Stunning & Mechanical Slaughter

1) Stunning

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STUNNING THE ANIMAL BEFORE SLAUGHTER CAUSES MANY HARMs NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS CRUELTY AND SUFFERING TO THE ANIMAL AS WELL AS PRODUCING UNHEALTHY MEAT TO THE CONSUMERS!

IN BRIEF:

1 - Some animals DIE from stunning, especially chickens (about 33% of chicken die from stunning before slaughter - Government figures). It is HARAM to eat any meat from an animal that died before slaughter (Dhabh). No body is checking stunned animals/chickens to see if they are dead or alive before slaughter, so all are SHUBUHA (doubtful) which Muslims should avoid eating. Also even if the animal is alive, what about the other HARAM and cruelty and the health hazards and the undesirable effects occurring as a result of stunning?

2 - consuming BLOOD inside the meat which is HARAM! The animals bleed less because of stunning, especially when the heart stops. There is also: "SALT AND PEPPER HAEMORRHAGE", rupture of the small blood vessels inside the meat, oozing more blood which does not go out at all.

3 - Stunning is PAINFUL and CRUEL to the animal, according to many medical studies done with the recording of the EEG (electric recording of the brain). Islam FORBIDS us to inflict any type of pain or cruelty on any type of animal. Similarly, EEG medical studies have shown that the direct method of slaughter (Dhabh) is PAINLESS to the animal.

4 - Stunning affects the QUALITY OF THE MEAT, by disturbing and disrupting the natural healthy chemicals/formula of the meat; making the meat after UNHEALTHY or harmful to health (NOT TAYYIB).

5 - Handling the animal for stunning, causes a lot of STRESS to the animal, which affects the hormones in the body of the animal and causes medical harms and other undesirable effects. This is cruel to the animal and Islam would like a relaxed, comfortable animal before slaughter.

6 - Failure of stunning leading to repetition of stunning which is more CRUEL and PAINFUL. Also some animals become paralysed and awake after stunning, some develops broken bones, some get bruises and lacerations...this is CRUEL and PAINFUL! Islam opposes all types of TORTURE to the animals.

7 - There are today in the West many non Muslim scientists who OPPOSE STUNNING for humane and welfare reasons like: Van der wal, Wernberg, Mcloughlin, Pollard, Winstanley, Marple etc... Also the Jews oppose all types of stunning.

8 - Some stunning techniques cause STRANGULATION/SUFFOCATION to the animal, as in the electric water bath used for stunning the chickens. Strangulating/suffocating the animal is prohibited in the Qur'an. Other animals are stunning by a violent blow on the head; this is prohibited too in the Qur'an.

9 - Risk of MAD COW DISEASE (BSE) occurring in some stunning, as in the Captive Bolt pistol used on the cows. The brain is damaged and there is a risk of contamination with BSE, and the consumer could develop a similar disease which will kill him/her. The European Union has decided recently to BAN stunning by the Captive Bolt pistol because of this serious health hazard. PITHING, another type of stunning, was prohibited before for the same reason.

10 - New medical research and studies have proved the amazing tranquilliser and healing effects on the animal when it hears BISMILLAH ALLAH AKBAR, when it is alive, fully conscious and able to hear! In stunning, the animal is unconscious or dead and unable to hear BISMILLAH ALLAH AKBAR.
11 - ALLAH is the MOST COMPASSIONATE, the MOST MERCIFUL. Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the MERCY to all the worlds (men and animals), all prophets of ALLAH like: Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) have done DHABH by the direct method and without any type of stunning...surely all were NOT CRUEL to the animals! Besides that, Teacher Muhammad has told us and shown us how to slaughter our animals as the best humane method and best for quality of meat.

12 - Surely stunning is a NEW BID'A/invention and is contradictory to the Prophet Muhammad's way the PERFECT way!

13 - The final prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has ordered us in a Hadith to FIGHT all those who do not slaughter their animals as done by the prophets.

14 - The OFFICIAL MUSLIM VIEW to the Government in the UK, by the major Muslim organisations like:

The Muslim Council of Britain, Union of Muslim organisations, Sharia Council, Regent Park Mosque etc is that ANY TYPE OF STUNNING CANNOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE BRITISH MUSLIMS.

15 - The European Council for IFTA and RESEARCH, has prohibited stunning in 1999 (about 50 European Ulama and Muftis in Europe).

