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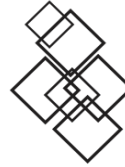
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### TOPIC

**ANIMAL RIGHTS IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY: AN ANALYTICAL AND  
COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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## ANIMAL RIGHTS IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY: AN ANALYTICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

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### Abstract

This analytical and comparative study aims to explore and analyse the perspectives on animal rights in Islam and Christianity, two of the world's major religions. The treatment of animals and their rights within religious frameworks is a topic of significant ethical, cultural, and social relevance. By examining the teachings, scriptures, and historical practices of Islam and Christianity, this research seeks to highlight the similarities and differences in their approaches to animal welfare and rights. The study begins with an overview of the beliefs and attitudes towards animals in both religions. Islamic teachings emphasise the importance of kindness and compassion towards all living beings, reflecting the concept of stewardship over the Earth. Christianity, on the other hand, often draws from the Biblical notion of human dominion over animals while also emphasising themes of compassion and responsible stewardship.

The study will delve into historical and contemporary practices within Islamic and Christian societies, highlighting instances where adherence to or deviation from religious teachings has impacted the treatment of animals. Additionally, the role of religious leaders, scholars, and institutions in shaping attitudes towards animal rights will be examined. It will shed light on how these religions address the moral responsibilities of humans towards the non-human creatures they share the planet with and how these perspectives have evolved over time. Ultimately, the findings of this research can facilitate discussions on fostering a more compassionate and responsible approach to animal welfare within religious contexts and beyond.

**Keywords:** Comparative, Animal Rights, Islam, Christianity, Bible.

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## **Introduction**

According to the traditions of the Bible, God created mankind in his own image and gave him (man) dominion and dominion over the rest of the creation. The terms dominion and dominion were used by the early Christians to mean that mankind should have dominion and dominion over non-human animals. According to Christian belief, animals do not have souls in their bodies.

### **Ancient Christianity and Animal Rights**

A review of the early history of Christianity shows that animal cruelty was not particularly noticed in early Christianity. According to ancient Christian thinkers, mankind is the best and highest among all living beings, and under this status, he can treat animals as badly as he wants because animals have only a few rights, while humans have only a few responsibilities. There are duties.

### **Modern Christianity and Animal Rights**

According to the current beliefs of modern Christianity, unnecessary cruelty to animals is not only morally wrong but also sinful. An English researcher puts modern Christianity's current position on animals in these words: Modern Christian thinking is largely sympathetic to animals and less willing to accept that there is an unbridgeable gap between animals and human beings. Although most theologians don't accept that animals have rights, they do acknowledge that some animals display sufficient consciousness and self-awareness to deserve moral consideration. Sunstain, Cass. R, and Martha C (2004).

However, today's Christian teachings seem to be more sympathetic to animals. Dr. Andren Linzey, who is one of the innovative leaders of Christians, has said that humans should take care of animals because they (animals) are part of God's creation.

Hafiz BA Masri sums up the same changes about animals in Christianity: "Old Testament does give the impression that all animals have been created merely for the benefit of human species and that man has the divinely given right to sacrifice them at the altar of his needs. However, Christians have started interpreting such passages in the context of cosmic Christology. The practical examples set by the Christian saints have been greatly responsible for the creation of a sense of affinity between man and other sentient beings. Al-Hafiz Basheer Ahmad al Masri (2007).

### **Christian Religious Literature and Animal Rights**

Christian religious literature contains very clear commands regarding the rights and welfare of animals. Certain passages and laws of the Bible are cited that give instructions on how to treat

animals well. According to the teachings of the Bible, cruelty to domestic animals is forbidden. About plowing the fields, it is forbidden to plow a donkey with an ox because, in this way, the weaker of the two are burdened, but both suffer.

"Thou shall not muzzle the ox when he trod out the corn; Thou shall not plow with an ox and an ass together. Muhammad Sarwar (2013a).

### **Christian Quotes and Animal Rights**

According to the famous sayings of the Christian religion, among the six things that God hates are the hands that shed innocent blood. Likewise, there are certain sayings through which a kind of division has been made between the righteous and the wicked, such as

A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Forti, T. (2008).

According to the Book of Hosea, a Christian religious literature, God has made an agreement with animals about their protection, according to which they will not be hunted, and all such tools will be destroyed. Kill them by, "And in that day, will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and I will make them lie down safely. Muhammad Sarwar (2013b).

