

McHalal System

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This is the McHalal System which I have proposed to McDonald's International in 1996
(A proposal which has not been officially adopted by McDonald's International)

Preview:

Sandwiches and fries served by McDonald's restaurants are continued to be accepted by customers world wide. McDonald's vision of business has always been the same i.e. quality, cleanness, value and service. This vision must be observed by al McDonald's restaurants.

Customer's requirements on meat quality deserve special attention by the management, e.g. the replacement of beefs meat by lamb, turkey's meat by chicken, or the preparation of meat according to certain believes. These requirements are primarily of either religious or/and social reasons.

The meaning of quality to any population has to be defined. Quality requirements may differ from one product to another as well as from one group of consumers to another. To Muslim, the definition of quality, to any food item (such as sandwiches containing meat, bakery products and fries) should, in addition, must include the following:

The Beef/Lamb/mutton/Goat/Chicken/Turkey meat used in the sandwiches has been obtained from Halal animal/bird and slaughtered according to Islamic rites i.e. by Muslim slaughter men; using sharp knife, facing Mecca, and in the absence of electrical stunning or any other anesthetic techniques.

All meals do not contain any parts or products of animals that are non-Halal to Muslims or products of animals which are not slaughtered according to Islamic law. All McDonald's meal Does not contain any ingredients that are considered Najasah (filth or unclean) as specified by Islamic law. All McDonald's meals are safe and not harmful. All McDonald's meals are not prepared processed or manufactured using equipment that is contaminated with things that are considered Najasah as specified by Islamic law. Any McDonald's meals or its ingredients do not contain any human parts or its derivates. During McDonald's meals preparation, processing, packaging, storage or transportation, the McDonald's meals are physically separated

from any other food or meals that do not meet the requirements stated above or any other things that have been decreed as Najasah by Islamic law. All McDonald's meals are thus termed Halal and, therefore, suitable for consumption by Muslims and non-Muslims in any part of the world. Each Halal meat/food/beverage carton/box when received by McDonald's restaurants is branded with Halal stamp for identification. In addition, adequate precautions were taken to prevent the inclusion/contamination of McDonald's meals/meats/beverages with non-Halal meat, pork/bacon meat, ingredients of pig's origin, or any traces of alcohol or shortening containing even traces amount of lard or fat of animal origin. Furthermore, an Islamic centre accepted by Muslim countries has supervised/certified such an operation/preparation and thus has issued all required Halal documentations.

One should not assume that the religious requirements of a particular Muslim government for food satisfy the majority of their native Muslim consumers. For example, Muslim governments accept the slaughtering of a Christian or a Jew person, where one could find few Muslims who do not accept the slaughtering of peoples belonging to these two faiths because of certain reasons and evident they hold. Another example is the electrical stunning technique used by the west in slaughtering animals/birds, although Muslim governments do not mind the technique prior to slaughtering with the conditions that it must be used under low voltages, we find that few Muslim consumers within that same particular country request the band of electrical stunning not only they suspect it is inhumane but they think that it likely kill the animal/bird before it is being slaughtered. To McDonald, and for the maximum sales and loyalty of its products by its consumer, it is therefore the consumer's requirements rather than the government's requirements that it must take into consideration as long as it does not conflict with the local government regulation. We have to remember her that we are not changing Islamic laws but because consumers hear news and stories about food being prepared in the west that it makes them insist on certain specifications in McDonald's meals.

For decades, "Halal certification" in meat exporting countries, like USA, have been serviced by Islamic centers and this have been well accepted by both Muslim governments and consumers world-wide. Carrying out such task, Islamic centers have shown to have the capabilities of expanding their services not only to meat but also to other food items since they have quick access to Muslim slaughter men and supervisors and Islamic centers from around the states/country.

Experience showed that centralized management of Halal certification by one Islamic centre has several advantages over non-centralized management. In the case of McDonald, the advantage is quite clear, in Muslim countries, it will give McDonald's meals the image of that Islamic centre and thus satisfaction to Muslim consumers. The centralized management of Halal certification, by one Islamic centre, will stop other Islamic centers from any attempts to apply for such services and thus the spreading of false rumors of religious malpractice. Other Islamic centers that wish to give Halal services McDonald's meals can apply to the centralized management of Halal certification as Halal services provider.

Halal certification involves "fees" which must be paid as services charges to the central management of Halal certification. These fees have to be fixed and regulated by both the central management of Halal certification and McDonald's international. One must bear in mind that the ultimate aim of Halal certification is to assure the fulfillments of religious element in foods aiming Muslim and non-Muslim consumers.

