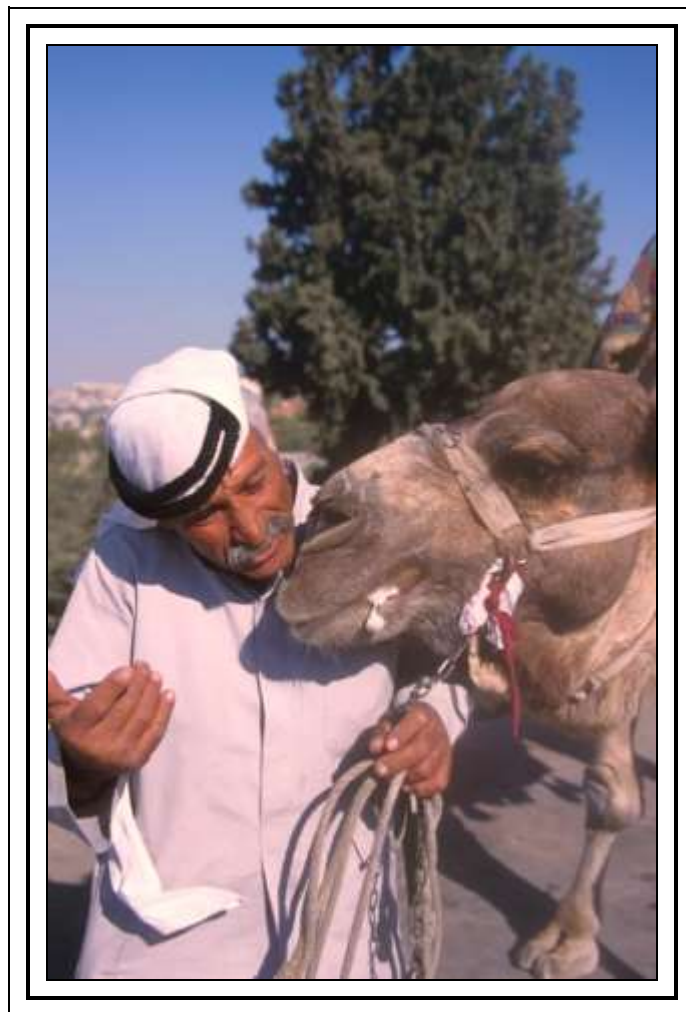


# *Islam and Life cycles*

*(Ecology in the Haadiths and the Noble Qur'an)*



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## *Story of life*

This morning men departed on camel's backs for the desert of Nafud, in the eastern part of Arabia. Grandpa showed up at my house with a brown camel the color of sun kissed desert sand.

"Come on, my son, I will show you the desert."

I threw my tablet on one of the shelves and complained, "I'm good. I know everything I need to know about the desert."

Grandpa frowned. "You think you know everything," he said, "but maybe there is room for improvement."

I remove the earbuds and said, "With all due respect, what is there to learn about?"

Grandpa smiled, "You'll see. Go get a sleeping bag and a gourd and come along."

When Grandpa had something on his mind, it was coined. So I followed him on the dusty path, under a sun that could heat an egg on a rock, already wary of this trip. The sleeping bag weighted like a feather across my back.

"Waali," said grandfather, "untether your beast and thank you camel for carrying you through the desert. It is going to be hard on you and on him too. He likes to feel appreciated."

I opened my eyes wide. Why would I thank a camel? Wasn't the beast there to serve me? Why would Grandpa mind about its feelings? As if animals had feelings.

"okay, dude, thanks," I said reluctantly.

I had never seen this part of the desert before, the one we trudged upon for hours.

The dunes were like a sea rippling along large areas of graveled lands. I thought about the life in the desert. The life here was like the stunted type of sorghum that was grown in the sands. It was a miracle of life, but a harsh one.

Grandpa often picked up his Qur'an while rocking on his camel. He slowly recited Surah 16 known as Surah An-Nahl (The Bee):

*Allah has created the heaven and the earth with truth.*

*He has created man from a drop of semen, then behold, this same man becomes an open opponent.*

*And the cattle, He has created them for you; in them there is warmth (from fur), and numerous benefits, and of them you eat.*

*And wherein is beauty for you, when you bring them home in the evening, and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning.*

*And they carry loads to a land that you could not reach except with great trouble to yourselves. Truly, your Lord is full of Kindness, Most Merciful.*

*He it is Who sends down water (rain) from the sky; from it you drink and from it (grows) the vegetation on which you send your cattle to pasture.*

*With it He causes to grow for you the crops, the olives, the date-palms, the grapes, and every kind of fruit. Verily! In this is indeed an evident proof and a manifest sign for people who give thought.*

*And He has subjected to you the night and the day, the sun and the moon; and the stars are subjected by His command. Surely, in this are proofs for people who understand.*

*And whatsoever He has created for you on this earth of varying colors (botanical life and zoological life). Verily! In this is a sign for people who remember.*

*And He has affixed into the earth mountain standing firm, lest it should shake with you, and rivers and roads, that you may guide yourselves.*

*And landmarks and by the stars human beings guide themselves.*

*And if you would count the graces of  
Allah, never could you be able to count them.*

It was still daylight, but the moon was visible like a second earth high above. I pondered over the Surah.

*How strange that nothing is ever at rest.*

The sands over the hills were moving by the action of the wind; water was lifted to the sky by the action of the sun; desert plants moved underground till they reached a wet spot, and palm-trees reproduced from their root. What seemed immobile had another life hidden from view. Even the mountains did not stay in place and moved along the magma of the planet. They melted over time and went down the earth in a cycle. Everything was bound to die if created one day, and what remained from the dead was

given to the living. Everything was recycled. Not only this was beautiful as was mentioned in the Surah, but it was useful, and plentiful.

"Why all this?" I asked.

"This?" Grandpa asked in surprise.

"Yes, all the sand, the dunes, the dryness, the scorpions, and camels. Why this?"

Grandpa said, "Oh, so men could worship Allah and be thankful. If one thinks about it, each time men had shown pride and been stingy and disobeyed Allah, they had to face consequences. These dunes are the consequences. We burned the trees, killed the animals. This was all forest a long time ago."

Several people from the caravan watched us thoughtfully. They were mostly merchants traveling from one place to another on account of their trading. A traveler from the caravan bowed toward us and said, "In the land I come from, there are many trees, beautiful trees. Men are strong and well built, and there is plenty for everybody. But when you look inside of each tree, you can see there is a disease. When you see inside each man, you see a disease too. Trees and men have good appearance, but at the first gush of wind, they fall down on the ground. Men have diseases like cancer or asthma in correlation with breathing polluted air and trees are eaten from inside by beetles. Because pollution, like indoor pollution, is not visible to the eye for many years, people never care about what they waste on earth. They become proud and act as if they were not responsible personally for the decline of the earth."

Grandpa nodded and added, "They act like this man Allah speaks about in the Qur'an [Al Khaf: verses32-45].

*Set forth to them the parable of two men: for one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date palms; in between the two We placed corn-fields.*

*Each of those gardens brought forth its produce, and failed not in the least therein: in the midst of them We caused a river to flow.*

*The produce of one of the men was abundant, so he said to his companion, 'I have more wealth than you, and more honor and power (many men follow me). That will never perish. And the Hour of Judgment will never come.'*

*His companion answered him, 'Do you deny the existence of Allah Who created you out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned you into a man? But I believe for my part that He is Allah, My Lord, and none shall I associate with my Lord. Why did you not say, as you went into your garden, that there is no power but with Allah. If you do see me less than you in wealth and sons, it may be that my Lord will give me something better than that garden.'*

*Allah was angry with the words of the first man, so He sent thunderbolts from heaven, and made a slippery sand of the man's garden. The water of the garden ran off underground so that its fruits (and enjoyment) were encompassed (with ruin), and he remained twisting and turning his hands over what he had spent on his property, which had (now) tumbled to pieces to its very foundations, and he could only say, 'Woe is me! Would I had never ascribed partners to my Lord and Cherisher!'*

*Nor had he numbers to help him against Allah, nor was he able to deliver himself.*

I thought about this story. The attitude of the proud man was so common in the world, that it had led mankind to many trials. I thought farther about the main disasters in the world. The first event I remembered was the rainy season in South-East Asia. Malaysia especially, but also Borneo, Indonesia, Thailand were struck these last years by many natural disasters. No wonder since one of the rain forest is located in South-East Asia, and people keep on cutting it down bit by bit. In only a few years, the Rain Forest had been cut in half! Many medicines came from the Rain Forest, medicines that cannot be found elsewhere, and also many species of plants and animals that will completely disappear from the surface of the earth with the deforestation. Forests give us oxygen so we can breathe and be healthy, and they regulate rainfalls. But this was nothing compared to the loss of hundreds of lives due to deforestation.

There were these tribesmen who witnessed their villages washed away by the rain. Not only everything was destroyed and carried away like people and cattle and crops, but also their ancient way of life. Hundred of years of civilization were destroyed in one day! But it did not happen like that. The forest was sold to European countries to make furniture or planks that would be used only once as they were used as construction materials. The tribesmen gathered in anger and went to see the manager of the logging

camp who gave them a few hundred of dollars to shut their complaints down. The manager looked them going away with a smile on his face. He thought within himself, 'With the money we gain from the forest, the country will be able to create schools, and shopping centers, and they would have a chance to compete with developed countries in knowledge and technology!'

The tribesmen soon realized the little money they had received would be quickly spent to replace what they had lost and used to cure the wounded and the sick. They looked at the huge buildings profiling in the horizon and looked at their modest way of life; they sighed, then walked back deeper into the forest in silence. Next day and the days after, the tribesmen tried to fish in the river that slowly calmed down, but the fish was dead and nothing would grow or move in the waters for months, except for leaches and snakes. They looked sadly at their sons who were preparing themselves to go to the city. Soon those children would bring back with them stories about how their living-conditions had apparently improved. They would bring back with them radios, and catalogues about objects they would never think about otherwise and did not need. Children would criticize the elders, and maybe even bring alcohol. They would soon forget about the traditional ways of life and they would forget to be thankful to Allah for the earth on which they walked and for the fruits coming from the trees. Maybe they would even forget that they survived because the forest was still alive, that the fruits they ate came from this very forest, as well as many other things. Maybe they would cut down more trees back there, in the town, so there would be more parking lots for their cars. Maybe they would end up believing that meat comes from tin pots. Maybe they would fail to see that the food that used to come from the forest was now imported to their country because the fertile land was full of cash crops: bananas, cocoa, coffee plants which would be soon sent to other countries to repay the national debt.

And the tribesmen retreated further into the forest and sighed, only words of silence coming to their lips. But men had to see the consequences before they could understand. When it was too late.

The logging camp manager didn't see that the earth was very muddy and slippery that day. Suddenly the earth gave way and he was eaten up by the earth and buried alive.



*It doesn't matter, thought the tribesmen. Tomorrow, somebody just like him will replace this one, no special qualification is needed for cutting the forest. But did his life matter?*

“Is it why you wanted me to see the desert, Grandpa?” I said.

He nodded. “I want you to see and I want you to remember.

It was said that the temperature of the desert had risen over the years, and the deserts had become dryer. This was known as the ‘green-house effect’. The nomads lived on little, finding their food with each season, and not dwelling very long in the same area.

Consequently, they used their natural resources sparingly, letting the earth time to replenish itself. Now, the governments encouraged nomads to settle down, causing the soil to become overused and the cattle to eat all vegetation around the settlements, turning complete areas into no-man’s lands.

“Is there any solution to it,” I asked Grandpa.

He stretched on the litter and drunk a few drops of water, precious as gold in the desert. Then he recited,

*By the token of time through the ages*

*Verily man is in loss*

*Except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and join together in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy [Qur'an, Surah 103]*

Then he added, "Men of faith are always winners. But how much faith do we have?"

Suddenly a man riding a white horse appeared on the tormented and swaying horizon. The heat made the land look like a furnace where spots of herbs marked the limit between the earth and the sky. The horse was restive and its rider turned it rather roughly. It was not a verdant land, so we could not go slow and let the animals graze. On the contrary, we passed through an arid area, even more barren than the one we had been riding all day, covered in rocks and salt. As a result, the rider had quickened the pace of the horse and hunger had enfeebled the animal.

Grandpa dismounted, ran to the horse and wipes the face of the horse with his gown. He brandished an index finger under the chin of the man and said, “Fear Allah, it behooves you to treat the animals gently. See here, my brother, do not clip the forelock of

the horse as you did, for a decency is attached to its forelock. Do not clip its mane, for it protects it; nor its tail, for it is its fly-flap! See, my brother, Allah is Who made us vicegerents on earth. There is a reward for acts of charity to every beast alive. A good deed done to a beast is as well as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being. Kindness to animals was promised by rewards in the Hereafter.” [A Haadith]

The man apologized and turned his face down out of shame. Nevertheless, he told his matter, and Waali’s grandfather and the mysterious rider disappeared in the wilderness while we made camp.

I was about to enter the circle the travelers had made on the ground to mark the place we would worship Allah when Grandpa reappeared from the veils of the night. He approached, extinguished the small fire, and dragged me by the sleeve out of the tracks.

Then he said, “Haven’t you learned anything today? Come take care of the animals before you put up for the night.”

