

## Contents

- [Why Stunning the Animal \(Dhabh\) Slaughtering cannot be accepted by Muslims?](#)
- [Is Islamic Slaughtering Cruel to Animals?](#)
- [Stunning](#)
- [The Issue of Stunning](#)
- [Is Stunning Animals Really Humane?](#)
- [The reason why it is forbidden to eat meat without draining the blood](#)
- [Islamic method of Slaughtering animals is better](#)
- [Stunning Animals Prior To Slaughter Is Unacceptable, Say UK Muslims](#)
- [Fatwa regarding stunning](#)
- [Whose halal and who's not?](#)
- [Chickens & Stunning](#)
- [The Islamic Viewpoint on Stunning Animals Prior to Consumption](#)
- [The ruling with chicken slaughtered by Muslims but stunned before slaughtering?](#)
- [Serious Welfare Problems of Electrical Stunning for Poultry & the Case for Gas Killing](#)

---

## WHY STUNNING THE ANIMAL BEFORE (DHABH) SLAYING CAN NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE MUSLIMS?

by Dr A Majid Katme

Islam, the last religion to mankind, is a comprehensive full way of life. The holy book al-Qur'an and the sayings/actions of the last prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or Sunnah are the two major holy references for every Muslim for all affairs and all issues of life. Food, diet, eating, what is allowed to eat (Halal) and what is not allowed to eat (Haram), when to eat, how to eat, what animals allowed to eat, what animals not allowed to eat, how to do (dhabh)/slaughtering the animal for food..? And how the teacher and the model prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did do dhabh and slayed the animal for food...all these and many more have been explained clearly and in detail in the teachings of Islam.

Allah (god) the creator, the legislator, the compassionate, the merciful to man and the animal has said clearly in the last holy book al-Qur'an:

In the name of Allah the most compassionate, the most merciful

**"Forbidden for you (for food) are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine and that which has been invoked other than the name of god.**

**That which has been killed by strangling or by violent blow or by a headlong fall or by being gored to death (by horns) that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild beast, unless you are able to do dhabh/slaying (in due form) and that which has been sacrificed on stones/idols...."** (Quran: chapter 5, verse 3)

According to this holy verse it is prohibited to eat:

- any dead animal before doing dhabh/the cut.
- any blood or blood inside the meat.
- any dead animal as a result of strangulation (and not dhabh)
- any dead animal as a result of a violent blow (and not dhabh)
- any meat contaminated or mixed with Halal meat.

And certainly Islam is against any cruelty or any painful procedure done to the animal. Unfortunately most of these prohibitions do occur in many techniques used in stunning the animal today..!

Not only that but the last prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has taught us clearly how to do dh abh/slaying in the only merciful way, without any cruelty and he did it himself and showed us how to do it?

He said in the Hadith:

**"verily Allah has prescribed /goodness (ihsan) in all things; thus if you kill, kill well (painlessly), and if you do dhabh/slaying, do best dhabh /slaying ;( perfect) by sharpening well the blade/knife in order the dhabiha die comfortably/painlessly"**

We know medically and physiologically today that when proper dhabh/slaying of the animal is done, by cutting the blood vessels of the neck, in the right anatomical site: sudden profuse bleeding does occur quickly, hemorrhagic shock and an instant "anaestisation" in the brain as a result of the quick loss of the blood from the brain in the fast bleeding out thus taking away instantaneously any functioning of the brain (sensation).

**There are many types of stunning techniques today:**

- the captive bolt pistol (used for cows/cattle).
- Electric stunning (used for sheep).
- electrified water bath (used for poultry).
- carbon dioxide (co2) gas (used for pigs).

**Medical research, scientific and medical evidence has, shown that stunning causes:**

some animals to die as in the electrified water - bath for poultry or chicken:

government figures about 1/3 of chickens die before doing the cut. This is mitah/dead and is prohibited to eat in Islam. The problem today: there is no body or doctor checking each animal after death (sheep, chicken...) if it died from stunning or from the cut? At least many are shubuha (doubtful) and a Muslim should avoid it.

The verse was clear before: it is prohibited to eat any dead animal before the cut.

**Less bleeding out, more blood in the meat;**

stunning causes "salt and pepper hemorrhage" inside the meat and blood can not be taken out, also by causing some animals to die when the heart stops, this will cause less bleeding out and more blood inside. It has been proved that the direct method of slaying the animal without stunning as in dhabh causes more bleeding out.

Blood is harmful to health as it is full of bacteria, infective agents and waste and harmful substances. Chemical changes in the meat... Making the meat less healthy and less nutritious. Cruelty and suffering to the animal that can not complain or speak up.

More stress to the animal which causes more discomfort and some harms to our health by consuming the meat of the "stressed animal". Failure on proper effective stunning, half stunning, paralysis and re-stunning; surely this is cruel.

Not only that but today there are many non Muslim scientists who oppose stunning, in the west for humane and health reasons like: van der wal, wenberg, mcLoughlin, pollard, winstanley, marple etc....and it is legal...the law of the land: Muslims and Jews to do dhabh /slaying without stunning. (Religious slaughter).

The official response given by the Muslims in Britain before to the government and following a national conference of Muslim organisations and Muslim leaders in regent park mosque and following many meetings:

Muslims are against stunning and will not accept stunning (see official response on 22nd Oct/1985 from regent park mosque on behalf of the Muslims in Britain). Since then there have been any new decisions or any change in the Muslim view.

The declaration of the European council for fatwa and research, in may 1999 in their annual meeting in cologne/Germany against the consumption of the animals stunned, especially the chickens and the cows, (the decision of over 35 Muslim theologians/ulamas who are living and working in Europe).The Jews in Britain and in many other countries oppose strongly all types of stunning.

Lastly: new scientific medical researches done by doctor's, vets, pharmacists, pathologists and members of parliament in Syria have showed clearly the therapeutic effect of saying: Bismillah Allah ak bar (in the name of Allah, Allah is the greatest) on the animals:

if the animal hears that, it gives him/her the tranquility and it takes away any germ or infection to give you pure healthy meat, the animal has to be fully conscious and alive before the cut/dhabh...and not unconscious or dead as it happens with some animals when stunning was used.

There are also two well known Islamic rulings:

- the first, any step or action leading to Haram is not allowed to do. We know well today that some animals die before we do any cut and a dead animal is forbidden to consume if it dies before slaying/dhabh. Also scientists have proved that stunning causes blood hemorrhage and blood inside the meat. Consuming blood is forbidden in Islam.
- The second ruling; a golden rule in Islam. If anything is doubtful (shubaha), the Muslim has to avoid it and we know today about the doubt in the stunned animals (death and blood).

This was done and repeated in many double blind "studies.

Video, slides and the book is available, even the Syrian doctors and scientists are willing to come to Britain to explain it all. Lately also, Britain and Europe has prohibited one type of stunning (pithing) because of the risk of BSE.

One could see clearly that many haram/prohibited things can occur as a result of stunning like: eating dead animal/mitah (not from the cut), consuming blood, which is forbidden too, meat not tayyib/wholesome/natural/pure due to some chemical changes in the meat. Besides it is cruel to the animals.

Our beloved prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has told us and showed us clearly how to do dhabh for real proper tayyib/wholesome halal meat.

It is wise and sensible and more humane and more healthy to stick to the prophetic way in dhabh/slaying the animal for food, especially as no one can find any mistake or cruelty or fault in this divine method as it is the only way to treat the animal humanly and to get healthy safe meat.

Allah, the creator of all animals and man and the universe is called also: al rahman al rahim (the most compassionate, the most merciful) and Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the mercy to all. There will never ever be any religious instructions which can cause suffering or pain to any animal.

Dr. A. MAJID KATME

The Muslim Campaigner for Halal Meat and Food

---

## Is Islamic Slaughtering Cruel to Animals?

by Dr. Aisha El-Awady

02/02/2003

Islam's stance on what is permissible to eat and what is not is clear. There are strict rules when it comes to meat regarding what is allowed and what is forbidden. In Surat Al-Maida (The Table) Allah says:

**"Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maytatah (the dead animals -cattle-beasts not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah or has been slaughtered for idols etc, or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering and that which has been killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a headlong fall or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it(before its death) and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on AnNusub (stone altars). [Forbidden] also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, [all] that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who**

**disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion, so fear them not (but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you completed My Favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin [such can eat these above-mentioned meats], then surely, Allah is All Forgiving, Most Merciful” .**

The Islamic practice of slaughtering animals by means of a sharp cut to the front of the neck has frequently come under attack by some animal rights activists as being a form of animal cruelty, the claim being that it is a painful inhumane method of killing animals. In the West, it is required by law to stun the animals with a shot to the head before the slaughter, supposedly to render the animal unconscious and to prevent it from reviving before it is killed so as not to slow down the movement of the processing line. It is also used to prevent the animal from feeling pain before it dies.

### **German Research Studies Pain**

It therefore may come as a surprise to those who have made such acclimations to learn of the results of a study carried out by Professor Wilhelm-Schulze and his colleague Dr. Hazim at the School of Veterinary Medicine, Hannover University in Germany. The study: 'Attempts to Objectify Pain and Consciousness in Conventional (captive bolt pistol stunning) and Ritual (Halal, knife) Methods of Slaughtering Sheep and Calves' concludes that Islamic slaughtering is the most humane method of slaughter and that captive bolt stunning, practiced in the West, causes severe pain to the animal.

In the study, several electrodes were surgically implanted at various points of the skull of all animals, touching the surface of the brain. The animals were allowed to recover for several weeks. Some animals were then slaughtered by making a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck cutting the jugular veins and the carotid arteries as well as the trachea and esophagus (Islamic method). Other animals were stunned using a Captive Bolt Pistol (CBP). During the experiment, an electroencephalograph (EEG) and an electrocardiogram (ECG) recorded the condition of the brain and the heart of all animals during the course of slaughter and stunning.

