

ARTICLE

What constitutes Halal meat

By Maulana Habeeb of Guyana

With regards to meat that is not slaughtered according to Islamic rites, (Quran 6:121, 2:168, 5:3, 6:145) Dr Ahmad Sakr, expert on Halal certification in USA, says it is not Halal because of the effect electric shock has on blood drainage. Using electric shock, explains Sakr, means that all of the animal's blood does not leave its body, because electric shock affects the central nervous system. It is Haram to eat meat containing blood, as it is clearly stated in the Quran that Muslims cannot consume blood. "Halal is Halal if the following conditions are taken into consideration," explains Sakr.

The first is that the animal is itself is Halal. That means no pork, for instance.

The second, is that the food the animal consumes does not contain any blood or meat. Sakr explains that the animal has to be herbivorous to be Halal, and adds that an animal becomes Haram if it consumes blood and /or meat.

The third condition Sakr lists for an animal to be Halal is that it should not be given any hormones.

In the meat industry, he says beef and chicken are given female sex hormones. This is meant to increase the weight of the animal in a short period of time.

The effect of consuming an animal with injected female hormones is a reduction in the masculine appearance of boys and men and Sakr mentioned "KFC and MacDonald's" as two examples. The meat industry also puts the preservatives nitrite or nitrate in meat. These react with the amino group of amino acids of the meat or protein to produce nitroso-amine. This is red pigment. This results in meat still looking red in its color, as if it is fresh, even if it has been on the shelf for one or two weeks. While this may be good for industry, it causes cancer.

A point to note is all KFC chickens labeled "certified Halal" in Muslim countries are slaughtered by Muslims by reciting Bismillah-Allah-hu-Akbar during the process. Birds are slaughtered manually and not mechanically.

Mufti Ebrahim Desai, Darul Ifta, Madrasah In'aamiyyah, Camperdown, South Africa explains mechanical slaughter is of three types:

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2. Chickens are transported to the place of slaughter through a conveyer belt and are manually slaughtered. If there is certainty that the chicken is alive and the Muslim slaughterer recites the name of Allah upon slaughtering, then the chicken is Halal. In this case, only the transportation is mechanical but the slaughtering is manual. This procedure is unanimously permissible and recommended.
- 3.
4. Chickens are transported by means of the conveyer belt to the mechanical slaughter blade. Once the mechanical plant comes into operation, the blade also comes into operation and cuts the chicken. This procedure is not permissible. It does not matter if the plant and the blades are controlled together or separately.
- 5.
6. The chickens are transported by means of the conveyer belt to many slaughter blades and every blade is controlled separately by a Muslim who recites the name of Allah upon effecting the mechanical slaughter. This procedure conforms to the principles of Sharée Zabh set out by the Fuqahaa. According to our knowledge, such a procedure does not yet exist.

"Except that which you slaughter." Quran 5:3. implies that the slaughterer himself has to hold the knife and recite the prayer and merely praying over a mechanical knife is unlawful. Justice Maulana Mufti M. Taqi Usmani Member Shariat appellate Bench, Supreme Court of Pakistan; Deputy Chairman, Islamic Fiqh Academy (OIC) Jeddah; Vice-President, Darul-Uloom Karachi, Pakistan states that each chicken must have an independent recitation of the prayer and whenever the entire neck is severed it will be considered foul and reprehensible. Mufti Allah Bakhsh Jami'at ul Uloom il Islamiyyah, Allama Banuri Town, Karachi, Pakistan differentiates between shooting an arrow whilst praying and that of praying over a machine; the former is done out of helplessness where generally arrows kill the animal, unlike the manual slaughter where one has the full control and ease.

The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, among the few U.S. groups that certify halal producers, who authorized more than 200 North American businesses, ranging from small producers to corporations whose product lines include goods for export to Muslim countries, have conditioned having a Muslim Supervisor throughout these operations, including while transporting the certified meat and preparing it in restaurants, since only his word could be taken legally.

In addition meat done by Christians and Jews may be Kosher but not necessarily Halal since they differ at times in terms of alcohol content, meat derivatives and L-cystein produced from human hair.

Kosher foods may contain alcohol, gelatin prepared from swine, animal fat not slaughtered in God's name. All of these are definitely anti-Halal. Halal foods must come from animals that were slaughtered while Muslims pronounce the name of Allah or His Oneness. Just No electric shocks, No machine blades.