars said that it is not dutiful. No texts refers that the Sacrifice is dutiful.

At-Tirmidhi reported that a man asked Ibn 'Umar about the Sacrifice whether it is dutiful or not. Ibn 'Umar said that the Prophet peace be upon him offered Sacrifice and Muslim did that after him.

So a Muslim who is able to offer a Sacrifice should offer it. Abu Hurairah may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "Whoever can afford it, but does not offer a Sacrifice, let him not come near our prayer place." This Hadith was narrated by Ahmed and Ibn Majah, and was graded as sound by Al-Hakim. Imams graded this Hadith as untraceable.

Sheikh of Islam Ibn Taimiah said: Sacrifice is a way of spending in a fair manner. It is permissible to offer a Sacrifice for the orphan from his own money. A woman can also take money from her husband to offer a Sacrifice for members of her family, even without permission of her husband. An indebted can offer a Sacrifice if the loaner does not ask him to pay the debt. A person can also borrow money to offer a Sacrifice if he can pay the debt later, but he it is not dutiful for him to do so.

The Prophet peace be upon him used to offer a Sacrifice on the Day of Sacrifice among the beasts, such as camels, cows and sheep. Thus scholars agreed that the Sacrifice shall be of these animals, and exceptional states are not considered.

Anas bin Malik may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Prophet peace be upon him sacrificed with two horned rams, black and white in color. He mentioned Allah's Name, and said 'Allah is the Greatest', and placed his foot on their sides. In another narration, this phrase is added: "He slaughtered them with his own hands." (Agreed upon) In another narration, "He sacrificed with two fatty, horned rams." In the narration of Muslim, "And the Prophet said: By the Name of Allah and Allah is the Greatest."

It is supererogatory that a person who offers a Sacrifice should attend slaughtering of it. It is dutiful upon him to mention Allah's Name and recite Takbir over it. He should slaughter in a good and gentle way as the Prophet peace be upon him used to slaughter.

Ahmed narrated that a man of Al-Ansar reported that the Prophet peace be upon him laid his Sacrifice down and said to that man: "Help me to slaughter my Sacrifice." Ibn Hajar said that narrators of this Hadith are trustworthy.

Anas bin Malik said: "The Prophet peace be upon him used to offer two rams as a Sacrifice, and I used to do the same." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari) This Hadith shows that drawing near to Allah with offering more than one Sacrifice is legal.

Malik, Ibn Majah and At-Tirmidhi narrated that 'Ataa bin Yasar said: "I asked Abu Ayoub: How people were offering Sacrifices at the time of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him?" He replied: "A man used to offer a sacrificial sheep for himself and the people of his family, and they used to eat and feed others from it, until it reached with people as you see nowadays (i.e. offering more than one Sacrifice)."

It is sufficient that a man can offer only one Sacrifice for himself and his family, alive or dead, few or many, even if he has several wives. But if a man offered more than one Sacrifice without seeking being seen by people and without seeking fame, but to draw near to Allah, then this would be good. Guests are not considered among one's family. Also his sons who have independent houses are not included in his Sacrifice.

Abu Rafi' reported that when the Prophet peace be upon him sacrificed, he used to buy two fatty, horned rams, black and white in color. After he offered the 'Eid (Feast) prayer and delivered the Khutbah, he would bring one of them (the two rams) while he is standing at the place where he prayed and slaughtered it, then he would say: "O Allah, this Sacrifice is for all people of my Ummah, who witnessed that You are the Only God and who witnessed that I have informed the Message (of Islam)." Then the Prophet would bring the other ram and slaughter it by his own hands and say: "This Sacrifice is for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad." The Prophet peace be upon him used to feed these rams to the poor, and he and his family also ate from them. (Narrated by Ahmed and Al-Bazar who said that its transmitted chain is good)

The time of slaughtering the Sacrifice is permissible to begin after offering the 'Eid prayer. But it is better to slaughter it after the Khutbah and after Imam of Muslims would slaughter his Sacrifice.

Al-Bara' bin 'Azib reported that his uncle called Abu Burda slaughtered his Sacrifice before the 'Eid prayer. So Allah's Messenger said to him: "Your (slaughtered) sheep was just mutton (not a Sacrifice)." Abu Burda said: "O Allah's Messenger, I have got a domestic kid." The Prophet said: "Slaughter it (as a Sacrifice) but it will not be permissible for anybody other than you." The Prophet added: "Whoever slaughtered his Sacrifice before the ('Eid) prayer, he only slaughtered for himself, and whoever slaughtered it after the prayer, he offered his Sacrifice properly and followed the tradition of the Muslims." (Agreed upon) In another narration: Abu Burda said, "I have a domestic kid better than two sheep."