The results were as follows:

#### **I - Islamic Method**

1. The first three seconds from the time of Islamic slaughter as recorded on the EEG did not show any change from the graph before slaughter, thus indicating that the animal did not feel any pain during or immediately after the incision.
2. For the following 3 seconds, the EEG recorded a condition of deep sleep - unconsciousness. This is due to the large quantity of blood gushing out from the body.
3. After the above-mentioned 6 seconds, the EEG recorded zero level, showing no feeling of pain at all.
4. As the brain message (EEG) dropped to zero level, the heart was still pounding and the body convulsing vigorously (a reflex action of the spinal cord) driving a maximum amount of blood from the body thus resulting in hygienic meat-for the consumer.

#### **II - Western method by C.B.P. Stunning**

1. The animals were apparently unconscious soon after stunning.
2. EEG showed severe pain immediately after stunning.
3. The hearts of animals stunned by C.B.P. 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. This in turn is unhygienic for the consumer.

#### **Western-Style Slaughtering and Mad Cow's Disease**

Not only is this method of stunning animals before the slaughter severely painful as shown by the previous experiment, but there is also a rising concern that this method 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.

Islamic Regulations for the Slaughter

As one can see from the previous studies, Islamic slaughtering of animals is a blessing to both the animal and to humans alike. In order for the slaughtering to be lawful, several measures must be taken by the one performing the deed. This is to ensure the highest benefit to both the animal and the consumer. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "God calls for mercy in everything, so be merciful when you kill and when you slaughter: sharpen your blade to relieve its pain".

The object used to slaughter the animal should be sharp and used swiftly. The swift cutting of vessels of the neck disconnects the flow of blood to the nerves in the brain responsible for pain. Thus the animal does not feel pain. The movements and withering that happen to the animal after the cut is made are not due to pain, but due to the contraction and relaxation of the muscles deficient in blood. The prophet (peace be upon him) also taught Muslims neither to sharpen the blade of the knife in front of the animal nor to slaughter an animal in front of others of its own kind.

The cut should involve the windpipe (trachea), gullet (esophagus), and the two jugular veins without cutting the spinal cord. This method results in the rapid gush of blood draining most of it from the animal's body. If the spinal cord is cut, the nerve fibers to the heart might be damaged leading to cardiac arrest thus resulting in stagnation of blood in the blood vessels. The blood must be drained completely before the head is removed. This purifies the meat by removing most of the blood that acts as a medium for microorganisms; meat also remains fresh longer as compared to other methods of slaughtering.

Therefore 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.

---

## STUNNING

In the Name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful,

Stunning the animal before it is actually slaughtered is a common practice in many western countries. It is claimed to be more comforting and causing less pain to the animal.

Pre-slaughter stunning was originally introduced to protect abattoir personnel, rather than the animals themselves. The idea was to immobilize the animal to facilitate killing procedures. However, the principle of stunning has now evolved to encompass the idea that animals should be rendered unconscious before they are slaughtered.

There are many methods used for stunning animals, just to mention a few:

### **The Captive Bolt Pistol**

This stunning method is widely used for all farmed animals. There are two types of captive bolt pistol: penetrative and non-penetrative. Penetrative stunners drive a bolt into the skull and cause unconsciousness both through physical brain damage and the concussive blow to the skull. The bolt on a non-penetrative stunner is 'mushroom-headed' and impacts on the brain without entering the skull. Unconsciousness is caused by the concussive blow. After the animal is unconscious, it is slaughtered.

The bolt is described as 'captive' because it flies out of the barrel but remains attached to the pistol. The pistol is placed on the centre of the animal's forehead and is either trigger-fired or fires automatically on contact with the animal's head.

### **Pitching**

Pitching is carried out in the majority of cattle slaughterhouses. The practice involves inserting a wire or rod through the hole in the head made by the captive bolt. The rod is slid up and down to destroy the lower part of the brain and the spinal cord.

## **Electric head-only stunning (electric shock or current)**

Electric head-only stunning with tongs is used to stun cattle, calves, sheep, goats, rabbits and ostriches. The operator places a pair of electric tongs on either side of the animal's head and passes an electric current through the brain - supposedly causing a temporary loss of consciousness.

## **Waterbath stunning**

The electric waterbath is widely used to stun chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. Birds are shackled upside down on a moving conveyor which carries them to an electrified waterbath into which their heads are supposed to be immersed. The shackles contact a bar which is connected to earth. The strength of the electrical current has risen in recent years - with the aim of ensuring that birds suffer a cardiac arrest and die when they enter the waterbath.

## **Gas stunning**

An animal is stunned by exposing them to a mixture of carbon dioxide and air. This gas causes the animal to lose its consciousness, after which it is slaughtered.

From an Islamic perspective, two main questions arise here:

- 1) Is using the method of stunning permissible?
- 2) Will the animal be considered lawful (halal) if it was slaughtered according to the rulings of Shariah after being stunned?

As far as the answer to the first question is concerned, this depends on whether stunning the animal reduces the pain or causes more unnecessary pain.

The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said:

“Verily Allah has prescribed proficiency in all things. Thus, if you kill (an animal), 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).

Some of the methods used to stun animals are indeed very painful and as a result have been banned in many countries, like the method of pitching, for example. Therefore, such methods will indeed be impermissible according to Shariah.

As far as the other methods of stunning are concerned, although experts claim that they minimize the suffering of the animal, but this can not be said for certain. An electric current or a bolt pistol does cause pain to the animal, whereas gas stunning may cause severe breathing difficulties.

However, if it is ascertained that the claim of the experts is correct in that stunning does minimize the suffering of the animal, and also the animal does not die prior to the actual slaughtering, then it would be permissible to use the method of stunning, otherwise impermissible.

The second question is: what is the ruling regarding an animal that was stunned prior to being slaughtered? The answer to this depends on whether stunning causes the animal to die. Animal experts claim that it does not cause the animal to die; rather it only causes it to lose its consciousness, thus not feel the pain of the slaughter.

This, however, can not be said for certain, as many a time the animal does perish as a direct result of the stun. Especially with chicken, it is very likely that the animal dies as a result of the electric shock. Some experts are of the view that the stunned animal remains alive only for a few minutes, after which it dies.

As a result, no such ruling can be given for certain. However, there is no doubt in the fact that if the animal was to die prior to the actual Islamic slaughter taking place or there is a fear of it dying, then it would be unlawful (haram) to consume its meat.

As the act of stunning renders the animal doubtful, one must avoid consuming the meat of animals that are stunned. It is known that the Jews abstain from consuming stunned animals, thus a Muslim should be more precautionous in what he eats. However, if it is determined in a particular animal that it did not die prior to being

slaughtered, then it would be Halal. This of course, is very difficult to determine whilst buying from meat shops, thus one should avoid it totally.

If you are forced to stun the animal by law, then it must be determined that the animal is still alive at the time of actual slaughter. This must be assured with each animal especially chickens, for they may die by the stun due to them being weak.

And Allah Knows Best

Muhammad ibn Adam  
Leicester, UK

---

## THE ISSUE OF STUNNING

An Islamic Perspective

The issue of electrically stunned chicken has been placed in front of the Ulama, and has undergone extensive research and studies. To such an extent that to achieve the most complete and satisfactory answer matters were referred to specialists and research groups.

With complete insight and without any doubts in our hearts we now proclaim the Islamic perspective on electrically stunning animals prior to slaughter is makrooh -e-tahrimi (extremely detested bordering close to Haram), as well as being an utterly pointless method of subjecting the animal to unnecessary cruelty and torture. (This is the ruling on stunning itself not on the meat of the animal, which will be Haram if it dies prior to slaughter, and this is a very common occurrence - translator)

Many sheikhs and muftis in their fataawa have already stated the same reasoning and have reached the same conclusion. They include many authentic books such as;

- Imdaadul Fataawa (vol 3, p606)
- Fataawa Mahmoodiyah (vol 17, p248)
- Fataawa Rahimiyah (vol 2, p95)
- Bayyinaat (monthly) (1410AH)

For this reason, i.e. to avoid causing the animal untold pain and suffering, and to take advantage of what the law does not force upon us, we must resort to the Islamic, Sunnah methodology and abandon such inhumane tra its.

We also strongly advise our Muslim brothers and sisters in general, to as far as possible endeavour to acquire Halal, pure foods, and also to avoid the purchase of stunned animals altogether.

We also at this moment in time would like to thank those slaughterhouse owners who, upon hearing this judgement have promised to altogether discontinue using any method of stunning.

In a Hadith narrated by both Sahih Muslim (Mishkat p357) and Abu Dawood (Abu Dawood ma'al Bathl; vol 5, p77), the companion of our beloved messenger T, Shaddaad bin Aus Z, relates that the messenger of Allah T has said, "Allah has ordered Ihsaan (kindness/benevolence) in all things, to such an extent that even when capital punishment is to be issued to anyone, then that too must be with Ihsaan. And when any animal is to be slaughtered then that too must be with Ihsaan. One must ensure that the knife is sharpened and the animal is relaxed."

And Allah Alone Knows Best

---

## Is Stunning Animals Really Humane?

By Aisha El-Awady

*Editor's Note: This article is for the most part a summary of a report entitled, 'Sentenced to Death' by Rebecca Smith and released by VIVA. Click here for the full report.*

The religious practice of slaughtering animals by a swift cut to the throat of the animal, practiced by both Muslims and Jews, has recently come under attack in the UK. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), an advisory group to the British government on ways to avoid cruelty to livestock, wants to see these methods of slaughtering banned under the pretence that these practices are cruel and cause suffering of the animals. They are demanding that it be required by law that the animals are stunned prior to being slaughtered.

According to the BBC, spokesman Roy Saich was quoted as saying, "There is no imperative for Muslims or Jews to eat meat produced in this manner." He continues saying, "There is no reason why they should not simply abstain from eating meat altogether if they do not wish to eat the same meat as the rest of us." (BBC News).