In the New Testament, many traditions refer to the protection of animals. It is stated by Jesus that God loves even the lowest of His creatures. Matthew narrates that Jesus had this faith that God watches over all His creatures. Even those who are of little value to us are protected. According to Christian belief, Jesus began his life living with animals, and Christians attach great importance to this fact. An English researcher describes the same events about Hazrat Isa as follows, "Every Christian sees deep significance in the story of Jesus beginning his life among the animals. Denied shelter and lodging by the humans of Bethlehem in Judea, Mary and Joseph were forced to use a manger for Jesus' birthplace. There, Jesus was born presumably in the company of such creatures as donkeys, oxen, cows, and sheep. Jesus's appreciation for animals is demonstrated by the repeated analogies and references to animals that he used in his teachings. He referred to his followers and those who worship the Lord as sheep, and he compared God's care for Jerusalem with a hen's concern for her brood. Often in his teachings, Jesus compared himself to such animals as the lamb and the dove, known for their innocence, meekness, and docility. He often represented animals as being under God's providence, and Jesus repeated statements to practice love, mercy, and compassion are consistent with, and indeed fundamental to, the humane and preservation ethic. According to several biblical

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traditions, God appears to deal equally with humans and animals. When God saved Noah and his family from the storm, God also kept the pairs of animals safe. “And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark”. Andrew Linzey and Tom Regan (2007).

According to the teachings of the Bible, the working animals working in the fields are given one day off a week for rest, just like the working humans. The animals are assured that no work will be taken from them for one day a week. Commands Israel, Six days to your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your households, and the alien as well may be refreshed”. Muhammad Sarwar (2013c).

### **The Point of View of Christian Intellectuals and Philosophers**

The greatest opposition to animal rights is found among Christian intellectuals. Among these intellectuals, advanced Christian intellectuals are particularly prominent. Below are the statements of some of the same Christian scholars from which their points of view about animals can be easily gauged.

#### **St. Augustine (St. Augustine 354-430)**

St. Augustine is considered among the intellectuals who are not convinced of animal rights. He explains his point in these words:

“Since beasts lack reason, we need not concern ourselves with their suffering, and that is why they have no rights” Charles Hartshorne (1983).

There is also a period in Europe in which the candle of light and fantasy is burning, while at the same time, there is also a strange series of superstitions. This is the period in which millions of cats and women were burned because they represented Satan. Although some voices seem to be raised in this period regarding the rights of animals, these existed only at the individual level. Among these rising voices, the name of Leonardo da Vinci is at the top.

#### **Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)**

Even the great philosopher Immanuel Kant was not convinced of the rights of animals. He presents his views on animal rights as follows:

“As far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end” Jean-Paul Sartre (1946).

It is also a part of history when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) requested Pope Pius ix (1877-1963) to speak up for animal rights and stop animal cruelty. They refused to do their part in stopping it, saying that humans had no duties towards lower animals and that animal cruelty was not a sin.

He also opposed imposing any accountability restrictions in society regarding animal rights in Rome. He expressed his opinion something like this:

“Society for such a purpose could not be sanctioned in Rome”. Morris et al. (1978).

### **Schopenhauer (1788-1860)**

The famous philosopher Schopenhauer also complained about Christianity's anti-animal rights approach.

“Christianity contains, in fact, a great and essential imperfection in limiting its precepts to man and in refusing rights to the entire animal world”. Jean-Paul Sartre (1946).

### **Matthew Narrates Concerning Jesus**

God cares for all his Creatures, even those of little monetary value to us; in the same way, Jesus stood on the hill while preaching and said: "The Fowels of the air", your heavenly father feedeth them”. Muhammad Sarwar (2013d).

There are many places in the Bible where it is proved that God treats humans and his other creatures equally. When Allah saved Noah and his family from the storm, Allah saved the animals in the same way. And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all cattle that were with him in the ark. Sarwar, M (2013a).

Likewise, certain biblical traditions argue against the cruel killing of wild and domestic animals. Basically, the idea behind it is that mankind is dependent on a system in which everything has its place, and without it, the balance will be disturbed, which will not be good for man himself. "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them, as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they and the spirit of the beast that goeth dawn ward to the earth. "No blood may be conned out of respect for life. Only certain types of birds, land animals, and fish may be eaten. In the Bible, animals are given one day of rest in the week, just as is the case with humans. This right to rest has also been recognised for animals: “Six days to your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your Ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your households, and the alien as well may be refreshed” Sarwar, M (2013b).

