

MAIN RULINGS OF UDHIYAH



By Shaykh Fahad Ibn Yahya Al-Amaaree
Judge in The court of appeal in Makkah

Translated by Abu Uthayla

The Eid Sacrifice – Udhiyah

Udhiyah: It is what is slaughtered from livestock animals during the days of sacrifice as a means of drawing closer to Allah, in a specific place.

Udhiyah is mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged it. It is one of the great rituals of Islam.

The Ruling of Udhiyah:

(a) An emphasised Sunnah: Which is the view of the majority of scholars, based on the verse and the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) continuous practice.

(b) Obligatory: This is the view of Abu Hanifah.

(c) Obligatory on the affluent: This is a narration from Imam Ahmad.

The person offering the Udhiyah may slaughter it themselves or appoint someone to do it, and it is not required to witness the slaughter personally.

It is permissible to buy the Udhiyah in installments or on deferred payment, provided the purchase is guaranteed and does not involve anything prohibited in Islamic law.

There is no difference in the virtue of Udhiyah between the one who slaughters it and the one who delegates it. What matters is piety.

Appointing someone trustworthy in their religion to do the slaughter is preferred; however, doing it oneself is better.

Conditions of Sacrificing

Type of Animal: The sacrificial animal must be from livestock: camels, cattle, or sheep/goats — by consensus.

Age: The animal must have reached the legally prescribed age: camels – 5 years, cattle – 2 years, goats – 1 year, and sheep – 6 months, whether male or female.

Sacrificing a buffalo is valid by agreement, as it is a type of cattle.

Pre-Slaughtered: It is not valid to buy a pre-slaughtered animal or meat and consider it a sacrifice, as the spilling of blood (in sacrificing an animal) is a religious objective.

Defects: The animal must be free from defects that prevent it from being valid; details of these defects are given elsewhere.

Time of Sacrifice: The sacrifice must be done during the designated time, beginning after the Eid prayer. Slaughtering before the prayer is invalid by consensus.

The time for slaughter ends at sunset on the 13th day of Dhul-Hijjah. After that, it is considered general charity, based on the opinion that Udhiyah is a Sunnah

What the one offering the sacrifice must refrain from

Cutting Hair and Nails: Whoever intends to offer an Udhiyah and has purchased the animal must refrain from cutting hair or nails starting from sunset on the last day of Dhul-Qa'dah, due to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prohibition. The stronger opinion is that it is obligatory, though some say it is recommended—as a sign of reverence for the prophetic text and submission to Allah through this restraint.

A woman is like a man in this ruling: she must also refrain from cutting her hair or nails. However, she may wash and comb her hair, and if some falls out unintentionally, there is no harm.

The family members of the one sacrificing (on their behalf) are allowed to cut their hair and nails; the ruling applies only to the sacrificer and to one entrusted to sacrifice on someone's behalf if they are offering the Udhiyah on their own behalf.

Intention: One may form the intention for Udhiyah on any of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and from that point must refrain from cutting hair or nails.

Deliberate and Accidental Cutting: If someone cuts their hair or nails out of forgetfulness or ignorance, there is no blame. If done deliberately, the person should repent and seek forgiveness—no penalty is due. If there's a valid excuse like surgery, it's allowed without issue.

Pilgrim: If a person intends to offer a sacrifice and then enters into Ihram for Hajj or Umrah, they must not cut their hair or nails.

The pilgrim or person performing Umrah does not need to wait for their Udhiyah to be slaughtered before shaving their head, as shaving is an independent act of worship. However, for other hair and nails, they should wait until the Udhiyah is slaughtered, as those acts are not part of pilgrimage rites.

Coming together to offer the sacrifice as a collective

There are several types of participation in the Udhiyah (sacrifice):

- (a) Gifting the reward (to someone) is valid.
- (b) Including others in the intention for reward and obligation dropping is valid.
- (c) Cost-sharing is not valid for sheep (by agreement), but it is valid for cattle and camels.

Sacrificing on Behalf: It is valid to sacrifice on behalf of those who live with him and whom he supports, without needing their permission, according to the majority of scholars.

If someone wants to offer a sacrifice on behalf of another, like a son for his father or a brother for his sibling, permission is not required—if the sacrifice is considered a Sunnah—whether it is counted as participation or reward gifting.

Difference between gifting reward and offering a sacrifice on behalf of another:

- (a) The first is a gift of reward; the second is the lifting an obligation from them —whether obligatory or Sunnah.
- (b) Gifting can occur before, during, or after the act; lifting the obligation off someone must be before or upon intending the act.

Multiple Families Gathering: If multiple families gather in one house before Eid, and each is independent, one sacrifice is not sufficient to drop the obligation for all. However, sharing in the reward is permissible.

