

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

SLAUGHTERING OF ANIMALS - THE CORRECT METHOD OF SACRIFICE

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There are some Muslims that advocate that the Quran does not mention 'slaughter' as the prescribed method to kill an animal for food. Furthermore, it is asserted by some that Muslims are free to eat an animal by killing it in any way it is deemed appropriate, the only precursor being the pronouncement of 'Bismillah' (In the name of God) during eating.

The intention of this article is not to argue a specific method of how an animal is to be captured or immobilised before it is sacrificed (on the understanding that whatever method is used is as humane as possible with minimum injury to the animal). However, the article does intend to show clearly from scripture that the '**death stroke**' should occur by a process of slaughter.

Four areas will be discussed:

- (1) Slaughtering of animals
- (2) Is 'Thakaytum' synonymous with 'Thubiha' (aka. ziba/dhiba)?
- (3) Has the term 'Thubiha' or its root word been used elsewhere in the Quran?
- (4) Pronounce the name of God before you kill the animal

(1) SLAUGHTERING OF ANIMALS

005:003

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat (Arabic: maytatu), blood (Arabic: damu), the flesh of swine (Arabic: walahmu-lkhanziri) and that on which has been invoked the name of other than God that which has been killed by strangling_or by a violent blow (Arabic: mawqudhatu) or by a headlong fall_or by being gored to death; that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are

able to slaughter it (Arabic: Thakaytum) (in due form); that which is sacrificed (Arabic: Thubiha) on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any forced by hunger with no inclination to transgression God is indeed Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful"

وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى التُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ

Thubiha Thakaytum

Illustrations - Joseph Islam

Please note that the Arabic word 'Thakaytum' has been used for 'slaughter' as a lawful manner of ending the life of an animal for consumption. This term appears in the same verse and is contrasted with the rejection of meat sacrificed on stone altars. Here the term 'Thubiha' is actually used, clearly indicating a familiarity of this process of sacrifice.

So what is the significance of using the word 'Thakaytum' instead of a derivative of 'Thiba/Ziba'?

(2) IS 'THAKAYTUM' SYNONYMOUS WITH 'THIBA/ZIBA' ?

Thakaytum - ROOT : DHAL/THAL-KAF-WAW

Please take particular note of the meaning of the word 'Thakaytum' as understood by classical Arabs which has been used to signify the ending of life in a **particular manner**, exclusive of any other manner. This has been well attested, by strong classical lexicon authority to **signify slaughter**. Furthermore, it is the details of 'slaughter' which are debated (and left to the development of Shariah / law) and not the word's significance as to mean 'slaughter'.

cned the intellect.] = ذَقِيَ (Mgh, Mṣb,) inf. n. as above, (Ṣ, Mgh, Mṣb, Ḳ,) *He slaughtered* (Ṣ, Mgh, Mṣb, Ḳ) an animal, (Mgh,) or a camel and the like, (Mṣb,) *in the manner [prescribed by the law,] termed ذَبَحَ* (Ṣ, Mgh, Ḳ,) i. e., (Mgh, Ḳ,) *in the manner termed ذَكَاةٌ* [q. v. infra]. (Mgh, Mṣb, Ḳ.) The proper signification of التَّذْكِيَةُ is The causing the natural heat to pass forth: but it is peculiarly applied in the law to signify the destroying of life in a particular manner, exclusive of any other manner. (Er-

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [1]

ذَكَاةٌ see ذُكُوَةٌ. = [Also] a subst. (Mgh, Mṣb, TA) syn. with تَذْكِيَةٌ (Mgh, Mṣb, Ḳ, TA) as signifying ذَبَحَ [i. e. The slaughter of an animal for food in the manner prescribed by the law]; (Mgh, Ḳ, TA;) as also ذَكَأَ, (Ḳ, TA, [in the CK ذَكَاةٌ,] which is likewise said to be a simple subst.: (TA: [in the TḲ, ذَكَا and ذَكَاةٌ are both said to be inf. ns., of which the verb is ذَكَأَ, signifying ذَبَحَ; but this I do not find in any lexicon of authority:])) it is satisfactorily performed by the severing of the windpipe and gullet, as is related on the authority of Aḥmad [Ibn-Ḥambal], or, as is also related on his authority, by severing them and also the وَدَجَانِ [or two external jugular veins], less than which is not lawful; or, accord. to Aboo-Ḥaneefeh; the severing of the windpipe and gullet and one of the وَدَجَانِ; or, accord. to Málík, the severing of the أُودَاجِ [or external jugular veins] though it be without the severing of the windpipe. (Mṣb.) The saying

