There are about 14 million Jews in the world and over one billion Muslims. Both religions have things in common like the ties they have to lands in the Middle East and the religious dietary restrictions placed upon them. In the Jewish religion this is called Kosher, and in the Muslim religion it is called Halal.

Kosher in Biblical Hebrew means “fit.” In order for an animal to be Kosher it must be one that chews its cud, or its regurgitated food, and have split hooves; these animals are called ruminants. Kosher animals must be slaughtered in accordance with certain rituals performed by a “shochtet,” a religious butcher. The animal is first rendered unconscious, so that during the butchering it won’t be aware of the butchering about to happen. After that the animal is checked for blemishes or signs that it might be diseased, which would make the animal un-Kosher, and the butchering continues according to the ritual. Jews will also not eat foods that are made with blood because they associate blood with life. Therefore, the blood is quickly drained and the animal is washed clean, and then soaked in tepid water for half an hour. Kosher salt is placed over the animal and the remaining blood is drained out over the next hour. Once it is rinsed of the salt and blood with cold water, it is considered Kosher and is acceptable to eat. There are also restrictions on egg and dairy products when as an example being that eggs with the tiniest trace of blood in them cannot be eaten. Also, meat and milk cannot be eaten or cooked together. Orthodox Jews have separate utensils and dishes to use when preparing or eating dairy products and meat products. There are also companies that determine what prepackaged and prepared meals are Kosher by placing a seal or stamp on them, dairy products get a “D” and meat products get an “M.” Items that do not need to be distinguished as Kosher or non-Kosher are pure foods, such as vegetables, coffee, sugar, flour, pure juices (except grapes) and tea.

Halal is the Arabic term meaning “permitted, allowed, lawful or licit.” When talking about the relationship between humans on the food they consume, halal means “permissible for consumption by a Muslim.” Halal is determined by how the food is obtained and how it is processed. For that can be considered to have a bade effect on the mind, body and soul of Muslim is called “Haram” or “unauthorized, illicit.” This includes pork and pork byproducts, any foods made with blood or alcohol and alcohol as a drink is haram. Cleanliness is highly valued in the Koran that it is believed that if a Muslim eats only Halal foods, it will keep their faith pure and clean also. There are strict regulations on how the food can be prepared in order to be considered Halal. First, the slaughterhouse must be overseen by a mature Muslim man. All the machinery and equipment in the slaughterhouse must be cleaned according to Muslim law and the slaughtering needs to be done by hand using a stainless steel knife that is cleaned after each slaughter. Also, with each kill the butcher makes he must say “In the name of Allah.” Milk produced by a healthy animal is Halal and even the enzymes that are used in the milk must come from Halal animal. There are companies, just like with Kosher foods, that go around and inspect the equipment to make sure they the food they produce can be considered Halal. In areas with high concentrations of Muslims there are entire sections with Halal foods, and even Halal fast food chains.

Jewish and Muslim religions are one of the many religions that have dietary restrictions although the differ in what they can eat, they both have a respect for the animal that is giving their life to feed them. The degree to which the Jews or Muslims follow their dietary restriction varies from person to person, especially with the modern times. There are some Orthodox Jews that are very strict with being Kosher and some Jews that don’t follow it at all. The same applies to Muslims, some are stricter than others. I think that it is very interesting that they have actual companies that go around and make sure that the food that is being produced is in accordance with Jewish or Muslim religions. This shows that the world has respect for their religions restrictions.