

Interfaith Vegan Coalition

ISLAM KIT



DEMONSTRATING THE ISLAM IDEALS OF HARMLESSNESS AND UNIVERSAL LOVINGKINDNESS

INTRODUCTION

The path to veganism in Islam seems to be twofold: One way leads via Islamic law (shari'a) the other via Islamic ethics (adab), of course they can be and often are used complementary. Both are based on Qur'an as Islam's primary revealed scripture and hadith, the collected narrations of or about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). Although the consumption of animals and animal products is not explicitly prohibited in Qur'an or hadith, a respectful relationship between humans and nonhuman animals is promoted and any use of animals for human purposes is severely restricted. Killing an animal is only allowed when an immediate need is given.



Traditionally the need was understood as either in self-defence or for food. As there is no need in the contemporary world to consume animals or animal products in order to survive, it is very doubtful whether it is still legitimate. Further if Islamic rules and regulations (shari'a) were strictly applied we would witness a dramatic reduction in the number of animals born raised and killed for human consumption, so much so that a fully plant-based diet will remain as only option for a large amount of people (especially urban populations). A common route to veganism amongst Muslims comes from an understanding and appreciation of Islamic ethics, which can either complete or completely bypass the legal route.



Many Muslims feel that something is wrong with the way nature and animals are treated these days. Veganism offers them a path of true justice and compassion. If it is better to spare a life than to take a lie, then why take it? If God is seen as the Most Compassionate and Merciful, then shouldn't believers emulate these qualities in order to draw closer to God? God loves all creation and so should we as humans. Further, if Qur'an and hadith are to be taken at face value then there can be no doubt for a Muslim that animals possess emotional, linguistic, spiritual and mental capabilities. They are persons and communities in their own right. When Muslim jurists in the medieval ages codified a systematic Islamic law they did not ignore the notion that animals are given rights by God and that they are due their justice. The axiom that causing unnecessary harm will incur a punishment from God, while good acts will be rewarded is also to be applied to our relations with other animals. However the legal injunctions in relation to animals are largely ignored today. There is thus an urgent need for a concerted effort to take a step back and remember our responsibilities, duties and boundaries as Muslims. Establishing a strong and robust animal rights law and promoting animal and environmental ethics in Muslim contexts is necessary to avoid pain and suffering for others in the here and for ourselves in the hereafter. Will you be part of the change?

QUOTES

Collection of vegan quotes from famous leaders, philosophers, etc. of the Islamic Faith

"Islam is based on principles of kindness, mercy, compassion, justice, and doing good works. These principles are seen pervasively throughout the texts of the religion – the Qur'an and the examples of the Prophet – as well as in many examples from Islamic history. Islam requires kindness and compassion towards all animals in all situations, and I hope most fervently that these rules can truly become a part of daily life." (Kirsten Stilt, *Animal Welfare in Islam*, p. 46)

"By ascribing spirituality to nonhuman creation, one of the points the Qur'an possibly intends is to present this creation, including nonhuman animals, as models and sources of inspiration. In the spiritual journey to which they are invited, humans perhaps will do better learning from other creatures, including

other animals, than feeling privileged or superior to them.” (Sarra Tlili, *Animals in the Qur’an*, p. 256)

“Many Muslims and Islamic religious leaders are not aware of the cruelty that is routinely inflicted on animals during transport, at pre-slaughter, and at slaughter in many Islamic countries. There is an urgent need to sensitise all Muslims to the teachings on animal welfare in the Qur’an and the Hadiths. This approach is bound to be effective in influencing the majority of Muslims in the livestock trade, especially the slaughter man in treating animals more humanely. This needs to be done by intervention at the highest level by religious bodies and organisations, which could be most effective in giving rulings (fatwas) on this issue.” (Sira Abdul Rahman, *Religion and Animal Welfare*, p. 6)

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

“That which was made permissible for a reason, becomes unpermissible by the absence of that reason.”– (Basheer Masri, *Animals in Islam*)

Some vegan friendly quotes of the Qur’an:

“There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth nor a being that flies on its wings, but they are communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they shall be gathered to their Rabb (Lord) in the end.” (Qur’an 6:38)

“Seest thou not that it is God whose praise all beings in heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and God knows well all that they do.” (Qur’an 24:11)

“And the earth, he has assigned it to all living creatures” (Qur’an 55:10)

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood and (those animals) killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by being gored to death. That is grave disobedience.” (Qur’an 5:3)

“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).