As disturbing as this quote is, let us for the sake of comparison look at the various methods of stunning that Muslims and Jews are being told are more humane than their own religious methods of slaughter and that they may be required by law to use whether they want to or not.

### **Animal Slaughter in the UK**

Each year in the UK, 900 million animals are slaughtered for the purpose of consumption. This takes place in less than 600 abattoirs. The concept of humane slaughter is supposedly behind the adoption of the practice of stunning animals before slaughter by the UK government, the claim being that stunning renders the animals unconscious and unable to feel pain at the time of slaughter. However scientific studies and the opinions of several experts have shown this to be untrue.

According to VIVA (Vegetarians International Voice for Animals), "Tens of millions of animals are being ineffectively stunned and are regaining consciousness while they bleed to death." Furthermore, it is quite an interesting fact that the original purpose behind the practice of pre-slaughter stunning was the protection of abattoir personnel rather than that of the animals since the immobilization of the animals facilitates the slaughtering procedure and allows the slaughter of a greater number of animals and hence a higher profit gained.

According to a report done by Rebecca Smith of VIVA, a vegan campaigning group fighting to save animals, the stunning techniques used in UK abattoirs include:

- **The Captive Bolt Pistol (CBP) and concussion stunning:**

This type of stunning is widely used for all farmed animals. Unconsciousness is caused either by penetration of the skull which causes brain damage or by causing a concussive blow to the brain without penetration. It is called 'captive' since the bolt is shot out of the barrel but remains attached to the pistol.

The disadvantages of CBP stunning:

In order to be effective, CBP stunning must be performed by highly trained personnel. Correct cartridge strengths must also be used. If this is not the case or if the pistol is not positioned correctly, the animal will have to endure the pain of being shot incorrectly and will then have to be shot again or be knifed while conscious. In a 1996 report, the Scientific Committee of the European Commission said that, "In 5 to 10% of cattle, captive bolt stunning is not applied correctly."

VIVA translates this percentage into 230,000 cattle in the UK being stunned incorrectly each year.

A practice known as pithing, which often followed the CBP shot and was practiced by the majority of cattle slaughter houses, increased the risk of BSE also known as Mad Cow disease by allowing infected brain matter to reach other parts of the animal's body. Pithing was banned in the UK in 2002.

- **Electric Head-Only Stunning:**

Cattle, sheep, goats and ostriches are all stunned using this method. The technique involves the application of a pair of electric tongs on either side of the animal's head. An electric current is then passed through the brain and this supposedly leads to the temporary loss of consciousness.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) say that, "There is increasing scientific evidence that some animals stunned electrically using tongs regain consciousness before they die from loss of blood." The reasons behind this are either an inefficient electric current being passed through the animals' brain during stunning or the animals begin to regain consciousness if the time interval between stunning and sticking exceeds a period of 20 seconds.



VIVA explains this saying that the stun caused by the electric head-only technique lasts between 20 and 40 seconds whereas the interval between stunning and knifing is as high as 70 seconds for sheep. This means that there are around 5 million sheep that regain consciousness after being electrically stunned before they die of blood loss.

Research done at Bristol University has also shown that after an electric stun, sheep may not be able to feel pain, they do, however, experience periods of full awareness. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the loss of consciousness is immediate, and some people like neurophysiologist Dr. Harold Hilman believe that stunning is extremely painful, pointing out that the electrocution of prisoners is used as a torture method in some countries. The animals cannot express this pain by crying out or by moving since the massive electric current paralyzes them.

- **Water Bath Stunning**

This is a widely used method of stunning for chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks. In this method, birds are shackled upside-down on a moving conveyor belt that takes them to the electrified water bath. The birds' heads are to supposedly be immersed in this water causing their electrocution. In recent years, the strength of the electric current has been raised to ensure the death of the birds by cardiac arrest.

- **Disadvantages of this method:**

The inadequate stunning of birds is a common problem with this method especially with ducks and geese that tend to raise their heads when entering the water bath and their heads are therefore not fully immersed in the water.

Another problem with this method is that although the aim of this method is to induce cardiac arrest, "many birds are improperly stunned and recover consciousness before slaughter," according to the RSPCA.

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 faeces at stunning, thus making their meat unhygienic as the fluids may leak out of the lungs and cause contamination.

This method of stunning is particularly cruel to turkeys. The shackling of turkeys by their legs, which may last up to 6 minutes, is extremely painful. This pain is caused by leg deformities that the birds suffer from due to their being bred in a manner that ensures maximum weight gain as fast as possible whereas their bones do not have time to properly develop.

Another problem for turkeys is that their wings may sometimes hang lower than their heads causing the bird to sustain a painful electric shock. The Scientific Veterinary Committee of the EU says that, "The prevalence of pre-stun electric shock in turkeys is high (about 80%)."

- **Gassing**

Birds may be stunned using CO<sub>2</sub> or Argon gas while they remain in their crates. Pigs are also gassed using CO<sub>2</sub>.

- **Sticking**

In this method a knife is stuck into the animal's throat or neck causing brain death from the rapid loss of blood supply to the brain. This method if not performed correctly can lead to the animal regaining sensibility before death.

## **Islam's Stance on Stunning**

Muslim scholars disagree on whether pre-slaughter stunning is prohibited or not. Some believe that if the animal is killed by the cutting of the throat and not by the stun then it is lawful to eat the animal's meat. The joint Muslim World League/World Health Organization meeting held in Jeddah during Rabi' al-Awwal 1406 AH/December 1985 agreed that "if it could be shown that stunning with electric shock enabled the animal to die peacefully, then it would be Islamically lawful" (Islamset).

On the other hand, those against stunning argue that in cases of captive bolt stunning or concussion stunning, the animal may die from the concussion, which would be similar to dying from a violent blow and the animal would then be classified as *mawquza* ("beaten to death"), which is prohibited in Islam.

In the electric water bath used for poultry, the birds may die partly by drowning or by cardiac arrest, which would classify the birds as *mayta* (dead). That would also make eating their meat unlawful.

These scholars also argue that chemical gassing should not be used as a stunning method as this would be similar to death by strangulation and the animal would be classified as *munkhaniqa*, (death by suffocation).

In this translation of Surat Al-Maida (The Table) Allah says, **“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, 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 (in due form), and that which is sacrificed on stone (altars).”**

However, no matter which choice one makes regarding this matter, there is no doubt that stunning of animals is cruel and causes unjustifiable suffering to the animals which is strongly prohibited in Islam.

**Sources:**

§ Smith, Rebecca, Sentenced to Death. Viva!

§ BBC, 2003: Halal and Kosher slaughter 'must end'.

Health an Islamic Perspective. Islamset.

---

## **The reason why it is forbidden to eat meat without draining the blood**

Prepared by Professor Dr. Tawfeeq 'Alwaan, Majallat al-Da'wah

**Question :**

**Is there an obvious reason why it is forbidden to eat animals that are not slaughtered according to sharee'ah, such as those killed by electric shock or shot with a gun, etc.**

**Answer :**

Praise be to Allaah.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“Say (O Muhammad): I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be Maytah (a dead animal) or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork); for that surely, is impure or impious (unlawful) meat (of an animal) which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allaah (or has been slaughtered for idols, or on which Allaah’s Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But whosoever is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits; (for him) certainly, your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”*

[al-An'aam 6:145]

Blood is the reason why it is forbidden to eat meat that has not been slaughtered according to sharee'ah. Our sharee'ah intends that the slaughtered animal should be drained of blood as completely as possible, and that is because of the extreme harm that would result from eating its blood.

It does not make sense, and it is unacceptable to suggest, that Islam would set out all these conditions to get rid of the blood of the slaughtered animal in the manner prescribed, then allow us to drink or eat blood after it is drained from the animal. For this reason it is a definite fact that Islam has forbidden blood as a means of nutrition for man. Rather this prohibition is a clear sign of the wisdom and purpose of sharee'ah in purifying the animal by draining the blood from it because blood is one of the most evil and unlawful kinds of food, which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sent to abolish.

*“he allows them as lawful At-Tayyibaat (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khabaa’ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods)”*

*[al-A’raaf 7:157 – interpretation of the meaning]*

Al-Tabari said in his *Tafseer*: “ The phrase ‘*blood poured forth*’ means blood that flows copiously. This is how Allaah described the blood when He told His slaves that it is haraam. ‘Ikrimah said: were it not for this ayah, the Muslims would gone to extremes in avoiding the blood that remains in the veins as the Jews do. Al -Maawardi said that with regard to blood that is not ‘poured forth’, if it has solidified in the veins, as in the liver and spleen, then it is halaal, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Two kinds of dead meat and two kinds of blood have been permitted to us...”

The reason why the blood that is “poured forth” is forbidden to us is because of the information that has become well known and well established nowadays among the doctors and those who carry out medical tests and study microscopic creatures, which is that blood is considered to be the optimum environment for the growth of germs. So if a person drinks blood it is as if he has drunk a “farm” for growing germs, in which the germs can multiply and grow, producing lethal poisons which, as is well known, have extremely harmful effects which result in germs invading the human body resulting in the person contracting contagious and lethal diseases.

If it is said that cooking the blood and eating it will surely kill these bacteria and microbes and put an end to them whilst preserving the hoped-for nutritional benefits of the blood, our answer is that some of these toxins cannot be altered by boiling and changed in such a manner that they become beneficial to the body. There are some that do not change at all, rather they remain lethal poisons even after being boiled, or the heat may alter them in such a way that they become even more lethal and harmful.

With regard to the benefits expected by the one who drinks blood thinking that it is a nutritious substance that strengthens the body, these benefits are non-existent, if we examine the composition of blood. Blood is very difficult to digest, so much so that if some of it is poured into a man’s stomach, he will vomit immediately, or it will come out in his stools without having been digested, in the form of a black substance. The reason why it is so hard to digest and it turns the stools black is the presence of the red substance (haemoglobin) which is basically formed of iron. As the blood passes through the digestive tract and as time passes, it starts to disintegrate and break down, and thus it also harms the body. If it were said that cooking also helps to break down the components of blood and make it easier to digest and benefit from its nutritional value, our answer is that boiling solidifies the proteins in the blood and makes it even more difficult to digest, more harmful and less beneficial.

