

MEAT AND POULTRY SLAUGHTERED BY AHLUL-KITAB

By Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Question

Why does the animal have to be slaughtered by a Muslim? Can't we eat the meat of animals slaughtered by the people of the book (Jews and Christians)?

Answer

Allah Ta`ala says in the Noble Qur`an: 'Today I have made permissible for you pure things and the food of those who were given the Book (Ahlul-Kitab) is also Halal for you'. (Qur`an 5:4)

Overtly the above Aayat reads that the Zabeeha of the Ahlul-Kitab is permissible, but the fundamental principle must be understood in order to understand the Qur`an i.e. 'One part of the Qur`an explains the other'. Therefore, this verse should be understood in the light of another verse relating to the same matter: 'Do not eat unless Allah's name has been taken and this (not taking Allah's name) practice is transgression' (Quran 6:121).

The former verse explicitly states that the Zabeeha of the Ahlul-Kitab is permissible, while the latter prohibits eating meat upon which Allah's name has not been taken. In the light of both these verses, it is understood that the Zabeeha of the Ahlul-kitab is permissible only if the name of Allah is taken at the time of slaughtering. The Ahlul-kitab used to take Allah's name when slaughtering an animal, therefore, their Zabeeha was also Halal for Muslims. It is for this same reason that an animal slaughtered by the Mushrikeen etc. is not permissible. The Ahlul-kitab of today are recognized more by name, less faith. There is no guarantee that they take the name of Allah/God when slaughtering an animal. Furthermore, they cannot be trusted anymore in matters pertaining to Halal/Haram.

Since there is uncertainty in the above slaughter manner, the Jurists are unanimous that it is not permissible to consume meat which is doubtful. Only if there is certainty that the Ahlul-kitab read the 'Tasmiyah' i.e. take the name of God when slaughtering an animal will their meat be permissible. We suggest that the Muslims in the U.S.A. and U.K. slaughter the animals themselves. A committee should be appointed and look into ways to facilitate for

Halal meat slaughtered by Muslims. This will make them independent from Christian/Jewish sources.

Another proposition may be that the meat sold on the market is packed, sealed and stamped by a Muslim organisation consisting of reliable scholars and Úlama who have proper Islamic knowledge of the principles pertaining to Halal/Haram of the Shariáh.

And Allah Ta'ala Knows Best

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