

AN UP-TO-DATE ASSESSMENT OF THE MUSLIM METHOD OF SLAUGHTER

Presented by Dr. Abdul Majid Katme, (Chairman of the Islamic Medical Association in the UK)
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In the name of ALLAH, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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TERMINOLOGY

I would prefer to call this talk 'An up-to-date assessment of the **Islamic** method of slaughter' as the Islamic view towards slaughter is what we would like to discuss here today; Islam has got permanent fixed rules and teachings which do not change with time but Muslims sometimes, especially when they are not practicing, do not adhere properly and strictly to the code of Islam.

Before going into this subject, I think it would be wise, for the benefit of this large, non-Muslim audience, to give an idea about Islam, a faith with 1.5-2 million followers here in the UK. I am sure that this explanation about our background will clarify many of the issues which we would like to raise during the talk today and will make you understand the importance and wisdom behind our Islamic Law in connection with slaughtering of animals for food.

Islam is the last, and final religion, after Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad, peace be upon him, was the last Prophet giving this message to mankind. The word Islam means voluntary, total and full submission to the words and orders of the creator, ALLAH (s.w.t) the one and only creator, the creator of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them). Islam is a full, comprehensive religion and code of life which contains all the instructions for the different aspects of life - health, nutrition economic, education, science, morality etc. - for the individual male and female, for the family and for the society at large. Its rules and orders are permanently fixed, forever, applying to any one place at any one time.

We therefore believe that **religious law should not be interfered** with by any authority.

The two basic references for Muslim laws are:

- **The Qur'an** (The final Book of Revelation, revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).
- **The Sunnah** [*sayings, actions and behavior of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).*]

ALLAH (s.w.t) is the Creator of the universe, our bodies - **with its anatomy and physiology** - and the Creator of all the animals. The same Creator has given us the appropriate laws, especially in connection with food and diet, which will never, ever, lead to any contradiction or any suffering or ill-health. The laws of real science go hand in hand with the laws of ALLAH (s.w.t)

Food and dietary laws are an important part of Islam and we have all the details about:

- **what food to eat and drink**
- **what food and drink to avoid;**
- **how to eat and drink (i.e. etiquette);**
- **when to eat and drink**
- **what animals to eat and**
- **which ones to avoid;**
- **how to slaughter the animals.**

All this, and a lot more, have been stated and explained in the Qur'an and by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his sayings and practice and to eat **halal** (lawful) food is a form of worship, like prayer.

Mercy is another characteristic of Islam:

- **mercy to all animals;**
- **to children; to women;**
- **to the elderly,**
- **and even to plants.**
- **A person can go to paradise for feeding a thirsty dog! A person can go to hell for starving a cat!**

Health is also another characteristic embedded in all the teachings and instructions of Islam. Anything **halal** (lawful) will lead you to good health, free from disease and suffering; conversely, anything haram (unlawful) will inevitably lead to disease and suffering of one kind or another. For example adultery leads to venereal diseases and other problems; homosexuality leads to AIDS, etc.; alcohol abuse gives brain damage, liver disease and many other medical, psychological and social problems (*all these are forbidden*).

Fourteen hundred years ago, Islam talked about the relationships between diet and disease by encouraging the **Halal** (lawful) diet and drink. Allow me to establish a few basic facts in Islam, which are relevant to our subject today. It is forbidden to consume blood, in any form, and, medically, we know that blood is harmful to health. As it contains toxins and urea, and may contain bacteria, parasites viruses new chemicals and drugs etc. Besides this, blood can lead to poisoning when still in meat to be consumed.

It is also forbidden in the Old and New Testaments to consume blood.

The Bible says: -

“And they smote the Philistines that day from Mishmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took: sheep, and oxen. And calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood. Then they told Saul. Saying. Behold, the people sin against the Lord. In that they eat with the blood. And he said. Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. And Saul said. Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them. Bring me hither every man his ox. And every man his sheep. And slay them here, and eat: and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood.”

(Samuel 15: 31-34).

“Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life: and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it. thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.”

(Deuteronomy 12:23-24)

It is forbidden to eat the meat of an animal, which has died before being slaughtered (by any kind of stunning, strangulation - chemical or physical -, a blow to the head -concussion or percussion -, or due to a fall etc.) Only meat killed in the Halal (lawful) way is allowed to be consumed (dead meat with all the clotted blood in it is very harmful to health).

ALLAH (s.w.t) says in the Qur’an ***‘Forbidden to you (for food) are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine and that over which has been invoked other than the name of ALLAH (s.w.t) that which has been killed by strangling or by a violent blow 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 (in due form) and that which is sacrificed on stone (altars).***

(Surah Al-Maida 5/3)

It is also forbidden (Haram) to eat carnivorous animals such as lions, tigers, etc., carnivorous birds like eagles and hawks, scavengers like vultures, mules, donkeys, rats, mice, dogs, cats and frogs. Some seafood’s, however, are allowed (halal) Eating meat is not compulsory in Islam, but highly recommended. Slaying animals for food has been described, clearly, by the Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him), in his saying,

‘Verily, Allah (s.w.t) has prescribed proficiency in all things; thus, if you kill, kill well and if you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters’

(Sahih Muslim).

In addition, ***it has been practiced by him (the Prophet) in the most perfect and humane way (and he is a Prophet and a model to follow).***

The Islamic View Of the Animals:

Again, to make you understand the religious concept of slaughtering, I would like to give you a brief idea about how Islam ***views animals*** and what the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad. (peace be upon him) have said about the animal kingdom and its place in Islamic teaching.