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [2]

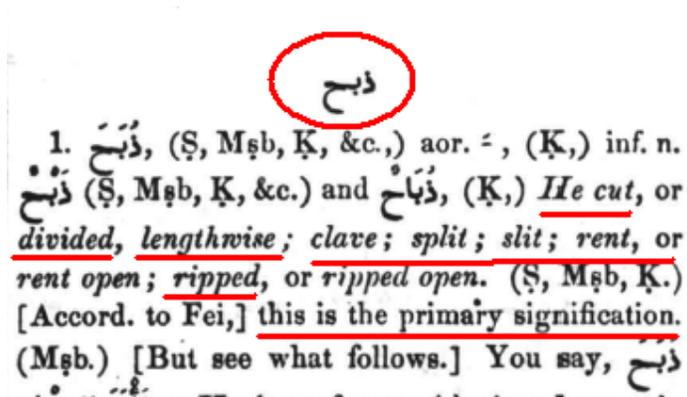
Once again it is noted that the synonymous nature of the term 'Thakaytum' with 'Thiba / Ziba' is **not disputed**. However classical legal jurists have indeed discussed the 'extent' and finer details of the slaughtering process. This is a rather different matter.

Please see related article [1] below.

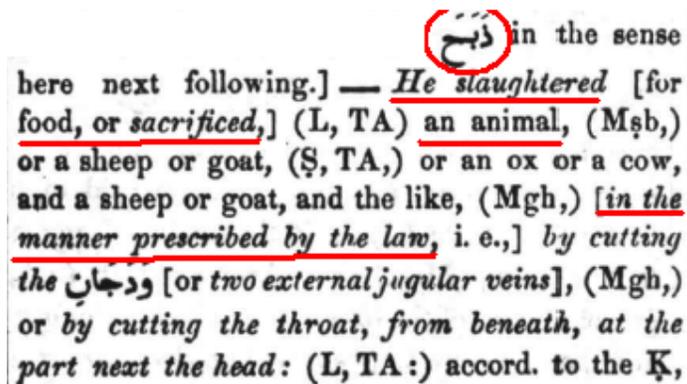
(3) HAS THE TERM 'THIBA' OR ITS ROOT WORD BEEN USED ELSEWHERE IN THE QURAN?

Root: DHAL/THAL-BA-HA (Thiba / Ziba)

Means to split / rip, cut the throat, sacrifice, trench, to slaughter / massacre, slay in large number, that which is sacrificed, victim, slaughtered one.



Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [3]



Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [4]

The most powerful authority of sacrificing the animal via the process of 'Thiba / Ziba' can be attested from the Quran itself. In Surah Baqarah (Chapter 2) named after the incident in question, a narrative is captured in which God asks the people of Moses to **slaughter** a Heifer. However, through their continual questioning making use of Moses as a conduit they created the difficulty for the task. Here the word 'Thiba / Ziba' is utilised making it clear that the correct scriptural prescription has always been to sacrifice the animal by the action of 'Thiba / Ziba'

002:071

"(Moses) answered: Indeed! He says: Verily she is a cow unyoked; she ploughs not the soil nor waters the tilth; whole and without mark. They said: Now you bring the truth. **So they sacrificed her (Arabic: Thabahu - Root: TH-BA-HA),** though almost they did not"

قَالُوا أَلَّيْنِ جِئْتِ بِالْحَقِّ فذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

Thabahu

Illustration - Joseph Islam

God's request to sacrifice by Thiba/Ziba can clearly be read only a few verses earlier in 2:67

002:067

"And remember Moses said to his people: **"God commands that you sacrifice (Arabic: Tadhbahu - Root: TH-BA-HA) a heifer."** They said: "Do you make a laughing-stock of us?" He said: "God save me from being an ignorant (fool)!"

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذَبُحُوا بِقَرَّةٍ

Tadhbahu

Illustration - Joseph Islam

Other uses of 'Thiba' in the Quran:

- Solomon threatens to slaughter the Hoopoe Bird due to the possibility of it being AWOL (27:21)
- Abraham's dream and the sacrifice of his son (37.102)
- Abraham's son ransomed by a tremendous sacrifice (37.102)
- Pharaoh's dreadful torment in slaughtering sons (2:49, repeated 14:6 and 28:4)

(4) PRONOUNCE THE NAME OF GOD BEFORE YOU KILL THE ANIMAL

022.036

"The sacrificial animals (**Arabic: Bud'na**) we have made for you as among the symbols from God: in them is (much) good for you: **then mention the name of God over them as they line up:** when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), then eat from them and feed the needy that do not ask and the needy that ask. Thus We have subjected them to you so that you may be grateful.

