good of the human community. It happens every year. And every year tens of thousands of cows, and of course goats, fall in a battle they never fight. They appear to be dying willingly and it does not occur to them that they need to resist. Don't cows and goats have a sense of history, or learn from history? They keep shedding their blood so that we can fatten ourselves on the beef and mutton that come from them. That reminds you of the huddled masses, forever ready to die so that their great men and women can live and go on to write their memoirs.

you can derive from that freshly dead cow. You know there will be loads of kutchi biriyani now that the goat you had earlier bought for as much as four thousand taka has been silenced for all time.

Ah, in the silence of the lambs and the cows, you call forth the epicurean in you. Your friends come over and you go visiting them. Every dining table, you will notice, reeks of the cow. Every plate of biriyani reminds you of the goat which sacrificed its future to your insatiable appetite for food. No, we are not complaining. It is just that even as we gorge on all that meat, downing it with a little



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On Eid-ul-Azha, it is the blood-soaked streets of the city that cause the tremors to rise in your soul. The place gives you that disturbing feeling that a battle has been fought and the casualties happen to be those unthinking cows and goats. The knives have been out for them, and will be out again for those animals which are yet to bite the dust. And the knives, you will notice, are drenched with blood. The hands that hold them belong to men who talk to us, almost regularly, on the delights that await us in the afterlife. And one of the paths to that partaking of sensual enjoyment runs through the gormandising which we give ourselves to once those cows are down and lifeless. The fat on the meat makes you drool; the thought of sheekh kabab keeps every other feeling in suspension; a dreamy look comes into your eyes as you wonder how many large slices of salted meat

sherbet or coca cola or, if we are a trifle bold, with that forbidden red or white wine, we tend sometimes to miss the cow and the goat which gave up their future for ours. Now, that is sacrifice in the real sense.

But let all that be. On Eid day, after all the blood and all the gore and all the feasting and partying, it is the stomach that needs taking care. Watch out for a growl or a squeak. The shops are fast emptying of belly-controlling tablets. All the bottles of 7-Up and Sprite have been sold. You groan and moan, turn this way and that. Passion is gone. Love cowers behind the sofa. The cow and the goat have come back to you, in the form of beautiful agony.

And yet you wait for next year.

The writer is Executive Editor, The Daily Star.