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Animal Rights in Wartime: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Teachings

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the ethical and jurisprudential aspects of animal rights in the context of war according to Islamic and Christian doctrines. This topic holds a significant ethical and legal position within traditions, reflecting different historical and cultural backgrounds as well as varied approaches to the issue. The primary research question is to analyze and critically compare Islamic and Christian perspectives on respecting animal rights during armed conflict, while also examining the related intellectual developments. The study aims to delineate the theoretical and practical frameworks of both religions in this field and to extract their points of convergence and divergence. The research methodology is based on a content analysis of sacred texts, jurisprudential and theological literature, and a descriptive-analytical review of the viewpoints of prominent thinkers from both religious schools. The findings indicate that within Islam, the killing and abuse of animals during war are strictly limited and only permitted in cases of necessity,

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with adherence to ethical principles. These teachings have demonstrated remarkable stability and continuity from the inception of Islam to the present. In contrast, Christian teachings have historically legitimized and, at times, mandated the killing of animals during wartime. Until the late twentieth century, the dominant Christian stance was not strongly protective of animal rights. However, contemporary philosophical and cultural transformations within Christianity have led to a fundamental reassessment and orientation towards the preservation and protection of animal rights in armed conflict. This study demonstrates that while Islam maintains a consistent theoretical and practical position, Christianity has undergone a significant historical evolution in its attitude towards animal rights during wartime.

Keywords: Animal Rights, War, Islam, Christianity.

Introduction

In today's world, the issue of animal rights has become one of the key and global topics. Environmental degradation caused by pollution and ecological crises, which reach their peak especially during wartime, are considered serious threats to living beings. Wars not only endanger human lives but also cause distress to domestic animals. In such situations, attention to ethical principles, particularly concerning animal rights, increases significantly.

Islam and Christianity, as two major world religions, each have teachings regarding animal rights. These teachings can be applicable during times of peace and tranquility, but they may face serious challenges during wartime when humanitarian and environmental crises peak. This research attempts to examine whether Islamic and Christian teachings also emphasize the

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preservation of animal rights during times of war or if these fundamental principles are neglected under such harsh circumstances.

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the application of religious teachings in crisis and wartime conditions and to propose practical solutions for protecting animal rights during such crises. Therefore, a comparative review of Islamic and Christian views on animal rights during wartime is of great importance not only from a religious standpoint but also from social and cultural perspectives.

Animal rights have been significant topics in religious texts, especially in Islam and Christianity. In Islam, diverse jurisprudential texts have addressed these issues extensively. For instance, in works such as "*Jawāhir al-Kalām*" authored by *Muhammad Hasan Najafi*, detailed discussions concerning the rights of animals and the conditions for their use are presented. Similarly, in hadith collections like "*al-Kāfi*" by *Shaykh Kulayni*, many narrations from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) emphasize respect for animals and forbidding their harm. These hadiths and teachings underscore the importance of humane and ethical conduct with living beings, especially in situations where wars and crises could impose destructive effects on animals.

In Christian teachings, beyond biblical instructions, ethical principles related to respect for animals have been expressed particularly in various religious and philosophical works. Specifically, in the book "*Ethics of War*" by Reichberg, topics such as human responsibility towards living creatures during wartime have been examined. Reichberg analyzes human behavior towards animals in times of crisis and presents this issue through the lens of

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how ethical principles during war can contribute effectively to the preservation of animal rights.

To date, comparative scholarly research specifically focusing on Islamic and Christian teachings about animal rights during war remains limited. Most existing studies investigate animal rights and environmental principles in peaceful circumstances and usually approach wartime issues mainly from a humanitarian perspective, while the impact of wars on animal rights and interreligious interaction on this matter have been less studied.

Wars typically bring heavily negative impacts on living beings. The use of chemical weapons, bombs, and destruction of natural resources cause widespread unrest and harm to animals and ecosystems. In these crisis conditions, 'Can the teachings of Islam and Christianity concerning animal rights be effectively applied?' 'Do the fundamental religious ethical principles maintain their significance in respecting animal rights during wartime?' 'And how can these principles be practically implemented in war conditions?'

This study strives to answer these questions through a comparative method, examining the Islamic and Christian viewpoints on animal rights during wartime. Additionally, it addresses the challenges that may arise in enforcing religious principles during war and suggests strategies to strengthen these principles under crisis conditions.

