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ESTABLISHING ANIMALS IN ISLAMIC ETHICS: WHO ARE THEY, AND
HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THEM?

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AND HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THEM?**

**HAYVANLARI İSLAM ETİĞİNDE KURMAK: KİM ONLAR VE
ONLARA NASIL DAVRANMALIYIZ?**

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for all the animals that are mentioned and not mentioned in the Qur'an



ABSTRACT:

This thesis aims to give a seat to the moral status of animals within Islamic ethics. By consulting two canonical sources of Islamic ethics—the *Qur'an* and the *hadiths* (sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad), first we examine *the values and characteristics of animals* according to the *Qur'anic* setting. Our study first argues that animals have *intrinsic value* beyond humans' utilitarian purposes. Second, we note that for various tasks the *Qur'an* explicitly grants humans benefit from animals, which constitute *extrinsic value* of animals. However, the same Book also puts limits on the human's rights. Third, we argue that the *Qur'an* assigns linguistic skills and spiritual capacities to animals. Through this knowledge, we hope to regenerate our ethical sensitivity toward animals.

After we grasp the *Qur'anic* approach to animals, we discuss “*how should we treat them [animals]?*” to consider our ethical behavior toward animals according to Islamic ethics. In that regard, first we examine the *hadiths* which provide guidance for the proper treatment of animals. We argue that Prophet Muhammad extirpates the early, brutal view of animals and causes a fundamental shift in humans establishing a new ethical concern pertaining to animals based on compassion and justice. Finally, we examine the Islamic concept of *khalifa* (trustee) in addressing Anthropocene. We argue that being appointed on earth as its trustee does not justify an anthropocentric view of animals, instead, it establishes ethical rules for humans to protect animals and the environment, therefore, forcing humans to develop an ethical consideration for nature.

KEYWORDS: Islam, Ethics, Animal, Qur'an, Hadith.

ÖZET:

Bu tez, hayvanların ahlaki statülerine İslam etiğinde bir alan açmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu amaçla çalışmamız, İslam etiğinin iki temel kaynağı olan Kur'an ve hadislere başvurarak, öncelikle hayvanların Kur'an'a göre ne gibi bir değere ve karaktere sahip olduğunu inceler. Çalışmamızın iddia ettiği ilk nokta, hayvanların insan kullanımına hizmet etmek dışında, *içsel değere* sahip olduğudur. İkincisi, Kur'an açık bir şekilde insanların hayvanlardan farklı amaçlar doğrultusunda istifade etmesine izin vermiştir, ki bu da hayvanların *dışsal değerini* oluşturur. Fakat aynı Kitap insanın bu yetkisini sınırlandırmaktadır. Üçüncü argümanımız ise, Kur'an'ın hayvanlara karşı etik bir hassasiyet geliştirmemizi sağlayacak bir biçimde hayvanları dil yetisi ve ruhsal kapasiteye sahip canlılar olarak tanımladığıdır.

Kur'an'ın hayvanlara olan yaklaşımını anladıktan sonra, çalışmamız etik davranışlarımızı değerlendirmek amacıyla "*hayvanlara nasıl davranmalıyız?*" sorusunu İslam etiği bağlamında tartışmaya açar. Bu bağlamda ilkin, hayvanlara doğru davranılması hususunda bize rehberlik eden hadisleri inceler. Argümanımız, Hz. Muhammed'in hayvanlara karşı sürdürülen insan davranışlarında temel bir değişim yarattığı; önceden var olan tüm kaba davranışları silerek, merhamet ve adalet üzerine kurulu yeni bir etik ilke ortaya koyduğudur. Son olarak, çalışmamız İslami bir terim olan halife (emanetçi) kavramını Antroposen dahilinde tartışır. İnanıyoruz ki, dünyaya halife olarak atanmak, insanda antroposentrik bir hayvan düşüncesine yol açmaz, tersine, insanın hayvanı korumak amacıyla bazı etik kuralları takip etmesini sağlar ve dolayısıyla, insanı etik bir değerlendirme yapmaya zorlar.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: İslam, Etik, Hayvan, Kur'an, Hadis.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is written not to appreciate Islam's ethical system but to appreciate the *animal's life* or "different forms of life" (Forsberg et al., 2012, p. 10) through the lens of Islamic ethics. Our hypothesis is that Islam can, and may, offer animal ethics an alternative understanding as it is primarily represented in the *Qur'an*. We believe that the *Qur'anic* verses pertaining to animals invite us to appraise the status of animals while equipping us with a comprehensive and holistic idea of nature which denotes the unity of God. These *Qur'anic* verses, then, are best understood and exercised by Prophet Muhammad whose teachings give us specific guidance regarding proper treatment of animals. In our view, to stand with the Prophet means to stand with animals and other species through compassion and justice. Therefore, *hadiths* (oral sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad) are the secondary source of Islamic ethics and this thesis as well.

By consulting the two canonical resources of Islamic ethics, we aim to reconsider our ethical consideration toward animals. For this purpose, two questions guide this study; who are the animals in the *Qur'anic* setting and what does the *Qur'an* tell us about our behavior toward animals? The first question "*who are they [animals]?*" is relevant to the first chapter of the thesis written for the purpose of revealing the values and characteristics of animals according to the *Qur'an*. In this chapter, by looking at wondrous verses, we will try to understand how a Holy book, the *Qur'an*, portrays animals from different angles. We believe that there are lots of passages in the *Qur'an* wherein various aspects of animals can be unearthed. An analytical and critical examination of these verses, in our opinion, can affect our perception of animals, consequently, changing our interaction with "non-human beings" as well. In the first chapter, these verses are categorized into three subtitles: "intrinsic value of animals", "extrinsic value of animals", and "characteristics of animals."

For this purpose, we will start with the examination of *intrinsic value of animals* that are highly emphasized in the *Qur'anic* verses. To borrow the term *intrinsic* from Arne Naess (2005), in this part, the expression *intrinsic* is used to

denote that animals possess essential value beyond human utilitarianism since each animal, *as well as* each human being, is created and sustained by God. The *Qur'anic* verses clearly state that each creature on this earth is the handiwork of God. Thus, animals should be respected, protected, and loved. This intrinsic value, which is independent from human utility, therefore, challenges us to develop a more comprehensive ethical consideration of animals. Naess, however, does not use this term within the theological realm. In his ecophilosophical approach, he ascribes intrinsic value to animals and other life forms to extend their rights in the context of *deep ecology*. However, it does not conflict with our Qur'anic position; the term *intrinsic* still inspires me because it stands against the idea that non-human beings are valuable insofar as their service to human utility.

To direct our gaze beyond instrumentalism, the *Qur'an* always advises humans to watch animals carefully since animals are a significant sign of the Creator. In this context, I will examine the *Qur'an's* stipulations on four animals: fly, bee, bird, and camel. I will argue that by looking at the *daily miracles* in these animal's lives, humans are invited to ponder on God's power and Creation. In that regard, the palpable existence of animals can help humans to find God, therefore, might be a guidance to humans to have a better religious life.

In our study, animal-related messages of the *Qur'an* will be explained with *tawhid* belief (*the absolute oneness of God*) which stresses that God is “the One and Only” (Q. 112:1) and plurality of the creation points to the Unity of God. This section is very important since it shows us that the *Qur'an* deeply offers intrinsic value to animals beyond the use-value to beings. Also, it helps us to realize that God is also *the God of animals*, not only humans, so that we are all creatures came from and dependent on the same Sustainer.

The extrinsic value of animals, on the other hand, points to the animal's instrumental value that enables human activities. Thus, it emphasizes physical usefulness in the human-animal relationship. In the *Qur'anic* context, I will consult this term to denote the human allowance to benefit from animals in different realms. When we turn to the extrinsic value, the Qur'an pronounces multiple uses of

animals for human benefit. Numerous verses mention that humans can benefited from animals mainly for nourishment, transportation, hunting, heating, clothing, and various housing equipment. Thus, God reminds us that we are extrinsically connected to animals. However, the *Qur'an* also consistently emphasizes that this permission is a Divine gift of God to humanity because otherwise, humans would suffer lots of pain, and even, they would not be able to sustain their life on this earth without animals. Since the human-animal relationship is an important issue in God's account, He has carefully arranged human authority over animals in the way that it does not lead to the exploitation of non-human beings. This section, therefore, can provide *Qur'anic* insight into our ethical consideration of animals while it enables us to realize that there is a crucial interdependence between humans and animals.

Finally, in order to understand the attributes of animals in *Qur'anic Weltanschauung*, we will examine some characteristics which are ascribed to animals by God. According to the *Qur'an*, God imputes two important qualities to animals: linguistic abilities and spiritual/religious capacities. We generally think that “humans exclusively possessed language as our defining characteristic” (Campbell, 2014, p. 15). However, the *Qur'an* may challenge this presupposition through its fantastic depiction of speaking animals. Although the theme of speech is limited to only two animals; a hoopoe bird and an ant, I believe that it may suffice for a revisionist idea toward animals in the human mind. Moreover, God also indicates that animals possess *a kind of* spirituality. For instance, in the *Qur'anic* worldview, all animals are capable of praying to God, although human beings don't understand their praying rituals, as in Q. 17:44:

“The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet you understand not how they declare His glory!”¹

¹ All translations of the *Qur'anic* verses are based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2003), *The Meaning of the Holy Quran: Complete Translation with Selected Notes*, Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation.

Animals' worship of God is a complex phenomenon, as will be pointed out. However, through these verses that assign linguistic and spiritual capacities, we realize that animals are neither simply automats as Descartes argues (Simondon, 2011) nor a mere commodity as modernity puts it (Özdemir, 2003), but an actant possessing mind and soul. Therefore, this section will be dedicated to understanding the nature of animals by examining their characteristics as it is manifested in the *Qur'an*.

After the presentation of *the values and characteristics of animals*, the next chapter will be devoted to the question “*how should we treat them [animals]?*” This question is relevant for the second chapter of the thesis which aims at revealing the *Qur'anic* influence on Muslims' behavior toward animals. The *Qur'an* has challenged and changed the pre-Islamic perceptions of animals from the early revelation, and therefore, first changed the Arabs' perception of animals and then subsequently deeply affected the Arabs' interaction with them. The rights over animals, which are set by God and limited with injunctions, is revealed through the *Qur'an* but truly explained with the *hadiths* in Muslim societies throughout history. The *Qur'anic* spirit reflected and exemplified in Prophet Muhammad's kind attitude toward animals has caused a significant change in Muslim's views, and brought about a new thought and life grounded in mercy whose affects continue to present day. At this point, it is also appropriate to remember that Prophet Muhammad is called by the *Quran* a Mercy for all creation: “We sent you not, but as a mercy for all creatures” (Q. 21:107).

Since Prophet Muhammad's sayings and attitudes toward animals may be regarded as concrete examples of the *Qur'anic* spirit, *hadiths* are useful resources for observing this change before and after the spread of Islam. Therefore, instead of verses, this part mostly deals with the examination of *hadiths* wherein Prophet Muhammad's teachings can be found. As we will see, before practicing Islamic teachings, in the *jahiliya* days (time of ignorance), Arab life was a brutal display: they were performing lots of *Jahili* traditions on animals which caused torture, pain, and death. The Prophet has forbidden all cruel practices to save animals from their

troubles and to turn people away from these inhumane attitudes. Therefore, while the *Qur'an* increased the well-being of animals, it also significantly increased the wisdom of the Arab in a short time. The *Qur'anic* engagement with animals brought new opportunities for understanding the world as a coherent and holistic system. The examination of animal-related *hadiths*, therefore, is an urgent and critical topic which needs to be studied in that it can provide guiding principles for the resolution of today's environmental crisis as well.

Finally, as concluding remarks, the last part of the second chapter will discuss two notions relevant to our topic: being a trustee (*khalifa*) and Anthropocene. I argue that Islamic ethical messages are mostly considered in the human realm in the classical ethics books. Thus none of them effectively brought into light the state of animals, and for that reason, Islam is accused of being anthropocentric. Therefore, my aim in this part is to question this *anthropocentric Islam* through the concept of trusteeship and its affects on animals. According to Islamic ethics, "humankind is given the dignified position of 'trustee on earth' (*khalifa*)" (Q. 2:30) to maintain world order. This bestowed trust, therefore, makes Muslims accountable to God for their attribute of and exercises in responsibility for protection of earthly beings. The MENA Declaration² states that:

Clearly, humans are not owners and masters of the natural environment; they are trustees to whom God has delegated the responsibility of maintaining and utilizing the natural environment in accordance with God's intentions. The *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions prescribe a criterion for responsible human trusteeship of Earth by refraining from actions that lead to the corruption of the environment.

Being a trustee denotes the fact that human's practices are controlled and restricted by God while *absolute authority still belongs to Him*. This duty, therefore, should be conducted in humility for the protection of earthly beings rather than the exploitation of them. To quote Foltz, he also says "The Islamic tradition, perhaps

² JUDAIC, CHRISTIAN, AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON SHARED MORAL PRINCIPLES: Abrahamic Traditions and Environmental Change MENA Project. Retrieved March 18, 2020, from: <http://fore.yale.edu/files/Theological-Support-for-MENA-Project-Principles.pdf>

more so than any other, has much to say about the need to respect *all parts of God's creation*" (Foltz, 2006, p. 4, italics is added).

On the other hand, unfortunately, it is difficult to say that there is enormous scholarly literature on Islam and the question of animals from a moral point of view. My focus is on the literature published by contemporary thinkers living in the West. The main works in question include Sara Tlili's *Animals in the Qur'an* and Richard Foltz's *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Countries*, also the writings of Fazlun Khalid, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Mawil Izzi Deen, and İbrahim Özdemir who are prominent names in the field of Islamic environmental ethics.

Also, Muslim exegetes are an indispensable part of this thesis. In the interpretation process of the *Qur'anic* verses, three different exegesis (*tafsir*) will be consulted, one is classical and two are from the 20th century Islamic thought, namely; Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, and Sayyid Qutb's *fi Zilal al-Qur'an*.³ I often find myself inspired for their fascinating expositions on verses, otherwise, such study would never come into existence. Therefore, this is the right place to explain what the *tafsir* is and its features pertinent to our study:

Tafsir is a genre that endeavors to interpret the Qur'an and elucidate its ambiguous parts, not merely to satisfy an intellectual need for understanding the most central text in a believer's life or a desire for studying a text deemed by Muslims to be the epitome of literary perfection, but also to serve the practical purpose of deriving and inferring rules and recommendations that Muslims would implement in their lives (Tlili, 2012, p. 43).

The *tafsir* genre, which is centered around the text interpretation, is relevant for our study since it helps us to understand how the *Qur'anic* perception of animals is understood throughout history in Muslim culture. Exegetes who explicate those themes, therefore, are the most important aspect of this thesis. Instead of attempting to survey all the exegetical works, this study is limited to a descriptive analysis of

³ Through the thesis, I have consulted Turkish version of the exegesis books, therefore, all translations of the exegetical sources from Turkish to English belong to me.

tafsir books written by three pioneering commentators. Consulted exegetes can display similar understanding or conflictual positions of *Qur'anic* animal themes. By using the intertextual approach, I would like to provide a comprehensive review of the animal-related verses and concepts.

Attempting to accord moral consideration to animals from the *Qur'anic* perspective, this thesis urges us to reconsider our ethical positions on animals in the light of the *Qur'anic* verses and the *hadiths*. In this context, the following term “ecotheologian” as defined by Gottlieb (2006) is quite influential and inspirational:

Ecotheologians have sought to reinterpret old traditions: finding and stressing passages in classic texts that help us face the current crisis [. . .] Thinkers have also tried to extend more familiar religious beliefs, especially ethical ones concerning love and respect for other people, to non-human nature. Nature becomes the Body of God, or the ‘neighbor’ whom we must treat as we would like to be treated (p. 9)

Though I am neither an ecologist nor a theologian, these sentences are exactly the right spirit for a student of cultural studies, who strives to study, learn, read, and write on such a topic. In my opinion, this study would be a humble and useful introduction for those who are willing to learn the Islamic perspective on animal rights and ethics, but for sure, a further proceeding requires a detailed examination of Islamic scholarship including philosophical, historical or legal norms.

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR READERS:

THE QUR'AN, ISLAMIC ETHICS, AND EXEGETES

Under this title, I want to present a short history of the *Qur'an* and explanation of Islamic ethics, which may enlighten the readers and prepare them for the topic. The *Qur'an* was revealed to Prophet Muhammad in 610 AD when he was forty years old. In his childhood, little Muhammad enjoyed being a shepherd. As such, he would take Meccan sheep to pasture through the highlands. He would sit under the shade of clouds while the sheep were grazing. After feeding the animals, he would draw water in order to give it to them (Yananlı, 2013). His ancestors were not wealthy or not landlords. His father died before he was born, and his mother passed away when he was just six years old. His care was provided mostly by his grandfather and an uncle.

As Muhammad became an adolescent, he began to feel disturbed regarding entrenched habits of his society. Although Mecca's corrupt environment was foreign to him (Draz, 2000), there was still something that he loved: mountains. Whenever he wanted to leave the city, he took to the mountains in search of solitude. Also, from a higher place, things could have been seen in a wider perspective. Mountains hence were symbols of searching for the truth (Şener, 2015) since they provide the viewer a comprehensive outlook. It is striking that when Muhammad took the first revelation in the cave Hira on the Mountain of Jabal al-Nur, nobody knew that this new message from God would first change his life and the Arab peninsula forever. After receiving God's message from Gabriel, he descended from Hira and came to his home. Since then, *Prophet Muhammad* (570-631) immediately started preaching Islam to his society and he painstakingly continued it until he passed away.

The *Qur'an*, which was revealed over approximately 23 years, covers the foundation of Islamic ethical concepts and standards, as well as the dimension of human behavior. The Arabic term *akhlaq* is literally translated into English as ethics. However, the conceptual meaning of *akhlaq* is twofold (Hashi, 2011): first,

akhlaq means “good character” as described in the *Quran* and *akhlaq* books which deal with perfection of the soul. Second, ethics indicate the moral philosophy which addresses the theoretical background of human conduct. In that regard, *akhlaq* (ethics) refers to the science which describes what humans ought to do. Therefore, it is a study of human efforts regarding moral standards. Islamic ethics, on the other hand, are not merely human effort, but standards reinforced by Divine revelation.

In Islamic ethics, human desires and wants are put aside because they cannot be the source of ethical values. Considering the ontological status of value in Islamic ethics, Hourani (2007) discerns three positions among the major schools. According to his categorization, the first group agrees on the idea that “values have an objective existence” (2007, p. 2), therefore, ethical values can be extracted from the Scripture, or they can be learned by human reason, or *by both*. In the eyes of the second group, since “values are in their essences whatever God commands” (2007, p. 2), they can be correctly *deduced only from tradition*. Thus, this school stays away from the independent human intellect. Finally, the third group defends the idea that “*values are objective*” (2007, p. 2), thus, ethical values can be grasped entirely through independent reason. However, they argued that these values should be promulgated by a wise man or prophet to the common people.

Considering the ontological aspect of ethical values, Draz (2008) also notes that human nature and capacity are not excluded completely in Islamic ethics. This idea can be found in some schools which argue that “in their most universal form, the rules of moral law are already inscribed within us” (Draz, 2008, p. 80), therefore, humans can grasp the values of right and wrong, and what is good and evil. At this point, we can think that if the rules of moral law are already evident in ourselves, the only thing we need to do is to decipher them through consulting our *reason* and following our *heart* (Draz, 2008). However, although reason and eternal force—which exist in human’s primal structure—command right to man, they still need to be guided through God (Hashi, 2016). Thus, in addition to consulting one’s own reason, there is also tradition coming from outside of ourselves. In this regard, “The *Qur’an* lays heavy emphasis on itself as the prime source of ethical knowledge

and guidance for man” (Hourani, 2007, p. 45). Consequently, it is probable that God indicates our duty internally, but also manifests it externally through the *Qur’an*, so that ethical values and divine commandments of God have been expressed clearly through words.

Exegetes, then, who are fascinated with God’s revealed words attempt to interpret His Book fastidiously. Their commentaries are valuable for comprehensive and detailed understanding of the *Qur’anic* verses in general and animal themes specifically. Here, a brief introduction of exegetical works which include different approaches toward animals will be helpful.

Our first commentator Fakhr al-Din al-Razi was born in the year 1149 in Rayy, the capital city of the Anatolian Seljuk State. He was a prodigy who studied medicine, astronomy, mathematics, geometry, logic, and rhetoric. Al-Razi’s tafsir *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* (The Great Tafsir) was written in the late episode of his life “at the peak of his intellectual, specifically philosophical, maturity” (Tlili, 2012, p. 60). As an exegete who adapted the opinion-based methodology, he tried to demonstrate the compatibility of reason and revelation (Yavuz, 1995b; Tlili, 2012). Therefore, he criticized the previous sources carefully, and tried to interpret the verses as an active commentator who evaluates the resources in his mind and makes *ijtihad*.⁴

According to al-Razi, people have different levels of understanding and they lack the information to discover correct and just principles (Yavuz, 1995b). Because of that situation, a distinguished person who is a prophet possessing different qualities than ordinary people needs to set up the basic rules that everyone will accept and follow. Al-Razi argues that although people have different levels of knowledge between themselves, they have nonetheless superior position among all created beings. In al-Razi’s account, the human is the only creature who can obtain

⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2020). “Ijtihād, (Arabic: ‘effort’) in Islamic law, the independent or original interpretation of problems not precisely covered by the Qur’ān, Hadith (traditions concerning Prophet Muhammad’s life and utterances), and ijmā’ (scholarly consensus). In the early Muslim community every adequately qualified jurist had the right to exercise such original thinking, mainly in the form of ra’y (personal judgment) and qiyās (analogical reasoning), and those who did so were termed mujtahids.” Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ijtihad>

theoretical and practical knowledge, thus, al-Razi seems to agree with human exceptionalism (Tlili, 2012).

Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, whose ancestors were scholar, was born in 1878 in Antalya, Turkey. He is acknowledged as one of the most important Turkish scholars and exegesis born in the late Ottoman period and living in the early republican era of Turkey. When he was seventeen years old, he settled in Istanbul to complete his religious education in the Kucuk Ayasofya Madrasah. In addition to a formal education, he also studied literature, philosophy, and music on his own initiative. After the proclamation of the Republic, he was supposed to write the first Turkish exegesis book. Although he thought that the *Qur'an* cannot fully be translated into any language, his *Qur'an* commentary *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (Religion of the Truth, Language of the Qur'ān) completed over twelve years is his most famous work. This book, which Yazır began to write at the age of 48 and completed at 60 years old, was first published by the Religious Affairs Directorate (Istanbul 1935-1938), and it was later published in many editions (Yavuz, 1995a).

Yazır, who thinks that people would be happy by adhering to the Islamic principles, had a firm understanding of philosophical thought and positive sciences (Yavuz, 1995a). This versatility, therefore, allowed him to cite Sufism, Western philosophy, logic, and many other sciences in his works. While his commentary is generally regarded as being in the traditional tafsir line, he follows both tradition-based and opinion-based exegesis methodologies.

Yazır argues that reason cannot grasp the truth by itself. Therefore, in addition to reason, humans also should have faith and reason can help us to grasp and verify the reality of the faith. According to Yazır's processing of knowledge, "it is impossible to make a rational explanation for the existence of the world without accepting the existence of God" (Yavuz, 1995a). In that regard, the whole gamut of nature including animals provides us with a more coherent understanding of the Islamic world view and helps humans to reach God. This *high art in the universe* which consists of numerous *living and inanimate* beings indicates the existence of a Creator who is All-knowing and All-Powerful (Yavuz, 1995a).

Our third commentator Sayyid Qutb was born in colonial Egypt in 1906. Generally known for his political life, has also had a keen interest in literature, literary critics, education, journalism, and publication (Görgün, 2009). Qutb, who actively engaged in student movements while studying at the university continued his political actions in his following years. After he was held responsible for the assassination attempt against Cemal Abdünnasir, the president of Egypt, Sayyid Qutb was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment in 1954. During this time, he continued to study on his tafsir *fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an). Then in the year 1966, he was sentenced to death, and his execution was reacted to throughout the entire Islamic world (Görgün, 2009).

The emergence of Qutb's *tafsir* is a little bit different from the previous exegetis's works. Qutb who was initially writing journal articles about the *Qur'an* and daily events, decided to write *tafsir* on each *juz* (part) of the *Qur'an* in 1952 upon drawing attention to these articles (Karliag, 1996). Since his purpose was to evaluate the daily issues in the light of the *Qur'an*, his style was initially far from the classical style of *tafsir*. Even when he was arrested, he continued to write his *tafsir* in prison and succeeded to publish it up to the twenty seventeenth part. Meanwhile, parallel to his intellectual development, he wrote the last four parts of his *tafsir* with a new method (Karliag, 1996), thus, the whole work was completed probably towards the 1960s. Qutb, then began to redact his *tafsir* in line with his developing thought system, however, he could only redact the first thirteen volume.

According to Qutb, "Life in the shade of the *Qur'an* is a blessing and only the one who tastes this blessing knows its beauty" (Karliag, 1996). For him, *Allah* revealed the *Qur'an* to be applied in daily life while enlightening the human mind and warming the heart. In order to show the *Qur'an*'s practical benefits, as well as its pleasure in the human's soul, Qutb developed different styles in his writings. One can observe that the first edition of his *tafsir* was similar to a literary work, but in the following editions, he began to add more detailed explanation and comment, and slowly, his work becomes a modern *tafsir* study (Karliag, 1996). In addition to the opinion-based tradition (*dirayah*), Qutb's method also included the narration-

based traditional technique (*rivayah*) wherein he benefited from many previous sources and cited them.

For Qutb, *Qur'anic* life aimed at the happiness of the human. As a critic of materialism and as someone who was interested in Islamic well-being, Qutb's main purpose was to develop values that elevated humanity, instead of emphasizing *the animal aspect of the human* (Görgün, 2009). Therefore, Qutb argued that humans cannot be degraded and evaluated with materialistic lens. Although he seemed like a holder of the Anthropocene view, because of his ideas elevating humans above animals, his criticism of materialism also paved the way for re-thinking the animal status. Özdemir, therefore, defines Qutb as "A pioneer of deep ecological Muslim thinking in modern times" (2016, p. 95). Qutb's comments and expositions on the *Qur'anic* verses which mention the interactions between humans and animals, enable us to gain new insights on the animal question. Thus, Qutb's *tafsir* stands as a unique example through its style and half of it having been written in prison.

CHAPTER 1

VALUES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ANIMALS IN THE QUR'AN

The first chapter aims to address the following question: what can we learn about the values and characteristics of animals from the *Qur'anic* verses? Revolving around this question, my purpose is to argue that animals have intrinsic and extrinsic value, and some characteristics unique to the *Qur'an* assigns animals moral consideration according to Islamic ethics. Therefore, the purpose of this part is threefold. The first is to argue that animals possess *intrinsic value* pertaining to their relationship to God which ascribes them moral status beyond human utility. The second aim is to explore the *extrinsic value* of animals in terms of instrumental benefits to human beings. The investigation of the *Qur'anic* verses about extrinsic value is relevant to realize how the *Qur'an* constrains our behavior toward animals while it allows human utility. Consequently, we are reminded that animals *still* have ethical subjectivation.

From this perspective, it is understood that Islamic ethical consideration of animals is based not on suffering, as Bentham (2000) claimed, nor on the ground of reason, as Hume thought (as cited in Driver, 2011), nor on the base of autonomy and will, as Kantians maintained (as cited in Korsgaard, 2011). These values are established on the ground of the human's view. However, since a person's idea is not prioritized in Islamic ethical values, the moral status for animals results from God's prescription. Thus, it is directly related to God's own words, the *Qur'an*.

To get a deeper ethical sensitivity, the third purpose of the first chapter, then, is to examine the characteristics of animals limited to the language and spirituality as manifested in the *Qur'an*. Before focusing on the proper treatment of animals contained in chapter two, it is important to introduce the values and characteristics of animals in the *Qur'anic* setting as a means of rectifying our lack of ethical consideration toward animals due to the lack of knowledge about their *characters*. The examination of the *Qur'an* can naturally diminish prejudices about animals and expand our ethical position through thought-provoking verses.

1.1. Intrinsic Value of Animals

Animals possess intrinsic value beyond what human beings attribute to them instrumentally, and this value stems from the fact that each animal is a masterpiece of God's creative wisdom and power. As the *Qur'an* indicates, they deserve a careful moral consideration. I argue that our ethical concern for animals derives from this very essential nature of animals, being created by God. But why does the *Qur'an* have so many statements about nature, natural phenomena, and animals. Also, why does God ceaselessly remind us that animals should be seen as His handiwork?

In my evaluation, these verses have two main functions: first, to remind us of God's unlimited wisdom and power manifested in the nature in general and animals in particular, thus urging humans to *believe in* God; second, to depict God's infinite mercy, thus, urging humans to *be grateful* to his Creator. For this section, by emphasizing the first function, we will examine animals' intrinsic value which stems from the fact that each of them is a sign and reminder of God. Consequently, each inculcates the idea of *tawhid* (unity of God). Since the value of animals is best understood with the concept of *tawhid*, a core pillar of Islam, I must define it before proceeding farther. Then, I will consult the *Qur'anic* verses about four animals: fly, bee, bird, and camel in the context of *tawhid*. By evaluating these verses, I hope to show how animals that we encounter every day are the miraculous handiwork of God, and, thus, beyond all utilitarian aspects, how God assigns special meanings to those animals that we rarely consider.

1.1.1. Animals' Place in Tawhid Belief

The Islamic concept of *tawhid* refers to the oneness of God. The *Qur'an* clearly says: "He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute" (Q. 112:1-2). It also states: "That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things" (Q. 6:102). Therefore, *tawhid* generates two different poles: God and non-God explained as follows by al-Faruqi (2000):

“Reality is of two generic kinds, God and non-God; Creator and creature. The first [...] is God, eternal, Creator, transcendent. Nothing is like unto Him; He remains forever absolutely unique [...] The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, jinn and angels, heaven and earth, paradise and hell, and all their becoming since they came into being” (Al-Faruqi, p. 10).

From the point of Islamic environmentalism, *tawhid* is emphasized on “all-inclusive” (Foltz, 2009) notion stating that all creatures are created by only one God, that is *Allah*, so, the whole gamut of nature is a guidebook which confirms the *tawhid* belief. Here, we reach a vital thought: instead of sacralizing nature, Islam prompts us to see the Sacred through nature. The very idea that every creation reflects its Creator (Ammar, 2005) can be found in the verse which states: “Wherever you turn, there is the presence of Allah” (Q. 1:115).

Accordingly, the *Qur'an* untiringly refers to natural phenomenon since the universe is the prime sign (*ayat*) of its Maker (Rahman, 1980) which is waiting to be recognized by the human. By doing that, the *Quranic* verses don't prove God in a scientific manner but point to Him (Rahman, 1980). If nature bespeaks God (Nasr, 1991), we as humans, are supposed to observe the hallmarks of Divine handiwork explicitly presented in our environment from the smallest entity to the larger bodies. The *Qur'anic* verses, for instance, mostly invite humans to stare at the starry nights (Q. 7:54; 6:97; 16:15; 37:6). In another place, we are called to have a look at the blooming flower (Q. 41:47). Our gaze then is directed to the magnificent mountains (Q. 13:3; 15:19; 16:15; 50:7). After all, when *tawhid* is interpreted as “all-inclusive”, it prompts us to think that “natural world and all creations as originality from God, returning to Him, and centered on Him” (Muhamad et al., 2020, p. 13). All these examples including the stars, flowers or mountains are given in the *Qur'an* to remind the human that each of these—including the human itself—has been created by the same God such that it entrenches *tawhid* in the minds.

In order to instill this holistic and comprehensive view of nature, Özdemir (2003) notes that the early chapters of the *Qur'an* “are about God and how we can

understand and comprehend His existence and presence through the natural world.” (p. 3) Indeed, it is seen that the earliest revelations of the *Qur'an* which arrived in Mecca deal with animals to put the idea of a single God into the human's heart and strengthen it. The *Qur'an*, consequently, mentions animals in different passages as evidence for the existence and the creative efforts of God. In this section, I will examine five animals mentioned in the *Qur'an* during the Meccan era. Although a lot of animals can be seen from the *Qur'anic* perspective, my interest will be focused on those which are mentioned in the context of *tawhid* in order to determine their intrinsic value in inspiring understanding of God's unity.

1.1.1.1. Fly

First, the fly which is mentioned in the *Qur'an* to diminish paganistic worldview. To elaborate, examination of the following verse deserves attention:

“O men!

Here is a parable set forth!

Listen to it!

Those on whom, besides Allah, you call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose!” (Q. 22:73)

This verse emphasizes God's oneness and strictly rejects the worship of deities other than the Creator “Who is All-Powerful, All-Knowing, and All-Merciful” (Özdemir, 2003, p. 5). As Rahman (1980) notes that belief in one God is the most important task of the *Qur'an*, and eventually, it requires one to be reflective about what the *Qur'an* says. As a careful listener to God's messages, this verse draws the human's attention to a fly and turns it into a reminder of the Creator. Based on a fly, God challenges idols and states that even if all idols come together and help each other, they cannot create a fly, which is a tiny creature.

At first glance, it seems that in this context the fly is portrayed as a belittled being through its small-scale and weak structure, but, in essence, the reason why God gives the example of a fly is because of its complexity (Qutb, 2013). In Qutb's

comment, for example, to create a fly is as much as impossible to create an elephant. Whether a fly or a bigger animal, like a mammal, each of them carries the “mysterious secret of life inside” (Qutb, 2013, p. 1664). Regardless of the distinction between the creation of a fly or an elephant, Qutb says, “What is the miracle hidden in the mosquito is the miracle hidden in the elephant” (2013, p. 16). Hence, the difficulty of the creation of a fly equals the difficulty of the creation of an elephant.

Then, why does God stress that no one is capable of creating a fly except Himself, instead of mentioning a bigger animal such as a lion, camel, or elephant? According to Qutb (2013), the inability to create a fly which seems a small creature causes a greater sense of impotency than the inability to create a camel or elephant. Thus, it has a greater impact on human heart and mind. By emphasizing the fly—a tiny animal but not insignificant as a tiny creation—this verse announces the powerlessness and the weakness of the idols, which are prayed to and begged from, in creating anything. In that way, humans are reminded that only God, “the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds” (Q. 1:2) should be praised and hallowed, neither rival nor partner should be assigned to Him.

1.1.1.2. Bee

While reflecting on this verse, my second reliance is on the bee which emphasizes the existence of God in the chapter of *Al-Nahl*, literally meaning “the bee” in English:

“And your Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men’s) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought.” (Q. 16:68-69)

To simplify, in this *Qur’anic* passage, we see a bee traversing from different flowers to produce honey which is highly beneficial to human health. However, what is stressed in this verse is that this ability of the honeybee is inherently put

into the bee's character by God. To convey this message, the verse says: "Your Lord *taught (evha)* the Bee." Although Ali (2003) prefers to translate the Arabic word "evha" as "taught" (2003, p. 281), a more accurate translation for *evha* is "inspired." Through an *inspiration* from God, all animals know how to build their nests, get their sustenance, protect themselves from enemies, and sustain their offspring (Cayır, 2009). Therefore, these behavior patterns which are deeply entrenched in the animals' lives and are reinforced by God cannot simply be named *instinct*. Commenting on the verse, Qutb notes that the bees undoubtedly work with the directives of the instincts, but nonetheless, we need to remind ourselves that these instincts have granted by God (Qutb, 2013). Thence, not only the bees but all animals are acting in accordance with the order received from God.

A remarkable feature of this fact is that *evha* is the verb form of *vahy* which means revelation (Yazır, 2007c). In the *Qur'an*, the term *vahy* is a word mainly used for the prophets, saints, and other high-level religious person (Q. 5:11, Q. 28:7). What is important for our case is that the bee is also cited with the same word, *evha*. Thus, in the religious sense, a bee's instinct is regarded as *a kind of* revelation (Qutb, 2013). If God inspired (*evha*) the bee to do something, it means that the bee takes "the revelation in the form of inspiration" (2007c, p. 246) as prophets do.

Yazır argues that the bee's inspiration is not exactly the same as a prophetic revelation, however, the usage of the word *evha* in the verse features the importance of the bee's case. Just as the prophets carefully fulfill the task assigned to them, the bee is obliged to do what God had revealed to do. The bee, therefore, behaves as it is prescribed to and cannot go beyond it. In this context, collecting pollen or producing honey are duties that God has given and taught the bee. Accordingly, the term *revelation* refers to the fact that God does not merely entrust the bee with some duties, but the All-knowing Creator also provides the necessary apparatus and conditions to the bee in accordance with its duties (Yazır, 2007c). Without such guidance, Tlili argues that "Bees would not be able to recognize the right fruits, find the right paths, and produce honey if it had to do all of this without receiving external guidance" (2012, p.161).

For the purpose of this thesis, it is unnecessary to give details about the healing aspects of honey or bee's subtle skills in building hexagonal honeycomb etc. each of them is represented as a miracle of God in the exegetes' comment. These facts are constant phenomenon which are already declared in the *Qur'an*. What we are supposed to realize is that all these natural processes are not designed by nature itself but with the divine permission of God (Al-Razi, 1992).

1.1.1.3. Bird

The third animal of regarding intrinsic value in the *tawhid* idea is the bird. The *Qur'anic* verses regarding the birds deserve some scrutiny because these passages issue that "every individual creature or being has its own ontological existence as a sign of God" (Özdemir, 2003, p. 7). By mentioning birds flying through an infinite sky, the following verses compassionately demonstrate that all beings on this earth denote God, therefore the "unseen" *Creator* becomes "seen" in the form of *created* life forms. In order to understand this reality, the *Qur'an* asks people to observe and deeply ponder on birds in their daily life as follows:

"Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) Most Gracious: truly it is He that watches over all things" (Q. 67:19, italics added).

"Do they not look at the birds, held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky? Nothing holds them up but (the power of) Allah. Verily in this are Signs for those who believe" (Q. 16:79, italics added).

Throughout history, humans have spent time in deep contemplation over birds and have always been impressed by the phenomenon of flight. Nonetheless, since we see birds almost every day, we begin to forget how utterly miraculous they are. However, the *Qur'an* mentions birds for our understanding of their wondrous aspects. In these verses, God and God only holds the bird up in the air. In his commentary on Q. 16:79, al-Razi (1992) notes that birds and the air are two elements created in accordance with flying. In his view, God gives wings to the bird so that it could fly and then, makes the air light enough to allow the bird to split the

air (1992, p. 304). These verses, therefore, restate the affirmation that the bird's capacity to fly is an indication of God's power, mercy, wisdom, and effort.

In the Islamic sense, every component points out its Author. However, in order to figure out the meaning of signs, someone should bind to faith. Otherwise, people can always understand these signs as mere reality. By emphasizing this understanding of Islam, Qutb's reflection on such verses points out the moral dimension of creation and animals. As we read above, the *Qur'anic* verses state that although everyone can easily watch birds flying through the sky, not everyone can ponder on its divine aspect, thus, accepting this situation as a mere result of natural causation.

On the contrary, those who believe can recognize the beauty and supremacy in this art, which mobilizes emotions and consciences as well. Consequently, they can attribute meaning to natural phenomenon. In evaluating this *Qur'anic* message, Qutb says, "A believing heart expresses its sensitivity to this beauty of creation by faith, worship and glorification of God" (2013, p. 1421). As a result, although these signs are open to everyone, only the believers can take the lessons from them (Al-Razi, 1992).

1.1.1.4. Camel

Finally, given that camels are presented as proof for the existence of God, their intrinsic value strengthens the *tawhid* belief. The *Qur'an* asks its early Meccan readers these critical and life changing questions:

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

And at the Sky, how it is raised high?

And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm?

And at the Earth, how it is spread out?" (Q. 88:17-20)

The *Qur'an* again and again encourages its readers to use their reason and intellect to discover the implicit dimension of nature and understand its messages. Since nature is endowed with God's palpable existence, the *Qur'an* strictly rejects

any idea that argues for “a natural order without recognizing God” (Rahman, 1980, p. 7). The *Qur’anic* exhortations are based on numerous verses asking, “do you not think?”, “do you not reflect?”, “do you not take heed?” (Rahman, 1980, p. 7) and “do they not look at?” which is an oft repeated question to emphasize focus on the creation of the world (Q. 2:259; 7:185; 21:30; 26:7; 50:6; 67:19).

To draw humans’ attention toward creation, in this verse, the *Qur’an* invites humans to ponder on the camel since it is an animal frequently encountered by Arabs in their daily lives (Yazır, 2007e). Among Arabian fauna, camels are the most significant mode of transportation, also providing meat, milk, wool, hides and a workforce (Yazır, 2007e). Although camels had been with the Arabs for centuries, like the case of the birds, humans often didn’t notice the details of this usual phenomenon. Here the *Qur’anic* verse remind of the Creator’s creative power by drawing attention to the *complexity* in the so called *ordinary*.

While camels provide lots of material benefits, as many other animals do, what makes the camel different from the rest is their character (Qutb, 2013). Despite its strength, size and strong constitution, the camel is a submissive animal in a way that even a small child pulls him along. In this context, three exegetes—Yazır, al-Razi and Qutb—express their astonishment over the camel’s subjugation to riders. The amiability and subjugation of the camel to humans is, in fact, an explicit sign of God’s existence and mercy upon mankind. Consulted exegetes keep reiterating that without this divine assistance, “obedience of such a strong creature to a weaker one” (Tlili, 2012) could not be maintained.

Also, “among other domestic animals, he [the camel] is the most resistant to hunger, thirst, fatigue, and harsh conditions” (Qutb, 2013, p. 2563). In evaluating the verse, al-Razi (2002b) relates his story about the strong imaginative faculty of camels which is another fascinating skill. He tells of a group of companions who are traveling in the desert and get lost and a camel helps them to find their way. Al-Razi says: “...He [the camel] found the way after a long time. We were amazed at how this animal could find the right path at once and how it remembered, so even

that we humans were unable to do so whilst that animal could find it naturally” (2002b, p. 105).