Halal certification system requires special Halal documents and Halal seals, these should carry out the name of the Islamic centre, the word "Halal", and if McDonald's management wishes that the words "McDonald's International" or "McHalal" showed on every Halal documents and Halal seal it is ok. The proposed McHalal system consists of sequential steps which incorporate the minimum Islamic requirements of Halal slaughtering and thus it encompass the requirements of the majority of Islamic schools. Thus, the suggested Halal system should not be claimed of any Islamic school but rather as steps adopted by McDonald's International to guarantee Halal meal sold in their restaurants. The present Halal system takes into its consideration both operations/preparations as observed personally during my trips made to many parts of the world including to McDonald's International, in USA on July, 1996.

McHalal System

A. Rules for Halal slaughter

1. The "animal" or the "bird" must no be forbidden for Muslim consumption.
2. The actual process of cutting the neck (slaughter) must be done by a rational Muslim.
3. At the time of slaughtering, the slaughter man must be fully conscious, and he must have the intention of making a slaughter.

4. During slaughtering, both fronts of the animal are facing Mecca, and there is no difference whether on its left or right or standing upright
5. At the time of cutting the neck, the animal or the bird must be fully alive with a settled life and the sign of this settled life is their moves after slaughtering.
6. At the time of slaughtering, the slaughter man must utter the prayer: "Bismillah Wa-Allahu Akbar" which means "in the name of Allah almighty great" and he should not mention any name other than Allah, mentioning the name of Allah should be on each animal or bird so that it can be considered as Halal or "Zabiha".
7. The slaughtering process has to be done using a sharp knife made of iron (Steel).
8. The animal should be slaughtered in a fast manner in such a way that both the trachea, the esophagus and the jugular veins are quickly cut (with a single cut i.e.. the knife must not be lifted), cut should be done below Adam's Apple, it must be retained on head, and blood drained out in full making the animal die quickly.
9. The actual cut on the neck has to be at the slaughtering site i.e. from the front of the neck and not from its back.
10. During the slaughtering process, the neck should neither be cut completely nor broken thus avoiding the severance of the spinal cord which results in an instant death.
11. In case of birds, the distance from the point of slaughtering to the point of scalding hot water must be long enough to insure complete death of the bird.
12. During the slaughtering process, avoid cutting any part of the animal/bird until complete death is insured.
13. The process of stunning by electric shock (including knocker and concussion) and mushroom head gun, or blow on head (including penetrating captive bolt pistol) are all unacceptable.
14. The equipment used for killing pigs must not be used for slaughtering animals or birds aimed for Halal consumption; also the area must be free of all contamination by pig meat or by non-Halal meat

15. There should be no chance of any contamination of "Halal" meat with "pig" meat (or "non-Halal" meat of other animals) either in the slaughterhouses, freezer, and chiller or at the time of packing, loading or unloading.

16. The complete operation/process of the shipment must be supervised by a devoted Muslim who fully understands the above mentioned Halal rules.

B. The slaughter man

1) The Muslim slaughter man has to be approved by an Islamic centre for his good behavior.

2) Only licensed Muslim slaughter men by the Islamic centre are the ones who may performed slaughtering of animals/ birds.

3) During slaughtering, Muslim slaughter men have to put on their identification cards.

4) The Muslim slaughter man works under direct supervision of a Muslim Halal meat supervisor.

5) As long as the slaughterhouse rules does not jeopardize the Halal system rules, the Muslim slaughter man has to observed all of slaughterhouse rules. If any acts jeopardize the Halal system then the Muslim slaughter man has to report it to his Muslim supervisor.

6) Annually, the Muslim slaughter man has to renew his registration with the Islamic Centre.

7) If the Halal system were not followed, the Islamic centre has full authority to terminate the license of the Muslim slaughter man.

C. The Muslim supervisor

The central management of Halal certification has to make a list of all registered supervisors, geographical locations and their signatures as it will appear in the Halal certificates.

1) The Muslim supervisor has to be appointed by the Islamic centre.

2) The Muslim supervisor has to be fit for the job, by showing good understanding of Islam so that he can be consulted on religious matters. He also has to show good understanding of the adopted Halal system and enjoy good behavior.

3) The Muslim supervisor must make a routine visits to slaughterhouses and processing plants that provide Halal meats/Halal food to insure that the system is working according to the plan.

4) Muslim supervisors have to be in continuous contacts with their Muslim slaughter men, slaughterhouses and processing plant and keep them informed about any changes and pass their messages to the central management of Halal certification.

