



178479 - Will the Sunnah of the `aqiqah be fulfilled by slaughtering one sheep for a boy?

the question

Allah has blessed me with a boy, who is now two years old, but I did not offer `aqiqah for him. Now Allah has blessed me with another boy, and I want to offer `aqiqah for both boys. If I slaughter one sheep for each boy, will I have fulfilled the Sunnah, or must I offer two sheep for each boy in order to fulfil the Sunnah? If I slaughter one sheep for each boy now, can I slaughter one sheep for each boy later on, so that two sheep will have been slaughtered for each boy? I hope to do that when my situation becomes easier, by Allah's grace. Or is the best and correct thing to slaughter two sheep on behalf of one of them now, and not offer `aqiqah for the other until things become easier, by Allah's grace? What is the difference between what is good enough and fulfilling the Sunnah?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Offering the `aqiqah is a confirmed Sunnah, but there is no sin on the one who does not do it, because of the report narrated by Abu Dawud (2842) from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: "If anyone has a child born to him and wishes to offer a sacrifice on its behalf, he may offer two sheep of similar type for a boy and one for a girl." Shaykh al-Albani classed it as authentic (hasan) in *Sahih Abi Dawud*.

Thus the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) connected the matter to what the individual wanted to do; this indicates that it is recommended (mustahabb), but not obligatory. See: *Tuhfat al-Mawdud*, p. 157.



Secondly:

The Sunnah is to offer two sheep on behalf of a male child and one sheep on behalf of a female, because of the report narrated by at-Tirmidhi (1516) and an-Nasa'i (4217) from Umm Karaz, according to which she asked the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about the `aqiqah, and he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "On behalf of a boy two sheep and on behalf of a girl one sheep." Classed as authentic by al-Albani in *Irwa' al-Ghalil*, 4/391.

Ash-Shirazi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Sunnah is to sacrifice two sheep on behalf of a boy and one sheep on behalf of a girl, because of the report narrated by Umm Karaz... and because and because the purpose is to express joy at the birth of the child, and the joy at the birth of a boy is greater, so the sacrifice offered on his behalf is greater. But if one sheep is slaughtered on behalf of each of them, that is permissible, because of the report narrated by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sacrificed one ram each on behalf of al-Hasan and al-Husayn (peace be upon them)... End quote.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary: The Sunnah is to sacrifice two sheep on behalf of a boy and one sheep on behalf of a girl, but if a person slaughters one sheep on behalf of a boy, then he has fulfilled the basic requirement of the Sunnah, because of what the author mentioned. (*Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 8/409).

In *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah* (30/280), it says: The Shafa'is and Hanbalis are of the view that it is recommended to offer as `aqiqah for a male two sheep of similar type, and for a female one sheep, because of the hadith of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in which she said that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed them to offer two sheep of similar type for a boy and one sheep for a girl.

It is permissible to offer one sheep as `aqiqah for a boy, because of the hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).



The Hanafis and Malikis are of the view that one sheep each may be offered as `aqiqah for a boy and a girl. Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to do that... End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If a person can only afford one sheep, that is sufficient and fulfils the purpose. But if Allah has made him well off, then two sheep is better. (*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 7/492).

Thirdly:

Once it has become clear that the basic requirement of Sunnah may be fulfilled by slaughtering one sheep on behalf of a boy, then if someone has two boys, for example, and he only has two sheep, then what is more appropriate to suggest is that he should slaughter one sheep on behalf of each boy, and thus he will have fulfilled the basic requirement of the Sunnah, and done as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did. Missing out on what is best for each of them is less serious than missing out on the basic requirement of the Sunnah for one of them, especially as some of the scholars say that offering the `aqiqah is obligatory. So discharging one's duty with regard to the `aqiqah for two boys is more appropriate than discharging it for one of them, and leaving the other unfulfilled.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did that: he offered one sheep each as `aqiqah for al-Hasan and al-Husayn.

Then if a person becomes better off after that, and he wants to offer another sheep in addition to the one that he had already slaughtered, then we hope that that will benefit him, in sha Allah, and that this will perfect the `aqiqah that he had previously offered.

Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan (may Allah preserve him) said: If he slaughters one sheep today, and he slaughters the second a few days later, there is nothing wrong with that, and it is not essential that the two sheep should both be slaughtered at the same time. (*Al-Muntawa min Fatawa al-Fawzan*).

Fourthly:



The difference between doing what is sufficient and doing something as prescribed in the Sunnah is that there is more goodness in doing it as prescribed in the Sunnah than in doing what is merely sufficient. An example is if a person does wudu' and washes each part once; his wudu' is valid and he does not have to repeat it, but if he washes each part three times, then he will have done what is sufficient and will also have a great reward for doing what is in accordance with the Sunnah. Another example is someone who fasts on the tenth day of Muharram but does not fast a day before or a day after. His deed is acceptable and he will be rewarded for it, but he is not like one who fasts one day before or after, for the latter will have done what is sufficient and more, by acting in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who encouraged us to fast a day before or a day after.

And Allah knows best.