

# Islam and Dogs

There is a deep-seated hatred of dogs among Muslims. Not among all Muslims, but among devout Muslims. Dogs are considered “najes,” (unclean).



I have always loved dogs. It is said, “Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity.” Is there a saying for a case when both stupidity and malice team up together? I remember a gang of Muslim kids

who tried to attack the street dogs. I was young and terrified. The gang managed to get a hold of a piece of meat from a nearby butcher shop as the bait. Bait for whom? The moment of truth arrived. I watched the unfolding drama from a distance with tremendous anticipation.

With the watering can hidden behind his back in one hand and the other hand held in front of him, dangling the bait, Hassan kept making friendly calls, “Here, here, good dog. Here, see what I’ve got for you. You’re our pet, you nice doggie, you,” as he slowly kept closing in on the dog. Uncharacteristically, the dog, while still on its side, started wagging its tail. It must’ve smelled the meat, the poor thing. I held my breath.

Then, the next thing I saw was Hassan’s mouth open, screaming like hell. The dog was dangling off the ground, hanging by its snout from Hassan’s hand, as if it preferred the meaty paw of the boss to the mostly boney bait. Hassan kept screaming, trying furiously to free his hand. The dog wouldn’t let go.

Suddenly, to my horror, I saw Hassan bend over and bite the dog on the snout. Then the two of them howled in a harrowing duet. I had enough. I ran away as fast as I could. I feared that the dog was going to come after me, or worse, Mother might hear the commotion, catch me at the scene and summon Father with his sharp knife to finish me off.

Fanatical Muslims hate, literally hate, dogs. You might wonder why, since all dogs are considered man's best friend by non-Muslims. And dogs have earned that privileged designation by their service as well as their devotion to people. Dogs have helped hunters, stood watch as hunters slept, and supplied people with an abundance of love. Why, then, single them out as deserving of hatred and even slaughter? It makes no sense.

**[4018] 45 - (...)** It was narrated that 'Abdullâh bin 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to order that dogs be killed, and I went throughout Al-Madinah, and we did not spare any dog but we killed it, to such an extent that we would even kill the dog of a woman belonging to the desert people."

One explanation for many Muslims' hatred of dogs goes back to the time of Islam's founder, Muhammad. The claims are that the Arab caravans were invariably accompanied by watchdogs. This presented a serious problem for Muhammad's followers who routinely raided the caravans, often in a stealthy manner. The dogs detected the robbers, alerted the people and helped prevent attacking Muslims from robbing caravans and killing the traders. It was thus that Muhammad declared dogs as *najes*—untouchable— and condemned them to death.

To this day, no observing Muslim allows a dog anywhere near himself or his household. And in Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, dogs are severely persecuted and considered fair game for maltreatment. Nonetheless, these very observant

Muslims don't have any qualms about using the invaluable assistance of dogs in chores to herd and guard sheep. In general, the Muslim hatred for dogs, as even many non-Muslims now know, has its origin in a celebrated hadith from the most authoritative collection, that by Bukhari:

Two Hadith from Sahih Muslim clearly convey Muhammad's hatred of dogs: Abdullah (b. Umar) (Allah be pleased with them) reported:

**Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) ordered the killing of dogs** and we would send (men) in Medina and its corners and we did not spare any dog that we did not kill, so much so that we killed the dog that accompanied the wet she-camel belonging to the people of the desert. (Sahih Muslim 3811)

Ibn Mughaffal reported: The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) **ordered killing of the dogs**, and then said: "What about them, i. e. about other dogs?" and then granted concession (to keep) the dog hunting and the dog for (the security) of the herd, and said: "When the dog licks the utensil, wash it seven times, and rub it with earth the eighth time." (Sahih Muslim 551)

In short, for the past 1400 years, every misery upon humanity and animals originated from the source of Islam: The prophet Muhammad and his fictional God, Allah. Humanity has suffered too much, yet, the civilized world caters to these savages and ignores their actions. Why you might ask? Because they have oil.