



## **Animals in Islam**

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## **Animals in Islam**

Excerpts are from the book by the same name, written by **Al-Hafiz B.A. Masri**, the first Sunni Imam of the Shah Jehan mosque (Woking, U.K.) when it was the Islamic center of Europe. He is widely respected for the depth of his scholarship in this field. (An Imam is a scholar who has studied the Koran and memorized it in its entirety.)

The sources quoted in this book are the Qur'an Majeed, the first source of Islamic law (Shari'ah); Hadith or Tradition, the second source; and Ijtihad, inference by analogy, the third source. Together, these three sources make up Islamic case law or 'Juristic Rules' (qawaidatul-fiqhiyah) that are the guidelines to be followed for any legal question. Many issues relating to animals, such as vivisection, factory farming, and animal rights did not exist 14 centuries ago and therefore, no specific laws were passed about them. To decide on issues developed in recent times, Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh) has left it to Muslim Jurists (fuqaha'a) to use their judgement by inference and analogy, based on the three above-mentioned sources.

Many Many thanks to CHAI where the following sections were taken from.

## **Dominion Over Animals**

The Qur'an Majeed states that man has dominion over animals: "He (God) it is Who made you vicegerents on earth." (Qur'an 35:39), but makes clear that this responsibility is not unconditional and states what happens to those who misuse their freedom of choice and fail to conform to the conditions that limit this responsibility: "then We reduce him (to the status of) the lowest of the low." (Qur'an 95:4,5) ".they are those whom Allah has rejected and whom He has condemned..because they served evil" (Qur'an 5:63). ".they have hearts wherewith they fail to comprehend, and eyes wherewith they fail to see, and ears wherewith they fail to hear..Such (humans) are far astray from the right path. (Qur'an 7:179).

There are people who take the concept of man's dominion over animals as a licentious freedom to break all the established moral rules designed to protect animal rights. The Imam Hazrat Ali has this to say about (those who misuse their authority over the weak): "A savage and ferocious beast is better than a wicked and tyrant ruler." (Maxims, see Ref. No. 4, pp. 203, 381).

Again, the Qur'an Majeed urges in remonstrance: "And be not like those who say, 'we have heard', while they do not hearken. Verily, the vilest of all creatures, in the sight of Allah, are those deaf and dumb ones who do not use their rationality." (Qur'an 8:21,22).

## **Animals Are Our Teachers**

Muslims have often been advised by their mentors to learn lessons from some species of animal. For example, the Imam Hazrat Ali gives this piece of advice: "Be like a bee; anything he heats is clean, anything he drops is sweet and any branch he sits upon does not break." (Maxims of Ali; translated by Al-Halal from Nahj-ul-Balagha (in Arabic); Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan; p. 436. The Imam, Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib was the son-in-law of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s), and the fourth Caliph (644-656 A.C. = 23-24 A.H.).

## **Animals Are Members of Communities and the Family of God**

The Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) puts it in these words: "All creatures are like a family (Ayal) of God: and he loves the most those who are the most beneficent to His family. (Narrated by Anas. Mishkat al-Masabih,3:1392; quoted from Bukhari.)

The Qur'an Majeed says: "There is not an animal on earth, nor a bird that flies on its wings, but they are communities like you.". (Qur'an 6:38).

The Holy Prophet(s) used to say: "Whoever is kind to the creatures of God, is kind to himself." (Wisdom of Prophet Mohammad(s); Muhammad Amin; The Lion Press, Lahore, Pakistan; 1945).

According to the learned commentators of the Qur'an Majeed..animals all live a life, individual and social, like members of a human commune. In other words, they are like communities in their own right and not in relation to human species or its values. These details have been mentioned to emphasize the point that even those species which are generally considered as insignificant or even dangerous deserve to be treated as communities; that their intrinsic and not perceptible values should be recognized, irrespective of their usefulness or their apparent harmfulness."

The significant point to note is that, physically, man has been put in the same bracket as all other species. The following Hadith leaves no ambiguity in the scene in which the Qur'an Majeed uses the word 'community': Abu Huraira reported the Prophet(s) as telling of an incident that happened to another prophet in the past. This prophet was stung by an ant and, in anger, he ordered the whole of the ants' nest to be burned. At this, God reprimanded this prophet in these words: 'because one ant stung you, you have burned a whole community which glorified Me'. (Bukhari and Muslim).

The Islamic law (Shari'ah) concerning the rights of animals are very elaborate and explicit. In the case of the ants' nest, the following Juristic Rule would apply: Any damage or a damaging retaliation for a damage is forbidden. (La zarara wa la zihar).

## **Human/Animal Communication**

There are numerous legends about the Muslim saints and other holy men who could talk to animals. However, for lack of authentication, they are taken generally as mere fables. There is one statement in the Qur'an Majeed, though, which proves that man had acquired the lore of speech with animals as early as the time of King Solomon. Perhaps in those days human civilization was more in tune with nature than it is today. The Qur'anic verse runs like this: "And Solomon was David's heir, and he said: 'O ye people! We have been taught the speech of birds.'" (Qur'an 27:16).

The Qur'an Majeed tells us that God actually communicates with animals, as the following verse shows: And your Lord revealed to the bee, saying: 'make hives in the mountains and in the trees, and in (human) habitations'. (Qur'an 16:68).

