

The Slaughter of Livestock (part 4 of 4): The Islamic Ruling Concerning Stunning (2)

Description: A comparison between modern slaughtering techniques and the method mandated in Islam. Part 4: Two more reasons that most modern methods of slaughtering are not encouraged in Islam are issues related with health and the possibility of rendering the animal impermissible to consume.

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Health

Removal of Blood:

It is clear that the removal of the maximum amount of blood before death of the animal is crucial to the purity of the meat. In the various methods of stunning, animals may undergo cardiac arrest after stunning, either unintentionally, such as electric head-only stunning, or intentionally, such as electric water bath stunning, in which enough electricity is used to ensure cardiac arrest of poultry. From the results of the experiment of the German University was that the hearts of animals stunned by CBP stopped beating earlier as compared to those of the animals slaughtered according to the Islamic method resulting in the retention of more blood in the meat. Stunning also causes 'salt and pepper' hemorrhage where the small blood vessels rupture, and blood leaks into the meat tissue. All these techniques cause the blood to remain in the vessels, encouraging the spawning of microorganisms.

Contamination of Meat

There is a rising concern that stunning may be a factor in the spread of mad cow's disease from cattle to humans, as it was discovered in recent research carried out at Texas A&M University and by Canada's Food Inspection Agency, that a method called pneumatic stunning (which is the firing of a metal bolt into the cow's brain followed by a pulverizing burst of 150 pounds of air pressure) delivered a force so explosive that it scattered brain tissue throughout the animal. This news is disturbing since the brain tissue and spinal cord are the most infectious parts of an animal with mad cow disease, which causes fatal Swiss cheese like holes in the brain of the infected animal. It is more disturbing to find out that around 30 to 40 percent of American cattle are stunned by pneumatic guns.

It was found by an experiment conducted by Gregory and Whittington in 1992 and published in *Research in Veterinary Science* under the title of *Inhalation of Water During Electrical Stunning in Chickens* that "chickens can and do inhale water during electric stunning in a water bath. No remedy for this is available at the moment." It was also

noticed that birds may defecate while being stunned and so live birds may inhale water fouled by feces at stunning, thus making their meat unhygienic as the fluids may leak out of the lungs and cause contamination.

Fear of Death

In many of these stunning techniques, animals die before they are slaughtered, either unintentionally, such as CBP and electric head-only stunning, or intentionally, such as gassing. This, according to Islam, renders the meat unlawful for human consumption, as it enters the category of carrion meat.

Conclusion

The legislations of the religion come from a Divine source, the Creator of all that exist, One Whose knowledge of His creation is infinite. This fact necessitates that all things mandated by God in the religion are done so from this Divine Knowledge, and therefore must be ultimate in all ways. Analyzing the legislations mandated and recommended in the religion of Islam will definitely come to show that indeed they are the best and most suitable to any given circumstance, and that they have a common denominator, the maximization of benefits and reduction of harm. As some people classify the Islamic method of slaughter to be cruelty to animals, the reality shows facts quite the opposite. Accusations of animal cruelty should very rightly be focused on those who do not use the Islamic way of slaughtering, but prefer to use those methods which cause pain and agony to the animal and could also very well cause harm to those consuming the meat

Sources:

Is Islamic Slaughtering Cruel to Animals? Dr. Aisha El-Awady

Is Stunning Animals Really Humane? Dr. Aisha El-Awady

Going for the Kill. Juliet Gellatley BSc (Zoology)

Sentenced to Death. Rebecca Smith

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