



Thousands of animals will once again be sacrificed worldwide on the occasion of Eidul-Adha. This qurbani (sacrifice) has been described as the “Sunnah of your Father Ebrahim (alaihis salaam)”. Sayyiduna Ebrahim (alaihis salaam) was commanded to offer his little son Sayyiduna Ismail (alaihis salaam) as a sacrifice. He submitted himself to the command of Allah Ta’ala and in compliance to the command he firmly passed the knife over the throat of his son. Allah Ta’ala prevented the knife from cutting and Sayyiduna Ismail (alaihis salaam) was spared.

Parent’s Desire

The Quraan Majeed refers to this incident as one of the tests that Sayyiduna Ebrahim (alaihis salaam) was put through, which he passed with distinction. What really was the test? The test was simply to determine what will be given preference – Deen or Desire? Like any other parent, Sayyiduna Ebrahim (alaihis salaam) also certainly desired to see his beloved child living with him in this world. Yet deen – the command of Allah Ta’ala – dictated that the desire to see the child living, no matter how intense, must be curbed and the child should be slaughtered. Sayyiduna Ebrahim (alaihis salaam) did not hesitate a moment in giving preference to deen over desire.

This is the message and the spirit of qurbaani - to always give preference to deen over desire; to slaughter one’s desire but refrain from slaughtering the command of Allah Ta’ala or the beloved sunnah of Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

Worshipping Desires

The entire life of a Mu’min is a test. Allah Ta’ala says: “Do the people think that they will be left

to say ‘we have believed’ and they will not be tested?’ (29:2) The core of this test, to put it simply, is one’s desire. Many desires are natural and in-born in every human being. The very nature of one’s desire is that it has no limit and wishes to be expressed unhindered. However sharee’ah has placed clear limits and boundaries. To curb one’s desires and restrict them within these boundaries is deen, while overstepping these limits is akin to worshipping one’s desires. Allah Ta’ala asks in the Quraan Majeed: “Have you seen the one who has made his desire his deity (god)?” (45:23) The meaning of this aayah is that the one who does what he desires and disregards the command of deen, it is as if he is a worshipper of his desires.

Restraining one’s desires, despite any pain that may be experienced in doing so, is the dictates of Imaan. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “None of you is a Believer until he submits his desires to that which I have brought (the Qur’an and Sunnah).” (Sharhus Sunnah vol. 1, pg. 213) This is the greatest test. Nabi’s (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) greatest fear was that his followers must not become the slaves of desires. He is reported to have said: “Among the things I fear most for my people are the following of desires (against the commands of sharee’ah) and having lengthy worldly aspirations. As for following one’s desires, this prevents one from (accepting or following) the Truth (deen) while future worldly aspirations make one forgetful of the Hereafter.” (Shu’abul Imaan #10132 and Fathul Baari vol. 11, pg. 284)

In order to assist us to curb our desires and pass the test, Allah Ta’ala and His beloved Rasul (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) have declared numerous rewards for those who restrain their desires and give preference to deen.

Desire will Lead to Destruction□□□□□□□□□□

For instance every person has a natural desire to have wealth. Wealth earned in a halaal manner without compromising deen in any way, and spent in a correct manner, is a great blessing. Likewise, every person naturally desires to be respected and honoured. However, if one’s desire for wealth becomes the object of life due to which he/she does not care about deen or the rights of people, or if he/she chases after fame, his/her desire will lead him/her to destruction. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “Two hungry wolves let loose on a flock of sheep cannot cause as much destruction to the flock than the damage inflicted upon one’s Deen by one’s greed for wealth and fame.” (Tirmizi #2376) On the contrary, curbing one’s desire for name, fame, power and popularity and sincerely adopting humility is greatly rewarded. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “He who humbles himself for the sake of Allah Ta’ala, Allah Ta’ala will elevate him.” (Muslim #6592)

Our emotions and thoughts are also subject to the same test – Deen or desire. To desire good for every believer is deen. “None of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself,” (Bukhari #13), declares Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). On the contrary, to desire that somebody should be deprived of the bounty that he has been blessed with is termed jealousy. It is described in the Hadith as “alhaaliqah” – something that shaves off and destroys one’s deen (Tirmizi #2510). The acid test is whether we desire good for others or wish harm for them?

Anger is also a natural emotion in man. When one is angered, one naturally desires to give vent to that anger. Once again deen dictates that the anger in personal matters should be restrained. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has declared: “The one who restrains his anger where he is capable of venting it, Allah Ta’ala will fill his heart with Imaan and peace.” (Faidhul Qadeer vol. 6, pg. 267 and Abu Dawood #4778)

Tug-of-War

In the use of one’s limbs one is constantly engaged in the tug-of-war between deen and desire. For instance the heart desires to cast lustful glances. Submitting to this desire destroys the heart and all the noor of Imaan. Deen demands that this desire be curbed. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has related from Allah Ta’ala the reward for curbing this desire in the following words: “The lustful glance (looking at non-mahrams) is from amongst the poisonous arrows of shaitaan. He who refrains from it out of my fear, I will bless him/her with such Imaan, the sweetness of which he/she will experience in his/her heart.” (Majma’uz Zawaaid vol. 8, pg. 122)

Deen dictates that one should dress with garments of taqwa (piety) – garments which fulfil the requirements hayaa and simplicity. One’s desires dictate that one should wear flashy garments which will impress others (besides one’s spouse). To follow such desires harms one’s Deen. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is reported to have said: “The one who wears garments to show-off, Allah Ta’ala will clothe him with garments of disgrace on the day of Qiyamah.” (Abu Dawood #4030) Thus following the “style” of the pious will be deen, while adopting the fashions of the day will be slavery of one’s desires.

The crux of our test in this world is summed up in the Quraan wherein Allah Ta’ala says: “As for the one who fears standing before his Rabb (on the day of Judgment) and restrains himself/herself from following his/her desires, verily Jannah is his/her abode.” (79:40&41) Thus

the lesson of qurbaani is simple yet very comprehensive: Adopt Deen over Desire. Therefore when any desire threatens to drag one beyond the limits of deen, slaughter it.

May Allah Ta'ala keep us steadfast on deen and save us from becoming the slaves of our desires. Aameen.