

Islam and Animal Welfare

(A compilation of religious views)

Published on the occasion of



2015

Compiled by:

Dr.Miftahul Islam Barbaruah

Published under project:

Animal welfare through the lenses of religious faiths in India

Vet Helpline India Pvt. Ltd.

(4th October '2015)

CONTENTS

1. Rationale.....	4
2. Understanding animal welfare and its importance.....	4
3. Islam on prevention of cruelty to animals.....	6
4. Animal sacrifice and Islam	10
5. Islam on dogs.....	11
6. Islam on pigs	11
7. Islam on blood sport.....	11
8. Islam on use of animals in research and war	12
9. Islam on slaughter of animals used for food.....	12
10. Conclusion.....	14

ABBREVIATIONS

PBUH : Peace be upon him

OIE : Office International des Epizooties (World Organisation for Animal Health)

KAP : Knowledge Attitude and Practice

Disclaimer: Vet Helpline India Pvt. Ltd is not a religious organization. Majority of the content of this compilation are sourced from various publications. The opinions expressed in this report are those of compiler and do not necessarily represent, and should not be attributed to Vet Helpline India Pvt.Ltd. While best efforts have been made in preparing this compilation, the compiler and Vet Helpline India Pvt.Ltd assumes no liabilities of any kind with respect to the accuracy of the contents.

We are thankful to following persons for feedback and guidance

Md Komoruzzaman Ahmed

Former founder president of Al-Ameen Welfare Society and Chairman, Hazrat Ayesha Educational Trust, Guwahati, Assam, India

Dr. Abdul Samad

Former Dean, Bombay Veterinary College, Mumbai, India

Dr. Inamdar Khwaja Moinuddin

Retired Assistant Commissioner of Animal Husbandry, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, India

Sponsored by:

Justice Shafiqul Haque Memorial Initiative

www.justicehaque.org

1. RATIONALE

Animal welfare and religion has been a subject of discussion since long. With growing importance of animal welfare, in recent years there are organized efforts to scientifically document knowledge gleaned from religious texts so as to initiate inter-community dialogue. For example, Harvard Law School is implementing Animals, Law, and Religion (ALR) project. The project is an inter-disciplinary and comparative project that works at the interface of religious laws and practices and animal welfare and rights.

In 1988, al-Hafiz Basheer Ahmad Masri published *Animal Welfare in Islam*, a short treatise that inspired animal activists throughout the Muslim world. OIE's (World Organization of Animal Health) working group on animal welfare has also published a report highlighting the compatibility between OIE standards and requirements of Islamic law in reference to prevention of cruelty to animals during transport and slaughter. The current report is an attempt to compile some of the teachings of 'Islam' on areas like : Prevention of cruelty to animals, animal sacrifice, importance of respecting the balance of nature, dogs and Islam, pigs and Islam, Islam and blood sports, Islam on animal in research and war, slaughter of animals used for food, Islam and vegetarianism etc.

Religion can immensely impact upon attitudes towards animal welfare, hampering or advancing the cause. This report published on the occasion of World Animal Day-2015 is intended for use of animal welfare organizations so that they can initiate dialogue and engage with Islamic religious institutions to bring in the required attitudinal transformation where required.

2. UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL WELFARE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Defining animal welfare:

As per world organization of Animal Health (OIE), animal welfare means¹ how an animal is coping with the condition in which it lives. An animal is in good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing.

John Webster² defines animal welfare by advocating three positive conditions: Living a natural life, being fit and healthy, and being happy

¹ Refer chapter 1.1.1 and Appendix 3.7.1 of Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

² Webster, J (2008). *Animal Welfare: Limping Towards Eden*. John Wiley and Sons. p. 6

Animal welfare can also be expressed in terms of following five freedoms³ to animals:



Importance of animal welfare

Research has demonstrated that the welfare and health of an animal are linked to food safety. Improvements in animal welfare have the potential to reduce on-farm risks to food safety, principally through reduced stress-induced immunosuppression, reduced incidence of infectious disease on farms and reduced shedding of human pathogens by farm animals⁴.

A growing body of research also shows that animal abuse is predictive of human aggression patterns including the ability to commit murder and larger social injustice. Exposure to animal abuse can produce a desensitization process where empathic abilities are reduced and callousness increased. Cruelty to animal is increasingly being recognized as a crosscutting cultural risk factor for human psychological health and security⁵.