I protested because I was cold, hungry and tired and I wanted to slip inside my sleeping bag and dive my teeth into some bread and dates. Grandpa was not used to long journeys on camels’ back, but me, my bones hurt.

I asked, “Why do you prevent me from even performing my prayers?”

He wiped the sides of his camel and said, “The companions of the prophet, peace be upon them, used to delay even saying their prayers until they had first given their riding and pack animals fodder and had attended to their needs. Think about it. They carry us all day and stand us without complaint; don’t you think you should be grateful to them for that?”

I looked straight and asked more kindly, “We are all bound to make mistakes. It is a good thing you told me about that. But why did you stop my fire from going and pushed me away like you did?”

Grandpa answered, “We do not pitch our tents for the night on the beaten tracks, for they are the pathways of nocturnal creatures, and where you built your fire, there was a column of ants who would have been hurt because of your ignorance. Our beloved Prophet, peace be upon him, used to forbid hurting or causing discomfort to any animal, as insignificant it might be. It’s because 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. So, to give water to your beasts when they need it may be the cause for you to enter Paradise; to neglect and be cruel to animals may cause you to enter Hell.” [A haadith]

I thought for a moment about the wisdom of what Grandpa had just said and retrieved my steps to look at the camp. Sure enough there were silver ants looking for water drops all over the tracks and their backs glowed under the aura of the moon.

I bowed my head in shame. If men had been more careful and had followed Allah’s commands, the earth would look differently by now. I was one of the ignorant. It was so easy to become inconsiderate.

*“Astaghfirullah, Astarfighullah, astarfighullah -- Allah, forgive me,”* I repeated.

Grandpa came near him and put his hand on my shoulder. "Everybody is but a student on this earth. If you did not make mistakes, God would destroy you and create another people who would make mistakes and ask for forgiveness. So make mistakes and learn." Then he turned his dark eyes grooved in a nest of wrinkles and smiled.

The camels were waiting for us.

## STUDYING THE STORY:

Scan the story carefully. Look for details. Fill in the chart below to compare the characteristics of animals and the characteristics of human beings as seen in Islam.

A first example is already done for you.

Characteristics of Animals	Man-animal kingdom Relationships and common characteristics	Characteristics of Humans
<p><u>1) Example:</u></p> <p>Animals are described as gentle and submitted to humans.</p>	<p><u>1) Example:</u></p> <p><i>Men and beast have both been created by Allah, but one (the animal) serves the other (humans) and helps him to survive in difficult natural conditions (scorch, distance, lack of food, especially in the desert)</i></p>	<p><u>1) Example:</u></p> <p><i>And the cattle, He (Allah) has created them for you. (on first page of story) For food and warmth. They carry loads to a land that you could not reach except with great trouble. (on second page)</i></p> <p>Men are described as feeble. They need help to carry loads.</p>
<p>2) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>2) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>2) -----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>3) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>3) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>3) -----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>4) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>4) -----</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>4) -----</p> <p>-----</p>

### Drawing conclusions:

After completing the chart, why do you think humans have to take care of animals and should not hurt them intentionally?

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Did you learn something about animals you did not know before? What is it?

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**Cross out** what you think animals **cannot** do. Leave blank what they possibly can do. Think well, some of these points are very controversial. Do not take any answer for granted.

Dream	Understand	Think	Pray	Read
Feel emotions	Imagine	Speak	Decide	Paint
Form communities	Take personal decisions	Design (architecture)	Build (machines)	Build (tools)

1) What problems did you encounter while doing this exercise? Explain:

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2) How are animals different from humans? Can you tell?

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3) Do you think nowadays men are respecting animals? Why some people mass exterminate (kill) some species of animals like the rhinoceros, the elephants, or the lions?

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4) Why some people do experiments on animals? Is it ok to do that?

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5) Why do some people create Associations all over the world in order to protect the animals? Brigitte Bardot is a French lady who fought against Muslims' practice of animals sacrifice. She thinks the killing of thousand of animals is useless and cruel during the ceremony of the end of Zul-Hijjah. Do you agree with Brigitte Bardot?

Explain:

In one way, she is right because -----

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But, we, as Muslims, we think that -----

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6) Some people think animals are better than men and men are worse than animals. What do you think concerning this point?

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## ECOLOGY AND THE HAADITHS:

### LOVE

Unlike the Qur'an that is a transcription of the words of Allah ta'alah, the **haadiths** explain what our prophet (Peace be upon him) said and did during his lifetime. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Allah's Blessings be upon him) was a model for all the Muslims and the humanity because he was constantly inspired by Allah.

We can learn many things in the Haadiths that are not mentioned in the Qur'an hence completing the Noble Book. Here is one example:

It is significant to know that rivers and fruit trees are abundant in the gardens of Jennah (Paradise). Even if plants grow rapidly and in plenty in the Heavens, they are different from the plants we know on earth. Men are not required to plant and harvest in the gardens of Eden, but the Sunnah tells us the story of a farmer who will ask a special favor from our Lord.



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Narrated by

Abu Huraira:

What are the differences between plants on earth and the plants in Paradise?

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(Al Bukhari: Volume 9, book 93, number 610)

Once the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) was preaching while a Bedouin was sitting there.

*The Prophet said, "A man from among the people of Paradise will request Allah to allow him to cultivate the land. Allah will say to him, 'Haven't you got whatever you desire?' He will reply, 'yes, but I like to cultivate the land.' (Allah will permit him and) he will sow the seeds, and within seconds the plants will grow and ripen and (the yield) will be harvested and piled in heaps like mountains. On that Allah will say (to him), 'Take, here you are, O son of Adam, for nothing satisfies you.'" On that the Bedouin said, "O Allah's Apostle! Such man must be either from Quraish or from Ansar, for they are farmers while we are not." On that Allah's Apostle smiled.*

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What do we learn, in this passage, about the believer's love for the creation?

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The love for Nature is so strong in Islam that an impressive Haadith states:

*When doomsday comes if someone has a palm shoot in his hand he should plant it.*

[Reported by al Bayhaqi]

This Haadith also shows the responsibility of men towards all that lives. Life is sacred because Allah has given it. But there is another meaning that this Haadith conveys. What is it? Why when the earth is going to be destroyed and revived men should still plant trees?

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The bond between the Muslim and Allah's creation is strong because all has been created to worship Allah Ta'alah. We all have the same purpose on earth. Allah has created a unity between all things in His creation, and an unbreakable bound. For this reason, everything created makes Tasbeeh (reciting supplications), even plants and pebbles.

Some examples:

*According to At-Tirmidhi and AD-DÂRIMI and Al-Hâkim, ' Ali Ibn Abi Tâlib (R&K) said: " I was accustomed to accompanying Prophet everywhere where he went in Mecca. One day, we left the area of Mecca and each time we passed close to a tree or a rock, they greeted the Prophet saying: "Peace be upon you, Prophet of Allah."*

The theologists affirm that these events took place at the beginning of the mission of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as way of supporting and proving to him that creation will obey to him and that his call will be listened.

*Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had as a practice to be pressed on a trunk of palm tree while he made delivering the sermon of Friday in the mosque of Medinah.*

*One day, one proposed to him to build a Minbar [to him, a pulpit] where he would be held to make the sermon. The Prophet accepted. When the pulpit was installed and that Friday came, the Prophet went up on the pulpit and at this point in time the trunk of palm tree emitted cries of pain for it was separated from the Prophet. The Prophet ran towards it and passed the hand on the trunk, which was calmed.*



This miracle is conveyed by a plethora of witnesses among the companions of the Prophet. As an example one quotes: 'Ubayy Ibn Ka' B, Jâbir Ibn ' Abdillâh, Anas Ibn Mâlik, ' Abdillâh Ibn ' Omar Ibn Al-KhaTTâb, ' Abdullâh Ibn ' Abbâs, Sahl Ibn Saad, Abou Saïd Al-Khadri, Buraidah Ibn Al-HaSib Al-Aslami, Om Salamah, and Al-MoTTalib Ibn Abi Wadâ' ah Have-Sahmi. According to Year-Nisâ' I in his book Have-Sonan Al-Kobrâ, according to Sahl Ibn Saad:

*"People were about to cry when they heard the trunk groaning until the Prophet had comforted it while passing its hand above. The Prophet said:*

*" By That which has my heart, if I had not comforted it, it would have continued thus until the day of the last Judgement."*

*During a visit paid to the prophet, by the first three Khulafa (future Islamic rulers), Abu Bakhr, Umar and Uthman, the Prophet picked up seven or nine pebbles and put them in his hand. Thereupon they made tasbeeh (praises for Allah) in audible sounds like that of the bees.[reported by Al-Bazzar]*

The true believer creates ties of affection with living and non-living creatures because they are intimately related. We love the creation because it was created by Allah Ta'alah. The creation also loves us. Read the passage below and find out why?

Because -----



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Narrated by Anas bin Malik:

*I went along with the Prophet to Khaibar so as to serve him. (Later on) when the Prophet returned he, on seeing the Uhud mountain, said, "This is **a mountain that loves us and is loved by us.**" Then he pointed to Medina with his hand saying, "O Allah! I make the area, which is in between Medina's two mountains **a sanctuary**, as Abraham made Mecca a*

*sanctuary. O Allah! Bless us in our Sa and Mudd (i.e. units of measuring)."*

(Bukhari: Volume 4, Book 52, Number 139)

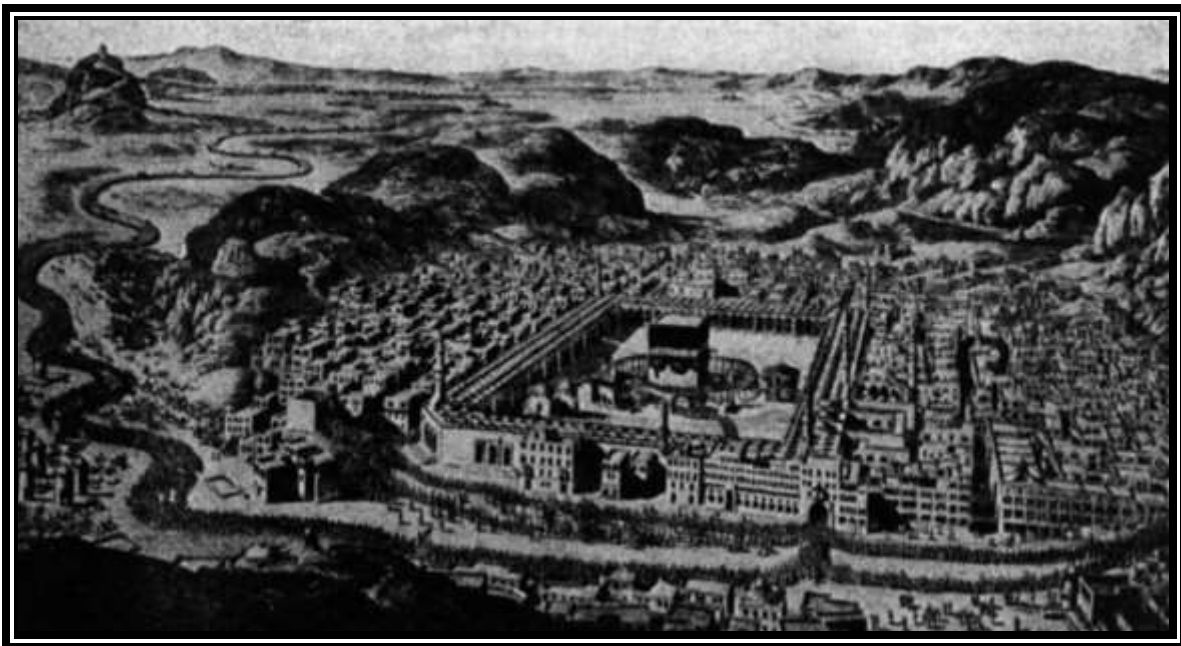
What is the definition of a sanctuary?

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What happened on Safa and Marwa in the Islamic history that is related in the Qur'an?  
Why do Muslims walk between those two mountains during the annual Hajj?  
Why does the Prophet says in a Haadith: (Bukhari: 2, 26, 706): *"Verily! (the mountains) As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the symbols of Allah"*?

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These mountains, by their strategic places, are sacred. Other mountains are also mentioned in Islam. For example, a hill in Arafat would be the place where Adam and Awwa (Eve) met again for the first time on Earth after they have been expelled from Eden.

Many times in the Qur'an, mountains are described as very useful; that stand firm and hold the earth like pegs, which they really do in scientific terms.

## RESPECT:

Such a love described in Islam for the creation demands great respect for our natural resources. It is important for Muslims not to waste or let themselves go to excessive consumption. This concern goes very far! It appears everywhere in the Muslim law. One must be honest when selling goods from the earth and not waste people's confidence and put their health in jeopardy.

### **Sales and Trade:**

Narrated by Anas bin Malik:

*Allah's Apostle forbade the sale of fruits till they are almost ripe (too old to be eaten).*

*He was asked what is meant by 'are almost ripe.' He replied, "Till they become red."*

*Allah's Apostle further said, "If Allah spoiled the fruits, what right would one have to take the money of one's brother (i.e. other people)?"*

Narrated Ibn Shihab: If somebody bought fruits before their benefit is evident and then the fruits were spoiled with blights, **the loss would be suffered by the owner (not the buyer).**

Describe what is implied in this last sentence: "the loss would be suffered by the owner (not the buyer)"?

