

## Right n. 14: The Right of the Offering

حق الهدى

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ الْهَدْيِ فَأَنْ تُخْلِصَ بِهَا الْإِرَادَةَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ وَالتَّعَرُّضَ لِرَحْمَتِهِ وَقَبُولَهُ وَلَا تُرِيدَ عَيْونَ النَّاطِرِينَ دُونَهُ، فَإِذَا كُنْتَ كَذَلِكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ مُتَكَلِّفًا وَلَا مُتَّصِنًا وَكُنْتَ إِنَّمَا تَقْصِدُ إِلَى اللَّهِ. وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرَادُ بِالْيَسِيرِ وَلَا يُرَادُ بِالْعَسِيرِ كَمَا أَرَادَ بِخَلْقِهِ التَّيْسِيرَ وَلَمْ يُرِدْ بِهِمُ التَّعْسِيرَ، وَكَذَلِكَ التَّذَلُّلُ أَوْلَى بِكَ مِنَ التَّدَهُّقِ لِأَنَّ الْكُلْفَةَ وَالْمُتَوَنَّةَ فِي الْمَتَدَهِّقِينَ. فَأَمَّا التَّذَلُّلُ وَالتَّمَسُّكُ فَلَا كُلْفَةَ فِيهِمَا وَلَا مَتَوَنَّةَ عَلَيْهِمَا لِأَنَّهُمَا الْخَلْقَةُ وَهُمَا مَوْجُودَانِ فِي الطَّبِيعَةِ. وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

**And the right of the offering<sup>1</sup> is that through it<sup>2</sup> you purify your will toward your Lord, and expose yourself to His Mercy, and His approval and not the eyes of the observers lower than Him. If this is so, you will neither be hypocritical nor extravagant. You will only intend the offering for God's sake, and know that God wishes your ease, and does not wish your hardship.**

**He also wishes His creatures to take it easy, and does not wish them to suffer hardships. Likewise, modesty is better than arrogance, for there lies extravagance and falsehood in the arrogant, while there are no formalities or falsehoods in the humble and the servile, since they are creatures and they exist in nature. There is no power but in God.**

The Arabic word 'hada' meaning offering is used to refer to the sacrifice made for the holy pilgrimage to the Ka'ba.<sup>3</sup> We read the following verse in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُؤُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ

***“And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice...” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 196]***

This is called an offering since it is like a gift some give to others after they sacrifice it. This is similar to

the present that the queen of Sheba sent for Solomon as we read in the following verse:

وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

***"But I am going to send him a present, and (wait) to see with what (answer) return (my) ambassadors."*** [The Holy Qur'an, al-Naml 27:35]

This word has been used seven times in the Holy Qur'an. In all instances, it is used to refer to the sacrifice made for the pilgrimage.

## The Sacrifice

The second obligatory act in Mina for those who go on the pilgrimage is to send an offering for sacrifice. This offering is intended to be an act to get closer to God. We read the following in Majma' al-Bahrain: "Offering refers to any good deed done with the intention of getting closer to God." If we want to better understand what Imam Sajjad said about the offering, we should review the Qur'anic verses on this issue. Consider the following verse:

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ...

***"And complete the Hajj or 'Umrah in the service of God. But if ye are prevented (from completing it), send an offering for sacrifice, such as ye may find, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice. And if any of you is ill, or has an ailment in his scalp, (necessitating shaving), (he should) in compensation either fast, or feed the poor, or offer sacrifice; and when ye are in peaceful conditions (again), if anyone wishes to continue the 'Umrah on to the Hajj, he must make an offering, such as he can afford..."*** [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 196]

In this verse God has spoken of the offering three times.

The first occasion is concerned with the situation where you are in the service of God, but you are prevented from completing it because of getting ill. In this case, you must send an offering for sacrifice.

The second occasion is on the day of celebration before shaving the head and after the ritual stoning of devil. It is not allowed to shave until the offering is sacrificed.