From the camel, which is given close attention, the *Qur'an* keeps inviting its readers to look further at the creation of the sky, the mountains, and the earth in a holistic and systematic way. In the interpretation of the verse quoted above, Yazır (2007e) states that the mentioning of *the camel, sky, mountains, and the earth* respectively is not an arbitrary order but very planned. The verse begins with the *camel* because Arabs deal with this animal almost every day. Then, if someone who rides on a camel raises his head, he will see the *sky* above; when he looks to the right and left, he sees the *mountains* around him, and finally, if he looks down from the camel's height, he sees the surface of the *earth*. Therefore, sight begins with the camel and ends on the land's surface, enabling humans to hold a wider view about the whole cosmos. Consequently, Yazır (2007e) rightly underlines the fact that if the human more carefully looks at his environment and realizes the world he lives in, he would have a wider and deeper knowledge about God's creations, power, and blessings fill our hearts with a sense of awe, wonder, and moral obligation to creation.

What we have seen so far from the preceding verses is that animals are not mentioned in these passages for their utilitarian aspect, but for their intrinsic value in strengthening the idea of God in the human mind. At this point, one might argue that according to this conceptualization, animals again service humanity, and subsequently, their value is not exactly intrinsic. However, in this study, I consult the term *intrinsic* within the frame of the humans' utilitarian activities. None of the examined verses emphasize the animals' utility in that regard. Instead, they point out the miraculous aspect of animals in the realization of the idea of God. These verses can again be an argument, then, for centralizing the human to help them reach God. As such, the ultimate goal is the goodness of humans.

However, I oppose this idea. First, it is true that God designed the *Qur'an* as guidance for humans. But He did not prioritize them because they have dire need of guidance. As a divine text that is concerned with the moral development of the

human, the *Qur'an* is “a Book, based on knowledge [...], a guide and a mercy to all who believe” (Q. 7:52). While the *Qur'an* itself is a guidance (*hidaya*) for those who have faith, animals are one of the most important forms of guidance to God from the moral aspect of human. Through divine assistance of them, humans are expected to develop faith in God and, furthermore, refrain from assigning any partners to God. Thence, these are concerned with animal welfare in the end because if we better understand that these animals are the handiwork of God, we can also regenerate our behavior and develop a deeper ethical consideration toward animals. The *Qur'anic* verses that help humans to establish a better relationship with God consequently upgrade the relationship between humans and animals. Thus, in my evaluation, the *tawhid* which strengthens our belief does not prioritize humans only but serves for the well-being of all creatures on earth.

On the other hand, it does not mean that instrumental usage of animals is completely denied or excluded. “The *Qur'an* does mention certain animals—such as cattle and beasts of burden—as having been created to serve humans” (Foltz, 2009, p. 215). Therefore, it explicitly allows humans to benefit from some animals in various ways. However, this is not the only form of relationship, as we have already examined. Later in the thesis, we will discuss how humans have been given various permissions and benefits regarding animals, i.e. *extrinsic value*.

1.2. Extrinsic Value of Animals

This section aims to reveal the extrinsic value of animals as manifested in the *Qur'an*, so it examines the verses in which it gives humans permission for drawing external benefits from some animals in various ways. It makes mention of generally using livestock for their meat, labor, hair, and wool. Also it refers to working animals for various tasks such as riding, drawing, ploughing, or hauling. Some animals, i.e. the dog, might be considered as both worker and pet—though not simply pet in the modern sense. In the *Qur'an*, this apparent utility of animals is granted by God to humans as a divine gift, not for a means of exploitation. This part

thus aims at representing the extrinsic value of animals, while the second chapter, “*how should we treat them?*” will elaborate on how human beings are obliged to follow ethical principles while drawing benefits from these animals.

Before discussing the external benefits of animals, I think, we should address a more general reminder of the *Qur’an*: humans cannot live without benefiting the earth. That is why in the *Qur’anic* description of the earth as cradle humans are the children of the earth. If this earth is human’s cradle, we grow up here, take advantage of its blessings until we die. And when the day comes, we return to the soil, then, for that time, the ecosystem benefits from our body in exchange. The following verse describes this ecological sustainability and the creation of the earth with dramatic details in order to draw people’s attention to the signs of God:

He Who has made for you the earth like a carpet (*mehda*) spread out; has enabled you to go about therein by roads (and channels); and has sent down water from the sky. With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others. Eat (for yourselves) and pasture your cattle: verily, in this are Signs for men endued with understanding. (Q. 20:53-54)

Although our consulted translator Ali (2003) preferred to use the word “carpet” for the definition of *mehda*, other translations of *mehda* use “cradle” (Qutb, 2013) and “bed” (Pickthall, 1977). Whether the earth is depicted as a carpet, cradle or bed, here the emphasis is on the fact that the earth is a place which is made manageable for humans by a higher authority: God, the Great Creator, designs our homeland with His infinite wisdom as a cradle in which people can live. He opens the way therein and brings down water from the sky. Then, this rainwater results in rivers and underground resources that enable the plants to grow. Finally, these plants become nourishment for humans and the animals. The whole picture is very colorful and ecological as it underlines how everything is connected to everything else, and the whole has been designed by the wisdom of God.

Since animals are a crucial part of this Unity, the *Qur'anic* verses reveal that humans are allowed the usufruct of animals as it is *authorized and prescribed* by God. Thus, while animals provide lots of benefit and wealth for human society, the *Qur'an* puts moral limits on how humans may behave. It also frequently reminds us that animals are God's gifts given to us as an act of His grace and, consequently, deserve to have a moral status. In the account of Islamic ethics, this conceptualization of animals differs from the utilitarian model which is established based on unfettered exploitation of them and also far from the Cartesian approach which erodes the inner meanings of living things (Wersal, 1995 as cited in Saniotis, 2011).

In order to understand the Islamic approach to the animal's utility, I will explain the concepts of *taskhir* and *tadhilil*. First, *taskhir* is the verbal noun to *musakhkhar* (serviceable), and it is used in the *Qur'an* to emphasize that everything on earth and in heaven is serviceable to humans, as stated in Q. 45:13:

“He [God] has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect.”

Therefore, the *Qur'an* states that everything in the earth and the heaven—i.e. animals, plants, the mountains, the seas, the sun or stars—made available for human benefit are, thus, subjugated to human use through God's coercion. From the point of animals, the concept of *taskhir* refers to animals acting in compliance with God's command to benefit humans. Eventually, *taskhir* can lead to the anthropocentric idea that all animals exist to serve mankind. However, instead of the creation of animals for human beings, *taskhir* corresponds to the fact that God assigns *some animals as serviceable* to human benefit while the absolute authority over animals belongs to God, and this authority is not shared with people in any way (Tlili, 2012).

Similarly, the second concept *tadhilil* (subjugation/subordination) is used in the *Qur'an* to state that animals are given to human service under God's command. It is also applied “to very limited number of an animal species, which are referred

to as *an'am*, typically defined as camels, cattle, sheep, and goats” (Tlili, 2012, p. 91). However, unlike the first concept *tashkir*, *tadhilil* gives more authority to human’s in control over animals and the permission to get benefit from them as follows:

See they not that it is We Who have created for them—among the things which Our hands have fashioned—cattle (*an'am*), which are under their dominion?

And that We have subjected them (*dhallalnaha*) to their (use)? Of them some do carry them and some they eat.

And they have (other) profits from them (besides), and they get (milk) to drink. Will they not then be grateful? (Q. 36:71-73)

The first conclusion derived from these verses is that not all animals, but *an'am* are created for humans. And since the meaning of *an'am* is restricted to a group of animals, it makes human dominion limited. According to exegetical interpretation, the categorization of *an'am* includes the sheep, goat, camel and oxen. It can also refer to the camel only, but not just goats and sheep (Al-Razi, 1989). Yazır (2007b) then notes that deer and gazelle are considered as *an'am* because they ruminant and do not have canine teeth. This categorization is inferred to in the Chapter of *Al-An'am* (The Cattle) which says:

“Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what Allah has provided for you...(Take) eight (head of cattle) in (four) pairs: of sheep a pair, and of goats a pair... of camels a pair, and oxen a pair...” (Q. 6:142-3-4)

The second conclusion from the above verses is that God assigns human as owners (*malikun*) over *an'am*. In his translation of Q. 36:71, Ali (2003) writes it as “which are under their dominion” but Pickthall (1977) translates the same line as “so that they [humans] are their owners (*malikun*)” which gives the more correct meaning. In the verse, the Arabic word *malikun* denotes human dominion, ownership, and control over animals. However, humans are supposed to realize that only through God’s permission these animals made serviceable and amenable to themselves.

This brings us to the third conclusion on domestication. These verses reveal that God makes *an'am* amenable to human control through *tadhilil*, but certain groups, especially wild animals don't remain compliant. Indeed, humans can hunt wild animals, but couldn't ride on them for instance, or such an attempt requires strenuous effort (Tlili, 2012). Therefore, I believe that these verses enable us to re-think of domestication through two perspectives. First, it is true that domestication extends human control over nature by bringing certain animal species under direct control (Lodrick, 2008). However, the *Qur'an* reveals that humans managed to tame *some* animals not *all* animals. Hence, in his commenting on the verses, Yazir defines *an'am* as "soft animals" (2007d, p. 425) since they are the ones which are made amenable for human utilitarian purposes. Secondly, although humanity can domesticate animals, we can only achieve this because God subdued animals in that way. Thus, Tlili argues that domestication is "an ontological divine intervention" (2012, p. 78) rather than the human's invention only. Therefore, according to the Islamic view, domestication is not a mere result of natural activities or "evolution of human culture" (Lodrick, 2008, p. 502), but it is a God-determined process.

Finally, these verses point out that after God endowed human with all these benefits through His mercy, they are supposed to be thankful. The verses Q. 36:71-73, thus, conclude by asking "Will they not then be grateful?" The similar question is also repeated in another verse, "We made animals subject to you, that you may be grateful" (Q. 22:36). According to al-Razi (1993), the creating of *an'am* and allowing humans to use them is a part of God's grace upon mankind. Qutb (2013) also emphasizes the necessity of being thankful for all these blessings to God. In short, the instrumental usage of livestock is a treasure which the Creator has deposited with us. Therefore, these verses don't establish the superiority or privileged status of the human. Instead, it requires us to pray and praise God very wholeheartedly. If God had created *an'am*, but had not allowed humans to dominate them, humans could not take advantage of these animals. Without such a divine permission, both al-Razi and Qutb say, humans would never able to manage *an'am* for various purposes.

Now that we have examined the concepts *taskhir* and *tadhilil*, we can pursue the extrinsic value of animals in more detail. Al-Razi evaluates the animals' extrinsic value in two groups: essential and non-essential (1992, p. 168). For him, nourishment and clothing are the primary benefits. Secondary benefits, those of aesthetic value follow these. To proceed with his categorization, we will look at the verses expounding on nourishment, hunting, transportation, shelter, clothing, and finally the aesthetic value of animals, respectively.

1.2.1. Nourishment and Hunting

Animals in the human diet have been a topic of debates and discussion for many years. The *Qur'an* explicitly allows one to kill certain specific animals for the consumption of their meat. The most detailed explanation about nourishment is in the Chapter of *Al-Ma'idah*, which literally means "The Table Spread." First, let's concentrate on the passage that contains the forbidden (*haram*) animals:

Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which has been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form)... (Q. 5:3)

In evaluating of this verse, Yazır (2007b) notes that the first four categories constitute the essential bans. He explains that dead meat indicates carrion, which is not killed upon being slaughtering. Accordingly, to eat carnivores is also *haram* because they are predators which eat carrion. Then, consuming blood and the flesh of swine is forbidden "for it is an abomination" (Q. 6:145). As for the fourth point, to slaughter an animal except for the sake of God is an enormous act. Yazır says: "It is Allah who has created the animal, put it under the command of man and then gave him the right of slaughtering" (2007b, p. 150). Therefore, animals should be slaughtered on behalf of God, not for another deity, for instance. Finally, to eat animals which are killed by external factors as described in the verse is forbidden. All of them can only be eaten in critical situations without exceeding the amount of necessity. (Q. 2:173; 6:145; 16:115). Then, the *Qur'an* states what is permissible

(*halal*) to humans but it first reminds that killing animals in the sacred site of Mecca—that is *Beyt al Haram* (Sacred Precincts), is prohibited in any way:

Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named: but animals of the chase are forbidden while you are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb... (Q. 5:1)

O you who believe! [...] when you are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb, you may hunt... (Q. 5:2)

Before indicating the lawful foods, these verses state that in *Beyt al Haram* (Sacred Precincts)—Mecca’s Kaaba shrine, no one can engage in land hunting. Hence, someone entering the *ihram* (the state of spiritual purification) for *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and *Umra* (lesser pilgrimage) is prohibited from killing animals with some exceptions. In their exegesis, Yazır (2007b) and Qutb remind of a *hadith* which says, “Five animals are vicious and harmful and are to be killed (even) inside the Sacred Precincts: the crow, the kite, the scorpion, the mouse, and the mordacious dog.”⁵ Since these animals can be aggressive and harmful to human beings, they can be killed even in the state of *ihram*. Also, sea hunting is still allowed as follows:

“Lawful to you is the pursuit of water-game and its use for food,—for the benefit of yourselves and those who travel; but forbidden is the pursuit of land-game; as long as you are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb” (Q. 5:96).

Except for that permission, *Beyt al Haram* is a sacred place where all earthly habits are put aside, accordingly, no one can practice land hunting (Qutb, 2013). Thus, at the sacred moment where Muslims gather in front of God Who bestows upon life to all creation, humans cannot violate the rights of animals while it is God endows that life to them: “O you who believe! Kill not game (*sayd*) while in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb...” (Q. 5:95). In this verse, the word *sayd* is generally used for animals whose meat can be eaten (Yazır, 2007b, p. 342). Moreover, according to Yazır (2007b), the prohibition of hunting also contributes

⁵ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from: <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/4543>

to maintaining the ecological order of Mecca. In the second chapter of the thesis, we will elaborate on this protective step in Islam to see how it has been expanded to accommodate both animals and plants, as well as the stricter rules on killing in the Mecca and Medina regions. For this reason, I skip that issue for now and here address *halal* (lawful) foods:

They ask you what is lawful to them (as food). Say: Lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure (*tayyibat*): and what you have taught your trained hunting animals (“*mukellebin*”) to catch in the manner directed to you by Allah: eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of Allah over it: and fear Allah; for Allah is swift in taking account. (Q. 5:4)

According to Yazır’s interpretation (2007b, p. 164), the word *tayyibat* contains the “good and pure beings” of the land and marine animals, birds and plants. One can better understand this verse with knowledge of the pre-Islamic eating habits of Arabs. Before the *Qur’anic* revelation, Arabs were eating carrion and drinking blood (Yazır, 2007b). However, the *Qur’an* forbade them from consuming such things and lead humans to choose the clean and lawful animals, including camels, birds, cows, sheep, and fish (Ferber, 2015) for their meat, fat, and milk:

“And in cattle (too) you have an instructive example: from within their bodies We produce (milk) for you to drink; there are, in them, (besides), numerous (other) benefits for you; and of their (meat) you eat” (Q. 23:21).

Lawful animals, then, should be slaughtered while they are still alive in accordance with religious obligations. For this study, It is unnecessary to give details of the techniques of animal slaughtering, but still, we need to point to Prophet Muhammad who advised his community to kill animals gently as embodied in his saying: “Verily Allah has prescribed beneficence in all things. When you kill an animal, kill well; and when you slaughter, slaughter well.” (Ferber, 2015, p. 30). As previously stated, we will cover an ethical inquiry into our treatment of animals in the second chapter.

When we go back to the verse Q. 5:4, we see that that the hunt caught by trained animals is *halal*. However, if the hunting animal holds it for himself, not for the owner and eats the prey, then the flesh is no longer *halal* and cannot be consumed by people (Yazır, 2007b; Qutb, 2013). Mentioning of dogs in hunting, therefore, is a remarkable element. In the verse, the word *mukellebin* which means “dogs trained to catch” (Ateş, 2003, p. 15) points to the fact that trained predators are used to catch edible food. As Qutb (2013) notes, the dogs’ intuition, combined with the developed sense of smell, sound and sight make up their well-known characteristics. Consequently, dogs have been an indispensable medium for human nourishment throughout history. Besides the dog, human can also use other trained predators, such as raptors, for hunting as the Hanafi sect accepts it (Yazır, 2007b).

1.2.2. Transportation, Shelter, and Clothing

In addition to nourishment and hunting, humans also derive extrinsic value from animals through transportation:

And on them [cattle], as well as in ships, you ride (Q. 23:22).

...

And they carry your heavy loads to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed: for your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful (Q. 16:7).

And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and use for show; and He has created (other) things of which you have no knowledge (Q. 16:8).

First, in order to examine animals’ functions in land transportation, the verse Q. 23:22 compares the animals with ships (Al-Razi, 1993). In commenting on this verse, Yazır reports that Arab poets also called camels “land ships” (2007c, p. 521), thus, we realize that this comparison is not made accidentally by God. Second, in the next verse, humans are reminded that animals carry our heavy loads to various places where we can barely reach ourselves without their help. And yet the *Qur’an* makes it clear to its reader: transportation function of animals should be recognized as God’s mercy to humans. Third, the *Qur’an* explicitly allows humans to use

horses, mules, and asses to meet their need for transportation. Al-Razi (1992) notes that since these three animals are not mentioned in the food category, their meat is not considered as *halal*. After all, as God offered these animals to the benefit of humanity out of His mercy, we should behave toward them with compassion too. In the *Qur'an*, we are frequently reminded that God gave us these animals. Accordingly, we are supposed to take care of them in an ethical manner, as it will be pointed out in the *hadith* discussion.

Then, the *Qur'an* indicates that the hair, wool, fur, and skin of animals are useable in terms of shelters and clothing:

“It is Allah Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you; and made for you, out of the skins of animals, (tents for) dwellings, which you find so light (and handy) when you travel and when you stop (in your travels); and out of their wool, and their soft fibres (between wool and hair), and their hair, rich stuff and articles of convenience (to serve you) for a time.” (Q. 16:80)

In commenting on this verse, al-Razi (1992) indicates that the Arabs built houses made of the leather and the hide of *an'am* for easy transport from one place another. These hides are not only used for the “perpetual state of movement” but also for the “perpetual state of immobility” (Tlili, 2012, p. 87). Besides homes, various household items are made such as mats, rugs, and blankets. Finally, people obtain garments and clothes for warmth, as it is put forwarded in the verse Q. 16:5 says, “And cattle He has created for you (men): from them you derive warmth.” These verses are the embodiment of the whole extrinsic value of *an'am* without them life would be much more troublesome for humans.

1.2.3. Aesthetic Value

On the other hand, two cases in the *Qur'an* shows that the extrinsic value of animals goes beyond the material interest: first, animals become companions to human, and second, they provide aesthetic benefits. For instance, humans have benefited from dogs not only as hunters but also as the primary protectors of their lives, and property and companions. Ateş (2003) argues that dogs are loyal friends

of humanity, and one example of this companionship is in the Chapter of *Al-Kahf* (“The Cave”). In this *Qur’anic* passage, we encounter a dog by the name of *Kitmir* which provides environmental safety and does not leave his owners alone while they sleep in the cave: “Whilst they were asleep, their dog stretching forth his two forelegs on the threshold” (Q. 18:18). This *Qur’anic* passage acknowledging the meritorious behavior of a dog in defense of his owners is a revealing example of the friendship and love between human and animal. However, animal companionship in Islam is a separate topic that should be independently pursued. Therefore, for my thesis, I will not place further emphasis on this theme.

Then, referring to aesthetic value of animals, the following verse contains the most explicit manifestation of the theme *beautiful, beloved animals* which denotes to the horses and other animals grazing in pastures:

Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hordes of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle (*an’am*) and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world’s life; but in nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (to return to). (Q. 3:14)

This verse indicates that horses and cattle are among the things for which the human yearns. According to Qutb’s view, the horse is an adorable and desirable “jewel” even in today’s technological age because it is “the symbol of the youth, movement, strength, beauty, love [...] and assertiveness” (Qutb, 2013, p. 255). Therefore, the image of a running horse evokes the sense of vitality on the human soul, and even those who cannot ride can enjoy watching it (Qutb, 2013). Al-Razi (1989), then, comments on this verse by adding that the horses’ march over grazing land sublimely evokes a good feeling and beauty.

Furthermore, the verse elaborates on the psychological and aesthetical influences of animals on human is elaborated through references to cattle and prosperous land. While the *Qur’an* indicates that humans love cattle and land, in Qutb’s view, the scene of large crops and livestock grazing on these beautiful lands is very pleasurable for the human because it symbolizes a flourishing life. On the other hand, Yazır (2007a) warns us that no matter how beautiful they are, these

possessions should not evolve into the purpose of life because they are just the elements of earthly sustenance, and the real purpose of humans is to obtain God's mercy instead of increasing the amount of possessions. Alike to Yazır's interpretation, al-Razi (1989) argues that horses and *an'am* are among the blessings of God, therefore, humans can take advantage of them while knowing it to be a blessing endowed by the Creator, the actual One Who should be praised.

Another example of the aesthetic value of animals is seen in this verse which reflects the *Qur'anic* spirit in a thought-evoking way:

“And you have a sense of pride and beauty in them [cattle] as you drive them home in the evening, and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning” (Q. 16:6).