Coming together to offer the sacrifice as a collective

Father's Condition: If the father is unconscious or similar, and he regularly offered a sacrifice, it should be done from his money on his behalf and for his household.

If the father has passed away, there are several cases to consider:

(a) If he left no pension, and the wife and children live together, any of them may sacrifice for all, and the one who pays should refrain from cutting hair or nails.

(b) If there is a continuous pension, one of them may donate and offer the sacrifice for himself and them.

(c) If the wife is alone, she sacrifices for herself if she wishes and is able.

(d) If the father is divorced and the children live with their mother, the father sacrifices for his children and the mother sacrifices for herself if she wishes.

Living with other than Family: If a group living together (like students) wish to share in a sheep sacrifice, they may gift the money to one of them who offers it on behalf of all, with the reward shared.

Differing Intentions when Sharing: People may share in a cow or camel even if their intentions differ—e.g., one intends Hajj sacrifice, another Udhiyah, and another meat.

Bequest/Endowment of Deceased: If the sacrifice is by bequest or endowment for deceased persons, participation in reward is valid, but not in cost-sharing—same as with living individuals.

Offering the sacrifice on behalf of the deceased

Offering a sacrifice on behalf of a deceased person has several scenarios:

- (a) If it is fulfilling a will (wasiyyah), it is obligatory without dispute.
- (b) If done jointly with a living person, it is valid according to the majority of scholars.
- (c) If done exclusively for the deceased, it is valid according to the soundest scholarly opinion—based on the general permissibility of giving charity on behalf of the dead and the absence of any opposing evidence.

May one eat from a sacrifice offered on behalf of a deceased person? There are two cases with regards to this:

- (a) If it was done based on a will, then it should not be eaten from, because it is considered a charitable donation intended for the poor and others.
- (b) If it was a voluntary offering, then it is permissible to eat from it.

Sharing on Behalf on Deceased: It is valid for a group to share in a sacrifice on behalf of a deceased person, like a father or similar, and for one to refrain (from grooming), though the matter is open to scholarly interpretation.

It is preferable that one of them donates the cost individually, without formal partnership, and intends the sacrifice on behalf of his father.

Rulings pertaining to designating the Udhiyah

The Udhiyah is designated by purchasing the animal with the intention of sacrifice; no statement or action is required alongside it.

Marking the animal with a line has two cases:

- (a) If the intent is to designate it as a sacrifice, then it is designated.
- (b) If the intent is only to indicate it belongs to someone, it is not designated.

Intention without Buying: The Udhiyah is not designated by intention alone; if someone intends to offer a sacrifice without buying the animal, they may change their mind.

Intention without Buying but Refraining from Cutting: If a person refrains from cutting their hair or nails and only intends to sacrifice, without purchasing the animal, the sacrifice is not binding.

When does it become binding? Once the Udhiyah is designated, it cannot be taken back, sold, or gifted—by consensus—because it becomes a right of Allah.

Dying before being able to Sacrifice: If someone designates a sacrifice and then dies before slaughtering it, the heirs must offer it as a sacrifice and may not treat it as personal property.

Selling and Buying a better Sacrifice: It is permissible—according to the sounder opinion—to sell the designated animal and buy a better one instead.

Rulings pertaining to designating the Udhiyah

If someone is given a sheep to offer as a sacrifice, there are three cases:

(a) If they take possession and declare it as a sacrifice, it becomes designated (for sacrificial purposes)

(b) If they take possession and intend it as a sacrifice, it becomes designated.

(c) If they take possession without saying or intending anything, it is considered a conditional gift—the gift is valid, but the condition is not binding. It is recommended to fulfill it as a matter of good character.

Reserving the sacrificial animal has several scenarios:

(a) If the animal is specified directly (by image, pointing, or any agreed method), it becomes designated with purchase and intent.

(b) If it is described from among a present flock, it is also designated upon purchase with intent.

(c) If it is described but not present (a debt upon the seller), immediate payment is required; if delayed, the sale is invalid.

(d) If someone is authorised to search for and purchase an animal with specific traits, this is considered giving that responsibility to someone else (wakālah), and no sale occurs until the agent actually buys the animal.

Slaughtering in Another Country

It is permissible to slaughter the Udhiyah outside the country through organisations and the like, as there is no religious specification for the location. There is no evidence in the texts prohibiting it or invalidating the sacrifice due to it being outside the country.

Slaughtering in the same location as the Sacrificer: Slaughtering the sacrifice in a country other than that of the sacrificer is valid, and requiring it to be in the same place is an extra condition needing proof to support this claim

Time of Sacrifice: If the sacrifice is slaughtered in another country, the relevant time is that of the slaughtering location. The sacrificer trims their hair accordingly, whether that is earlier or later than their own country—based on the apparent meaning of the text.