The article is organized into five main sections. The first section introduces the necessity and background of research on animal rights in Islam and Christianity. The second section examines animal rights in Islamic teachings, with emphasis on Quranic verses, prophetic and Ahl al-Bayt traditions, and jurisprudential texts. The third section analyzes Christian

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teachings on animal rights, focusing especially on biblical teachings and Christian philosophical works related to the protection of animal rights. The fourth section comparatively analyzes Islamic and Christian perspectives on animal rights during war and investigates how these teachings operate during crises. Finally, the fifth section summarizes the research findings and offers recommendations to strengthen religious perspectives on animal rights in wartime.

1. Conceptualization

This section briefly introduces the religions of Islam and Christianity to provide context for the examination of key concepts and subsequent comparisons.

1.1. Christianity

Christianity, with a history spanning over two thousand years, has undergone many changes and developments throughout different periods. The term "Christian" was first used around 35 to 40 AD in Antioch, Syria. It was applied to a religious group whose followers included both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals, distinguished primarily by their direct connection to "Christos." "Christos" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which the Jews used to refer to the awaited savior (Hinnels, 2012: 142).

The roots of Christianity go back to the region of Palestine, especially Judea and Jerusalem. Christianity initially regarded itself as the continuation of Jewish traditions. At first, it spread in areas previously influenced by Judaism, with Palestine holding particular significance. However, through

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the active missionary work of figures such as Paul of Tarsus, Christianity quickly expanded into other regions as well (McGrath, 2013: 45).

The commonly used name for the sacred scriptures of Christianity is the "Bible," which is composed of two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible is our primary source for understanding the foundational principles of Christianity. The Old Testament, also called the Hebrew Bible, narrates the history of the Israelites from the beginning until around the 4th century BCE. The New Testament specifically focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and their impact on the early churches (Van Voorst, 2014: 40).

Since every religious text requires interpretation, the Bible is no exception. Consequently, the history of Christian theology can primarily be viewed as the history of biblical interpretation (McGrath, 2013: 265). Accordingly, the theological system refers to the scientific and profound study of a religion aimed at understanding its inner essence as well as propagating its teachings (Van Voorst, 2014: 36).

The theological system addresses various topics, among the most important of which are theologies, Christology, and Christian ethics (Rasoulzadeh and Baghbani, 2017: 158). In this study, our main sources include the sacred scriptures and some theological texts that discuss ethics in war and its relation to nature and animal rights.

1.2. Islam

Islam fundamentally means voluntary submission to God (Izutsu, 1994: 256). Islam is recognized simultaneously as a religion and a civilization. On one hand, Islam introduces itself as a set of religious beliefs that include specific religious rites and ceremonies. On the other hand, Islam provides

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special behavioral models for human society concerning family life, civil and criminal laws, commerce, social manners, and even personal hygiene (Hinnels, 2012: 336).

The primary sources for deriving Islamic rulings and teachings include the Quran, Sunnah, and reason. The Quran, the divine book of Muslims, is not limited to religious issues alone but also contains political and social directives (Léonard, 1955: 128). The Quran, as the main source, influences the Sunnah, and the Sunnah functions to clarify and explain it (Jizani, 2006: 68). For most Muslims, the Sunnah encompasses the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Shawkani, 1998: 95). Among the Shia (Imami) school, the Sunnah also includes the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Imams (AS) (Fazel Qaeni Najafi, 1997: 23). These traditions are reflected in various hadith collections such as "*al-Kāfi*," "*Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*," and "*Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*" within the Imami school, and "*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*" and "*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*" within Sunni Islam.

In addition to the narrations, numerous analytical works exist that provide more precise and analytical expositions of Quranic and hadith texts. These works are often written in the form of jurisprudential books within the two main schools of Imami and Sunni thought. This study, based on Islamic sources (Quran and Hadith) and reliable jurisprudential texts, will examine Islam's perspective on animal rights and environmental protection, especially under wartime conditions.

1.3. Definition of Animal

The word "Animal" is derived linguistically from the root "*Ḥayy*" meaning life or living (Ibn Fāris, 1978 AD/1399 AH: 2, 122). A living being referred to as "Animal" encompasses all living creatures, including humans and non-

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humans; however, the common and general usage of this term applies to non-human living beings, which is the intended meaning here. In many jurisprudential discussions, animals are subject to various rulings. Animals are categorized by type into marine and terrestrial, avian and non-avian, blooded and bloodless. From the perspective of legal rulings, they are further classified as lawful (halal) or unlawful (haram) for consumption, pure or impure, and capable or incapable of ritual purification (Hashemi Shahroudi, 2005 AD/1426 AH: 3, 407).

