



مجمع علماء كئلاله

FINAL POSITION PAPER #1

GUIDANCE ON

THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE USE OF STUNNING TECHNOLOGY

IN THE PROCESS OF THE SLAUGHTER OF CHICKENS

15th Zhul Qedah 1435 A.H.

10th SEPTEMBER 2014 A.D.

ABOUT THE MAJLIS UL ULAMAA (MAJLISTT)

The Majlis ul Ulamaa is a forum to facilitate the collaboration of Islamic Scholars resident and active within Trinidad and Tobago. It seeks to define the authentic Islamic position as it relates to Islam and the Muslim community of the country, considering the various scholastic positions and schools of law. To this end, it deliberates on issues of importance, and defines the Islamic position. The due process is meticulous, spanning the issuing of a draft position paper, inviting stakeholders and public comment and consultations before a final position is issued.

SHARIAH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN (2014)

Maulana Dr. Waffie Mohammed

SHARIAH COUNCIL MEMBERS*

Mufti Ahmed Gulam
Sheikh Alaa Makshat
Mufti Asrar ul Haque
Maulana Kavir Mohammed
Sheikh Munaf Mohammed
Dr. Musa Mohamed
Maulana Mushtaq Ahmad Sulaimani
Hafiz Maulana Shahid Mohammed
Maulana Sharaaz Mohammed
Sheikh Umar Khan
Mufti Zaid ur Raza

**(in alphabetical order of first name)*

CONTRIBUTING NON-MEMBER

Maulana Siddiq Ahmad Nasir

FOREWORD

Maulana Dr. Waffie Mohammed
Shariah Council Chairman- 2014

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

The Majlis ul Ulamaa (Council of Scholars) must be congratulated for undertaking the initiative to work together, and staying committed to working to provide useful and beneficial information to the Muslim population in particular, and the national community in general – on matters of significant importance relating to Islam as a complete way of life.

Islam gives clear guidance regarding the dos and don'ts in everyday life. Every believer in Allah should try to familiarize himself or herself with what should be done in matters of faith and practice. This is a combination which would contribute to better individuals and better communities, and serves as both a means and an end we desperately need more of in the world today.

The Majlis Al Ulamaa has undertaken to fulfil two very important requirements of the Muslim Ummah as is stated in the Holy Qur'an. They are:

1. A contingent from every expedition should devote themselves to the study of Religion, in order to be able to properly admonish the people. (9:122).
2. Let there arise out of you, a band of people, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. (3:104)

May Allah bless the good work that is being undertaken by the Majlis ul Ulamaa, and guide us all to do His work for His pleasure, Inshah Allah.

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem
Allahumma salli alaa sayyidinaa Muhammadin wa baarik wa sallim

THE ISSUE OF STUNNING IN THE PROCESSING OF CHICKENS

The Shariah Council of the Majlis ul Ulamaa (Majlistt) is aware of the uncertainty in the national community regarding acceptance of the practice by some chicken processing facilities to use water-bath stunning before the chicken is slaughtered. Some scholars are of the opinion that the use of water-bath stunning is prohibited and renders the chicken Haraam (i.e. Unlawful for Muslim consumption). Others maintain the opposite position and regard the stunning process as not affecting the Halaal status (i.e. Lawful for Muslim consumption) of the final product.

QUALIFICATION OF SLAUGHTERED CHICKEN AS HALAAL

The Majlistt recognises that for slaughtered chickens to be considered Halaal, it has to meet some specific conditions, viz.:

- The chicken must be alive at the point of slaughter
- A Muslim must take the Name of Allah at the time when each chicken is being slaughtered.
- The People of the Book, (i.e. Ahlul Kitaab) must also take the Name of Allah at the time when each chicken is being slaughtered, and this is also lawful according to the Qur'an.
 - The Majlistt notes that Schools of Law vary on whether a slaughtered chicken is still Halaal if the believer in Allah forgets to take the name of Allah. Upon deliberations, it is agreed as follows:
 - Muslim or one from Ahlul Kitab forgets to take the name of Allah, the chicken will still be considered Halaal.
 - If however, Muslim or one from Ahlul Kitab deliberately avoids taking the name of Allah, that meat is not considered Halaal, and it should not be eaten.
 - If a person does not believe in Allah, and slaughters the chicken, that chicken is haraam and cannot be eaten by any Muslim, even if they are desirous of taking the Name of Allah at the time of eating.

THE USE OF STUNNING IN THE PROCESS OF SLAUGHTERING:

The Majlistt recognises that stunning that is applied to various types of animals, takes various forms. In the case of chickens the Majlistt accept the use of water-bath stunning that is used in poultry processing. In this context, the Majlistt takes note of the following:

- The blood must flow out after slaughtering.
- The jugular veins, the oesophagus and trachea must be cut.
- Regarding the use of stunning, the investigations by scholars who currently sit on the Majlistt Shariah Council, combined with consideration of other studies done by Ulamaa of many reputable Muslim Organisations internationally, all reinforce the acceptability of water-bath stunning in the processing of chickens, with specific conditions.
 - Some Muslim Scholars maintain the position that the use of water bath stunning renders the chicken impermissible. The Majlistt is of the position that use of water bath stunning in itself does not make the chicken Haraam for Muslim consumption, as long as the chickens are alive at the time of slaughtering.
 - The Majlistt endorses the practice of regular visits to the processing plants where stunning is being practised, by scholars, to ensure that the Islamic requirements are maintained at all times.
 - Persons may wish, out of their own volition, to abstain from certain foods; However, it should be clearly understood that this personal preference cannot be used as a basis to render meat Haram or even Makrooh.
 - The Majlistt notes as well that other scholars and individuals do not accept the use of water-bath stunning on the grounds that it represents cruel treatment, pain and undue suffering to the chicken prior to its being slaughtered. The Majlistt found, based on its research, that the use of stunning calms the bird in preparation for slaughter – which has resulted in low risk of damage to the chicken at the point of slaughtering and therefore is a humane process.
 - It is to be noted that in stunning of the different sizes of chickens, the voltage needs to be adjusted based on the size of the chicken. Tests were conducted within the voltage range – administered variably based on the size of the chicken

– within which range chickens were able to recuperate. The current being administered must be properly regulated.

- Based on observations, Majlistt recognises that if a chicken died before it was slaughtered; it did not bleed and therefore retained a red colour after plucking. Such chicken is considered to have died before the point of slaughter and is removed from the processing system and rendered as pet food. Such chicken is considered Haraam, and Majlistt is aware that the rejected chickens are not approved by the Health Authority for human consumption.

The Majlistt is aware that:

- Stunning does not cause damage to the birds other than a disorder of their nervous system.
- The stunning voltage is infinitely variable. Because of this, an optimum stunning effect can always be achieved, with varying capacities and under different circumstances.

Allah Knows Best

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