The Qur'an Majeed uses the same Arabic word "Wahi" for God's revelation to all His Prophets, including the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s), as it has been used in the case of the bee..it proves the basic fact that animals have a sufficient degree of psychic endowment to understand and follow God's messages - a faculty which is higher than instinct and intuition.

### **Animals Have Consciousness**

Many passages from the Qur'an Majeed and Ahadith state that all animals are endowed with spirit and mind and ".there is ample evidence in the Qur'an Majeed to suggest that animals' consciousness of spirit and mind is of a degree higher than mere instinct and intuition. We are told in the Qur'an Majeed that animals have a cognizance of their Creator and, hence, they pay their obeisance to Him by adoration and worship: Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praises are celebrated by all beings in the heavens and on earth, and by the birds with extended wings? Each one knows its prayer and psalm, And Allah is aware of what they do. (Qur'an 24:41).

It is worth noting the statement that 'each one knows its prayer and psalm'. The execution of a voluntary act, performed consciously and intentionally, requires a faculty higher than that of instinct and intuition. Lest some people should doubt that animals could have such a faculty, the following verse points out that it is human ignorance that prevents them from understanding this phenomenon: The seven heavens and the earth and all things therein declare His glory. There is not a thing but celebrates His adoration; and yet ye mankind! ye understand not how do they declare His glory.(Qur'an 17:44).

The following verse tells us how all the elements of nature and all the animal kingdom function in harmony with God's laws; it is only some humans who infringe and, thus, bring affliction on themselves. The Qur'an Majeed dwells on this theme repeatedly to emphasize the point that man should bring himself into harmony with nature, according to the laws of God -- as all other creation does: Seest thou not that unto Allah payeth adoration all things that are in the heavens and on earth -- the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the animals, and a large number among mankind? However, there are many (humans) who do not and deserve chastisement.(Qur'an 22:18).

A Dutch team of scientists has found scientific evidence of mental suffering in animals. They have discovered that, like the human brain, an animal's brain too releases a substance called 'Endorphin' to cope with emotional distress and pain, caused by frustration or conflict. This substance is 100 times more powerful than morphine. (This was reported in the newsletter of Compassion in World Farming Agscene, August 1985, 20 Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hants, England).

### **Animals and Humans Must Share Natural Resources**

Once it has been established that each species of animal is a "community" like the human community, it stands to reason that each and every creature on earth has, as its birth-right, a share in all the natural resources. In other words, each animal is a tenant-in-common on this Planet with human species.

But "Man has always been in competition with animals for food, and the problem has been aggravated in the current world situation, especially because of modern agrarian mismanagement." The Qur'an Majeed has tried to allay this fear of man by reassuring him that God is not only the Creator but also the Sustainer and the Nourisher of

all that He creates. However, the Qur'an Majeed lays down the condition that human beings, like all other creatures, shall have to work for their food, and that their share would be proportionate to their labor: "And that man shall have nothing, but what he strives for." (Qur'an 53:39)

The Qur'an Majeed repeatedly emphasizes that food and other resources of nature are there to be shared equitably with other creatures. Below are just a few of numerous such verses: Then let man look at his food: how We pour out water in showers, then turn up the earth into furrow-slices and cause cereals to grow therein - grapes and green fodder; olive-trees and palm-trees; and luxuriant orchards, fruits and grasses..as Provision for you as well as for your cattle. (Qur'an 80:24-32).

Again, in the following verses, the bounties of nature are enumerated with the accent on animals' share in all of them. Everything was created for human AND non-human animals: And He it is Who sends the winds, as glad tidings heralding His mercy. And We send down pure water from the clouds, that We may give life thereby, by watering the parched earth, and slake the thirst of those We have created - both the animals and the human beings in multitude. (Qur'an 25-48,49).

And do they not see that We meander water to a barren land and sprout forth from it crops, whereof their cattle as well as they themselves eat? Will they take no notice of it? (Qur'an 32:27).

We {God} brought forth from it {the earth} its waters and its pastures, and established the mountains firm - as a source of provision for you and for your animals. (Qur'an 79:31-33).

There is no doubt that the message includes all animals, not just domestic livestock, in whose welfare we have a vested interest: There is no moving creature on earth, but Allah provides for its sustenance. (Qur'an 11:6) And the earth: He {God} has assigned to all living creatures. (Qur'an 55:10).

The essence of Islamic teachings on 'Animal Rights' is that depriving animals of their fair share in the resources of nature is so serious a sin in the eyes of God that it is punishable by punitive retribution: The Qur'an Majeed describes how the people of Thamud demanded that the Prophet Saleh(s) show them some sign to prove he was a prophet of God. (The tribe of Thamud were the descendants of Noah. They have also been mentioned in the Ptolemaic records of Alexander's astronomer of the 2nd century A.C.)

At the time of this incident, the tribe was experiencing a dearth of food and water and was, therefore, neglecting its livestock. It was revealed to Prophet Saleh(s) to single out a she-camel as a symbol and ask his people to give her her fair share of water and fodder. The people of Thamud promised to do that but, later, killed the camel. As a retribution, the tribe was annihilated. This incident has been mentioned in the Qur'an Majeed many times in different contexts. (Qur'an 7:73, 11:64, 26:155, 156; 54:27-31).