16 - MORE: The British Government has allowed the Muslims (& Jews) to slaughter their animals according to their religions (exemption from stunning) and without any type of stunning. So it is LEGAL and according to the law of the land to have our Real Halal meat from DHABH without stunning...

THE ISLAMIC AND HEALTH & WELFARE EVIDENCES ARE INCREASING DAY AFTER DAY TO OPPOSE ANY TYPE OF STUNNING...

So any Muslim practicing stunning is disobeying the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and NOT following the Fatawas of Ulama, and is feeding our Muslims and the innocent children non Halal meat and is CHEATING the Muslims by saying it is HALAL MEAT.

He is also GIVING us 2 HARAMS at least: eating from dead animal and feeding us the Haram blood! And he is giving us unhealthy meat with many risks to our health (BSE, Blood etc...)

He is also inflicting pain and cruelty on the stunned animals and he will have to answer before ALLAH, when he will be asked about this unnecessary cruelty.

He is also breaking the official Muslim view (consensus) to the Government.

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION IS NEEDED IN ALL LANGUAGES and our ULAMA/IMAMS should be the most aware.

AND ALL THOSE CHEATING MUSLIMS who are not SELLING REAL HALAL MEAT without stunning SHOULD BE EXPOSED AND BOYCOTTED!

THESE ARE FEW WEBSITES AGAINST STUNNING:

www.unstunnedhalal.com
www.iccservices.org.uk
www.mcb.org.uk
www.chechitauk.org
www.halalmc.org

NB: please also see my scientific medical study and research on STUNNING, in some of the above websites.

Title of the study: AN UP-TO-DATE ASSESSMENT OF THE MUSLIM METHOD OF SLAUGHTER
Also see the book: AL-DHABH: SLAYING ANIMALS THE ISLAMIC WAY by Dr Ghulam Mustafa Khan.

[Source: Halal Monitoring Committee ]
2) Mechanical Slaughter

Fatwa: Mechanical Slaughter

Machine-slaughtered Meat

Fatwa: Mechanical Slaughter

Mechanical slaughter is of three types:

1. Chickens are transported to the place of slaughter through a conveyor 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.

2. Chickens are transported by means of the conveyor 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.

3. The chickens are transported by means of the conveyor 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.

and Allah Ta'ala Knows Best

Courtesy of Islam.te's Ask-Imam.com and Mufti Ebrahim Desai, Darul Ifta, Madrasah In'aamiyyah, Camperdown, South Africa.

[Source: Halal Monitoring Committee ]

Machine-slaughtered Meat

Slaughtering animals mechanically is becoming a widespread phenomenon in many abattoirs, plants and firms in a number of countries. The idea and objective behind slaughtering animals mechanically rather than manually is to speed up the process of slaughter, thus catering for a mass production. There are many methods of slaughtering chickens mechanically. In some major plants, one machine takes care of all the stages of slaughter and production, in that the chickens enter the machine from side alive and exit from the other with all the stages of slaughtering, removing of the feathers, cleaning, cutting into pieces, packaging, etc being taken care of by this colossal electrical appliance. Normally, chickens are transported to the place of slaughter through a conveyor belt on which the chickens are hanged upside down with its legs tied to the hooks on the conveyor.

These chickens after passing through extremely cold water arrive at the place where a gyratory blade or knife cuts the chickens. Thereafter, the chickens move along to the other stages of cleaning, cutting, packaging, etc.

In some plants, a Muslim pronounces the name of Allah Most High (tasmiyah) before switching the machine on which caters for the slaughtering of thousands of chickens. In other places, two Muslims stand at each of the two production lines. One pronounces the name of Allah (tasmiyah) during the slaughter process, while the other makes sure that the machine has missed no chicken. A fifth “spare” stands-by to cover breaks, lunches, and prayer. At times, each line slaughters up to 140 chickens per minute or 8400 chickens per hour.

To understand the Shariah ruling with regards to machine-slaughter, one must remember that, for an animal to be considered Islamically lawful (halal), there are basically three conditions.
a) Most of the four veins (including the Jugular vein, according to some) must be cut with a knife, blade or any tool that is sharp and has a cutting edge;

b) The name of Allah must be pronounced at the time of slaughtering, whether actually or effectively (such as when it is forgotten by someone who would normally have said it);

c) The slaughterman must be either a Muslim or from the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab). (See: al-Hakimi and Ibn Abidin in Radd al-Muhtart ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar)

It should be also remembered here that all these conditions are necessary individually and separately. Failure to fulfill them will render the animal unlawful.