The third case is when you are in peaceful conditions again. Sending an offering for sacrifice in Mina is the certain duty of any pilgrim who wants to participate in the pilgrimage ceremonies.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أُمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا

**“O ye who believe! Violate not the sanctity of the symbols of God, nor of the Sacred Month, nor of the animals brought for sacrifice, nor the garlands that mark out such animals, nor the people resorting to the Sacred House, seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:3]**

There are eight decrees in this verse. One is related to animals brought for sacrifice – marked or unmarked. The same issue is pointed out in the following verse:

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ ذَلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

**“God made the Ka’ba, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for men, as also the Sacred Months, the animals for offerings, and the garlands that mark them...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:97]**

In another verse we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعْمِ بِحَكْمِ بِهِ نَزَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ

**“O ye who believe! Kill not game while in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb. If any of you doth so intentionally, the compensation is an offering, brought to the Ka’ba of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:95]**

The compensation must be donated to the Ka’ba. Jurisprudents agree that the expiation related to hunting while in Umrah should be sacrificed in Mecca and that related to hunting while in Hajj should be sacrificed in Mina. They also agree on the place of sacrifice. The issue of the sacrificial animals is again referred to in the following verse:

هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُ

**“They are the ones who denied Revelation and hindered you from the Sacred Mosque and the sacrificial animals, detained from reaching their place of sacrifice...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Fath 48:25]**

These were the seven instances where the offering to sacrifice is mentioned in the Qur'an. We understand the importance of the offering and realize that this is done in order to obey God and to approach Him, and that it is to be taken to Ka'ba or the place of sacrifice.

## The History of Offering for Sacrifice

Everyone is instructed to know when the practice of sending an offering for sacrifice started. Historical records show various forms of offering for sacrifice existed in different nations. The Qur'an has stated the origin of this practice to be at the time of the two sons of Adam as we read in the following verse:

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

***“Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam. Behold! They each presented a sacrifice (to God): It was accepted from one, but not from the other. Said the latter: “Be sure I will slay thee.” “Surely,” said the former, “God doth accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:27]***

We can see that presenting a sacrifice to God is one of the means of approaching God. Since the present of one of them was accepted, the other one threatened to kill him. The two sons of Adam used this practice to test their closeness to God. Abraham also tested his closeness to God through presenting a sacrifice.

As understood from the Old Testament, God ordered him to sacrifice an animal.<sup>4</sup> The children of Abraham expressed their closeness to God through offering sacrificial animals. The offerings at the time of Moses were of two types. They used to sacrifice one group and free the second group for the sake of God. The group that was sacrificed was also of the following three kinds:

- 1) They used to burn one group and only leave its skin for the rabbi.
- 2) They used to burn half of the second group and leave the second half for the rabbi.
- 3) The third group were those whose meat was for everyone.

The Romans used to offer sacrifice for their gods. The Priests used to spread water, honey and rose water at the time of the offering. It is recorded in history that they did not restrict themselves to the sacrifice of animals. At times, they sacrificed people too. The Phoenicians, Canaanites, Persians, Romans and Egyptians practiced this until an order to ban this practice was issued in the year 657 A.D. by the Romanian Parliament.

It is said that each year the Egyptians used to drown a fully made up virgin girl in the river. They did this

with the intention of getting closer to their gods. This wicked practice continued in Egypt until Amr ibn A'as banned it upon the permission of Umar ibn Khattab. This has been quoted on the authority of Ustad Ahmad Jorjani who was one of the scholars in Al-Azhar University.<sup>5</sup>

Islam forbade all forms of offering for sacrifice for idols and men. Islam taught the proper practice of sending an offering to its followers. The verses related to this issue were cited above. Since human nature is inclined towards the belief in God, man likes to offer a sacrifice to Him. Islam taught man the proper way to offer a sacrifice, and the proper thing to offer. We should not think that the blood or the meat of the sacrificed animal would reach God. No. This is just a practice to help man approach God. Therefore, it should be done with the soul intention of approaching Him. That is why God's name should be invoked when we offer a sacrifice to Him.