After hundreds of scientific experiments and huge advancements in modern science, carrying out blood tests and precise scientific research in this field, it has become indisputably clear to all those who are concerned with human health of all nationalities and specialties that the great harm done to health by eating blood or cooking it and using it all boil down to the fact that drinking blood is ingesting a lethal poison. This is clear from the following scientific facts:

1 – Blood is basically composed of two basic elements, namely water which represents 90% of the liquid in which the components of blood swim (which is known as plasma). The rest is formed of blood cells and other elements. The one who wants to drink blood or cook it and eat it does so because he wants to consume something with a high or regular nutritional value. But these scientific facts prove that he would have to drink such a huge amount of blood in order to avail himself of a small amount of blood protein and a little bit of iron that it is not worth the risk of exposing himself to the dangers that result from that.

In brief, blood is the opposite of what people think, it is very poor in nutritional values. Therefore the fact that it is forbidden does not mean that the Muslims are being deprived of any major nutritional benefit.

2 – Major harm may result from this small amount of blood protein mixed with very harmful and poisonous elements, which means that ingesting it poses a great risk and puts a person in danger. Foremost among these dangers is the poisonous gas with which blood is filled, namely carbon dioxide which flows in venous blood from all parts of the body.

Because the one who drinks blood takes it from the animal when it is full of carbon dioxide, which is a gas that kills by asphyxiation. When a person dies of asphyxiation, it is because of the accumulation of this gas in his blood, the lethal effects of which result in death.

So it is obvious that repeatedly drinking blood which is filled with carbon dioxide, on the part of one who is accustomed to this practice, will lead to harmful results depending on the extent to which this gas is present in the animal's blood and the extent to which the body of the drinker is susceptible to it.

What we have mentioned here are only the effects that result from the components of blood on the one who drinks it or eats it after cooking it. We have also mentioned other extremely harmful effects which are directly connected to the specific functions that Allaah has created in blood and the roles that it plays in the animal's body, functions that cannot be performed unless the blood is in a liquid, flowing state. If we were to content ourselves with the above bad effects of using blood for food, that would be sufficient to make any nation that appreciates knowledge to promulgate laws banning this practice, even if that nation was kaafir.

*"He grants Hikmah [wisdom] to whom He wills, and he, to whom Hikmah is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding"*

*[al-Baqarah 2:269 – interpretation of the meaning]*

Glory be to the One Who taught the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that which he did not know and bestowed that blessing upon him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"Allaah has sent down to you the book (the Qur'aan), and Al-Hikmah (Islamic laws, knowledge of legal and illegal things, i.e. the Prophet's Sunnah — legal ways), and taught you that which you knew not. And Ever Great is the Grace of Allaah unto you (O Muhammad)" [al-Nisa' 4:113]*

Glory be to the One Who honoured the world with this true religion which has not left any major or minor matter without explaining to mankind the right way and the straight path. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"Indeed, there has come to you from Allaah a light (Prophet Muhammad) and a plain Book (this Qur'aan).*

*16. Wherewith Allaah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism)" [al-Maa'idah 5:15-16]*

---

### **Islamic method of Slaughtering animals is better**

Al Shaddad Bin Aous has quoted this tradition of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) " **God calls for mercy in everything, so be merciful when you kill and when you slaughter, sharpen your blade to relieve its pain** ".

Many allegations have been made that Islamic slaughter is not humane to animals. However, Professor Schultz and his colleague Dr. Hazim of the Hanover University, Germany, proved through an experiment, using an electroencephalograph (EEG) and electrocardiogram (ECG) that \*Islamic slaughter is THE humane method of slaughter\* and captive bolt stunning, practiced by the Western method, causes severe pain to the animal. The results surprised many.

#### **Experimental Details:**

1. Several electrodes were surgically implanted at various points of the skull of all animals, touching the surface of the brain.
2. The animals were allowed to recover for several weeks.
3. Some animals were slaughtered by making a swift, deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck cutting the jugular veins and carotid Arteries of both sides; as also the trachea and oesophagus Halal Method.
4. Some animals were stunned using a captive bolt pistol humane slaughter by the western method.
5. During the experiment, EEG and ECG were recorded on all animals to record the condition of the brain and heart during the course of slaughter and stunning.

#### **Results and Discussion:**

##### **I - Halal Method**

1. The first three seconds from the time of Islamic slaughter as recorded on the EEG did not show any change from the graph before slaughter, thus indicating that the animal did not feel any pain during or immediately after the incision.
2. For the following 3 seconds, the EEG recorded a condition of deep sleep - unconsciousness. This is due to a large quantity of blood gushing out from the body.
3. After the above mentioned 6 seconds, the EEG recorded zero level, showing no feeling of pain at all.

4. As the brain message (EEG) dropped to zero level, the heart was still pounding and the body convulsing vigorously (a reflex action of the spinal cord) driving maximum blood from the body: resulting in hygienic meat for the consumer.

## II - Western method by C.B.P. Stunning

1. The animals were apparently unconscious soon after stunning.
2. EEG showed severe pain immediately after stunning.
3. The hearts of the animal stunned by C.B.P. stopped beating earlier as compared to those of the animals slaughtered according to the Halal method resulting in the retention of more blood in the meat. This in turn is unhygienic for the consumer.

---

## Stunning Animals Prior To Slaughter Is Unacceptable, Say UK Muslims

The British Muslim community views with serious concern recent reports that the Farm Animal Welfare Council intends next month to recommend that the Government outlaws the religious Islamic and Jewish method of slaughtering animals.

"The stunning of animals prior to their slaughter is an unacceptable requirement to both British Muslims and Jews. Numerous medical studies have shown that stunning leads to the retention of a significant amount of blood in the meat and is the cause of death in some animals before slaughter. The consumption of blood and the meat of animals which have died before slaughter is clearly prohibited in Islam as it is harmful," said Mr Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

Dr Ahmad al-Dubayan, the Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London's largest mosque, voiced his support for the MCB's position and said: "The Islamic Halal method is a humane and Divinely-ordained injunction which is binding on all Muslims. We hope that others will not seek to interfere with our most basic beliefs and customs."

---

## Fatwa re stunning

Mufti Shabbir Ahmad, Darul Uloom Bury

Making an animal unconscious prior to slaughter, whether by means of a current or pistol, contains from a shar`ee perspective a number of major flaws which have been detailed by Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thanwi in Imdadul Fatawa and then by my teacher Shaykh Mufti Muzaffar Hussain, Director and Mufti of Madrasah Mazahir Uloom, Saharanpur in response to a legal query. I briefly present an exposition of this. This method of practice (due to the reasons given) is, therefore, in no way permissible. It is an obligation on Muslims to make all efforts in trying to bring this method of practice to an end and under no circumstances to accept this method.

1. The Fuqahaa have specifically mentioned that it is forbidden to cause unneeded pain and suffering to the animal to be slaughtered.

وكره كل تعذيب بلا فائدة نتل قطع الرأس والسليخ قبل ان تبرد اي اي تسكن عن اضطراب  
(در المختار)

Since the above shock cannot constitute slaughter, it is apparent that it is, therefore, a means of unneeded pain and suffering which is not permitted by the Shari`ah. If it is claimed that this act does not cause the animal pain and suffering but rather aids the expulsion of blood from the body and annuls the animal's senses, this too would be incorrect as prior to being made unconscious the animal senses were in working order and so their suspension after unconsciousness is not certain as it is possible that this instrument may have caused a suspension in movement (paralysis) whilst senses are still functioning, لان بطلان الحركة لا يستلزم بطلان الدس and it is obvious that in the case of the senses remaining, the usage of these instruments will be a means of increase suffering.

1. The Shari`ah has declared the releasing of flowing blood as the reason behind slaughtering. Now it is apparent that the workings of the physical organs are strongest in the state of consciousness, and it is also apparent that the expulsion of the blood is a physical act. Therefore, the stronger (and more actively) the organs function, the more blood will be released and the objective of the Legislator will be well realised. Thus, to intentionally enervate the organs and thereby cause a decrease in the amount of blood pumped out would not be permitted by the Shari`ah as this clashes with the objective of the Legislator.

2. The third reason, which is more abhorrent than the others and alone would suffice in making this matter impermissible is that those that adopt such methods consider them preferable to the way prescribed by the Shari`ah (in which the animal is not made unconscious), and consider the method of shari`ah inferior and deficient, and giving preference to the innovated over the prescribed is close to Kufr.

والله اعلم وعلمه أحكم و أنتم

03//05/1404 - 06/02/84  
Fatwa Number 145

Mufti Shabbir Ahmad  
Darul Uloom Al-Arabiyyah Al-Islamiyyah  
Holcombe Hall, Holcombe, Bury

Translated on 29/01/04

---

## Whose halal and who's not?

*A recent report published by the Farm Animals Welfare Council (FAWC) on the treatment of animals at slaughter has pushed the "stunned vs. non-stunned" debate firmly back on the agenda. The Council, which has advised the government on issues of animal welfare since 1979, calls for the current exemption of halal and kosher meat from being pre-stunned to be repealed. This recommendation, which has not yet been put into practice, has caused outcry among British Muslims and Jews, who thought this chapter had been firmly closed since they were exempted back in 1984. But what, if anything, has changed since then, and why are we once again being forced to justify our right to halal and kosher meat? Erfana Bora investigates and discovers a huge split within the Muslim community.*

It was almost two decades ago that a joint committee of Jewish and Muslim groups resolved the furore over pre-stunning by presenting the government with the case for halal and kosher being essential to fulfil requirements of Divine Law. Now, the publication of this new report has brought history to repeat itself. An emergency meeting of Muslim and Jewish groups was called at Central London Mosque on June 12th, to formulate a joint strategy to counter the recommendations and once again present a united front to the government. The attendees included representatives of the Chief Rabbi's Office, Jewish Board of Deputies and the Shechita Board. From the Muslim community, representatives of the Muslim Council of Britain, Islamic Medical Council and the Halal Food Authority were amongst those present. The meeting's outcome was a petition and two-page cover letter addressed to all parliamentarians concerned with the new FAWC guidelines. Signed by all the meeting's attendees, the petition called, once again, for nonstunned slaughter to be allowed to continue.