The animal rights movement in America dates back to the late eighteenth century, as in England. It originated with the laws passed in New York, which were related to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was founded in 1866. In 1892, laws against repeated experiments on animals were passed. Likewise, the American Welfare Institute and the Humane Society of the U.S. were established. One of the most important laws passed in the history of animal rights in the United

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States is the 1966 Animal Research Regulations Act, signed by President Johnson. Similarly, the current animal rights movement emerged in the 1970s. From day one, this movement has sought to create a balanced relationship between humans and other living beings on moral and religious grounds. The movement was heavily fueled by philosophical underpinnings, and serious efforts were made to get Americans to become part of the animal rights movement.

A review of the characteristics of this movement has been presented by an English researcher in the following words:

"Finally, during the 70s, the modern and current animal rights social movement emerged. This movement had implicit, since its beginning, American values such as the basing upon moral and religious grounds the relationship between nature and humans, other species' rights, the right to control nature, and the establishment of responsibilities of the following generations. Vicente- Arche, A. R. (2001).

Today, America is considered the only superpower in the world. It has tried to influence other countries of the world in every field, but today, it has come to the conclusion through research that humans should treat animals well and refrain from cruelty to animals. This is the improvement of the whole world, but this is the miracle of Islam and the Prophet of Islam, who strongly emphasised treating animals well and taking care of their rights fourteen and a half years ago. The last of the Semitic religions is Islam. According to the teachings of the founder of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad, Islam is not a religion but a religion. That is, it does not offer only a few teachings of faith and worship but a systematic system of every aspect of life. For the growth and guidance of mankind, more or less one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets came from Allah, the Exalted, who continued to convey the message of Allah, the Exalted, in their own eras and in their respective nations. Their prophecies and messengers were also for specific nations and regions, but the Prophet of Islam was sent by Allah Almighty as Mercy to the worlds (Raḥmāṭu<sup>n</sup> Li<sup>l</sup> 'Ālamay<sup>n</sup>i) and closed the door of prophethood and messengers on him. You are the last prophet of Allah. No other prophet will come after you because the purpose of the mission has been completed. The merits and virtues of all religions have been gathered in Islam. This is the religion which is also the favourite religion and religion of Allah Ta'ala. Its uniqueness from other religions is that this name shows its special attribute that it is not named after a person, while each of the remaining religions is named after a particular person. Or in the name of the nation in which he was born. For example, the name Christianity is Christianity because it is related to Jesus. Buddhism is named Buddhism because its founder was Buddha.

Islam is a religion whose teachings are free from exaggeration. This was the religion of all the God-knowing and right-loving people who lived in every nation and every country. Animals are also revealed:

Regarding animals, we know from the Holy Quran that Allah Ta'ala really speaks with animals, as shown in the following verse .

And your Lord put (thought) in the heart of the bee that you build your houses in some mountains and in some trees and in some thatches (also) which people build high (like roofs). Sarwar, M (2016).

Although it is anyone's guess as to which method Allah uses to communicate with animals, all we know is that the Qur'an has used the exact same Arabic word "Wahiya" to communicate with the bee used for what Allah Ta'ala has done in dealing with His Messengers and Hazrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The interpretation and application of the revelation sent by Allah to the prophets will be different from the interpretation and application of the revelation sent to the animals.

This is a very serious and important intellectual topic that can be dealt with briefly here, but it proves the basic fact that animals are also endowed with such a level of consciousness that they can understand the message of Allah Almighty. And you can follow it.

And this is an ability that is superior to instinct and intuition. According to a Confucian Sufi (who lived in the 3rd century BC), "All living beings that exist between the earth and the sky that have blood and breathe are also all conscious.

Contribution of Animals to Natural Reserves:

Once it is proved that all species of animals are one community, like the communities of human beings, then it is also understood that every creature found on earth has a regular place in all-natural reserves as their birthright. It has parts.

Let us see here why some mankind do not live up to the terms of this common heritage. Looking at some people's inappropriate behaviour towards animals, it seems that they may have inherited this attitude from primitive people when humans competed with them for their food for their survival.

