

Animal Welfare During Religious Slaughter

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Animal Welfare

“The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often even more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are.”

**--Niccolo Machiavelli,
Italian philosopher, humanist and writer**

Introduction

- **The slaughter of animals for human consumption has been practiced since the beginning of animal domestication dating back to prehistoric times.**

Introduction

- **Killing animals, the most brutal act in the relationship between human beings and domestic animals, is an inevitable stage in food production.**

Introduction

- **Recognition that animals are sentient, i.e., capable of feeling and suffering, has led humans to work to minimize their suffering during all stages of life, including slaughter.**

Today We Will Discuss

- **Animal welfare and religion**
- **Protocols and procedures of religious slaughter**
- **OIE and animal welfare**
- **Recommendations to improve slaughter**
- **Recommendations to improve scientific research**

Religious Slaughter

- **Jews and Muslims have dietary laws that guide them in the preparation of food they eat.**
- **The term Kosher for Jews and Halal for Muslims.**

Religious Slaughter

- **The most important component of these laws is the question of how an animal is treated and specifically, killed for food.**
- **Both religions have generally used a knife to cut across the neck to bring on unconsciousness and eventually death.**

Animal Welfare is Deeply Rooted in the Religion

- **5000 years ago Judaism had a set of rules with regards to the well being of animals.**
- **1400 years ago Islam required kindness to all animals and cruelty to them was frowned upon.**

Animal Welfare is Deeply Rooted in Judaism

- **A mother and her off-springs may not be killed on the same day.**
- **Domesticated animals must be fed before a person sits down to eat.**
- **Domestic animals must be fed even when humans are fasting.**

Animal Welfare is Deeply Rooted in Islam

- *As the legend goes: A thirsty man went to a well and quenched his thirst. He saw a dog panting with thirst and he gave water to the dog.*
- *Prophet Muhammad said, 'There is a reward in doing good to every living being.'*

Animal Welfare is Deeply Rooted in Islam

- **Nestling birds should not be separated from their mothers.**
- **It is forbidden to mutilate an animal by cutting its ears or tail.**
- **A sick animal should be treated properly.**

Animal Welfare is Deeply Rooted in Islam

- **Islam requires that pets and farm animals be provided food, water and shelter.**
- **An animal should not be beaten or tortured.**
- **Animals or birds should not be used as shooting targets.**

Animal Welfare and Industrial Development

- Animal welfare might have suffered with industrialized farming.
- Leading to the animal rights movement that began with the publication of Peter Singer's book, *Animal Liberation*, in 1975.

Kosher Slaughter:

Basic Requirements

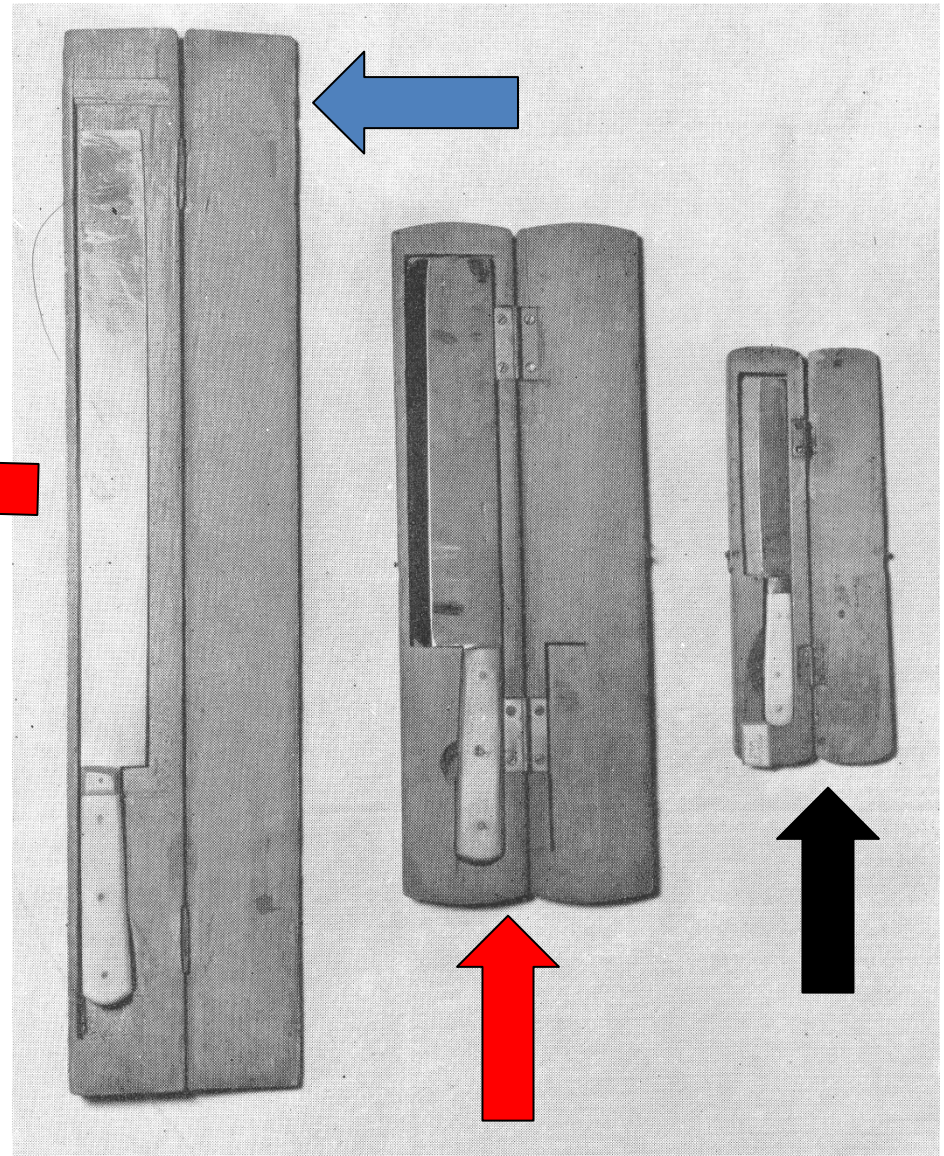
- **Only a trained and certified slaughter man with both religious and practical training may slaughter an animal.**
- **A special slaughter knife must be used that:**
 - **Has a straight blade**
 - **Is at least twice the size of the animal's neck**
 - **Is extremely sharp**
 - **Is checked for nicks and sharpness after each use**

