



Lost sheep

Fatwa no. 346:

Q: Two months ago, I found a goat at the time of `Isha' (Night) Prayer. I told the mayor of the village and put it in the marketplace, but nobody claimed it. Please advise us. May Allah reward you.

A: This goat should be treated like lost sheep. The Prophet (peace be upon him) when asked about the lost sheep one finds, said, [\(It is yours or for your brother, or for the wolf. \)](#) This is a part of a Hadith agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. This Hadith applies to whoever thinks he can keep trusts; those who do not think they can keep trusts are not permitted to take it, otherwise they may get themselves into what leads to

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usurpation. Therefore, a trustful person can slaughter a lost sheep he finds and be ready to compensate its value if the owner is later identified, sell it and keep its price or raise it with the intention of giving it back to its owner. Having already slaughtered the lost goat or sold it and kept its price and he thinks that the owner will most likely not be identified, he may give its value in Sadaqah (voluntary charity) on behalf of the owner. In the instance that the owner appears, he is to be given the value of the goat, while the Sadaqah will count for its payer. However, if he spends on nurturing the goat with an intention to give it back to its owner, and the owner is identified, he should give it to him and claim the amount he spent on it. If the owner is not identified, the finder of the goat is to sell it and hold what he has spent on it. If there is an excess amount, it will have the same ruling as in the case when it is slaughtered after evaluating its price or selling it and keeping the price. May Allah grant us success! May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, his family and Companions!

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