

# A Debate on the Islamic Rulings on the Natures and Functions of Dogs in the Light of Hadīth'

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**“Hadisler Işığında İslâm Tabiat  
Tasavvuru Bağlamında Köpekler:  
Doğaları ve İşlevleri”**

**Özet:** Günümüzde önemli ve hararetili tartışmalardan biri, köpeklerin evcil hayvan olarak beslenmesi meselesidir. Zira Müslümanlar bu konuda Batı'lılardan farklıdır. Konu günümüz Müslümanları arasında da bir tartışma konusudur. Google veya YouTube'da yapılan bir arama, konuya dair yazılmış yüzlerce makalenin ve yüklenmiş videonun varlığını ortaya koyacaktır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın temel amacı; köpek karşıtı ve yanlısı iki karşıt görüş arasında bir köpeği bekçi evinde tutmanın izin verilebilirliği ya da verilemeyeceği şeklindeki iki görüşün arasını bulmaktır. Ayrıca abdest sonrası köpeklere dokunmak, satın almak ve satmak, köpekleri öldürmek, köpek geçerken dua etmek ve köpek pisliğini toprak yerine sabun gibi başka yollarla temizlemek gibi ahkâm da incelenecektir. Çalışma, Kur'an-ı Kerim, hadisler gibi İslâm'ın temel güvenilir eserlerdeki bilgiler ve Müslüman âlimlerin görüşleri tetkik edilerek yürütülecek; Kütüphanelere, kitaplara, dergilere ve yazma eserlere müracaat edilecektir. Çalışmada, âlimlerin köpeklere yaklaşımında iki bakış açısı olduğu ortaya konulmuştur: Köpeğe, evinden ayrı bir yaşam alanı sağlamak şartıyla, güvenlik, avlanma veya çiftçilik gayesiyle köpeğe sahip olunması caizdir. Ayrıca, köpeğin salyasıyla temas etmemeye dikkat edilmesi gerektiği vurgulanır. Son olarak Müslümanlar, köpekler hakkındaki bilgilerden hareketle, onları ihmal etmeleri, kötü davranmaları veya onlara kimsenin zarar vermesine izin vermemelidirler.

**Atıf:** Kamal-deen Olawale SULAIMAN, “A Debate on the Islamic Rulings on the Natures and Functions of Dogs in the Light of Hadīth,” *Hadis Tetkikleri Dergisi (HTD)*, XVIII/2, 2020, ss. 41-57.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tartışma, İslâmî hükümler, köpek karşıtı ve köpek yanlısı hadis, çağdaş Müslümanlar, Kur'an

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## I. Introduction

The issue of dogs is one of the most debatable issues in recent times, especially as *da'wah* gains ground in the Western countries, whereby people converting in to Islam in large numbers. Thus, the question on the lips of many reverts are: can we keep our dogs as Muslims who want to abide with the Islamic obligations? And will our new religion (Islam) take away from us our dogs, which has become our closest friends? Also Islamic discourses on the nature and functions of dogs are representative of a range of tensions among the contemporary Islamic Scholars. In fact, the debates surrounding the avowed impurity of dogs and the lawfulness of possessing or living with them are one of the main issues symbolizing the challenging dynamic between the Islamic law and the nature. For instance, it is tradition among Muslims all over the world to regard the dog as a dirty animal that when touched would void the ablution and infect the one who touched it with dirty impurity! What makes this issue so debated is the fact that there are many Prophetic *Ḥadīth* that warn Muslims about getting into contact with dogs. In fact, some of these *Ḥadīth* give warnings that going against this rule takes away a sizeable amount of reward from a person's record (of good deeds) daily. Adding to that is the Prophet's order for killing the dogs in Medina and the Angel Gabriel's refusal to enter the Prophet's house in one of his visits, citing the presence of dog as reason. As a result, many Muslims have used these views to justify the abuse and neglect of dogs. But alongside with this, are many *Ḥadīth* that call for showing kindness to animals in general, including dogs, and the permissibility of keeping dogs for hunting, guarding, etc. It's further reported that some of the Prophet's companions, were in the habit of keeping animals for farming purposes or even for fun and pleasure. Also, cruelty contradicts the Qur'an's view that all animals form "communities like you." Therefore, Islam teaches its followers to be merciful to all creatures, and all form of animal cruelty is forbidden. So to clarify this confusion, this article therefore needs to interpret those anti-dogs and pro-dogs *Ḥadīth* in the light of the Qur'an and present several *Ḥadīth* examining the place of dogs in Islam. More also, dogs today are used for a wide range of tasks not mentioned in the classical books. These tasks include: guide dogs for the blind, security dogs for the police and military, search dogs for humans trapped under rubble, detecting cancer, predicting and warning about seizures, as part of therapy for autism or PTSD, and many others. These tasks are beneficial to Muslims. Determining their legal status requires having a clear understanding of the textual evidence and rulings related to dogs, as well as a clear understanding of the contemporary task.

