

### Viewpoints

1. People's religious practices are more important than animals. Although animals are sentient beings that experience pain, they are not autonomous moral beings that have human rights. This speciesism is one of the reasons why we as humans do take the right to eat animals. If we are more significant than animals, then our deeply held religious beliefs and practices that come from it should be protected.
2. Religious slaughter is good for animal welfare, as the method of slaughter is to minimise the pain and animal distress. Both the shechita (kosher meat) and dhabibah (halal meat) slaughter require the use of a sharp knife and a cut to the neck area in order for the animal to quickly lose blood flow to the brain and lose consciousness. Other animals must not be present as well, and everything is done in order to minimise the pain and distress of animals.
3. Motivation behind ending the religious slaughter is often grounded in antisemitism and Islamophobia. Animal welfare is just a proxy for a wider issue of anti-religious bigotry. New atheism, militant secularism and anti-religious bigotry both on the left and the right use animal welfare to attack religions. The far right has especially been vocal against religious migrant groups and have openly criticised many of their religious practices. The reason why people advocate for animal rights is not to protect the animals, but its motivation is deeply anti-religious sentiments.
4. Animals are sentient beings and experience pain in a very similar way humans do. EU's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) have stated that: "Due to the serious animal welfare concerns associated with slaughter without stunning, pre-cut stunning should always be performed." The government's own advisory body, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) states that the practice should be banned. The FAWC have concluded that animals slaughtered without pre-stunning are likely to experience "very significant pain and distress" before they become unconscious. The scientific consensus is clear that it is more humane to stun an animal prior to slaughter than not to do so.
5. We should have complete separation of the state and religion, and both should be completely disentangled. There should be no accommodation for religious practices or anything stemming from religious beliefs even if there would be no concerns about animal welfare, as religious practices and beliefs are superstitious and are inherently negative for societies, and we should restrict them whenever we can.

6. We should accommodate religious practices, but this should not come to the expense of anyone else. There must be one-law-for-all and equality before the law without allowing certain groups any sort of privilege, especially if that privilege would entail allowing slaughter of animals in a way that includes avoidable and unnecessary suffering of sentient beings. If the law demands that animals are stunned before the slaughter to reduce the pain and suffering then this should be applied to everyone, irrelevant of what they believe in or what is their religious or cultural practice.

### **Questions**

- Q1. Rank the viewpoints from 1-6, with 1 being the strongest and 6 the weakest
- Q2. Explain why do you think this is the strongest argument
- Q3. (Viewpoint 1) Is religious belief or practice more important than welfare and humane treatment of animals?
- Q4. (Viewpoint 2) „Religious slaughter of animals is concerned about animal welfare; this is why there is a cut to the neck in order for minimum pain and distress“. How far do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- Q5. (Viewpoint 3) „The reason why people complain and criticise religious exemption to animal welfare is motivated by hate towards religions“. How far do you agree or disagree?
- Q6. (Viewpoint 4) „Scientific consensus clearly shows that stunning animals before slaughter is reducing suffering and is more humane“. How far do you agree or disagree?
- Q7. (Viewpoint 5) “Even if all religious practices accept stunning of the animal before slaughter, we should still prevent religious ritualistic slaughter because religions are unwelcome superstition“. How far do you agree or disagree?
- Q8. (Viewpoint 6) “Law that prevents avoidable and unnecessary suffering of animals should apply to all equally and no should be exempt from it no matter what they deeply believe“. How far do you agree or disagree?
- Q9. Is religious exemption to animal welfare justified? Is it religious privilege?
- Q10. Should we change the law? Why yes, why not?
- Q11. Should we have labels on the meat stating if was pre-stunned or non-stunned? Why?