Scope of animal Welfare:

In recent years, Animal welfare is also recognized as a branch of science where scientists are investigating animal welfare using rigorous scientific methods. Leading universities worldwide have set up separate centers and departments in the field of Animal Welfare Science.

The scope of animal welfare activities is getting wider day by day. Statutory requirements and customer demand is forcing companies in sectors like food, pharmaceuticals, bio-research, entertainment, animal transport etc. to make investments on process and facilities to meet national and global welfare standards. Specialized programs are being undertaken to address human animal conflicts. Humane

³ Report of Farm Animal Welfare Committee (1965), Government of UK

⁴ de Passillé AM, Rushen J. "Food safety and environmental issues in animal welfare" Rev Sci Tech. 2005 Aug; 24(2):757-66.

⁵ GRF 2nd One Health Summit 2013: Presentation by Philip Tedeschi, Institute for Human-animal Connection, University of Denver

education is increasingly being considered as an important element in human resource development programs. Animal welfare is now increasingly being considered as one of the key element of 'One Health'⁶ approach.

3. ISLAM ON PREVENTION OF 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 circumstance. 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.

All the creatures on earth, and all the birds that fly with wings, are communities like you. We did not leave anything out of this book. To their Lord, all these creatures will be summoned. (The Quar'an, Surah 6. Al-An'am, Ayah 38)

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

We were on a journey with the Apostle of God (PBUH), 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'⁷.

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

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has even tried the 'Punishment and Reward' approach in the following hadith:

⁶ One Health' is defined as "the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines — working locally, nationally, and globally — to attain optimal health for people, animals and the environment. One Health' focuses on zoonotic, emerging diseases and issues like food safety and environmental hazards at the human-animal-ecosystem interface

⁷ 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.

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 (PBUH) 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 herself⁸." 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 (PBUH) 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'⁹. '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.'¹⁰

The Prophet (PBUH) 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 thirst¹¹. To catch birds and imprison them in cages without any special purpose is considered abominable.

One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 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.

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 (PBUH) will serve as an example:

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Mishkat al-Masabih; Book 6; Chapter 7, 8:178.

¹¹ Narrated by Abu Huraira. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2244. Also Bukhari, 3:322. Also Awn (Ref. No. 32); Hadith No. 2533, and others.

Jabir told that God's Messenger (PBUH) forbade striking the face or branding on the face of animals...The same companion of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) reported him as saying, when an ass which had been branded in its face passed him by: 'God curse the one who branded it.'¹² 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 (PBUH) migrated to Madinah from Makkah in 622 AD, people there used to cut off camels' humps and the fat tails of sheep. The Prophet (PBUH) 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."¹³

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 (PBUH) 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."¹⁴ Hazrat 'Omar ibn al-Khattab used to instruct repeatedly: 'Give time to the slaughtered being' till it is dead cold¹⁵.

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 carcass¹⁶.

Another malpractice in Arabia in those days, which caused pain and discomfort to the animals, was stopped by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in these words: "Do not store milk in the udders of animals..."¹⁷

Not only physical but also emotional care of animals was so much emphasized by the Holy Prophet(PBUH) that he once reprimanded his wife, A'ishah, for treating a camel a

¹² 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).

¹³ Narrated by Abu Waqid al-Laithi. Tirmidhi; Hadith No. 1480, Chapt. On Al-At'imah. Also 'Robson' (Ref. No. 15), p. 872).

¹⁴ Kitab al-Muqni, 3:542. Also Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm.

¹⁵ Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm. Hazrat 'Omar ibn al-Khattab was the second Caliph (634-644 A.C. = 12-22A.H.).

¹⁶ Kitab al-Nil wa Shifa'al-Alil, 4:460.

¹⁷ Muslim and Bukhari. Also Holy Traditions; 1st Edition; Vol. 1; Muhammad Manzur Ilahi; Ripon Press, Lahore, Paistan; 1932; p. 149).

bit offhandedly. Hazrat A'ishah herself narrates: "I was riding a restive camel and turned it rather roughly. The Prophet (PBUH) said to me: 'it behooves you to treat the animals gently'¹⁸.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself was once reprimanded by Allah for neglecting his horse, as the following Hadith tells us: "The Prophet (PBUH) 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'¹⁹.