Knives of Various Sizes

- Beef ←

- Sheep/Goat/Veal ←

- Chicken ←



Kosher Slaughter: Basic Requirements

- **The jugular veins, the carotid arteries, and the windpipe must be cut using a horizontal cut across the neck.**
- **Need to cut the animal at the proper point along the neck.**

Kosher Slaughter: Prohibitions

No pausing [continuous strokes]

No burrowing

No Deviating from exact place of cut

No tearing before the cut

Halal Slaughter:

Basic Requirements

- **Animals must be of a halal species.**
- **Must be slaughtered by a Muslim.**
- **A very sharp knife must be used.**
- **God's name must be invoked.**
- **Cut must be on the front of the neck to sever all passages.**
- **The blood must be completely removed.**

Halal Slaughter:

Prohibitions

- To slaughter an animal using a blunt knife.
- To sharpen a knife in front of the animal.
- To drag the animal to the place of slaughter.
- To skin a slaughtered animal before it is dead.
- To slaughter an animal in front of another animal.
- To separate the head from the body during slaughter.

OIE and Animal Welfare

- **The 1994 OIE publication, ‘Animal Welfare and Veterinary Services’ provided a valuable overview of international animal welfare issues.**

[From: **Animal welfare: global issues, trends and challenges**
OIE Scientific and Technical Review:

Co-ordinator and Editors: A.C.D. Bayvel, A. Gavinelli & A.
Rahman
Volume **24** (2), August 2005]

OIE and Animal Welfare

- **The overall objectives of the publication is to communicate the OIE's world-wide leadership on animal welfare and explain that animal welfare is a complex, multi-faceted international policy issue, with important scientific, ethical, economic, cultural, social, religious and regional dimensions.**

OIE and Animal Welfare

- The **science-based** standards will be developed on an incremental basis as scientific information becomes available.

OIE and Animal Welfare

- **My work with OIE started in November 2003 as part of a team of scientists tasked with developing guidelines for the Slaughter of Animals for Human Consumption.**
- **These guidelines were adopted in May 2005.**
- **The guidelines include acceptable variations in restraining, stunning and bleeding the animals.**

OIE and Animal Welfare

- **OIE document provides specific guidelines for slaughter of animals for halal, kosher, and for certain other groups.**
- **It allows for a horizontal cut on the neck without prior stunning the animal.**

Religious Slaughter

- Religious slaughter when done right has been, historically, a humane method of killing animals.
- Some cattle were held so loosely by the head-holder and the rear pusher gate that they could easily have pulled away from the rabbi's knife. I was relieved and surprised to discover that the animals don't even feel the super-sharp blade as it touches their skin. They made no attempt to pull away. I felt peaceful and calm."
(Regenstein and Grandin 1992)