On the surface of it, this was an admirable display of inter-faith and, I daresay, 'intra-faith' unity. But in reality, the show of solidarity between the different Muslim groups masked a fundamental split in method and ideology between some of the delegates. Q-News has discovered that the seemingly straightforward attempt to convince the government of the need to continue with the exemption may be undermined by the controversial stance of one lone group in this debate: the Halal Food Authority (HFA). Enter Mr Masood Khawaja, Director of the HFA, who signed

the petition on June 12th, but does not, it seems, really believe that the exemption is necessary at all. In a press release displayed on the HFA website, Mr Khawaja states that "experiments carried out to immobilise the animal through controlled stunning, if successful, would be looked at with an open mind." When *Q-News* spoke to Mr Khawaja it became apparent that, for reasons of sheer pragmatism, he was behind the scenes eager to endorse any method of stunning which hopes to immobilise animals without the risk of them dying in the process. This would introduce a method of producing halal meat that is at once pre-stunned, and failsafe, something that is, according to those in the opposing camp, by its very nature an oxymoron. And so, enter Dr Majid Katme, spokesperson of the MCB on issues of halal meat.

Dr Katme ardently presents the case against all stunning, not only in the case of halal and kosher meat, but for all other meat, on the grounds that non-stunned meat is better for the health of the nation. He cites numerous scientific studies that have shown stunning has a detrimental effect both on meat quality and safety. More specifically, in relation to halal meat, stunning can present major problems that obstruct the process of *dhabihah* (halal slaughter). One of these is that currently, a large proportion of animals are killed by the stunning process, which makes the meat carrion and therefore unlawful. According to the FAWC, 33% of stunned chicken is dead before it reaches the blade; this would enter the market labeled 'halal.' Stunning can also cause hemorrhaging and subsequent retention of blood that is required to flow away. Moreover, stunning causes massive changes in the chemical composition of the meat as the animal goes into stress and shock, releasing hormones into the muscle tissue. Not only this, but stunning also increases the risk of the spread of BSE. The picture then, does not look too good. These salient arguments against stunning render such meat to be at the very least *non-tayyib* (good/wholesome), if not haram (impermissible).

But these issues did not seem to concern the director of the Halal Food Authority. Mr Khawaja, instead, wants a system whereby licensed slaughter men operating in licensed slaughterhouses would stun meat before slaughter to bring about immobilisation before the process of *dhabihah*, with vets on hand to ensure that animals are well treated before slaughter. When asked about checking each animal to determine it was still alive between stunning and slaughter, he deemed it an unnecessary or unworkable idea, and gave the analogy of cooking rice and not having to check whether each individual grain of rice in the pot was cooked through before you can eat it.

Mr Khawaja obviously does not realise the implications of potentially haram meat being passed through his proposed system, and to liken this to someone eating a couple of grains of undercooked rice is about as crass an analogy you can get. To think that the HFA have such disregard for the welfare of the Muslim community's physical and spiritual state and yet is widely considered an authority on halal food in this country is in my opinion, scandalous.

As far as my investigations indicate, the HFA may as well change its acronym from HFA to DFA, the Doubtful Food Authority.

Another problem with Mr Khawaja's proposal is that it leaves Jewish concerns for kosher meat out in the cold. For meat to be kosher, no stunning may be used in any circumstances, and so to call for mass 'controlled' stunning shows no regard for the joint work carried out with Jewish groups over the years. And the plain truth is, that on this issue at the very least, the old maxim could never ring more true: if united we stand, then divided we must surely fall.

Perhaps the deciding factor in this debate should be the insistence on following the *sunna* and the safe, healthy option. As Dr Katme points out, what Allah ordained for His prophets must be returned to as our example, and we should not pander to the relentless needs of Muslim consumers, who want massive amounts of cheap meat. It is after all, this excessive demand for meat that allows Muslims to buy pork-injected chicken without checking where it is from or at whose hands it has been processed. Although, as Mr. Khawaja points out, three million chickens are slaughtered in the UK for the halal market per week, and 'controlled immobilisation' is the only way to cater for this demand, we need to have an overhaul of the way we deal with halal meat in this country. We have reached crisis point, with the biggest irony of all in this debate being that 90% of all *dhabihah* in the UK is stunned anyway (due to both ignorance of the current exemption on the part of slaughter men and the chance of making a tidy profit) and the only way we can break this system down is through education of the masses and drastically downsizing our appetite for meat. This, and support for organic and fair trade foods will not only put the halal back onto our plates, but also the *tayyib*.

I believe we need a united front against stunning or else we will lose not only the halal and the *tayyib*, but our voice and our rights. There should be no shame in saying we cannot have an 'open-minded' attitude when it comes to stunning. Such an attitude, after all, conforms only to the convenience of those who have no idea what halal and kosher means, both spiritually and practically, to Muslims and Jews.

## Chickens & Stunning

### 1. Muslims (and Jews) are exempt from the legal requirement of stunning prior to slaughter.

The Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967 states:

(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, no bird to which this Act applies shall be slaughtered unless it is slaughtered instantaneously by means of decapitation or dislocation of the neck or some other method approved by the Ministers, or it is, by stunning effected by means of an instrument of a kind approved by them and in proper repair, instantaneously rendered insensible to pain until death supervenes.

(2) The foregoing subsection shall not apply to the slaughter, without the infliction of unnecessary suffering, of a bird

(a) by the Jewish method for the food of Jews anti by a Jew duly licensed for the purpose by the Rabbinical Commission referred to in Schedule 1 to the Slaughter of Animals Act 1958; or

(b) by the Muslim method for the food of Muslims by a Muslim.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has confirmed this fact in correspondence dated 5th Oct 1999 in the following words:

"I confirm that the law permits slaughter by the Jewish or the Islamic methods that is without stunning."

### 2. The act of stunning is not permissible within the Islamic parameters.

Hakimul Ummah Molana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi Sahib *rahmatullahi alaihi* issued a Fatwa on 17 Rabi al-Thani 1335 AH corresponding to January 1917 AD on the issue of stunning prior to slaughter. He has stated it to be a forbidden practice. (See *Imdaadul Fataawaa* vol. 3, p. 605606.) He concludes that if one regards stunning prior to slaughter to be better than the Islamic method, it is akin to Kufr!

Mufti Kifaayatullah Sahib *rahmatullahi alaihi* comments on captive bolt stunning as follows: "This practice conflicts with the Sunnah and Islamic teachings. There is the strong possibility of the animal being haraam. That is, if death becomes certain it is futile to cut its throat, and the animal will be haraam" (See *Kifaayatul Mufti*, vol. 8, p. 277.)

Maulana Mufti Nizaamuddin Sahib *rahmatullahi alaihi* has commented on the issue of stunning with electrical current or by the captive bolt method as follows: "This method is unnatural and more painful which the intellect prohibits. It is for this reason that the Fuqahaa and Ulamaa of the Ummah have considered it forbidden and makrooh to use this method of slaughter without being compelled to do so. They have deemed it to conflict with the spirit of Islam. (See *Fataawa Nizaamiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 409.)

Maulana Mufti Mahmoodul Hassan Gangohi Sahib *rahmatullahi alaihi* has described the practice of stunning using electrical current to be contradictory to the established Sunnah method *and Makroohi Tehrimi* (a sinful act). (See *Fataawaa Mahmoodiyyah* vol. 17, p. 247.)

Molana Mufti Abdurrahim Lajpuri Sahib has described the practice of stunning to control the animal using the captive bolt method as "severely makrooh". (See *Fataawa Rahimiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 95.)

(6) In the Safar 1410 AH (October 1989) issue of *Bayyinaat*, p. 28, the practice of stunning chickens using waterbath stunners has been described by Moulana Mufti Muhammad Shafiq 'Arifi Sahib as a cruel and Makrooh (forbidden) practice.



Molana Mufti Yusuf Ludhyanwi Sahib has written concerning the stunning of chickens. "This method of slaughter is incorrect. If there had been any relief for the animal in striking the head and Allah had preferred this method, then the Messenger of Allah himself would have taught this method. Those persons who have devised this method are essentially trying to prove themselves cleverer than the Messenger of Allah. If this method is prevalent in Pakistan or any other Muslim country, it should be stopped immediately." See 'Aap ki Masaail aUf un lea Hal', vol 4, p.205.)

Molana Ahmed Mirpuri comments on the issue of poultry stunning using electrical current as follows: "As far as slaughtering after administering a current is concerned, if the animal remains alive after the shock, we cannot deem it to be haraam because it is a live animal that has been slaughtered. Therefore, this animal will be halaal subject to fulfilling the remaining conditions of slaughter. However, if non-stunned meat is "available it should be afforded preference, because where there is an element of doubt or difference, it is better to exercise caution in any case." (See Fataawa Siraat iMustaqeem, p.498.)

**NOTE: In the interest of brevity only relevant quotes have been given. For full details please refer to the original sources.**

It can clearly be seen that stunning prior to slaughter is a forbidden practice within the Islamic parameters. Muslim scholars have comprehensively forbidden this inhumane practice deeming it to conflict with the Islamic teaching. Many scientific studies have also confirmed that the Islamic method is THE humane method and that stunning causes pain to the animal.

Professor Schultz and Dr. Hazim of the Hanover University, Germany, proved through an experiment using an Electro Encephalograph (BEG) and Electro Cardiogram (BCG) that Islamic Slaughter is THE humane method of slaughter and captive bolt stunning, practiced by the western method, causes severe pain to the animal. The EEG showed severe pain immediately after stunning and the hearts of the animals stunned by C.B.P. stopped beating earlier as compared to those of the animals slaughtered by the Islamic method resulting in the retention of more blood in the meat.