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### One must share the goods of the earth with the animals:

It is interesting to know that the farmer who plants crops is encouraged to pray to Allah, saying: '*Allah, give part of the crop to the animals, and part of the crop to myself.*' In Islam, natural resources must be shared equally and justly, even with animals. There are stories recorded at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that prove this point.

### One must be just towards the animals:

Narrated by Abu Huraira:

*The Prophet said, "While a man was riding a cow, it turned towards him and said, 'I have not been created for this purpose (i.e. carrying), **I have been created for sloughing.**'"*

It has been written that a wolf spoke to one of the companions of the Prophet near Medina as narrated in Fatah-al-Bari.

Unais bin 'Amr: Ahban bin Aus said, *"I was amongst my sheep. Suddenly a wolf caught a sheep and I shouted at it. The wolf sat on its tail and addressed me, saying, 'Who will look after it (i.e. the sheep) when you will be busy and not able to look after it? **Do you forbid me the provision which Allah has provided me?**'"*

(Bukhari: Volume 3, Book 39, Number 517)

The cow clearly reproaches the man to mistreat it because the cow is used contrary to its purpose. It can become weak and useless because of the abuse of the man. The wolf reproaches the shepherd his greed. If one really thinks about it, this is what ecology talk about! Each species must have its place in the life cycle to make it work. We need predators so that sheep will not become too numerous. Too many cattle would destroy the natural balance because animals would be eating too many herbs and bushes on their grazing land. The remains left by the wolf will also nourish scavengers that feed on dead bodies. And so on, and so forth... This is the principle of the food chains.

## **SENSITIVITY:**

Read the story at the beginning of this unit. What does Waali's grandfather wants to teach us about the treatment of animals in Islam?

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Allah warns us that excess and negligence leads to grave consequences. He forbids all mischief. In particular, Allah forbids Muslims to burn trees in time of war. Why? Because living creatures, as Islam teaches its followers, can feel and suffer and also because they take trees and forests as homes and refuge; forests are also their reserve for food. Scientists have studied plants for many years. They have discovered amazing behaviors among them that have become evident only since a few centuries. The way of looking at plants and

animals has drastically changed, especially this century. Read the book *When the Elephants Weep* to be become convinced of this idea. For instance, in 1873, a scientist tested for electrical impulses in a plant. He found out that the plant received the same types of electrical waves that make nerve impulses in animals. Research has shown that the chemical reactions a plant emits when it is suffering damage are almost identical to the neuro-hormonal reactions that regulate pain and injury repair in animals. Even more bizarre to us is the fact that aspirin sprinkled on the leaves seems to relieve the reaction. It is enough to feel touched, even if we do not know if plants really feel pain as we feel it.

Scientists also noticed that the sensory systems and response systems allow plants to regulate hydraulic pressures and growth rates in different areas, which work like the muscle system in animals. They are very sensitive to changes in the environment; noise can even stunt the growth of some plants by half. People who are said to have green thumbs are usually people who love plants. This love somehow is transmitted to the plant.

How do you personally feel about that? Make the experience with two plants. Speak to one plant and ignore the other. What happens after a few weeks?

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It is clear that Islam believes in the feelings in plants and rocks. They can love, feel pain and recite prayers as well as supplications. We have recently discovered that there is life in rocks, an inner life that completely escapes us. We should trust the Qur'an and the Sunnah about the sensitive life of the creation and not judge by our own eyes. Science has made shocking discoveries that we would have thought ridiculous or in the domain of science fiction. Why wait for science to believe what our Revelation tells us?





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For many years, scientists kept on torturing animals because they thought animals did not feel anything. Things have changed now even if laboratories still use them for their experiments. Fourteen centuries ago, at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, Allah already prohibited Muslims from torturing animals, especially for the sake of pleasure or sport.

Narrated by Ibn 'Umar:

***The Prophet cursed the one who did Muthla to an animal (i. e., cut its limbs or some other part of its body while it is still alive).***

(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 67, Number 424)

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) always prevented people from harming as insignificant insects as ants, or birds, or domestic animals. He knew that each species has its role and is very important at its own level. He treated them as believers and worshippers of Allah.

For instance, the Sunnah tells the story of an ant who bit one of the Prophets (Peace be upon him):

Narrated by Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, *"Once while a prophet amongst the prophets was taking a rest underneath a tree, an ant bit him. He, therefore, ordered that his luggage be taken away from underneath that tree and then ordered that the dwelling place of the ants should be set on fire. Allah sent him a revelation:-- "Wouldn't it have been sufficient to burn a single ant (that bit you) rather than a whole community that glorifies my name?"*



(Bukhari: Volume 4, Book 54, Number 536)

What do we learn about the way we should look at every living creature?

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## HARMFUL ANIMALS:

However, if animals are harmful, they may be killed, although never with fire.  
The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:  
*“There are five pests that may be killed whether one is in ihraam or not:  
rats, scorpions, crows, kites [a hawk-like bird], and mad dogs.”*  
(Reported by Muslim, 2071).

Another report adds a sixth: snakes.  
Thus the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us that they are harmful pests, and that they are unlike other animals which do not do harm, and so he told us to kill them whether we are in ihraam or not (state of cleanliness that precedes the ritual of Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage) if they attack us. If other creatures, such as ants or cockroaches or dung-beetles, cause us harm, they may also be killed with insecticides, but not with fire.  
And Allaah knows best.  
So, if a dangerous snake enters your house, what will you do?

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Islam teaches us another set of behaviors in that particular case.  
The answer is that you should make it leave your house. If it refuses, then it should be killed.  
But men should always do it quickly and without sufferings:

Imam Muslim narrated that Shadad Ibn-Aws said:  
*“I have kept in heart two points from our Prophet (Peace be upon Him). Allah orders us to refine every thing we do. When killing enemies, kill properly, and when slaughtering*

*animals slaughter properly. So the one in charge of slaughtering must sharpen his blade to comfort his slaughtered animal."* [A Haadith]

He is also advised to kill or sacrifice the animal away from the other animals in order not to cause them anxiety. Do you know what makes the flesh of animals become **kosher** for Muslims?

Explain: -----

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Do you think it is a painless way of slaughtering?

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It is prohibited to stun the animals by stroking or using electricity, for these kinds of stunning hurt the animal. Our Prophet (Peace be upon Him) interdicted his followers from torturing or hurting animals. On the contrary, he ordered them to be kind and benevolent with them.

Imam Ahmad narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) passed by a group from Al-Ansar (the supporters) while they were aiming at a pigeon.

*The Prophet said: "Don't make an aim from an alive creature".*

Saeed Ibn-Gobair narrated that *Ibn-Ommar had passed by some youth from Koraish while they were aiming at a bird and in return for their missed shoots they gave the owner of the bird the arrows. When the youth saw Ibn-Ommar, they ran away so Ibn-Ommar said: "Who did that? Allah curses the one who did that. The prophet (Peace be upon Him) curses any one who takes an alive creature as an aim".* Narrated by Muslim.

Imam Muslim narrated on the authority of Ibn-Gaber Ibn-Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with them, that *the Prophet "forbids us from leaving animals tied without food or drinks until death"* (No. 3620)

Thus, animal lives are sacred, and Muslims are forbidden to kill them unjustly and painfully, even if they are very small insect. Muslims will be judged upon the way they treat animals. This, because animals worship Allah as we do.

*"Allaah and the angels, and even the ant in its nest and the whale in the sea will pray for the one who teaches people the ways of good."*

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi; Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad Shaakir edn., no. 2685.

Abu 'Eesa said, this is a saheeh ghareeb hasan hadeeth).



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However, Some animals are unclean because their saliva or flesh may contain worms and diseases for men. This is true for cats, pigs, and dogs. Cats furthermore are not advised for pregnant women because they can transmit an illness that may deform the child at birth. What you eat makes what you are. Can you imagine seeing what the pig eats entering your body? Although dogs are not allowed in Islam as animals of company, they can be very useful and are regarded as lawful to keep if kept out of the house.

*"They consult you concerning what is lawful for them; say, Lawful for you are all good things, including what trained dogs and falcons catch for you. You train them according God's teachings. You may eat what they catch for you, and mention God's name thereupon. You shall observe God. God is most efficient in reckoning." (Quran, 5:4 )*

Dogs are extremely *naajis* (impure, unclean).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *"If a dog drinks from the vessel of any one of you, let him wash it seven times"* (reported by Muslim, no. 279).

According to another report: *" and clean it the eighth time with earth."*

(Saheeh Muslim, no. 280).

Keeping dogs nowadays is the habit of the kuffaar, who adopt them as friends, kiss them, let them lick them and play with their clothes, sleep with them and even leave them money in their wills. Keeping a dog is an imitation of the kuffaar. But the fact that it is forbidden to us to keep a dog and interact closely with it does not mean that we should not be kind or feel compassion towards dogs if we see them in a pitiful state.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us that *"a man saw a dog biting the dust because of thirst, so he took his shoe and started to scoop water up with it until the dog's thirst was quenched. Allaah appreciated his good deed and granted him entry to Paradise for it."*

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, no. 174).

According to another report, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *"Whilst a man was walking he became very thirsty, so he went down to a well and drank from it. When he came out, he saw a dog panting and biting the soil because of thirst. The man said, 'He is suffering the same as I suffered,' so he filled his shoe (with water), came out and let the dog drink until his thirst was quenched. Allaah appreciated his good deed and forgave him because of it." The people asked, "O Messenger of Allaah, will we be rewarded for how we treat animals?" He said, "In every living thing there is a reward."*

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, Fath, no. 2363).

What do you think the prophet of Allah (Peace and blessings be upon him) means by this sentence:

*"In every living thing there is a reward"?*

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## LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL CONDUCT TOWARDS ANIMALS:

All Fatawas in this part of the book are directly quoted from: <http://www.islam-qa.com>

There is wisdom in what Allaah has created, there is also wisdom in what He has prescribed and commanded in His laws ( the *sharee'ah*). He has forbidden His slaves to eat unclean things because if they consume them, these things will become a part of them and they will be what they eat. When a person eats, he resembles what he eats, and what he eats becomes essentially a part of him. Hence man is more balanced in his attitude and behavior than other animals because he is more balanced in what he eats. Eating blood and the flesh of carnivorous wild animals gives a person a wild, devilish character and makes him aggressive towards other people, so sharee'ah wisely forbids eating such foods except when there is an overwhelming reason to do so, such as absolute necessity. Because the Christians eat pork, it gives them a kind of harshness and cruelty. The same applies to those who eat the flesh of carnivores and dogs – they take on the character of these animals. A devilish attitude is an essential attribute of fanged carnivores, which is why they are forbidden as food by sharee'ah. Since camels may display such a devilish attitude, Islam commands those who eat camel meat to counteract it by doing wudoo' (ritual ablution). Since a donkey-like attitude is an essential attribute of donkeys, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade us to eat them. Since blood is the vehicle of the Shaytaan through which he travels, Allaah has absolutely forbidden us to eat blood.

*"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah, that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a head long fall, or by being gored to death, that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal, unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form), that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrow: that is impiety." (Al-Maidah # 3)*

What about the skin of those forbidden animals?

If some animals are unlawful to eat because their flesh is impure, what about their skin? Do you think it is ok to have a purse made of a pig's skin? Explain your reasoning:

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The skins of animals that become *halaal* through proper slaughter are pure (taahir), because they become good through the process of proper slaughtering, such as the skins of camels, cattle, sheep, gazelles, rabbits and so on, whether they are tanned or not tanned. As for the skins of animals whose meat we cannot eat, such as dogs, wolves, lions, elephants and the like, it is impure (naajis), whether it is slaughtered or it dies or is killed, because even if it is slaughtered it does not become *halaal* and cannot be good, so it is *naajis*, whether it is tanned or not tanned. This is according to the most correct opinion, because the most correct opinion is that impure skins cannot be made pure through tanning if they come from animals which we are not permitted to slaughter for food.

As for the skins of animals which have died before they could be slaughtered properly, if these are tanned then they become pure, but before they are tanned they are impure. So now animal skins may be divided into three types:

- a) **The first type:** those which are pure whether they are tanned or not, which are the skins of animals that may be eaten if they are slaughtered correctly.
- b) **The second type:** skins, which cannot be pure either before or after tanning, because they are impure. These are the skins of animals whose meat we cannot eat, like pigs.
- c) **The third type:** skins, which become pure after tanning, but are not pure before tanning. These are the skins of animals whose meat may be eaten if they are slaughtered properly but not if they die otherwise. Liqa' al-Baab al-Maftooh by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 52/39.

Among the blessings that Allaah has bestowed upon us is the fact that He has made our religion easy for us, and has not made it too difficult or unbearable. He has allowed us many things that were forbidden according to previously revealed laws.

Allaah says:

*Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you*  
[Qur'an: al-Baqarah 2:185].

Hence all kinds of food from the sea are permissible, whether they are plants or animals, alive or dead.

Allaah says:

*Lawful to you is (the pursuit of) water-game and its use for food – for the benefit of yourselves and those who travel* [Qur'an: al-Maa'idah 5:96]

Ibn 'Abbaas said: “ Sayduhu (lit. hunting, pursuit) refers to whatever is taken from it alive, and ta'aamuhu (lit. its food) means whatever is taken dead.”