In regards to 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).

“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).

Some vegan friendly narrations of or about the Prophet Muhammad (Hadith):

Narrated by Anas: "All creatures are like a family (Ayal) of God: and he loves the most those who are the most beneficent to His family. (Mishkat al-Masabih,3:1392; quoted from Sahih Bukhari.)

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

"Truly God is kind and loves kindness. He rewards kindness and does not reward violence. (Sahih Muslim 4697)

'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.)

"It is a great sin for man to imprison those animals which are in his power." (Sahih Muslim)

Narrated by Abu Hureira: "Avoid ye the seven obnoxious things {deadly sins}: polytheism; magic; the killing breathing beings! Which God has forbidden except for rightful reason." (Sahih Muslim - Kitab-ul-Imam (Ref. No. 46); chp. XXXIX, vol. I, p. 52; also Bukhari, 4:23 and Awn (Ref. No. 32) Hadith No. 2857

"The worst of shepherds is the ungentle, who causes the beasts to crush or bruise one another." (Sahih Muslim)

"You will not have secure faith until you love one another and have mercy on those who live upon the earth." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and Abu Dawud)

"May God curse anyone who maims animals." (Ibn Al-Athir)

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to Himself."

"Fear God with regard to animals' said the Prophet of Islam, 'ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off their backs when they are tired; surely, there are rewards for being kind and gentle to animals, and for giving them water to drink.'"



Narrated by Ibn 'Omar and by Abdallah bin Al-As: "There is no man who kills {even} a sparrow or anything smaller, without its deserving it, but God will question him about it." (An-Nasai, 7:206, 239, Beirut. Also recorded by Musnad al-Jami Ad-Darimi, Delhi, 1337 and Mishkat al-Masabih; English translation by James Robson, in four volumes; Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan; 196

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

Reported by Abdullah b. Ja'fir Abi Talib: "The Prophet went into a garden of a man from the ansār and there was a camel. When the Prophet saw the camel he felt compassion and his eyes shed tears. The Prophet went up to the camel and stroked him between his ears, and the camel calmed down. The Prophet then said: 'Who is the owner of this camel?' A young boy from the ansār came and said, 'He is mine, Prophet.' The Prophet said: 'Don't you fear God with regard to this animal, whom God has given to you? For the camel complained to me that you starve him and work him endlessly.'" (Sunan Abu Dawud 2186)

Narrated by Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah bin Mas'ud: "We were on a journey and during the Prophet's absence, we saw a bird with its two chick; we took them. The mother bird was circling above us in the air, beating its wings in grief. When the Prophet Muhammad returned he said: 'Who has hurt the feelings of this bird by taking its chicks? Return them to her!'" (Muslim. Also Awn (Ref. No. 32) Hadith No. 2658 and Guillaume (Ref. No. 57); p. 106).

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

Narrated by Abdullah bin 'Omar: The Prophet(s) told his companions of a woman who would be sent to Hell for having locked up a cat; not feeding it, nor even releasing it so that it could feed herself." (Sahih Bukhari, 4:337; recorded in Riyad (Ref. No. 28), Hadith No. 1605; p. 271. Also Sahih 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)

Abdullah Ibn 'Umar reported: "The Prophet cursed the one who treated animals harshly." (Sahih Bukhari 5091; also Ibn Hajar, vol 20, p. 56, 5515)

"Whoever treats harshly a living being and then does not repent, God will treat him just as harshly on judgment day. (Sahih Bukhari 5091; also Ibn Hajar, vol 20, p. 56, 5515)

Reported by Abu Hurayra: "The Prophet said that among us there was a man who was traveling and he became very thirsty. So he found a well and descended into it and drank, then exited, when he saw a dog panting and eating the ground from his thirst. The man said: 'This dog has reached a level of thirst that I almost reached,' and so he descended into the well and filled his shoe with water and provided the water to the dog. God thanked the man and forgave him of all his sins. The men listening to this story said: 'Oh Prophet, will we be rewarded for assisting animals?' The Prophet said: 'There is the possibility for a rewarded for helping each living being.'"

