

The Fiqh Council of North America

February 15, 2006

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf
ISNA Canada
Toronto, Canada

Dear brother Dr. Ashraf:

Assalam 'alaikum wa rahmatullah.

I received your question about the permissibility of machine slaughtering of poultry according to Fiqh. My answer is as follows:

For the slaughter of the animals there are two main requirements according to the Shari'ah: 1. Tasmiyah, 2. Tazkiyah.

1. Tasmiyah is mentioning the name of Allah at the time of slaughter. If a person is slaughtering a few animals, he should pronounce Basmalah at the slaughter of every animal. If he is slaughtering a large number of animals, he should begin his work with Basmalah and keep repeating it as much as he can; but he does not need to recite it at every single slaughter.
2. Tazkiyah is purification of the animal from the flowing blood. This is done for most of the animals by slitting the throat up to the two arteries but without cutting the whole neck. The brain stem of the animal should remain connected to the body because this helps in pushing the blood quickly from the body.

If these two procedures are followed, whether by cutting by human hands or by some mechanical method, the slaughter is Halal and is called proper Dhabihah. With the more advanced technology, I believe that mechanical method as used for the slaughter of animals is more precise, fast, hygienic and less painful for the animals.

It came to my attention that during machine slaughter sometimes birds are passed through the circular knife without being properly slaughtered. Some people have said that this may occur 10-15% of times. In this situation, there must be good human supervision and any bird that is not adequately slaughtered should be slaughtered by hand.

Wallah a'lam.

Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi
Chairman, Fiqh Council of North
America