1.4. Concept of Right

The term "Right (*Ḥaqq*)" is a trilateral root verb derived from the form "*Ḥaqq*" and its meaning is the opposite of falsehood (Fayyūmī, 2007 AD/1428 AH: 1, 143). Conformity to reality is a defining attribute inherent in all derivatives of the word "Right" (Muṣṭafawī, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 2, 262). Islamic scholars, including philosophers, jurists, and theologians have provided multiple definitions of the concept of right (Ramazani, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 91). A definition relevant to this study is that a right constitutes the entitlement or eligibility that an entity possesses in relation to something (Talebi, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 72). The definition of having a right applies to animals, and Islamic teachings recognize such rights for animals. In this regard, the prominent text "Bihar al-Anwar" includes a chapter entitled "The Right of the Animal upon its Owner," which elaborates on all such rights within religious teachings (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 64, 201).

2. Examination of Animal Rights in Islamic Teachings

Islam, as a comprehensive religion, pays special attention not only to human rights but also to the rights of other creatures, including animals. Islamic teachings emphasize the preservation and observance of the rights of all

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living beings and the environment. Muslims are enjoined to engage in just and compassionate behavior toward nature and animals. This section explores the rights of animals and the environment in Islam to clarify the role of these teachings in maintaining ecological and ethical balance.

2.1. Animal Rights

In the legal systems that prevailed in various societies and nations before Islam, animals had no recognized rights; where regulations existed either before or after Islam in some tribes up until recent centuries, their motivation was primarily respect for human feelings. However, in Islam, any animal that does not harm humans is respected, and this respect forms the basis for legal rulings concerning animals (Ja'farī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 115). The Holy Quran explicitly condemns cruel and unjust behaviors toward animals that were common in pre-Islamic times, describing them as satanic acts. The Quran, in various verses including verse 119 of Surah *al-Nisā'*¹, considers cruelty toward animals a despicable behavior contrary to the spirit of Islam. These teachings underscore the importance of humane treatment of living creatures and emphasize the necessity to uphold animal rights and protect them from any kind of harm and oppression, particularly in the contemporary world.

In Islamic culture, providing water to animals carries immense reward, especially on the Day of Judgment. Specifically, a narration states that watering an animal on the Day of Resurrection grants the person shelter

1. "And surely I will mislead them and instill in them vain and distant hopes, and compel them to split the ears of livestock [as a sign forbidding their use], and command them to alter the creation of God [by reversing male to female and female to male, thereby elevating their pure nature to polytheism, and turning their natural, spiritual, and physical beauties into ugliness]. Whoever takes Satan as his guardian and helper instead of God has certainly suffered an evident loss." (119).

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under God's Throne¹ (Şadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 64). This narration not only highlights the importance of attention to animals but also reflects the significance of such acts before God. Causing harm to animals is clearly forbidden in Islam. Islamic jurisprudence states that if an individual entrusts an animal to another and instructs the custodian not to provide food or water, the custodian must not comply; rather, they are duty-bound to care for the animal humanely and avoid any mistreatment. Such conduct is considered an ethical and legal obligation, expressly emphasized within discussions on trustworthiness (Najafi Jawaheri, 1983: 27, 111).

Jurists and scholars have explicitly affirmed that if someone witnesses another person mistreating animals, they are religiously obligated to prevent such behavior and, where possible, stop the oppression, for the sake of preserving the dignity of animals and preventing cruelty. According to some jurists, immediate action must be taken upon witnessing inhumane treatment of animals to prevent further harm (Khaṭīb Sharabīnī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 5, 528; Zuhaylī, n.d.: 6, 4850).

Islam enacts specific legal provisions against those who neglect to provide water and fodder to their animals. Should a person intentionally evade this duty, legal authorities must intervene. In such cases, the animal's owner must either sell the animal or assume responsibility for its sustenance. If unable to provide these necessities, under special circumstances, slaughter of the animal may be permitted, but never abuse or cruelty. The owner must always attend to the animal's needs and never allow it to suffer from hunger

1. Whoever quenches the burning sorrow of a liver—whether from an animal or otherwise—God will provide for them a shade beneath His Throne on the Day when there is no shade except His.