### **Is Animal Suffering Fate (Allah's Will) or the Fault of Humans?**

Many people misunderstand the real sense of the doctrine of 'pre-destination', or 'fate' (Qaza wa Qadr or Qismat). The literal meaning of 'pre-destination', in the Islamic sense, is: 'pre-fixing the fate of someone or something', in the sense of determining the capacity, capability, endowment, function and other faculties. The Qur'an Majeed uses the Arabic word 'taqdir' meaning 'destiny' even for the decreed orbits of the planetary motions; for inorganic substances; as well as for animated creatures, including human beings. Within those pre-fixed limitations,

however, conditions could be changed for the better, suffering could be avoided or lessened by human effort and skill.

## **Experimentation on Animals**

Scientific and pharmaceutical experiments on animals are being done to find cures for diseases, most of which are self-induced by our own disorderly lifestyle. All human problems - physical, mental or spiritual - are of our own creation and our wounds self-inflicted. By no stretch of imagination can we blame animals for any of our troubles and make them suffer for it. All this (experiments), and much more, is being done to satisfy human needs, most of which are non-essential, fanciful, wasteful and for which alternative, humane products are easily available. To kill animals to satisfy the human thirst for inessentials is a contradiction in terms within the Islamic tradition. Let us hope a day will dawn when the great religious teachings may at last begin to bear fruit; when we shall see the start of a new era, when man accords to animals the respect and status they have long deserved and for so long have been denied.

Vivisection did not exist at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) and therefore, was not specifically cited in the law (Shari'ah). Guidance on such issues comes from analogy and inference (Ijtihad). One of the main excuses for all kinds of cruelties to animals is selfish interest or human needs. Let us see how the juristic Rules define 'needs' and 'interests' and judge these cases according to those definitions. The basic Juristic Rule (qaidatul-fiqhiyah) that would apply to pecuniary experiments is: "One's interest or need does not annul other's right" (al-idtiraru la yabtil haqqal-ghair).

Needs are classified in three categories: necessities (al-Masalih ad-darurfyah) without which life could not be sustained; needs required for comfort and easement from pain or any kind of distress, or for improving the quality of life (al-Masalih-al-haiya); and luxuries (al-Masalih at tahsiniyah) desirable for enjoyment or self-indulgence.

Some rules that can be applied to these needs to determine whether experiments on animals would be allowed: What allures to the forbidden, is itself forbidden. (Ma'ad'a ela al-harame, fahuwaharamun"). This rule implies that material gains, including food, obtained by wrongful acts, such as unnecessary experiments on animals, become unlawful (haram).

No damage can be put right by a similar or a greater damage." (Ad-dararu la yuzalu be mislehi au be dararin akbaro minho). When we damage our health and other interests by our own follies, we have no right to make the animals pay for it by inflicting similar or greater damage on them, such as by doing unnecessary experiments to find remedies for our self-induced ailments.

Resort to alternatives, when the original becomes undesirable. (Iza ta'zuro al-aslu, yusaru ila-l-badle). This rule places a great moral responsibility on experimenters and medical students to find alternatives.

The basic point to understand about using animals in science is that the same moral, ethical and legal codes should apply to the treatment of animals as are being applied to humans. According to Islam, all life is sacrosanct and has a right of protection and preservation.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) laid so much emphasis on this point that he declared: "There is no man who kills {even} a sparrow or anything smaller, without its deserving it, but God will question him about it." (Narrated by Ibn 'Omar and by Abdallah bin Al-As. An-Nasai, 7:206,239, Beirut. Also recorded by Musnad al-Jami - Ad-Darimi; Delhi,

1337. Also, Mishkat al-Masabih; English translation by James Robson, in four volumes; Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan; 1963 (hereafter referred to as 'Robson').

He who takes pity {even} on a sparrow and spares its life, Allah will be merciful on him on the Day of Judgement. (Narrated by Abu Umama. Transmitted by Al-Tabarani).

Like all other laws of Islam, its laws on the treatment of animals have been left open to exceptions and are based on the criterion: "Actions shall be judged according to intention." (Al-A'amalo binniyah)..If the life of an animal can be saved only by the amputation of a part of its body, it will be a meritorious act in the eyes of God to do so. There is no doubt that the Islamic prohibition against the cutting or injuring of live animals, especially when it results in pain and suffering, does apply to modern vivisection in science. We are able to support this interpretation of the Islamic teachings by referring not only to the above-quoted representative Traditions (Ahadith), but also to the Qur'an Majeed. In the verses quoted below, the principle is expressed that any interference with the body of a live animal which causes pain or disfigurement is contrary to the Islamic precepts. These verses were revealed in condemnation of the pagan superstitious custom that she-camels, ewes or nanny goats which had brought forth a certain number of young in a certain order should have their ears slit, be let loose, and dedicated to idols. Such customs were declared by the Qur'an Majeed as devilish acts, in these words: It was not Allah who instituted the practice of a slit-ear-she-camel, or a she-camel let loose for free pasture, or a nanny-goat let loose..."(Qur'an 5:106). "Allah cursed him {Satan} for having said: 'I shall entice a number of your servants, and lead them astray, and I shall arouse in them vain desires; and I shall instruct them to slit the ears of cattle; and most certainly, I shall bid them - so that they will corrupt Allah's creation'. Indeed! He who chooses the Devil rather than Allah as his patron, ruins himself manifestly. (Qur'an 4:118, 119).

