

# Christian and muslim viewpoints on animal rights essay sample



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Morality is concerned with what is considered right and wrong. All human beings have an ability to determine what we think is the right and wrong way to behave. Many things can depend on what a person's sense of right and wrong are; including their environment, upbringing, parents attitudes, pressure from friends and peers. Each and every person is able to make a moral decision.

There are a number of factors, which influence a Christian's moral decision. These are, the Bible, the church in which they belong and prayer, all of them are important in understanding how Christians make moral decisions.

Christians were originally taught that animals do not have souls; therefore they are not the same as humans. In Genesis it says that God created the Earth and all living things, some people might point out that animals were put on Earth for our use, although we still should show them respect and love and take care of them.

The most important part of Gods creation, for Christians, are human beings, Christians still have respect for animals though. St Frances of Assisi proved this, for instance Christians founded the RSPCA. Many Christians have joined campaign groups to fight against animal cruelty. Christians also argue against experimental cruelty to animals for cosmetics.

' Scientists must abandon laboratories and factories of death.' (Pope John Paul II)

Jesus occasionally taught the people on how to treat animals, Christians can read these in the Bible and base their decisions on it, fortunately there was

no animal testing in the time of Jesus, but this does cause a problem for Christians who are seeking an answer about animal experimentation in the Bible.

Some Christians are against all experiments on animals, others think they are necessary under certain circumstances, all Christians believe that animals should be treated humanely. Christians feel that any unnecessary suffering of experiments shouldn't be acceptable. The view some Christians had in the past about animals not being of much value never came from the Bible.

Christians have not always acknowledged that animals have rights, however in the last few decades there has been increasing awareness of the rights due to animals. There are different Christian groups in the Christian faith, each of these groups act in a different way towards animal rights.

' Animals, as part of God's creation, have rights which must be respected.'

(Dr Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1977 and President of the RSPCA)

The Church of England believes that an animal's life is not as important as humans; God created all animals. The Church of England also believes in the stewardship, the humans should be stewards for animals. Animals are allowed to be used in medical research but nothing else. The Church of England thinks that livestock, animals reared for food, should be treated better.

‘ In the end, lack of respect for the life and well being of an animal must bring with it a lowering of man’s own self-respect. “ In as much as ye do it to these the least of my little ones ye do it unto me.”’ (Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury)

The Methodist church also believes that it is wrong for people to carry out research on animals for cosmetics and weapons, however medical research is permissible. Sag and hare hunting or and other hunting for fun and not for food should be banned. The Methodists church supports this quote

‘ A human being may be worth many sparrows but even a sparrow does not die unnoticed’ (Matthew 10)

The Roman Catholic Church believes that animals don’t have rights; this is usually called moral theology. They do agree that human have duties towards animals and that it is their place to take care of them. The Roman Catholic Church teaches this,

‘ Certain uses of animals are acceptable; they can be used to provide food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help men and women in their work and leisure. Official teaching tolerates animals use in medical and scientific experiments if it remains within reasonable limits.’

The Roman Catholic Church warns people about spending too much money on animals, some humans spend millions of pounds on saving endangered species and there are people of our race dying every second from diseases and famine. The Roman Catholic Church thinks that more money should be spent on the human race.

‘ God has the right to have all his creatures treated with proper respect.’

(Cardinal Heenan, Catholic Archbishop.)

The Qu’ran does permit meat eating, although given this there are many Muslims, such as the Shi’ite and Sufis, who see vegetarianism as the Islamic ideal and choose this diet.

‘ Once, during a severe famine, a student of religion saw a dog lying on the ground, so weak it could not even move. The student was moved to pity, and immediately sold his books and brought food to give to the dog. That very night, he had a striking dream. “ You need not work so hard to acquire religious knowledge, my son. We have bestowed knowledge upon you.”’

(This is a Muslim story from the Muslim Voice in January 1990)

Allah created all living things, including animals, all animal have their own way of living and existing in our universe. Muslims believe that all animals praise Allah in their own special way, and to do service to Allah. Allah gave wings to the birds to let them fly, he enabled the fish to swim and the horses to run, Allah gave each animal their skills and abilities which helps them throughout their lives, human beings existed after animals did.

‘ There is not an animal on Earth, nor a bird that flies on it’s wings, but they are communities like you.’ (Qu’ran 6: 380)

Muslims are not allowed to harm any animal for no particular reason;

Muhammad (pbuh) prohibited people from seizing birds, the whipping of their animals and burning anthills. When he stopped someone from doing

these awful things he understood that they were doing it for their own

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enjoyment, he pointed out to the people in question and showed them that what they were doing was not fun for the animal.

Allah created humans with superior intelligence to animals, Allah expects all humans to be responsible, kind and fair to all life on Earth. Allah provides animals of every type for the use of humans, some of these animals he provided for food others for transport,

‘ It is Allah who has provided you livestock of every kind. You can some kinds and others you eat...’ (40: 79)

Although these are given to humans, they must not forget they take care of the Earth and everything in it.

When animals are being used for work we must allow them plenty of food and not overwork them at any time. Pets must be feed and cared for; a person should have the same respect for domestic animals as wild animals.

‘ God will not be affectionate to that man who is not affectionate to God’s creatures.’

If a Muslim is to eat an animal, the animal must be killed according to the rules of Dhabaha, Dhabaha prevents any unkindness to animals.

When Muslims are in the process of killing an animal there are certain rule to follow as not to inflict any unnecessary pain on the animal. A Muslim must not sharpen his knife in front of the animal about to be killed, or that the animal must not expect that death is upon him. Animals should not be slaughtered in front of one another. When an animal is being killed a small

prayer is said, before being eaten all the blood should be drained from its body.

In the Hadith, Ibn Assas once reported,

‘ The prophets saw a man sharpening his knife after laying down a sheep to be slaughtered. He rebuked him saying, “ Do you intend to make it die two deaths.” ‘

When the correct tools are absent in the procedure of killing an animal there are other methods as an alternative. Muslims say that it is wrong to stun an animal with electricity. In the Hadith it states that for the slaughter a sharp knife, a piece of wood or a reed can be used, as long as they will inflict as little pain as possible. If a person is inexperienced in this departure and they do not know how to kill it by the jugular vein, they are allowed by the Muslim faith to poke a sharp appliance into the hollow of it’s neck.

Muslims believe that hunting for sport is immoral and wrong, they allow hunting for food and other purposes, if hunting for food the weapon being used must still be sharp. Muhammad disagreed and forbid sports of any kind where animals fight one another.

‘ If someone kills a sparrow for sport, the sparrow will cry out on the day of judgement, “ O Lord! That person killed me in vain! He did not kill me for any useful purpose.” ‘

‘ Animals most suffer, although it is right to experiment on them if this helps to save human lives.’

How far do you agree with this statement, refer to Christianity and Islam?

I think that researching and experimenting on animals on a whole is wrong, after saying this I believe that experimenting for medical purposes is acceptable, although if there is any alternative to vivisection that way is preferable. I do not think that animals should be experimented on excessively, the tests and such forth should be as little as possible to inflict the least pain and suffering.

I believe that God created animals and birds on the 5/6 day of creation; he placed man on earth in his image to rule over everything on the earth, he wanted mankind to take care of his world for him and to look after every living thing in it.

‘ Who ever is kind to the creatures of God if kind to himself.’ Mohammed

Muslims have no support for cases when pain or cruelty is inflicted upon an animal. They do not accept experimentations on any animal for cosmetics under any circumstances, although it is acceptable to experiment for medical reasons if there is no other way.

‘ 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.’