Dr Harold Hillman Mb BSc PbD, former Reader in Physiology, University of Surrey, Director of Unity Laboratory of Applied Neurobiology has refuted the wide spread assumption that the administration of an electric current causes instantaneous unconsciousness, so that animals feel no pain. He states:

- (1) " Electric stimulation of the skin with low voltages and currents causes a tingling sensation, while higher power causes pain and burns, due to action on the sensory nerve endings in the skin. Stimulation of motor nerves or of muscles directly with low voltages and currents causes muscles to contract, while higher powers causes spasm and paralysis. It is an everyday experience that, for example, a patient whose finger is anaesthetised locally to lance a whitlow can still flex it"

Continuing further on why electrical stunning is not believed to be painful, he states:

Firstly, the public, the slaughterers, the farmers, and the butchers, have not understood the division of the nervous system into sensory and motor systems. Secondly, animals and people subject to large currents, being paralyzed, cannot exhibit the obvious signs of pain - evasive and violent movements.

3) Professor Syyed QMM Kamoopuri PhD, Dar al-Salaam, states on the issue of stunning:

- ("In modern methods, mechanical or electrical techniques are used to produce a stunning effect in order to make the animal paralyzed. They argue that these new techniques are less painful and fearsome comparing to the Islamic slaughtering. But this is not true. The paralyzed animal feels terrible pain and experiences fear but cannot express it because it is motionless. This creates a wrong impression that the animal is not suffering when as a matter of fact it is."

In an address to approximately 300 to 400 specialists at the UFAW (Universities Federation Animal Welfare) given by Dr Abdul Majid Katme of the Muslim Doctors' Association. He states:

- (4) **Electrified Water Bath for Poultry Stunning** 'The birds are suspended on a 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) (Health et al 1983). 'One-third of the birds are killed 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.' (FAWC 1982). In this report, they emphasised, 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 FA we reported' a substantial number may still be sensitive to pain'. I would like to conclude this aspect of pain by quoting from the same poultry report of the FAWC. 'The physiology aspects of the stunning of poultry are not well understood and criteria for establishing insensitivity to pain, suitable for use in working conditions, may well be unreliable.'

**It cannot be guaranteed that the chicken will remain alive after stunning. The variations in sizes of the chickens and their individual resistance capacities mean that a blanket magnitude of current cannot be set. The health of each individual chicken will also influence its endurance capacity. Legislation does not specify any specific magnitude of current. However, if electric current is used it must be sufficient to induce immediate unconsciousness for all chickens and last until they die.**

In the correspondence from the MAFF dated 5th October 1999, it is stated:

When birds or animals are stunned, induction of unconsciousness must be immediate and must last until the bird or animal is dead. The legislation does not specify *minimum* or minimum currents to be used during electrical stunning.

This department has commissioned research on electrical stunning; this has confirmed that there is variation in the current received by each bird in constant voltage waterbath stunners. Because the non-statutory recommended currents for each species are intended to stun all birds, they are set at levels, which at 50 Hz (mains frequency), will result in some birds receiving current which is sufficient to cause death by cardiac arrest.

This may be addressed in various ways. Depending on the line speed, it may be possible to identify birds which have been killed in standard 50Hz waterbath stunners as when they leave the stunner they will be limp, whereas stunned birds will be rigid. It may also be possible to identify these birds during post-mortem examination. Either way, this could allow these carcasses to be identified and removed from the line.

Application of current at higher frequencies is not associated with cardiac arrest and many poultry slaughterhouses now use high frequency stunning equipment. Alternatively, constant current stunning equipment may be used to ensure that each bird receives a predetermined current sufficient to stun but not to kill."

" It can be seen that constant voltage waterbath stunners are totally unreliable. The MAFF also do not contend categorical identification of birds that have been killed as a result of stunning. Instead, they have used the words: 'it may be possible'. Similarly, they have not asserted that stunning current at higher frequencies will **NOT** kill the animal. Instead, they have used the words 'is **not associated** with cardiac arrest'. Finally, the assertion that 'constant current stunning equipment may be used to ensure that each bird receives a predetermined current sufficient to stun but not to kill is very questionable. The individual endurance capacities and state of health of the various sizes of chickens renders it impossible to set a minimum rate, as the minimum magnitude of current required to only stun the healthier and more enduring birds may be enough to kill the less healthier and less enduring chickens. Furthermore, all this is in addition to the fact that stunning is not permissible within the Islamic parameters due to the unnecessary pain it inflicts upon the animal.

Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt

---

## The Islamic Viewpoint on Stunning Animals Prior to Consumption

In the aforementioned scenario the Islamic viewpoint is and has always been that it is not permissible to stun an animal, as it is a cause of greater grief and pain for the animal and against the animal right's principles of Islam. Furthermore, if the animal were to die as a result of stunning then its consumption for a Muslim will also be haram (impermissible). Statistically speaking, it is highly unlikely for the animal to escape death, particularly the smaller species.

Thus, as a leading Islamic institute in Britain we support this cause of exemption for stunning headed by UK Halal Corporation on behalf of Muslims in Britain and hope it would be resolved in the preferred manner.

Department of Islamic Jurisprudence

Darul Uloom al-Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah  
Bury, UK

---

### Question :

**What is the ruling of the Ulama with chicken slaughtered by Muslims but were stunned (given mild electric shock to weaken the chicken) before slaughtering?**

### Answer :

Praise be to Allah,

It is prohibited to stun the animals by stroking or using electricity for these kinds of stunning hurt the animal and the interdicts us from torturing or hurting animals and on the contrary ordered us to be (Him Peace be upon) Prophet Imam Ahmad narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that .kind and benevolent with them especially at slaughtering while they were aiming at a (the supporters) Ansar -om Al passed by a group fr (Peace be upon Him) the Prophet . "t make an aim from an alive creature 'Don" :The Prophet said .pigeon

Ommar had passed by some youth from Koraish while they were aiming at a -Gobair narrated that Ibn-Saeed Ibn -When the youth saw Ibn .their missed shoots they gave the owner of the bird the arrows bird and in return for Peace )The prophet .Who did that? Allah curses the one who did that" :Ommar said-Ommar, they ran away so Ibn 3619 Narrated by Muslim # . "an aim curses any one who takes an alive creature as (be upon Him

Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with them, that the -Gaber Ibn-Imam Muslim narrated on the authority of Ibn (3620 .No) "forbids us from leaving animals tied without food or drinks until death " Prophet

Peace be )I have kept in heart two points from our Prophet " :Aws said-ted that Shadad Ibn Also, Imam Muslim narra When killing enemies, kill properly, and when slaughtering .Allah orders us to refine every thing we do .(upon Him slaughtering must sharpen his blade to comfort his slaughtered So the one in charge of .animals slaughter properly .animal

.There are many other evidences that prove the importance of being kind and benevolent with animals

ts the animal and Allah forbids us In short, it is unlawful to stun the animal before slaughtering because stunning hurt from doing that except in necessary when the animal is out of control at slaughtering and it is difficult to catch it so to be eaten if it is it is then lawful to resort to partial stunning to control the animal and in turn it would be lawful .slaughtered alive

t lead to death of the animal for if that happened it would be unlawful to 'This stunning is permitted only if it doesn't :be eaten as Allah the Almighty said in His Holy Book

t, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the dead me:are (for food)Forbidden to you " name of other that Allah, that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a head long fall, or by in due )ld animal, unless ye are able to slaughter it eaten by a wi (partly)being gored to death, that which hath been that :by raffling with arrow (of meat)also is the division (forbidden) ;(altars) enots no decifircas si hcihw taht , (from (3Maidah # -Al) ".is impiety

.His Messenger Mohammed and his companions And Allah knows best, and Peace & Blessing be upon

**Islam Q&A**  
**Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid**

---

## **The Serious Welfare Problems of Electrical Stunning for Poultry and the Case for Gas Killing as a Means for More Humane Slaughter**

The practice of electrically stunning poultry, which is standard in slaughterhouses across North America <sup>1</sup>, results in both poor welfare and carcass degradation. In terms of welfare, the many variables and frequent process failures associated with electrical stunning methods make it difficult to ensure adequate stunning and result in pain and suffering for birds who experience prestun shocks, have their necks sliced open, and are dipped in scalding hot water, often while still fully conscious. Furthermore, the uncrating, shackling, and conveying of live birds, which always precedes electrical stunning, has been shown to cause severe stress and leads to a decrease in meat quality. On the other hand, the gas killing of poultry using a mixture of 90 percent argon in air with less than <sup>2</sup> percent residual oxygen, while not perfect, helps to significantly alleviate many of these animal welfare and carcass-quality issues and should be adopted by producers.

### ***Animal Welfare Concerns of Electrical Stunning***

Serious animal welfare problems that arise with electrical stunning of poultry are painfully evident before stunning even takes place. In order to facilitate the process, birds must first endure a stressful procedure called “shackling,” in which they are hung upside-down by the legs on a line of shackles moving so fast that it is impossible to handle the birds humanely. Leg deformities and other injuries typical of large broilers may exacerbate the pain as their sensitive periosteal areas are pinched by the metal shackles. In one survey, researchers examined broilers and found that <sup>3</sup> percent had broken bones and 4.5 percent had dislocations when examined after shackling. Another study looked at hens before and after shackling and found that there was a 44 percent increase in newly broken bones immediately following shackling. Recent analyses published in *Animal Welfare* and *World’s Poultry Science Journal* concluded that shackling can be both a physiologically and psychologically painful experience. <sup>4</sup>It is only after enduring these stresses that the birds are electrically stunned.