### **Fur and Other Uses of Animals**

There is a large-scale carnage of fur-bearing animals..to satisfy human needs, most of which are non-essential, fanciful, wasteful and for which alternative, humane products are easily available..The excuse that such things are essential for human needs is no longer valid. Modern technology has produced all these things in synthetic materials and they are easily available all over the world, in some cases at a cheaper price.

Some juristic rules that apply are: "That which was made permissible for a reason, becomes unpermissible by the absence of that reason." (Ma jaza le uzrin, batala be zawalehi) and "All false excuses leading to damage should be repudiated." (Sadduz-zarae al-mua'ddiyate ela-l-fasad). These rules leave no excuse for the Muslims to remain complacent about the current killing of animals in their millions for their furs, tusks, oil, and various other commodities.

The Qur'an Majeed does mention animals as a source of warm clothing (Qur'an 16:5), but modern-day clothing made of synthetic fibers is just as warm as clothing made from animal skins and makes clothing from animal skins unnecessary. The Qur'an refers only to the skins and furs of domesticated cattle which either die their natural death or are slaughtered for food. Today, millions of wild animals are killed commercially just for their furs and skins, while their carcasses are left to rot. Fourteen centuries ago Islam realized the absurdity of this wasteful and cruel practice and passed laws to stop it in the following Ahadith:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) prohibited the use of skins of wild animals. (Narrated by Abu Malik on the authority of his father. Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi as recorded in Garden of the Righteous - Riyad as-Salihin of Imam



Nawawi; translated by M.Z. Kahn; Curzon Press, London, 1975; [hereafter referred to as Riyad]; Hadith No. 815, p. 160.)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) forbade the skins of wild animals being used as floor-coverings. (id)

The Holy Prophet(s) said: 'Do not ride on saddles made of silk or leopard skins.' (Narrated by Mu'awiah. Abu Dawud; (see Riyad, Ref. No. 28); Hadith No. 814, p. 160.)

## **Animal Fights**

All kinds of animal fights are strictly forbidden in Islam. Out of the numerous such injunctions, one would suffice here: God's Messenger(s) forbade inciting animals to fight each other. (Narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Abu al-Darda; recorded in Riyad (Ref. No. 28); Hadith No. 1606; p. 271. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No. 15), p. 876.)

Like camel-humps, fat-tails of sheep and target-animals (mujaththema), the meat of animals who die as a result of fights is also declared in Islam as unlawful to eat (haram). For example, the Spaniards hold fiestas on special occasions to eat the bull killed by a matador.

## **Factory Farming**

(See also the sections on [Cruelty to Animals](#) and [Slaughter of Animals](#) Used for Food and the restrictions thereon.) Our Holy Prophet(s)'s overwhelming concern for animal rights and their general welfare would certainly have condemned (La'ana) those who practice such methods (factory farming), in the same way as he condemned similar other cruelties in his days. He would have declared that there is no grace or blessing (Brakah) - neither in the consumption of such food nor in the profits from such trades.

## **Vegetarianism**

There is no suggestion in the Qur'an Majeed or in any other of the Islamic sources that eating meat is good for physical or spiritual health. Islam's approach in this matter is neutral; it has left the choice to the individual, but those who opt to eat meat are urged in the Qur'an Majeed to eat in moderation. (The Qur'an 7:31; 5:87 and other verses). Furthermore, there are elaborate and stringent laws governing the overall treatment of animals used for food - their rearing and breeding; the pre-slaughter; and handling during and after slaughter.

The Holy Prophet(s) has placed the killing of animals without a justifiable reason as one of the major sins: Avoid ye the seven obnoxious things {deadly sins}: polytheism; magic; the killing breathing beings! Which God has forbidden except for rightful reason. (Narrated by Abu Huraira. Sahih Mulim - Kitab-ul-Imam (Ref. No. 46); Chapt. XXXIX, Vol.I; p. 52. Bukhari, 4:23. Also Awn, (Ref. No. 32); Hadith No. 2857.

The Arabic word for 'breathing beings' is 'Nafs.' Until recently it used to be taken as meaning 'human beings' only. All the Arabic dictionaries give the meaning of 'Nafs' as 'Ruh' (soul), and since they are breathing creatures, there seems to be no reason why the Qur'anic verses No. 6:151, 152 and others should not comprehend all 'breathing beings', i.e. all species of animals. These verses should be read in conjunction with other verses of the Qur'an Majeed and numerous Ahadith which speak of the sanctity of life as a whole, declare animals as possessing soul (zi Ruhin) and place animals physically on a par with human beings.

The baneful {sinful} things are: polytheism; disobedience to parents; the killing of breathing beings without a valid reason.

(id. Narrated by Abdullah Ibn 'Amr.)

### **Slaughter of Animals Used for Food**

Meat-eating is neither encouraged nor even recommended by Islam: "Say {O Muhammad!} I find not in what has been revealed to me any food {meat} forbidden to those who wish to eat it, unless it be dead meat, or blood that pours forth, or the flesh of swine - for it is unclean {rijs} - or the sacriligious {fisq} meat which has been slaughtered in anybody's' name other than that of Allah." It is significant to note that these laws have been laid down for those "who wish to eat it" (Ta'imin yat'amohu). Eating meat is not required.

