



# SUCKING AT SACRIFICES



An unspoken law prevailing in this land is that if you consider yourself even half a man, then you must be able to buy a cow on your own. This rule, like most others, applies only to the middle class individuals who do not have a personal secretary nor enough money to hire a third party to do their work for them. If you are barely surviving after taxes and regular expenditure, then lend us an ear. Over the years, you may have already understood how hard buying a cow really is. Today, we tell you how your years of knowledge and experience are totally wrong.

Firstly, buying a cow is no longer a religious sacrifice- it entails much more. It is a social status; a symbol of how successful you really are. Buying a small cow or a goat, affordable and just enough for your friends and family is considered a faux pas. Your cow, by social standard alone, must be enough to add to the already full refrigerators of your neighbours. After that there must be enough leftover for your family and the underprivileged of society (well, a few kilograms here and there anyway). Anything less will just not suffice.

If you, for a minute, think that the coming

festival is between you and your God, then you are blasphemously wrong. While religious texts may explain that God cares neither for the skin, meat nor the blood but for the piety, scholars are wont to point out that piety can be translated any which way. Piety, by definition, includes religious devotion, spirituality or a mixture of both. In other words, it is open for interpretation. Now, you may ask if one's income is slightly over 2 lakhs a month, is a 1 lakh taka cow really a sacrifice or even an expression of proper piety, and you will literally get no answer. Religion doesn't bore itself with numbers and such until of course it comes to identifying a monetary value. A cow worth 50,000 BDT and charity worth the same are treated as equal for all people regardless of the discrepancies in their income.

Of course, money isn't the only issue. Size matters and trumps all. If you spend too much money on a small cow, it almost seems that society is ingrained to ridicule you. We all know that rich people must buy huge cows. In fact, the societal pressure is so much, that even middle class earners are expected to buy big cows. No home, no savings for your children's education and no

proper pension funds? That is all irrelevant, provided you can buy a big enough cow and do the expensive pilgrimage as required. Religion trumps materialistic things. Duh! But what does your religion say about such matters? It is when these questions are asked when a 200 year game of Chinese whispers is brought into contexts, but who needs that kind of hearsay.

There is much more left. Whether you understand it or not, a cow's skin, teeth, amount of beef and of course how much of a fight it puts up are all worth bragging. If you managed to slaughter a cow that ten other folks held down for your safety, you can be nothing but a hero. Such a brave soul! Conquering a furious but most timid of beasts with ONLY ten men. You must be something special, yes?

But how do you treat an animal you are about to 'sacrifice'? (sacrifice being an overstatement of sorts, considering your driver literally just bought it last night). Well, you feed it, right? Your caretakers shower it too. Then you slice its neck, in front of its mates, because obviously animals can't see or feel anything. But what about the overwhelming scientific evidence that they

can feel or see? Don't worry; science has no place in this morally sound and absolutely 100% humane advent.

The sacrifice, end of the day, is indeed an integral part of our culture. Of course, we'd be better off considering what a sacrifice entails but when we are satisfied by the preaching of overzealous (and by the way sponsored) preachers, then who are we to question what has been going on for centuries? Does anyone even care about animals?

"And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered." That almost sounds like equality, doesn't it? Ignore and move on. Sacrifice, in whatever form, is a very personal thing. No one can be capable of judging another's actions. But we can judge our own, can't we? Sometimes it isn't about a higher power or a deity; it is simply about us. Can we allow for a moment of retrospection when the time comes around? Some more food for thought while you munch on that delectable leg in the form of an early morning nehari. ■