5) In addition to his supervision and visits, Muslim supervisors have to make monthly reports on their activities.

D. Halal Critical Points (Halal CCP)

Critical Control Point (CCP) is a concept from which Hazards Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) is based on. HACCP is a food safety management system that is recognized worldwide and is recently known as ISO22000. CCP is a stage or a process that defines where any intolerable and/ or unacceptable level of hazard may be encountered, and it is at this point within the food chain where potential unacceptable hazards should be controlled.

A good example of a CCP would be the manufacturing of safe pasteurized milk, whereby the pasteurization step is considered as a CCP because it is the first step of processing milk where the determined microbial hazards will be put into its minimum. The step after pasteurization in producing pasteurized milk will not bring the initial microbial hazard to its minimum and for this particular reason it is determined that the pasteurization step in the manufacturing of pasteurized milk is a CCP.

Another example of CCP is when cooking meat patties, which is also considered as a CCP for the production of safe hamburgers; simply because it is at this step that potential microbial hazards present in the raw meat can be minimized and put to its safest level.

Food safety experts do not like the use of food safety terminologies in fields other than food safety. For example, it is known that hazards in food safety fall under three main categories: microbial, physical, or chemical. Hospitals and insurance claims were the basis for these three categories. However, Muslim

food experts have extrapolated the use of food safety terminologies to serve human diet, specifically in providing Halal food, and for this reason they have added fourth categories for hazard which has a religious nature that is Haram/Najes which mean unlawful by Islamic law and called its Halal critical points (Halal CCP).

Halal CCPs are any identified points within the operation/preparation/processing of Halal meat/food that otherwise might lead to a religiously unacceptable situation termed: "Najasah", which ultimately lead to the condemnation of the product and thus a control must be placed. If an identified Halal CCP were not observed and thus not controlled within the meat/food chain it would result in the contamination of the meat/food as it may be non-Halal because of its nature or may contain unlawful ingredients. If such situations do exist, Halal CCP must be identified and controlled for each operation/preparation by both food processing plant managers/ slaughterhouse managers and must be fully supervised by the Halal CCP coordinator. Examples of Halal CCP are as follows:

1) Grinding of Halal meat by grinder is a CCP. If a grinder has earlier been grinding non-Halal meat, the situation can be corrected by reversing the operation i.e. Halal meat is grinded first and then non-Halal meat. The same should apply to the rest of the operations/ other meat products, the operations/ processing/ preparation of Halal meat should start first. And before they are used for any Halal meat operations/ processing/ preparation all units/connivers/pipelines must be washed thoroughly in a specific manner and under direct supervision of a Muslim supervisor.

2) The distance between the site of slaughtering the Halal animal to the site of processing of the slaughtered animal (cleaning steps) must be long enough to ensure the complete bleeding and thus the death of the animal (a sign of that would be to see the animal completely motionless).

3) In Halal poultry slaughterhouses, the distance between points of slaughtering of a bird to points of immersing the slaughtered birds into scalding hot water is considered as a Halal CCP. Why? Because if the bird is still alive when it entered the scalding water, the slaughtered bird will be considered as non-Halal as it will be definitely dies by the act of drowning in water and not by the act of the knife, and therefore, it is devoid from the definition of being Zabiha.

4) The revolving boxes seen in the slaughterhouses, are acceptable method of controlling the movement of huge animals prior to their slaughtering. However, the great weight of these animals might create inconvenient for the animals once they are lifted and are still alive and in motion (not completely dead yet). This would be inhumane from Islam religious point of view and thus the correction for this Halal CCP is to wait for these animals until they are completely motionless before attempting to lift them for processing.

5) The stunning of animals, which I am not in favor of at all, is another Halal CCP in a Halal slaughterhouse for bovine, ovine or poultry. Stunning must be under a condition that should not lead to death of a sheep/bird before slaughtering it with a knife, therefore, the voltage of stunning tool in case electricity is used must be considered as a Halal CCP in a Halal slaughterhouse that should not leads to the death of sheep/birds..

6) Another example of Halal CCP within the Halal supply chain is the storage of Halal carcasses. After animals are slaughtered and became Zabiha, they must be stored in a cold-storage facility that is dedicated solely for Halal carcasses to avoid contamination with non-Halal materials.

A Muslim Halal coordinator should always look for potential Halal CCP within his/her own plant and use this concept within the Halal supply chain to control Haram/Najes because situations may differ from one manufacturing plant or slaughterhouse to another.