While Islam permits eating meat, it gives instructions to ensure humane slaughter, with as little pain to the victim as possible:

God's Messenger(s) was reported as saying: 'Allah Who is Blessed and Exalted, has prescribed benevolence toward everything {and has ordained that everything be done in a good way}; so, when you must kill a living being, do it in the best manner and, when you slaughter an animal, you should {use the best method and} sharpen your knife so as to cause the animal as little pain as possible. (Narrated by Shaddad bin Aus. Muslim; Vol. 2, Chapter 11; Section on 'Slaying'; 10:739, verse 151. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No. 15); p. 872. Also recorded in Riyad. (Ref. No. 28); Hadith No. 643; p. 131).

The Messenger of Allah was heard forbidding to keep waiting a quadruped or any other animal for slaughter. (Bukhari. Also Muslim; Vol. 2, Chapter 11; Section on 'Slaying'; 10:739; verse 152. Also 'Robson' (Ref. NO. 15), p. 872).

The Prophet(s) forbade all living creatures to be slaughtered while tied up and bound. (id (Ref. No. 46); Hadith No. 4817; p. 1079).

The Holy Prophet(s) said to a man who was sharpening his knife in the presence of the animal: 'Do you intend inflicting death on the animal twice - once by sharpening the knife within its sight, and once by cutting its throat?' (Al-Furu Min-al-Kafi Lil-Kulini; 6:230).

Hazrat Imam Ali says: "Do not slaughter sheep in the presence of other sheep, or any animal in the presence of other animals." (id (for Hazrat Ali see Ref. No. 4).

Hazrat 'Omar once saw a man denying a sheep, which he was going to slaughter, a satiating measure of water to drink. He gave the man a beating with his lash and told him: "Go, water it properly at the time of its death, you knave!" (Reported by Ibn Sirin about Hazrat 'Omar and recorded in Badae al-Sande; 6:2811).

If animals have been subjected to cruelties in their breeding, transport, slaughter, or in their general welfare, meat from them is considered impure and unlawful to eat (Haram). The flesh of animals killed by cruel methods (Al-Muthiah) is carrion (Al-Mujaththamah). Even if these animals have been slaughtered in the strictest Islamic manner, if cruelties were inflicted on them otherwise, their flesh is still forbidden (Haram) food:

Oh, ye messengers! Eat of the good things {tayyibat} and do righteous deeds. Surely, I know what you do." (Qur'an.23:51).

Oh believers! Eat what We have provided for you of lawful and good things, and give thanks for Allah's favour, if it is He whom you serve. (Qur'an 2:172; 16:114).

The word 'Tayyib', translated as 'good', 'pure', 'wholesome', etc. means pure both in the physical and the moral sense.

The main counsel of Islam in the slaughter of animals for food is to do it in the least painful manner. All the Islamic laws on the treatment of animals, including the method of slaughter, are based in all conscience on "the spirit" of compassion, fellow-feeling and benevolence:

Allah, Who is Blessed and Exalted, has prescribed benevolence toward everything and has ordained that everything be done in the right way; so when you must kill a living being, do it in the proper way - when you slaughter an animal, use the best method and sharpen your knife so as to cause as little pain as possible. (The Sahih Mulsim, 2:156. Also Al-Taaj fi Jaami al-Usool, Vol. 3, p. 110, Cairo Edition. Also Al-Faruo min-al-Kafi, p. 2, and others.)

Failure to stun animals before slaughter causes them pain and suffering. Muslims should give serious thought to whether this is cruelty (Al-Muthiah). If so, then surely the meat from them is unlawful (Haran), or at least, undesirable to eat (Makruh). Al-Azhar University in Cairo appointed a special committee to decide whether the meat of animals slaughtered after stunning was lawful. The committee consisted of representatives of the four acknowledged Schools of Thought in Islam, i.e. Shafii, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali. The unanimous verdict (Fatwa) of the committee was: "Muslim countries, by approving the modern method of slaughtering, have no religious objection in their way. This is lawful as long as the new means are 'shar' (Ahadd) and clean and do 'cause bleeding' (Museelah al-damm). If new means of slaughtering are more quick and sharp, their employment is a more desirable thing. It comes under the saying of the Prophet(s) 'God has ordered us to be kind to everything' (Inna'l-laha Kataba-'l-ihsan 'ala kulle Shay'in). (The History of Azhar, Cairo; 1964; pp. 361-363)."

To crown all verdicts (Fatawa), here is the 'Recommendation' of a pre-eminent Muslim organization of this century - The Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami). It was founded in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 1962 A.C. (1382 A.H.) with 55 Muslim theologians (Ulama'a), scientists and leaders on its Constituent Council from all over the world. MWL is a member of the United Nations, UNESCO and the UNICEF. In January 1986 it held a joint meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO) and made the following 'Recommendation' about pre-slaughter stunning (No 3:1. WHO-EM/FOS/1-E, p. 8):

Pre-slaughter stunning by electric shock, if proven to lessen the animal's suffering, is lawful, provided that it is carried out with the weakest electric current that directly renders the animal unconscious, and that it neither leads to the animal's death nor renders its meat harmful to the consumer.

As of 1989, in the following countries, Muslims were NOT exempt from stunning: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand. The following countries allow only partial exemption to Muslims under special conditions and regulations: Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Finland and Canada.

