

# Celebrating Eid-ul-Azha

SYED ASHRAF ALI

ONE of the canonical festivals in the Islamic calendar (the other being Eid-ul-Fitr), Eid-ul-Azha brings for the Muslim world a divine blessing, a rare opportunity not only to enjoy an auspicious day of joy and happiness but also to receive Allah's Mercy and Reward through sacrifice, patience and constancy. The great festival of Eid-ul-Azha, popularly known in this sub-continent as *Bakrid*, is celebrated by the Muslims on the tenth of *Dhul-Hijja* every year through sacrifices and prayers in memory of the glorious sacrifice of the Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail (peace be upon them). But Eid-ul-Azha does not simply commemorate the unique sacrifice made by *Hazrat Ibrahim* and Ismail (peace be upon them), it also testifies eloquently to the patient way in which both father and son cheerfully offered to suffer any self-sacrifice, however painful or difficult it might be, in order to obey the Command of Allah, Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.

Although the word "Eid" in Arabic means "Joy", Eid-ul-Azha is certainly not an occasion for unbridled fun and frolic, not an opportunity for immoderate gluttony or gourmandism, but it is a solemn, sacred festival which enables a person to enjoy, in the right kiln of Islam, through *Azha*—sacrifice and surrender, resignation and renunciation, selflessness and total submission to the Will of God.

Celebrated concurrently with the slaughtering of the animals in *Mina* by the *Hajjis* and the days of *Tashreeq* in the auspicious month of *Dhul-Hijja*, the glorious festival is also known as *al-Eid al-Kabir* or "the Great Festival". Some also call it *Eid-ul-Qurban* or the "Sacrificial Feast". This sacred Day of Sacrifice is also known in the Muslim world as *Yaum-an-Nahr*.

Sacrifice has always played a significant role in the chequered history of mankind. Sacrifices have been made to get rid of natural calamities like flood and cyclone and earthquake, to evade famine, to solicit rain, to stop volcanic eruptions, to win wars, to ally tyranny, to appease or eulogise gods and goddesses—human sacrifices have indeed been made by various nations in various forms and for various purposes since the dawn of civilisation. The glorious and inimitable attempt of *Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah* to slaughter his son *Hazrat Ismail Zabihullah* (peace be upon them) as a sacrifice in obedience to God's Command, however, stands unique in the annals of history. Never, never indeed, on the day of this cold star has any other father tried to slaughter his own son with his own hands, and in full senses, simply to obey the Master's Command.

It was indeed a great and momentous occasion when two

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men, with concerted will, "ranged themselves in the ranks of those to whom self-sacrifice in the service of Allah was the supreme thing in life". The glorious incident, which took place in *Mina* some 3800 years ago, commenced a new era in religious history. It teaches us the very essence of our religions that the keys of life and death, and the mysteries of everything around us, are in Allah's Hands, that our honesty, determination and upright conduct are not matters of policy or convenience, all our life in this world must be lived as in the presence of Benign Providence, that no task or responsibility, however difficult or heavy a burden it may be, is greater than what we can bear. It teaches us, in the words of the Holy Quran, that "short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right". It teaches us that a Muslim does not live with his body, but he lives with his spirit. It teaches us not to love life over much, seeing that we must one day part with it. It teaches us to face death with resignation.

Muslims all over the world celebrate Eid-ul-Azha every year and hundreds and thousands of sheep, cows, goats and camels are sacrificed on the 10th day of *Dhul-Hijja* in the name of Allah. Unfortunately, however, very few of us celebrate this auspicious occasion in a befitting way. Very few realise that *Rabbul Alameen* does not need the flesh and blood of the animals. What he asks for is the *Taqwa* (which has been mentioned 211 times in the Holy Quran) and not lives in a physical sense. *Sum al-Hajj* in the Holy Quran declares very clearly: "It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches God; it is your piety that reaches Him. He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify God for His guidance to you. And proclaim the Good News to all who do right."

The glorious incident in the valley of *Mina* put an end to the system of Human Sacrifice which was common among most ancient people. Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) seeing in a vision that he, too, was sacrificing his son, his preparation to fulfil it literally and lastly the Divine commandment to sacrifice an animal in his stead indeed marked the abolition of the savage custom of human sacrifice. The world today stands indebted to the righteous Patriarch and his dedicated son for their noble example in uprooting the age-old savage custom.