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or thirst (Mousavi Khomeini, 2013: 2, 248). Some scholars have posited that humankind has been placed as a temporary steward and vicegerent on earth as a test, thus being responsible and accountable for any misuse of Earth's life forms or natural resources (Haque and Masri, 2011: 6, 165).

In wartime conditions, the protection of animal rights assumes jurisprudential necessity. Even when Muslims have seized animals as spoils from non-believers, if there is a possibility that enemies will reclaim these animals, Muslims are forbidden from mutilating or cruelly killing any part of the animals. This rule is based on a consensus among Imami scholars, first presented by *Shaykh Tūsī* (Tūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 518). Necessity can be an exception to this law (Ibn Barrāj, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 316). Further, it is asserted that in the absence of war and military necessity, killing animals to provoke enemy anger is impermissible, as animals hold sanctity and intrinsic value that must be respected (Allama Ḥillī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 14, 91).

Therefore, from Islamic teachings it is evident that Islam not only prohibits cruelty and oppression of animals but also emphasizes the preservation of their dignity and rights. This sacred religion consistently underscores, even under the most difficult circumstances such as war or economic hardship, the necessity of respecting and caring for animals as sentient living beings. Based on these principles, human conduct toward animals must be grounded in ethics, dignity, and mutual respect. Any mistreatment of animals is religiously forbidden and socially condemned as inhumane behavior. Consequently, promoting these teachings can foster a society founded on humanity and peaceful coexistence between humans and other living beings

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3. Analysis of Christian Teachings Regarding Animal Rights

Christian teachings explore human responsibility toward animal rights and offer various principles for interacting with living beings and protecting the environment. The following section reviews the concept of animal rights within Christian doctrine.

3.1. Animal Rights

The Bible never explicitly ascribes specific rights to animals nor directly asserts that animals possess inherent life rights similar to humans. Unlike humans, who are uniquely created by God, animals are regarded as part of creation but occupy a lower status. Humans, recognized as the noblest of God's creatures, possess special faculties that distinguish them from other beings. The Bible states that God granted humans dominion over animals and appointed them to govern and control them (Genesis 1:20–31). Furthermore, God sanctioned the use of animals for human sustenance (Genesis 9:1–3; Leviticus 11:2–3). Since animals hold a lower value than humans, they are not entitled to human rights, and human life should not be sacrificed for animal preservation.

However, the Bible acknowledges that humans are obligated to treat animals with kindness and mercy. Although animals lack the equal value of humans, they are still God's creatures with inherent worth, as God declared them "Good" (Genesis 1:20–25). Consequently, within the supervisory role God gave humans, causing harm to animals or inflicting suffering upon them is prohibited. The Bible uses the same term for the breath of life given to animals as is used for humans (Genesis 2:7), indicating that animals too are endowed with life-force (Genesis 1:20–21, 24, 30). While animals possess life, humans uniquely possess self-awareness, logical reasoning,

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foresight, free will, moral responsibility, and the capacity for communion with God. Even animal sacrifice, which signifies their recognized value, is present in biblical texts (Leviticus 4–6; Hebrews 9:11–28).

Attention to animal suffering is therefore warranted because the Bible exhorts care and consideration toward these creatures (Genesis 7:2–4; Psalm 104:10–30; 147:7–9; 148:7–10; Matthew 6:26; Luke 12:6–7, 24); although post-flood God permitted humans to use animals for food (Genesis 9:1–3), this alteration in dietary laws may be understood as a consequence of human sinfulness. In Eden, humans were strictly herbivorous (Genesis 1:29–30; 2:16). Additionally, prophetic anticipations in the book of Isaiah depict a future era when wild animals will coexist peacefully (Isaiah 11:6–8), implying that meat consumption was not originally central to God's plan.

The Bible repeatedly instructs fair and just treatment of animals. Mosaic Law forbids cruelty even toward birds, promising longevity to those who refrain from harming animals (Deuteronomy 22:6–7), and legislates for improving the living conditions of farm animals (Deuteronomy 22:1; 4:10; 25:4). Fair treatment of animals is a fundamental aspect of righteous living in the Bible (Proverbs 12:10).