While the *Quran* draws our attention to the fact that cattle (*an'am*) fulfill to the obligatory needs of mankind, it also states that *an'am* satisfy to the aesthetic tastes of people (Qutb, 2013). In this verse, God clearly expresses that owners enjoy releasing their animals to the pasture in the morning and gathering them in the evening because these moments are quite delightful to observe. Qutb depicts these moments as “charming... and sweet scenes that give a distinct pleasure to humans” (2013, p. 1399). Al-Razi's description, then, is very poetic:

“When the shepherd brings his *an'am* to warren in the evening and releases them to pasture in the morning, these animals present a beautiful appearance... And those pastures echo with the voices of those sheep and camels, while the owner rejoices to have these beauties” (1992, v. 14, p. 166).

Al-Razi also makes an explanatory comment about the chronological order of the sentences in verse Q. 16:16. He points out that the phrase “drive them home in the evening” precedes “lead them forth to pasture in the morning” and this order is not arbitrary (1992, p. 166). He explains that animals are hungry and thirsty on their way to the pasture, but they look better when returning to the barn since their bellies are saturated and their udders are filled with milk. Therefore, God first mentions the return of *an'am* to the barn since its impact on the owner is more positive and then, talks about animals grazing in the morning. The animal owner,

who sees the healthy state of his animals in the evening thinks that he will be restful financially. In this context, both al-Razi (1992) and Yazır (2007c) agree that the preceding verse points to the financial values of animals in addition to aesthetic benefits.

The sea and marine creatures also respond to the humans' compulsory needs and aesthetic tastes:

“It is He Who has made the sea subject, that you may eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender, and that you may extract therefrom ornaments to wear... that you may seek (thus) of the bounty of Allah and that you may be grateful.” (Q. 16:14)

Among the blessings of the sea there are fresh fish and other foods which are pronounced as *halal*. In addition to nourishment, humans have used coral, pearl, and mother-of-pearls as jewelry and ornaments for many years: “Out of them come Pearls and Coral” (Q. 55:22). The mentioning of these pleasures together with vital human needs conveys that the aesthetics is a phenomenon that God offers for the benefit of people and we must take advantage of beauty for our own souls and needs (Qutb, 2013).

After the examination of the intrinsic and extrinsic *value* of animals—the former implicitly and the latter explicitly stated in the *Qur'an*, we now come to the third section to see what the *Qur'an* says about *characteristics* of animals. As a result of this inquiry, we can draw a deeper theological description of animals which will enable us to know them better too. When the first chapter is completed—it means that when we better understand *who are they [animals]?*, then we will discuss *how we should treat them* in order to fully represent the ethical consideration of animals in Islamic ethics.

1.3. Characteristics of Animals

Two subtitles make up this part: animals' language and spirituality as manifested in the *Qur'an*. Through this section, I will argue that the *Qur'anic* verses

ascribe linguistic skills and spiritual dimension to animals. These two characteristics are relevant to our study because they are two important attributes usually assigned to human in a unique sense. The *Qur'an*, however, shows us that animals may *also* have a communication style, and they can be religious beings. At this point, I do not argue that “animals are just like humans” in emphasizing their language and spirituality. Instead, the point is that these characteristics are shared by animals too, and the *Qur'anic* vision of other beings in that regard is influential on our perception of animals. Although the regarded themes are limited to the few examples in the *Qur'an*, the *Book* has the power to change our ethical consideration toward animals. This section, therefore, is dedicated to presenting how animals' identity becomes recomposed around verses about language and spirituality.

“In regarding our relationship to animals, we generally pick characteristics that differentiate ourselves from animal beings, then develop arguments based on this differentiating line,” argues Gruen (1993, p. 344). Advocates of this line thus build one of their strongest arguments on a presupposition that human beings differ from animals owing to language. Moreover, they only count human language as a language (Tlili, 2012). As a result, considering language as an important characteristic that lifts human above animals has been a standard measure for determining the status of animals (Wynne & Udell, 2013). It seems that animals' inferiority is associated with their incapability to produce articulate speech, while humans get privilege because they communicate clearly through intelligible language.

According to German philosopher Heidegger, for example, animals' communication system is not an effective variation of language (Batukan, 2015). He states that although animals can possess languages, their language is never pretended to be world-forming as human do, therefore the animals' life still differentiates from the realm of the human's nature. As a result, regardless of how far animals developed a communication system, the separating line between humans and animals remains. On the other hand, the *Qur'an* has a unique reading

of the language motif. Two themes on animal language are helpful to discussion: the interactions that the Prophet Solomon has with the hoopoe bird and the ant.

The *Qur'anic* verses also bespeaks the animals' capacity for entering into a relationship with God through religious practices. For instance, passages that describe the birds praying and singing hymns are scene-setting and suffice to inspire our emotions while leading us to ponder on the animal's characteristics. However, it should be noted that as human beings, we can never fully understand the way of animal worship through studying verses. Nonetheless, this part can be helpful for opening a new discussion that revives the attributes of animals. By looking at the communication and praying style regarded to animals, the stance toward them will not simply change but our sensitivity and imaginative power can evolve.

This section will follow the *tafsir* genre which we have used in previous parts. In order to capture the further meaning of the *Qur'anic* verses, expositions of Muslim exegetes will be unveiled. Through this examination, it will be revealed how one exegete maintains the idea that communicative and spiritual practices of animals denote real meaning, while the other understands these themes in a figurative sense. It is my conviction that in both ways, we will get a chance to see how the inspirationally cognitive and spiritual capacity of animals are envisaged in the *Qur'an*.

1.3.1. Language

For the time being, I will begin with a widely known fable written by the Ikhwan-al Safa⁶ during the tenth century. In this fable, by assigning subjecthood to

⁶ Ikhwan-al Safa (the Brethren of Purity) is an anonymous group of people lived during the tenth century mainly in Basra, was also active in Baghdad. Goodman and McGregor (2012) define the Ikhwan al-Safa as a "secretive coterie occupied a prominent station in the history of scientific and philosophical ideas in Islam." This coterie has especially gained fame in Islamic philosophy after writing their compendium *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity). As a philosophically oriented study, Ikhwan-al Safa's epistle consists of four parts: "Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Sciences of the Soul and Intellect, and Theology" (Goodman, McGregor, 2012, p. xii). In the second part of the *Rasa'il*, after reflecting their wisdom on plants, Ikhwan writes their

animals, Ikhwan attributes the ability of speech to them, hence animals can express their desires and struggles to readers. The fable tells the story of a group of animals who weary from arduous tasks and does not want to serve humans anymore. In order to be free from human dominion, they come together and open a case against man in front of the King of the Jinn. However, while humans have articulate speech, animals are inarticulate beings. Recognizing that humans are more eloquent than themselves, the animals are afraid that the case might go against them because they think that “arguments persuade only when presented clearly, articulately, and fluently” (Goddmann & McGregor, 2009, p. 149). This inequality between the animals and humans is even stated in the Assembly of the Jinn by an outspoken jinni who says:

“If these beasts cannot hold their own rhetorically against the humans, *for lack of clear and fluent speech and men best them with their glib tongues and their fine and facile explanations*, do you think these animals should remain their prisoners?” (Goodmann & McGregor, 2012, p.142, emphasis is added)

In order to express themselves in the best way, the animals decide to select a delegate for every species which is the most skilled in eloquence, insight, argument, and explanation. During the trial, therefore, animals can easily respond to the multiple arguments of the humans. Nonetheless, after a long and contentious trial, the animals lose the case, thus, they remain in the service of humans. No matter what the result is, the Ikhwan al-Safa epistle stands forth as one the best fable which emphasizes the importance of the speech phenomenon from the perspective of animals and humans.

Contrastingly, when we look at the *Qur’an*, that is neither fiction nor a literary book, the Chapter of *Al-Naml* includes the most important language themes as a unique resource for our study. In this chapter, we see Prophet Solomon’s

22nd epistle regarding animals which addresses to “Qur’anic animal themes at considerable depth” (Tlili, 2012, p. 41). Within that chapter, then, Ikhwan writes a fable in which animals’ suffering under human dominancy is revealed. Through the fable, Ikhwan presents how humans are boasting of their *unique* skills that have lifted them above animals to prove that they are master of animals. Animals’ argument, however, deconstructs this master-slavery duality in a striking manner.

crowds of birds; a dialogue between the Prophet and his missioned bird *Hudhud*, as well as an ant's extraordinary words, each of them as unequalled example of animal speech. Thus this section, Prophet Solomon will be our main actor.

First, it should be noted that Prophet Solomon's ability to have discourse with birds stems from his superior knowledge (*ilm*) bestowed on him by God. As we already know from the *Qur'an*, Solomon was David's son, and God endowed both of them with high levels of knowledge (*ilm*), as in Q. 27:15:

“We gave knowledge to David and Solomon: and they both said: ‘Praise be to Allah, Who has favored us above many of His servants who believe!’ ”

Then Prophet Solomon proclaims their unique ability in Q. 27:16 as follows:

“O you people! We have been taught the speech (*mantiq*) of birds (*al-tayr*) [. . .] this, behold, is indeed a manifest favor [from God]!”

As seen here, *Qur'anic* terminology used the word “*mantiq*” to refer to the bird's language. In this section, after introducing the concept of *mantiq* in its *Qur'anic* usages, we will analyze the content of the linguistic utterances of the hoopoe and the ant. Thereafter, we will explore what their utterances reveal about their characteristics.

After that introduction, we will draw inferences from Yazır's (2007d) commentary of *mantiq* (speech) and *nutq* (to speak). According to Yazır, both *mantiq* and *nutq* denotes speech in different ways. Yazır describes *mantiq* as a phenomenon considering only for the linguistic capacities of non-human beings. Tlili (2012) also reminds that “in the *Qur'an*, the word *mantiq* is used only with birds, and it is understood as to refer to their language” (p. 177). Also, in the examined verse Q. 27:16, in order to denote “speech of birds”, God choose the word “*mantiq at-tayr*.” Although *mantiq at-tayr* denotes the sounds that are voiced by a bird (*tayr*) to reveal its own feelings, *mantiq* does not merely indicate the use of sounds or words, but it mainly emphasizes the intention behind the act of cooing. Thereby, rather than language, *mantiq* in the *Qur'an* refers to a birds' logic which encompasses reason and intention behind a bird's speech.

At this point, Tlili (2012) informs us that “*mantiq* is the technical term used to designate a science of logic adapted from Aristotle...” (p. 178) As such, Prophet Solomon’s capability of understanding birds is not merely understanding their sound, but also understanding their logic. According to al-Razi, while Solomon says that he has been taught the speech of birds, he wants to emphasize that he can understand their purpose and intentions (2002a, p. 410-411). Therefore, the fact that he was taught the “speech of birds” informs us that Prophet Solomon was able to understand the birds’ actions and feelings while they were talking to him. While Solomon was listening the birds’ warbling or hearing their worship, he also knew why they resounded in that way and what the meaning of it was. Through knowing the *mantiq* of the birds, he could consequently take control of the birds and include them into his forces (Al-Razi, 2002a).

On the other hand, *nutq* is a phenomenon unique to human beings, and it deals with meaning and content rather than a mere expression sound (Yazır, 2007d). Yazır defines *nutq* as “the expression of the hidden thoughts through tongue in the form of simple or compound sounds” (2007d, p. 132). For him, although speech may contain mental evidence, its main function is to signify a meaning. “There might be voice and mental activities in speech, however, as long as it does not contain any meaning, it is not called real speech” (2007d, p. 132) says Yazır. As an example, Yazır reports that Arabs use the word *nutq* for the dove’s cooing or chickens’ clucking, but these are not *real* speech. It is a clear fact that not only birds, but also all animals have a kind of speech. And they develop communicative skills. However, since everyone can understand a simple level of animal’s communication, Prophet Solomon’s understanding of the discourse of the birds is beyond a rudimentary level, subsequently requires *a deeper ability* (Yazır, 2007d, p. 132).

At this point, Yazır pays attention to an important detail about the verse. As we have read in the verse, Prophet Solomon said, “*we were taught the speech of birds,*” not the birds were taught human speech. By emphasizing this sentence, Yazır considers that *Prophet Solomon's understanding of birds* is more important

than *a bird's ability to speak*. Yazır accepts that birds are creatures who have high faculties, but nonetheless, we cannot never truly know how birds perform simple or compound sounds. By saying this, Yazır does not try to devalue the importance of the bird's speech, but for him, the Prophet's access to the birds' language seems more significant than the way the bird's speech occurs. According to Yazır (2007d), the lesson we need to take from *mantiq at-tayr*, then, is pondering on Prophet Solomon's capability and his bestowed wisdom. As it is understood from the verse Q. 27:15, not everyone is endowed with such an ability because it requires having a deep understanding bestowed by God. To have discourse with the birds, therefore, is a divine gift given to Prophet Solomon. By emphasizing the mercy of God, Qutb (2013) also points out that "no one except God can teach people the language of birds. Likewise, nobody is endowed with that kind of blessings" (2013, p. 1747). Ergo, the Prophet's ability to have discourse with birds "is about individual effort as well as grace and the fact that both are necessary for spiritual progress" (Davis & Darbandi, 1984, p. 25).

1.3.1.1. Hoopoe

Dear hoopoe, welcome! You will be our guide;

It was on you King Solomon relied...

He knew your language and you knew his heart.

—The Conference of the Birds (Mantiq at-Tayr), Farid ud-Din Attar.

Among the birds, Prophet Solomon especially relied on a hoopoe whose name was *Hudhud*. From the following verses, we understand that hoopoe was a commissioned bird that fulfilled the orders of the Prophet. The dialogue between Solomon and the hoopoe does not only reveal the possession of a language, but it also bears the markings of the bird's intelligence, vision, and complexity:

And he [Solomon] took a muster of the Birds; and he said: "Why is it I see not the Hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, or execute him, unless he brings me a clear reason (for absence)."

But the Hoopoe tarried not far: he (came up and) said: “I have compassed (territory) which you have not compassed, and I have come to you from Saba with tidings true. I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne. I found her and her people worshipping the sun besides Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem pleasing in their eyes, and has kept them away from the Path,—so they receive no guidance,— (Kept them away from the Path), that they should not worship Allah, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you hide and what you reveal. Allah! —there is no god but He!— Lord of the Throne Supreme! (Q. 27:20-26)

In order to draw arguments from the preceding verses, each sentence should be examined respectively. Besides prophecy, Solomon was a king and his army consisted of men, jinni and the birds. Prophet Solomon was using *Hudhud* as his guide and scout for water for his army (Goodman & McGregor, 2009, p. 164). One day, during their journey to Yemen, the Prophet did not find the hoopoe in the ranks. He asked where the hoopoe was and said that he would penalize the bird for its absence (Yazır, 2007d). According to al-Razi (2002a), the saying of “*I will certainly punish him*” is a significant sentence which refers to the bird’s intelligence. Al-Razi argues that the possibility of punishment may point to bird’s rationality because punishment can only be a matter for those who are accountable (*mukallaf*) or those who have reached the age of appeal (*mukallafiyah*).⁷ Because the hoopoe was on the verge of a possible punishment, we can infer that the hoopoe was capable of reason and eligible for training (Al-Razi, 2002a).

Then *Hudhud* came back and said, “*I learnt something that you don’t know.*” The importance of this sentence is twofold. First, it indicates that a bird may know something of which Solomon (even as a Prophet) had no previous knowledge. Thus, *Hudhud*’s words remind Prophet Solomon that even though he knows a lot of things, there may be situations in which he does not know everything. Thus, *Hudhud*’s words are a warning for the Prophet to invite him to have humility, otherwise having a lot of knowledge might drive him to be pretentious (Al-Razi,

⁷ For a detailed explanation of *mukallaf* being, please look at the semantic analysis of *taklif* written by Tlili (2012) on page 202-206.

2002a). Secondly, although hoopoe talks to Solomon, this verse includes a message for each of us (Tlili, 2012). These verses remind us that some cases or situations might exist in which humans are less knowledgeable than other creatures. Therefore, on the one hand, *Hudhud* is a symbol of animal intelligence: on the other, the bird pays attention to the human's limited knowledge, as it repeated in Q. 17:85, which says "of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)"

Moreover, in the following verses, we see how a bird can make an in-depth analysis about its social environment and political situations. Since *Hudhud* flies across different regions, it sees a city in Yemen named as "Sheba" which is governed by a female ruler, *Balqis*. The bird is so astonished by the queen's rein, acquiring every requisite under a magnificent throne, that it begins to tell Prophet Solomon what it saw. Furthermore, the hoopoe begins to depict the religious practices of Sheba's folk. The bird seems unhappy to see people worshipping the sun besides God. According to *Hudhud*, people should pray to God, not to the sun because it is better for them to prostrate to *Allah*. In the eyes of *Hudhud*, those who are going astray can't reach the right path. These verses, therefore, show us that a bird can ponder on human activities and make inferences about them. It is very interesting to see that other creatures might be examine and evaluate our practices, at least religious practices, and that a human's sins may even drive animals to sadness. Al-Razi is also astonished at how *Hudhud* can assess social and religious situation and make a comparison between the right one –worship of God– and the wrong one –worship of the sun– (Al-Razi, 2012a; Qutb, 2013). Qutb, therefore, defines *Hudhud* as being the "smartest, farsighted and faithful person" (2013, p. 1748) because of its firm understanding.

Prophet Solomon silently listens to what the hoopoe says about Sheba, then he says:

"Soon shall we see whether you have told the truth or lied! Go you, with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them: then draw back from them, and (wait to) see what answer they return" (Q. 27:27-28).

It is important to note that the Prophet does not accept *Hudhud*'s narration as correct and does not trust hoopoe at first. Therefore, in order to understand whether the bird is lying or not, he decides to send a letter with *Hudhud* to *Balqis*, the queen of Sheba. These verses indicate that the Prophet also uses *Hudhud* as the postal service. However, according to Yazır (2007d), the usage of *Hudhud* in communication is different from sending a letter with a pigeon, for instance. As the *Qur'anic* verses have shown, *Hudhud* does not simply deliver the letter, but it is advised by Prophet Solomon to examine the reaction of Sheba's people when the letter has reached them. In that situation, the bird acts like a *human*; after *Hudhud* delivers the letter, it draws back and, begins to wait to see how they will behave. In the continuation of the chapter, *Balqis*'s reaction to the letter was described, and then, the dialogue between Prophet Solomon and the hoopoe ended.

Through their expositions on verses, all exegetes express their admiration for birds' mental and physical abilities as mentioned in the *Qur'an*. Nonetheless, their views are also driven by anthropocentric feelings. For instance, although all exegetes agreed that birds have a special possession of rational faculties, Qutb (2013) argues that birds' abilities to understand cannot rise to the level of the understanding of people. Al-Razi (2002a), then offers an interesting argument by saying that God made birds intelligent in the time of Prophet Solomon, but *today's* birds aren't that smart (2002a, p. 411, italics is added). In a similar way, Qutb thinks that the speech of birds is a significant case which denotes God's miracle and power. However, he says that birds given to Prophet Solomon service had more advanced abilities and deeper understanding than *other* birds (2013, p. 1748), hence, the linguistic ability of birds is limited to that particular situation instead of being a general attribute of birds.⁸

⁸ It might be true that linguistic and mental features of the birds are fully unearthed through a Prophetic case, however, as opposed to exegetes' view, I believe that this situation doesn't assign birds' speech limited *to day*, but instead, the one who is able to understand the discourse of the birds is limited *today*. The *Qur'an* acknowledges that being able to understand what the birds are saying is a miracle and God-given capacity. Therefore, in my view, the *Qur'an* pays attention to our lack of ability to decipher their language, instead of today's birds' deficiency. In contemporary research, numerous studies have been carried on birds' communication, language and consciousness, which

1.3.1.2. The Ant

Beyond the story of *Hudhud*, the Chapter of Al-Naml also reveals Prophet Solomon's conversation with an ant that is another important communication between the human and animal. One day, while the Prophet and his forces were advancing into battle, they arrived at a valley full of ants. An ant who sees them coming says:

“O you ants! Get into your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you without [even] being aware [of you]!” (Q. 27:18)

Although the ant's speech is a miracle, Qutb states that it is very easy in God's account and it can be articulated only with the permission of God (Qutb, p. 1746-1751). Through this verse, the *Qur'an* challenges the idea that humans and animals cannot communicate with each other because they have different natures. Qutb argues that all barriers between human and animal are set and placed by the Creator. Therefore, God who establishes such barriers between can easily diminish the same barriers so that there will be no obstacle for communication between the two parties. Also, for al-Razi, the ant's speech does not seem so farfetched because God is capable of creating reason and speech in ants (2002a, p. 412). All three commentators then agree that the ant mentioned in the verse is female (Yazır, 2007d; Al-Razi, 2002a).

After the Prophet Solomon hears what she said, he smiles at her words, as in Q. 27:19:

“So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: ‘O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Your favours’...”