## **Providing for Animals Used to Carry Heavy Loads**

Animals in the service of man should be used only when necessary and their comfort should not be neglected

The Prophet(s) once passed by a lean camel whose belly had shrunk to its back. 'Fear God' he said to the owner of the camel, 'in these dumb animals and ride them only when they are fit to be ridden, and let them go free when it is meet that they should rest. (Narrated by Abdullah bin Ja'far. Awn (Ref. No. 32); 7:221; Hadith No. 2532).

About taking care of animals while travelling, the Holy Prophet(s) used to give the following advice

When you journey through a verdant land, {go slow to} let your camels graze. When you pass through an arid area, quicken your pace {lest hunger should enfeeble the animals}. Do not pitch your tents for the night on the beaten tracks, for they are the pathways of nocturnal creatures. (Narrated by Abu Huraira. Sahih Muslim - Kitab-ul-Imam (Ref. No. 53); Vol. III; Chapter DCCVII; Hadith No. 4724; pp. 1062, 1063.

Saying daily prayers (salat) is one of the five most important obligations of the Moslem religion. In the following Hadith, one of his companions tells us that the holy Prophet(s) and his fellow travelers used to delay even saying their prayers until they had first given their riding and pack animals fodder and had attended to their needs: "When we stopped at a halt, we did not say our prayers until we had taken the burdens off our camels' backs and attended to their needs." (Narrated by Anas. Awn (Ref. No. 32); 7:223; Hadith aNo. 5234. Also 'Guillaume' (Ref. No. 57); pp.106, 107).

Hazrat Imam Ali's general advice about pack animals is: "be kind to pack animals; do not hurt them; and do not load them more than their ability to bear." (Maxims (Ref. No. 4)).

## **Cruelty to Animals**

According to the spirit and overall teachings of Islam, causing unavoidable pain and suffering to the defenseless and innocent creatures of God is not justifiable under any circumstances. Islam wants us to think and act in the positive terms of accepting all species as communities like us in their own right and not to sit in judgement on them according to our human norms and values.

Prevention of physical cruelty is not enough; mental cruelty is equally important. In the following incident, a bird's emotional distress has been treated as seriously as a physical injury:

We were on a journey with the Apostle of God(s), and he left us for a while. During his absence, we saw a bird called hummara with its two young and took the young ones. The mother bird was circling above us in the air, beating its wings in grief, when the Prophet came back and said: 'who has hurt the FEELINGS of this bird by taking its young? Return them to her'. (Narrated by Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah bin Mas'ud. Muslim. Also Awn (Ref. No. 32) Hadith No. 2658. Also "Guillaume' (Ref. No. 57); p. 106).

It is reported by the same authority that: "a man once robbed some eggs from the nest of a bird. The Prophet(s) had them restored to the nest." (id).

The Holy Prophet(s) has even tried the 'Punishment and Reward' approach in the following Ahadith:  
The Islamic concern about cruelty to animals is so great that it has declared the infliction of any unnecessary and avoidable pain 'even to a sparrow or any creature smaller than that' as a sin for which the culprit would be answerable to God on the Day of Judgement.

The Prophet(s) told his companions of a woman who would be sent to Hell for having locked up a cat; not feeding it, nor even releasing it so that it could feed herself." (Narrated by Abdullah bin 'Omar. Bukhari, 4:337; recorded in Riyad (Ref. No. 28), Hadith No. 1605; p. 271. Also Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2242. English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi; Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan; 1976; Vol. 4, Hadith No. 5570; p. 1215. (According to the English translation, this Hadith was also narrated by the Abu Huraira and by Naqi who had heard it from Abdullah); Hadith No. 5573; p. 1215.) This Hadith has been recorded by almost all the authentic books of hadith, as the Re. No. 53 will show)

Islam's concern for animals goes beyond the prevention of physical cruelty or even condescending kindness to them, which is a negative proposition. It enjoins on the human species, as the principal primates of animated world, to take over the responsibility of all creatures in the spirit of a positive philosophy of life and to be their active protectors.

The Prophet(s) was asked if acts of charity even to the animals were rewarded by God. He replied: 'yes, there is a reward for acts of charity to every beast alive.' (Narrated by Abu Huraira, Bukhari, 3:322. Also Muslim, Vol. 4; Hadith No. 2244. Also Awn (Ref. No. 32), 7:222, Hadith No. 2533. Also Mishkat al-masabih, Book 6; Chapter 6.

Mishkat Al-Masabih concluded from "Bukhari" and "Muslim" to the effect that: 'A good deed done to a beast is as good as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to human beings' and that: 'Kindness to animals was promised by rewards in Life Hereafter.' (Mishkat al-Masabih; Book 6; Chapter 7, 8:178.)

The Prophet(s) told his companions of a serf who was blessed by Allah for saving the life of a dog by giving it water to drink and quenching its thirst. (Narrated by Abu Huraira. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2244. Also Bukhari, 3:322. Also Awn (Ref. No. 32); Hadith No. 2533, and others).

To catch birds and imprison them in cages without any special purpose is considered abominable. No advantages and no urgency of human needs would justify the kind of calculated violence which is being done these days against animals, especially through international trade of livestock and meat. One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) tells us: "If you must kill, kill without torture." (La taqtolu bi'l-idha'i). While pronouncing this dictum, he did not name any animal as an exception - not even any noxious or venomous creature, such as scorpions and snakes.

