



The Joseph Interfaith Foundation

United in a Vision for Truth

Statement on Kosher-Halal Meat

For immediate release

09-03-14

The National Council of Imams and Rabbis of the Joseph Interfaith Foundation takes strong exception to the comments made by John Blackwell of the BVA as reported in The Times of 6 March.

This is, in effect, an attack on religious freedoms. Secular efforts to mitigate the suffering of animals when taking their lives for food should not be made at the expense of denying religious people the freedom to do so in their own way.

Given the fact that up to 9% of animals in this country are mis-stunned on the first occasion it is disingenuous to focus on the religious practices of the Jewish and Muslim who conduct slaughter under strict welfare standards.

The process of halal & kosher slaughter itself acknowledges the animal as a trust and a gift from God, the mention of the name of the Divine before commencing the action serves as a reminder of this. The aim is to make the death of the animal as quick and painless as possible. The kosher and halal methods of slaughter with an extremely sharp knife cause a rapid loss of consciousness which is indeed equivalent to the stunning of the animal.

The true spirit of eating Halal and Kosher (permissible) meat, and food in general, inherently and necessarily includes the idea of “pure and wholesome”, a broad concept which takes a holistic approach to the processes of rearing and consumption of animals. The welfare and treatment of animals is central to this so that the whole supply chain should be underpinned by ethical principles.

In British society, where there is generally high respect between vegetarians and meat eaters and likewise between people of different faiths, the conflicting necessities of people’s freedom and compassion for animals needs to be balanced. It is true that a discussion around how we as a society treat animals and consume meat is needed, but this discussion must be sincere and requires contribution from all sections of the society. Targeting specific religious communities is not helpful and misses the very point that such a discussion should be addressing.

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Sheikh Muhammad Ismail; Senior Imam, Birmingham Central Mosque

Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi; Senior Rabbi, Birmingham Progressive Synagogue

Rabbi Yosi Jacobs; Senior Rabbi, Birmingham Hebrew Congregation

Sheikh Ezzat Khalifa; Senior Imam, London Central Mosque and Cultural Centre

Rabbi Jason Kleiman; Senior Rabbi; Bet Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue, Leeds

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