It is very clear that what Allah, in His infinite Mercy, desires from the *Bandas* on this sacred occasion is giving of our whole being to Him. It is by the mention of Allah's name that an animal is sacrificed. The utterance of the Quranic verses affirms and asserts over and again: "Truly my prayer, and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds." It is not an empty mention of a word that Muslims make, the very hearts of the *Momens* tremble at the mention of the Holy Name. Each and every Muslim sacrificing an animal should bear in mind if he can sacrifice an animal over which he has full control for a particular period of time, how much more necessary it is that he should lay

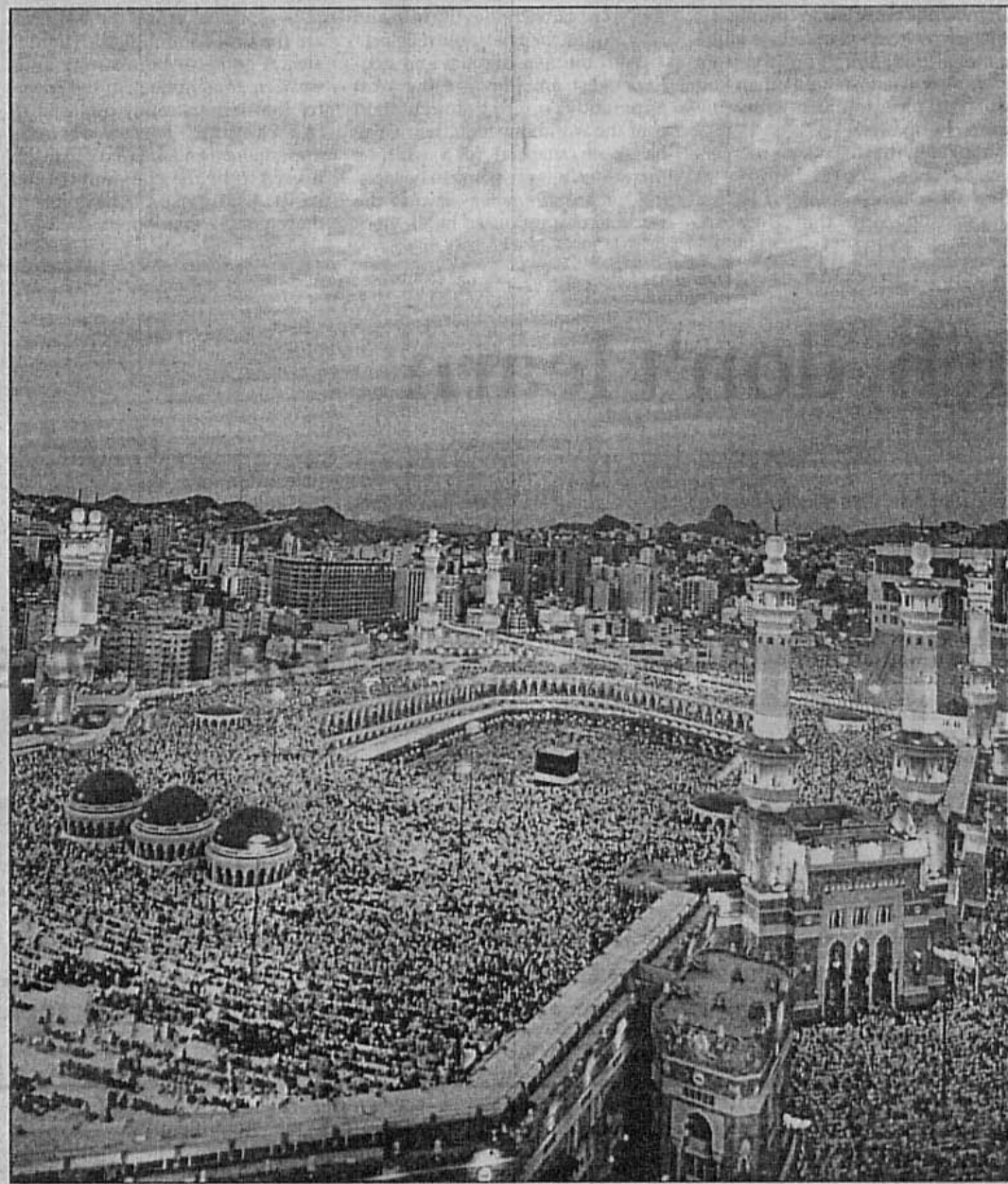
down his life in the Way of Allah, Who is not only his Master but also his Creator and Sustainer.