According to Yazır (2007d), there are three points causing him smile at that moment. First, since Prophet Solomon is a king, he is influenced by the “fine politics of the ant” (Yazır, 2007d, p. 135) wherein the ant tries to protect her community. The Prophet, thus, likes the precaution of the she-ant and is pleased to

reveal learning process of the birds, memorization, practicing, and strategy (Wynne & Udell, 2013; Andrews, 2015; Prinz, 2018).

see her politics. Secondly, he feels happy because of the good opinion of ant the about his army. According to Yazır and al-Razi (2002a), by saying “*Solomon and his hosts crush you without being aware of you!*”, the ant thought that the Prophet's army would not kill them wantonly, so that even if they crush them, they would do this accidentally. Finally, the Prophet was delighted since he could understand the language of the ant. Although the animal's language is a “secret world closed to humans” (Qutb, p. 1749), the *Qur'an* shows us that the barriers were removed for Prophet Solomon. As such, he was pleased and thankful for being given a blessing that enabled him to hear and understand the ant's words and the discourse of the birds.

As apart from Prophet Solomon's feelings, these few sentences expressed by the ant also suffice us to realize the mental traits of the ant species. Firstly, the *Qur'an* clearly reveals that ants possess communication skills, and they can talk to each other in their own world, although their communication system is unknown to most of us as *human beings*. Secondly, the ant's warning her commune to prevent them from suffering is a good reminder for us that each being loves to live so that it protects itself and its own species' life in that regard (Ateş, 2003). The *Qur'an*, therefore, states that *living is the right of every creature*. This right can also be strengthened with the “right to happiness” developed by Tenzin Gyatso (2003). Gyatso argues that “to enjoy happiness and overcome suffering” (p. 19) is innate faculty of all creatures. Consequently, all living beings including humans, animals, and plants seek happiness.

As the third point, examined verses indicate sympathy between animals. In the *Qur'anic* case, the ant is not merely concerned for itself, but she is fearful, anxious, and protective of her tribe (Ateş, 2003). Fourthly, the ant's statement is evidence of how she and her army are intelligent creatures from the *Qur'anic* point of view. As we read in the *Qur'an*, the warning ant commands her group to enter the dwellings, while her community has the capacity to receive orders and organize themselves according to directions. Finally, in the light of the verses, the ant's capacity of discernment is also unearthed. Since the ant realizes that the one coming

is Solomon, she does not simply say “someone is coming”, but instead, mentions the name of Solomon specifically. Therefore, the ant’s ability to figure out who he is exactly is another indication of animals’ intelligence (Qutb, 2013).

What we have seen so far, both the hoopoe and ant possess linguistic skills together with rational faculties. Thus, the Chapter of Al-Naml reveals that not only Prophet Solomon, but also the hoopoe and the ant are equipped with knowledge (*ilm*). The linguistic utterances of the hoopoe and the ant show that communicative systems are not limited to humans, and animals can possess a high level of reason, awareness, complexity, and vision (Tlili, 2012).

1.3.2. Spirituality

After linguistic capacities, my second reference for the moral status of animals is based on religious accounts. The *Qur’anic* verses enable us to think that “non-human animals are believers” (Foltz, 2014, p. 5), as such, the *Qur’an* rejects the pre-Islamic perception of animals while portraying animals as spiritual beings who depend on God *as much as human*. Thus, spirituality is a topic where it seems that inspirational thoughts are to be found regarding the animals’ status. In this section, first I will examine the phrase “*umamun amthalukum*” (they are peoples like you) which asserts the similarity between human and animal as stated in Q. 6:38, then I will discuss the concepts of *tasbih* (praise/glorification of God) and *sujud* (prostration) to present the relationship of animals with a number of religious practices.

“Non-human living beings are morally significant, in the eyes of God and/or the cosmic order. They have their own unique relationship with God, and their own places in the cosmic order” (p. 348). This quotation is from Christian animal theolog Linzey (2009). Similarly, illustrating the fact that not only humans but also animals partake in God’s attention, the *Qur’an* says:

“There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you (*umamun amthalukum*). Nothing have we

omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.”
(Q. 6:38)

In commenting on this verse, Yazır (2007b) denotes to the fact that each animal species resembles to humans for several reasons and vice versa. First, all animals have a certain lifestyle in natural order as settled by God. No one can cross the natural border ascribed by God in that regard. Second, all living things are created by God and in need of Him (p. 141). It means that their sustenance, life span, and deaths are determined by a Divine Authority. Third, animals are social beings who gather, fight, enjoy, and copulate with each other to reproduce. Therefore, all kinds of animals, from *an animal living on the lowest ground to the bird flying in the sky*, are “equivalent to human beings” (Yazır, 2007b, p. 418). According to Yazır, people should ponder on the creation and lifestyle of animals. While all animals share these common points, they have nonetheless many differences among them. Through this diversity, each species reveals the power of God and serves as a sign which is helpful to realize the God is the Originator of everything.

Al-Razi (1990), on the other hand, notes that this verse does not elaborate in what way humans and animals are alike. Then, how do animals become “peoples like you” in comparison with humans? In his understanding of the phrase “*umamun amthalukum*”, considering the animals partake in God’s attention, al-Razi interprets the verse through the perspective of sustenance. As all other creatures, God creates animals, manages their lives and guarantees their sustenance throughout their lifespan. The clearest message of the verse Q. 6:68 is that animals are given a special manner in God’s account, therefore humans are also supposed to be careful in their treatments of animals. In this context, al-Razi cites a hadith which says:

“A bird which is killed for no reason will complain to God on the Judgment Day saying, ‘*My Lord, this person killed me for no reason. S/he neither ate my flesh nor allowed me to continue to live*’” (as cited in Tlili, 2012, p. 141).

I think, this saying of the Prophet is a concrete example of the *Quranic* worldview towards animals. For Tlili (2012), through this quotation which

highlights the importance of an animal's life, al-Razi reminds us why animals do matter in Islam. Moreover, al-Razi indicates that God gathers all animals in order to give them their right on the resurrection day. Al-Razi (1990) reports from Qadi who maintains that animals have the right to receive compensation from God because of their suffering in this world. For instance, animals are allowed to be slaughtered for their meat, pests killed collectively because of the harm they cause to humans, or working animals assigned by God to carry heavy loads and used in arduous task. Each of them will be compensated for their struggles.

1.3.2.1. Tasbih (praise of God)

Then, al-Razi (1990) reports from Vahedi who holds the view that animals, like humans, know God and pray to Him. Moreover, through the verse Q. 6:38, God aims to emphasize that animals are also attached to religious capacities. In essence, numerous verses (Q. 61:1; 62:1; 64:1) consider the nature as a unit that praises God. For instance, the verse Q. 59:1 explicitly states that:

“Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

The *Qur'an* also says:

“The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet you understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forgiving!” (Q. 17:44)

Within the exposition written by exegetes on *tasbih* there are two strands, which can be grouped as active and passive (Yazır, 2007c). For the first group, animal's *tasbih* is active and linguistically similar to human language. Active *tasbih*, therefore, denotes literal or actual worship involving language and awareness of God. For those who advocate this opinion, animals practice *tasbih* in a conscious manner and through using language although it is undecipherable to human beings. According to Yazır, supporters of this view quote “*yet you understand not how they declare His glory!*” (2007c, p. 305) to emphasize that animals use language despite humans' incapability to understand their hymning

praises. Yazır also seems close to this party by citing a number of reports indicate that Prophet Muhammad heard and understood the *tasbih* of many inanimate and animate nonhuman beings such as stone (2007c, p. 305).

The second group, on the other hand, argues that animals are involved in passive glorification (*tasbih*). Passive *tasbih* denotes to a figurative meaning which states that every creature call attention to God just by existing (Tlili, 2012). As such, animals' *tasbih* is reduced to their state of being. According to this view, animals extol and glorify God through their existence. Contrary to active *tasbih*, here the emphasis is on being a sign of God, instead of being a rational creature possessing language and consciousness. According to this group, animals' worship cannot belong to real *tasbih* since actual *tasbih* is assigned to the human realm only as al-Razi (1992) already conveyed.

Like Yazır (2007c), in his commentary on this verse, al-Razi also cites two types of *tasbih*, then he elaborates on the nature of them (1992, p. 494). For him, animals cannot have a verbally expressed *tasbih* because only the *mukallaf* beings can practice *real tasbih* through language. To be a *mukallaf* one is "required to follow the precepts of religion" (Tlili, 2012, p. 168), and since animals are not counted as *mukallaf* beings, they can practice only passive worship. In al-Razi's idea, the active type of *tasbih* takes place only when a creature possesses "rational faculties, knowledge, understanding, and language" (Tlili, 2012, p. 168). By leaving animals out of rationality and supporting the figurative sense of *tasbih*, al-Razi finds verbal *tasbih* is farfetched for animals.

Our third exegete, Qutb (2013), also seems closed to a figurative interpretation of animals' glorification. However, for him, regardless of whether it is a rational or irrational, inanimate or living thing, every piece of art created by God glorifies and praises its Creator through their palpable existence. In his description of creatures' *tasbih*, Qutb conveys his thoughts in a poetic way by writing:

All stones and all pebbles, all seeds and all leaves, all flowers and all fruits, all plants and all trees, all insects and all reptiles, all people and all animals, all living

things on Earth, floating in the water and flying in the air, besides, the inhabitants of the sky... Yes, all these beings see God and turn to Him for His glory (p. 1452).

Among these earthly powers, the *Qur'an* explicitly mentioned birds as glorifiers of God, like in Q. 24:41:

“See you not that it is Allah Whose praises all beings in the 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 Allah knows well all that they do.”

Looking at this verse, al-Razi (2002a) states that birds' flapping in the air is their figurative *tasbih*. Al-Razi, thus, rather than assigning verbal worship, ascribes a figurative sense of spirituality to animals. In his opinion, the existence of birds and the process of flying may be regarded as their *tasbih* which denotes a higher Reality. For al-Razi, birds are endowed with the capacity to fly by God, therefore, their ability to stay in the air and flap their wings despite their heavy bodies is one of the greatest proofs of God Almighty Who holds them up in space (2002a). Although al-Razi insists on a figurative meaning of the birds' praise, he reports a story from Abu Sabit which paves the way for active *tasbih* of animals. It is as follows:

I was sitting with Muhammad ibn Cafer al-Baqir. He said to me, “Do you know what these sparrows are saying as the sun rises and sets?” I said “no.” He said, “These glorify and sanctify the lords, and want their sustenance” (2002a, p. 113).

Despite this citation, al-Razi (1992) still argues linguistic *tasbih* requires having conscious. Such a kind of possession, however, cannot be attributed to birds. For al-Razi, if the birds practiced linguistic *tasbih* and knew God as humans do, they would be smart beings who could understand our conversations and language too. Regarding birds' rationality, al-Razi says “birds are more deficient than a child” (1992, p. 114). As a result, he puts animals' interaction with God outside the realm of human experience and knowledge, and, consequently, stands with the anthropocentric worldview.

Nonetheless, al-Razi grants rationality and linguistic *tasbih* to animals in occasional cases, such as birds' hymn praise along with Prophet David is remarkable point in Q. 21:79 where it says:

“To Solomon We inspired the (right) understanding of the matter: to each (of them) We gave Judgement and Knowledge; it was Our power that made the hills and the birds celebrate Our praises, with David: it was We Who did (all these things).”

Similar scenes are depicted in Q. 38:18-19 and Q. 34:10 which say:

“We bestowed Grace aforetime on David from Ourselves, (saying): ‘O you Mountains! Sing you back the Praises of Allah with him! And you birds (also)!’ ”

In commenting on Q. 34:10, Qutb (2013) tells us that Prophet David was singing hymns along with a chorus of the mountains and birds using his unprecedentedly beautiful voice. Qutb, who adopts the figurative sense of *tasbih* in previous verses, now concedes that inanimate beings and animals worship with Prophet David occurred in a literal sense. In his comment, Qutb emphasizes the *unifying aspect of tasbih*. According to him, the advanced degree of devotion and enthusiasm of Prophet David's *tasbih* unveils all the differences between himself and the universe. When his own *tasbih* is integrated with the worship of the universe, the mountains and the birds began to rejoice with David, then a different relationship appeared where humans and other beings coexisted. Qutb (2013) says:

When all beings establish a common relationship with God, the differences between living things, even between inanimate beings and living things, disappear, and all beings meet in the direct and single essence offered by God. This common core is previously hidden under the veil of differences and dissimilarities...

But God then brings them together in vibrations of a common melody. This is such a high degree of purification and transformation that one can reach to this level only through the special donation of the Creator. God removes material obstacles from that person's existence and integrates his/her essence into the entire universe, therefore that person can establish direct and unimpeded communication with everyone and everything in the universe (p. 1917).

Hence, Qutb insists that these verses grant a high level of spirituality and verbal communication to living creatures and inanimate beings which challenge the accustomed natural law. According to the general understanding, obstacles between humans and other species exist, therefore these two parties cannot communicate with each other. As such, one who reads these passages might easily be surprised to see Prophet David calling upon all nature to praise the glory of God and being embraced by a chorus of birds around him.

According to Qutb, there isn't need to be shocked because the essence of all creatures is one. "All beings in the heavens and the earth have 'souls' and every being reaches its Supreme Creator through this spirit" says Qutb (2013, p. 2298). Regardless of their shapes, types, or sexes, each of them unites in God's existence, the Creator of all beings. If everything is involved with the praise of God, the *Qur'an* indicates that everything in the world possesses some aspect of the Divine Reality. That is the reason Nasr says "so every time we destroy a species, we are destroying a prayerful being. It is like murdering someone while he is praying. It is as abominable as that" (Nasr, 2003, p. 88).

1.3.2.2. Sujud

Sujud (prostration) is another element of animals' spirituality which occurs in numerous verses stating:

"See you not that to Allah bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and on earth,—the sun, the moon, the stars; the hills, the trees, the animals; and a great number among mankind?" (Q. 22:18, Q. 16:49)

In his interpretation of Q. 22:18, Yazır (2007c) explains the concept of *sujud* in the sense of submission to the command and will of God. The *Qur'an* painstakingly reminds that everything in heaven and earth, that is, angel or human, alive or inanimate, submits to the will of God. To put it differently, God ascribes a certain duty to each being, and each creature prostrate to God by fulfilling the task attributed them by Him. Thus, when we take the *sujud* to be a form of submission, animals' prostration is living as commanded to them in the way that they are

granted. Therefore, in Yazır's view, animals falling into prostration does not involve conscious behavior, but it is a matter of obedience.

Al-Razi (1993) also evaluates the *sujud* as obedience and submissiveness to God's decree, but he elaborates on this phenomenon a little more. While resignation still remains as the key, he distinguishes between two types of *sujud* which are the *sujud al- 'ibada* and *sujud al-inqiyad* (Tlili, 2012, p. 174). The first form indicates active worship (*ibada*) as Muslims physically perform in their ritual prayers, and the second form simply corresponds to submission to God's authority. This categorization demands the emergence of two types of actors: While rational and irrational. While the rational beings, which are the creatures like humans, angels and jinnis, involve in ritual prostration, the prostration of irrational beings includes only the obedience to God. As an example, al-Razi also quotes the verse which says "The herbs and the trees —both (alike) bow in adoration" (Q. 55:6) to suggest that prostration in this verse denotes the submission and humility of these objects (1993, p. 235). Alike Yazır, al-Razi's hardly thinks that animals are consciously obeying God or that they have an interactive relationship with Him.

On the other hand, for Qutb, rational and irrational categories do not exist. Rather, he groups them as the believer and nonbeliever. While the believers submit to God's universal law by their own will, those who are not believers unwillingly submit. Qutb says, "Everything in the heavens and the earth, from animals to the angels prostrates to God. Their souls are free from boasting against God [...and] filled with obedience to His command" (2013, p. 1403). Therefore, the *Qur'anic* message states that each animal unhesitatingly glorifies God since they are aware of that they are created by God. Animals, thus, are not self-praising and are inherently inclined toward their Creator. On the other side, only humans praise God hesitantly or neglect and deny it completely. While animals are begging from God with hope and prayer, only humans can boast against their Creator and fail to bow to God. Hence, the *Qur'an* reveals that animals may be superior to humans because they are equipped with better spirituality. However, Foltz reminds us that although animals can submit themselves to the will of God, "their compulsory glorification

is not wage-earning” (2009, p. 214). By referring to the *Masnavi*, Foltz (2009) cites Rumi who says, animals can be masters in performing glorification of God, but humans gain rewards in that they are also permitted to deny their religious tasks.

This brings us to the discussion of free will. While humans have a choice to obey or disobey to God, nature operates under the command of God and thereby, cannot refuse to obey to laws ingrained by the Creator. Furthermore, Rahman (1980) argues that the whole gamut of nature, included animals, is *muslim*⁹ in the *Qur’anic* sense for “it surrenders itself to and obeys the command of God” (1980, p. 9). Therefore, except for humans, all of nature acts through "automatic volition" to God as Rahman (1980) notes:

“For the Qur’ān, the whole of nature is one firm, well-knit structure with no gaps, no ruptures, and no dislocations. It works by its own laws, which have been ingrained in it by God, and is, therefore, autonomous; but it is not autocratic, for, in itself, it has no warrant for its own existence and it cannot explain itself” (Rahman, 1980, p. 2).

In this connection, animals whose natural conditions are established by God are completely contingent upon God. Humans, on the other hand, are created beings who can disobey the rules, therefore they are charged with responsibility (Rahman, 1980; Özdemir, 2003) not with superiority. Please recall that, as mentioned before, our responsibilities toward animals will be discussed in second chapter of the thesis.

Finally, the last form of *sujud* (prostration) is the inclination of the animal’s shadow as referred to in this verse:

“Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the earth do prostrate themselves to Allah (acknowledging subjection),—with good-will or in spite of themselves: so do their shadows in the mornings and evenings.” (Q. 13:15, Q. 16:48)

⁹ Etymologically, the word *muslim* comes from the root s-l-m is "to be safe," "whole," and "integral", therefore, as an active participle of s-l-m, *muslim* means “one who surrenders oneself to the Law of God” (Rahman, 1983, p. 172) in order to be safe, to preserve its wholeness, and to sustain its integrity. When the word *muslim* with little m is written as *Muslim* with capital M, it becomes a proper name defining those who accept the religious message promulgated by the *Qur’an*, in other words, anyone obeying God’s law and creedal doctrine of Islam (Rahman, 1983).

As it is known, objects have shadows, and these shadows move throughout the day. They sometimes stand upright and sometimes incline toward the surface. The preceding verse, moreover, states that this movement of an object's shadow—whether a human or animal—is also considered as *sujud* in the Islamic sense because it is an inevitable physical act commanded by God. As a result, besides the thing itself, the shadow of the being is also dependent on God's commandments since they act as He wills (Yazır, 2007c; Al-Razi, 1992). By emphasizing shadows, this verse reveals that even the clinging of the shadows to the ground does not occur by the will of the owners, but it happens under God's command. Animal's prostration in that regard might be a prostration which signifies obedience to God, or/and it can refer to the inclination of their shadows.

No matter how animals worship God—whether actively or passively, literally or figuratively, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly—I believe that the examination of the *Qur'anic* verses related to animal's spirituality don't only affect our minds about animals. But it also inspires us to question the place of humans on earth and our position with regard to the rest of creation. As the *Qur'an* reveals, each being in the universe practices *tasbih* and *sujud*. Ergo, according to the *Qur'anic* setting, the whole cosmos is alive and endowed with soul by God. And among all creation, the human is given a soul not to put him apart from the cosmos, but to integrate him into the universe.

To that point, animals' glorification of God in terms of *tasbih* and *sujud* involves an activity that enables the integration of humans in the acknowledgement of God's existence. In Qutb's (2013) view, the one who reads the *Qur'an* first realizes that s/he and all animals are created by the One True God. Then, if all animals and plants, for instance, glorify God, Who is praiseworthy, s/he also begins to pray to God as each other being does. Thence, *tasbih* and *sujud* might be the influential means for the coexistence of humans in nature. Consequently, the examination of the *Qur'anic* verses about animal spirituality is an envisionment of the establishment of a kinship between humans, animals, and the rest of creation.

This unifying aspect of Islamic worship, in that sense, may be said to resemble Naess's ideas of deep ecology, which states that human life is not independent of its surroundings (Şakacı, 2013). The Islamic perspective, moreover, emphasizes that as the human realizes that he is part of nature due to a religious commonality with other beings, he also becomes aware of his own smallness in the cosmos (Qutb, 2013). However, this is not a sense of smallness that causes him to feel worthless or insignificant. Instead, the human who actively interacts with nature finally understands that s/he affects everything while s/he also can be affected by everything. Islam, therefore, does not assign the human as the master or ruler of animals, but it confers responsibility to the human for sustaining the well-being of them all. For that reason, the second chapter will discuss human behavior toward animals through the lens of Islamic ethics.

CHAPTER 2

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THEM?

This second chapter aims at inquiring into this basic question: how should we treat animals in accordance with *Qur'anic* ethics? Our main purpose, then, is to present the Islamic influence on our behaviors toward animals. For this purpose, the first section will be dedicated to the examination of *hadiths* (prophetic traditions) which impose various limits on human attitudes and provides a guidance in relation to animals. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Islamic worldview places a lot value on animals given that they were created by God.