Luckily, on this theme, we have quite a few of the Holy Prophet(s) sayings. During the pre-Islamic period, certain pagan superstitions and polytheistic practices involving acts of torture and general cruelties to animals used to be common in Arabia. All such practices were condemned and stopped by Islam. The following few sayings of the Holy Prophet(s) will serve as an example:

Jabir told that God's Messenger(s) forbade striking the face or branding on the face of animals. The same companion of the Holy Prophet(s) reported him as saying, when an ass which had been branded in its face passed him by: 'God curse the one who branded it.' (Narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah. Muslim, Vol.3, Hadith No. 2116. Also Awn al-Ma'bud Sharh Abu Dawud (hereafter referred to as Awn); 7:232, hadith No. 2547. Also The Lawful and

Unlawful in Islam (in Arabic); Yusuf el-Kardawi; Mektebe Vahba, Cairo; 1977; p. 293. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No. 15); p. 872). This Hadith is concerned with causing pain to the animal on the sensitive parts of its body, as well as with the disfigurement of its appearance.

When the Holy Prophet(s) migrated to Medina from Mecca in 622 A.C., people there used to cut off camels' humps and the fat tails of sheep. The Prophet(s) ordered this barbaric practice to be stopped. The temptation for the people to perform this sort of vivisection on the animals was that the juicy humps and fatty tails could be eaten while the animal remained alive for future use. To remove this avidity, he declared: "whatever is cut off an animal, while it is still alive, is carrion and is unlawful (Haram) to eat." (Narrated by Abu Waqid al-Laithi. Tirmidhi; Hadith No. 1480, Chapt. On Al-At'imah. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No. 15), p. 872).

To make sure that no injury was inflicted on the animal while there was even a flicker of life in it, it was forbidden by the Holy Prophet(s) to molest the carcass in any way, such as: by breaking its neck, skinning, or slicing off any of its parts, until the body is dead cold. One of his sayings on this theme is: "Do not deal hastily with a 'being' before it is stone dead." (Kitab al-Muqni, 3:542. Also Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm). Hazrat 'Omar ibn al-Khattab used to instruct repeatedly: 'Give time to the slaughtered being' till it is dead cold. (Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm. Hazrat 'Omar ibn al-Khattab was the second Caliph (634-644 A.C. = 12-22A.H.).

Many other Muslim authorities have also given juristic opinions (fatawa) to the effect that, after slaughter, time should be given for the rigor mortis to set in before cutting up the carcass. (Kitab al-Nil wa Shifa'al-Alil, 4:460).

Another malpractice in Arabia in those days, which caused pain and discomfort to the animals, was stopped by the Holy Prophet(s) in these words: "Do not store milk in the udders of animals.." (Muslim and Bukhari. Also Holy Traditions; 1st Edition; Vol. 1; Muhammad Manzur Ilahi; Ripon Press, Lahore, Paistan; 1932; p. 149).

Not only physical but also emotional care of animals was so much emphasized by the Holy Prophet(s) that he once reprimanded his wife, A'ishah, for treating a camel a bit offhandedly. Hazrat A'ishah herself narrates: "I was riding a restive camel and turned it rather roughly. The Prophet(s) said to me: 'it behooves you to treat the animals gently'. (Narrated by A'ishah. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2593. Also Awn, 7:155, Hadith No. 2461; (Ref. No. 32)).

The Holy Prophet(s) himself was once reprimanded by God for neglecting his horse, as the following Hadith tells us: "The Prophet(s) was seen wiping the face of his horse with his gown (jullabiyah). When asked why he was doing that, he replied: 'Last night I had a reprimand from Allah regarding my horse for having neglected him'. (Narrated by Yahya bin Said. "Malik bin Anas al-Asbhahi". Also Al-Muwatta, (in English); Divan Press, Norwich, England; 1982; p. 205.)

The following Hadith forbids the disfiguration of the body of an animal.

The Prophet(s) said: 'Do not clip the forelock of a horse, for a decency is attached to its forelock; nor its mane, for it protects it; nor its tail, for it is its fly-flap'. (Narrated by 'Utbah ibn Farqad Abu Abdillah al-Sulami. Abu Dawud. Also Awn, 7:216, 217, Hadith No. 2525 (Ref. No. 32)).

The incidents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's(s) personal grooming of his horse; his wife A'isha's rough handling of her camel; the Holy Prophet's(s) prohibition of cutting forelocks, the mane or tail; the condemnation of striking and branding on the face or ears - all these and many other such Ahadith show that this great man, Muhammad(s)

had realized even fourteen centuries ago that animals have a sense of adornment and sensitivity.

## **Animal Sacrifice**

It is not their flesh, nor their blood, that reaches Allah; it is your righteousness {piety and spiritual volition} that reaches Him..Their flesh will never reach Allah, nor yet their blood, but your devotion will reach Him (Qur'an 22:37).

The main purpose of allowing Muslims to continue with animal sacrifices was to turn this tradition into an institution of charity. All the verses of the Qur'an Majeed which deal with the subject wind up with the proviso that the meat be fed to the poor, the needy, those who are too modest to beg as well as the mendicants - those who beg openly (The Qur'an, 2:196; 22:28; 35-37).