Condition (b), which is to pronounce the name of Allah, has a great bearing to the issue of machine-slaughter, thus it is imperative that we understand it in great depth and detail.

Some people argue that pronouncing the name of Allah (tasmiyah) is not a prerequisite in order for the animal to be Halal, rather it is merely something that is Sunnah.

This understanding is incorrect due to various reasons:

Firstly, the Qur’an is quite clear with regards to the obligation of pronouncing the name of Allah (tasmiyah). Allah Most High says:

“Eat not of (meats) over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced. That would be sinful (fisq).” (Surah al-An’am, 121)

This verse quite clearly mentions the necessity of pronouncing the name of Allah Most High without any ambiguity or doubt. And Allah did not just suffice on this command, rather followed it by saying “that would be sinful (fisq)” removing any doubt that Tasmiyah may not be necessary.

Similarly, Allah Most High says:

“They ask you what is lawful for them (as food). Say: Lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure and what you have taught your trained hunting animals (to catch) in the manner directed to you by Allah. Eat what they catch for you and pronounce the name of Allah over it.” (Surah al-Ma’idah, V.4)

And:

“Why should you not eat of (meats) on which Allah’s name has been pronounced?” (Surah al-An’am, V. 119)

And:

And there are cattle on which, (at slaughter), they do not pronounce the name of Allah, a fabrication against Him. Soon He will require them for what they have been fabricating.” (Surah al-An’am, 138)

This verse is also quite stern on the necessity of pronouncing the name of Allah Almighty. So much so that Allah called the non-pronouncement of his name, a fabrication against Him.

There are many other verses also that clearly and categorically illustrate that pronouncing the name of Allah Almighty at the time of slaughtering an animal is an absolute necessity and a fundamental ingredient to a valid slaughter.

Secondly, there are many narrations of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) that also show the importance of pronouncing the name of Allah Most High.

Jundub ibn Sufyan al-Bajali (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that: “Once we offered some animals as sacrifice with the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace). Some people slaughtered their sacrifices before the Eid prayer. When the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) completed his prayer, he saw that they had slaughtered before the prayer, so he said: “Whoever slaughtered before the prayer, should slaughter another animal (sacrifice) in place of it, and those who did not slaughter until we prayed, should slaughter by pronouncing the name of Allah.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 5500)
Rafi’ ibn Khadij (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: “if the killing tool causes the blood to gush out, and the name of Allah is pronounced, then eat (of the slaughtered animal).” (Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 5498)

Adi ibn Hatim (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that he said: “O Messenger of Allah! At times, I let go of my hunting dog but I find with it another dog and I am unaware which of the two hunted the animal? The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: “Don’t eat (from the hunted animal), for you have pronounced the name of Allah on your dog and not on the other.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, no 5486)

There are many other rigorously authenticated narrations of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) that signify the importance and necessity of pronouncing the name of Allah at the time of slaughter.

Thirdly, almost all the Islamic jurists (fuqaha) are of the view that pronouncing the name of Allah is a prerequisite for an animal to be considered Halal. The only exception is the situation when one forgets to pronounce the name of Allah Most High.

Imam al-Haskafi (Allah have mercy on him) from the Hanafi school states:

“An animal slaughtered (zabiha) by other than someone from the people of the book (ahl al-Kitab), such as a fire-worshipper, idol-worshipper, etc will not be Halal...Similarly, the animal on which the name of Allah was not pronounced intentionally (will be haram)...However, if it was left out due to forgetfulness, it would be Halal.”

The great Hanafi jurist, Allamah Ibn Abidin (Allah have mercy on him) explains the above by stating:

“Meaning a slaughtered animal will not be lawful to consume (halal) if the name of Allah was intentionally not pronounced whether the slaughterer was a Muslim or from the people of the book (kitabi), because of the (clear) text of the Qur’an and the consensus (ijma) of all the scholars.” (See: Radd al-Muhtar ala al-Durr, 5/298-299)

In the Maliki Madhab, it is stated in Sharh al-Kabir of al-Darder:

“Pronouncing the name of Allah (tasmiyah) is necessary at the time of slaughtering the animal or sending for hunting if one remembers and is capable of doing so. Thus, it is not necessary for a person who forgets, neither on a person who is dumb and neither on the one who is forced to not pronounce it (mukrah).”