## Offering as a Religious and Intellectual Act

It can be concluded from the above discussion that offering animals for sacrifice is a religious and intellectual act that is done to purify the soul, and improve the economy. The meat of the sacrificed animal should be distributed among the poor people for the sake of God. This we understand from the following traditions.

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of God's Prophet :

إِنَّمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ هَذَا الْأَضْحَى لِتَتَسَّعَ مَسَاكِينُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّحُومِ فَأَطْعِمُوهُمْ

*“God has established this sacrifice in order that your poor may have ample meat to eat. Therefore, give them meat to eat!”<sup>6</sup>*

Abi Basir narrated that he told Imam Sadiq : “What is the reason for offering for sacrifice?” The Imam said:

إِنَّهُ يُغْفَرُ لِصَاحِبِهَا عِنْدَ أَوَّلِ قَطْرَةٍ تَقْطُرُ مِنْ دَمِهَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِيهِ بِالْغَيْبِ. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَائُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ ۗ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ قَبِلَ اللَّهُ قُرْبَانَ هَابِيلَ وَرَدَّ قُرْبَانَ قَابِيلَ

*‘The sins of the one who is offering will be forgiven when the first drop of blood of the sacrificed animal falls on the ground. It is also a means by which God gets to know those who fear Him in the Unseen. God the Almighty said: “It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches God: it is your piety that reaches Him...” [Hajj, 22:37]. See how God accepted the offering of Abel, but turned down that of Cain.<sup>7 8</sup>*

The reward for the one offering the sacrifice and his being forgiven are stressed in this tradition. In

addition, the fact that his purity of intentions is recognized is also outlined. Imam Ali said:

لَوْ عَلِمَ النَّاسُ مَا فِي الْأَضْحِيَّةِ لاسْتَدَانُوا وَضَحَّوْا؛ إِنَّهُ لَيُغْفَرُ لِصَاحِبِ الْأَضْحِيَّةِ عِنْدَ أَوَّلِ قَطْرَةٍ تَقْطُرُ مِنْ دَمِهَا

*“If the people only knew the reward for offering animals for sacrifice, they would borrow money to make an offering. Indeed, the sins of the one who is offering a sacrificial animal are forgiven once the first drop of its blood falls on the ground.”<sup>9</sup>*

It has been recorded in Wasa`il al-Sh`ah that the Prophet of God told his daughter, the Blessed Fatima :

إِشْهَدِي نَبْحَ ذَبِيحَتِكَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ قَطْرَةٍ مِنْهَا يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ بِهَا كُلَّ ذَنْبٍ عَلَيْكَ... وَهَذَا لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عَامَّةً

*“Be present beside the animal you offer for sacrifice since your sins will be forgiven the moment the first drop of its blood falls down on the ground.” He then added: “This issue applies to all Muslims.”<sup>10</sup>*

Imam Kazim quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

اسْتَفْرَهُوا ضَحَايَاكُمْ فَإِنَّهَا مَطَايَاكُمْ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ

*“Seek for sacrificial animals that are brisk and agile since they will be your mounts to cross the (Bridge of) Sirat.”<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>. The animal sacrificed during the holy pilgrimage.

<sup>2</sup>. In the other version it continues: “You desire God and you do not desire His creation; through it you desire only the exposure of your soul to God’s mercy and the deliverance of your spirit on the day you encounter Him.”

<sup>3</sup>. The House of God.

<sup>4</sup>. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v. 1, p.365.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid. pp.366–367.

<sup>6</sup>. ‘Ilal al-Shara’i, p.437.

<sup>7</sup>. The sons of Adam.

<sup>8</sup>. Ilal al-Shara’i, p.438.

<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v. 1, p.369.

<sup>11</sup>. ‘Ilal al-Shara’i, p.438, section 179.

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