Nevertheless, there are passages that depict unfavorable treatment of animals. For example, Genesis 9:5 states that God demands reckoning for human blood from animals; Exodus 21:28–30 prescribes stoning a bull that gores someone and the responsibility of the owner. Mark 5:13 records Jesus permitting unclean spirits to enter a herd of pigs, which are subsequently drowned—an episode illustrating the permissibility of animal death under divine authority. Augustine argued that Christ's example of permitting the killing of pigs via demon expulsion signals that abstaining from killing

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animals reflects superstition and delusion rather than moral virtue (Augustinett, 2017: 102).

Thus, a thorough reading of biblical teachings reveals that while there is significant emphasis on kindness and care towards animals in some parts, overall the biblical view situates animals as creatures of lesser value compared to humans. Although many verses stress avoiding cruelty and respecting basic animal rights, in numerous contexts animal life is subordinate to divine plans or human needs and can be sacrificed or used. This perspective indicates that in the biblical worldview, animal rights are framed mainly within human benefit and necessity, not as independent entitlements grounded in intrinsic dignity.

Ethicist Peter Singer in "Animal Liberation" critiques the New Testament for lacking explicit prohibitions against animal cruelty (Singer, 2017: 370). However, this judgment may not fully account for instances in the New Testament that convey kindness toward animals (Exodus 23:2–3). Among great Christian thinkers like Augustine, it was commonly held that because animals lack rational souls, worry about their suffering is unnecessary, and thus they hold no rights. Historical records show that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) urged Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) to defend animal rights and stop cruelty, but he declined, stating humans have no duties toward inferior animals and that cruelty to animals is not sinful (Muhammad Sarwar, 2021: 5).

4. Comparative Examination of Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Animal Rights during Wartime

A comparative study of Islamic and Christian views regarding the rights of animals and nature during wartime reveals that Islam places special

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emphasis on the preservation of nature and the rights of living beings under the conditions of war, whereas these issues are not similarly addressed in Christianity. In this context, analyzing the religious teachings of both faiths can elucidate how Islamic and Christian doctrines approach the treatment of animals and nature in wartime.

4.1. Animal Rights in Wartime from the Perspective of Islamic Teachings

The prohibition of harming animals and violating their rights is a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings.

4.1.1. The Right to Life of Animals

The right to life of animals is respected in Islam. *Shaykh Ṭūsī* states that if a person owns any animal, the obligation to provide for that animal's sustenance rests upon them due to the sanctity of the animal (Ṭūsī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 6, 47). Just as providing food for the preservation of human life is obligatory, so it is necessary to preserve the life of animals, even if the animal does not belong to the individual (Shahīd Thānī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 12, 120). Unrestrained killing of animals is considered undesirable. The Prophet Muhammad clearly emphasized this point. He commanded military and combat personnel to abstain from harming animals and instructed that permissible (*Ḥalāl*) animals be slaughtered only in quantities necessary for consumption]¹ (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 19, 179). Useless killing of animals is among those acts that will be subject to complaint on the Resurrection]² (Ibn Ḥibbān, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 13, 214). This directive

1. When the Prophet of God (PBUH) sent a commander to lead an army, he instructed him to perform these actions... and to refrain from killing animals whose meat is eaten, except when it is necessary to consume them.

2. I heard the Messenger of God (PBUH) say: On the Day of Resurrection, a sparrow will be brought forward, crying out that so-and-so killed it without cause and without benefit.

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clearly demonstrates the importance Islam attributes to the life and dignity of animals and stresses the necessity to uphold their rights. Moreover, one who engages in hunting for mere amusement commits an unlawful act (Najafi Jawahiri, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 14, 262). A narration states that such a journey is vain and does not shorten prayers¹ (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 3, 437).

Imam Reza (AS), in response to a question about the prohibition of eating donkey meat, stated that the reason was the fear of extinction of the species and the preservation of their lives; otherwise, eating their meat is not objectionable (Ṣadūq, 1965 AD/1385 AH: 2, 563). When Prophet Noah was instructing the survivors to board the Ark, the divine command came: "And We said: Take aboard each species a pair, a male and a female," (Hud/40) to ensure that no species perished during the flood (Makarem, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 9, 97).

Some Sunni scholars have mentioned that there is no report of the Prophet Muhammad ever killing an animal (Ibn Rushd, 1995: 1, 310). In wartime, the preservation of animal rights is also a jurisprudential necessity; for example, even when Muslims acquire animals from polytheists as spoils, if there is a possibility of reclaiming these animals by the enemy, it is not permitted to mutilate or kill them cruelly. This rule is based on a consensus among Imami scholars (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 518). However, exceptional circumstances of necessity are excluded from this law (Ibn Barāj, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 316).