The biggest chapter in the Qur’an is Al-Baqarah (The Cow). It contains 286 verses, many of which are verses of guidance and Islamic instruction for the believers.

Other chapters of the Qur’an with titles related to ***the animal kingdom are:***

- **Cattle, Bees, Ants, Spider, Elephant.**

According to the Muslim scholars and scientists, these titles and names of the animals carry behind them some wisdom and interesting, meaningful ideas. Look at how these animals have the honor to have chapters of the Holy Book named after them!

There are also other animal names mentioned in the Qur’an with the stories relevant to them:

- *camel, mule, donkey, horse, snake, locusts, whale, pig, fox, house-fly, carnivorous animals and birds, frog, bird, calf, fish, sheep, monkey, lice, dog, goat, bee and many others.*

Preservation of the species was done a long time ago by ALLAH's (s.w.t) order in Noah's Ark, without which we would not know of any animals in our lives today. This is also a reminder for us to preserve the species in our lifetime and at any one time. Animals were created before mankind.

All animals are created for the benefit of man (and there should be a kind, loving relationship and treatment given by man to them).

Animals can be used, gently and kindly in the way that they have been created, i.e. you do not ride a cow. The behavior of each animal is a sign of the Excellent Maker and Creator.

Each animal has the right to sanctity of life and this life is taken from some by the permission of ALLAH (s.w.t) and for good reasons only for food, by the most humane and merciful ways of killing.

ALLAH (s.w.t) says in the Qur'an:

'There is not an animal on Earth nor a bird that flies by its wings, but they are **community like you.**'

(The Cattle, 6/38)

The word "**Community**" is very interesting; here we say 'Chinese Community, Turkish Community' and we imply that this community has its own natural habits, language and special way of communication, special ways of food and eating, in recreation and mating, rearing their offspring and each one is respected individually with his or her own rights. This keyword 'community' was mentioned 1,400 years ago in the Qur'an to stimulate mankind to study all the different behavior and needs and to respect the rights of the animals.

The Qur'an says, '*they are a community like you.*' So the rights of the animals in Islam, and their need for normal physiological behavior are::

- **Food (no genetically modified food) and drink (healthy, natural), suckling;**
- **Facilities for normal elimination (defecation and urination);**
- **Facilities for normal standing, walking, running and flying;**
- **Facilities for normal mating and copulation (with no outside interference of their reproductive system) and normal rearing of their offspring (full motherhood and no separation of mother and baby); no beating, cruelty or any harsh treatment to be treated individually with full respect for the body;**
- **Facilities for recreation; resting, dozing, lying-down and play facilities;**
- **Facilities for social behavior;**
- **Full sleeping facilities and protection from harsh weather;**
- **Facilities for individual comfort; grooming, playing etc.**

There should be full recognition of the **psychological needs**; animals should not be slaughtered in front of others nor should the knife be sharpened before them; the baby should not be forcibly removed from the mother.

The welfare of the animals must come **first**, before monetary profit.

It is forbidden in Islam, to kill an animal in a cruel way or for pleasure, to use an animal as a target, to cut a part of it whilst still alive or finally, to set animals fighting against each other.

The above points are why Islam is against the following: *battery cage (factory farming), fox hunting, bull fighting, cock fighting, dog fighting, using the animals for targets, culling seals, killing frogs, caging the animal, most vivisection. the abuse of drugs in animals and the interference with their organs sexuality [castration, sterility etc.(reproduction)]*

As you know, all of these problems of cruelty to animals are endemic and epidemic in the Western society so you can see that there is a lot to do today in order to relieve the suffering of animals. This is especially so as the complaints have been arriving, day after day (about 50,000) of animal cruelty and the RSPCA have been treating more than 192,000 animals per year, due to men's cruelty!

We believe that a God-conscious personality is the best defense against human cruelty to animals and I am sure that this would save the RSPCA a lot of work.

The Islamic method of slaughtering animals for food (DHABH)

In the beginning I would like to mention that the words of ALLAH [the Creator and the Legislator (swt)] are the absolute; 100 per cent right, 100 per cent safe and 100 per cent humane and cannot be put to test or examination by a human who is created, who is limited in his outlook and who cannot see or know everything. However, true scientific study can discover, sometimes, the wisdom and reason behind some Divine teachings or orders.

I am talking now about a religious belief, and human right which cannot be justified by philosophical argument of scientific testing or human debate or false assumptions and wrong conclusions. However to our surprise, when we have looked to our Islamic method of slaughter, and looked also to the other methods of slaughter today, and tried to make comparisons or, as they say, an **'up-to-date assessment'** we were surprised to discover many of the good reasons behind our method and their signs of their Divine source and to also discover the failures, problems, harm and suffering of all the other methods which are man-made and which have been shown by many scientists in their study and research.

Before going into the detail of the Islamic method of slaughter, please allow me to mention and discuss together what the best method of slaughter is, generally.

I am sure that you will agree with me that the best method of slaughter should have the following criteria:

- *Allows for draining most of the blood out;*
- *Causes no stress to the animal;*
- *Does not cause death before the actual slaughter;*
- *Found with no fault in any scientific study;*
- *Proved to be humane', causing no "pain" or suffering or cruelty, even to a few individual animals;*
- *Causes no damaging or harmful effects to the quality of the meat;*
- *Found to be a sure way of death (reliable);*
- *Found to be irreversible (slowly and gradually progressing to death);*
- *With only one way of killing (direct method);*
- *To be practical and realistic; quick and easy to perform in any society, in any place;*
- *'Very economical' (not a lot of machinery and equipment, etc.);*
- *Being more familiar to the animal, with less machinery and restraint (with a less threatening atmosphere);*
- *Safe to perform (no electricity, gas or shocks, etc.);*
- *Accepted by the community consuming the meat;*
- *Liked by the slaughter man, with no psychological ill-effects on him;*
- *Blessed for the believers by ALLAH (s.w.t).*

Blackmore (1982) has identified the important factors which should be considered when choosing the most suitable method of slaughter as: humane aspects; capital and running costs; ease of operation and operator safety; secondary effects on the carcass and by-product quality, statutory and religious requirements.