There are a few things – certain types of water animals – which some scholars exclude from the permission outlined above. These animals live at the same time on earth and in the water.

Which animals do you think they are thinking about?

Give examples:

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Which animals live in the water and have fangs? Give examples:

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**Crocodiles.** The correct view is that eating these is not allowed, because they have fangs and live on land – even though they may spend a lot of time in the water – so precedence should be given to the reason for forbidding it (it is a land animal that has fangs).

**Frogs.** It is not permitted to eat them because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade killing them, as is reported in the hadeeth of ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn ‘Uthmaan, who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade the killing of frogs. (Narrated by Imaam Ahmad and Ibn Maajah; see also Saheeh al-Jaami, 6970). The rule is that everything which we are forbidden to kill, we are not allowed to eat; if we are allowed to eat it we are allowed to kill it.

Some scholars exclude **sea snakes**, but the correct view is that as they live nowhere except in the water, we are permitted to eat them, because of the general nature of the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

*Lawful to you is (the pursuit of) water-game and its use for food –  
for the benefit of yourselves*  
[al-Maa'idah 5:96].

**Otters and turtles.** The correct view is that to be on the safe side, it is permissible to eat them after slaughtering them properly, because they live both on land and in the sea. Here the rule is that in the case of animals that live both on land and in the sea, the rules concerning land animals should be given precedence, to be on the safe side, so they must be slaughtered properly, except for crabs which do not need to be slaughtered, even though they live both on land and in the sea, because they do not have blood.

Everything that can cause harm is forbidden as food, even if it comes from the sea, because Allaah says:

*And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another).*

*Surely, Allaah is Most Merciful to you.*

[al-Nisa' 4:29], and:

*...and do not throw yourselves into destruction*

[al-Baqarah 2:195].

**Riddle:**

**1) The Prophet said, "A horse may be kept for one of three purposes: for a man it may be a source of reward; for another it may be a means of living; and for a third it may be a burden (a source of committing sins)."**

***Who are these three men?***

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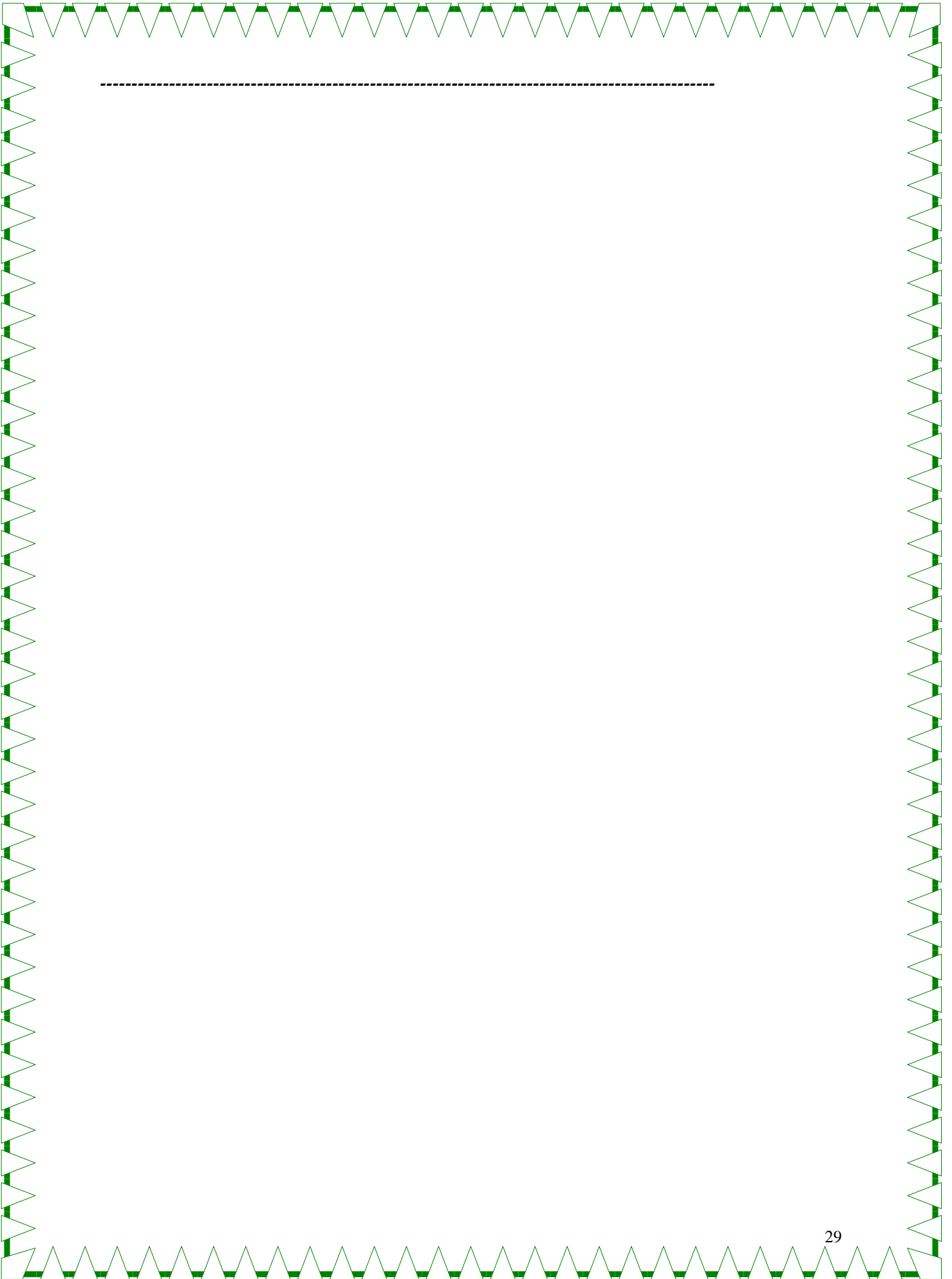
***How are they using their horse?***

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**2) If someone keeps a dog for his pleasure only and not for a useful purpose, what does he lose everyday?**

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## **Answers for the riddles:**

**1) Volume 4, Book 56, Number 839:**

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "A horse may be kept for one of three purposes: for a man it may be a source of reward; for another it may be a means of living; and for a third it may be a burden (a source of committing sins).

As for the one for whom it is a source of reward, he is the one who keeps his horse for the sake of Jihad in Allah's Cause; he ties it with a long rope on a pasture or in a garden. So whatever its rope allows it to eat, will be regarded as good rewardable deeds (for its owner). And if it breaks off its rope and jumps over one or two hillocks, even its dung will be considered amongst his good deeds. And if it passes by a river and drinks water from it, that will be considered as good deeds for his benefit) even if he has had no intention of watering it.

A horse is a shelter for the one who keeps it so that he may earn his living honestly and takes it as a refuge to keep him from following illegal ways (of gaining money), and does not forget the rights of Allah (i.e. paying the Zakat and allowing others to use it for Allah's Sake).

But a horse is a burden (and a source of committing sins for him who keeps it out of pride and pretense and with the intention of harming the Muslims."

**2) Volume 4, Book 54, Number 541:**

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "If somebody keeps a dog, he loses one Qirat (of the reward) of his good deeds everyday, except if he keeps it for the purpose of agriculture or for the protection of livestock. "

Book 14, Number 2669:

Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud:

We were with the Apostle of Allah (peace\_be\_upon\_him) during a journey. He went to ease himself. We saw a bird with her two young ones and we captured her young ones. The bird came and began to spread its wings. The Apostle of Allah (peace\_be\_upon\_him) came and said: Who grieved this for its young ones? Return its young ones to it. He also saw an ant village that we had burnt. He asked: Who has burnt this? We replied: We. He said: It is not proper to punish with fire except the Lord of fire.

Volume 4, Book 54, Number 538:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "A prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave her because of that."

## ECOLOGY AND THE NOBLE QUR'AN

### MEN, ANIMALS, UNORGANIC things

In the Noble Qur'an, plants and animals are mentioned many times. Sometimes they are used to create **parables**, sometimes they are used to show the wisdom of Allah Ta'alah in his creation.

A certain number of surahs (chapters of the Qur'an) bear the name of animals or plants species to demonstrate their importance as part of Allah's plan.

Find the number of Surahs in the Noble Qur'an that have for title something in relation with:

- 1) Life in the sky: -----
- 2) Animals: -----
- 3) Plants: -----
- 4) Men: -----

You have certainly noticed that about one fourth of the surahs in the Qur'an have for title the name of a man or of a group of men. Other titles of surahs are related to mounts, animals, natural elements and events. Allah Ta'alah even swears by the fig and the olive tree, by the sunset and the sunrise, by heavenly bodies. As it is true that these things exist, the words of Allah are also true.

*By the fig, and the olive*

*By Mount Sinai [95:1-2]*

*By the sun and its brightness*

*By the moon as it follows it [91:1-2]*

*By the dawn [89:1]*

*By the forenoon (after sunrise)[93:1]*

*By the heaven and At-Târiq (the bight star) [86:1]*

*By the heaven holding the big stars [85:1]*

*And by the winds that blow violently*

*And by the winds that scatter clouds and rain [77:2-3]*

Whoever reads the sacred book is invited many times to look around and think, ponder, reflect upon the creation. Why? Because there is much wisdom to learn in how things have been made and how harmoniously they were put together.

The Qur'an speaks about how the universe has been created. The Noble book even offers scientific explanations of the big bang, the elliptic movement of the planets, the reason for the creation of the mountains, the stages of the fetus in its mother's womb, and many other things. Can you give some examples?

---

### **Creation of the Universe:**

The Qur'an informs us concerning the existence of an initial gaseous mass (*dukhan*), as well as descriptions of the elements which, although at first were fused together (*ratq*), they subsequently became separated (*fatq*). These ideas are expressed in chapters *Fussilat* and *al-Anbiyaa*:

*God then rose turning towards the heaven which it was smoke*

[Al-Qur'an, 41:11]

*Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), then We split them apart?*

[Al-Qur'an 21:30]

According to modern science, the separation process resulted in the formation of multiple worlds, a concept which appears dozens of times in the Qur'an.

For example, look at the first chapter of the Qur'an, *al-Faatihah*:

*Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.* [Al-Qur'an, 1:1]

These Qur'anic references are all in perfect agreement with modern ideas on the existence of primary nebula (galactic dust), followed by the separation of the elements which resulted in the formation of galaxies and then stars from which the planets were born.

### **Expansion of the Universe:**

Chapter *ath-Thariyaat* of the Qur'an alludes to one of the most imposing discoveries of modern science, the Expansion of the Universe.

*"The heaven, We have built it with power, Verily We are expanding it."*

[Al-Qur'an, 51:47]



The expansion of the Universe was first suggested by the general theory of relativity and is supported by the calculations of astrophysics. The regular movement of the galactic light towards the red section of the spectrum is explained by the distancing of one galaxy from another. Thus, the size of the universe appears to be progressively increasing.

### **The Sun and the Moon:**

Whereas the Bible talks of the sun and the moon as two lights differing only in size, the Qur'an distinguishes between them by the use of different terms: light (*noor*) for the moon, and lamp (*siraaaj*) for the sun.

*Did you see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other,  
and made in them the moon a light and the sun a lamp?*

*[Al-Qur'an, 78:12-13]*

The moon is an inert body which reflects light, whereas the sun is a celestial body in a state of permanent combustion producing both light and heat.

### **Orbits:**

Today, the laws governing the celestial systems are well known. Galaxies are balanced by the position of stars and planets in well-defined orbits, as well the interplay of gravitational forces produced by their masses and the speed of their movements. But is this not what the Qur'an describes in terms which have only become comprehensible in modern times. In chapter *al-Anbiyaa* we find:

*"(God is) the one Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon.  
Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion.*

*[Al-Qur'an, 21:33]*

The Arabic word which expresses this movement is the verb *yasbahooon* which implies the idea of motion produced by a moving body, whether it is the movement of one's legs running on the ground, or the action of swimming in water. In the case of a celestial body, one is forced to translate it, according to its original meaning, as *"to travel with its own motion."*

### **Mountains:**

The Noble Qur'an is perfectly in harmony with modern discoveries when it illustrates that the mountains is shaped like a wedge, that the mountain itself is but a small part of the whole, and that its root is deeply entrenched in the ground. Dr. Press writes on the functions of the

mountains and states that they play an important role in stabilizing the crust of the earth. This is exactly how the Qur'an described mountains 14 centuries before.

**Allah said:** *And the mountains Has He firmly fixed*

[Qur'an 79:32]

**And He said:** *And the mountains as pegs*

[Qur'an 78:7]

**And He also said:** *And he has set up on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you*

[Qur'an 16:15]

## GARDENS IN THE HEAVENS AND HELL

This surely shows how important is nature in the eyes of our Lord. Nature is something Allah has rewarded us with, in this world as well as in the Hereafter. It is significant to know that rivers and fruit trees form the main landscapes visible in the gardens of Jennah (Paradise). And people live in peace and in community among them.

*"Verily, the Muttaqoon will be in a place of security, among Gardens and Springs, dressed in fine silk and (also) in thick silk, facing each other. This is how it shall be, and We shall marry them to Houris with wide, lovely eyes. They will request therein for every kind of fruit in peace and security."* [44:51-55]

*"Indeed the Muttaqoon will be amongst the Gardens and water-springs."* [15:45]

Verses on gardens and palm trees are plentiful in the Qur'an.