Imam al-Dasuqi (also a major Maliki jurist) explains the above by stating:

“The meaning of the Qur’anic verse: “Eat not of (meats) over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced” is that on which the name of Allah was not pronounced intentionally with having capability of doing so. However, if Allah’s name was not pronounced due to forgetfulness or incapability, then the animal would be lawful (halal). An individual ignorant of the ruling (jahil) will be treated in the same manner as the one who deliberately and intentionally does not pronounce the name of Allah (a’mid).” (See: Hashiyat al-Dasuqi ala al-Sharh al-Kabir, 2/167-168)

From the Hanbali Madhab, Imam al-Bahuti (Allah have mercy on him) states:

“If the slaughterer fails to pronounce the name of Allah deliberately (amadan) or ignorantly (jahlan), the animal will not be lawful (halal), due to the statement of Allah Most High: “Eat not of (meats) over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced”. However, if he failed to pronounce the name of Allah forgetfully, then it would be lawful (halal) to consume from the animal, due to the Hadith of Shaddad ibn Sa’id wherein the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: “The Zabiha of a Muslim is Halal even if he does not pronounce the name of Allah as long as it is not left out deliberately, narrated by Sa’id.” (Kashaf al-Qina’ ala Matn al-Iqna, 5/181)

As far as Imam Shafi’i (Allah have mercy on him) is concerned, it is usually related from him that the animal will be lawful to consume even when one does not pronounce the name of Allah intentionally, and that to pronounce the name of Allah is merely a Sunnah.

However, the great contemporary jurist, Shaykh Mufti Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) discusses the viewpoint of Imam Shafi’i (Allah have mercy on him) in his Arabic treatise “Ahkam al-Dhaba’ih” concluding that this is only when it occurs infrequently. If a habit is made of not pronouncing the name of
Allah due to negligence and taking the matter lightly, the animal would not be lawful according to the Shafi'i school also.

Shaykh Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) states:

“It appears by looking into the book “al-Umm” of Imam Shafi’i that he did not explicitly mention the lawfulness of the animal on which the name of Allah is not pronounced, rather he only stated that the animal on which the name of Allah was not pronounced forgetfully would be lawful (halal). The text of Imam Shafi’i (Allah have mercy on him) is as follows:

“When a Muslim sends his (hunting) dog or bird, both of which are trained (to hunt), I would prefer that he pronounces the name of Allah. If he did not pronounce the name of Allah forgetfully, and the animal was hunted, then it would be Halal to consume from it…. “ (Kitab al-Umm, 2/227)

Further along, Imam Shafi’i (Allah have mercy on him) clearly states that the one who does not pronounce the name of Allah by taking the matter lightly, then the animal slaughtered by him would not be lawful. He states:

“If a Muslim forgets to pronounce the name of Allah Most High, the slaughtered animal is Halal to consume. However, if he did not pronounce the name of Allah by taking the matter lightly (istikhafatun), then the slaughtered animal will not be lawful to consume.” (al-Umm, 2/131, Bab Zaba’ih ahl al-Kitab)

These texts of Imam Shafi’i quite clearly illustrate that the Shafi’i school does not give a general permissibility of consuming from animals on which the name of Allah was not pronounced intentionally, rather, the slaughtered animal will be unlawful (haram) in the Shafi’i Madhhab also if the name of Allah (tasmiyah) was not pronounced due to being negligent or taking the matter casually and lightly, and that one make this a habit.

The upshot of all of this, is that the ruling of permissibility (of animals on which the name of Allah was not pronounced, even intentionally) according to Imam Shafi’i (Allah have mercy on him) is only restricted to the situation where one leaves the Tasmiyah once or twice by coincidence, and not due to being neglectful or taking the matter casually. And even in that situation, it will be disliked (makruh) to consume from the animal, for Imam Shafi’i stated: “I would prefer that he pronounces the name of Allah”, thus the Shafi’i fuqaha have clearly mentioned that if one does not pronounce the name of Allah intentionally, it will be Makruh and one will be sinful for doing this. (See: Buhuth fi Qadhaya Fiqhiyya Mu’asara, p. 393-394)

It becomes clear from the above that, if the name of Allah (tasmiya) was not pronounced on an animal intentionally and deliberately, then the slaughtered animal will be unlawful (haram) without doubt according to the Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali schools of Islamic sacred law. It will also be unlawful (haram) to consume it according to the Shafi’i school if it was not pronounced due to negligence and forming a habit of it. However, if the name of Allah was not pronounced out once in a while, then (according to the Shafi’i school) despite this act being Makruh and sinful, it will not be Haram to consume from the animal.