." (Sahih Bukhari 3071; also Ibn Hajar, vol. 10, p. 112, hadith 2364, and Ibn Hajr, vol. 10, p. 112, hadith 2365)

"A prostitute suffered from thirst while she was walking on a journey. When she found a well, she climbed down into it and drank from it. Then she came out and saw a dog lolling its tongue from thirst and licking the ground. The woman said: 'This dog has suffered thirst just as I have suffered from it.' She climbed down to the well, filled her shoe with water, and caught it in her mouth as she climbed up. Then she gave the dog a drink. God appreciated this deed, so he forgave her sins. (Sahih Bukhari 3208)

Qurra ibn Iyas reported: A man said, 'Oh Messenger of God! I was going to slaughter a sheep but I had mercy on it (or felt sorry for it).' The Messenger of God said, 'If you have mercy on the sheep, then God will have mercy on you twice.'" (al-Adab al Mufrad 368)

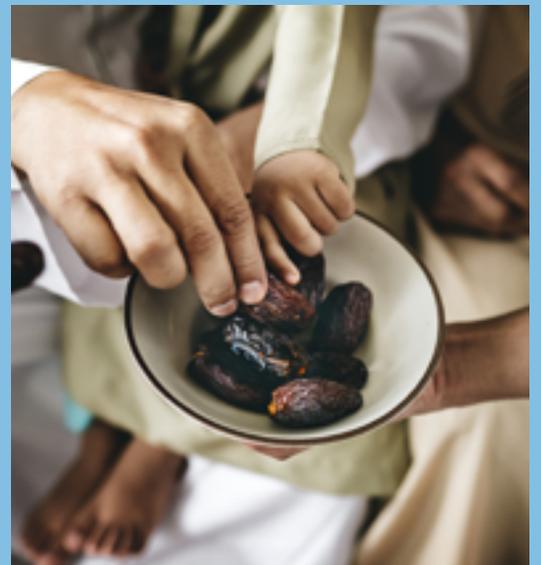
ISLAMIC HYMNS, POEMS, CHANTS, SONGS

On Eating Meat

"O Muslims, I see you fasting during the day,
But then to break your fast you slaughter cows at night.
At one end is devotion, at the other murder –
How can the Lord be pleased?
My friend, pray cut the throat of anger,
And slaughter the ravages of blind fury,
For he who slaughters the five passions,
Lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride,
Will surely see the Supreme Lord face to face."
— Kabir Sahib, 15th Century Sufi Poet

I No Longer Steal from Nature

You are diseased in understanding and religion.
Come to me, that you may hear something of sound truth.
Do not unjustly eat fish the water has given up,
And do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered
animals, Or the white milk of mothers who intended its
pure draught for their young, not noble ladies.
And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking eggs;
for injustice is the worst of crimes.
And spare the honey which the bees get industriously
from the flowers of fragrant plants;
For they did not store it that it might belong to others,
Nor did they gather it for bounty and gifts.
I washed my hands of all this; and wish that I
Perceived my way before my hair went gray!
Al-Ma'arri (Poet-philosopher 973-1058)



Pease note: Al- Ma'arri is a controversial figure amongst vegan Muslims. In his life he was at times in open conflict with the establishment and in his writing he critiques many dogmas that others held or still hold dear. Thus while some see him as a hero and very early champion of the vegan ideals, others see him as a heretic, or somewhat friendlier as an Arab vegan philosopher but not a Muslim. Your choice whether to leave this in or not!

RITUALS OR CEREMONIES THAT COULD BE MODIFIED TO INCLUDE VEGAN VALUES

There are a number of traditions carried out by Muslim that involve the killing of animals. First and foremost amongst them is Eid Al-Adha, a day when millions of animals are slaughtered to commemorate the Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to God. The scriptural evidence for this tradition and what to do on this day is the topic of a rich and controversial debate amongst vegan Muslims. Counter to the common opinion that it is part of Muslim's religious duties to take part in this tradition, Muslims who want to show compassion to animals are upholding their right to find alternatives and point to the fact that it might not be obligatory after all.