In the light of these important factors, I have been expanding the criteria as shown above, to try to make the matter easier to understand. I would like you to remember these points and check them very well with the Islamic method of slaughter and the other methods of slaughter used today.

The Islamic (halal) method of slaughter can be described as follows:

The animal has to be lawful to eat, alive, healthy, to be slaughtered only for the reason of food, in the name of The Creator, ALLAH (s.w.t) and not for any other reasons (it has to be well-fed, not thirsty handled and moved gently and individually).

The slaughter-man must be in possession of a clear mind and not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, trained in the job, with an awareness of what he is doing.

The act of slaughter (Al-Dhabh) starts by pronouncing the name of ALLAH (s.w.t), The Creator (**BISMILLAH ALLAHU AKBAR**), to take His permission and in order to make the Slaughter-man accountable and responsible and to give compassion and mercy to the animal during this act. Besides, any action we do in our daily life should be commenced with the mention of the name of ALLAH (s.w.t) The Most Kind, The Most Merciful.

The Qur'an says:

“And eat not of that where on ALLAH’s name has not been mentioned for verily it is abomination.

(Surah Anam 6/121)

Then, by a very, very sharp knife (which should be kept like a surgeon’s knife in sharpness and cleanliness, as previously stated by DR Ghulam Khan (UFAW, 1971), **a Deep swift cut** done instantaneously and quickly to **the blood vessels** of the neck (**the two caroid arteries** which carry blood to the brain and head, **the two jugular veins** which bring blood from the brain back to the heart), **the trachea** (windpipe) and **the oesophagus** (gullet), but the **central nervous system** (the spinal cord) should be kept safe and intact (not cut).

This deep, large cut through all **the blood vessels** of the neck **causes acute blood loss and haemorrhagic shock**: we know the blood is under great pressure, especially in **the big carotid arteries** (systolic pressure) and at high speed and, according to physical law, the pressure always goes from the high to low resistance - the point of the cut is the scene of low resistance for blood to and from the brain. As we have a fully intact, alive heart, so most of the blood is going to be pumped and poured out instantaneously and quickly under pressure leading to a rapid **fall** in the blood pressure. Thus depriving the brain of its main source of oxygen and glucose, and with no blood which is necessary to keep the animal alive and functioning and able to deal with any perceptive sensation this leads to anoxia and almost **immediate loss of consciousness** (anesthetization or **“stunning”**). The cerebrospinal fluid pressure falls even more rapidly than the blood pressure because of **the jugular veins** being cut, and this results in a deep shock and **more loss of consciousness**.

The animal, at this stage after the cut, is in a **stable and quiet state with no movement** or any distressed behavior. One would assume, if there was any pain or suffering, it would kick, move or show signs. After this short resting phase, and because the brain is deprived of oxygen and blood due to the huge amount of bleeding, the heartbeats increase in order to increase the flow of blood to the brain and other deprived areas. Tonic and clonic involuntary contractions and convulsions start and occur as automatic physiological reflexes in order to send and push blood up, especially to the brain. These contractions and convulsions are ‘painless’ (not, as the layman would imagine, that the kicking is due to the pain) especially when the animal is already unconscious and still has an **intact spinal cord** with safe nerve centers to the limbs, muscles and organs. So, we have a huge amount of bleeding from the initial cut then blood loss is continuing with the squeezing pressure of these contractions and convulsions, leading to **maximum bleeding-out** and less retention of blood in the carcass, giving a better quality of meat [both safer and healthier (this is like direct method of slaughter, **“but without stunning”**)].

I would like to end this section of my talk with at least one testimony from, for example, Lord Horder GCVO, MD, FRCP, who explained this type of slaughtering scientifically (and without the use of stunning):

‘The animal loses consciousness immediately. It is difficult to conceive a more painless and rapid mode of death; for a few seconds after the cut is made, the animal makes no movement its body is then convulsed, the convulsive movements continue for about a minute and then cease. The interpretation of this fact is clear: the cut is made by a knife so sharp and so skillfully handled that a state of syncope with its associated unconsciousness follows instantaneously upon the severing of the blood pressure. The movement of the animal which begins at about 90 seconds are epileptiform in nature and are due to the blood-less state of the brain (cerebral ischemia with complete anoxaemia). Sensation has been abolished at the moment of the initial syncope.’

Of course, there have been many other statements by eminent scientists giving the same explanations and conclusions about the direct act of slaughtering such as DR Leonard Hill (1923), Sir Lovatt Evans, Professor Harold Burrow, I M Levingen (1979), Professor F R Bell. Mr. Openshaw, Mr. Hayhurst etc. (Some are quoted, in Impact Magazine 1985).

Let me quote Prof. Leonard Hill, F.R.C.V.S, who strongly believed and expressed his views in his article – that the incision applied in the Ritual Slaughter causes no pain. Any Surgeon today knows that sudden big injuries are not felt at the time of

infliction. Pain comes later when the wound is (septic, and) inflamed. Structures beneath the skin apart from isolated sensory nerve endings are insensitive to the knife.