In some cases, the offerers of the sacrifice are allowed to consume a portion of the meat themselves, while in others the whole of the carcass is to be given in charity. Sacrifice is meant to be an act of worship and thanksgiving to solicit the approbation of God neither in the sense of atonement nor in the sense of transposing one's sins onto a scapegoat; but it is meant to be an act of benevolence (Ihsan) to fulfill a social obligation. After reading the Qur'anic version of sacrifice, there remains no doubt in one's mind that any sacrifice that is allowed to go to waste is a sinful as well as a criminal violation of the Islamic law (shariah). Verses 22:36 and 37 make this proviso abundantly clear."

The Qur'anic injunctions are so exacting on the point of not taking the life of an animal without a justifiable cause (Be-ghair-e-haqiqin) that wasting meat, even by offering it to deities and gods is called a devilish act.

"During the early period of Islam the traditional offerings of animals made some sense. Meat was then an important ingredient of human diet and not even a scrap of it was wasted. Today we have made their killing an empty ritual and forgotten the intent."

A learned Muslim scholar, Sheikh Farid Wagdi, says in his Wagdi's Encyclopaedia - Article on Sacrifice that there might come a day when Muslims shall have to substitute the rite of animal sacrifice with other methods of giving alms.

## **The Importance of Respecting the Balance of Nature**

"Those who take undue advantage of other species break the Divine Law of equilibrium in nature - and nature never forgives." The Qur'an Majeed dwells on this theme recurrently, such as: Allah has not created all this without truth {Haqee} (Qur'an.10:5} for it is He who created everything and ordained it with due potential {Taqqdir} (Qur'an.25:2) not to allow any change to corrupt what Allah has created (Qur'an.30:30). Then a warning is given to those people who are guilty of infraction, in these words; "Do they not know how many We have annihilated before them - those whom We had established on earth as more powerful than We have established you." (Qur'an.6:6).

## **The Importance of Conserving Nature**

{Even when the world is coming to an end} On Doomsday, if any one has a palm-shoot in hand, he should plant it. Musnad of Ahmad, 5:440 and 3:184 (hereafter referred to as Musnad).

## **Blood Sports**

There are many Ahadith forbidding blood sports and the use of animals as targets, some of which are as follows: The Prophet(s) condemned those people who take up anything alive as a mere sport." (Narrated by Abdullah bin 'Omar. Muslim, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 1958).

The Prophet(s) forbade blood sports, like the Bedouins. (Narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas. Awn, (Ref. No. 32); 8:15, Hadith No. 2603. Also 'Robson'; p. 876 (Ref. No. 15, but it does not mention 'Bedouins').

The Prophet said: 'Do not set up living creatures as a target'. (Narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas. Muslim Vol. 3, Hadith No. 1957. Also 'Robson'; p. 872 (Ref. No. 15)).

The Prophet(s) condemned those who use a living creature as a target." (Narrated by Abdullah bin'Omar. Bukhari and Muslim. Also 'Robson' p. 872 (Ref. No. 15)).

The Prophet(s) forbade an animal being made a target." (Narrated by Anas. Recorded by Riyad. (Ref. No. 28); Hadith No. 1606; p. 272.

The Prophet(s) was reported as saying: 'Do not make anything having life as a target'." (Narrated by Ibn Abbas. Sahih Muslim - Kitab-us-Said Wa'dh-Dhaba'ih; Chapter DCCCXXII, Vol. III; Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan, 1976; Hadith No. 4813; p. 1079; (hereafter referred to as Kitab-us-Said).

Ibn 'Umar happened to pass by a party of men who had tied a hen and were shooting arrows at it. When they saw Ibn 'Umar coming, they scampered off. Ibn 'Umar angrily remarked: 'Who has done this? Verily! Allah's Messenger(s) has invoked a curse upon one who does this kind of thing. (id. Narrated by Said bin Jubair).

The Prophet(s) passed by some children who were shooting arrows at a ram. He told them off, saying: 'do not maim the poor beast'." (Narrated by Abdallah bin Ja'far. An-Nasai, 7:238).

The fact that these Ahadith repeat the same sayings of the Holy Prophet(s) in slightly varying wordings shows that he took the matter very seriously and repeated them again and again on different occasions in the presence of different people. Another significant point to note in this respect is that, to stop the use of animals as targets or in blood sport, the Holy Prophet(s) did the same as he did in the case of camel-humps and sheep-tails, quoted above. He declared their meat as Mujaththema and unlawful (haram) for consumption, according to the following Hadith:

God's Messenger(s) forbade eating a mujaththema {carrion} of a bird or animal set up and shot at as a target for shooting. (Narrated by Waqid al-Laihi. Abu al-Darda. Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 1473, Chapt. 'Al-At'imah'. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No.15); p. 874.



## **Military Research, Including Wound Labs**

One might also appeal to the Islamic law (Shari'ah) to oppose using animals in military research in general and in the so-called wound laboratories in particular. The above-quoted Ahadith, as well as the Juristic Rules, would seem to support the view that our wars are our own problems and that we have no right to make the animals suffer for them.

## **Animals in War**

Even in war, animals cannot be killed except if needed for food. Hazrat Abu Bakr, the first Caliph after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(s) (632-634 A.C.) addressed the Muslim army at a place outside Medina, called Jorf, before sending them off for the battle of Muta. Among the instructions he gave to the soldiers was not to slaughter animals except for food. (The Qur'an, 22:40; Tabari III, p. 123).