It will indeed be a sin if we forget the supreme sacrifice made by the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail (peace be upon them), buy an animal from the market, slaughter it just for the sake of fun and gourmandism, and celebrate this auspicious day through mere pleasure and gaiety, extravagance and dissipation, unbridled merry-making and uncouth entertainment. No Muslim, nay no human being, has any right to humble the unparalleled sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim and his son (peace be upon them) by equating it with the mere slaughtering of an animal with no *taqwa* behind it. We will certainly insult those salt

of the earth if we celebrate Eid-ul-Azha only through expensive clothes and delicious dishes, and not through prayers and penance, sacrifice and benevolence.

Allah has very kindly given us power over the brute creation and permitted us to eat their meat but that too if we pronounce His Holy Name at the solemn act of taking the animal's life. Through this solemn invocation, without which we are apt to forget the sacredness of life, are we reminded that wanton cruelty is not in our thoughts (as the immodest and sinful *Brigitte Bardot* thinks) and is never permitted in Islam. Nor does the Most Perfect *Deen* of Allah permit extravagance or wastage in the name of religion on any occasion whether through slaughtering of cattle on the day of Eid-ul-Azha or through any other means. Eid-ul-Azha is the system of denying ourselves the greater part of the food derived from the sacrificed cattle for the sake of the poor brethren; our symbolic act finds practical expression in benevolence, and that exactly is the virtue sought.

Syed Ashraf Ali is former Director General of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.



Celebrating the Hajj

# The sacrifice is symbolic

**The sacrifice of animals we make in commemoration of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah's supreme sacrifice is certainly symbolic. It reminds us to learn many things and also to unlearn many things. Let the symbolic sacrifice be meaningful and significant. Piety should be the first consideration.**

KAZI AULAD HOSSAIN

EID-ul-Azha is the second greatest religious festival of the Muslims after Eid-ul-Fitr. And when we think of Eid-ul-Azha or the "Qurbani" we think of sacrificing unblemished cow/goat/ram/camel etc. in commemoration of the sacrifice made by Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah (Friend of Allah) at the behest of the Lord Creator. And what was the sacrifice Hazrat Ibrahim (A) made? It was his dearest thing in life, his own beloved son Hazrat Ibrahim (A). In this connection what is to be specially noted is that Hazrat Ibrahim's (A) sacrifice of his dear son was symbolic. His sacrifice reminds us whether we should endeavour to be pious and dutiful. Our sacrifice of spotless and healthy animals on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha gives us a clear signal to sacrifice unhesitatingly our own interest (if not our best things) for the sake of indigent persons. Whether sacrifice of such animals is for the hapless have-nots and downtrodden people, for amelioration of their miserable condition should be seen. Sacrifice of animals should not be considered as the highest good of life.

How oblivious and unmindful we are about our bounden duties and responsibilities toward the poor and indigent persons! There is a slum in the vicinity of a wealthy tycoon's mansion and there lives a helpless poor widow with her ¾ famished children and the widow puts in her back-breaking labour breaking bricks every day from morning till evening with a view to earning a meagre income to keep

their body and soul together. The wealthy tycoon has not ever visited it to see for himself as to how the slum dwellers live in sub-human conditions. There is an affluent and stiff necked high official/executive moving in his airconditioned and costly chauffeur-driven limousine. He scarcely thinks that he has a blood relation languishing silently away from public gaze in his remote village house.

We know that a sacrificial animal has millions of hair on its body and it is said that Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) (peace be upon him) once observed that the man who sacrifices an animal having such enormous quantity of hair on its body will gain millions of virtues/rewards, that is, virtues equal to the total number of hair the sacrificial animal will have on its body. But in this connection it may be pointed out that if the wealthy tycoon and the stiff-necked high official think that since they have sacrificed two robust animals on the occasion Merciful Allah will not catch hold of them for their numerous unjust and evil deeds on the day of Judgement, if they think that they will be exonerated then they will make monumental mistake in view of Benign Allah's declaration in the following Quranic Ayat: *Sura Hajj: Ayat 37* "It is not meat, nor their blood reaches Allah, it is their piety that reaches Him." So, Eid-ul-Azha is not an occasion only to satisfy our gastronomical delight, it is surely an opportune moment to examine oneself whether he has been able to achieve "Taqwa" or piety as desired by Merciful Allah.