A precious and fat Sacrifice that its meat is good is better than two Sacrifices which are low in price and goodness.

Slaughtering on the Day of Sacrifice is better. Al-Bara' reported that he heard the Prophet delivering a Khutbah saying: "The first thing to be done on this day (first day of 'Eid Al-Adha) is to pray; and after returning from the prayer, we slaughter our Sacrifices (in the Name of Allah). And whoever does so, he acted according to our Sunnah (traditions)." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Abu Burda bin Niyar said before the Prophet peace be upon him: "I thought today (the Day of Sacrifice) as a day of eating and drinking, and I liked that my sheep should be the first to be slaughtered in my house."

It is supererogatory when slaughtering the Sacrifice: O Allah, this Sacrifice is for me and for (then he would mention people that would share him in reward); this is not saying intention loudly.

A Muslim can offer one Sacrifice for himself and his family, alive and dead. A person can recommend others to offer Sacrifice for him after his death, or can offer a Sacrifice for a dead person as a charity for him. Some scholars said that it is permissible to offer a Sacrifice for a dead, and other scholars said that it is not permissible.

'Uqbah bin 'Amer said: "The Prophet peace be upon him distributed among his Companions some animals for Sacrifice (to be slaughtered on 'Eid Al-Adha)." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Thus a Muslim can offer a Sacrifice that comes to him in a legal way or through aid by another person not participation.

Abu Musa ordered his daughters to slaughter their Sacrifices by their own hands.

Any member of the family can offer another Sacrifice.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said: "He who takes a bath on Friday and then goes (to the Masjid), he is like one who offers a camel as a Sacrifice; and he who comes at the second hour is like one who offers a cow; and he who comes at the third hour is like one who offers an horned ram." (Agreed upon)

Some scholars see that this Hadith shows that it is better to offer a sacrificial camel for one person, then a cow, then a ram, then a sheep, then a goat, then seventh of a camel, and then seventh of a cow. If people of a country left offering a specific kind of animals, then they would offer the following. Malik sees that offering a sheep is better because the Prophet peace be upon him offered it and he does nothing except the best.

Muslim narrated that Thauban reported that the Prophet peace be upon him slaughtered his sacrificial animal and then said: "Thauban, make its meat usable (for journey)." And I (Thauban) continuously served him that until he arrived in Madinah. This shows that offering a Sacrifice is for people of country and Bedouins, and for present and traveler.

Allah said: "Celebrate the praises of Allah during the Appointed Days." Ibn Abbas and Ibn 'Umar said that the Appointed Days' are Tashriq Days; they would be four days: the Day of Sacrifice and the three days that follow it. That is the opinion of many Prophet's Companions and followers.

It is preponderant that Sacrifices can be slaughtered on any of these four days; that is the opinion of Imam Ahmed, Ibn Taimiah and Ibn Al-Qayem. Ibn Hajar said: Scholars took Hadith reported by Jubair bin Mut'am as a proof, as the Prophet said: "Sacrifices can be slaughtered on any day of Tashriq Days." (Narrated by Ahmed)

Scholars agreed that Sacrifices can be slaughtered at day or at night, except Malik and Ahmed did not agree with that.

Allah said: "Then eat you thereof (of the Sacrifices) and feed the distressed ones in want."

Many scholars see that the command (in this verse) to eat of is Sacrifice is recommended (not obligatory). The verse has divided the Sacrifice into two parts; one for the one who offered it, and the other for the poor.

Another verse has divided the Sacrifice into three parts, as Allah said: "Eat you thereof, and feed such as (beg not but) live in contentment, and such as beg with due humility." Thus there is variety in this matter. Salamah bin Al-Aqua' reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "Eat of it (the Sacrifice), and feed of it to others and store of it." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

It was reported that Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masood and Ibn 'Umar divided the Sacrifice into three parts; Imam Ahmed and others followed this opinion.

Jabir bin Abdullah reported that the Prophet said: "Sacrifice only a full-grown animal unless it is difficult for you, in which case you should sacrifice a (six to ten month old) sheep." (Narrated by Muslim)

The full-grown animal is the camels, cows or sheep that are of two years or more. Al-Ahnaf and Al-Hanabela said that it is sufficient to sacrifice with from six to ten month old sheep. A two-year sheep is better than a sheep of about six months. But if a person offered a six-month sheep however there is a two-year sheep, his Sacrifice would be correct; this is the opinion of most scholars.