Man has always been in competition with animals for getting his food, and this problem has become more intense in the current situation of the world, especially due to mismanagement in modern agriculture. The Holy Qur'an has tried hard to remove his fear by giving him confidence and assurance and has said that Allah Ta'ala is not only the Creator, but He is also the Sustainers and Sustainers (of all His creations). Finsen, L., & Finsen, S. (1994).



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However, the Holy Qur'an also states this condition very strongly that such a (man) has to strive, labour, and work for his food like all other creatures, and his share will be in the same proportion as the proportion of his labour. It will be as much as he will do labour.

The Following Verses of the Quran also clarify the Same Concepts.

So, man should look at his sustenance (and consider). Indeed, we rained water with great force. Dense orchards and (a variety of) fruits and fodder (of animals) for you and your livestock. And it is He Who sends down the winds with glad tidings before His mercy (rain), and We send down from the sky pure (cleansing) water so that by it We may give life to (any) dead city and (Moreover) let us give this (water) to the many cattle and (nomadic) men whom We have created. And have they not seen that we send the water to the barren land, then we bring out of it fields from which their cattle eat, and they themselves also eat? Do they not see? It is He who took out its water (separately) from the earth and brought forth its plants (in the remaining dry regions), and it is He who (by combining certain substances) raised the firm mountains from the earth. For the benefit of what after reading all these verses, one may think that all these verses are probably about the same animals with which human interests are related, but if the Quran is studied carefully from this point of view, it is known that the Quran's message is not only for pets and domestic animals but for all animals.

### **Islamic History and Animal Rights**

History is a witness to the fact that the people of Europe are not the founders of creating animal welfare and rights arrangements and shelters for animals, but this honour also goes to the people of Islam and the founder of Islam. Before talking about the problems of animals, it was possible to defend and protect their basic rights. Having feelings of love for all creatures is a fundamental part of Islamic law, Islamic history, and Islamic culture. Islamic history shows that the protection of animal welfare and rights has a unique and important position in Islamic history. In the Middle Ages, Cairo had a great position in terms of its culture, economy, and population. Everywhere in Cairo, the presence of hotels, schools, mosques, palaces, and various institutions was at its peak. Along with all these buildings and institutions, special places for animal rights were also created in Cairo. They had places for all kinds of animals to rest, drink, and rest. Water ponds and cisterns were built at the beginning of long roads for animals to drink. So that traders and travelling caravans can water their animals from there and depart. These bright aspects of Islamic history have been mentioned by Prof. Kirsten Still in this way:

"Muslims in Egypt established watering troughs for animals adjacent to schools and mosques and endowed pious trusts (waqf) to support the burden of providing care to those animals and supplying them with water. The services were provided to all animals owned and stray alike. The troughs were made of stone or marble and were a charitable way to provide water to people, their working animals, and all other kinds of animals that found themselves in the city and in need of water". Kristen Still (1984).

Historians have made particular mention of these water cisterns and ponds in the medieval history of Islam, with the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk periods in particular replete with such examples. Examples of water cisterns are common from the Fatimid period. Where animals used to drink water. The water reservoirs in Qarafa were built by the daughter of King Mu'azuddin Allah next to the palace, and it was in 976 AD. Attached to the other palaces of Qarafa were many cisterns which were built for drinking water for animals.

Among them were those reservoirs which have been mentioned by the famous historian Taqiuddin Maghribi in his history. Even today, there is a water tank for drinking water for the shod animals, which is in front of Al-Qamar Mosque on Al-Mu'ez Street. In the same way, there is also the reservoir, which was reconstructed by Amir or Al Bagha al-Salami in 1396.

There is great balance and moderation in Islam regarding animals; it neither places them in such a sacred place that humans have to bow their heads in reverence to them nor does it deprive them of their rights. And the helper leaves that people continue to oppress them in any way they want and continue to deprive them of their rights. Islam, with great seriousness and modesty, clarifies the limits of relations and connections between humans and animals, determining their statuses and presenting detailed commands. Islam's view of animals must be seen in the context of its general view of the universe, man, and other creatures. According to the Quran, animals are created for man. It is Allah Who has created cattle for you, that you may ride on some of them, and some of them you may eat, and there are other benefits in them for you, and that you may ride on them (further) to fulfil that need reach that which is (fixed) in your breasts and (that) you are carried on them and on boats. However, Muslims are instructed not to do cruelty to animals, and Muslims are only allowed to eat halal meat that has been made halal according to Sharia law. Melek Saral et al (2020).