Apart from the clear Divine laws and orders to us, and the clear physiological and scientific evidence, I would like to mention one golden rule in Islam which, again, fits into the perfection of mercy to every individual animal.

The rule states “**Any action or method which will definitely lead to some harm damage or suffering is to be rejected or, any action which can be suspected to lead to a prohibited act is also to be rejected (e.g. eating dead animals or consuming blood etc.). So any method of slaughtering which can give us more blood or a dead animal [before the cut (for slaughtering) is made] is rejected**”

Two facts are indisputably established by the above Professor:

- a) That a big injury such as throat cutting is not felt at the moment of infliction.
- b) That the cutting of big arteries in the throat instantly arrests the circulation in the brain and abolishes consciousness.

Prof. Charles Lovett Evans, F.R.C.V.S., has this to say:-

" As anyone who has ever witnessed the act is well aware, the animal lies absolutely still the moment the vessels are cut, and it is only a minute or so later that asphyxia! convulsions set in. Consciousness we know is lost long before this "

" On physiological principles, it is clear that when such large vessels are severed the arterial blood pressure falls at once to a very low level, moreover the carotid arteries being severed, much of the blood supply to the brain is immediately lost and the result is immediate loss of consciousness. To consider that the animal suffers pain is, in my opinion, quite absurd. I consider the method to be equal to any "

Prof. Leonard Hill says that no death could be more merciful, taking into account that the animal unlike man, has no knowledge or fear of impending death. The death is as quiet and merciful as that inflicted on murderers by hanging; to them, of course, the whole of this agony is in the advancing fear of death which is dated and timed and known to the victim.

Methods of slaughter used today

1.The captive bolt pistol

used commonly for cattle, calves and goats. It is the shooting, by a gun or pistol in the forehead (mechanical method) by a blank cartridge or compressed air. It could be penetrating or non-penetrating (percussion stunning). It breaks the skull, shatters and destroys the brain. A rod of steel is introduced in the skull hole to smash, cut and destroy the brain [*pithing:now to be prohibited in UK and Europe by January 2001*]. All this occurs before the real slaughtering cut is made. Recently, a new method by which a steel needle to penetrate the skull and brain and in which air is injected to cause intercranial pressure has been developed.

Problems, harm and results of this method have been reported in different scientific and Government reports, as follows:

- **Improper stunning (failure of stunning leading to re-stunning and double shots (FAWC 1982 and 1984);**
- **Paralysis of the animal while still conscious (FAWC 1982 and 1984);**
- **‘Depressed skull fracture’ and considerable damage to the brain (FAWC 1984);**
- **Brain contamination (Blackmore 1979);**
- **Blood splash (extravasation of blood from vessels Into muscle and meat with some clotting of the blood) (Blackmore 1979);**
- **Brain hemorrhage (Blackmore 1979);**
- **Bruising and injuries from the heavy fall of the animal after the shot;**
- **Death reported by Lawton (1971); Temple Grandin (1980) stated that tests on sheep and calves indicated that penetrating captive bolt stunning actually kills the animal;**

- **Damage or harm to the meat.** Marple (1977) stated *'Captive bolts should be discontinued in view of their detrimental effect on meat quality.* (Quoted by Biala 1983)

We know that this method is still widely practiced, especially in the UK!

2. Carbon Dioxide (CO2)

it is done by moving the animal through a room which contains a mixture of CO2 and air (about 65/70% CO2 by volume). It is used only for pigs. It is a form of chemical strangulation. CO2 is a harmful gas to be inside the body.

Problems and harm reported include:

- **Considerable, unacceptable stress** (*violent excitation, general agitation and convulsions*).
- *'CO2 stunning is more stressful than either properly applied electrical or captive bolt stunning'* (Temple Grandin 1980).
- **Suffocation, strangulation and death to the animal before the cut; death was reported by Glen (1971).**
- Toxic effect of the gas on the blood and physiology.
- **It is definitely a cruel way for the animal and I would like to quote here also from FAWC (1984) when they discussed pain; 'It is doubtful whether the animal feels pain or is even conscious'. This method has been banned in Holland and many other European countries**

3. Electrical Stunning

could be to head and brain only or to head and back or to the legs, and there are three varieties:

a. Low Voltage Electrical Stunning by a pair of scissors-like tongs with circular or rectangular electrodes which are usually immersed in a saline solution then applied to the side of the head. Voltage is not less than 75 volts (50 Hz mains frequency) for not less than seven seconds.

Problem and harm with this method include:

- **It is cruel, by giving an electric shock directly, with no anesthesia;**
- **paralysis while the animal is conscious (pain);**
- **doubt about the effect and feeling of pain;**
- **unreliable: missed shots and re-stunning;**

Recovery of the animal usually occurs within 30-40 seconds. Electric stunning only induces paralysis, not unconsciousness, leaving the animal helpless but completely conscious to pain. (E.H. Callow from his book *'Food Hygiene'*)

Some scientists and physiologists have expressed serious misgivings; some are of the opinion that the animal is merely paralyzed by the electric current and so prevented from making a sound or a movement while fully conscious and experiences great pain as the current passes through its body. Such views are shared by the following Professors and Scientists:

- Prof. A.C. Ivey (North Western University of America)
- Prof. M.J. Hertz, of France
- Prof. Roos & Koopmans, Holland.