Let there be no competition for buying robust sacrificial animals on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha for such meaningless competitions is certainly unacceptable to Almighty Allah as clearly indicated in the said Quranic Ayat. What is, however, acceptable to Him is man's love, fellow feeling and affection for the have-nots windows, indigent persons and orphans who cannot meet both ends, who often experience the sharp pinch of hunger. Let the rich, resourceful and well-to-do persons endeavour to bring smiles on the melancholy faces of such unfortunate and neglected persons at least on the occasion of "Qurbani" Eid.

It will also not certainly be irrelevant if we recall here what Almighty Allah says in *Ayat 7* of *Sura Hadid* (Iron) of the Holy Quran: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that where He has made you trustees, and such of you as believe and spend (aright) theirs will be a great reward."

That the money and wealth a man has earned by the sweat of his brow do not actually belong to him. He is merely the custodian or trustee of his money and wealth on behalf of Merciful Allah and the have-nots have a share of them.

The sacrifice of animals we make in commemoration of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah's supreme sacrifice is certainly symbolic. It reminds us to learn many things and also to unlearn many things. Let the symbolic sacrifice be meaningful and significant. Piety should be the first consideration.

Kazi Aulad Hossain is a retired high govt official.

# Qurbani in rural Bengal

ABUL KALAM ELIAS

EVERY nation has its own distinctive custom and costume, calendar and culture. It is a 'fait accompli' that we the Muslims have separate name and nomenclature, history and tradition, arts and architecture. In other words a different outlook of life, and on life.

But it is an irony of fate that the palmy days of ours have gone by. Science had got out of Muslim hands. In these days of scientific advancement, Muslims suffer from identity crisis. We have become Muslims only in name but not in letter and spirit. We are only beef-eater Muslims, who do not know about the superiority of our culinary culture. That once the delicious dishes of the Muslims delighted the whole world.

It is said that the golden days were always in the past. I can still call up my boyhood remembrances. No sooner had the day of Eid-ul-Azha approached than we got up from bed at early dawn and cleaned our hearth and home, premises and courtyards, bypaths and byways in front of the house. Because cleanliness is next to Godliness.

We used to watch our sacrificial cow and our next door neighbours would also call at our door to have a glimpse of our domestic environment. My pious father would starve till such time as the cow was slaughtered by the priest after Eid-congregation at the open meadow of our village school. Beggars and destitutes used to visit from door to door together their due-share of

**We, the Muslims have fallen into the deep valley of degradation from the pinnacle of glory. Who will cry a halt to the sad-state-of-things and sorry-state of affairs? Selfishness, self-aggrandisement, meanness, greed, jealousy, hatred, back-biting, malice, narrowness of outlook, violence and mischief-making have become the order of the day in our present day society. Sacrificing attitude has become very rare. Let Eid-ul-Azha rejuvenate us morally.**

meat. I have seen a lower middle class poor who could ill-afford to offer Qurbani hence buy the meat from the have-nots.

The common sight in the rural Bengal after Qurbani is the carrying of cooked or boiled meat by bags and pots to huts and homes of dear and near ones. Slum-dwellers, and floating have-nots, the poor and the beggars come out with their bowls and pots in quest of roti and meat. The dry these rotis and raw-meat in the sun to be preserved against bad times.

Home coming urban dwellers are the co-sharers of laughter and tears with their kin and kin on this festive occasion. Village folks play host to the guests and visitors from towns, receive and welcome them with warmth and cordiality.

Indigenous dishes are prepared with meat and rice. Most palatable of the dishes is very often the last item before the departure of the urban dwellers from the humble huts of rural Bengal. I shall never forget the delicious dishes of my traditional island, Sandwip, that was the cradle of my infancy. There were the typical Bengali food, pan-cakes, meat pies and mince-pies. In the wake of Eid-ul-Azha

festival hides and skin dealers and charity collector of religious institutions have a good time to raise fund to stand in good stead against rainy days.

In the countryside where there is no refrigerator, village women preserve the meat by constant warming up the cooked food for days, weeks and months together. I have seen the priests or poor people drying the minced meat in the sun.

Now let us put in the words of the poet on this happy occasion of joy and rejoicings, merry-making and mirth:

"We want, not only killing of bests but to draw inspiration from this religious institution which is the symbol of sacrifice reminiscent of Hazrat Ibrahim.

"We want revolutionary spirit of Islam, rejuvenation and regeneration of our glorious past. No more tyranny of customs, but the sacrifice of selfish end.

"We want self-realisation, self-knowledge and self-consciousness. These three alone lead man to sovereign power."