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

The Prophet (PBUH) said: 'Do not clip the forelock of a horse, for decency is attached to its forelock; nor its mane, for it protects it; nor its tail, for it is its fly-flap'²⁰.

The incidents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) personal grooming of his horse; his wife A'isha's rough handling of her camel; the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) 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 hadith show that Muhammad (PBUH) had realized even fourteen centuries ago that animals have a sense of adornment and sensitivity.

Animals in the service of man should be used only when necessary and their comfort should not be neglected. The Prophet (PBUH) once passed by a lean camel whose belly had shrunk to its back. 'Fear God' he said to the owner of the camel, feed these dumb animals and ride them only when they are fit to be ridden, and let them go free when it is felt that they should rest²¹

About taking care of animals while traveling, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) 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 creatures²².

¹⁸ Narrated by A'ishah. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 2593. Also Awn, 7:155, Hadith No. 2461; (Ref. No. 32).

¹⁹ Narrated by Yahya bin Said. "Malik bin Anas al-Asbhahi". Also Al-Muwatta, (in English); Divan Press, Norwich, England; 1982; p. 205.

²⁰ Narrated by 'Utbah ibn Farqad Abu Abdillah al-Sulami. Abu Dawud. Also Awn, 7:216, 217, Hadith No. 2525 (Ref. No. 32).

²¹ .Narrated by Abdullah bin Ja'far. Awn (Ref. No. 32); 7:221; Hadith No. 2532.

²² (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. In the following Hadith, one of his companions tells us that the holy Prophet (PBUH) 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."²³

Hazrat Ali's (rz)²⁴ 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)).

4. ANIMAL SACRIFICE AND ISLAM

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 which deal with the subject wind up with the provision that the meat be fed to the poor, the needy, those who are too modest to beg as well as the mendicants - those who beg openly (*The Qur'an*, 2:196; 22:28; 35-37).

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

²³ Narrated by Anas. Awn (Ref. No. 32); 7:223; Hadith No. 5234. Also 'Guillaume' (Ref. No. 57); pp.106, 107.

²⁴ Read Hazrat Imam Ali (AS) as in practice with Shia (Jafri) sect of Muslim.

5. ISLAM ON DOGS

To the literalists, the prohibition against dogs as pets is clearly delineated in one of the hadiths, the traditional accounts of the life and sayings of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH). In their view, the hadiths and the Qur'an unambiguously set forth the laws of sharia. But as Abou El Fadl²⁵, a researcher points out, determining which of the tens of thousands of hadiths are authoritative requires both knowledge and critical analysis. One must evaluate the reliability of the sources and assess how consistent the hadiths are with the moral vision of the God who speaks in and through the Qur'an.

In the case of the dog hadith, Abou El Fadl found it hard to believe that the same God who created such companionable creatures would have his prophet declare them "unclean."

Investigating the sources, he discovered that the hadith in question not only derived from an unreliable chain of sources but reflected views far more consistent with pre-Islamic Arab customs and attitudes. What's more, he says, he found that a hadith from one of the most trustworthy sources tells how the Prophet himself had prayed in the presence of his playfully cavorting dogs.

6. ISLAM ON PIGS

Traditionally omnivorous pig is considered as an unclean animal that devours virtually anything, including human excrement and is a breeding ground for various malignant microbes and parasites. It is scientific that pork obtained from scavenging pigs can cause serious disease to human beings. Holy Qur'an suggests people to avoid blood and flesh of swine only on health ground. There is no mention in Holy Qur'an that one need to hate pigs or cause harm to it.

7. ISLAM ON BLOOD SPORT

There are many hadith forbidding blood sports and the use of animals as targets, some of which are as follows:

The Prophet (PBUH) condemned those people who take up anything alive as a mere sport."²⁶ The Prophet said: 'Do not set up living creatures as a target'²⁷.

²⁵ Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature, s.v. "Dogs in the Islamic Tradition and Nature." New York: Continuum International, 2004. <http://www.scholarofthehouse.org/dinistrandna.html>

²⁶ Narrated by Abdullah bin 'Omar. Muslim, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 1958

²⁷ Narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas. Muslim Vol. 3, Hadith No. 1957. Also 'Robson'; p. 872 (Ref. No. 15).