4.1.2. Destruction of Animals as an Act of the Oppressors

1. "Travel hunting is invalid, and the prayer during it is not performed as shortened (*Qaṣr*). Travel hunting is invalid, and during it, the prayer is not shortened (*Qaṣr*).

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One of the issues that the Holy Qur'an addresses is that when tyrannical humans come to power, they resort to destroying crops and progeny. The noble verse states:

"And when he turns away, he strives upon the earth to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals." (al-Baqarah: 205)

The occasion of the revelation of this verse is attributed to *Akhnas ibn Sharīq*, who, upon pledging sincere Islam to the Prophet (PBUH), later set fire to the Muslims' crops and drove away their animals (Wāhidī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 1, 66). The term "*Tawallā*" in the verse may be translated as "Turning Away" or "Assuming Power." Among the early Shia commentators, the late *Ṭabrisī* interprets "Progeny" as any possessing a spirit (*Ṭabrisī*, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 2, 54), while the late Kashani explains "Progeny" as referring to quadrupeds (Kashani, 1956 AD/1336 SH: 1, 444). Contemporary commentators, such as Javadi Amoli in *Tafsir Tasnim*, view the term "Progeny" in a general sense, including animals (Javadi Amoli, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 10, 224). Among classical Sunni commentators, *Ibn Qutaybah* explicitly stated that "Progeny" refers to quadrupeds (Ibn Qutaybah, 1977 AD/1398 AH: 1, 80), corroborated by *Ṭabarī*, who extends the interpretation to any person who kills animals unjustly (*Ṭabarī*, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 3, 583). Other Sunni commentaries including *al-Durr al-Manthūr* (Suyūṭī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 1, 574), *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* (Tha'ālabī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 426), and *al-Tafsir al-Farīd Lil Quran al-Majīd* (Muna'im, n.d.: 1, 193) share similar viewpoints.

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According to the preceding verse]¹ (al-Baqarah: 204), such conduct toward animals characterizes a contentious person. A hadith recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* describes such an individual as the most hated before God] (Bukhārī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 3, 131).

4.1.3. Prohibition of Cruel Killing of Animals

In addition, burning animals is strongly forbidden in prohibition narrations and is considered a reprehensible act]² (Ṣadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 4, 5). Killing with torment, an act involving cruelty, is explicitly forbidden even for birds in Prophetic traditions]³ (Sijistānī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 3, 60). Interestingly, even burning ants is prohibited]⁴ (Qurṭubī, 1964 AD/1384 AH: 13, 174; Qarrī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 7, 2672). While some Islamic jurists permit burning carcasses after slaughter as a means to demoralize the enemy, they categorically prohibit burning or tormenting living animals (‘Aynī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 7, 138). Mutilation, even of biting dogs, is considered inappropriate]⁵ (Sharī Raḍī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 421). This reflects Islam’s sensitivity toward all living beings and underscores the importance of respecting animal rights, even in the smallest scales. This approach essentially expresses that every living being plays a role within the ecosystem and must be treated with respect and kindness.

1. "And among the people is he whose speech in this worldly life pleases you, and [in order to make it appear as if his tongue is in harmony with his heart] he calls God to witness what is in his heart, while indeed he is one of the fiercest enemies."

2. The Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade burning any part of animals with fire.

3. I heard that the Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade killing animals in a manner involving patience (i.e., causing them pain or torture). By God, if there were a bird being killed in such a way, I would not tolerate it.

4. The Prophet of God (PBUH) forbade inflicting torment with fire.

5. "Beware of mutilation, even if it is done to a biting dog."

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A narration states that if an animal, due to circumstances, cannot return to Muslim lands and remains in enemy territory, it should not be chased or have its legs cut off; if necessary, it should be slaughtered to prevent suffering]¹ (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 49).

These teachings remind us that animal rights must be vigilantly observed under all conditions and testify to our own ethics and humanity. Respecting animals and attending to their needs, especially during war and crisis, can contribute to building a sustainable and compassionate society.