Stunning does not first involve passing an electric current through the animal's body. The magnitude of the current passed must be adequate; voltage of higher rating could lead to bone fractures. Voltage of lower rating produces electric convulsions without inducing unconsciousness. A lower voltage rating needs longer application and this being a matter of judgment, the human element could lead to failure. The variations in the sizes of animals and their individual resistance to the current are also important considerations.

Let me quote the following petition of Meat Packers in Denmark to the Danish Government:-

"Stunning with electricity causes *extravasation* in the meat, **sanguinary intestines** and fractures in the spinal column, *pelvis, shoulder blades*, through the shock. The blood in the meat makes it more *susceptible to putrefaction* and has *detrimental* effect on taste."

b. High Voltage Electric Stunning by using an electric shock of 300-400 volts, commonly used for pigs and sheep.

Problems and harm with this method:

- It is very cruel by giving a high electric shock (*electrocution to a conscious animal*).

As a doctor, I have been practicing for more than 10 years and giving electric shocks (**'stunning'**) (Electro-Convulsive Therapy - ECT) to patients (WITH MENTAL ILLNES) but only after a general anaesthetic. The Medical Council would strike my name from the Register if I should ever dare to give ECT without anaesthesia because it is very cruel to do so. ***I wonder, is it not cruel to do this to an animal too?*** Although the voltage used in ECT is smaller than that used for animals, is it not still cruel?

“Electric stunning of calves by the **'head only'** method is inhumane in all circumstances”. (*Blackmore 1982*);

- **Ventricular fibrillation, cardiac inhibition, cardiac disfunction, cardiac arrest and death; “Head to back stunning induced a cardiac arrest in all the sheep”.** (*Gregory and Wotton, 1984*);
- **Bone-shattering;**
- **Stress: “>From a physiological standpoint, the stunned animal is more highly stressed”.** (*Althen 1977 quoted by Temple Grandin 1980*);
- **High level of blood splashing in the carcass** (*Gilbert, Blackmore, and Warrington*); **“Electric stunning raised the blood pressure by 3 1/2 times”**
- **Pain and sensation;**

I would like to quote, ‘It is difficult to determine the sensitivity of an animal to pain during the first few seconds of stunning while the electric current is applied.’ (FAWC 1984)

I also quote Baldwin 1971 (quoted by Biala 1983): **“The question whether the animal is suffering pain during the period of consciousness is not so readily appropriate to objective experimental investigation”.**

c. Electrified Water Bath for Poultry Stunning ‘The birds are suspended on the shackle (upside down) then the head is intended to come into contact with the water and the passage of an electric shock through the brain’. (FAWC 1982)

Problems and harm with this method:

- **A very cruel way to give the electric shock, especially in this uncomfortable position;**
- **Drowning and suffocation resulting in death.**
- **It was well-documented that some birds were taken, still alive to the scalding tank (to remove the skin and feathers) (Heath et al 1983). “One-third of the birds are dead (mitah) in the stunner and one-third are not stunned”.** (FAWC 1982).
- **Death from the stunner;**

“A substantial number were killed as a result of the shock from the stunner”. (24% dead in UK, MAFF 1999, 17 to 37% in USA) In this report, they emphasized, clearly, eight reasons why stunning may not be satisfactory (please see the report for details)].

- **Paralysis by failure of stunning.**
- **With regard to pain, apart from the above suffering, the FAWC reported “a substantial number may still be sensitive to pain”.**

I would like conclude this aspect of pain by quoting from the same poultry report of the FAWC;

“The physiological aspects of the stunning of poultry are not well understood and criteria for establishing insensitivity to pain, suitable for use in working condition, may well be unreliable”.

Conclusion

As we have seen in all these methods of slaughtering today, the following are prevalent and are taken from 36 scientific studies and research papers:*

- **Stress to the animal** (*in at least 7 studies*)
- **Death before sticking** (*in at least 7 studies*)
- **Harmful effects in the quality of the meat** (*in at least 4 studies*)
- **Internal hemorrhage, blood splash, speckle, salt and pepper hemorrhage as a result of stunning** (*in at least 8 studies*)
- **Pain (shown in at least 10 scientific studies) which throws doubt on the ability to measure pain in the animal and hints that the animal may be suffering pain in the different methods of slaughter used.**
- **EEG (Electro-encephalograph): there are at least 7 studies which throw doubt on the validity of this measure that the animal is conscious or has lost consciousness.**

We still do not understand **Stunning**; what it does exactly and how it stuns the animal (even in ECT for the human, we also do not know what it does and how it works). We are still unable to define pain and sensation of the animal (and we will be unlikely to do so) and to understand the loss of consciousness and its relation to pain.

I would like to quote Gregory and Wotton (1985): *‘There is as yet no unequivocal scientific evidence which shows how electrical stunning stuns an animal’.*

Also, they said, *‘There is no information on the brain (glucose and oxygen thresholds) required to support consciousness and memory retention respectively.’*

Many scientists **opposed** to the use of stunning: Van der Wal –78, Wernberg –79, McLoughlin –71, Pollard –73, Winstanley –81, and Marple –77, etc.