What if the time of Slaughter is Unknown? If the sacrificer does not know when their Udhiyah is slaughtered abroad (e.g., via organisations or apps), they may release themselves from restriction after Eid prayer in the location of the agent (even based on probable assumption), to avoid hardship and in keeping with the principle of prompt slaughter.

Since the religious command for sacrifice applies from the first slaughter among multiple ones, it is preferable to release oneself at that point.

Having multiple sacrifices for one household: Whether by the father or with other family members—is permissible, as held by the majority of scholars. However, it is better to avoid excessive sacrifices and showing off. One sacrifice suffices according to the Sunnah, and surplus wealth is better spent as charity in needy areas. Offering one sacrifice is good enough.

Multiple Wives: If a person has multiple wives in separate homes, one sacrifice suffices (based on the Prophet's practice), but it is permissible to offer a sacrifice for each household out of kindness, benefit, and to spread joy, which is something recommended

Rulings pertaining to eating from that which is sacrificed

How the Udhiyah is distributed: It should be eaten from, gifted, and given in charity. The Sunnah is to divide it into thirds.

Giving it all away to Charity: According to the sound opinion, eating from it is not obligatory, and it is permissible to give all of it away in charity.

Feeding Non-Muslims: It is permissible to feed a non-Muslim from the Udhiyah, since charity is valid for non-Muslims. This was reported from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), and it is the opinion of the majority of scholars.

Avoiding Disagreement: It is better to donate enough to fulfill the meaning of "charity," to avoid the disagreement of those who consider it obligatory.

Transferring Ownership: The poor should be given from it in a way that transfers ownership—they should receive the raw meat itself.

Giving Cooked Meat: Giving cooked meat to the poor does not count as full ownership (unlike Zakat al-Fitr), because it prevents the poor from storing or preserving it.

Distribution: It is not required to distribute the Udhiyah meat during the days of Tashreeq, as there is no specific evidence for that condition.

Can the Sacrificer eat from his Sacrifice? Whoever vowed to offer a sacrifice must not eat from it; it should be given entirely to the poor. If they do eat from it, they must compensate according to its value.

Rulings pertaining to eating from that which is sacrificed

Using the Wealth of an Orphan: It is valid to offer a sacrifice from the wealth of an orphan. The guardian may eat from it, but should not give it in charity to preserve the orphan's assets.

Sacrifice for a Foetus: A sacrifice is not offered for a foetus, as there is no textual evidence for it.

Can the Udhiyah be made up after sunset on the 13th day? There are three scenarios:

- (a) If it was a vow, it must be made up—this is the opinion of the majority of scholars.
- (b) According to those who consider the Udhiyah obligatory, it is made up like other duties and obligations.
- (c) According to the view that it is Sunnah, it may still be slaughtered and treated as charity—this is the opinion of most jurists.

Deficiencies or Issues with the Sacrifice

If the sacrificial animal becomes defective after being designated, the ruling depends on the cause:

(a) If the owner caused the defect through negligence or deliberate harm, they must replace the animal.

(b) If the defect happened without the owner's fault, and the animal was sound at the time of designation, it may be slaughtered and is valid.

If the Animal gets Lost: If a designated sacrificial animal gets lost and is found after sunset on the last day of Tashreeq, it should be slaughtered and given as charity.

If the sacrificial animal is lost or stolen and not replaced before the time ends, it must be made up if it was obligatory; otherwise, it is simply an act of charity.

If the Udhiyah is stolen and the owner was not negligent, there is no blame on him.

If the Animal Perishes: If someone vowed to offer a sacrifice and the animal perishes, they must replace it, as the vow makes it obligatory.

Deficiencies after the Sacrifice: If the animal is spoiled after slaughter but before distribution (e.g., it rots), the sacrifice is still valid, and its value should be donated instead

Mixing different types of Sacrifices together

Mixing with 'Aqeeqah: Combining the intention of Udhiyah and 'Aqeeqah (newborn sacrifice) is not valid, as each has a distinct religious purpose.

Mixing with a Vow: One cannot combine a vow and Udhiyah in a single sacrifice, because a vow must be fulfilled with its own specific intention.

Performing 'Aqeeqah Independantly: It is valid to perform 'Aqeeqah during the days of Udhiyah, but it does not count as an Udhiyah.

Mixing with Hady: It is not valid to combine Udhiyah and Hady (the pilgrimage sacrifice) because they differ in purpose and location.