This approach not only helps protect the environment but also promotes a culture of peaceful coexistence between humans and other creatures. Furthermore, these principles can aid in shaping a better and more just future for all living beings. By adhering to these teachings, we can create a world where all creatures—humans and animals alike—live with mutual respect and cooperation, thereby contributing to the flourishing and stability of our ecosystem. Ultimately, attention to animal rights reminds us that as intelligent beings, we bear ethical and social responsibilities toward the world around us.

4.2. Treatment of Animals during War from the Perspective of Christian Teachings

Throughout the history of warfare, animals have played a significant role. One essential question that arises in examining Christian teachings and sacred texts is which behaviors toward animals in wartime are permissible and which are forbidden.

1. It is narrated from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS) that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: When an animal in the enemy's land or on the path of God becomes immobile, it must be slaughtered, and one should refrain from cutting its Achilles tendon.

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4.2.1. Views of the Sacred Texts on Animal Rights in War

In the Bible, especially the Old Testament, it is observed that God at times commands the destruction of all living beings in wars. One such command is found in the book of Deuteronomy, where God orders the Israelites: "But of the cities of these peoples, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes" (Deuteronomy 20:10-18). This decree explicitly mentions creatures possessing breath (including animals) and commands their complete destruction. Animals are therefore included under this order and are to be annihilated.

After the era of Moses and Joshua, when God crowned Saul through Samuel, He commanded him: "Now go and strike Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. Kill man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1 Samuel 15:3) This instruction commands the killing of humans and animals alike. During Joshua's and the Israelites' attack on Jericho, besides the slaughter of all men, women, and children, all animals including oxen, sheep, and donkeys were killed (Joshua 6:20). Similar actions took place in other battles among Israelite tribes where all animals in the cities were also killed; as narrated in Judges: "The men of Israel turned back against the Benjamites and struck them down with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying the whole population of the towns, including the animals, everything they found." (Judges 20:48) These accounts indicate that in those times, warfare and animal slaughter were part of divine and religious military commands.

Another issue in wartime treatment of animals is the mutilation of enemy animals. The sacred texts, particularly in the book of Joshua, recount God instructing Joshua to chase the enemy horses and burn their chariots: "Do

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not be afraid of them, for tomorrow I will deliver all of them slain before Israel, and you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." (Joshua 11:1-23) This command indicates that mutilating enemy animals and even severing the tendons of cavalry horses was permissible in certain wartime contexts. Additionally, when King David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, he ordered all enemy horses to be hamstrung except for one hundred chariots kept for himself (2 Samuel 8:3-4; 1 Chronicles 18:3-4). This further illustrates that in some wars, hamstringing horses and other war animals was considered a legitimate military tactic.

Perhaps the only passage that can be argued to support the right to life of animals in the Bible is the story of Noah's Ark, which states: "Of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; male and female shall they be." (Genesis 6:19) However, this event does not pertain to wartime but rather the preservation of animal lineage during the flood. Nonetheless, it can be viewed as affirming the general principle of life in animals, paralleling the Qur'anic concept of animal life mentioned earlier in this study.

4.2.2. Views of Post-Biblical Christian Thinkers

Christian thinkers have offered some limited reflections on animal rights in war. Some scholars suggest that over the centuries, few Christians have actively engaged with the issue of animal rights. Notable figures such as Saint Basil and Isaac of Syria provided some teachings on compassion toward animals, but the dominant Christian thought did not significantly evolve on this matter. Christianity failed not only to moderate the harsh Roman attitudes toward animals but also extinguished the spark of

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compassion that few held in those periods over the long term (Singer, 2017: 372).

For example, Thomas Aquinas], following Augustine], argued that by divine command, the lives of animals and plants are preserved not for their own sake but for human benefit. Thus, according to the just mandate of the Creator, their life and death depend on human use (Aquinas, 1947/1954).

However, it should be noted that some instances do reflect respect for animal rights during war. Specifically, the Treaty of Narbonne], issued on August 25, 1054 CE, explicitly provided that sheep and their shepherds while grazing must be granted truce and protected from harm or slaughter. This decree marks a shift in attitude towards animals in war, emphasizing their protection (Reichberg, 2011: 172). Nevertheless, the prevailing Christian thought remained aligned with Aquinas's instrumentalist view well into the twentieth century (Singer, 2017: 376).

In contrast to Singer's critical views of Christianity, David Onnekink, in a valuable article titled "Religious Evangelists and Their Views on Animals" robustly defends Christian perspectives on animal rights. He interprets biblical texts in support of animal protection and portrays Christian thought as an advocate for animal rights.

