

The Spirit of Qurbani

The Legacy of Sacrifice and Submission in Islam

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help and forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the consequences of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah alone without partner, and I bear witness that our master Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and Messenger.

O servants of Allah! Fear Allah as He deserves to be feared. Reflect upon the great symbols of Islam that Allah has preserved for this Ummah, not merely as rituals to be performed, but as lessons to transform our hearts, our character, and our commitment to faith. Among these great symbols is Qurbani, the sacrifice connected with the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام and his noble son Ismail عليه السلام.

Dear respected brothers and sisters!

As the blessed days of Dhul-Hijjah approach, Muslims throughout the world prepare to perform the sacred act of Qurbani. Yet many people reduce it to the slaughtering of an animal alone, while forgetting its deeper message. Qurbani is not simply about meat, blood, or celebration. It is about obedience, surrender, sacrifice, loyalty, patience, and complete submission to Allah. It is a living reminder that a believer must always be ready to sacrifice personal desires for the pleasure of Allah SWT

1. The Great Sacrifice of Ismail عليه السلام

The story of the sacrifice of Prophet Ismail عليه السلام is one of the greatest incidents recorded in human history. Allah Himself preserved this event in the Qur'an with everlasting honor. It is not merely a historical account; it is a lesson of faith for every generation until the Day of Judgment.

Allah says:

يَا بُيَّيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى ۚ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*“O, my dear son! I have seen in a dream that I am sacrificing you, so tell me what you think.”
He replied, “O my father! Do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, among the patient.” (As-Saffat: 102)*

Reflect upon this scene carefully. Ibrahim عليه السلام was not commanded to sacrifice wealth, property, or comfort. He was commanded to sacrifice his beloved son, the child for whom he had waited many years. And Ismail عليه السلام was not an ordinary child. He was righteous, obedient, beloved, and the joy of his father’s heart.

Yet when the command of Allah came, neither father nor son hesitated. Ibrahim عليه السلام did not argue with Allah, and Ismail عليه السلام did not resist his father. This is the highest example of submission. This is true Islam: when the command of Allah comes before personal emotions, desires, and attachments.

The Qur’an further says:

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ

“Then when they both submitted, and he laid him down upon his forehead...” (As-Saffat: 103)

Notice the words: “When they both submitted.” The father submitted. The son submitted. Their entire household submitted to Allah. This is why Allah honored them forever.

2. Allah Made the Sacrifice Memorable for Humanity

Allah loved the obedience and sincerity of Ibrahim عليه السلام so much that He transformed this sacrifice into a universal symbol for humanity.

Allah says:

وَقَدَرْنَا لَهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

“And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. And We left for him honorable mention among later generations.” (As-Saffat: 107-108)

Allah replaced Ismail عليه السلام with a ram from Paradise and declared this event a timeless lesson for mankind. Even today, billions of Muslims remember Ibrahim عليه السلام through Qurbani.

This teaches us that extraordinary obedience earns extraordinary closeness to Allah. Worship is not merely words on the tongue. If we truly claim to love Allah, that relationship must be expressed through action, sacrifice, obedience, and commitment.

Many people claim faith when life is easy. But true faith appears when sacrifice is required. Ibrahim عليه السلام proved that Allah was more beloved to him than anything else in the world. Therefore, Allah raised his status and made him “Khalilullah” — the intimate friend of Allah.

3. Why Was Qurbani Prescribed for This Ummah?

a) To Revive the Sunnah of Ibrahim عليه السلام

Qurbani was prescribed so that the legacy of Ibrahim عليه السلام remains alive until the end of time. Allah says:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنَسَكًا

“And for every nation We prescribed a ritual of sacrifice.” (Al-Hajj: 34)

This ritual reminds believers that whenever they are tested, they must stand firmly upon obedience to Allah just as Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام did.

The Prophet ﷺ was also commanded to revive this sacred tradition. When the companions asked about Qurbani, the Prophet ﷺ said:

سُنَّةُ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“It is the Sunnah of your father Ibrahim.” (Ibn Majah)

They asked, “What reward is there for us in it?” The Prophet ﷺ replied:

بِكُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ حَسَنَةٌ

“For every hair, there is a reward.” (Tirmidhi)

This shows that Qurbani is not a cultural practice. It is an act of worship connected directly to the legacy of Prophethood.

b) Qurbani is Worship Through Imitation of Ibrahim عليه السلام

Allah declared the imitation of Ibrahim (A) itself to be an act of worship. When a believer performs Qurbani sincerely, he is following the footsteps of one of the greatest prophets.

Islam teaches us that greatness is achieved by following the righteous. Qurbani trains the believer to obey Allah even when sacrifice becomes difficult.

A believer says through Qurbani:

“O Allah! Just as Ibrahim sacrificed for You, I too am ready to sacrifice my desires, my ego, my wealth, and my comfort for Your sake.”

c) Qurbani Reminds Us of the Spirit of Sacrifice

The sacrifice of an animal is meant to awaken the spirit of sacrifice within the believer.

If a time comes when Islam, truth, morality, or the Muslim community requires sacrifice, then a believer must not retreat in cowardice or selfishness.

The Ummah cannot rise without sacrifice. Parents sacrifice for their children. Scholars sacrifice for knowledge. Prophets sacrificed for guidance. The companions sacrificed their homes, wealth, and even their lives for Islam.

Qurbani reminds us that faith is not merely decoration. Faith demands commitment.

d) Qurbani Is Performed to Attain the Pleasure of Allah

Allah clearly explains the real objective behind Qurbani:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ

“Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allah, but what reaches Him is your taqwa.” (Al-Hajj: 37)

Allah does not need our animals. Allah looks at the sincerity of our hearts. A Qurbani without sincerity becomes an empty ritual, but a sincere sacrifice becomes beloved to Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

وَإِنَّ الدَّمَ لَيَقْبَعُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَكَانٍ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ

“Indeed, the blood is accepted by Allah before it reaches the ground.” (Tirmidhi)

What an incredible honor Allah has given this worship. Before the blood even touches the earth, Allah accepts it from the sincere servant.

e) Qurbani Teaches Care for Humanity

Another objective of Qurbani is generosity and concern for those in need. Islam does not allow worship to become selfish or isolated from society.

Allah praises the believers:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

“They give others preference over themselves even though they themselves are in need.”
(Al-Hashr: 9)

Through Qurbani, we feed the poor, assist struggling families, strengthen relationships, and spread happiness among people. This spirit of giving is a sign of true Iman.

Today, many people spend lavishly on luxuries but hesitate to help the needy. Qurbani teaches us that wealth should not imprison the heart. A believer learns to give for the sake of Allah.

Conclusion:

Dear respected brothers and sisters!

Qurbani is not merely the slaughtering of an animal. It is the revival of a divine story written with sacrifice, obedience, patience, and submission. It connects us with Ibrahim عليه السلام, Ismail عليه السلام, and the entire legacy of Prophethood. Every takbir of Eid and every sacrifice performed during these blessed days remind us that Allah must come before everything else.

We must ask ourselves: What are we sacrificing for Allah today? Are we sacrificing our sins, our arrogance, our selfishness, and our disobedience? Are we sacrificing time for worship, wealth for charity, and comfort for the service of Islam? The real lesson of Qurbani is not only to sacrifice an animal, but to sacrifice whatever stands between Allah and us.

May Allah grant us the spirit of Ibrahim عليه السلام, the patience of Ismail عليه السلام, and the sincerity required for accepted worship. May He accept our Qurbani, purify our intentions, strengthen our faith, unite this Ummah upon righteousness, and make us among those who sincerely submit to Him in every aspect of life.