



Eid ul-Adha ('Festival of Sacrifice') is one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar. The festival remembers the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to.

History:



In the holy Quran, Ibrahim dreams that Allah commands him to sacrifice his son Ismail in a sign of obedience to God.

Shaytaan (Satan) tried to confuse Ibrahim and tempt him not to go ahead with the sacrifice, but Ibrahim resists the temptation and drives him away.

Ibrahim later tries to kill his son, but Allah stops him, sending the Angel Jibreel (Angel Gabriel) with a ram for him to sacrifice instead.

"Adha," the Arabic word for "sacrifice," is commemorated on the final day of the Hajj pilgrimage, the fifth pillar of Islam. Muslims who are physically and financially able to go on Hajj are encouraged to do so, in what is seen as an Islamic lifetime duty.

The festival is also referred to as Eid al-Kabir (greater Eid, in Arabic), Qurbani Eid (Eid of sacrifice)/Baqra Eid (Eid of "cattle" slaughter, in South Asian languages) and Büyük Bayram (greater Eid, in Turkish).

Dr. Fozia Bora, associate professor of Islamic History at the University of Leeds in the U.K., told Newsweek: "The Eid al-Adha festival offers a fascinating case study of how contemporary Muslims grapple with such issues as the ethics of meat consumption in an age of intensive farming and often poor standards of animal welfare.

"While vegetarian and vegan Muslims interpret and apply the idea of 'sacrifice' in often quite different ways, the commitment to mark the ancient origins of the festival is retained, as is the desire to help feed the poor and needy. The spirit of giving, sharing and spreading joy, thus blurring distinctions of class and wealth, remains the visible hallmark of the festival across various communities."

Celebration:



On Eid al-Adha, Muslims thank Allah for all their blessings and send good wishes to their loved ones.

The celebration also typically includes the symbolic sacrifice of a lamb, goat, cow, camel or other animal that is divided into threes to be shared among friends, family and the needy.

The sacrificing of animals was also a cultural practice of pre-Islamic Arabs in the Arabian peninsula, Bora said, adding that early Muslims of the region adopted and adapted the practice, which has remained stable over many centuries.

Muslims typically attend mosque on the first day of al-Adha, to perform ṣalāt, communal prayer, at dawn. They also donate to charities and visit family and friends, exchanging gifts. The "Qurbani"—or "sacrifice"—is offered in devotion to Allah and to help the vulnerable.

"It's remarkable how this festival offers a window onto a multicultural history spanning Biblical narratives, Arabian social practices and modern Muslim interpretations of the idea of 'sacrifice,'" she said.

"What we also see is a model of 'unity within diversity' where Muslims from different parts of the world, speaking vastly different languages, living in different climates and with differing local customs, tend to honor the festival in similar ways, through charity, prayers, eating together and decorating homes and bodies."