44730 - When is slaughtering for someone other than Allaah regarded as shirk?

the question

Is every slaughter that is not done for the sake of Allaah regarded as shirk? Please give details, may Allaah reward you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Slaughter may sometimes be a sacrifice, done to glorify and venerate Allaah, and it may sometimes be done to honour a guest or to provide meat to eat and so on. In the first case, it is not permissible to offer this kind of glorification and veneration to anyone other than Allaah; whoever offers that to anyone other than Allaah has associated someone else with Him and committed major shirk (shirk akbar), and the meat he slaughtered is regarded as maytah (dead meat). But in the second case, this is permissible and may be required, but in all cases it is not permissible to mention the name of anyone other than Allaah when slaughtering the meat, otherwise it becomes maytah (dead meat) which is haraam, so mentioning the name of Allaah when slaughtering the animal is a separate issue from the issue of the purpose of the slaughter.

If it is said: how can we differentiate between that which is done to honour a person and that which is an act of worship to someone other than Allaah? The answer is: that in the case of seeking to draw closer to someone other than Allaah, the intention is not to slaughter the animal for meat, rather the intention is to venerate the one for whom it is slaughtered and to give the meat to other people, such as the one who slaughters before a chief when he returns from a journey and so on, then he gives the meat to other people to eat it. This is what some people used to do in the past, and this sacrifice was only done in order to venerate the chief, so it comes under the heading of major shirk.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

Slaughter means killing by shedding the blood in a specific manner, which is done in several ways:

1 – That which is done as an act of worship with the intention of venerating the one for whom the sacrifice is done and humbling oneself before him and drawing closer to him. This may only be done for Allaah in the manner prescribed by Allaah. Doing this for anyone other than Allaah is major shirk. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): Verily, my Salaah (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)”

[al-An’aam 6:162]

2 – That which is done to honour a guest or for a wedding feast and the like. This is something which is enjoined and is either obligatory or mustahabb (encouraged), because the Prophet SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest.” And he SAWS (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn ‘Awf: “Give a wedding feast even if it is with only one sheep.”

3 – That which is done to provide food or to sell the meat and so on. This comes under the heading of that which is permissible and the basic principle is that it is allowed, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Do they not see that We have created for them of what Our Hands have created, the cattle, so that they are their owners.

72. And We have subdued them unto them so that some of them they have for riding and some they eat”

[Ya-Seen 36:71-72]

and it may be required or forbidden, depending on what it is a means to.

Sharh al-Usool al-Thalaathah in Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 6/62.

It says in Mawaahib al-Jaleel: With regard to slaughtering sacrifices to idols, there is no dispute that it is haraam, because this is something that is sacrificed to something other than Allaah. (3/213).

It says in Radd al-Muhtaar (6/309):

Slaughtering an animal for the arrival of prominent figure is forbidden, whilst slaughtering an animal to honour a guest is permissible. Then he said: The difference is that if he offers some of the meat to the prominent figure, then the slaughter is for the sake of Allaah and the benefit is for the guest or the wedding feast or the purpose of making money (by selling the meat), but if he does not offer any of it to the prominent figure and he gives it to others, then it was done to venerate someone other than Allaah, so it is haraam.

It says in al-Majmoo': It is not permissible for the one who is slaughtering the animal to say "In the name of Muhammad" or "In the name of Allaah and the name of Muhammad." Rather it is the right of Allaah that slaughtering should be done only in His name and vows should be made only in His name, and prostration should be done only to Him, and no created being should be associated with Him in that. Al- Ghazaali said in al-Waseet that it is not permissible to say, "In the name of Allaah and Muhammad the Messenger of Allaah (S)." because this is shirk. (8/384).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen was asked about the ruling on offering a sacrifice to someone other than Allaah, and whether it is permissible to eat that meat. He replied: Offering a sacrifice to someone other than Allaah is major shirk, because offering a sacrifice is an act of worship, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)"

[al-Kawthar 108:2]

“Say (O Muhammad): Verily, my Salaah (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)”

[al-An’aam 6:162]

So whoever offers a sacrifice to anyone other than Allaah is a mushrik whose shirk puts him beyond the pale of Islam – we seek refuge with Allaah – whether he offers that sacrifice to an angel, a Messenger, a Prophet, a caliph, a wali (“saint”) or a scholar. All of that is shirk (associating others in worship with Allaah) which puts one beyond the pale of Islam. People must fear Allaah and not allow themselves to fall into that shirk of which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with Allaah, then Allaah has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers”

[al-Maa’idah 5:72]

Eating from this meat is haraam, because it has been sacrificed to someone other than Allaah, and everything that is sacrificed to someone other than Allaah or slaughtered on an altar is haraam, as Allaah says in Soorat al-Maa’idah (interpretation of the meaning):

“Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maitah (the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allaah’s Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allaah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns — and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal — unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone-altars)”

[al-Maa'idah 5:3]

These sacrifices which are slaughtered for anyone other than Allaah come under the heading of

haraam food which we are not permitted to eat.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen was asked about the ruling on offering sacrifices to anyone other than Allaah.

He replied:

We have stated elsewhere that Tawheed means devoting worship only to Allaah – may He be exalted – and not worshipping anyone other than Allaah with any kind of act of worship. It is well known that offering sacrifices is a kind of worship by means of which a person seeks to draw closer to his Lord, because Allaah has enjoined it in the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)”

[al-Kawthar 108:2]

Every act by means of which a person seeks to draw closer (to his Lord) is an act of worship. So if a person offers a sacrifice to someone other than Allaah as an act of veneration and humility, seeking thereby to draw closer to him, as he seeks to draw closer to his Lord and venerate Him, then he is a mushrik who associates others in worship with Allaah. And if he is a mushrik, then Allaah has stated that He has forbidden Paradise to the mushrik and his abode is Hell.

Based on that, we say that what some people do, offering sacrifice to graves – the graves of those whom they claim to be awliya’ (“saints”) – is shirk which puts them beyond the pale of Islam. Our advice to these people is to repent to Allaah from their actions and to make their sacrifices for Allaah alone, and their prayer and fasting for Allaah alone; if they do that, He will forgive for them what they did before, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven”

[al-Anfaal 8:38]

Majmoo’ al-Fataawa 2/148.

For more information see al-Qawl al-Mufeed ‘ala Kitaab al-Tawheed, 1/215; Tayseer al-‘Azeez al-Hameed, 1/155; al-Durar al-Sanniyyah min al-Ajwabah al-Najdiyyah, 1/428.