'Uqbah bin 'Amer reported: "We sacrificed a sheep (from six to ten month old) with the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him." (Narrated by Al-Nesai) Ibn Hajar said that the transmitted chain of this Hadith is strong.

Jabir said: "The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him commanded us that seven persons should join in a camel for offering a Sacrifice." (Agreed upon)

All scholars agreed that seven persons can participate in offering a sacrificial camel or cow; and this seventh of a camel or a cow can be for one or more than one person. One sheep can be offered as a Sacrifice for one person even a number of people participate in paying its price. Also the seventh of a camel or the seventh of a cow can be offered for one person; and it is permissible to offer it for a person and his family and all of them will share the reward; that is like a sacrificial sheep.

Al-Bara' bin 'Azib reported that Allah's Messenger stood among us and said: "There are four types of sacrificial animals which are not permitted: A one-eyes animal which has obviously lost the sight of one eye, a sick animal which is obviously sick, a lame animal which obviously limps, and an old animal which has no marrow." (Narrated by Ahmed and the four Imams, graded as sound by At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Heban and Al-Nawawi) Ahmed bin Hanbal said that this Hadith is good.

All scholars agreed that if any animal has any of these four defects, it cannot be offered as a Sacrifice. Other defects that are like or severer than these four ones have the same rule.

In another narration by Al-Nesai: I said to Al-Bara' that I disapprove offering an animal if there is a defect of its horn or if it is still young. Al-Bara' said: "What you disapprove, leave it but do not forbade it for others."

Ali may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him prohibited to sacrifice an animal with a slit ear or broken horn. (Narrated by the five Imams, graded as good and sound by At-Tirmidhi)

Ali said: "The Messenger of Allah enjoined us to pay great attention to the eye and the ear and not sacrifice a one-eyed animal with a slit which leaves something hanging at the front or back of the ear, or with a perforation in the ear, or an animal with broken front teeth." (Narrated by Ahmed and the four Imams, graded as sound by At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Heban and Al-Hakim)

A slit that leaves something hanging at the front or back of the ear and perforation of the air, these all are defects of the animal's ear; it is disapproved to sacrifice with such animal but the Sacrifice would be correct.

Yazid said: I came to 'Utbah Al-Sulami and said: "Abu Al-Waleed, I went out seeking sacrificial animals. I did not find anything which attracted me except an animal whose teeth have fallen. So I abominated it. What do you say (about it)?" He (Abu Al-Waleed) said: "Why did you not bring it to me?" He (Yazid) said: "Glory be to Allah! Is it lawful for you and not lawful for me?" He said: "Yes, you doubt and I do not doubt. The Messenger of Allah has forbidden an animal whose ear has been uprooted so much so that its hole appears (outwardly), and an animal whose horn has broken from the root, and an animal which has totally lost the sight of its eye, and an animal which is so thin and weak that it cannot go with the herd, and an animal with a broken leg." (Narrated by Ahmed, Abu Dawood and Al-Bukhari) Al-Hakim said that the transmitted chain of this Hadith is sound.

Animals that have defects like those stated in the Hadith or severer than them have the same rule; they cannot be offered as a Sacrifice.

Anas reported that the Prophet said: "Whoever slaughtered (his Sacrifice) before the 'Eid prayer, he should slaughter again." (Agreed upon)

The intention of Sacrifice is assigned by saying that you will offer a Sacrifice or by buying an animal with the intention to offer it as a Sacrifice. When an animal is assigned to be offered as a Sacrifice, then some rules should be applied upon it: Its property cannot be transferred to another person except if it would be substituted with a better animal. If the animal got defected, died or lost: If this happens without negligence, then it is not dutiful for a person to substitute it, when he finds the lost one, he should slaughter it, and he can slaughter the defected animal and the Sacrifice would be correct. But if this happens out of negligence, a person has to substitute it with another animal like it or better than it.

Ali bin Abi Taleb may Allah be pleased with him said: "The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him appointed me to be in charge of his sacrificial camels, and commanded me to distribute all their meat, hides and saddlery to the poor, and not to give anything from them to the butcher." (Agreed upon)

It is forbidden to buy anything from the sacrificial animal such as the skin or anything else. The butcher shall not be given anything from it as his fee.