The Prophet (PBUH) condemned those who use a living creature as a target."²⁸

The Prophet (PBUH) forbade an animal being made a target."²⁹

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 (PBUH) has invoked a curse upon one who does this kind of thing³⁰.

The Prophet (PBUH) passed by some children who were shooting arrows at a ram. He told them off, saying: 'do not maim the poor beast'.³¹

The fact that these hadith repeat the same sayings of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) in slightly varying wordings show that he took the matter very seriously and repeated them again and again on different occasions in the presence of different people.

8. ISLAM ON USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND WAR

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. Many reliable 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.

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 (PBUH) (632-634 AD) addressed the Muslim army at a place outside Madinah, 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 food³².

9. ISLAM ON SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS USED FOR FOOD

Meat-eating is neither encouraged nor 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 sacrilegious (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 meat" (*Ta'imin yat'amohu*).

²⁸ Narrated by Abdullah bin'Omar. Bukhari and Muslim. Also 'Robson' p. 872 (Ref. No. 15)

²⁹ Narrated by Anas. Recorded by Riyad. (Ref. No. 28); Hadith No. 1606; p. 272.

³⁰ Narrated by Said bin Jubair

³¹ Narrated by Abdallah bin Ja'far. An-Nasai, 7:238.

³² The Qur'an, 22:40; Tabari III, p. 123

While Islam permits eating meat, it gives instructions to ensure humane slaughter, with as little pain to the slaughtered bird or animal as possible. The permission to eat meat can be linked to following verse from the Qur'an.

O who you believe, make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you but commit no excess for Allah does not love those given to excess . (AlQura'n: AlMaida: 5:87)

O you the Prophet! Why do you prohibit that which Allah has made lawful to you. (AlQura'n:AtTahreem66:1)

The Messenger of Allah was heard forbidding keep waiting a quadruped or any other animal for slaughter³³.

The Prophet (PBUH) forbade all living creatures to be slaughtered while tied up and bound³⁴. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) 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?'³⁵

Hazrat Ali (rz)³⁶ says: "Do not slaughter sheep in the presence of other sheep, or any animal in the presence of other animals."

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!"³⁷

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.

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

³³ Bukhari. Also Muslim; Vol. 2, Chapter 11; Section on 'Slaying'; 10:739; verse 152.

³⁴ (Ref. No. 46); Hadith No. 4817; p. 1079.

³⁵ (Al-Furu Min-al-Kafi Lil-Kulini; 6:230).

³⁶ Read Hazrat Imam Ali (AS) as in practice with Shia (Jafri) sect of Muslim.

³⁷ Reported by Ibn Sirin about Hazrat 'Omar and recorded in Badae al-Sande; 6:2811.

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 possible³⁸.

10. CONCLUSION

The discussion above indicates importance of animal welfare in Islam. However, cruelty to animal is commonly observed in livestock and meat trade dominated by Muslims in many countries. This is continuing though countries have legal provisions on animal welfare. In recent years attempts have been made to understand the meat value chains with focus on Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) of people at various levels³⁹. The learning of value chain functioning, KAP of people associated with such value chains together with basic understanding of religious texts on animal welfare can help in developing suitable risk communication⁴⁰ strategy to reach out to people practicing cruelty. Participation of religious leaders in delivering such communication can make much difference.

Even if animals have been slaughtered with prescribed Islamic method e.g. Halal method of slaughter, if cruelties were inflicted on such animals both prior and during slaughter, their flesh is still forbidden (Haram) food in Islam. This indicates the possibilities intervention through mass consumer campaign in Islamic societies to prevent animal cruelty across meat value chain.

The dissemination of learning on Islamic teachings on animal welfare and compassion can also go a long way towards solving societal conflicts and aggression observed in some Muslim societies.

³⁸ The Sahih Mulsim, 2:156. Also Al-Taaaj fi Jaami al-Usool, Vol. 3, p. 110, Cairo Edition. Also Al-Faruo min-al-Kafi, p. 2, and others.

³⁹ Livestock Market Systems Study for control of Transboundary Animal Diseases in India (FAO, 2013)

⁴⁰ Risk arising out of cruelty to animal viz. poor food quality, emergency of diseases etc.