Limits for Halal CCP must be set in three levels, for example when a limit is reached it is considered as **critical** which means it is unacceptable. A **target** limit must also be set to determine an ideal situation which put a hazard (Halal CCP) under manageable level, and a **tolerable** limit which means that the product still safe, however it is at a worrying state, and would require quick corrective actions.

All Halal CCP limits and corrective actions within the Halal food chain must be documented, must always be verified and reviewed, especially in situations where changes have occurred.

Documentations of Halal CCP and suggested corrections that must be taken at different circumstances will allow Muslim workers/slaughter men to be able to take a decision especially in the absence of a Muslim Halal supervisor.

Making use of quality systems that have been proven useful and beneficial is a must by Muslims to enhance the quality values of life, as long as it does not collide with the basic teachings of Islam.

E. Halal Meat Certificates

For a meat shipment to be considered officially as Halal it should be accompanied by a Halal certificate issued by an approved Islamic centre. Thus, a Halal meat shipment will not be considered officially as Halal if it did not contain an official Halal certificate issued by an approved Islamic centre. Ideally, Halal certificates consist of the following:

- 1) The name and address of the Islamic centre.

The real value of Halal meat certificates come from the knowledge of the person or Islamic center who issued them. If the person or Islamic center who issued the certificate is not known to consumers or officials in the importing countries, then such shipment might face some constrains with regard to its acceptance by officials or might be subjected to rumors by Muslims.

- 2) A paragraph which state that the carcasses/meat/meat products have been obtained from an animal or a bird slaughtered according to Islamic rites.

- 3) A Halal seal, which contain the word Halal, the name of the Islamic center which issued it. Since the seal will be also used to stamp boxes/cartons, the name Allah should not be included in the seal.

- 4) The name and signature of both the Muslim supervisor and the slaughter man.

- 5) Details on the meat shipment.

For example: kind of meat i.e. is the Halal certificate for carcasses or meat products, quantity, weight and date of slaughtering if it is carcasses or date of processing in the case of meat products.

- 6) Name and address of the exporter, importer, slaughterhouse or processing plant

7) A serial number.

The serial number of the Halal certificate can be used for further verification of the certificate and its validity. A list of certificates serial numbers, dates and to whom it was issued should be made available for routine auditing purposes.

8) Several copies, e.g. four copies: Original (white) and a copy (green) for exporter/ slaughterhouse/ processing plant. The exporter/ slaughterhouse/ processing plant keep the green copy and send the white original copy to the importer. Another copy (pink) will be kept with the supervisor and finally, a copy (yellow) for the central management of Halal certification.

F. Halal Meat Products Certificates

Some companies are in the business of processing meat into meat products, i.e. they receive de-boned meat from slaughterhouses and then further processed it into special meat products. Therefore, the following procedure is acceptable for issuing Halal certificate for processed meat:

- 1) The Halal meat to be processed into Halal meat products must initially be Halal and originally supervised by an approved Islamic centre and hold Halal certificate.
- 2) The processing plant/company will provide the Muslim supervisor proper Halal certificate for the amount of Halal meat to be processed.
- 3) Before processing start, a written agreement have to be prepared between the Muslim supervisor, representing the Islamic centre, and the processing plant manager, representing the company, explaining all production/processing steps, how the product is going to be handled and all responsibilities.
- 4) The processing plant will provide the Muslim supervisor with all the ingredients, their origin i.e. animal or vegetable origin.
- 5) The processing plant has to allow the Muslim supervisor to move freely around the processing plant and to have access to all documents related to the shipments.
- 6) The processing plant should guarantee that the Halal meat or Halal meat product will not be contaminated at any stage of the processing with non-Halal meat product or pigs meat.
- 7) All Halal products and Halal meat products should be stored in a specified area.

8) The processing plant will report to the Islamic centre on a routine bases on the type and amount of Halal product it has on its premises.

G. Halal Seal

- 1) All Halal seals must at all time be in the custody of the Muslim supervisor.
- 2) Under no circumstances the Halal seal should be given to the processing Plant/slaughterhouse employee.
- 3) All Halal carcasses must be branded with the Halal seal.
- 4) All cartons/boxes containing Halal meat products must be stamped with the halal seal.
- 5) All processing plants/slaughterhouses must be informed about the Halal seal.
- 6) If the Halal seal, for any reasons, has been forged, then the processing Plant/slaughterhouse managers should take necessary steps to stop such malpractice.

If any of the Halal system rules, mentioned above, and for any reasons have been jeopardized, the central management of Halal certification of the Islamic centre has the authority and full power to withdraw the company's right for obtaining necessary Halal certificates.