Some people try to justify the lawfulness of the animals on which the name of Allah was not pronounced (even intentionally) with the following Hadith recorded by Imam al-Bukhari in his Sahih:

Sayyida A’isha (Allah be pleased with her) narrates that a group of people said to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace): “Some people bring us meat and we do not know whether the name of Allah was pronounced over it or not.” He (Allah bless him & give him peace) said, “You pronounce the name of Allah on it and eat from it.” A’isha (Allah be pleased with her) states: “Those people had embraced Islam recently.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 5507)

However, their claim can not be substantiated with the above narration, for this Hadith is merely implying that if a Muslim was to foreword you some meat, then one should assume that the name of Allah was pronounced thus it is Halal. One should have a good opinion regarding other fellow Muslims. This is the reason why Sayyida A’isha (Allah be pleased with her) stated that these people had embraced Islam recently, thus there may be doubt in the meat slaughtered by them. However, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) commanded that one should regard a Muslim to have fulfilled the requirements of a valid and lawful slaughter even if he newly embraced Islam.
The above Hadith has nothing whatsoever to do with the situation where one is positive that and sure that the name of Allah was not pronounced intentionally. Thus, if one was aware that Tasmiyah did not take place, the animal would be unlawful.

In conclusion, the Hadith is referring to the situation where one has not seen the animal being slaughtered with his naked eye (as is the case with most of us), thus has to rely on the word of the one who is selling him. If there is no reason to doubt him, one may purchase the meat and eat of it. The Hadith is not referring to the situation where one knows for certain that the name of Allah was not pronounced at the time of slaughter. The difference between the two situations is quite clear and apparent.

Having understood the importance of pronouncing the name of Allah Most High (tasmiyah) at the time of slaughtering animals, we once again return to our discussion on machine-slaughter. There are few points that need to be taken into consideration:

Firstly, the machines have a blade that keeps turning round like a rotating hand mill or grinder. This blade is quite sharp and moves very rapidly, and the necks of the chickens and birds (that are hanged upside down) pass on it with the veins being instantly cut. If that is the case, then there is nothing wrong (in this case) from a Shariah perspective.

If the blade was so sharp that it was to totally cut off and separate the head of the bird from the rest of its body, then despite this act being disliked (makruh), the animal would remain lawful (halal).

It is stated in the famous Hanafi fiqh work, al-Hidaya:

“If one reached the spinal marrow (nukha’) with the knife or cut off the whole head, the act will be Makruh, although it will be permissible to consume from the animal.” (al-Marghinani, al-Hidaya, 2/438)

However, at times it is possible that the bird moves due to some reason when passing by the blade, thus the neck and veins may not be completely cut or may be cut but only slightly leaving doubt whether the veins that must be cut in order for the animal to be lawful have been cut or otherwise. If that is the case, then the animal would be unlawful.

Therefore, one needs to be assured whether the veins of all the birds and chickens are slit in a proper manner. If this can not be assured, then it would not be permissible to use these machines or one must use something that guarantees the cutting of veins properly.

The second (and fundamental) issue here is of pronouncing the name of Allah Most High (tasmiyah). There are few scenarios:

As you may be aware that the machine does not slaughter all the birds at once, rather the birds are slaughtered one after the other. Thus, if a Muslim was to pronounce the name of Allah and switch on the machine, then the first bird that is slaughtered may be Halal but the rest would remain unlawful, for it is a condition that each animal individually has the name of Allah pronounced over it. Yes, if some animals or birds were slaughtered simultaneously, then one pronouncement would be sufficient.

The verse quoted earlier where Allah Most High says: “Eat not of (meats/animals) over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced. That would be sinful (fisq)” indicates that each animal separately must have the name of Allah pronounced over it.

