26952 - Is it permissible to slaughter an animal with the intention of offering a sacrifice?

the question

I have been married for four years and have not been blessed with children. Praise be to Allaah, I have recently heard the news that my wife is pregnant, and on my father’s advice I slaughtered two animals (as a sacrifice) and distributed the meat among needy Muslims, purely for the sake of Allaah on behalf of myself and my wife. What is the Islamic ruling on that? May Allaah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If this sacrifice and feeding the needy was done as an act of thanksgiving to Allaah, then it is permissible, for feeding people is a way of doing good to people, and Allaah loves those who do good.

But if your sacrifice was aimed at warding off evil and bringing about good, then it is not permissible. This is what is well-known among people when the word “sacrifice” (fadw) is used, because they think that by doing this they will ward off evil and bring about good, so they do this when accidents or sickness happen to them or their loved ones.

In Islam, sacrifice is not a means of warding off that which has been decreed by Allaah, whether good or bad.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about slaughtering an animal when a building is completed or halfway through building. He said:

This action is subject to further examination. If the intention behind the sacrifice is to protect oneself against the jinn or some other intention by which the owner of the house intends to

achieve something, such as keeping it or its occupants safe, this is not permissible, and it is a kind of bid'ah (innovation). If it is done for the jinn then it is major shirk, because it is an act of worship done for someone other than Allaah.

But if it is done as an act of thanksgiving for a blessing that Allaah has bestowed, such as reaching the roof or completing the house, so the person gathers his relatives and neighbours and invites them to this feast, there is nothing wrong with this. This is what many people do as an act of thanksgiving for a blessing from Allaah, as He has enabled them to build a house and live in it instead of renting. Similar to this is what some people do when they come back from a journey, and they invite their relatives and neighbours as an act of thanksgiving to Allaah for their safe arrival. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came back from a journey he would sacrifice a camel and invite the people to eat. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3089).

Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 5/388.

Shaykh Muhammad al-Saalih ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

What some people do when they move into a new house and slaughter an animal and invite their neighbours and relatives is fine so long as it is not accompanied by any corrupt beliefs, as is done in some places where, when a person moves into a new house, the first thing he does is to bring a sheep and slaughter it on the threshold so that the blood will fall onto it, and they say that this will prevent the jinn from entering the house. This is a corrupt belief which has no basis in Islam. But if a person slaughters it as an expression of joy and happiness, there is nothing wrong with that.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti', 7/550, 551.

And Allaah knows best.