With regard to **Pain**. I would like to quote from the FAWC Report (1985), *‘There is a lack of scientific evidence to indicate at what stage in the process of losing consciousness the ability to feel pain ceases.’*

More research should be undertaken to establish:

- Signs which indicate that the animal is completely insensible,
- To what extent reflex actions and movements post-stunning and sticking indicate an awareness of pain.’ (FAWC 1985)

I also quote Baldwin 1971, (quoted by Biala 1983): *‘The question whether the animal is suffering pain during the period of consciousness is not so readily appropriate to objective experimental investigation’.*

On the 3rd April 1985, The Guardian stated, in an article **‘Second Opinion’** about **‘Pain; by any other definition’**, *‘The Government stated in its White Paper (Cmd 8883) about measuring pain in an animal. ‘there is, and can be, no definition of the term’.*

The Times newspaper similarly has mentioned, on the 3rd September 1984, in an article entitled **‘Animals and experiments, Government’s Bill will lead to new guidelines on pain’** *How can anyone know the extent of the pain an animal is suffering? ... There is no means of measuring pain ... a measurement of pain is not possible.’ (with all this ignorance... How can any one be sure ... and accuse us of inflicting pain to the animal and be cruel!)*

It is clearly, beyond any doubt, the least to say that the assumption of stunning is **questionable**, and it is quite unfair for the RSPCA, FAWC and others to attack Muslims (and Jews), criticizing their slaughtering methods, and to recommend new laws, enforcing stunning, which have **no scientific basis** and are **unreliable**, owing to the problems, harm and cruelty resulting from its practice. (People in glass houses should not throw stones!) It would be useful to hear the Christian viewpoint and why they have changed methods. What is the **psychology behind this misconception and misunderstanding?**

It is mistaken to identify the cut on the animal with oneself, thinking it is causing pain.

I would like to quote Ray & Scott from their book *‘The Humane Emergency of Farm Animals’ (UFAW):*

‘So far as actual physical suffering is concerned, men often identify themselves with the animal they kill and assess pain in terms of their own feeling. To some extent, at least, this attitude is justified but, whereas man is invariably conscious of the inevitability and significance of death, animals usually lack such apprehension unless they are badly handled and feel menaced’

“Human feelings, however, should as far as possible not be allowed to influence the use of the most humane techniques”.

In addition, we are insulting a dumb creature which cannot express it’s feelings or sensations by speech, etc. They are, as reported by Rebecca Hall in her book, ‘Voiceless Victims’.

Meat industries are always keen to stun as many animals as possible in the least possible time and so commercial interests have often been the overriding factor

I would like to conclude, that an **up-to-date assessment** of the Islamic (or religious) method of slaughter shows, beyond doubt, that the Divine method **is the only humane method** which is **free** from side-effects and secondary effects on the animal and the consumer and which **matches** almost all the criteria for the best method of slaughter and is to be recommended.

We obviously would recommend more research and study to be done on the religious methods of slaughter (e.g. the effect of cutting the trachea and oesophagus on the animal during slaughter). We also need research into the effect of restraining. Transporting and using chemicals and drugs on the animals as far as the meat quality and health are concerned. Also, we need to study the psychological effect of the present methods on the slaughter-man himself.

Appendix:

FETWA

RECENT INFORMATIONS: The European Council for Ifta and Research has given this Fatwa in his meeting in Koln/Germany on, 19—22 May 1999:

- **“It is not allowed to eat all the stunned chicken as many of it die from the effect of STUNNING”**
- **“It is not allowed to eat the meat of cow if it was stunned as some of it die from the stunning before Dhabh/Slaughtering” The slaughtering of sheeps in some countries is not different from the Islamic method of slaughter.”**
- **Pitching’s method of stunning will be outlawed in UK/Europe by January/2001 (because of BSE risk)**
- **It is believed that the cows, the sheep’s and the chicken have been fed for long times meat/offal/by products from the animals and blood which are all not allowed in Islam;**

It is called: ”LAJIM AL -JALLALAH”, when any of these VEGETFJRIAN animals are fed unnatural diet or animal protein. Or dirt (all considered IZRA);

If this occurs, according to Fuqaha: you kill, all these animals you do not drink their milk or eat their meat and eggs. Alternatively you starve them near to death (3 to 40 days) then you feed them their natural vegetarian diet

—There is a big question mark (?) on all meat from the cow due to BSE or Mad cow disease.

There is also a question mark (?) on all chicken and sheep’s when they are fed: animal protein or the meat of other animals.

—There is a big danger in all the meat imported from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Brazil etc., to Muslim countries.

It is believed that they are not slaughtered in the proper Islamic HALAL way and without stunning.

Also it is believed that they have been fed with unnatural diet (animal protein). –There is a growing campaign in the West against feeding these animals which we eat: Genetically modified food which could Harmful and with health hazards.

The Muslims in Britain are joining with these non-Muslim organizations and Christians in: Genetic Engineering Alliance, the big Umbrella organization;

Muslims are advised to join them.

-Some active bodies like; Friends of the Earth, Green peace, the Soil Association etc. They do have a lot of useful studies and reports, which can be very helpful to the Muslims. (See also many of their Websites).

—On health grounds, Muslims should oppose hormones and *antibiotics* to be given to the animals we eat.

We need badly: Muslim scientists in the field of animal slaughter and to investigate more: our HALAL method, stunning etc.

—We need badly to grow our own animals” in our own farms in the natural way or organic.

—Pesticides/insecticides and all chemicals should be avoided, as they have been proved harmful to health.

—Most Muslim countries could be on the way like the west for BSE and other diseases as they use STUNNING and do feed their animal’s unnatural diet or animal meat/protein.

—A big international Muslim body to investigate and explore all, these dangers to our Muslim Ummah and to stop all these harmful unnatural haram practices.

A massive publicity campaign is urgently needed. —It is allowed in Britain and in many European countries to slaughter the animals without stunning (for Muslims and Jews) there are haram ingredients in many food in the supermarkets.

—Many fruits/vegetables are not safe due to pesticides and insecticides, additives, coloring etc.