Imam al-Haskafi (Allah have mercy on him) states:

“The condition (for an animal to be Halal) is that the animal is slaughtered straight after the pronouncement of Allah’s name (tasmiyah) before one begins doing something else (tabaddul al-majlis). So much so that if a person laid down two sheep, one over the other, and slaughtered them simultaneously with pronouncing the name of Allah once, then they will both be Halal, contrary to the situation where one slaughters them one after the other (m, in that only the first will be Halal). The reason behind this is that the repetition of the act (m, meaning the act of slaughtering) necessitates repetition of Tasmiyah.” (See: Radd al-Muhtar al a al-Durr al-Mukhtar, 6/402)

The same has also been mentioned in the other fiqh schools. See for the Hanbali school: Ibn Qudama, al-Mugni (11/33), and for the Maliki school: Muwaq al-Maliki, al-Taj wal Iklil (3/219).
Moreover, the jurists (fuqaha) have mentioned that the animal must be slaughtered straight after the pronouncement of the name of Allah without having a considerable delay.

Imam al-Haskafi (Allah have mercy on him) states:

“If the slaughterer pronounces the name of Allah then engages in eating or drinking something, and then slaughters the animal, in such a case, if the period was considerably lengthy, it will be unlawful to consume the meat. However, if the period was not that long, it would be Halal. And “being long” is what an onlooker would regard it to be a considerable time.” (Durr al-Mukhtar with Radd, 6/302)

Ibn Qudama, the great Hanbali jurist, states:

“If a person laid down the sheep in order to slaughter it and pronounced the name of Allah, thereafter put the knife down and picked up another knife or replied to a greeting (salam) or spoke to someone, etc, and then slaughtered the animal, it will be Halal to consume it. The reason being is that he recited the Tasmiyah for that particular animal without separating the Tasmiyah and slaughter with a considerable time. Thus, it is as though he did not speak.” (al-Mugni, 11/33)

In conclusion, the majority of the jurists (fuqaha) have stipulated that the pronouncement of Allah’s name (tasmiyah) must be on each and every individual animal, and that there should not be a major separation between the Tasmiyah and slaughter.

As such, pronouncing the name of Allah Most High when switching the machine on will not render all the chickens to be lawful (halal). The reason being is that the one who pronounced the name of Allah the first time did not pronounce it on each and every individual animal, and secondly, there is a separation of hours or even a whole day (in some cases) between the pronouncement and the slaughter of thousands of chickens, which is also not acceptable for the animal to be considered legally Halal.

The second scenario here is that a Muslim stands close to the blade in the appliance and pronounces the name of Allah Most High when the chickens come close to the blade and are slaughtered. This also has many problems from an Islamic perspective.

Firstly, it is a condition that the name of Allah is pronounced by the one who is slaughtering the animal. However, in the mentioned scenario, the one standing next to the blade has nothing to do whatsoever with the chicken. He did not switch the machine on, neither did he turn the blade nor moved the chicken towards the blade. He is merely like an individual who was passing by a slaughterer who was slaughtering his animal. There is no connection whatsoever. Suppose he did pronounce the name of Allah and another person pronounced the name of other than Allah, then to whom will the slaughter of the animal be attributed to?

Secondly, there are thousands of chickens that are slaughtered in the machine, thus it is impossible that the name of Allah is pronounced on each and every individual bird. The one who is blessing the chicken must not move for even one moment or take his eye off the machine, for if he failed to pronounce the name of Allah on even one chicken, it will become unlawful (haram). Even if he did take all reasonable measures to pronounce the name of Allah on every chicken, it is virtually impossible, given the magnitude of chickens that are slaughtered.

In light of the above, it is very difficult to say that birds and chickens that are slaughtered mechanically are lawful (halal), whether one pronounces the name of Allah when switching on the machine or whether there are individuals who pronounce the name of Allah when the chickens come close to the blade in the machine.

Some people argue that “Islamically there is no difference between hand-slaughter and machine slaughter” thus, one should not insist on the chickens to be slaughtered manually.

However, the question here is not of hand-slaughter and machine-slaughter, rather, the issue here is of fulfilling the Shariah requirements with regards to a valid slaughter. If the conditions for a valid slaughter are fulfilled (regardless of whether it is hand-slaughter or machine-slaughter), the animal would be lawful (halal) to consume. However, if these conditions are not fulfilled, it will render the animal unlawful (haram). If these conditions were not fulfilled in hand-slaughter, even then the animal will become unlawful. It is not a case of favouring one over the other.
Internationally renowned scholar, Shaykh justice Mustafa Muhammad Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) has mentioned the solution to this problem in his Arabic treatise Ahkam al-Zaba’ih and in his English book Contemporary Fatawa. He states:

“The only solution to this problem is that instead of one person, three Muslims be employed to cut the throats of chicken manually. They can slaughter the hanging chicken, alternatively. The speed of the machine need not be slowed down, nor does the production need to be reduced. Each one of these three persons will cut the throats of chickens by pronouncing the name of Allah.