Most Muslims will agree that it is not obligatory to sacrifice if you cannot afford it. Can anybody really afford to destroy the environment, abuse and torture animals in order to fulfil a perceived duty? It is evident that the animal agriculture is a major cause of environmental degradation and the cause for widespread food shortages as money, land, resources, and even grains, corn, and soy are being used to benefit the industry while neglecting both human needs and animal rights and welfare. Human workers in these industries are also amongst the least protected. Thus many vegan Muslims think that it is a tradition gone out of control, which contradicts its stated goals of increasing god-consciousness (taqwa) and promoting social justice through giving to the poor.

Muslims who are concerned with these issues can sacrifice personal possessions, donate to or volunteer for charities, or do other good deeds. Some stay at home as they are overwhelmed by the massive amount of suffering that is inflicted on innocent creatures on this day. The tradition is so appalling to some and so vehemently promoted as absolute necessity for Muslims by others, that some Muslims are even losing faith in their religion and turn their back on Islam. While a personal decision like that should be respected, it is seen as essential by some to support their Muslim brothers and sisters in phases of doubt and crisis. Muslims with a strong moral compass and a sense for justice, who are open to vegan solutions to big problems should reach out to each other on this day and celebrate (and perhaps mourn?) together in the merciful and compassionate spirit of Islam, giving both an example for other vegan Muslims and such Muslims who are open for it.

Other occasions that often involve the killing of animals are wedding or birth celebrations. For some Muslims sacrificing animals is a way of saying thank you to God, but Muslims who don't want to celebrate life with death can simply choose not to do it, serve yummy plant-based food instead and say thanks in a different way.

ISLAMIC BOOKS, ARTICLES, DOCUMENTARIES, AND VIDEOS

There is to date no single book that promotes veganism from a Muslim perspective (please let us know if you know of any!), however key aspects of veganism (animal nature and status, animal rights and advocacy, as well as environmentalism) are the topic of a number of publications. Please note that none of the below authors are promoting veganism as such, while two of them, Basheer Masri and Richard Foltz, are at least favourable towards vegetarianism (whether Masri was perhaps even a strict vegetarian/vegan is possible, but not confirmed). Richard Foltz,

offers a veggie friendly and fascinating historical overview of human- nonhuman relationships in Muslims contexts, including recent and contemporary promoter of animal rights. Sarra Tlili delivers a unique and detailed account of nature and status of animals based on a non-anthropocentric Qur'an exegesis. Musa Furber launches an attack on industrial animal farming methods from an Islamic perspective and promotes animal rights and make strong legal arguments that are very useful for vegan advocacy, while neglecting the ethical side and insisting on perceived entitlements. Kristen Stilt draws on her extended work as animal rights activist in Egypt and lays out animal welfare rules and regulations that are (signed off by a scholar from the Al-Azhar University in Kairo, and thus) acceptable to the Muslim mainstream. Nadeem Haque and Basheer Masri then lay out principles to move forward in terms of full-fledged animal rights.



Key Resources

Stilt, Kirsten. *Animal Welfare in Islam*.

Foltz, Richard. 2006. *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

Tlili, Sarra. 2012. *Animals in the Qur'an*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Furber, Musa. 2017. *Intensive Animal farming. Wrongs and responsibilities*. Tabah Essays Series, no. 5. Abu Dhabi: Tabah Foundation.

Haque, Nadine & Basheer Masri. 2011. *The Principles of Animal Advocacy in Islam: Four Integrated Ecognitions*. In *Society & Animals*, vol. 19: 279-290.