If someone intends both Udhiyah and Hady in one animal, only one is valid. If they intended one of them, it counts. If neither was specifically intended, neither is valid.

Paying the Butcher: It is not permissible to pay the butcher from the meat of the Udhiyah, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade it.

When 'Aqeeqah may be Mixed: Someone who can afford separate sacrifices must not combine intentions. But if one only owns a single animal, they may combine the intention for both 'Aqeeqah and Udhiyah.

Mixing different types of Sacrifices together

Exclusivity: Exclusivity is not required when gifting the reward; one can dedicate a single sacrifice to multiple people, provided it's the same type of offering.

Receiving Meat: Whoever receives Udhiyah or Hady meat as a gift bears no responsibility regarding the intention of the sacrifice.

If someone intends both Udhiyah and 'Aqeeqah at the same time, the ruling is:

(a) If both are intended together, it does not fulfill either—according to the sounder opinion.

(b) If he intended only one, it counts for that specific one that he intended.

There is scholarly disagreement about combining sacrifice with non-religious occasions (like coffee gatherings or celebrations):

(a) Those who allow multiple intentions in a sacrifice permit it.

(b) Those who reject overlapping intentions do not permit it without a clear singular intention.

Rulings relating to the slaughterer

Is it valid for someone who does not pray to perform a slaughter?

There are two scholarly opinions on this matter, based on whether abandoning prayer constitutes disbelief.

Is the sacrifice of one who completely abandons prayer valid, and may it be consumed?

This issue is similar to the previous one and depends on the ruling of one who completely abandons the prayer.

As for the one who prays sometimes and neglects it sometimes, he commits a major sin but is not considered a disbeliever according to the correct opinion.

Is it valid for a person from the People of the Book to perform a slaughter?

It is valid for a Muslim to perform slaughter, and also valid for a Jew or Christian to do so (including for sacrificial purposes), by scholarly consensus.

Is it valid for an apostate or an idolater to slaughter?

No, it is not valid. Their meat is unlawful to eat, by consensus.

Is it valid for a woman to perform slaughter?

Yes, a woman's slaughter is valid by scholarly consensus.

Can a Child perform Slaughter?

A child who has not reached discernment cannot validly perform a slaughter, due to his inability to form intention—by consensus.

If the child has reached discernment (can intend), then his slaughter is valid by consensus.

Rulings relating to the slaughterer

Is it valid to slaughter the sacrificial animal at night?

Yes, it is valid to slaughter the udhiyah (sacrificial animal) at night—this is the correct view.

What is the ruling on mentioning Allah's name during slaughter?

Mentioning the name of Allah is obligatory when slaughtering. However, it is excused if omitted due to ignorance, forgetfulness, or mistake—according to the majority of scholars.

Is it necessary to specify the owner of the animal during slaughter?

No, it is not required for the slaughterer to intend or mention the name of the animal's owner at the time of slaughter—especially when there are many sacrifices or it is difficult to specify.

Getting together on the Eve of Arafah

Definition of the Eve of 'Arafah Gathering (Ta'reef):

It is for people in towns to gather in mosques for supplication and remembrance, imitating the gathering of pilgrims in 'Arafah.

Its ruling is a matter of disagreement among scholars:

(a) It is permissible. This is the view of al-Hasan, Ibn Sireen, Ibn Ma'een, and the Shafi'i school, who considered it a good innovation (bid'ah ḥasanah). Imam Ahmad permitted it, and it was reported from Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).

(b) It is an innovation and disliked. This was held by Nāfi' (servant of Ibn 'Umar), 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaṭī, al-Ḥakam, Ḥammād, Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik ibn Anas, and some Shafi'is.

The most accurate view distinguishes four scenarios:

(a) If the gathering involves violations such as traveling specifically for it or treating it as a regular Sunnah, it is an innovation. This was affirmed by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Note: Some Hanbalis and modern scholars quoted Ibn Taymiyyah as condemning it unconditionally as an innovation, which is incorrect.

(b) If the practice includes pilgrim-like rituals such as entering iḥrām, it is undoubtedly an innovation.

(c) If done with the belief that it is a Sunnah or specific to this day, it is best to avoid it due to lack of evidence—since acts of worship are restricted to textual proof.

Getting together on the Eve of Arafah

And what is reported from Ibn ‘Abbas should be understood as general practice, not specification.

There is no known encouragement from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the companions despite the presence of cause and lack of barriers.

Using scholarly disagreement as justification here is incorrect. The term innovation was freely used in many issues by the early scholars.

If done as general mosque attendance for worship, remembrance, supplication, or i’tikāf—individually or in a group—it is permissible.

Waiting between prayers is recommended. Whoever claims this form is impermissible, their statement is invalid.