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad calls upon people to reshape and mold their relationship with animals and the environment in the light of the *Qur'anic* verses. Careful analysis of animals in the *Qur'an*, thereby, has provided a more comprehensive view of the world to early-Arabs (Ozdemir, 2003). As Izutsu (2008) notes, before the revelation of Islam, Arabs were lacking the metaphysical dimension of nature since they were engaged with concrete things that surround them. As such, they didn't pay attention to the problems of existence as Greek thinkers did. When early-Arabs are invited to look at nature as a whole, the entrenched habits toward animals changed owing to deep reflection on nature provided by the *Qur'an* and exemplified by the Prophet.

In order to understand the degree of change in human behavior toward animals with Islam, first we will look at the pre-Islamic attitudes toward animals and then *hadiths*, which eliminated previous brutal practices. Thereby, we will see the new perspective brought not only to that for Arab society, but also to all Muslims throughout history to the present day. Examination of the prophetic tradition, which protects animal status, therefore, is relevant to our topic to see its influence on human behavior. While protecting animals, Prophet Muhammad, who is presented in the *Qur'an* "as a mercy for all creatures" (Q. 21:107), also shows the highest level of compassion and insists on his quest for justice toward all beings. Hence, Muslims regard him as the exemplar par excellence of mercy for all

creation. Thus, inspired by his attitudes, I will make a short explanation of the Islamic ethical notions *adl* (justice) and *zulm* (injustice) due to their important influences upon our treatment of animals.

The final section, then, will be dedicated to the Islamic concept of being a trustee (*khalifa*) particularly addressing its affects upon our behavior toward the environment and animals. As Ammar (2005) points out, “protecting the environment and all God’s creation for Muslims is a duty and not a choice” (p. 862). Moreover, this concept of trusteeship entailing acknowledgment of being a contributor is crucial for sustaining this protective attitude in humans. However, some critics argue that the Islamic notion of a trustee perpetuates the mischievousness and dominancy of humans and cannot stop animals’ suffering. Contrastingly, the examination of the concept of a trustee will provide a more accurate and comprehensive view of the ongoing Islamic environmental debate. Overall, in this chapter, I will try to show how pondering on animals is an indispensable part of Islamic ethics, and results in treating animals in appropriate ways.

2.1. Pre-Islamic Attitudes Toward Animals and the Hadiths’ Teachings.

Before the *Qur’anic* revelation, early Arab view of animals were at their most brutal. When Prophet Muhammad began to promulgate the *Qur’anic* message, dwellers of Mecca felt uncomfortable with his attacks on the status quo. They could see that he would change the whole system, not only the economic system but the whole fabric of society. Recognizing that human attitudes are shaped by their worldviews, his presenting a new *Qur’anic* worldview was causing a paradigm shift in the peoples’ perception of the universe and themselves. This was establishing a new pattern of interaction with nature as well as animals. This change as introduced by Ali (2012) points out that Islam was revealed not for sustaining the erroneous comfort zone, but instead to break the comfort zone. He says:

“The Prophetic mission was not one about creating comfortable corners for believers to inhabit but one of transforming the world that existed into an envisioned one. Inheritors of this mission should not be satisfied in corners either.”

To understand how Islamic teachings have affected the entrenched customs regarding animal status, this section deals with presenting some *Jahili* (ignorance) practices of the pre-Islamic attitudes toward animals. Thereby, it argues that the *Qur'an* changed and challenged the ancient traditions in relation to animals. God established the *Qur'anic* duties, and then the prophets practiced them best. *Hadiths* (prophetic traditions), which provide specific guidelines and injunctions concerning animals (Ferber, 2015), therefore, are an inseparable element of this section.

Prophet Muhammad, known for his complementing and explanatory methods of representing *Qur'anic* values and commands, is a role model for Muslims in all realms of life. The *Quran* makes it clear that following and emulating attitudes of the Prophet are criteria of God's love for a Muslim: “Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If you do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you, your sins; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful’” (Q. 3:31). As such, remembering the prophetic attitude toward animals might well bring a thought-provoking change in our relationship to God, the universe, ourselves and *animals*.

2.1.1. Early Arab Practices Toward Animals

If one attempts to investigate the habits of early Arabs, that person encounters tragic practices toward animals such as *'akr*, *beliyye*, *ceb* and other behaviors that will be discussed through *hadiths*. To begin with, *'akr* was a brutal practice causing animal death. According to this pre-Islamic Arab custom, after the dead person was buried, the owner's animal was also strangled or a camel's back leg nerves are cut off for the soul of dead person, then these animals are left to die in suffering at the head of the grave to be eaten by predators. The wounded camel whose nerves were cut, would begin to suffer, and fall to the ground wherein it would wait for its death in pain. As one might guess, the injured camel that was abandoned at the head of the tomb would finally become prey for birds or predators (Sarıcık, 2014).

'*Akr* is also practiced for showing generosity (Sarıcık, 2014). In a so-called generosity race, two rival groups take their sword and start to cut off their own camel's leg nerves. Whoever killed more camels was considered the most generous. The general aim of '*akr* is to kill animals with the intention of fame and vanity. Therefore, as Prophet Muhammed forbade '*akr* as a brutal act, he also banned eating animals' meat that died in the way of '*akr*. In a similar way, the custom of *beliyye* was practiced when the dead person was buried. However, this time, camel's head is wrapped, and its front legs were tied to its tail, rendering camel immobile at the head of the grave. The camel, which was brutally tortured in this way, left to its death for many days, and consequently died of hunger and thirst (Sarıcık, 2014).

The Madinan people especially performed another vicious *Jahiliya* custom called *ceb* (Sarıcık, 2014). The people of Madinah split the humps of the camel while they are alive and cut off a piece of fat to cook in their meal. Likewise, they cut the sheep's tail while they were still alive and cut out a piece of fat to eat. Also, pre-Islamic Arabs sometimes extracted a living animal's limb or cut a limb from a living body by using a sharp tool. All these practices were utterly merciless causing suffering to living beings.

A third *Jahiliya* custom was another brutal style of cutting. According to this tradition, when pre-Islamic Arabs wanted to slaughter an animal, they cut the animal's neck skin without cutting its trachea, esophagus, and carotid arteries. In this way, the animal died in pain without losing blood. The reason why pre-Islamic Arabs tried to keep the blood inside the animal body because they were drinking it or making various foods with using this blood. Although this practice caused lots of physical pain to animal (Sarıcık, 2014). After the revelation of the *Qur'an*, the consumption of blood was clearly considered as *haram* (prohibited) in four verses (Q. 6:145; 16:115; 5:3; 2:173).

To sum, the *Jahiliya* practices forbidden in the Islamic period were killing animals for a dead person or in a generosity race, cutting or splitting a piece from a living animal, cutting the neck skin of an animal to keep blood in the dead body. Thus, they all became symbols of viciousness and brutality toward animals. Prophet

Muhammad abolished all these habits by saying: “Beware! Every object of pride of the pre-Islamic times [...] has been put under my feet, except the supply of water to pilgrims and the custody of the House.”¹⁰ In this statement, he clearly indicates that many customs of pre-Islamic times are worthless and the abusive treatment of animals were among the eliminated habits. Beyond these brutal customs, Prophet Muhammad also abolished numerous bad habits and advised humans to treat animals with compassion and justice as prescribed in *hadiths*. These *hadiths* pertaining to animals can be categorized into “their treatment, their lawfulness as food, prescriptions for slaughter, and restrictions on hunting” (Foltz, p. 31). In the next section, I will articulate some of them to address the prophetic influence on the Muslim’s relationship with animals.

2.1.2. Hadiths and Their Transformative Effects

For explanation of *hadiths* related with good treatment of animals, let us begin with the abolishment of animal fighting. Islamic ethics see animal fighting including species such as dogs, roosters, partridges, camels and bulls as evil and forbidden. There is a *hadith* which says that “the Messenger of Allah prohibited instigation between beasts.”¹¹ These fights are primarily forbidden because they violate the animals’ right of live given that the animals can be severely hurt or even die. Such activities are also prohibited because they are intended to satisfy the barbarian faculties inside humans, as well as causing suffering of animals (Yeniçeri, 2014). Moreover, Sarıcık (2014) argues that the one who watches such incidences is held responsible for the death of the animal. He states that if nobody was interested in these shows, animals would not be endangered and would probably not die. Those who watch such events, therefore, are considered as the one has killed the animal.

Prophet Muhammed also prohibited using animals as a target in competitions called *musabara*. During the pre-Islamic era in Arab society, animals

¹⁰ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 02, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/58210>

¹¹ Prohibition of Animal Fights in Islam. Retrieved April 10, 2020, from <https://islam.stackexchange.com/questions/38172/prohibition-of-animal-fights-in-islam>

were trapped or confined in a narrow space and then used as shooting targets in various competitions. In this context, the Prophet warns people by saying that “Allah curses anyone who mutilates an animal” (Ferber, 2015, p. 8) and does not allow any spirit-bearing creatures, especially animals such as birds and chickens, to be targeted (Yeniçeri, 2014). The following *hadith* narrated by Sa‘id ibn Jubayr criticizes targeting too as follows:

Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once passed by some young men of the Quraysh who had tied up a bird and made it a target at which they were shooting arrows. Every arrow that missed became the possession of the owner of the bird. When they saw Ibn ‘Umar, they dispersed.

Thereupon, Ibn ‘Umar said: "Who has done this? May Allah curse whoever has done this. Verily, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) invoked a curse upon whoever makes any living creature a target (of his marksmanship, archery, etc.)"¹²

In addition to adults’ attitudes toward animals, it is seen that animals were being targeted and maltreated even by children. A *hadith* describes that Ibn Umar saw a child who was throwing stones to a tied up chicken. After Ibn Umar untied the chicken’s binding, he went to talk to the child’s parents and said, “prevent your child from holding animals in a place to kill them, because I heard that the Messenger of Allah forbade it.” (Sarıcık, p. 77, 2014).

Another prophetic warning regarding proper treatment of animals can be seen in *hadiths*, which emphasize that “animals should not be loaded with more than they can bear” (Ferber, 2015, p. 13). *Hadiths* related to the prohibition of overloading animals are especially concerned for labor animals used for transportation of loads and people. These animals are subjected to the exhausting toils of hauling, riding, ploughing, and drawing water. Therefore, various narrations remind us that we should have beneficence (*ihsan*) toward working animals. For instance, when the Prophet saw an animal that had difficulty in carrying three people riding on it,

¹² Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 02, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/64654>

he said: “the third person is cursed” to emphasize that it is wrong to exhaust the animal with overloading it (Yeniçeri, 2014).

Another *hadith* is reported by Abu’ d-Darda who saw a camel hauling load more than it could bear. In order to prevent the camel’s suffering, he intervenes with the owner by saying “The Prophet says that you should load the animals as they can bear it” (Yeniçeri, 2014, p. 128). Similarly, a *hadith* narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal stresses that owners shouldn’t tear out an animal’s sinew, therefore, the work to be done by labor animal must be in accordance with their capacity. Thus, animals shouldn’t be extremely tired at the end of the day (Yeniçeri, 2014). Also, the Prophet felt tenderness and compassion toward all creatures thinking that animals should be petted to relieve their fatigue. For instance, we know that Prophet Muhammad was petting camels’ heads (Yeniçeri, 2014). From the *hadiths*, we also learn that he wiped off a horse’s sweat by using his cloth to relieve the tired horse, although this behavior was found odd by others since he swept away the sweat with his own cloth (Yeniçeri, 2014).

Moreover, a *hadith* reported by Anas ibn Malik sets up some rules for traveling with animals and points out that animals shouldn’t get tired during the journey:

“Whenever we stopped at a place (during a journey) for rest, we would not offer any (voluntary) prayer until we unloaded the luggage from the riding animals.”¹³

This *hadith* indicates that when the Prophet and his companions reached their destination, the first thing they did was unload their luggage from riding animals, and then perform their prayer. Ergo out of mercy, they wouldn’t start their worship without first fulfilling the needs of animals, although they were keen to pray. Thus, once again we observe that the pattern that shaped the Prophet’s attitudes was mercy towards all creation.

¹³ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 04, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/8844>

Also, the Prophet's noteworthy concern regarding animals' wellbeing while traveling can be found in this *hadith*:

“When you travel (through a land) where there is plenty of vegetation, you should (go slow and) give the camels a chance to enjoy the benefit of the earth. When you travel (through a land) where there is scarcity of vegetation, you should hasten with them (so that you may be able to cross that land while your animals are still in a good condition of health). When you make a halt for the night, avoid (doing so on) the road, for the tracks are the pathways of wild beasts or the abode of noxious little animals.”¹⁴

In addition to the ethical treatment of animals, this *hadith* also includes lessons for ecological systems since it regards land sustainability and points to the effect of overgrazing. If the vegetation is enough on the travel route, it is advised to free camels to graze since this nourishment makes animals happy. If the vegetation is scarce, it would be better to complete the journey as much as possible. Here the purpose seems twofold. First, preventing the camels from grazing gives time to plants for re-growth. Second, it enables the camels quickly to reach the destination without falling into exhaustion.

The continuation of the *hadith* which regards the road and its usage is also quite interesting. It is seen that Prophet Muhammad prohibits one from halting on the road when the night has come because the road is used by some animals like insects and wild beasts. Therefore, when travelers take a break, they are advised to leave the road and step aside. Hence, the road is a place where animals pass, and insects stay overnight. The goal of such a behavior is twofold. First, this *hadith* warns travelers to be protected from the poisonous insects or other kind of predators, so that they are advised to give a break off the road. Second, the preceding *hadith* shows concern for the animals that use the road at night. As it is known, the roads are the shelter of predatory pests and living creatures on the ground. Because it's easy for them, they mostly walk on roads and pick up things

¹⁴ The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad at Your Fingertips. Retrieved from April 12, 2020, from <https://sunnah.com/muslim/33/255>

like food falling to the ground at night.¹⁵ Therefore, the aforementioned *hadith* ascribes “*the right of the road*” to animals since it prioritizes their use of the road at night.

The following *hadiths* may be regarded as unique examples regarding both the physical and emotional dimensions of animals. The first one is also a rare moment in which Prophet Muhammed communicates with animals, a camel, which is complaining about its bad situation. The related passages of the *hadith* are as follow:

He [Muhammad] entered the garden of a man [...] When a camel saw the Prophet, it suddenly wept tenderly, making a yearning sound, and its eyes flowed with tears. The Prophet came to it and wiped the temple of its head. So it kept silence. He then said, “Who is the master of this camel? Whose camel is this?”

A young man [...] came and said, “This is mine, Messenger of Allah.” He [The Prophet] said, “Do you not fear Allah about this beast which Allah has put in your possession? It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it heavily, which fatigues it” (Ferber, 2015, p. 13).

This *hadith* teaches us that feeding animals adequately is commanded and subjecting animals to exhausting toils is forbidden. Mert (2013) emphasizes that camels are animals strong enough to cross miles for several weeks without eating and drinking. If the mentioned camel was so fatigued, it means that the mentioned camel had really suffered which drove it to cry. Furthermore, beyond the physical situation, this *hadith* also conveys to us the animal’s emotions and mental state. The camel’s reaction when it saw the Prophet is quite touching. Through this interaction, we realize how a camel is capable of expressing conscious volition toward the Prophet (Ferber, p.14), and how it asked the Prophet for aid. According to Mert (2013), camels which generally have a calm and delicate character express their sorrow and joy immediately. Since this camel cried directly to the Prophet, Mert argues that it was indeed suffered tremendously.

¹⁵ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 10, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/tr/browse/hadith/5961>

Branding and hitting the face of animals is also unlawful act that affects both physical and emotional states of animals. For illustrating the enormity of these behaviors, two hadiths reported by Ibn ‘Abbas are quite intriguing:

A donkey that had been branded on the face passed by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) so he said: "May Allah curse the one who branded it." Another narration by Imam Muslim reads: "The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) forbade striking the face and branding on the face."¹⁶

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saw a donkey that had been branded on the face. He disapproved of it. Thereupon, Al-‘Abbas said: "By Allah, I shall not brand (the animal) but on the part most distant from the face." Al-‘Abbas then commanded that his donkey should be branded on its hips. He was the first to brand an animal on the hips.¹⁷

According to Prophet Muhammad, the face is seen as the personality of the animal, and in order to protect their personality, all kinds of ill treatment to the face is cursed (Yeniçeri, 2014). Also, in the Islamic account, branding and striking the face is forbidden because the "face is tender (*laṭif*) and is the locus of beauty (*maḥasin*) and the senses" (Ferber, 2013, p. 9). Therefore, any cruelty against the face—whether of human or animal—is a blemishing act that violates the right of personality. It is understood that the Prophet's ideas are very different from the philosopher Levinas who argues that animals don't possess a face, therefore they cannot be an ethical subject (Şimşon, 2015). Against Levinas's arguments, the Prophet perceived the animal's face as the manifestation of its character and states that harming of an animal's face is an insult to its individuality.

Moreover, *hadiths* related to rights and duties even set established rules about milking. These *hadiths*, which emphasize that some milk should be left for the baby animals, are remarkable and describe holistic acts of mercy. As we have

¹⁶ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/8893>

¹⁷ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/8891>

seen in the first chapter of this thesis, the *Qur'an* reveals that some animals are assigned by God to produce honey, eggs, and milk for the well-being of humans. However, this situation does not assign humans as the absolute possessor of these animals. To remind of this reality, the *Qur'an* reveals that humans, who are endowed with such Divine Gifts, are bound by some responsibilities toward animals who painstakingly works for them. Within that regard, the Prophet warned people about milking procedures. He advised that an amount of milk should left for the animals, instead of exhausting it entirely. In a *hadith*, Dirar ibn al-Azwar narrates:

“I gifted a female sheep to the Messenger of Allah and he ordered me to milk it. I milked it vigorously. He said, “Leave [the remainder of the milk, in the udder] that is to draw the milk [that comes after it]” (Ferber, 2015, p. 14).”

It is clear that this behavior has two purposes. First, it is believed that it provides for better replenishment in the animal’s udders. (Ferber, 2015). Second, it aims at leaving a proportion of milk “that is adequate to feed the animal’s young” (Ferber, 2015, p. 14). While commenting on this *hadith*, Yeniçeri (2014) argues that milk has been created for the offspring first, then, only the rest belongs to humans.

Avoiding unnecessary pain given to animals is also important while milking. For instance, Prophet Muhammad indicates that one’s nails should be kept trimmed to prevent harming the animal’s udders during milking (Yeniçeri, 2014). In a *hadith*, it is stated that the Prophet gave one of his camels to a poor man by saying:

“When you return to your sons, order them to be beneficent in feeding their quadrupeds. And order them to pare their nails and not let your nails make the udders of your livestock bleed when you milk them.” (Yeniçeri, 2014; Ferber, 2015).

Furthermore, while some animals feed humans, we should feed all of them appropriately. There are numerous *hadiths* explicitly stating that no one should prevent animals from adequate nourishment. In one of the most oft-repeated *hadith*, it is declared that a woman earned punishment because she left her cat in hunger and thirst. Ibn Umar’s narration reported:

“The Messenger of Allah said: a woman went to Hell due to imprisoning a cat in the house. She did not give it any food and did not let it go out and eat the insects on earth”¹⁸ (Taşdelen, 2010, p. 44).

Although it does not indicate that whoever kills a cat will eventually go to hell, the *hadith* reminds us that the care of animals should not be underestimated. Otherwise, to leave animals in pain is an enormity that can cause a person to be punished severely. Another *hadith*, on the other hand, states that good treatment toward animals can be a cause for forgiveness (Ferber, 20159. For instance, a *hadith* tells of a prostitute woman who gives water to a dog being gifted with going to Paradise by God. The Prophets said:

“A prostitute saw a dog turning around a well on a hot day; it was panting due to thirst. She took off her shoe, filled it with water and gave the water to the dog. The woman was forgiven due to this deed”¹⁹ (Taşdelen, 2010, p. 41).

In another *hadith*, Prophet Muhammad mentioned that:

"A man felt very thirsty while he was traveling; he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and watered it. Allah was pleased with him for that deed and forgave him" (Taşdelen, 2010, p. 41).²⁰

The preceding *hadiths* indicate that by God gives rewards for kindly feeding animals, and these deeds are precious enough for one to be admitted into Paradise. In order to understand the importance of animals' nourishment, we can also look at the *Qur'an*. Numerous verses state that God is the only Power which gives sustenance (Q. 29:17) to each creature, therefore, not only human but also animals

¹⁸ Questions on Islam. Retrieved April 4, 2020, from: <https://questionsonislam.com/question/will-you-explain-hadith-about-woman-who-gave-water-dog-going-paradise-and-woman-who-left>

¹⁹ Questions on Islam. Retrieved April 4, 2020, from: <https://questionsonislam.com/question/will-you-explain-hadith-about-woman-who-gave-water-dog-going-paradise-and-woman-who-left>

²⁰ Questions on Islam. Retrieved April 4, 2020, from: <https://questionsonislam.com/question/will-you-explain-hadith-about-woman-who-gave-water-dog-going-paradise-and-woman-who-left>

are dependent upon that sustenance granted by God. This aspect is put forward in Q. 29:62 which says:

“How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is Allah Who feeds (both) them and you.”