Further reading

- Abdul Rahman, S., H. Aidaros. 2012. "Islam and animal welfare with special reference to cruelty to animals during transport and slaughter". In *Journal of Commonwealth Veterinary Association*, vol. 28: 27-30.
- Foltz, Richard. 2000. "Is there an Islamic environmentalism?" In *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 22: 63-72.
- Foltz, Richard, F.M. Denny & A. Baharuddin (eds.). 2003. *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. In Series Religions of the World and Ecology edited by M.E. Tucker & J., Grim. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Furber, Musa. 2015. *Rights and duties pertaining to kept animals. A case study in Islamic Law and Ethics*. Tabah Papers Series, no. 9, Abu Dhabi: Tabah Foundation.
- Furber, Musa. 2017. *Intensive Animal farming. Wrongs and responsibilities*. Tabah Essays Series, no. 5. Abu Dhabi: Tabah Foundation.
- Ghandi, Maneka. 2011. "Islam and Animal Rights". In: *Southasia*, vol. 15, no. 7: 51-52.
- Masri, Basheer 1986. "Animal experimentation: The Muslim viewpoint". In *Animal Sacrifices: Religious Perspectives on the Use of Animals in Science*, edited by Tom Regan, 171-197. Philadelphia: University Press.
- Masri, Basheer. 1987. [Animals in Islam](#).
- Masri, Basheer. 1992. "Islam and Ecology". In: *Islam and Ecology* edited by F. Khalid , J. O'Brien, 1-23. London: Cassell Publishers Limited.
- Masri, Basheer. 2007. *Animal Welfare in Islam*. Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation.
- Rahman, Sira Abdul. 2017. "Religion and Animal Welfare – An Islamic Perspective". In *Animals*, vol. 7 no. 11, DOI: 10.3390/ani7020011
- Stilt, Kristin. 2017. "Constitutional Innovation and Animal Protection in Egypt". In [Law & Social Inquiry](#)
- Tlili, Sarra. 2015. "Animals would follow shafi'ism: Legitimate and Illegitimate Violence to Animals in medieval Islamic thought". In *Violence in Islamic thought from the Qur'an to the Mongol* edited by Robert Gleave & Istvan Kristo-Nagy, 225-244. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Tlili, Sarra. 2017. "I Invoke God therefor I am". In *A Global History of Literature and the Environment* edited by John Parham and Louise Westling, 107-122.

YouTube Clips

Basheer Masri's legendary video lecture about animal rights is perhaps the best out there in terms of documentaries. Hamza Yusuf promotes a dramatic reduction of consumption of animals and animal products, however is not ready yet to fully embrace veganism. Faima Bakar favourably explores the permissibility of veganism for Muslims.

['Creatures of God' - Basheer Masri](#)

['Food Habit, Animals & Islam' - Hamza Yusuf](#)

['Does veganism go against Muslim Beliefs?' - Faima Bakar](#)

Articles:

Kadry, Nadia. 2016. ["Is it time more Muslims turned to veganism?"](#)

Barrie, Mohammed. 2018. ["Vegan Muslims on the Rise: An interview on eating plant-based and living cruelty free"](#)

KEY ISLAMIC WEBSITES AND FACEBOOKS

The best website to find more information on the journey towards veganism from a Muslim perspective are:

www.animalsinislam.com

www.veganmuslims.com

On these pages you will find lots of information about most questions to do with veganism and Islam. We also have a section on Islam and Veganism on our own homepage:

www.interfaithveganalliance.org/animal-welfare-islam/

There are a number of Facebook groups and pages, where Muslims interested in veganism meet. There you can get in touch with like-minded people, discuss your questions or give your answers, and of course get the best vegan recipes:

- Vegan Muslim Community
- Raw Vegan Muslims
- Muslim Vegans
- Muslim Vegans for a Healthy World
- Animal Rights and Animal Welfare in Islam
- Environment and Animals Rights in Islam
- The Veiled Vegan
- Vegan Muslim
- The Vegan Muslim
- Vegan Muslim Initiative

MUSLIM ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Sammer Hakim is an Australian based animal rights advocate, founder of and main contributor to the homepage www.veganMuslims.com as well as administrator of the Facebook group 'Vegan Muslim Community'. Feel free to contact him about anything to do with veganism and Islam, but note that he can get quite busy with his workload and responsibilities.

Contact: contact@veganmuslims.com.

Duke McLeod, based in Aotearoa/New Zealand, is a regular volunteer at a vegan food outlet at University of Otago. He has recently completed a small research project about vegan Muslims and the connections of Islam and veganism for his Postgraduate Diploma in Anthropology and will inshallah continue this work for his PhD starting next year (2019).

Contact: duke.mcleod99@gmail.com.

MUSLIM PRAYERS THAT HONOR ALL LIFE AND PROMISE NONVIOLENCE

Bismillah i-Rahman i-Rahim

May God's Love fill my heart

And may God's Mercy guide my actions

May God's Beauty be in my eyes in my daily interactions

May God's strength be in my hands when I stand up for justice

May God's wisdom be in my mind when I speak truth to power

And may God's Peace be on my tongue when I eat a plant based meal

Written by Duke McLeod

Follow-Up Support for You
For ideas, support, advice, please email:

veganspirituality@idausa.org
activistsupport@idausa.org

