

Required age for the sacrificial animal

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What is the required age of the sacrificial animal of `Eed al-Adha?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

The principle as regards the sacrificial animal is that it is not accepted unless it is of the beast of cattle which are: camels (camel and she-camel), cows (cow and ox) sheep (ram and ewe) and goats (billy goat and nanny goat), in accordance with Allaah's جَلَّ جَلالُه saying:

لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنَ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ

[...that they may mention the Name of Allaah over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food]¹

As for the acceptable age of the beast, it is the Thaniyya of all these kinds.

- The Thaniyya of camels is a five-year-old camel starting the sixth.
- The Thaniyya of cows is: a two-year-old starting the third.
- The Thaniyya of sheep is: a one-year-old starting the second.
- The Thaniyya of goats is: a one-year-old starting the second.

A sacrificial animal is not accepted under these ages for all these kinds, except in case it is difficult to get a sheep fulfilling the required age. In such a case, a Jadha` suffices. A Jadha` is a six-month-old sheep, in accordance with the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "**Sacrifice only Al-Mussina (i.e.Thaniya) of animals, unless it is difficult for you, in which case sacrifice a ram (of even less than a year, but more than six months' age)**"².

The apparent meaning of the hadeeth is that the Jadha` of sheep is not accepted unless it is not possible to sacrifice a Mussinna. As for the reported hadeeths concerning the permissibility of sacrificing a Jadha` of sheep, the authentic ones should be understood that it is allowed to sacrifice a Jadha` in case a person is not able to sacrifice a Mussinna either because it is not available when needed or because of its high price, in accordance with the hadeeth of `Aassim Ibn Kulayb on the authority of his father, he said: "We used to take as

¹ Soorah al-Hajj [22:34]

² Reported by Muslim in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the age of the animal that should be sacrificed (hadeeth 5082), Aboo Dawood in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the age of the sacrificial animal (hadeeth 2797), Ibn Maajah in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the required age of the sacrificial animal (hadeeth 3141) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 14093), from the hadeeth of Jaabir رضي الله عنه.

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leader, during conquests, one of the messenger's ﷺ Companions. Once we were at Persia, it was the day of sacrifice and the Mussinna beasts were expensive, so we slaughtered two or three of Jadha` instead of the Mussinna. A man from Muzayna among us stood up and said: We were with the Prophet ﷺ and the same thing as today happened to us, so we sacrificed two Jadha` or three instead of a Mussinna, then the Prophet ﷺ told us: "**The Jadha` suffices as well as the Thaniy**"³.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah سبحانه وتعالى. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers Muharram 14th, 1429 H. January the 22nd, 2008

³ Reported by Aboo Dawood in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the age of the sacrificial animal (hadeeth 2799), An-Nasaa'ee in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the Mussinna and the Jadha' (hadeeth 4383), Ibn Maajah in the chapter of "Sacrifices" concerning the required age of the sacrificial animal (hadeeth 3140) and Al-Haakim in "Al-Mustadrak" (hadeeth 7538), on the authority of Mujaashi` Ibn Mas'ood رضى الله عنه. This hadeeth is authenticated by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (hadeeth 1146).