Give examples:

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These gardens represent some equivalent of Paradise on earth:

2:23, 2:34, 7:20, 17:92, 18:6/33/34, 23:20/21/28, 26:58/135/148, 34:17, 35:34, 36:36, 37:44, 44:27, 50:11, 55:47-49, 56:28, 68:18, 69:23, 71:13, 78:17, 33, 80:25.

Even Hell (Jahannam) has a tree and it is peopled with animals.

*Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of Zaqqum? For We have truly made it (as) a trial for the wrong-doers. For it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-Fire: The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils: Truly they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith. Then on top of that they will be given a mixture made of boiling water. Then shall their return be to the (Blazing) Fire. [As-Saffat 37:62-68]*

## PERFECTION OF THE CREATION

### ANTS:

The ant, as many animals in the Qur'an, is doted with the ability to understand, speak and decide a set of actions upon reasoning:

*...At length, when they came to a (lowly) valley of ants, **one of the ants said:***

*O you ants, get into your habitations, lest Suleiman and his hosts crush you (under foot) **without knowing it***

[An-Naml (The Ants): 27:18]



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There are about 10,000 species of ants on earth. They have been created 100 million years ago as attest fossil ants found in amber. In all these years, they have hardly changed in shape. The Qura'n tells us that *"All the creatures on earth are communities like you"* [Quran, 6:38], and this is true because most species of ants live in highly organized colonies like communities. They have a queen, a few males for mating and many female workers. To start a new colony, the Queen flies out. She mates, makes a shallow nest and dismantles her wings that she uses for food. She lays 100 eggs an hour, 30,000 in a week. After about 20 days, the eggs turn into worm-like larvae, which the queen washes and feeds. After another 20 days or so, the ants are mature. They instinctively know their role in the society. The first ones out are always workers or gatherers. They go out and get food to bring back to the nest for the queen. There are nurses who care for the young; they make sure dirt does not get into body segments by constantly licking the eggs and

larvae. They move them to upper chambers for warmth during the day and move them back to lower chambers at night when it is cooler. If it is raining outside, the nurses dash around carrying their charges lower and lower where the rain might not penetrate.

Worker ants concentrate on enlarging the nest, digging new chambers underground, making repairs where needed. They also keep the colony clean, removing dirt and debris and the dead from the pathways.

Soldiers are equipped with larger heads, a hard armor like covering and larger and stronger jaws. They will attack insects, both for protection and for food. They will gather food and can carry up to 50 times their weight.

There are ants, which steal eggs from other ant colonies and raise them as slaves. There are army ants, which are constantly moving and hunting down insects. There are ants, which keep herds of aphids and actually milk them, enjoying the substance the aphids produce from flowers. There are ants, which work in teams to sew leaves together to use in building their nests. And there are "parasol" ants which carry large leaf segments over their heads like umbrellas back to the nest, where they partially chew them, then use them as mulch to grow mushrooms-their food of choice. All the societies of ants are perfectly coordinated and organized as in human societies. That should be enough for us to gain respect for them.

Most species of ants live in highly organized colonies with a queen, a few males for mating and many female workers. There is a specific division of labor among the ants. The ant is born into the job it will perform for life.

The nurses are meticulous in caring for the young; they constantly clean them, move them for providing them with the right amount of moisture, warmth, etc.

Worker ants concentrate on the architecture of the nest; they enlarge it, dig new chambers, and make repairs. They also keep the colony clean by removing dirt, debris, and the dead.

The soldiers are bigger and wear something that looks like armor. They will attack insects, both for protection and for food.

The gatherers get the food.

More interesting, there are ants, which steal eggs from other ant colonies and raise them as slaves. There are army ants occupied in warfare, constantly moving and hunting down insects. There are ants, which keep herds of aphids in order to milk them, enjoying the nectar they produce. There are ants, which work in teams to sew leaves together as construction matters. Finally, there are "parasol" ants, which carry large leaf segments over their heads like umbrellas.

Back to the nest, they compost those leaves and use them as mulch to grow mushrooms for their subsistence.

## CAMELS:

Of course Islam makes mentions of one of the most amazing animals on earth, the camel, as proof of Allah's wisdom:

*Do they not look at the Camels,  
how they are made?-*

[Surah Al-Ghâshiyah (The Overwhelming): 88:17]



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Camels are a gift from Allah for desert people all over the world, from Asia to Africa. They are perfectly constituted, and they are of service for men. Our beloved prophet (peace be upon him) was in shock by the way the Meccans sometimes treated their camels. Apparently, pre-Islamic people used to cut the hump of camels during their pilgrimage. The hump was appreciated for its fat. Afterwards, they let the wound heal while the animal was still alive and suffered a lot. They were ungrateful to what the services camels rendered them!

For surely the camel is a beautiful creation!

A camel's feet have large pads that keep him from sinking in the desert sand. His thick lashes keep out sand from his eyes and there's a transparent eyelid that can close in heavy storms. His nostrils can close against blowing sand. Thick hair prevent ear infections.

A camel's hump is a source of energy when food is scarce. The lining of the mouth is very tough so that the camel can bite and chew anything, even thorny cactus plants without harm to the mouth. Furthermore, it has a low metabolic rate, so that energy is used slowly. Its body temperature can reach high to cope with the heat of the desert, and the camel is one of the few animals that can sweat as a cooling system.

The camel will only drink when needed; it only replaces what is lost.

Therefore, camels fit perfectly their niche which is the desert sand and rock.

Without the camels, nomads would die and deserts would be uninhabited by men. Are men grateful for that? Do men fit their 'niche' so well?

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### **OTHER ANIMALS:**

What are the other animals mentioned in the Qur'an?

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What are their characteristics?

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## **PERFECTION OF THE CREATION**

The perfect unison between earth, sky and the man was given in the form of a gift to prophet Dawud (David) (Peace be upon him). The mountains and the birds echoed the incantations he made for Allah Ta'alah.

*We bestowed Grace aforetime on David from ourselves: "O you Mountains! Sing you back the Praises of Allah with him (David)! and you birds (also)!*

[Surah Saba' (Sheba): 34: 10]

His son, Suleiman, was also blessed with the gift of Prophethood and the ability to understand the language of animals.

### **Story of PROPHET SOULEIMAN (Solomon)**

**(peace be upon him)**

Suleiman inherited his father David's prophethood and dominion. This was not a material inheritance. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:



*The prophets' property will not be inherited, and whatever we leave is to be used for charity.*

(Sahih Al-Bukhari).

*And indeed We gave knowledge to David and Suleiman, and they both said: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has preferred us above many of His believing slaves!"*

*And Suleiman inherited (the knowledge of) David. He said: "O mankind! We have been taught the language of birds, and on us have been bestowed all things. This, verily, is an evident grace (from Allah)." And there were gathered before Suleiman his hosts of jinns and men, and birds, and they were all set in battle order (marching forwards).*

*[Qur'an: Surah An-Naml (The Ants) 27:15-17]*

After his father's death, Suleiman became king. He begged Allah for a kingdom such as none after him would have, and Allah granted his wish.

*35. He said, "O my Lord! Forgive me, and grant me a kingdom which, (it may be), suits not another after me: for You are the Grantor of Bounties (without measure).*

*[Qur'an: Surah Sad (the Letter): 38: 35]*

Besides wisdom, Allah had blessed Suleiman with many abilities. He could command the winds and understand and talk to birds and animals. Allah directed him to teach both men and jinns to mine the earth and extract its minerals to make tools and weapons.

*80. It was We Who taught him the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence: will you then be grateful?*

*[Qur'an: Surah (The Prophets): 21-80]*

He also favored him with a mine of copper, which was a rare metal in those days.

*12. And to Suleiman (We made) the Wind (obedient): Its early morning (stride) was a month's (journey), and its evening (stride) was a month's (journey); and We made a Font of molten brass to flow for him; and there were Jinns that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from our command, We made him taste of the Penalty of the Blazing Fire.*

*13. They worked for him as he desired, (making) arches, images, basons as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places): "Work you, sons of David, with thanks! but few of My servants are grateful!"*

[Qur'an: Surah Saba ( Sheba:) 34: 12-13]

During his time horses were the common mode of transportation. They were very essential for defense, to carry soldiers and cart provisions and weapons of war. The animals were well cared for and well trained. One day Suleiman was reviewing a parade of his stable. The fitness, beauty and posture of the horses fascinated him so much that he kept on stroking and admiring them. The sun was nearly setting, and the time for the middle prayer was passing by.

*When he realized this, he exclaimed: "Alas! I did love the good (these horses) instead of remembering my Lord (in my 'Asr prayer)" till the time was over, and the sun had hidden in the veil of the night. Then he said: "Bring them (horses) back to me." Then he began to pass his hand over their legs and their necks (till the end of the display). And indeed We did try Suleiman and We placed on his throne Jasadan (a devil, so he lost his kingdom for a while) but he did return (to his throne and kingdom by the Grace of Allah and he did return) to Allah with obedience and in repentance.*

*He said: "My Lord! Forgive me, and bestow upon me a kingdom such as shall not belong to any other after me. Verily, You are the Bestower."*

*So, We subjected to him the wind, it blew gently to his order whithersoever he willed, and also the devils from the jinns including every kind of builder and diver, and also other bound in fetters. (Saying of Allah to Suleiman): "This is Our gift, so spend you or withhold, no account will be asked." And verily, he enjoyed a near access to Us, and a good final return Paradise.*

[Qur'an: Surah Sad: 38: 30-40]

One day Suleiman gathered his army, which had different battalions of men, jinns, birds, and animals. He marched them to the country of Askalon. He thanked Allah for saving some ants' lives. He was glad that the ant knew him to be a prophet who would not intentionally harm Allah's creation.

*Allah the Almighty narrated: And there were gathered before Suleiman his hosts of jinns and men, and birds, and they all were set in battle order (marching forwards). Till, when*

*they came to a valley of the ants, one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Suleiman and his hosts crush you, while they perceive not."*

*So he (Suleiman) smiled, amused at its speech and said: "My Lord! Inspire and bestow upon me the power and ability that I maybe grateful for Your Favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves."*

[Qur'an: Surah An-Naml (The Ants): 27:17-19]

In Jerusalem, on a huge rock, Suleiman built a beautiful temple to draw the people to worship Allah. Today this building is known as "The Dome of the Rock." From there, a large band of followers joined Suleiman on pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. After they had completed their *hajj*, they traveled to Yemen and arrived in the city of San'a. Suleiman was impressed by their clever method of channeling water all over their cities. He was keen to build similar water systems in his own country but did not have enough springs. He set out to find the hoopoe bird, which could detect water under the ground. He sent the hoopoe, but this one was nowhere to be found. In anger, he declared that unless the bird had a good reason for its absence, he would punish it severely. The hoopoe eventually came to Suleiman and explained the reason for its delay.

*20. He inspected the birds; and he said: "Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees?"*

*21. "I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he bring me a clear reason (for absence)."*

*22. But the Hoopoe tarried not far: he (came up and) said: "I have grasped (the knowledge of a thing) which you have not grasped, and I have come to thee from Saba' (Sheba) with tidings true.*

*23. "I found (there) a woman ruling over them and she has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler on earth; and she has a magnificent throne.*

*24. "I found her and her people worshipping the sun besides Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem pleasing in their eyes, and has kept them away from the Path,- so they receive no guidance,-*

*25. "(As Shaitan (Satan) has kept them away from the Path), so that they should not worship Allah, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you hide and what you reveal.*

26. *"(Allah)!- there is no god but He!- Lord of the Throne Supreme!"*
27. *(Suleiman) said: "Soon shall we see whether you have told the truth or lied!"*
28. *"Go you, with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them: then draw back from them, and (wait to) see what answer they return"...*
29. *(The queen) said: "You chiefs! here is delivered to me - a letter worthy of respect.*
30. *"It is from Suleiman, and is (as follows): 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful:*
31. *"Be you not arrogant against me, but come to me as Muslims (true believers who submit to Allah with full submission)."*
32. *She said: "You chiefs! advise me in (this) my affair: no affair have I decided except in your presence."*
33. *They said: "We have great strength, and great ability for war: but the command is with thee; so consider what you will command."*
34. *She said: "Verily! Kings, when they enter a country, they despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest, thus do they behave.*
35. *"But I am going to send him a present, and (wait) to see with what (answer) return (my) ambassadors."*
36. *Now when (the embassy) came to Suleiman, he said: "Will you give me abundance in wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you! Nay it is you who rejoice in your gift!*
37. *(Then Suleiman said to the chief of her messengers who brought the present:) "Go back to them, and be sure we shall come to them with such hosts as they will never be able to resist: We shall expel them from there in disgrace, and they will feel humbled (indeed)."*
38. *He said (to his own men): "You chiefs! which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?"*
39. *An 'Ifrit (strong), of the Jinns said: "I will bring it to thee before you rise from that place (council). Indeed I have full strength for the purpose, and may be trusted."*
40. *One who had knowledge of the Book said: "I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!" Then when (Suleiman) saw it placed firmly before him, he said: "This is by the Grace of my Lord!- to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! and if any is grateful, truly his gratitude is (a gain) for his own soul; but if any is ungrateful, (he is ungrateful only for the loss of his ownself) truly my Lord is Free of all Needs, Supreme in Honour !"*

41. He said: "Transform her throne out of all recognition by her: let us see whether she is guided (to the truth) or is one of those who receive no guidance."

