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20 - Ud-hiyah is Sunnah, not Wajib

Q: I am married, praise be to Allah, and I have children. I live in a city other than the city in which my family lives, but on holidays I go to the city where my family is. On 'Eid-ul-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice), my children and I came five days before the 'Eid but we did not offer the Ud-hiyah (sacrificial animal offered by non-pilgrims) even though I am able to, praise be to Allah.

Is it permissible for me to offer Ud-hiyah? Is my father's Ud-hiyah valid on behalf of myself and my wife and children? What is the ruling on Ud-hiyah for the one who is financially able? Is it obligatory on the one who is not able? Is it permissible to take a loan in order to offer the Ud-hiyah?  A.A.Sh. Rafha' the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A: The Ud-hiyah is a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet), not Wajib (obligatory), and one sheep is sufficient on behalf of a man and the members of his household, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to sacrifice two-horned rams that were white speckled with black, every year; one on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and the other on behalf of those among his Ummah (nation based on one creed) who believe in the Oneness of Allah.

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If you, dear questioner, are living in a separate house, then the Ud-hiyah offered by your father on behalf of himself and the members of his household is not sufficient for you, because you are not living with them in the same house. It is prescribed for you to offer Ud-hiyah on behalf of yourself and your family. There is nothing wrong with a Muslim taking a loan to offer Ud-hiyah if he is able to repay it. May Allah grant us all success!

Source: Fatwas of Ibn Baz