### **Animal Rights in Pre-Islamic Arab Civilization**

The Holy Prophet is an Arab by his mission; He belongs to the famous Quraysh tribe of Arabia, and the Holy Qur'an itself was also revealed in the Arabic language, which the Holy Qur'an itself testifies in these words. From the study of Arab civilisation before the emergence of

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Islam, it is known that the Arabs used to worship animals, and for that reason, they had declared the meat of different types of animals as harmful. They also used animals to perform evil deeds like magic. Some tribes of Arabs also adopted animals as symbols specific to their tribe, and some animals were considered very blessed, such as camels and horses, bees, and some other animals. They bring blessings, while dogs and cats were believed to be associated with the evil eye, which they believed sometimes took the form of animals. Like countless other civilisations, pre-Islamic Arabs attributed many human characteristics to animals. The lion was characterised by bravery, the domestic chicken by generosity, and the sugarcane by foolishness.

Among the pre-Islamic Arabs, the most important animal, without any doubt, was the camel. That is, the camel was the species that not only provided the Arabs with food and clothing (shelter) but also provided them with facilities for travelling from one place to another. The Holy Qur'an also invites us to consider the structure and texture of the camel and says. The disbelievers wonder how all this will be made in Paradise. Do they not look at the camel to see how it is made of a strange structure? Given the importance of the camel, sacrificing the camel was considered a great act of generosity. This is the reason why camels were sacrificed in honour of guests coming from far away on the occasion of Hajj. Bukhari, I. (1957). Before the rise of Islam, there was a custom among the Arabs that with the death of the owner of a camel, the camel was also sacrificed so that the camel could serve him in the afterlife. Arab Bedouins also believed that eating camel meat is a religious act of submission and that seeing a camel in a dream is very auspicious and blessed.

Before Islam, there were ugly traditions of fighting animals, cutting the hump of a camel, and cutting off the tail of a sheep in Arab civilisation. Holy Prophet has strictly forbidden all these ugly and cruel rituals. Feeding animals is the payment of a basic right; in particular, the right of animals to drink has great importance in Islamic jurisprudence. From this one problem, it can be estimated how much importance Islam has given to animals and their rights, even though sometimes the opponents of Islam ridicule this Shariah order of Islam that:

Is Islam a more modern and right-giving religion than today's modern age?

The following hadith provides justification for this right for blessed animals.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: A man was going, and he felt very thirsty on the way; he saw a well, so he went down into that well and drank water. When he came out of the well, he saw That a dog was panting and licking mud due to thirst; that person thought that this dog was suffering from thirst as I was (some time ago), so he went down into the well and washed his socks. I filled the water, then, holding the sock in my mouth,

climbed on it and watered the dog. Allah accepted this good deed and forgave him. The Companions said: O Messenger of Allah! Is there a reward for us in these animals, too? He said: There is a reward in every living being (i.e. every living animal) Al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim (1957).

### **Do Not Overwork Animals**

Allah Almighty has created everything in the universe under a purpose and scope. The goals of every living being are also limited and bound to perform work and services within a certain scope. Can work? When an attempt is made to take more work from him than he is capable of, then it will be equivalent to oppressing this animal. Therefore, this is the command from the Prophetic teachings that we should have the same expectations regarding animals for which they were created, and in no case should one try to take more work from them than they are capable of, as is clear from the following Sunnah of the Prophet .

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas narrates that the Holy Prophet said: Do not make any living thing a target (for archery). Mo, D., Xunzi, & Han, F. (1967).

### **Derived Words**

Animal rights have been opposed in ancient Christianity, but animal rights are strongly supported in modern Christianity. Judaism has compassionate teachings about animals. However, these teachings, including Christian teachings, do not provide a strong foundation for the current animal rights movement. Islam is the only religion whose teachings on animal rights can fulfil all the requirements of the animal rights movement in the present day. Ancient civilisations have conflicting traditions regarding animals. Babylonian, Nineveh, Egyptian, and Indian civilisations also have examples of worshipping animals with kindness. Whereas in ancient Greek civilisation, the owner's crime was punished by his animal. Similar to the guilty man, animals were sentenced to imprisonment or death. Ancient Roman law allowed that if a landowner's ox crossed the median boundary of a cultivated field, both the animal and the owner could be put to death.

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