This procedure has been practised in a number of countries where the objective of mass production was never harmed or adversely affected. In the same Maple Lodge Slaughter House, we had seen a number of jobs being done manually by persons standing by the railing on which the chickens pass continuously. The same method can easily be applied at the stage of slaughtering also. This will require only two or three more persons to be employed which should never be a problem for such a big firm….If this objective is achieved, one should not insist on it being manual or mechanical.

In the way I have suggested, all the process of the mechanical production will remain as it is. The only act to be done manually is the act of cutting the throat without slowing down the machine. You can see that the separation of liver and some other parts of chicken is still being done manually, while it does not in any way, slow down the process. The same method is suggested for cutting the throat also.” (Contemporary Fatawa, p.288-289)

In conclusion, there is no justification of machine-slaughtered chicken, neither is there a great need for it. As Shaykh Taqi has pointed out that, many firms have employed the method suggested by him and that it did not have an affect on mass production. Given this and all the other proofs outlined above, it will not be permissible to mechanically slaughter chickens where the necessary conditions are not fulfilled. However, if they are fulfilled, then the animal would be lawful (halal) to consume.

Finally, one must remember that machine-slaughter is a new phenomenon created by the rapid progress in modern technology. Thus, it is obvious that it is impossible for one to find express rulings with regards to it in the classical sources of Islamic jurisprudence. Its ruling can only be derived from the general principles and guidelines set down in the Qur’an, Sunnah and the classical works of Islamic jurisprudence. Thus, they may be some differences of opinion with regards to this issue and we respect the other opinions. However, the above is what I have understood from my teachers, especially Shaykh Mufti Taqi Usmani, upon whose Arabic work (Ahkam al-Zaba’ih) this article is primarily based.

One must also remember that this is a very important issue for a Muslim. Consuming Halal food is one of the most important things for a believer, for it has a bearing on all the other worships.

Allah Most High says:

“O people! Eat of what is in the earth, Halal and Pure, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, for you he is an open enemy.” (Surah al-Baqarah, 168)

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: “Allah the Almighty is pure and accepts only that which is pure. Allah has commanded the faithful to do that which he commanded the Messengers, and the Almighty has said: “O Messengers! Eat of the pure things and do right”. And Allah the Almighty has said: “O you who believe! Eat of the pure things We have provided you.” Then he (Allah bless him & give him peace) mentioned (the case of) a man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the heavens (saying): “O Lord! O Lord!” —while his food is unlawful, his drink unlawful, his clothing unlawful, and he is nourished unlawfully, so how can he be answered!” (Sahih Muslim)

Thus, the food we eat has a direct effect on us. It is the primary thing that needs to be considered by a Muslim. Supplications (dua) are not accepted due to consuming unlawful food. Hence, a Muslim should abstain from that which is doubtful also.

One should also remember that, originally all things are permissible unless proven to be unlawful (al-Asl fi al-Ashya al-Ibaha), however, the case with meat is different, in that it is unlawful until proven to be Halal.

The proof on this is the narration of Adi ibn Hatim (Allah be pleased with him) already quoted where he said to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace): “O Messenger of Allah! At times, I let
go of my hunting dog but I find with it another dog and I am unaware which of the two hunted the animal? The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said: “Don’t eat (from the hunted animal), for you have pronounced the name of Allah on your dog and not on the other.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, no 5486)

This Hadith clearly indicates that when there is doubt in the animal being Halal, it will be unlawful to consume it, which signifies that meat is originally unlawful (hurmah) until proven to be Halal. Had it been originally Halal, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) would not have ordered Adi (Allah be pleased with him) to abstain from consuming it.

This also serves as an answer to those who state that the organization certifying products as “Halal” is responsible, and thus, any sins for eating the chickens will go to the certifying organization. It is the responsibility of every individual that he/she investigates the authenticity of such statements and then consumes the meat.

Moreover, if one did that which was in one’s capacity (i.e. investigating), then although the sin for consuming Haram meat may not be committed but the effects of eating Harm will still remain. This effect, as stated previously, will have its toll on one’s worship, Dua, and on life in general.

May Allah Most High guide us all to the straight path and keep us far away from unlawful and doubtful food, Ameen.

And Allah knows best.

[Source: Halal Monitoring Committee ]