Religious Slaughter

- On the flip side, not all religious slaughter practices meet the animal welfare guidelines. Certain practices may need to be banned, e.g.,
- Shackling and hoisting,
- Upside down holding pens

Changing Landscape of Animal Welfare

- **NZ: Proposed ban on un-stunned religious slaughter .**
- **EU: Attempt to force labeling for religious slaughter.**
- **Attempt by Australia to force stunning of Australian cattle on Indonesia.**
- **Holland banning un-stunned slaughter.**

Changing Landscape of Animal Welfare

- **Industry groups adopt animal welfare guidelines (AMI, FMI, NCCR)**
- **Companies become more sensitive to animal welfare and create supply chain guidelines (Whole Foods, McDonalds')**

Religious Slaughter has three components

- 1. The Religious Laws**
- 2. The People**
- 3. The equipment**

OIE can influence all three components if it can involve religious organizations to support the implementation of the OIE Animal Welfare Standards.

Religious Slaughter has three components

- 1. The Religious Laws: In every religion there are core requirements and secondary requirements, which are negotiable; e.g. for halal slaughter non-lethal stunning is acceptable by many countries and most organizations. Other requirements can be studied together. But one must respect the desire by those who want to adhere to slaughter without stunning.**

Religious Slaughter has three components

1. The Religious Laws

2. The People

Proper training of all workers, both knowledge workers and field workers is important in understanding animal welfare. Kosher slaughter men get full training in practical work but halal slaughter men only get on the job training.

Religious Slaughter has three components

1. The Religious Laws
2. The People
3. The equipment

Some thing as simple as knife for halal (even for kosher) can be standardized to proper size, shape and sharpness.

Same can be true about restraining equipment.

Religion and Science Must Come Together

To meet the dietary needs of the Global Jewish and Muslim communities what must happen:

- **Real science based research is needed to evaluate all slaughter systems. Poorly designed experiments do more harm than good in bringing all stake holders to the table.**
- **The animal welfare of religious slaughter needs to be improved consistent with and respectful of all religious and cultural requirements.**

Religion and Science Must Come Together

To meet the dietary needs of the Global Jewish and Muslim communities what must happen:

- The experiments can be conducted in the field with real time data to be more objective and scientific.**
- The religious community needs to take on this responsibility with help from the scientific community that has their best interests in mind.**

Religion and Science Must Come Together

- **Scientists and the religious workers must not lose objectivity in their work and not get influenced by political rhetoric or hate mongering.**

Religion and Science Must Come Together

- **Not all stunned slaughter is good and not all un-stunned slaughter is bad. Some religious slaughter houses perform at zero tolerances, whereas 5% failure in mechanical stunning is acceptable.**
- **Hence a need for standardized research methodology.**

Religion and Science Must Come Together

- Perception that hitting is better animal welfare than slitting must be scientifically tested and proven, to be true or false.
- I observed a loud, bellowing steer turned up side down, become totally silent, with the first stroke of knife, as the blood gushed out. [experiment]

Religion and Science Must Come Together

- **The assumption that all un-stunned slaughter is the same so that all research data from all forms of religious slaughter, e.g., shackle and hoist; shackle, hoist and cast; upright slaughter pen; rotating slaughter pen; high speed V restrainers; and high speed double rail system can all be combined.**
- **Can such assumptions lead to equitable scientific conclusions?**

More Research Needed

- **To determine what constitutes a good cut**
- **Redesign knife to meet best slaughter practices.**
- **Develop correlation between cut and pain.
Develop correlation between stun and pain.**
- **Research time to collapse parameters.**
- **Develop understanding of tolerance of failure.**

Recommendations

- **Make animal welfare guidelines truly science based.**
- **Be sensitive to cultural and religious factors.**
- **Take into consideration economic factors.**
- **Help member countries to enact and enforce culturally appropriate animal welfare regulations.**

Recommendations

- **Work with individual member countries to identify animal welfare issues and help them resolve them consistent with cultural expectations.**

Conclusions

- **Animal welfare and humane slaughter are at the core of religious slaughter. Good science will demonstrate that the most humane slaughter *may* well be religious slaughter.**
- **All research on the issue of religious slaughter (as opposed to evaluating a particular situation) needs to be done on a system that is representative of religious slaughter .**
- **Proper scientific techniques coupled with religious laws will enable proper assessment and recommendations of best practices in animal welfare.**

Conclusions

- **Conventional practices are guided by economic conditions.**
- **Food safety as well as animal welfare are important concerns that need to be addressed in less developed countries.**
- **Views about what is good animal welfare and how important it is, differs among various groups of people.**

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It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.

—Audre Lorde