“Humane slaughter,” as defined by law for most species in many developed countries, requires that animals be rendered unconscious, thus insensible to pain, prior to slaughter. For any claims of humane slaughter to be made, it is critical that this be accomplished without exception and with minimal stress afforded to the animals involved. With electrical stunning for poultry, however, this is almost impossible because of the great variation among individuals that determines the effectiveness of the electrical settings. In other words, each bird will have a different weight, fat content, age, number of feathers, level of cleanliness, brain resistance, and leg size (which determines shackle-to-leg contact)—all of which influence the effectiveness of an electrical stun and thus make it nearly impossible to ensure proper stunning unless the settings are changed to accommodate each bird. “The high occurrence of improper stuns is testimony to the difficulty of controlling all these variables” and as a result, “under many commercial conditions in poultry slaughterhouses, we have little reason to believe that proper electrical stunning is achievable consistently.”<sup>5</sup> This was confirmed in a Farm Animal Welfare Council report to the British minister of agriculture, which surveyed facilities in the United Kingdom and found that one-third of chickens were improperly stunned and not rendered insensible to pain during electrical stunning.<sup>6</sup>

Although it has been argued that settings in excess of 120mA may induce unconsciousness <sup>7</sup> in chickens if applied properly, others have called this theory into question. The most profound indication of insensibility to pain is an isoelectric (flat) EEG pattern. Electrical stunning, however, does not immediately produce such a pattern. It has been hypothesized that the epileptiform brain activity that it does induce is akin to a human *grand mal* epileptic

seizure wherein the subject is unconscious. And while this argument may be appropriate for sheep and pigs, who display the high-frequency polyspike activity found in *grand mal* seizures after being electrically stunned, it is markedly different for chickens. In fact, in 90 percent of chickens, electrical stunning produces low-frequency polyspike activity that is “associated with *petit mal* epilepsy in humans and is not necessarily associated with unconsciousness.” Higher voltage settings do not remedy the problem by causing higher frequency polyspike activity, implying that regardless of the electrical settings, chickens may not be rendered unconscious as a result of the stunning.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, research presented at a recent symposium on the humane slaughter of farm animals suggests that birds may still be able to experience pain after electrical stunning but are not able to display a pain reflex because of temporary paralysis.<sup>9</sup> A study authored by four British poultry slaughter supervisors concluded that electrical stunning is fraught with problems and acknowledged that “electrical paralysis may occur under certain conditions in man and other animals, during which pain can be perceived but reaction to it is impossible.”<sup>10</sup> And several researchers have presented evidence that even the shock, which is supposed to render the animal immediately and painlessly unconscious, is, in fact, intensely painful.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the efficacy problems of electrical stunning in general, the system is also prone to frequent failure. Prestun shocks are both painful and common, occurring, for example, when a bird’s wing comes in contact with the stun bath<sup>12</sup> before the head. Testimony from the recent “McLibel” lawsuit revealed that, according to Dr. Neville Gregory, up to 13.5 percent of broilers at one particular slaughterhouse were being shocked before fully entering the stun bath. Chief Justice Bell, who presided over the case, concluded that the pre-stun shocks were indeed cruel.<sup>13</sup> Other birds are able to avoid the stun bath altogether by lifting their heads and thus having their throats slit by a mechanical blade while fully conscious. Some are even able to avoid this blade, again by lifting their heads or via guide rail failure. Recent research examining the use of electrical stunning for poultry verifies that “birds do dodge the knives, some completely, some partially, because they are not fully stunned.”<sup>14</sup> Another leading poultry scientist wrote that “problems associated with inefficient neck cutting [are] only too common in poultry processing plants.”<sup>15</sup> The “McLibel” lawsuit highlighted the numerous occasions where broilers were still fully conscious during neck-cutting.<sup>16</sup> For example, Chief Justice Bell estimated that, based on the evidence presented during the trial, more than two birds per minute in the U.S. were fully conscious as their throats were cut.<sup>17</sup> Dr. Gomez Gonzales, a meat-management technician for the McDonald’s Corporation, also testified that between 1 and 2 percent of chickens miss the stun bath in their U.S. slaughterhouses.<sup>18</sup> Applied to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics for 2000, this means that up to 165 million broilers miss the stun bath altogether and have their throats cut while still fully conscious every year.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the manual killer positioned between the mechanical blade and the scalding tank, with such fast-moving lines, often two rows deep, it is impossible to ensure that every bird is dead, let alone unconscious, before entering the scalding tank. Additionally, the more time that elapses after the point of the initial stun (for those who did not avoid the stun bath), the closer the birds are to full recovery. Thus, those who avoid the mechanical blade have an increased probability of being conscious when they reach the manual killer or, in the event that they are missed by the manual killer as well, as they enter the scalding tank. The previously mentioned study, whose authors were veterinary surgeons with experience supervising poultry slaughter, determined that sentient birds are indeed sometimes scalded.<sup>20</sup> Another survey looking at various chicken processing plants in Australia also concluded that some birds are “not killed before they reach the scald tank.”<sup>21</sup> And two additional studies concluded that “red-skin chicken carcasses,” a common occurrence during electrical stunning, is due to a physiological response to heat when live birds enter a scalding tank.<sup>22</sup>

The tendency for improper electrical stunning is even more pronounced in the United States, where, despite an abundance of evidence to the contrary,<sup>23</sup> most producers believe that high electrical settings lead to carcass downgrading<sup>24</sup> and, as a result, keep settings too low (significantly lower than the 120mA used in many facilities in the United Kingdom) to achieve anything more than temporary paralysis.<sup>25</sup> And since U.S. laws inexplicably do not provide humane slaughter for poultry and thus do not require that birds be rendered insensible to pain prior to slaughter,<sup>26</sup> producers often compromise animal welfare for supposed gains in carcass quality. A metastudy of electrical stunning methods verifies that in North America, “the development and application of [electrical] poultry stunning had more to do with facilitating processing than with humane slaughter.” This is confirmed through documentation indicating that typical North American settings may be as low as 12.5 mA.<sup>27</sup> Such low electrical settings have particularly dangerous consequences for birds who are paralyzed yet still sensible after passing through the stun bath or who miss the mechanical blade and fully recover by the time they are manually cut or scalded.

### ***Gas Killing Offers a More Humane Alternative to Electrical Stunning***

Clearly, electrical stunning methods result in severe welfare problems for billions of birds each year in the U.S.

alone. Gas killing, using a mixture of 90 percent argon in air with less than 2 percent residual oxygen, has proved to be far more humane and less likely to cause carcass degradation—two convincing reasons why producers should immediately adopt such systems. The welfare improvements from making such a switch would be vast, including the elimination of uncrating, live shackling, prestun shocks, and being cut or scalded while still conscious because of improper stunning. A recent study examining gas killing states that “there is no doubt that [the gassing] of poultry would eliminate some of the welfare concerns associated with the slaughter of poultry.”<sup>28</sup> Such methods allow for the stunning of birds while still in their transport crates, greatly reducing the stress of unloading. It would also “eliminate the preslaughter handling stress associated with uncrating and shackling the live birds before they are stunned electrically.”<sup>29</sup> Under the gas killing model, birds are taken directly from the transport vehicles in their containers and gassed *before* being shackled.

In fact, after visiting a poultry slaughterhouse that employed a gas killing system, a leading poultry-welfare scientist was compelled to write: “In my opinion, this is the most stress-free, humane method of killing poultry ever developed. The birds are quiet throughout the operation. They remain in the transport crate until dead and the killing procedure itself is fast, painless, and efficient. There is no risk of recovery from unconsciousness.”<sup>30</sup> Other leaders in animal welfare who endorse gas stunning include the late Ruth Harrison of the Farm Animal Welfare Council; Professor John Webster, dean of veterinary medicine at Bristol University; James Phillips, chief veterinary officer of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA); and Dr. Martin Potter, head of the Farm Animals Department of the RSPCA.<sup>31</sup>

### ***The Most Humane Mixture Is 90 Percent Argon in Air With Less Than 2 Percent Residual Oxygen***

Research has shown that the use of 90 percent argon in air with less than 2 percent residual oxygen is the most humane and least aversive gas mixture for killing poultry. A study comparing different types of mixtures found that the argon mixture is “acceptable on humanitarian grounds” and that “chickens can ideally be killed in batches by inducing anoxia ... with 90 percent argon ... in air.”<sup>32</sup> While carbon dioxide has been shown to be highly aversive to humans<sup>33</sup> and birds when inhaled, argon is an inert gas and is not readily detected, thus can be used to create a non-aversive atmosphere where birds die painlessly. In one study, researchers observed that 100 percent of hens tested entered a feeding chamber filled with 90 percent argon voluntarily and were killed by the gas, while fewer than half even set foot into a chamber containing carbon dioxide.<sup>34</sup> Other research looking into poultry gassing, particularly for turkeys, found that “because argon is an inert gas with no taste or odour, most of the turkeys did not detect its presence, and they didn’t show any signs of respiratory discomfort before they lost consciousness,” whereas others displayed discomfort via head shaking and gasping with a mixture containing carbon dioxide.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, the use of an anoxia-inducing mixture of 90 percent argon in air with less than 2 percent residual oxygen results in great welfare improvements over other methods of killing or stunning poultry, including reduced stress during unloading, shackling and stunning, and a reduced risk of prestun shocks and being conscious during neck-cutting and scalding. The residual oxygen level, however, must be carefully maintained at less than 2 percent to ensure rapid brain function loss, as several researchers have found that trapped air between birds or crates can raise the residual oxygen to levels that can prevent proper stunning. Also, in order to ensure that recovery to consciousness does not occur, it is crucial that the birds be killed by the gas before being shackled. Studies examining the batch stunning of chickens using various gas concentrations found that many birds rapidly regained consciousness, suggesting that gas stunning may be unsuitable on welfare grounds. Researchers have recommended that “birds should be killed rather than stunned by the stunning gases” and that this “will not only obviate the recovery of consciousness, but subsequent operations such as uncrating and shackling of the birds and neck cutting would be performed more easily on the dead and hence relaxed carcasses.”<sup>36</sup> In order to improve upon the deficiencies of electrical stunning, the use of gas methods must kill the birds, rather than merely stun, thus reducing the likelihood of regaining consciousness during slaughter.