42. So when she arrived, she was asked, "Is this thy throne?" She said, "(It is) as though it were the very same'. And (Suleiman said): "Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we were submitted to Allah (in Islam)."

43. And that which she used to worship besides Allah has prevented her (from Islam), for she was of a disbelieving people.

44. It was said to her: "Enter As-Sarh (a glass surface with water underneath it), but when she saw it, she thought it was a pool of water, and she (tucked up her skirts), uncovering her legs. He said: "This is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass." She said: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul: I do (now) submit (in Islam), with Suleiman, to the Lord of the Worlds."

[Qur'an: Surah An-Naml (The Ants): 27: 20-44]

Suleiman's public work was largely carried out by the *jinns*. This was a punishment for their sins of making people believe that they were all-powerful, knew the unseen, and could foresee the future. As a prophet, it was Suleiman's duty to remove such false beliefs from his followers. One day, Allah the Exalted ordained for Suleiman to die. His death, like his life, was unique. The people had to learn that the future is known neither by the *jinns*, nor by the prophets, but by Allah alone, so Suleiman's death became an example. He was sitting holding his staff, overseeing the *jinns* at work in a mine. He died sitting in this position. For a long time, no one was aware of his death, for he was seen sitting erect. The *jinns* continued with their sand toil, thinking that Suleiman was watching over them. Many days later, a hungry ant began nibbling Suleiman's staff. It continued to do so, eating the lower part of the staff, until it fell out of Suleiman's hand, and his great body fell to the ground. People hurried to him, realizing that he had died a long time ago and that the *jinns* did not perceive the unseen, for had the *jinns* known the unseen, they would not have kept working, thinking that Suleiman was alive.

*When we decreed death for him (Suleiman), nothing informed them (jinns) of his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept slowly gnawing away at his stick, so when he fell down, the jinns saw clearly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have stayed in the humiliating torment.*

[Qur'an: Surah Saba'(Sheba): 34:12-14]

Prophet Suleiman (peace be upon him), was able to understand the speech of animals.  
Here is a conversation he holds, in the Qur'an, with the bird hoopoe:

*22. But the Hoopoe tarried not far: he (came up and) said: "I have compassed (territory) which you have not compassed, and I have come to thee from Saba' with tidings true.*

*23. "I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne.*

*24. "I found her and her people worshipping the sun besides Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem pleasing in their eyes, and has kept them away from the Path,- so they receive no guidance,-*

*25. "So that they should not worship Allah, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you hide and what you reveal.*

*26. "(Allah)!- there is no god but He!- Lord of the Throne Supreme!"*

*27. (Suleiman) said: "Soon shall we see **whether you have told the truth or lied!***

[Surah An-Naml (The Ants): 27: 22-27]

What do we learn in this passage about the ability of the animal (the hoopoe)?

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What do we learn about the particular relationship between the Hoopoe and Suleiman (peace be upon him) when the prophet, peace be upon him, says: "Soon shall we see whether you have told the truth or lied!"?

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### **Subject for a final discussion or an essay:**

#### **Humans and animals' senses**

#### **Differences & similarities:**

Animals (under the term 'animals' let's include any living creature as opposed to humans) and humans live in many different worlds that rarely overlap. Each animal creates its territory and lives inside this territory on its own, inside its own community. On the contrary,



humans move from one cycle (one community) to another. He can move this year from Japan to Los Angeles, or he may become salesman after abandoning his former profession of dancer. The animal world is extremely reduced compared to the one of humans. Animals seldom bother each other and continue basically the same life from birth to death. At the same time, animals and humans understand little of each other, or at least this is what we presume, but humans have learned to use animals, not the contrary.

Humans understand things animals cannot understand, and animals perceive things humans cannot perceive. The dog's nose is a million times more sensitive than ours. Dogs can hear sounds that humans cannot hear, and from a great distance too. It is interesting to notice that if the animal senses are more developed, their sense of space is usually much more restricted. A field for instance would appear like a big forest for an ant. Ants recognize the obstacles and its height by the vibration on its antennae. So touching is very important for them, as well as for the housefly that tastes from its feet.

Humans rely a lot on their eyesight. But again, if humans would like to see like a hawk, they would have to look through binoculars that magnify eight times what they see!

Humans have a sense that help them to recognize where is their right and where is their left, where is up and where is down, where is front and where is back. Humans have three semicircular canals, in the ear, called cochlea, filled with fine hair and fluid. When the fluid leaves the base of the 'cochlea', hair sense it and gives a signal. This is what humans call the sense of balance. In the 'cochlea', there are the 'saccul' and the 'utricle' that contain cells responsible to gravity and tell us which way we are. Fish orient themselves like humans! However, insects have fine hair all over their body that plays the same role!

Humans live in a tri-dimensional world: they recognize three plans: vertical, horizontal and depth. Some animals live in a two dimensional world like the water strider, an insect that glides along the surface of the water as if it had air cushion under its feet. The water strider can perceive only a flat surface of lines: the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. If you do the experience of looking at each flat object at the eyes level, you will have an idea of what the water strider perceives. Therefore, the water strider does not perceive movements coming from above or from under the surface of the water. It cannot see its enemies, which are birds and fish! It can only perceive the vibrations at the surface of the water just before being attacked.

Usually animals have a better vision than humans. Eagles or simple birds can see much better than humans do, and some insects can even see in all directions at the same time. But many animals do not even need to see; they send sounds into the air or into the water to recognize

their surroundings or their peers. As the sound waves return to them, they know with accuracy what lies ahead and how far. The bat uses this device as well as the dolphin that lives in rivers. Some animals, like the snake, orient themselves by changes in temperature. The snake has a pit organ under its eye that has more than 150,000 heat-sensitive points, enabling it to detect any prey. Humans have only two or three of them per square centimeter, so they can perceive very little changes in temperature.

Animals like the snail cannot perceive the movement of things. For it, the grass pushed by the wind is seen like not moving at all. The reason is that snails do not perceive a movement as a series of movements when the succession of images goes too fast. And this stage occurs much faster for the snail than for humans.

On the contrary, many animals perceive things that are without motion or change for humans, like the growing of plants.

People can distinguish sounds that range from 15 to 15, 000 hertz (vibrations per second) while dolphins, for instance, can distinguish sounds between 400 and 200,000 hertz. The dolphin's language is too fast for humans to hear and too high pitched.

Nevertheless, it seems that humans and animals share one thing in common: they both are conscious of their environment and are sensitive to it. Forest monkeys have been reported as shy and nomad. However, monkeys that get used to city life become aggressive bold and always sleep at the same place. It seems that city life for monkeys as for humans transform them, so that they can never come back to a calmer and simpler life. They seem to react the same way to stress, in other words to emotions than humans.

### **Essay or discussion:**

**Animals are doted with senses more developed than humans. However, humans dominate them. How are humans superior to animals? Which gifts do we have to take care of the earth better than other living creatures?**

## THE COVENANT

In Islam, there is no real barrier between animals, rocks and humans. All are able to feel, utter words, respond to the call of Allah whenever they are permitted to do so. Certain prophets were given special gifts that are called miracles: Prophet Suleiman (Peace be upon him) was able to understand the language of animals and he could see the Jinns (another creation of Allah Ta'alah); Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him) was given the power to part the sea; Muhammad (peace be upon him) could communicate with rocks and plants.

The real barrier between animals and humans is that humans do not understand how the animals pray and they cannot understand their language. But animals can suffer, feel love or be depressed; they remember things and they can decide on their own. Like humans, some animals are more intelligent than others and like humans some animals can even create tools, build habitations, or knit (the spider web or some birds nests prove the ability of these animals to sew and design). What differentiate humans from animals is that the instinct (the inherent) is much stronger in animals, and humans rely more on their imagination and intelligence for survival. The inability for human beings to understand things right away, by instinct, is true from the beginning of his creation. When asked to take care of the earth, only humans accepted the challenge out of ignorance. In the Qur'an, it is called "the covenant".

What is the definition of a "**covenant**"?

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This covenant has a story. Here is what the Qur'an says about it:

*72. We did indeed offer Al-Amânah (the Trust or moral responsibility or honesty, and all the duties which Allâh has ordained) to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid of it (i.e., afraid of Allâh's*

***Torment). But man undertook. He was indeed unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).***

*73. (With the result) that Allah has to punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Unbelievers, men and women, and Allah turns in Mercy to the Believers, men and women: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

[Al-Ahzâb (The Clan) 33: 72-73]

The Trust or the Covenant was offered to all creation. What made the man accepts it besides being ignorant? What made the animals refuse it?

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Allah says He will punish men who do not keep the Covenant.

The Covenant does not cover only the subject of taking care of the earth, it implies something else. What is it? How can men betray the Trust? Give examples:

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### **SUBMISSION TO MEN**

Islam draws a clear line between those who keep the covenant, the believers; and those who betrayed it, the non-believers or *kafirs*, and the hypocrites. So the covenant does not imply only taking care of animals and plants, but also to set community rules based on faith, on prayer and on the pillars of Islam. Men should completely submit to the will of Allah Ta'alah. That is a part of the covenant.

In exchange for their submission, men are granted the power over Nature and an eternal soul. Men can cultivate the earth, build tools to shape the earth at will (or almost), train pets. They are granted the intelligence to do so, and this form of intelligence is unique to humans. So, the submission of the earth and the heavens is in man's favor. The Qur'an gives examples of things that Allah Ta'alah submitted to the men. Can you cite some of them?

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*God it is who created the heavens and the earth; and sent down from the sky water, and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you; and subjected to you the ships, to float therein upon the sea at His bidding; and subjected for you the rivers; and subjected for you the sun and the moon, constant both; and subjected for you the night and the day; and brought you of everything you asked Him: but if you try to number God's favors, you cannot count them; - verily, man is very unjust and ungrateful*  
[Qur'an 14:37]

Other verses are: 18:42, 16:11/66, 20:54, 22:6/64/66, 31:11, 35:28, 39:22, 42:29, 43:12, 50:10, 57:21, 78:7-12,15, 79:32, 80:25, 89:25.

Allah Ta'alah mentions the blessings He has bestowed upon men. What are these blessings?

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*And the earth we have stretched out and have thrown on it firm mountains, and have caused to grow upon it of everything a measured quantity. And we have made for your means of livelihood therein, and for those for whom you have not to provide*

[15:20]

Other verses are: 15:21, 41:11.

Allah mentions the diversity in his gifts:

*And what he has produced for you in the earth varying in hue,  
verily, in that its a sign for a people who are mindful*

[Qur'an 16.14]

Other verses are: 20:56, 35:26, 50:8.

The last group of verses shows that God has created everything but still the actions of men count. Men have to demonstrate their intentions actively as well as their gratefulness towards Allah's gifts.

In which surah does Allah Ta'alah warns us many times against denying His bounties?

Surah \_\_\_\_\_.

Allah has created the earth in balance and harmony so that men should not find too hard to live on it.

*... that no burdened soul shall bear the burden of another? And that man shall have only  
that for which he strives; and that his striving shall at length be seen?*

[Qur'an 53:39]

But the man is tested on the way he behaves towards this balance, so that Allah may distinguish between the good and the bad.

*Verily, we have made what is on the earth an ornament thereof,  
**to try them**, which of them is best in works, but, verily, we are  
going to make what is thereon bare soil*

[Qur'an 18.6]

Knowing that, can you tell for what other purpose the earth equilibrium, the ecosystem, has been created?

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*The merciful taught the Qur'an; he created man, taught him plain speech. The sun and the moon have their appointed time; the herbs and the trees adore; and the heavens, he raised them and set the balance, that you should not be outrageous in the balance; But weigh you aright, and stint not the balance. And the earth he has set it for living creatures; therein are fruits and palms, with sheaths; and grain with chaff and frequent shoots; then which of your Lord's bounties will you twain deny?*

[Qur'an 55:2-9]

As the verse mentions it, man should adjust himself to Nature. The balance has been set to see if the man is able to keep his covenant. He is tested in his capacity of thinking and of giving to himself a discipline. The revealed books were sent in order to give insights in the way men should behave. The most perfect of those book is the last one -- the Qur'an. In it, men are taught how to live in conformity with Nature. Muslims can find in there all they need to know concerning how to live happily on earth and how to solve problems.

If men are granted such diversity and such a beautiful place as the earth to live on, in Islam, the believers are often warned against wasting the treasures of the earth. They are forbidden to waste the water even while performing ritual ablutions near a big river. Trees must be respected even in time of war.

### WASTING

It is worth mentioning that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and the righteous caliphs (Allah may reward them) counted among the poorest of the Muslims. They were afraid they would have, on Doom Day, to account for everything they had spent. They did not want to waste anything; to attain this state, they did not attach themselves to worldly things. They hardly have a cloth to cover their intimacy, and they gave everything they could to the poor.

Ordinary men are not asked to go that far. On the contrary, Muslims are permitted to become rich and show their wealth, but they should never be arrogant, and they should observe parsimony in everything.