Today our society and the nation is undergoing a critical juncture. The rule of law is con-

spicuous by its absence. Corruption of every description has crept in all walks of life. Terrorism and muscle-merry have polluted the academic atmosphere of educational institutions. Extortionists, thugs, goons, dacoits, hijackers, looters, frauds, imposters, ruffians, scoundrels lie in wait. A sense of insecurity stares every stranger and passerby in the face.

Men and women at home and outside are afraid of unknown apprehension. Dusk descends and dead silence comes down on the villages. Reciprocal killing is going on in full swing in the name of politics. Thus a vicious circle has poisoned the very atmosphere and environment all around.

The leadership crisis has added fuel to the social, economic, cultural and educational crisis. Eid-ul-Azha festival is a part of our religious and cultural life-style. They say we, the Bengalees, stand on ceremony and celebrations. Our words are not in conformity with our deeds. We have been treading beaten track from the dim past. We perform our prayer, keep fasting of Ramadan, go to pilgrimage. But have we reposed our trust

in Almighty Allah who is the Protector, Destroyers and Creator of the vast universe?

Islam has come on earth with the message of equality, justice, friendship and freedom for all. But, we the standard bearers of Islam have miserably failed to inculcate in us the noble ideals of the Holy Quran, tenets of Islam and the sayings of the holy prophet (S.M.). We have fallen on evil days as a disastrous consequence of our misdeeds and follies. We have gone against the teachings of Islam.

Qurbani reminds us of the supreme sacrifice made by Hazrat Ibrahim who was about to slaughter his beloved son, as he was ordained by Almighty Allah in his dream. Thus Qurbani has been introduced in our Muslim society as a symbol of sacrifice. Muslim history is replete with the innumerable instances of self-sacrifice.

But alas! We, the Muslims have fallen into the deep valley of degradation from the pinnacle of glory. Who will cry a halt to the sad-state-of-things and sorry-state of affairs? Selfishness, self-aggrandisement, meanness, greed, jealousy, hatred, back-biting, malice, narrowness of outlook, violence and mischief-making have become the order of the day in our present day society. Sacrificing attitude has become very rare.

Let Eid-ul-Azha rejuvenate us morally.

Abul Kalam Elias is a former college principal and Bangla Academy research fellow.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Chandpur  
Phone No. 0841/63310

## Invitation for Tenders

1.	Ministry/Division	Communication.
2.	Agency	Roads & Highways Department.
3.	Procuring entity name	Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Chandpur.
4.	Procuring entity district	Chandpur.
5.	Invitation for Tender No.	10/CRD/2004-2005.
6.	Invitation Ref No.	Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Comilla's Office Memo No. 2978 dt. 20-12-2004 & 18 dt. 03-01-2005.
7.	Source of funds	Public Fund.
8.	Tender package name	As per list of package.
9.	Tender last selling date	29-01-2005 up to office hours.
		Date Time
10.	Tender receiving date and time	30-01-2005 Up to 12-30 PM.
11.	Tender opening date and time	30-01-2005 At 2-00 PM.
12.	Name & address of the office(s) for	Address
	(i) Selling tender document	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Chandpur/Comilla/B'baria.
	(ii) Receiving tender document	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Chandpur.
	(iii) Opening tender document	Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Chandpur.
13.	Eligibility of tenderer	All tenderers regardless of whether enlisted or not enlisted with the employer & as per qualification mentioned in the tender documents.
14. List of package		
Sl. No.	Package No.	Identification of package Location Tender security amount (Tk) Price of tender document Completion time in days/ week/months
1.	10/1-0405	Carpeting & seal coat work on the bridge deck of Chandpur Bridge of Raipur-Chandpur Road. Raipur-Chandpur Road. Tk. 8,200/00 Tk. 500/00 15 days
2.	10/2-0405	Construction of earthen road shoulder of Comilla-Chandpur Road. At different km. Tk. 7,400/00 Tk. 500/00 15 days
3.	10/3-0405	Cement painting, distempering door, vermishing & grill painting of office building & inspection bungalow. Office building & inspection bungalow of Chandpur Road Division. Tk. 12,200/00 Tk. 500/00 30 days
4.	10/4-0405	For extension of prayer room at ground floor of Chandpur Road Division Office. Chandpur Division Office Bhaban. Tk. 1,100/00 Tk. 250/00 30 days
5.	10/5-0405	Painting of Fender Post of 260.69 metre long prestressed Concrete Girder Bridge over River Dakatia at Chandpur-Natunbazar-Puranbazar Link. Natunbazar-Puranbazar Link Bridge. Tk. 800/00 Tk. 250/00 15 days
15. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without showing any reason.		

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