The wiser individuals are those who know whom to consult and how to get the most benefit from their opinions: such people are a pleasure to work with. Insensitive, thoughtless individuals, so complacent about their own knowledge or competence in an affair that they will intimidate others into accepting their opinions, are always unbearable to those who must work with them.

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON DRAFT GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE TERM "HALAL"

The draft General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal", which are being considered by the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Committee on Food Labelling. Here is some background information You may find helpful.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the international body responsible for the execution of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The commission was created in 1962 by FAO and WHO. The program is aimed at protecting the health of consumers and facilitating international trade in foods.

The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of international food standards adopted by the Commission and presented in a uniform manner. It includes standards for all the principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw. The Codex Alimentarius includes provisions in respect of the hygienic and nutritional quality of food, including micro biological norms, provisions for food additives, pesticide residues, contaminants, labelling and presentation, and methods of analysis and sampling. It also includes provisions of an advisory nature in the form of codes of practice, guidelines (such as the enclosed proposed draft General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal") and other recommended measures.

There are generally eight 'steps' to the adoption of Codex standards, codes of practice, guidelines or other recommended measures which are as follows:

Steps 1, 2 and 3

The Commission decides that a measure should be proposed and also which subsidiary body or other body should undertake the work.

The Secretariat arranges for the preparation of a draft, which is circulated to Members of the Commission and interested international organizations for comment on all aspects, including possible implications for their economic interests.

Step 4

The comments received are sent by the Secretariat to the subsidiary body concerned which has the power to consider such comments and to amend the draft.

Step 5

The draft is submitted through the Secretariat to the Commission or to the Executive Committee with a view to its adoption. In taking any decision at this step, the Commission or the Executive Committee will give due consideration to any comments that may be submitted by any of its Members regarding the implications which the proposed draft or any provisions thereof may have for their economic interests.

Step 6

The draft is sent by the Secretariat to all Members and interested international organizations for comment on all aspects, including possible implications of the draft standard for their economic interests.

Step 7

The comments received are sent by the Secretariat to the subsidiary body or other body concerned, which has the power to consider such comments and amend the draft.

Step 8

The draft is submitted through the Secretariat to the Commission together with any written proposals received from Members and interested international organizations for amendments at Step 8 with a view to its adoption as a Codex Measure.

At the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling on 24-2 October the Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal" to the 21st Session of the Code Alimentarius Commission on 3-8 July 1995 for adoption at Step 5 (see above). Consequently, your views are now being sought. It was further agreed that the Codex Co-ordinating Committee for Asia would be informed of this decision and that specific comments would be solicited at step 6.

The draft General Guidelines are intended to enhance and complement Section 5.1(iv) of the Codex General Guidelines on Claims. These support the general principles set out in the Codex General Standard for the labelling of Pre packed Foodstuffs that foods should not be described or presented in a manner which is false, misleading or deceptive. These principles form the basis of both EC and UK food labelling legislation.

CODEX GENERAL GUIDELINES ON CLAIMS

CAC/GL 1 – 1979 (REV. 1 – 1991)

INTRODUCTION

The Codex General Guidelines on Claims was adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 13th Session, 1979. A revised version of the Codex General Guidelines on Claims was adopted by the 19th Session of the Commission in 1991. It has been sent to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO as an advisory text, and it is for individual governments to decide what use they wish to make of the Guidelines.

SCOPE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 These guidelines relate to claims made for a food irrespective of whether or not the food is covered by an individual Codex Standard.
- 1.2 The principle on which the guidelines are based is that no food should be described or presented in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect.
- 1.3 The person marketing the food should be able to justify the claims made.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of these guidelines, a claim is any representation which states, suggests or implies that a food has particular characteristics relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, production, processing, composition or any other quality.

PROHIBITED CLAIMS

The following claims should be prohibited:

- 3.1 Claims stating that any given food will provide an adequate source of all essential nutrients, except in the case of well defined products for which a Codex standard regulates such claims as admissible claims or where appropriate authorities have accepted the product to be an adequate source of all essential nutrients.
- 3.2 Claims implying that a balanced diet of ordinary foods cannot supply adequate amounts of all nutrients.
- 3.3 Claims which cannot be substantiated.
- 3.4 Claims as to the suitability of a food for use in the prevention, alleviation, treatment or cure of a disease, disorder, or particular physiological condition unless they are:
 - (a) In accordance with the provisions of Codex standards or guidelines " for foods under jurisdiction of the Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses and follow the principles set forth in these guidelines.

or,

- (b) In the absence of an applicable Codex standard or guideline, permitted under the laws of the country in which the food is distributed.

- 3.5 Claims which could give rise to doubt about the safety of similar food or which could arouse or exploit fear In the consumer.

POTENTIALLY MISLEADING CLAIMS

The following are examples of claims which may be misleading:

- 4.1 Meaningless claims including incomplete comparatives and superlatives.
- 4.2 Claims as to good hygienic practice, such as "wholesome", "healthful", "sound".

CONDITIONAL CLAIMS

5.1 The following claims should be permitted subject to the particular condition attached each:

- (i) An indication that a food has obtained an increased or special nutritive value by means of the addition of nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and amino acids may be given only if such an addition has been made on the basis of nutritional considerations according to the Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods. This kind of indication should be subject to legislation by the appropriate authorities.
- (ii) An indication that the food has special nutritional qualities by the reduction or omission of a nutrient should be on the basis of nutritional considerations and subject to legislation by the appropriate authorities.

(iii) Terms such as "natural", "pure", "fresh", "home made", "organically grown" and "biologically grown" when they are used, should be in accordance with the national practices in the country where the food is sold. The use of these terms should be consistent with the prohibitions set out in Section 3.