*It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and date-palms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds), and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered (i.e., zakât: 1/10<sup>th</sup> to 1/20<sup>th</sup>). But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not Al-Musrifun (the wasters by extravagance; with lack of wisdom and thinking, etc.).*

[Surah An-‘âm (The Cattle): 6:141]

*O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters*

[Surah A’ râf (The Heights) 7:31]

What are the two very important principles these last verses teach to Muslims?

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So, men are encouraged to purify their wealth by an annual tax called the Zakat. Furthermore, they are advised not to be excessive in performing acts of piety. Men should take time to eat and take time to sleep because too much excess can lead them to sins. How? Can you describe some situations as examples?

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Here is a story to ponder about from the Islamic traditions of Haadiths:

### **The Poor Man Said .**

It was a usual meeting. The Prophet (PBUH) was in his place and his companions gathered around him to hear the words of wisdom and guidance. Suddenly a poor man in rags appeared, saluted the assembly:

"Salamu Alaikum" and finding a vacant place, comfortably sat down. The Prophet (PBUH) had taught them that all Muslims were brothers and in an assembly one should sit wherever one finds a place, regardless of any status. Now, it so happened that this poor man sat next to a very rich man. The rich man felt disturbed and tried to collect the edges of his dress around himself, so that the poor man did not touch them. The Prophet (PBUH) observed this and addressing the rich man he said:

"Perhaps you were afraid that his poverty would affect you?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah," he said

"Then perhaps you were apprehensive about some of your wealth flying away to him?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah."

"Or you feared that your clothes would become dirty if he touched them?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah."

"Then why did you draw yourself and your clothes away from him?"

The rich man said: "I admit that was the most undesirable thing to do. It was an error and I confess. Now to make amends for it, I will give away half of my wealth to this Muslim brother so that I may be forgiven."

Just as he said this, the poor man rose and said:

"O Prophet of Allah, I do not accept his offer."

People present were all taken by surprise. They thought the poor man was a fool. But he explained:

"O Prophet of Allah, I refuse to accept his offer because I fear that I might then become arrogant and ill treat my Muslim brothers the way he did to me."

What does this story teach us as far as pride is concerned? How does this story link to the subject of wasting Allah's gifts?

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Remember the **story of life** at the beginning of this unit.

Describe two examples of two situations when men exhibit too much pride:

Explain the possible consequences of their pride towards animals:

To have too much pride is a sin in Islam because it means we refuse to learn; it means also that we refuse some parts of the message of the Holy Qur'an. Allah Ta'alah goes to say that the one *who has a grain of pride in his heart is forbidden the entry to Jennah (A Hahdith)*. In the Qur'an, Allah talks about the fate of men who do not respect Allah's Trust because they are "unjust and foolish" [Qur'an 33:72]. Look at what Allah says about it?

*204. There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life  
May dazzle thee, and he calls Allah to witness about what is in  
his heart; yet is he the most contentious of enemies.*

*205. When he turns his back, his aim everywhere is **to spread  
mischief through the earth and destroy crops and cattle.***

*But Allah loves not mischief*

[Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow): 2: 204-205]

*By (the Token of) Time (through the ages),*

***Verily Man is in loss,***

*Except such who have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual  
teaching of Truth, and of **Patience and Constancy***

[Surah Al-‘Asr (The Time): 103: 1-3]

Why do men need to learn “Patience and Constancy”?

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We can ask ourselves why men have been given the responsibility over the earth. Do we deserve this honor? Even the angels did not understand Allah's decision.

30. Behold, Your Lord said to the angels: "**I will create a vicegerent on earth.**" They said: "Wilt You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- while we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?" He said: "**I know what you know not.**"

31. And **He taught Adam the nature (name) of all things**; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell me the nature (names) of these if you are right."

32. They said: "Glory to You, of knowledge We have none, save what You Have taught us: In truth it is You Who is perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

33. He said: "O Adam! **Tell them their natures.**" When he had told them, Allah said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?"

34. And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith.

[Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow): 2: 25-34]

What does the Qur'an means by the sentence: "(Allah has) taught Adam the nature of all things"?

What is the “nature” of things? Why did Allah did ask angels and jinns to bow down to Adam? Why Allah did not teach all things directly by Himself? What was the intended purpose?

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Since things were made to bow to Adam, does that mean that the earth was created only for the commodity of men?

***He Who has made for you the earth like a carpet spread out;  
has enabled you to go about therein by roads (and channels);  
and has sent down water from the sky." With it have We produced  
diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others.***

[Surah Tâ-Hâ : 20: 53]

This idea makes more sense if we know that animals are revived during Doomsday so that they may be witnesses on the way they were treated by men. Then, these animals will be reduced to earth. The Hereafter contains animals, but they will be different from those on earth. Knowing that, what can we possibly conclude about what differentiates men from animals? Can we safely say that the animal condition in the Hereafter is linked to their refusal of the covenant?

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So, at the beginning, men were given the names of all things; they understood how things were ordained. Can we still distinguish between right or wrong, good and bad? Is it a part of our nature?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ I do not know    ☐ Maybe

Men are left with a choice: to do good or to do bad. Why can men choose? What enables men to make a choice in their behavior?

***Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the **ocean for the profit of mankind**; in the rain which Allah Sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they Trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;- (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise.***

[Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow): 2: 164]

**Explain:**

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Some men are bad; some are good. Why is that? What is the wisdom behind the necessity of having good and bad people?

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The diversity in the type of people is very important because both are needed to create a balance. There are bad people so that good people can distinguish themselves, and there are good people so that they may be an example for the others. Good or bad, Islam emphasizes the utmost importance of seeking knowledge, for men and women, from cradle to grave. Why? Can good men become bad or bad men become good?

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*By Allah's will they routed them; and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed. **And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief:** But Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds.*

[Surah Al-Baqrah (The Cow): 2: 251]

Many men and women have been touched by the logical, natural and balanced teachings of the Qur'an. Some have been the worst enemies of Islam before they became the most pious of

the companions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). Some other were kafirs, then, they came to understand the message of Islam and its truth and they became imams or great Islamic leaders. Can you site some of them?

**Best companions:**

--‘Umar bin Al-Kattab,-----

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**Imams:**

Yusuf Islam,

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Why don't you start a personal research? Maybe there are converts around you. Why did they choose Islam? If you do not know anybody, read articles and books where those people are mentioned and tell why they chose Islam?

Interview them.

"Why did you chose Islam? Why did you revert?"

"Because

Why do we say "reverted" and not "converted"?

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**ENTERING THE FOLD OF ISLAM**

According to Islam, every child is born with the built-in ability to know and believe in his Creator; he has the cognition that has been placed by Allāh in his nature (*fiṭra*). Allāh describes



the human soul in a very beautiful way. After swearing by the most majestic signs of His creation, Allāh says:

*...and by the soul and He who perfected it! Then He inspired to it  
[the ability to understand] what is good for it and what is evil for it.  
Successful is he who purifies it, and failure is he who corrupts it.  
[Qur'an 91:1-10]*

Allāh has made our souls such that we are able to distinguish what is good and what is evil. But for a human soul to function on its *fitra*, there is a condition -- it must be kept pure, it must be immunized against spiritual corruption. The soul is like a bulb which can give light, provided it itself is not surrounded with a thick cover or dust; every human being has that light in his soul; however, those who keep it pure can enlighten their path with it, while those who allow the 'spiritual dirt' to accumulate on it cannot see their path towards Allāh. (Incidentally, *kuf* literally means a cover.) The Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) emphasized the same thing when he said,

*Every child is born with the believing nature (al-fitra),  
it is his parents who make him into a Jew or a Christian.*

Besides this *fitra*, Allāh has also provided us with various means to know Him and believe in Him; He sent prophets and messengers, He sent books, and above all He created thousands of signs in nature which remind us of Him.

*Soon We shall show them Our signs on the horizon (āfāq) and in  
themselves (anfus), until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth  
[Qur'an 41:53]*

The Qur'ān clearly says that,

*There is no compulsion in the religion [Qur'an 2:256]*

What this verse actually means is that: *"There is no compulsion in [accepting] the religion of Islam."* Why?

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The verse continues, *"Surely the Right Path is clearly distinct from the crooked path."* So Muslims can always show the difference between the right and the wrong paths, and non-Muslims are invited to reflect upon the truths revealed in the noble Qur'an in total liberty, may they live in Muslim lands or not. Non-Muslims are never forced to accept Islam.

Once a person enters into the fold of Islam, the rules change.

As soon as one becomes a Muslim by his own choice, he is expected to submit himself to Allāh totally and completely.

*O You who believe! Enter into submission, kāffatan!*

[Qur'an 2:208]

*Kāffatan* in the sense of "all" and "completely". Once a person becomes a believer, he surrenders the right of making decisions to Allāh and Messenger:

*No believing man and no believing woman has a choice in their own affairs when Allāh and His Messenger have decided on an issue*

[Qur'an 33:36]

People who reverted to Islam played a great role in spreading Islam and encouraging Islamic expansion. During the Middle Ages, the Berbers of Morocco were the main armies that conquered Spain. They were all reverted to the fold of Islam!

Reverts historically counterbalanced the evil coming from the *kafirs* (non-believers) and helped create an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood between people.

How do you think some of the people just mentioned have contributed to Islam? What do you think other converts could do?

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**Balance: Good-Bad**



Examples:

Yusuf Islam by formation  
is a singer. He used his  
ability Allah gave him in  
order to create and

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propagate Islamic songs over the world. His songs (*nasheeds*)  
can easily replace the songs of the kafirs we are imposed  
upon.

**KNOWLEDGE**

Islam points out that people who seek knowledge are better than people who spend days  
and nights in prayer. Praying is of course essential (we have to pray five times a day without  
omission), but it can never replace the understanding of the ways the world has been created.

*And We send the **fecundating winds**, then cause the rain to descend  
from the sky, therewith providing you with water (in abundance),  
though you are not the guardians of its stores.*

[Surah Al-Hijr (Stoneland): 15: 22]

**Those who understand our earth (ecology) and Allah's message (Muslims) are more  
able to act upon their discoveries.** They are more able to be vicegerents on earth. Even if the  
more we know, the more we are responsible for the bad things happening on earth, we cannot  
escape this responsibility because it is an obligation set by Allah Ta'alah upon Muslims, men and  
women alike.

Each good from one of us should balance the bad other people do, that is why our  
involvement is important in protecting animals and plants.

But how can we manage that?

How does it work?

Examples:

Muslims can make the effort of recycling in their homes, and tell their friends why they do that  
and how the friends can limit their wastes at their own level. They must point out that it is for the  
sake of Allah and His creation. They may receive rewards for that.

Muslims who reforest the land counterbalance some of the negative effects of deforestation by  
log companies, so improving the quality of life.

Now, your ideas:

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The Qur'an teaches us many things about the water cycle, or the creation of animals from water, or the creation of men from the male semen and the woman ovary, and so on, and so forth. It is like a textbook of life, therefore we should use it constantly.

*43. **Don't you see** that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap? - then will you see rain issue forth from their midst. And He sends down from the sky mountain masses (of clouds) wherein is hail: He strikes therewith whom He pleases and He turns it away from whom He pleases, the vivid flash of His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight.*

*44. It is Allah Who alternates the Night and the Day: **verily in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision!***

*45. And **Allah has created every animal from water:** of them there are some that creep on their bellies; some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills for verily Allah has power over all things.*

*46. **We have indeed sent down signs that make things manifest:** and Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.*

[Surah An-Nur (Light): 24: 43-46]

It is interesting to know that the description of the water cycle in the Qur'an from far precedes its scientific discoveries. Water cycles have not been discovered in Europe before the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. At this time, Muslim scholars already knew from the Qur'an that the wind causes the rain to fall, and the earth keeps the rain as in a sponge in order to make trees and crop

grow. They also knew that animals came from the sea, which idea has nowadays been elaborated.

*3. And it is He who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm and (flowing) rivers: and fruit of every kind. **He made in pairs, two and two: He draws the night as a veil over the Day.** Behold, verily in these things **there are signs for those who consider!***

*4. And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighbouring, and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn, and palm trees -growing out of single roots or otherwise: **watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat.** Behold, verily in these things **there are Ayât (signs, lessons, etc) for those who understand!***

[Surah Al-Râd (The Thunder): 13:3-4]

The Qur'an has taught the scholars that every living creature is created from a male and a female, even flowers. The Qur'an also stresses the importance of diversity. Diversity must be kept and seen as a blessing from Allah Ta'alah.

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Explain:**

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*66. And verily in cattle (too) will you find an instructive sign. From what is **within their bodies between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it.***

*67. And from the fruit of the date-palm and the vine, you get out wholesome drink and food: behold, in this also is a sign for those who are wise.*

*68. And **thy Lord taught the Bee** to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations;*

*69. Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought.*

[Surah An-Nahl (The Bee): 16: 66-69]



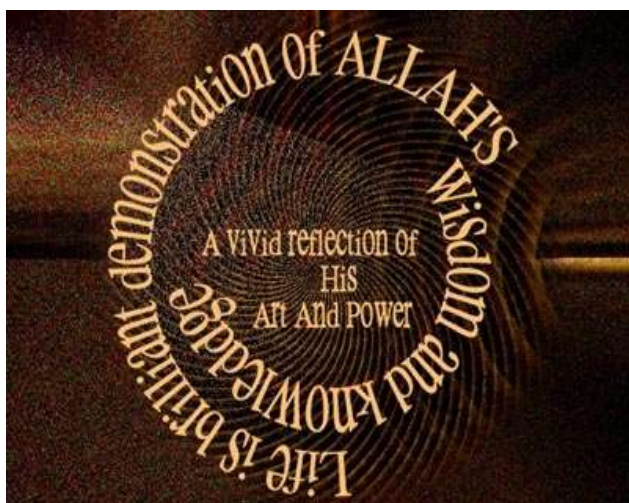
These verses show proofs of Allah's knowledge and wisdom as a teacher of Nature's mechanisms. He has created what we call the "instinct" among living creatures. This instinct is not acquired; it is inherited for the purpose of survival.