While commenting on this verse, Qutb (2013) indicates that there might be some animals which cannot afford to collect, carry, and care for their sustenance by themselves. But nonetheless, they continue to find nourishment because God provides their food and does not allow them to starve (p.1828). In this, humans are reminded that nothing on this earth—rain from the sky or plants from the ground (Q. 29:63) have been created only for human existence, but they also serve the well-being of animals. The idea that God allocates these resources to all beings can be found in this verse stressing that one of the reasons for the rain is to provide water for animals:

“And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky,—That with it We may give life to a dead land, and slake the thirst of things We have created,—cattle and men in great numbers.” (Q. 25:48-49).

In addition to water, food is also allocated for animals as stated in this passage:

“And do they not see that We do drive rain to parched soil (bare of herbage), and produce therewith crops, providing food for their cattle and themselves? Have they not the vision?” (Q. 32:27)

In these verses, the message is that both animals and humans are endowed with enough sustenance to meet their needs through God’s mercy. Moreover, not only natural resources, but also other earthly components such as the mountains are established in the land for easing the life on Earth. The *Qur’an* says “...and the mountains has He firmly fixed; —For use and convenience to you and your cattle.” (Q. 79:32-33). Consequently, it is a human duty to protect the resources which are benefited from animals. If God has created, nurtured, and cultivated grasslands and other forms of sustenance for all creatures, humans should not deprive animals from

the use of them (Taşdelen, 2010). To sum up, the Creator, Who provides everything for sustaining life, cares for animals' welfare.

On the other hand, as manifested in the first chapter, Islam allows killing some species to eat and utilize their meats through slaughtering and hunting according to the rules prescribed in the *Qur'an*. So, instead of emphasizing which animals can be eaten or not according to Islamic ethics, let's examine at this point the *hadiths* that deal with the controversial issues about killing. To begin with, the *hadith* reporting of Prophet Muhammad commanding the killing of dogs in Medina is contentious: "If the dogs were not a community, I would order that they were to be killed. Kill all dogs of black color" (Taşdelen, 2010, p. 36).

Prophet Muhammad's approach toward dogs in Medina is interpreted by Menache (2008) as follows:

Faced with a plague of stray dogs, Muhammad at first made a categorical decision to exterminate all dogs. He moderated his decree afterwards, reasoning that God had created the canine genus and that people needed certain species of dogs. The Prophet thus decided to exterminate only black-coated strays, particularly those with light patches, the indisputable mark of the devil (p. 498).

Although Menache (2005) argues that the Prophet sees the black colored dogs as an emanation of evil spirits, and therefore acted in a biased way toward them, according to Yeniçeri (2014), the phrase "black color" points to dogs which were likely to have rabies. As such, the command of the Prophet is a precaution against the danger of the spread of rabies in Medina. While some dogs were to be put to death, the Prophet left aside dogs including "trained hunting dogs and watchdogs, which guarded houses, alleys, flocks, crops, or vineyards" (Menache, 2005, p. 498). Otherwise, dogs cannot be killed wantonly since they are a community created by God, as stated in the verse Q. 6:38: "There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you." Also, the *Qur'an* states that nothing is created in vain (Q. 21:16) and every creation of God is beautiful in the Prophet's view (Yeniçeri, 2014). Since all animals have their own value, only the harmful and aggressive ones should be

killed. The *hadith* does not aim at the complete extinction of the dog species, instead, “the Prophet’s tradition on this issue was intended to apply only to dogs at risk of being infected by the rabies virus” (Al-Fadl, 2005, p. 500).

Similarly, another *hadith* allows dogs to be killed: “Five animals are vicious and harmful and are to be killed (even) inside the Sacred Precincts: the crow, the kite, the scorpion, the mouse, and the mordacious dog.”²¹ Although killing and hunting is not permitted in the Harem province as we noted earlier, the aggressive dogs can be killed whether in the Harem or out of it.

By stressing *hadiths* pertaining to dogs, some reports state that dogs are impure, hence, are viewed ominously in the Prophetic tradition (Al-Fadl, 2005). These anti-dogs reports, however, are rejected by Muslim jurists and scholars for some reasons (Al-Fadl, 2005). First, the *Qur’an* does not contain any condemnation of dogs as impure and evil. Contrarily, the *Qur’anic* verse acknowledge canine loyalty as put forward in the story of the Seven Sleepers (Q. 18:18). Also, in different fields, dogs defend their owners; therefore, they turn allies to humans. Moreover, as we have examined in previous *hadiths*, it is mentioned that there was a reward for a benevolent act toward a thirsty dog. Finally, Islamic tradition honors all creation, thus, an animal’s life cannot be deemed worthless and taken wantonly.

Nonetheless, in the next *hadith*, it can be deduced that having a dog as a pet is prohibited. The Prophet says: “If anyone keeps a dog that is neither for hunting nor for guarding livestock, their reward (for good deeds) will be reduced by two qirats per day.”²² The phrase “two qirat” means that reward of good works can be lost if the one keeps the dog in the house, thus, it refers to the unlawfulness of possessing a dog. For some, this *hadith* conveys the idea that every animal should kept in accordance with its *fitra* (the very nature of things), consequently, taking dogs into houses as pets is not permitted (Taşdelen, 2010). However, while Ferber

²¹ Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from: <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/4543>

²² Encyclopedia of Translated Prophetic Hadiths. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from: <https://hadeethenc.com/en/browse/hadith/2994>

(2015) comments on the *hadiths* about kept animals, he says that these animals mentioned in the *hadiths* were not simply pets, but they were generally working animals benefited from in different tasks. Also, regarding those times, the prohibition of dog ownership might have been concerned with cleaning requirements. This situation eventually makes the permissibility of owning dogs is limited to serviceability. Although the dogs are the best companions to human in various fields such as hunting, herding, watching, farming, or protection, it was advised that they are must be kept aside the house.

Besides, according to the Prophet's sayings, taking animals' young is a forbidden act in Islamic ethics. There are some specific examples in which the Prophet forbade the removal of offspring birds from their nests. In one narration, it is told that when Prophet Muhammad saw a man who took baby birds from the nest and put them into his bag, he stopped that man and warned him to give the young birds back to their mother (Yeniçeri, 2014). For the Prophet, animals should not be exempted from their mother's compassion, while the mother should not be left in pain from separating it from her offspring. The importance of keeping babies together with families is emphasized in another *hadith* narrated by Ibn Mas'ud. It runs as follows:

We were with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and give him peace) on a journey when he drew apart to relieve himself. We saw a red bird that had two young ones with it. We caught them and the red mother bird came, beating the earth with its wings. The Prophet (may Allah bless him and give him peace) then returned and said, "Who has distressed this bird on account of its young? Return them to her" (as cited in Ferber, 2015, p. 10).

Within the lights of the corresponding *hadiths*, the Islamic approach to hunting can also be evaluated under the scope of mercy. The principle that the offspring should not be separated from its family naturally requires the principle that the parents should not be separated from their young through killing (Yeniçeri, 2014). Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever unfairly kills a bird or a smaller animal will surely be judged in front of God" (Taşdelen, 2010, p. 26). Islam, therefore,

does not allow hunting for mere pleasure and forbids hunting except in the case of necessity. Consequently, in Islamic ethics, hunting is lawful/permissible (*halal*) in accordance with the *Qur'anic* principles, and it is a bad deed/abominable (*makruh*) when practiced for enjoyment. Finally, it is obligatory (*farz*) if it is essential for survival (Yeniçeri, 2014). It is understood that although hunting is licensed in Islam, it shouldn't be done arbitrarily, but practiced only when it is needed in difficult situations such as famine, hunger, and poverty (Taşdelen, 2010). Hunting, otherwise, which causes the elimination of animal species is an enormity.

Following the principle of mercy, a *hadith* related to the prescriptions for slaughter indicates that animals must be killed gently. The Prophet said:

“Verily, Allah has prescribed excellence in everything. If you have to kill, then kill in the best manner. If you slaughter, then slaughter in the best manner. Let one of you sharpen his knife so his animal feels no pain” (Ferber, 2015, p. 11).

Butchering animals and cutting off a piece of it while the animal is still alive is strictly forbidden in the prophetic tradition since it is among the cruelest acts toward animals. As we have seen, pre-Islamic Arabs were practicing these kinds of brutal customs until the Islamic teachings challenged the mistreatment of animals. With the revelation of the Islam, it is understood that the *Qur'an* allows humans to kill some species and benefit from animals for certain purposes. However, these verses lack specific guidance regarding humans' treatment toward animals. The *hadiths*, at this point, give specific guidance on how animals are to be treated (Ferber, 2015), thus, setting the limits on our behaviors. These *hadiths* “then began to legalize through the discipline of *fiqh* (jurisprudence)” (Nanji, 1993, p. 110). The jurist al-Sulami, for instance, states that the animal owner “should spend [time, money or effort] on it, even if the animal is aged or diseased in such a way that no benefit is expected from it” (Foltz, 2006, p. 34).

2.1.3. Islamic Protection Zones

Taking these *hadiths* as protective steps for animal welfare, then, Islamic ethics do also rightly forbid the damaging of animals' habitat. In this context, the establishment of *himas* (protected areas) and *harims* (areas in which development is forbidden) contains lessons for us to adequately learn and apply. During the era of Prophet Muhammad, two different protection zones were established in Medina and Mecca to prevent the defacement of nature: the concept of *hima* (a protected area) and the *harim* (greenbelt) were the institutions that preserved wildlife and sustainability.

Under the *hima* protection zone, settlement and cultivation is prohibited so that it enables animals to graze (Deen, 2006). Therefore, all activities that prevent the growing of trees and grass are prohibited in the *hima* since “these protected areas are pastures for animals such as camels, cattle and sheep” (Yeniçeri, 2014, p. 175). For instance, Prophet Muhammad has declared a wooded and wetland in Medina as a protected zone especially for horse herds (Yeniçeri, 2014). Since the institution of the *hima* enables poor people to graze their animals, it also addresses public welfare in guaranteeing the equal distribution and access to resources, overall, bringing environmental benefit to society (Hancock, 2019).

In addition to the *himas*, there are also *harim* zones wherein a stricter set of rules are applied. Islamic regulation on management of land establishes settlements called *harim* (inviolable zones) defined as: “a large area of land that by order of the *Qur'an* is accessible to all people in the community and in which no hunting is allowed and no trees may be cut down” (Hancock, 2019, p. 9). It is reported that Abu Hurairah—one of the most important companions of Prophet Muhammad—said: “Even if I see gazelles spreading and grazing in the city in Medina, I cannot disturb them” (Yeniçeri, 2014, p. 176). Another companion Abdullah ibn Sellam also narrated that no tree can be cut or bird hunted in the *harim* regions (Yeniçeri, 2014). Finally, it is reported that when Abu Sa'id al-Hudri saw a bird captured in the *harim* zone of Medina, he unwound its rope and released the bird (Yeniçeri, 2014).

Aside from the hunting bans, in the region of the *harim*, the land integrity is inviolable since it ensures a safe water supply. As Deen (2006) notes that the *harim* rises on barren land to protect “wells, natural springs, underground water channels, rivers and trees” (p.149). Designation of the *harim*, as such, helps to protect the wilderness, nature reserves and endangered species in accordance with the *shari’a* (“legal modality or code”) (Khalid, 2005, p. 879). Indeed, the Islamic legal tradition (*shari’a*) puts restrictions on the use of natural resources which are designed to ensure sustainable and just use of them. As Foltz (2009) points out, common use of resources such as water, land and air is determined through the following principles: “(1) non-vital needs are subordinated to vital needs; (2) the needs of the poor take precedence over the needs of the rich; and (3) one may not cause harm in order to obtain a benefit.” (Foltz, 2009, p. 215)

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), then, explains the goal of the *shari’a* as “protecting all benefits, eliminating or minimizing evil, safeguarding the greater good, and removing the greater harm from those who are most vulnerable” (Hamed, 2011, as cited in Saniotis, p. 158). Islamic environmental literature, thus, stresses that the benefits of natural resources are open to everyone. Although these precepts are quite valuable, *shari’a* (Islamic cannon) also provides important insight for the use of animals. Ergo, this common use of resources should include the consideration of with animals. From the *Qur’anic* verses and protection zones, it can be deduced that utilization of natural resources is not limited to human use, but animals also benefit from the promises of the earth. By re-phrasing the principles presented above, therefore, I would say:

(1) Nonvital needs of human are subordinated to vital needs of animals; (2) the needs of the animals take precedence over the needs of human development; and (3) one human may not harm to the resources of animals to obtain a benefit in vain.

This matter can be put more starkly: to establish human commonality with animals is not a choice, but it is the “must-do-now” ethical precept. Actually, we should realize that the ones who are sharing the natural resources are not the

humans; conversely, animals sharing in the natural resources with humans—the late arrivals on earth. As human beings, we are in dire need of everything around us which are God’s gift (*ni’hma*) (Khalid, 2005) endowed for the sake of all creatures, therefore, we should always be careful in our conduct toward nature and animals.

To ensure this idea, the environment-preserving institutions of *himas* and *harims* are worthy models that incorporate sustainability, animal welfare, and ecological protection. As it is known, Mecca and Medina are two important religious centers that host thousands of people every year. The Zones of Mecca and Medina, thus, are sacred and protected areas, set aside in perpetuity by Prophet Muhammad as sanctuaries in mitigating environmental defacement. If there were no hunting bans or other prohibitions, the natural order of these regions would not have been maintained.

However, according to Foltz’s (2009) criticism, the implication of these institutions cannot be effectively applied today. These protected areas are now part of urban development, and the *himas* which should be preserved have disappeared (Foltz, 2009). Even the *Kaba*, the holiest site in Islam, is under the threat of urban density. Nonetheless, the institutions of the *hima* and *harim* serve as reminders of the efforts for the sake of animal welfare.

2.1.4. Ethical precept of Justice (*adl*) and Injustice (*zulm*)

Having embarked on *hadiths* and protection zones, I will now back up my arguments with the ethical precepts of justice (*adl*) and injustice (*zulm*) which are deeply rooted in the *Qur’an*. My reasoning for concluding this section with these concepts is that they include ethical principles affecting our behavior toward animals. My aim here is to provide a brief evaluation of these concepts for broadening our consideration of animals. I will give lexical explanation for the meaning of each term in classical Arabic, then try to establish their relationship with *hadiths* and animals.

For this purpose, I follow Izutsu’s (2002) analysis of *zulm* and its variations. First, Izutsu notes that *zulm* is generally translated as “wrong”, “evil”, “injustice”

and “tyranny”; then, *zalim* is the nominal form of *zulm*, corresponding to “wrong-doer” or “evil-doer” (Izutsu, p.164). Besides, the verb *zalama* is ‘to wrong’, ‘to oppress’, ‘be unjust’ to someone (Hourani, 2007, p. 29). After asserting that *zulm* is one of the most negative concepts for *Qur’anic* ethics, Izutsu makes a lexical explanation of the root ZLM, which is quite useful for this animal related debate. Izutsu explains it as follows:

“The primary meaning of *ZLM* is, in the opinion of many of the authoritative lexicographers, that of 'putting in a wrong place'. In the sphere of ethics it seems to mean primarily 'to act in such a way as to transgress the proper limit and encroach upon the right of some other person'. Briefly and generally speaking, *zulm* is to do injustice in the sense of going beyond one's own bounds and doing what one has no right to” (2002, p. 164-65).

The concept of *zulm* includes various ethical messages which can be applied to animals’ lives, but it is mostly considered in the human realm. Thus none of them have been effectively brought into the light for the sake of animals and therefore, leaves out the animals’ problems. For instance, if the *zalama* is “to put something in a place other than its proper place” (Hourani, 2007, p. 30), animals shouldn’t be kept under improper conditions which damages their life and are not appropriate to their nature. When we consider the animals’ suffering in unjust conditions through transportation, industrial farming, slaughtering, zoo keeping, entertaining etc., it is understood that many of our behaviors are considered as a mere *zulm*.

Hadiths, however, includes lots of commands and prohibitions about ethical treatments of animals to prevent *zulm* against them. It is true that Islam allows us to meet our needs from animals for different purposes, however, it is still concerned for animals even while taking their lives. Islamic ethics, for instance, does not approve of brutal killing practices from *Jahiliya* period and *today*. The Prophet’s perspective on slaughtering which is based on mercy prompts us to avoid unnecessary pain while taking animals’ lives. Prophet Muhammad said, “Every one of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably” (Ferber, 2015. p. 11). Referring to the Prophet’s attitudes, al-Sulami states that “He

[the animal owner] should kill it properly and with consideration; he should not cut its skin or bones until its body has become cold and its life has passed fully away” (Foltz, 2006, p. 34). Also, *hadiths* forbid the confinement of animals for idle sport and state that keeping animals in unhealthy conditions is unlawful.

Today’s animals, however, are exposed to many unhealthy conditions while being transported for meat consumption²³ and they are sprawling in dirty barns. If they are not raised for be slaughtered, they are forced to perform in entertainment that is against their *fitra* (natural state). In order to satisfy human enjoyment, many of them are exposed to human gazes in places like circuses and zoos. Referring to the use of animals as commodities for human pleasure, Franklin (1999) develops the term “passive consumption of animals in leisure” (p. 47). While the active consumption of animals denotes meat eating, in passive consumption animals are supposed to entertain the guest and visitors. However, there is no doubt that these animals “*are put in the wrong place*” both physically and emotionally. Today, our treatment of animals is determined by our whims and desires instead of Divine injunctions. This is certainly against the Islamic ethics that discipline humans. To relieve animals’ suffering, *hadiths* combined with the definition of *zulm* should lead us to think carefully about our behaviors and the contemporary problems regarding animal life.

To continue, other meaning of *zalama* in Arabic is “to go to the wrong place, go astray” (Hourani, 2007, p. 30). In the definition above, Izutsu says that *zulm* is “to encroach upon the right of some other person.” Let us ponder on this definition in reference to animals and other creatures, not the only “person.” As human beings we are encroaching on the sea, forest, and mountains, and unfortunately, exiling the animals, plants, and even inanimate things from their own living areas. “Widespread destruction of habitat, diminishing populations and species loss” (Franklin, 1999, p. 45) are one of today’s most important ecological problems. On the other hand, Islamic ethics forbid damaging habitats and seek the establishment

²³ See Zeybek (2020) and Arıkan (2014) for an examination of industrial farming in Turkey.

of protection zones to prevent *going astray*. Nonetheless, it would seem that we are hardly remembering and applying the prophetic tradition.

This is where we need the second concept of *adl* (justice) as it refers to human-animal relations. According to Islamic ethics, justice is a pivot as it is put forward in Q. 4:135, “*O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice.*” However, the concept of justice in the verses generally applies to interpersonal relations. The *Qur’an*, for example, specifically advises showing justice to orphans (Q. 4:127), to parents (Q. 4:135), or to human life (Q. 17:32). My question is that can we reconsider this concept of justice as extended to animal welfare. To put it differently, is it possible *to be just to animals*?

When we look at the definition of *adl*, as Hourani (2007) says, “*adl* is primarily equitable distribution between two or more recipients of something” (p. 31). In his lexical explanation, he identifies another related meaning of *adl* as “balanced” and “well-proportioned” (2007, p. 33). What is significant here for our study is “equal distribution” because it may help us to “stand firmly for justice” to animals regarding equal access to resources. We already concluded that all earthly benefits—rivers, plants, soil, air etc. should be carefully protected and allocated with living beings in mind because these are God’s manifold gifts to all creatures, and are not only limited to humans. Therefore, the usufruct of the earth pertains to all creatures, not just humans (Wersal, 1995 as cited in Saniotis, 2011). Once more: “Eat for yourself and pasture your cattle” (Q. 20:54).

So, justice in this regard, means caring for the status of animals, protecting their sustenance, and, ultimately sustaining the natural order. The centrality of justice in Islam requires us to act properly and in a balanced way even at the cost of one’s own whims and desires. Therefore, we should stand up for justice to animals through a just distribution of resources in a sustainable way to guarantee that they also benefit from the earth. Consequently, as long as we are just to animals, we would protect the rights of animals. Thus, the Islamic understanding of justice protects the species rather than causing speciesism. Although the *Qur’an* does not

specifically use such a meaning of *adl*, the enormity of transgressing the limits toward the earth is stated in the following verse:

“The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrongdoing and *insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land*, defying right and justice: for such there will be a Penalty grievous” (Q. 42:42, italics is added).

Looking at the *hadiths* and their extensions, it is observed that Islamic ethics evidence caution in regard to animals. The Prophet said: “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 a human being” (Ammar, 2005, p. 864). However, looking back at the prophetic tradition and boasting of the ancestors does not suffice to ensure animal welfare today. What is needed is putting them into practice in the light of contemporary problems. Although the proper treatment of animals is a universal issue, it must be one of the biggest concerns, particularly for Muslims, if Muslims believe that they are dwelling on this earth as trustees endowed with the heavy responsibilities of carrying God’s legislation. The next and final chapter will naturally be devoted to the examination of the *Qur’anic* notion of trusteeship to see the criteria of human behavior pertaining to animals.

2.2. Islamic Notion of Trusteeship and Its Affects upon Our Behavior

In this section, I will examine the *Qur’anic* concept of trusteeship (*khalifa*) in addressing its affects upon our behavior toward animals. My concern with this concept is in its providing a greater ethical consideration that supports the animals’ status. Within the expositions written by scholars on trusteeship, two strands that can be labelled as traditional and critical are prevalent. The traditional party supports the idea that being a trustee on earth is a divine task attributes responsibility to humans, therefore, it has a positive affect upon our behavior in taking environmental action. In contrast to this ideology, the critical strand argues that the bestowed task of trusteeship reinforces the anthropocentric image of Islam,

rather than extending moral obligations. Thus, let us analyze these varying conceptualizations on trusteeship and evaluate their consequences on animals.