It can be concluded based on biblical texts and Christian thinkers' reflections that although there are elements within Christian scripture and theology that encourage kindness toward animals, the Bible does not recognize animal rights in wartime and often portrays animals as lacking rights when measured against human objectives.

5. Comparative Study of Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Animal Rights during Wartime

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Based on the teachings of Islam and Christianity, the points of agreement and divergence regarding animal rights in wartime can be summarized as follows:

5.1. Points of Agreement

5.1.1. Importance of Animal Protection in War

Both faiths emphasize the necessity of respecting animal rights during wartime. Islamic texts record the Prophet Muhammad's explicit command to avoid harming animals, and while Christian texts include commands to slaughter animals in some wars, there are cases where animals were protected from harm and slaughter.

5.1.2. Ethical Teachings in Both Religions

Both religions stress certain ethical and humane principles in dealing with animals. Islam views respect for animals as part of human moral responsibility, while Christianity's views have evolved over time toward greater respect for animal rights even in war.

5.1.3. Attention to Environmental Preservation

Both traditions indirectly acknowledge the importance of preserving the environment and protecting ecosystems. Islam explicitly emphasizes the protection of living creatures, and Christianity, through evolving attitudes, increasingly advocates for animal protection in wartime.

5.2. Points of Divergence

5.2.1. Religious Views on Animal Killing in War

Islamic teachings prohibit the killing of animals in war except when necessary and under ethical constraints. Conversely, Christian scriptures, especially the Old Testament, include divine commands for the slaughter of

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animals in wartime. Some biblical narratives describe outright destruction of animals during Israelite wars.

5.2.2. Differences in Wartime Animal Treatment

Islam forbids burning animals and inflicting cruel deaths, extending care even to the smallest creatures such as ants, while Christianity historically permitted targeting enemy animals as war spoils or to harm the enemy, despite some modern protective stances.

5.2.3. Changing Attitudes in Christianity

Islamic principles have consistently emphasized animal rights through history, whereas Christianity, despite earlier permissiveness regarding wartime animal slaughter, has witnessed a gradual shift toward protecting animal rights in modern times—particularly after milestones such as the Narbonne Truce.

5.2.4. Historical Development and Evolution of Views

Islamic teachings on respecting animals during war have remained stable from the Prophet's time till today. Christian views have evolved from endorsing wartime slaughter toward animal protection, evidencing a historical progression not paralleled in Islamic doctrine.

Conclusion

- Necessity of Protecting Animal Rights in War

Wars pose serious threats not only to human life but also cause widespread destruction to wildlife and ecosystems. Environmental degradation, pollution, and destructive weaponry during conflicts harm animal habitats and increase their suffering. Hence, emphasizing animal rights and ethical treatment in religious texts is natural and unavoidable.

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A. Islamic Teachings: Islam unequivocally stresses respect for animal rights. Its doctrines consistently highlight humane ethical behavior toward living beings. The Prophet Muhammad and the Imams have strictly prohibited animal cruelty. These values apply equally in wartime, reflecting a comprehensive ethical and environmental approach founded on human dignity and social responsibility.

B. Christian Teachings: Although animals are generally considered of lesser value than humans in Christianity, biblical teachings and Christian philosophy advocate kindness toward animals. Despite historic injunctions permitting animal slaughter in wars, contemporary Christian thought increasingly supports animal rights and the need to preserve their dignity during conflict.

C. Comparative Conclusion: Comparative analysis indicates Islamic animal rights principles have persisted without major change since the Prophet's era, while Christian attitudes have gradually shifted toward animal protection in wartime—though disparities remain in the degree of recognition and emphasis on animal rights.

- Practical Challenges and Solutions

Implementing animal rights principles during war faces obstacles like human conflicts, economic hardships, and neglect of animal needs amid crises. This study proposes effective strategies to reinforce respect for animal rights during crises and wars, including religious and ethical education to elevate public awareness and inspire positive behavioral change.

- Role of Humanity and Social Responsibility

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Ultimately, animal rights observance must be regarded as a religious, social, and ethical duty. Promoting these theological and moral teachings fosters societies rooted in humanity, justice, and peaceful coexistence between humans and other life forms. Such an approach not only conserves natural ecosystems and biodiversity but also enhances a culture of respect, compassion, and accountability within human communities.

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