(iv) Religious or Ritual Preparation (e.g. Halal, Kosher) of a food may be claimed provided that the food conforms to the requirements of the appropriate religious or ritual authorities.

(v) Claims that a food has special characteristics when all such foods have the same characteristics, if this fact is apparent in the claim.

(vi) Claims which highlight the absence or non-addition of particular substances to food may be used provided that they are not misleading and provided that the substance:

(a) Is not subject to specific requirements in any Codex Standard or Guideline;

(b) is one which consumers would normally expect to find in the food;

(c) has not been substituted by another giving the food equivalent characteristics unless the nature of the substitution is clearly stated with equal prominence; and

(d) is one whose presence or addition is permitted in the food.

(vii) Claims which highlight the absence or non-addition of one or more nutrients should be regarded as nutrition claims and therefore should invoke mandatory nutrient declaration in accordance with the Codex Guidelines on Nutrition Labeling.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE TERM “HALAL”

AT STEP 5 OF THE PROCEDURE

1 SCOPE

1.1 These guidelines recommend measures to be taken on the use of **Halal** claims in food labelling.

1.2 These guidelines apply to the use of the term **Halal** and equivalent terms in claims as defined in the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods and include its use in trade marks, brand names and business names.

3. These guidelines are intended to supplement the Draft Revision of the Codex General Guidelines on Claims and do not supersede any prohibition contained therein.

2 DEFINITION

2.1 **Halal** Food means food permitted under the Islamic Law and should fulfil the following conditions:

(i) Does not consist of or contain anything which is considered to be unlawful according to Islamic Law;

(ii) Has not been prepared, processed, transported or stored using any appliance or facility that was not free from anything unlawful according to Islamic Law; and

(iii) Has not in the course of preparation, processing, transportation or storage been in direct contact with any food that fails to satisfy (i) and (ii) above.

2.2 Notwithstanding Section 2.1 above:

(i) **Halal** food can be prepared, processed or stored [in different sections or lines] within the same premises where non-halal foods are produced, provided that necessary measures are taken to prevent any contact between **Halal** and non-halal foods;

(ii) **Halal** food can be prepared, processed, transported or stored using facilities which have been previously for non-halal foods provided that proper cleaning procedures, according to Islamic requirements, have been observed.

3. CRITERIA FOR USE OF THE TERM "HALAL"

3.1 LAWFUL FOOD

The term **Halal** may be used for foods which are considered lawful. Under the Islamic Law, all sources of food are lawful except the following sources, including their products and derivatives which are considered unlawful:

Food of Animal Origin

(a) Pigs and boars.

(b) Dogs, snakes and monkeys.

(c) Carnivorous animals with claws and fangs such as lions, tigers, bears, and other similar animals.

- (d) Birds of prey with claws such as eagles, vultures and other similar birds.
- (e) Pests such as rats, centipedes, scorpions and other similar animals.
- (f) Animals forbidden to be killed in Islam i.e. ants, bees and woodpecker birds.
- (g) Animals which are considered repulsive generally like lice, flies, maggots and other similar animals.
- (h) Animals that live both on land and in water such as frogs, crocodiles and other similar animals.
- (i) Mules and domestic donkeys.*
- (j) All poisonous and hazardous aquatic animals.
- (k) Any other animals not slaughtered according to Islamic Law
- (l) Blood
- (m) Genitals.*

Food of Plant Origin

Intoxicating and hazardous plants.

Drink

- (a) Alcoholic Drinks.
- (b) All forms of intoxicating and hazardous drinks.

Food Additives

All food additives derived from Item 3.1 (i), (ii) and (iii).

3.2 SLAUGHTERING

All lawful land animals should be slaughtered in compliance with the following requirements:

- (i) The slaughterman should be a Muslim who is mentally sound and knowledgeable of the Islamic slaughtering procedures.
- (ii) The animal to be slaughtered should be lawful.
- (iii) The animal to be slaughtered should be alive or deemed to be alive at the time of slaughtering.
- (iv) The head and front of the animal should be directed towards Qibla. (i.e towards Makkah)*
- (v) The phrase "*Bismillah Allahu Akbar*" (in the name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest) should be invoked *during* slaughtering.
- (vi) The slaughtering device should be sharp and should not be lifted off the animal during the slaughter act.
- (vii) The slaughter act should sever the trachea, oesophagus and main arteries and veins of the neck region.
- (viii) The animal **must not be stunned**, anaesthetized or otherwise rendered wholly or partially insensible before slaughter. It must be fully conscious when it is slaughtered.**

3.3 PREPARATION, PROCESSING, PACKAGING, TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

All food should be prepared, processed, packaged, transported and stored in such a manner that it complies with item 2.1 and 2.2 above and the Codex General Principles on Food Hygiene and other relevant Codex Standards.

4. ADDITIONAL LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

4.1 When a claim is made that a food is **Halal**, the word **Halal** or equivalent terms should appear on the label.

4.2 In accordance with the Draft Revision of the Codex General Guidelines on Claims, claims on **Halal** should not be used in ways which could give rise to doubt about the safety of similar food or claims that **Halal** foods are nutritionally superior to, or healthier than, other foods.



* The Committee agreed to add the amendments in square brackets (Sections 3.1(i)(m) and 3.2(iv) for additional government comments.

** The Government decided in 1987 that the religious slaughter of animals without pre-stunning should continue to be permitted. The Muslims are exempt from stunning.

***THEY (THE MUSLIM) DO NOT HAVE TO
STUN***