Please note that the Arabic word 'Budna' (from the root Ba-Dal-Nun) is not restricted to 'camels' as is often translated, but the term covers any animal of sacrifice such as a cow, bull, goat or camel.

As it can be argued that the above is a requirement specific to sacrificial rites, the following verse imparts an example which is not regarding sacrificial animals.

005.004

“They ask you what is lawful to them Say: lawful to you are (all) things good and pure: and what you have taught your trained hunting dogs in the manner directed to you by God: eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of God over it: and fear God; for God is swift in taking account”

Hunting animals (such as dogs) normally catch **prey** and this verse is not necessarily dealing with sacrificial animals. This verse also follows the verse which details food restrictions.

The verse is clear that one is to pronounce the name of God over the food that is caught. It can be argued that this verse simply requires one to pronounce the name of God before eating the animal and not during slaughter. However, as carrion (dead meat) is forbidden, the hunting animal will be trained to bring the prey alive or in a state where it can be made lawful to eat (by slaughtering it in a lawful manner). It is in this context that the pronouncement of God's name is being mentioned which is being posited as a requirement for slaughter.

KILLING AN ANIMAL VIA A BLOW / STRIKE / STUNNING IS FORBIDDEN

It should be noted that some stunning processes render an animal temporary immobile. This is not the contention here. The contention is purely that death that results as a direct cause of the blow to an animal renders it unlawful for consumption.

005:003

وَالْمُنْحَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ

mawqudhatu

Illustration - Joseph Islam

The Arabic word used is '**mawqudhatu**' in its verb form 'Waqadha'. The root of this word is: **Waw-Qaf-Dhal/Thal** which means to beat till death, to strike violently or to be killed by a blow.

وقد

1. وَقَدَّهُ, aor. يَقْدُ, (Ṣ, L, &c.,) inf. n. وَقْدٌ, (Ṣ, L, K, &c.,) He beat him, or struck him, violently: (L, K:) he beat him until he became relaxed, or languid, and at the point of death: (Ṣ, L, Mṣb:) or he beat him so that he became at the point of death: (A:) he broke his skull, wounding the brain: (L:) he beat or struck, him upon the small protuberance above the back of the neck, so that the sound of the blow or blows reached the brain, and deprived him of reason: (Aboo-Sa'eed, L:) he beat him (a man) until he died. (L.) — وَقَدَّهُ بِالضَّرْبِ [He killed him with beating]. (ISk, L.) — وَقَدَّ الشَّاةَ He beat the ewe, or she-goat, to death with pieces of wood [ḡc.: see وَقَيْدٌ]. (L.) — وَقَدَّهُ He pros-

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [5]

SLAUGHTER PRACTICES IN THE INDUSTRY

There are undoubtedly heinous practices carried out in the industry where animals are tortured, kept confined, maltreated and slaughtered indiscriminately by methods which defy belief. All efforts must be undertaken to expose such practices to the relevant authorities and the public so that they can be curtailed.

However, please see a video below which provides one example of the kind of Islamic approach to be taken when preparing an animal for slaughter. Note the way animals should be treated which results in the relative composure of the animals.

There is no actual slaughter shown in the video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quhVxLUwiBw&feature=youtu.be>

(Please note that I am not in any way affiliated with or known to the individuals / company shown in the video)

FINAL THOUGHTS

The process of Z-B-H (sacrifice) has always been the prescribed way to kill an animal, attested by the Quran itself as shown by the example in Surah Baqarah. This can also be attested from the previous scriptures.

The term '**Thakaytum**' has a specific rendering and means to 'kill in the manner of the law'. Indeed this may have given rise to discussions which deal with the 'extent' of the law and slaughtering specifics but in no way does the term indicate (certainly from evidence and linguistic scrutiny) anything other than to 'Thiba / Ziba' (slaughter).

If we take a cue from the story of the Heifer itself, maybe the details are not so important as is the general act. But this too is another topic.

Related Article:

- (1) [Thakaytum](#)

REFERENCES

[1] LANE. E.W, Edward Lanes Lexicon, Williams and Norgate 1863; Librairie du Liban Beirut-Lebanon 1968, Volume 3, Page 971

Highlights marked in red on the lexicon excerpt are my own insertions. They have no bearing on the original text other than they emphasise relevance to the topic at hand. These are merely illustrations and have solely been utilised for educational and explanatory purposes.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., Page 953

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., Volume 8, 2959

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