2.2.1. Definition

The Islamic concept of being a trustee (*khalifa*), literally means “successor” in Arabic (Foltz, 2009) as expressed in the verse Q. 6:165, “It is He Who has made you (His) agents (*khalifa*), inheritors of the earth.” Islamic environmental ethics, thereby, are highly influenced by this concept that is also put forward in a dialogue between God and the angels in the verse Q. 2:30 as follow:

“Behold, your Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth.’”

Angels were taken aback by God’s decision and ask:

“Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?”

God answers:

“I know what you know not” and appoints the humans as His trustees on earth.

Thus, the *Qur’anic* term trustee refers to a commissioned obligation, or preoccupation inherited from the Legislator. According to Draz (2008), the idea of obligation is “the most fundamental basis, the pivot, the nucleus” (p. 13) of any moral doctrine, so that all ethical systems revolve around obligation. In the Islamic perspective, commandments of moral obligation are imposed on humans by God “to the extent that it is possible” (Draz, 2008, p. 28). As such, the duty of trusteeship in the *Qur’an* is a physically possible action which is also pointed out in Q. 6:152 where God says, “We don’t burden any soul with more than it can bear.”

Accordingly, the concept that the human is the *khalifa* on earth lays the foundation for Islamic environmental ethics because it prompts us to think that humans, who are created as the delegates of divine will, are being assigned the responsibility to improve life on earth (*ta’mir*) (Hashi, 2011). The importance of this heavy task is better grasped through the verse Q. 33:72: “We did indeed offer the Trust (*amanah*) to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they

refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it.” Hashi (2011) indicates that “With regards to trust (*amanah*), the *Qur’an* states that man and woman need to uphold [...] responsibilities that are bestowed upon them” (p. 125). The mentioning of the heavens, earth and mountain in the verse denotes the weight and importance of being a trustee as imposed on the human beings (Qutb, 2013). In obtaining this delegation, humans are attributed intellect, free will, guidance, and knowledge as well as other qualities so that humans might rightly utilize them in fulfilling this imposed duty. In connection, Nanji (1993) argues:

“Individuals become trustees through whom a moral and spiritual vision is fulfilled in personal life. They are accountable to God and to the community, since that is the custodian through whom the covenantal relationship with God is sustained” (p. 108).

Saniotis (2011) regards the trustee together with *akhirah* (the hereafter) as the establishing guidance for Islamic environmental ethics. The idea of *akhirah* emphasizes that people will be held accountable for their deeds on this earth, thus, they will be tested in their trusteeship (Özdemir, 2003; Khalid, 2005). If every human action will be evaluated in the hereafter, to be obliged as God’s trustee on this earth does not provide absolute freedom or priority on earth, but instead, it brings a strict control mechanism upon human actions.

2.2.2. Trustee or a Mischievous Human?

However, critics of this model look askance at the human capability for performing such a duty. One of them is Afrasiabi (2005) who focuses on the limitations of humans in fulfilling the trusteeship of the Earth. Although classical Islam puts the “perfect man” (*insan al-kamil*) as an ideal, according to him, there is always “the potential failure of humans in this duty” (2005, p. 873). Therefore, Afrasiabi (2003) remains cautious in evaluating trusteeship as a notion that extends human obligation in humility. Instead, for him, the term trustee has a monarchical connotation, as will be pointed later. Similarly, Taylor argues that “humans have neither the knowledge nor the capacity that are required to perform this function” (as cited in Tlili, 2017, p. 7). Hancock (2019), then, draws attention to this lack of

ability in humans by pointing to the verse wherein angels foresee that humans are going to be mischievous by stating: “Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?” (Q. 2:30).

In response to this, traditional literature argues that there are numerous *Qur’anic* verses calling on humans to refrain from mischief, therefore, humans are not allowed to destroy the earth in pursuit of profit and power. And by the way, it is argued that not only Islam but religions in general, explain human roles in the cosmos and expect that humans behave according to Divine instruction. (Hitzhusen & Tucker, 2013; Harper, 2008). According to Islamic ethics, humans shouldn’t despoil the earth as stated in the verse Q. 7:85, “Do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you.” In *Qur’anic* terminology, corruption (*fasad*) refers to “misappropriate and mishandling, leads to destruction of life; hence, the *Qur’an* commands Muslims to avoid *fasad*, instead it calls them to do *ihsan* (doing good or better)” (Hashi, 2011, p. 125).

To put it more concretely, the *Qur’an* depicts a mischievous person as one whose deeds are condemned by God: “There is the type of man [...] his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah loves not mischief” (Q. 2:204-5). The *Qur’an* warns us that the one who harms the Earth should not be idealized: “And follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant,— Who make mischief in the land” (Q. 2:151-2). Another verse says: “And Allah loves not those who do mischief” (Q. 5:64). The *Qur’an*, then, mentions the Prophet Shu’ayb who warn his community by saying: “O my people! [...] nor commit evil on the earth, with intent to do mischief” (Q. 29:36).

After verses which condemn the mischievous acts of humans, the *Qur’anic* verses call for maintaining balance to avoid despoiling the planet since all things on earth are carefully measured, as in Q. 15:19-21:

And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due *balance*.

And We have provided therein means of subsistence [...]

And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures (inexhaustible) are with Us; but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable *measures*.

According to these verses, individual's relationship to nature should be based on the concepts of trusteeship, measurement, and balance. In order to have a prosperous life, this trio set in the *Qur'an* offers that our God-given right to benefit from earth should be relevant to sustainability. The very idea that the earth is the result of God's measurement is depicted in the *Qur'an* painstakingly; the heavens are built, the night is darkened, land is spread out, water and plants are produced, mountains are established, the human being is created... (Q. 79:30-33; Q. 2:22). As vividly depicted in the *Qur'an*, the creation is so balanced and "every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion" (Q. 13:8, Q.54:49). Therefore, while the despoiling nature is forbidden in Islamic ethics, humans are also prevented from over-consumption: "O Children of Adam! [...] eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters" (Q. 7:31).

As being trustees on this earth, we are accountable and responsible before God since our duties have been explained and taught to us by the Legislator (Draz, 2008). Given all this, being informed about responsibilities is obviously useful for our moral will which is highly fragile. Otherwise, humans would be easily irresponsible, thence, easily neglecting his earthly duties under the pretext that that he was not taught by God. This is clearly put forward in Q. 4:165: "we sent all these apostles as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that man might have not excuse before God."

Thus, the role as maintainers of balance and measurement is entrusted to humanity by God. In order to sustain this trio, the *Qur'an* reminds us that all living and inanimate things have a function which is carefully measured: "Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!" (Q. 21:16). This function does not refer to being serviceable to human use but being an important component of creation. Therefore, destroying animals that are components of a holistic system is destruction of natural order. To prevent such a

mischievous act, the *shari'a* states, “it is not permitted for anyone to kill or destroy animals and plants for fun” (Muhamad et al., 2020, p. 1).

Trusteeship, thus, makes us responsible before God for adhering to practices in animal welfare that protect them and prevent harm. Based on this understanding of trusteeship, animals are entitled to an ethical consideration whose precepts are determined by the transcendental and universal teachings of God. On this point, Hancock (2019) argues that “as nature has no connection with the divine, there are no metaphysical consequences to its destruction” (2019, p. 3). Nasr (2003), on the other hand, reminds us that since destruction of animals is transgression upon God’s authority, it destroys our relationship with God. Besides, the *Qur’an* points out that animals are God’s worshippers too, thus, when we destroy them, we don’t only damage to our relationship with God, but also, the animals’ relationship with God (Nasr, 2003).

2.2.3. Trustee in addressing the Anthropocene

Anthropocentrism is another critical interpretation of the *Qur’anic* concept of trusteeship. Certainly, a deep explanation of anthropocentrism is beyond this thesis, so, I will draw inferences related to my topic. First, Tlili (2012) argues that anthropocentrism designates human superiority because “humans tend to understand better, value more, and prioritize the interests of the circles that they consider closer to them” (Tlili, 2012, p. 52). As a result of this selective attitude, “humans consider themselves the most valuable species or created beings” (2012, p. 52).

According to the critical stance, this kind of human exceptionalism can be found in Islamic ecotheology too. The very idea that the “human species are the noblest of God’s creatures (*ashraf al-makhlughat*)” (Afrasiabi, 2005, p. 872) settled over the earth as trustees causes the emergence of Islamic anthropocentrism. For Afrasiabi, Islam’s anthropocentric cosmology does not ascribe moral obligations toward animals, and contrarily, it is seen problematic. Thus, the “stereotypical monarchical connotation of vicegerency” (2003, p. 292) should be relinquished. In

his account, the concept of trustee is “an expression of a religious perspective which places man at the center of history and makes him the privileged creature on earth” (2003, p. 283). Instead of emphasizing the “perfect man”, Afrasiabi (2005) develops the “Islamic post-anthropocentric approach” focusing on human limitations in fulfilling divine tasks on earth. However, it does not mean neglecting divine promise. Instead, it acknowledges that we have limits on earth. Hence, we should be more careful regarding our duties to the environment. As long as humans realize their limits on earth and understand that they will failed if they do not restrain themselves, a new ecotheology, which is far from human dominion, can be established in Islam (Afrasiabi, 2005).

Human exceptionalism, on the other hand, is not relevant only to Islam. Christianity especially has begun to be scrutinized after the 1967 dated Lynn White’s essay: “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” that criticized the Western form of Christianity for its exploitative view of nature. Gottlieb (2006) also states that “many writers have found in biblical writings about ‘man’s’ right to ‘master the earth’ (Genesis 1:28) an essential source for the havoc wreaked by Western societies upon the earth” (p. 8). Christian theological orthodoxy, then, is criticized for “maintaining the view that God had given humans absolute rights to use animals as they saw fit” (Franklin, 1999, p. 16). The idea that humans and nature are guided by the same principles, therefore, is quite foreign to Western thought the wherein human is elevated beyond nature for assuring its dominancy (Lodrick, 2005).

In bringing the term dominancy to Islam, we see that the Arabic translation of the word “dominion” is *mulk*, which is used in the *Qur’an* forty-eight times addressing God’s power, not humans’, as being an absolute possessor of “the earth and the heaven” (Hancock, 2019). Moreover, one of the names of God in Islam is *Al-Malik* meaning: “The One Who possesses the *Mulk* (kingdom), dominion, power, authority [...] He is the One Who possesses the disposal of all affairs. He

commands, makes and does whatever He wants.”²⁴ Ergo, the dominion of the earth only belongs to God in a way that cannot be assigned to humans or other creatures.

However, in Islam, human dominion over animals is generally attributed to the *Qur’anic* passages which say, “It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth [...]” (Q. 2:29) Then, this “dominancy” is supported by the “subjugation” of creatures to the human by referring to the verse which says, “See you not that Allah has made subject to you (men) all that is on the earth” (Q. 22:65). Tlili (2012) criticizes the idea that the *Qur’an* grants humankind dominion over animals and opposes the reductive interpretation of these verses as we have already discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Also, in Islamic ethics, it is reiterated that this dominion is tempered by various injunctions regarding animals, thus, these injunctions eventually lead to some legal and ethical rulings, as presented in the chapter regarding the *hadiths*. Appointment as trustee, henceforth, cannot be considered as a unique human right boasted of against animals. Instead, it is a highly crucial duty making us accountable for good to animals in our domain, the Earth.

Nonetheless, the role of trustee still contains dilemmas for the human. While humans are both animals’ manager and their user, “maintaining the equilibrium” (Ammar, 2005, p. 864) between the two side might be challenging. When animals which are carefully created by God are given to humans as a trust (*amanah*), they become possessions to fulfill the human needs in some cases; at other times, they are “divine signs” needing to be protected. Anthropocentrism is involved with this dilemma, indeed, as it is found in expositions of the *Qur’an*. Our exegetes express their affection for animals with occasional cases, but they don’t waver from the Islamic teachings regarding “humanity as its crown” (French, 2005, p. 671). While goodness toward the creation is emphasized through the *tawhid* idea, human superiority is also advocated. Consequently, human kinship with animals is undercut. Qutb (2013), for instance, is the most inclined exegete to establish

²⁴ 99 Names of Allah (Al Asma Ul Husna). Retrieved 19 April, 2020 from <https://99namesofallah.name/>

commonality between human and animal through pointing out the interdependence between all of creation, saying:

It is the human, who God has breathed His own spirit into, therefore, He made him superior to most other creatures and brought him to a higher level than animals. Thus, God Who is the Almighty, aims to raise human life above the essential needs of the animal, intends that the human's instincts and ideals would be more transcendental than animal instincts and wishes (p. 1193).

To support this inference, Qutb (2013) compares animals to humans through various aspects. For instance, animals are viewed as creatures who are driven by instinct (yet this instinct is understood as *a kind of* revelation from God), restricted to sense of organs, and motivated by a mere sexual appetite, cannot believe in religion, lack rationality and their live naked. Humans, on the other hand, are creatures who have free will, can transcend sensuality through their perceptions, establish the marriage as an institution, believe in God, are equipped with reason and wear clothes. These realities explicitly compel with anthropocentric attitudes always leading us to make comparisons between human and animals, as Tlili (2012) states:

Humans would be portrayed as the only species capable of abstract reasoning, having a conscience, free will, immortal soul, and so forth, whereas other species are granted no or little share of these skills and features (p. 53).

Themes such as human uniqueness and special status can be found in the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa* (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity). When animals open a case against the humans, Adamites begin to boast of their unique characteristics to prove their dominion over animals. In comparison with animals, humans say: "Our fair form, erect stature, upright carriage, and keen senses, our subtle powers of discrimination, our sharp minds and superior intellects all show that we are the masters and they, our slaves" (Goodman & McGregor, 2012, p. 109). However, the man's boasting arguments are then interrupted by an animal spokesman who says: "all these form, sense and mind are the gift of God, thus out of control; thus not a base for a justified pride" (Goodman & McGregor, 2012, p. 114). Animals, at this

point, act like a fine example of Stoics by directing our gaze to God to remind that these capacities boasted about are not human's own effort, thus out of control. Rather, they are God's gifts to be "acknowledged as an act of grace" (Goodman & McGregor, 2012, p. 114).

And through the fable, animals also indicates that they have the same skills and features but in a different form than humans. In this context, Ikhwan's epistle reminds of Simondon (2011) who says that in order to live on Earth, "the means change according to the species but the functions remain" (p. 51). As such, comparing commonalities between human and animal, Simondon emphasizes that "life is the same everywhere" (2011, p. 51). The following passages of the fable also shows us that the human's boasting about his virtues can work against himself as well. For instance, humans claim that another sign that they are superior to animals is the religious capacities of man; thus, they pride themselves on having prophets and divine books which are virtues that animals would never able to have. In response to this, the animals argue that this situation features human deficiency rather than superiority. Since the human has a fragile morality, they always needed to be guided through an external authority. On the other hand, animals perfectly know and praise their Creator, so, they are never in dire need of such guidance as books, preachers, saints or prophets.

To, let me reiterate my initial argument: the *Qur'anic* themes of animal's possession of linguistic and spiritual capacities can help us to eliminate the anthropocentric attitudes and thereby, alleviate the distorted image of animals. If we return to the concept of trusteeship, then, this notion would probably be interpreted as a mean for Islamic anthropocentrism. But when we put the trustee back into the "protective" context, its affects on human behavior become more positive. In addition to its motivating aspect, in the *Qur'an*, Muslims are defined as a "justly balanced" community (Q. 2:143)—a virtue, which is highly crucial for environmental ethics,—but what constitutes as Islamic teachings toward animals is contested today. Charles Péguy states that "Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics" (as cited in Linzey, 2000, p. 5). In order to go beyond mysticism,

we need to formulate a response to the contemporary animals' problems in the light of the *Qur'an* and *hadith*. Developing an Islamic ethical consideration of animals which is dynamic, appealing and action oriented is not something optional or a mere necessity, it is religious obligation for us.



CONCLUSION

Islamic ethics regards animals as having with moral status. The very idea of this thesis is supported by the *Qur'an* and *hadiths*. *Qur'anic* verses contain many references to animals which can establish a refreshing ethical position toward them. Also, direct moral obligations and institutions regarding the status of animals are originated mostly from the *hadiths*. Therefore, *hadiths* functioning as guideline for proper treatment are the second canonical source of Islamic ethics, and this thesis as well. Thus, the *Qur'an* together with the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, are highly influential in ascribing ethical consideration for animals and shaping our behavior toward them.

To support this claim, the first chapter analyzed *the values and characteristics of animals* in the view of the *Qur'an*. Beginning with a review of the *Qur'anic* verses, I allowed room to deduce the *intrinsic value of animals*. Also in this study, I argued that animals' intrinsic value stems from the fact that each animal is a handiwork, sign, and reminder of God, hence, each has a God-given value in itself apart from humans' utilitarian purposes. However, I claimed that this intrinsic value can be best seen and understood within the concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God). Since I believe that the *Qur'an* inculcates *tawhid* through expressing the intrinsic value of *some* animals, I have selected four animals (fly, bee, bird, and camel) and then examined the way they are referred to by God to reveal the idea of *tawhid* to people. As a result, I claimed that these animals direct our gaze to God's existence, creation, power, wisdom, and effort.

Second, the *Qur'anic* verses pertaining to the *extrinsic value of animals* were evaluated under the categories of nourishment, hunting, transportation, shelter, clothing, and aesthetic value. By examining the concepts of *taskhir* and *tadhilil*, this section showed that humans have God-given rights to benefit from animals. However, humans are not the absolute possessor over them because these animals are God's manifold gifts. This conclusion enabled me to discuss the importance of gratitude. As revealed in this section, the *Qur'an* advises humans to be grateful to God because it reminds us that humans draw extrinsic value from animals only with

the permission of the God Who is the “merciful sustainer” (Rahman, 1980, p. 45). Therefore, I argued that possessing rights over animals does not lead to exploitation of them, but instead, it makes humans abide by ethical rules and conjunctions.

Third, as shown in the section on *characteristics of animals*, the *Qur’an* specifically points out linguistic skills of *some* animals and religious capacities of the entire creation. By insisting on this aspect of non-human beings, my purpose was not simply to argue that “animals are just like us.” On the contrary, I carefully refrained from humanization of animals because animals do not have to share similar features with humans to be ethically considered by humans. Nonetheless, as Franklin notes, “We tend to understand them in terms of our own experiences, language and emotions” (1999, p. 65). Yet, I wanted this section to establish *commonness* with animals, instead of an *identification* with them. As the *Qur’an* explicitly reveals that, language and spirituality are not uniquely attributed to humans, but they can be found in the animal realm indeed. Thus, I argued that to know that animals *also* have linguistic and spiritual capabilities allows us to develop a sensitivity towards animals first, and then, can pave the way to obtain a deeper ethical concern for them.

After introducing the animals in the *Qur’anic* setting, the second chapter analyzed *how we should treat them* in accordance with Islamic ethics. In order to answer this question, first, I examined the prophetic tradition toward animals. I argued that Prophet Muhammad’s incremental steps backed society away from wantonness transforming the whole worldview into an envisioned one, and, consequently, caused a new ethical standard for the treatment of animals. To see the extent of this transformation, I began with presenting some conducts that existed in the *Jahili* Arab society and the early days of Islam. This section revealed that through the Prophet’s compassionate deeds and sayings regarding animals, brutal traditions of the early Arabs were eliminated. And then, the Prophet further established a new paradigm for animals which rejected animal abuse. This reference enabled me to discuss Islamic protection zones of *harim* and *harem*, the affects of *sharia* upon animals, and the ethical precepts of justice and injustice. This section,

therefore, argued that having a just manner toward animals is theologically and ecologically an urgent issue.

In the last section, I attempted to offer an exposition on the *Qur'anic* concept of being a trustee (*khalifa*), which is useful to the animal question. After scrutinized two different expositions on trusteeship in the realm of Islamic environmentalism, I argued that the duty of trusteeship outlines the principles of ethical behavior since it calls upon people to upgrade their relationship with nature and animals on the base of balance and measurement. Consequently, this section exposed how being *khalifa* on Earth makes us accountable and responsible for our actions toward the environment and does not allow room for an anthropocentric view of animals. Given that anthropocentrism is a large issue to cover, I have only raised a few questions in this thesis instead of presenting a debate of significant depth.

While studying this thesis, I encountered the Christian animal theologian Linzey through his writings. In his book *Animal Gospel*, Linzey (2000) says: “The book speaks of my frustration, my pain, my sadness [...] to the [...] sufferings of the weakest of all” (p. 3). Being a Muslim student concerned for animals, I am also striving to establish these sentences for my own study too, however, I know that this thesis is only a meager venture in illuminating the Islamic vision of animals. Moreover, I couldn't convey my all frustration, pain and sadness for animals in one dissertation. Nonetheless, despite its shortcomings, I hope that this thesis will be considered as a humble attempt to pursue more profound and in depth studies, thus helping to empower our vision, heart, and soul toward animals from the lens of Islamic ethics.

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