*Or, Who has made the earth firm to live in; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and **made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water?** (can there be another) god besides Allah. Nay, most of them know not.*

[Surah An-Naml (The Ants): 27: 61]

Muslim scientists have proved with this verse that Allah Ta'alah refers to the ocean currents. Water near the ocean surface travels around the world in currents. It is noteworthy to remember that water flowing from rivers do not mix with the salt water from the ocean, and this sometimes for hundred of miles. Fresh water from the Amazon River can be found up to 112 miles (180 km) out to sea.

It is essential here to remember the many scientists who converted to Islam after reading and studying the Qur'an. They found truth in the Qur'an, scientific facts that nobody was aware of at the time of the revelation. Can you site a few scientists who became Muslims after having read the Qur'an?



Scientists converted  
(or reverted) to Islam :

- 1) **Maurice Bucaille-(embryology)-----**
- 2) -----
- 1) -----
- 2) -----
- 3) -----
- 4) -----

**ISLAM'S SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**

Islamic tradition and law, as well as Islamic science, focus on the improvement of the situation for the whole community. Common welfare is more important than individual wishes. As § 10 of the guidelines on environmental protection claim, the most important duty of the rulers is to improve the situation of the community and of individuals:

*And that man an have nothing but what he does (good or bad)*

[Qur'an 53:39]

Leaders must have to be able to see, hear and speak. They have to be just, wise, valiant and courageous for the protection of Islamic lands. They have to master the sciences sufficiently to be able to interpret *shari'a*, to practice *ijtihad*. Ibn Taimiya (1328) ads competence and loyalty to those requirements. Competence (qawa) as combining technical mastering with moral force. Loyalty consists after him in the defense of public functions against personal whims and those of the family. Kalif Omar reminded his son: *"Every man invested with authority over the Muslim who assigns functionaries for friendship or familiar relations is cheating god, his prophet and the Muslim."*

Now what concerns the guiding regulations and administration of water, range and forests, the basic sentence is the common right on common use: *"People share three things: water, pasture and fire."*

In the desert areas access to drinking water is an undeniable human right. Under slightly better conditions as well the right on access to water for the ablutions. Water rights in matters of irrigation are guided by two principles:

- a) Priority: the higher fields are first irrigated
- b) Equality: nobody should profit at the expense of others, surplus water has to be distributed.
- c) Moderation: Ankle deep flooding is in most cases considered as sufficient irrigation.



The legislative Rules of Islamic Law which Govern all Procedures and Measures for the Protection and Conservation of the Environment are as follows:

1. Protection, conservation and development of the environment and natural resources is a mandatory religious duty to which every Muslim should be committed.
2. Religious awareness and guidance in this field is necessary so that each individual may take part in the protection and development of the environment and natural resources.
3. Religious awareness and Islamic guidance includes a call to all individuals, at all levels and by all possible means, to commit themselves to Islamic morals and manners in dealing with nature, the environment and the natural resources for their sustainable use and development.
4. Ownership of all environmental elements is the common and shared right of all members of the Islamic community.
5. Islamic law stipulates the interference of the ruling authorities for the good and interest of all people and to eliminate common mischief and corruption: *"The leader's actions are determined and dictated by the common good."*
6. The interest of the nation and the community should be preferred to the interest of individuals in the case of conflict.
7. Preference and priority should be given to fundamental interest if there are conflicts with needed interests or luxury interests.
8. Priority should be given to actual or urgent interests.
9. Avoidance of mischief should be given preference and should come before the achievement of interests.
10. The primary duty of the ruler and his assistants, whether they are administrative, municipal or judicial authorities, is to do their best to realize the interest of individuals for the betterment of life and society as a whole.
11. The state has the right to take all measures and actions to avoid, prevent or minimize damage before it occurs.
  - The State has the right to forbid any action that may lead to or result in damage or mischief. No one is entitled to stop or even spoil the community's sustainable use of any of the basic elements of resources of the environment.
  - The State has the right to limit the scope of action, its place, time and kind and quality.
  - The State has the right to impose certain measures or technical standards to prevent the occurrence of damage.

12. The State has the right to take all necessary measures and actions associated with elimination of actual damage, repair of its effects and provision of indemnity for it.

- The State, for instance, has the right to hold individuals, organizations, establishments and companies responsible for the elimination and removal of damage resulting from their activities, enterprises and or projects which are needed for the welfare of the whole community.
- The State has the right to impose moratoria on certain projects or enterprises if it realizes that such objects or enterprises will lead to, or result in, real damage to the environment that is in excess of the benefits thereof.
- The State has the right to hold individuals, organizations, establishments and companies responsible for the cost of eliminating the damage
- The State has the right to claim damages or indemnity from individuals, organizations, establishments and companies for avoidable damage to the physical or natural environment, resulting from unlawful activities which cannot be eliminated or recovered.
- The State has the right to censure or blame individuals, other owners of organizations and establishments or their designees, should they infringe or violate the terms of license, charters, permits or contracts intentionally or deliberately or through evident negligence or violation of the general policies and instructions set forth by the State for the conservation of the natural environment, its element and its resources."

*Conclusion:*

No nation has but what it strives for, and Allah does not help those who do not change themselves first. The utmost condition for a better planet is to move and act. And reflect. And understand.

Here are a few more points to ponder about:

- 1) What do Allah teaches us about this point as far as the covenant with Adam at the beginning of the world is concerned?

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- 2) Humans did take the covenant because they were foolish and ignorant. What does that make animals compared to humans?

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- 3) People usually think that men are more intelligent than animals. This belief would differentiate humans from animals the most accurately. However, what does the word "intelligence" mean to you? Is intelligence:

- ☐ The ability to adapt well to any environment, especially a natural environment?
- ☐ The ability to imagine and create?

- 4) Looking from one of these points of view, which is the most intelligent of the mankind or the animal kingdom?

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I thought it was important to include these questions at the end of this unit because we, Muslims, do not have all the answers.

There are still many things to discover about our environment.

In the Hereafter, we will be allowed to ask any questions and we will get answers. Until then, we are forced to seek for answers here, now, and also make mistakes.


You might be, yourself, one day, part of these answers.

You may contribute one day to clarify points that are yet very obscure to our knowledge, and help us to see more clearly in the wisdom of Allah and in the story of life, Insha Allah.

We will finish with the words of brother Khalid Dhorat (Mawlana) taken from:

<http://www.jamiat.org.za/isinfo/iman.htm>:

"The Nature of the Intelligence of Man If one were to cast a glance over different objects in this world, one would find that sensibility and consciousness go on increasing gradually from inorganic matter to human beings. The smallest particle of the universal kingdom known as the atom is deprived of all sense perception and consciousness, but a faint trace of life appears in the minerals. In the vegetable kingdom, sensitiveness is discernible in the form of germination, while a still higher type of sensibility accompanied by a limited consciousness can be seen in the animal life. Then, in man, the sense perception reaches its perfection with the appearance of discretion and consciousness. Inorganic matter is, accordingly, free from every kind of responsibility; vegetables respond to the law of life and death; animals are liable to a bit higher responsiveness; while man has to shoulder the responsibility of everything done by him. In the case of man, this responsibility varies according to his sensibility. A child will be not as accountable as an adult, nor a lunatic like a sane person. This being the case, nature then takes upon herself the responsibility to sustain beings and creatures to the extent of their lack of sensibility and consciousness. She goes on caring for everything in proportion to their potentialities and abilities of self-survival. Who heats up the diamonds and rubies in the bosom of the earth? Who feeds the fish in the oceans? Who feeds the wild animals? Who provides nourishment to the birds in the air and who attends to their ailments? Why do the animals of the same species living in mountains and jungles, under different climatic conditions, develop different characteristics? Why are the dogs of Europe different in appearance from those in Africa? Why does nature provide them with different types of paws and furs and skins according to different physical and climatic conditions? Allah provides all these provisions only. These differences indicate the ways in which nature compensates every being according to its lack of will and intelligence and then slowly withdraws its care as it develops its own potentialities helpful to sustain itself. Man has to earn his own living. He has to cultivate and grow foodstuff for meeting his needs. He has not been provided with a thick pelt and fine soft hair as some of the animals do



have for protecting themselves against the rigours of climate. Likewise, he has himself to cure his illness, heal his wounds, and provide for himself. Filling his belly is not as easy as picking a fruit of a tree, a scratching out a few worms from the earth. On the other hand, nature undertakes the responsibility of protecting other creations, according to their lack of will and perception against their enemies. She arms them with different coats of mail: some are given claws and canine teeth; some are taught to fly, or to swim, or to run; while others fend off their enemies by biting or stinging or emanating a stench. But, look at the man. The poor fellow has neither the tusks of the elephant, nor the claws of the lion, nor even horns or pointed teeth or stings and poison glands to defend himself. He has been created weak and defenseless, but the great weapons of sense, perception, and consciousness make up for his deficiencies. This makes him the veritable master of his environment. It enables him to subdue powerful elephants and ferocious lions. He can catch poisonous snakes, birds flying in the air, and fish living in high waters. He can contrive a variety of arms and armaments for his defense. To whichever philosophy or religion you may subscribe, you would agree that man is held responsible for his actions by virtue of possessing the senses and consciousness and intellect as well as will and determination. So let us, as thinking Muslims, distinguish ourselves, not only from the animal kingdom, but amongst mankind so that we may once again emerge as the torch-bearers of civilization. "

Follow-up article taken from: <http://www.chai-online.org/islam.htm>

### **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 eats 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, 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 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 used to say: "Whoever is kind to the creatures of God, is kind to himself" (Wisdom of Prophet Mohammad; 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 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 zarar 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 Suleiman. Perhaps in those days human civilization was more in tune with nature than it is today. The Qur'anic verse runs like this: "And Suleiman 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, 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 Hadith 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 birthright, 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 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 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 "predestination," or "fate" (Qaza wa Qadr or Qismat). The literal meaning of "predestination," 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 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-haram, 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 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 Judgment.

(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...and be 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...(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 impermissible 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 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 forbade the skins of wild animals being used as floor-coverings. (id.)



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

The Holy Prophet 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 '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 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 traveling, the Holy Prophet 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 Muslim religion.

In the following Hadith, one of his companions tells us that the holy Prophet 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 No. 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 judgment 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, 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 had them restored to the nest" (id.).

The Holy Prophet 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 Judgment.

The Prophet 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 Ref. 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 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 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 that is being done these days against animals, especially through international trade of livestock and meat. One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad 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 will serve as an example:

Jabir told that God's Messenger forbade striking the face or branding on the face of animals....The same companion of the Holy Prophet 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 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 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 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 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, Pakistan; 1932; p. 149)

Not only physical but also emotional care of animals was so much emphasized by the Holy Prophet 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 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 himself was once reprimanded by God for neglecting his horse, as the following Hadith tells us: "The Prophet 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-Asbahi." 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 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 personal grooming of his horse; his wife A'ishah's rough handling of her camel; the Holy Prophet'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, 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 that 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 (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 (Shari'ah). 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-haqqin) 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 {Haque} (Qur'an.10:5), for it is He who created everything and ordained it with due potential {Taqdir} (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 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 forbade blood sports. (Narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas. Awn, [Ref. No. 32]; 8:15, Hadith No. 2603. Also "Robson" p. 876 [Ref. No. 15])

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 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 forbade an animal being made a target. (Narrated by Anas., Recorded by Riyadh. [Ref. No. 28]; Hadith No. 1606; p. 272)

The Prophet 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 has invoked a curse upon one who does this kind of thing." (id. Narrated by Said bin Jubair)

The Prophet 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 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 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 forbade eating a mujaththema {carion} of a bird or animal set up and shot at as a target for shooting. (Narrated by Waqid al-Laithi. 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 (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 (Qur'an, 22:40; Tabari III, p. 123).

## Islam and Kindness to Animals Quiz

**Answer True (T) or False (F) and explain the basis for the correct answer.**

1. God made covenants with animals just as with people.
2. Only humans go to Heaven.
3. Hunting for sport is permissible as long as the animals have a "sporting chance."
4. Any animal that kills a human should be put to death immediately.
5. A person who is noble, polite, sensible, learned, and orthodox may be considered righteous even though he or she is cruel to animals.
6. Since humans are given dominion over the animals, we can subordinate all their needs to ours.
7. Animal sacrifices are considered worthy deeds.
8. It is forbidden to tie the legs of a beast or of a bird in a manner that would cause them pain.
9. Although a blessing is said when new clothes are worn, the blessing may not be said if the clothes are made of fur or leather, for you have killed to get them.
10. Animals are to be fed and watered only after humans have finished eating.

Answers:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	SCORE:
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	