### ***Carcass-Quality Improvements From the Gas Killing of Poultry***

In addition to the welfare benefits, gas killing provides producers with improved carcass quality when compared to electrical stunning; the latter of which is “frequently criticised on both bird welfare and meat quality grounds.”<sup>37</sup> Researchers at the University of Bristol looked at carcasses of gas-stunned vs. electrically stunned broilers and concluded that incidence of broken bones and breast muscle hemorrhaging would be “substantially reduced by gas killing of broilers.”<sup>38</sup> In addition, the study found that gassing also results in a more rapid pH fall after the killing than with electrical stunning, thus enabling early filleting. A study published in the *Veterinary Record* also compared carcasses from the two stunning methods and stated that “the advantages of gaseous stunning include improved meat quality, fewer broken bones and less muscle haemorrhaging.”<sup>39</sup> The authors also looked into the concern that gas-stunned birds do not have as good a bleed-out rate than electrically stunned birds and found that after one minute, the differences were “not sufficient to impede the bleeding efficiency of broilers.”<sup>40</sup> Another study at the

University of Bristol in the U.K. found that “gaseous stunning of broilers produced relatively better quality carcasses and meat than electrical stunning and therefore may have commercial advantages.”<sup>41</sup> More specifically, gas-stunned broilers showed lower incidence of broken bones and breast and leg muscle bruising. The authors suggested that the increased leg bruising from electrical stunning was a direct result of shackling live birds.

Yet another reason that gas killing improves carcass quality results from the tendency of a chicken to inhale water during the initial spasm from being electrically shocked. A recent study examined this by including a radioisotope in the stun bath and then looking at carcasses to determine whether or not internal radioactivity was detected. The results clearly showed that “chickens can and do inhale water during electrical stunning in a waterbath and that no remedy is available at the moment.”<sup>42</sup> The authors suggest that the respiratory tract could thus be contaminated with bacteria from the stun bath and leak onto the edible portions of the carcass during evisceration.

## Conclusion

It is all too clear that electrical stunning methods do not result in humane deaths for chickens. During this process, chickens endure the stresses of uncrating, are painfully hung upside down on shackles, and often receive painful prestun shocks. Many have their necks cut while still fully conscious, and some are even scalded alive. Gas killing methods, using a mixture of 90 percent argon in air with less than 2 percent residual oxygen, significantly help alleviate these welfare problems while, at the same time, improving carcass quality for the producer. There are several such systems currently available for commercial use and a number of large-scale systems have already been implemented in the United Kingdom with great success.

Please direct any questions or comments regarding this report to Cem Akin email [CemA@peta-online.org](mailto:CemA@peta-online.org).

- 1 F. Boyd, “Humane Slaughter of Poultry: The Case Against the Use of Electrical Stunning Devices,” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 7 (1994): 221-236.
- 2 N.G. Gregory, and L.J. Wilkins, “Duration of Wing Flapping in Chickens Shackled Before Slaughter,” *Veterinary Record*, 121 (1989): 567-569.
- 3 N.G. Gregory, and L.J. Wilkins, “Broken Bones in Chickens: Effects of Stunning and Processing in Broilers,” *British Poultry Science*, 31 (1990): 53-58.
- 4 J.M. Sparrey, and P.J. Kettlewell, “Shackling of Poultry: Is It a Welfare Problem?” *World’s Poultry Science Journal*, 50 (1994): 167-176.
- 5 M.J. Gentle, and V.L. Tilson, “Nociceptors in the Legs of Poultry: Implications for Potential Pain in Pre-Slaughter Shackling,” *Animal Welfare*, 9 (1999): 227-236.
- 6 F. Boyd, p. 227.
- 7 G.B.S. Heath, “The Slaughter of Broiler Chickens,” *World’s Poultry Science Journal*, 40 (1984): 151-159.
- 8 F. Boyd, p. 224.
- 9 N.G. Gregory, “The Physiology of Electrical Stunning and Slaughter,” in UFAW, *Humane Slaughter of Animals for Food Symposium*, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, England, 1986.
- 10 N.G. Gregory, and S.B. Wotton, “Poultry Stunning and Slaughter,” in European Conference Group on the Protection of Animals, *Pre-slaughter Stunning of Food Animals*, Horsham, Sussex, England, 1987.
- 11 N.G. Gregory, 1986.
- 12 S. Richards, and A.H. Sykes, *Research in Veterinary Science*, 8 (1967): 361. [Reference taken from G.B.S. Heath, D.J. Watt, P.R. Waite, and J.M. Ormond, “Observations on Poultry Slaughter,” *Veterinary Record*, 108 (1981): 98.]
- 13 A.M. Katme, “An Up-to-Date Assessment of the Moslem Method of Slaughter,” and L.M. Gerlis, “An Up-to-Date Assessment of the Jewish Method of Slaughter,” both in UFAW, *Humane Slaughter of Animals for Food Symposium*, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, England, 1986.
- 14 Compassion in World Farming, “Animal Welfare Problems in UK Slaughterhouses,” Jun. (2000): Section 3.2.3.
- 15 D.J. Wolfson, 1999, “McLibel,” *Animal Law*, 5, No. 1 (1999), 44.
- 16 F. Boyd, p. 226.
- 17 N.G. Gregory, “Humane Slaughter,” *Outlook on Agriculture*, 2 (1991): 95-101.
- 18 Full McLibel transcripts available at [www.mcspotlight.org](http://www.mcspotlight.org).
- 19 Ibid, p. 31.
- 20 Ibid, p. 30.
- 21 According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NASS Document Pou 3-1(01), 8,262,630,000 broilers were produced in 2000. Two percent of this figure yields 165,252,600.
- 22 G.B.S. Heath, D.J. Watt, P.R. Waite, and J.M. Ormond, “Observations on Poultry Slaughter,” *Veterinary Record*, 108 (1981): 98.
- 23 G.L. Griffiths, and D.A. Purcell, “A Survey of Slaughter Procedures Used in Chicken Processing Plants,” *Australian Veterinary Journal*, 61 (1984): 401.
- 24 G.B.S. Heath, D.J. Watt, P.R. Waite, and P.A. Meakins, *British Veterinary Journal*, 139 (1983): 285.
- 25 G.L. Griffiths, and D.A. Purcell, “The Occurrence of Red-Skin Chicken Carcasses,” *British Veterinary Journal*, 141 (1984): 312-314.
- 26 G.L. Griffiths, M. McGrath, A. Softly, and C. Jones, “Blood Content of Broiler Chicken Carcasses Prepared by Different Slaughter Methods,” *Veterinary Record*, 117 (1985): 382-385.
- 27 F. Boyd.
- 28 Documentation taken from: Karen Davis, *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* (Summertown, Tenn.: Book Publishing Company, 1996), p. 167. Refers to: Wayne Austin, Simmons Engineering Company, letter to Clare Druce, 1 Feb. 1994, re: stunning and killing technology used in North America. “The typical amperage used in stunning by our pulsating direct current pre-stunner is approximately 12 to 15 mA. ... In our shortest pre-stunner, there would be 16 birds in contact; in our longest pre-stunner, there would be 24 birds in contact. If the reading is 200 mA, with 16 birds in contact, there would be an average of 12.5 mA per bird.” Also in Davis, p. 167, according to Kuenzel, “Stunner voltage should be 24-35 volts. Each individual bird receives 15mA” (personal interview, 7 Oct. 1993).
- 29 F. Boyd, p. 221.
- 30 See footnote 24.
- 31 A.B.M. Raj, “Aversive Reactions of Turkeys to Argon, Carbon Dioxide and a Mixture of Carbon Dioxide and Argon,” *Veterinary Record*, 138 (1996): 592.
- 32 A.B.M. Raj, “An Investigation Into the Batch Killing of Turkeys in Their Transport Containers Using Gases,” *Research in Veterinary Science*, 56 (1994): 325.
- 33 I.J.H. Duncan, “Killing Methods for Poultry: A Report on the Use of Gas in the U.K. to Render Birds Unconscious Prior to Slaughter,” (Ontario: Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare, 1997), p. 9.

- 31 *Ibid*, p. 10.
- 32 A.B.M. Raj, 1994.
- 33 N.G. Gregory, A.B. Mohan Raj, A.R.S. Audsley, and C.C. Daly, "Effects of Carbon Dioxide on Man," in "The Use of Carbon Dioxide for the Stunning of Slaughter Pigs," *Fleischwirtschaft* 70 (1990): 1173-4.
- 34 A.B.M. Raj, 1994.
- 35 A.B.M. Raj, 1996.
- 36 A.B.M. Raj, and N.G. Gregory, "Investigations Into the Batch Stunning/Killing of Chickens Using Carbon Dioxide or Argon-Induced Hypoxia," *Research in Veterinary Science*, 49 (1990): 366.
- 37 A.B.M. Raj, L.J. Wilkins, R.I. Richardson, S.P. Johnson, and S.B. Wotton, "Carcass and Meat Quality in Broilers Either Killed With a Gas Mixture or Stunned With an Electric Current Under Commercial Conditions," *British Poultry Science* (in press), (1997): p. 169.
- 38 *Ibid*, p. 173.
- 39 A.B.M. Raj, and N.G. Gregory, "Efficiency of Bleeding of Broilers After Gaseous or Electrical Stunning," *Veterinary Record*, 128 (1991): 127.
- 40 *Ibid*, p. 128.
- 41 A.B.M. Raj, T.C. Grey, and N.C. Gregory, "Effect of Electrical and Gaseous Stunning on the Carcass and Meat Quality of Broilers," *British Poultry Science*, 31 (1990): 725.
- 42 N.G. Gregory, and P.E. Whittington, "Inhalation of Water During Electrical Stunning in Chickens," *Research in Veterinary Science*, 53 (1992): 362.
-