## II. The permissibility of keeping a dog to guard houses, alleys and the like

There are two points of view, the first is that it is not permissible, because of

the apparent meaning of the following anti-dog *Ḥadīth*: Narrated by Abu Hurayrah that: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever keeps a dog, one *Qirat* of the reward of his good deeds is deducted daily, unless the dog is used for guarding a farm or cattle."<sup>1</sup> In another narration from the Prophet, Abu Hurayrah said "unless it is used for guarding sheep or farms, or for hunting."<sup>2</sup> Also, it was narrated by Abu Hāzim from Abu Hurayrah that: The Prophet said, "A dog for guarding cattle or for hunting."<sup>3</sup> It was also narrated by as-Sa'ib b. Yazid that: Abu Sufyān bin Abu Zuhayr, a man from Azd Shanū'a and one of the companions of the Prophet said, "I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "If one keeps a dog which is meant for guarding neither a farm nor cattle, one *Qirat* of the reward of his good deeds is deducted daily." I said, "Did you hear this from Allah's Apostle?" He said, "Yes, by the Lord of this Mosque."<sup>4</sup> In another tradition narrated by Abdullah b. Dinar said that: Allah's Apostle said, "If somebody keeps a dog, he loses one *Qirat* (of the reward) of his good deeds every day, except if he keeps it for the purpose of agriculture or for the protection of livestock."<sup>5</sup> Again, it was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said: Whoever keeps a dog that is not a dog for hunting, herding livestock or farming, two *qirāts* will be deducted from his reward each day.<sup>6</sup>

In the first instance, these scholars differed as to how to reconcile between the reports which speak of one *qirāt* being deducted and those which speak of two *qirāts* being deducted. For instance, it was said that two *qirāt* will be deducted if the dog is more harmful and one *qirāt* will be deducted if it is less. And it was said that at first the Prophet said that one *qirāt* would be deducted, then the punishment was increased after that, so he said that two *qirāts* would be deducted in order to put people off from keeping dogs even more.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, al-Hafiz al-'Aynī opined that: they were said at two different times "one *qirāt*" was mentioned first, then the warning was made stricter and two *qirāts* were mentioned.<sup>8</sup>

Other reports that are in line with this discussion narrated from 'Ali ibn 'Abī

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<sup>1</sup> al-Bukhārī, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'il: *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, 1987, Ḥadīth, 2145.

<sup>2</sup> Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Edt. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī), Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, n.d, Ḥadīth, 2978.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 3, Book 39, Ḥadīth, 515.

<sup>4</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 3, Book 39, Ḥadīth, 516.

<sup>5</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 4, Book 54, Ḥadīth, 541.

<sup>6</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth, 2978.

<sup>7</sup> Huda "Islamic View regarding Dogs" Retrieved from, <https://www.learnreligions.com/dogs-in-islam-2004392>, on the 11/05/2020.

<sup>8</sup> Ayoub M. Banderker "Dog in Islam" Retrieved from, [Dogs%20in%20Islam/Ddogg/Dogs%20in%20Islam%20\\_%20Animals%20in%20Islam.htm](https://www.learnreligions.com/dogs-in-islam-2004392), on the 5/05/2020.

Tâlib that the Prophet said: The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, another Ḥadīth narrated by Abu Talha that: The Prophet said, “Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or there are pictures.”<sup>10</sup> In addition to this the Prophet said: The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image.<sup>11</sup> Finally, it was narrated by Salim’s father that: Once Angel Jubril promised to visit the Prophet but he delayed and the Prophet got worried about that. At last he came out and found Jubril and complained to him of his grief (for his delay). Jubril said to him, “We do not enter a place in which there is a picture or a dog.”<sup>12</sup> The above narrations establish that angels do not enter a place where there is a dog. While Ḥadīth commentators have given various reasons for this, the central fact remains that angels do not enter such a place. Ḥadīth commentators such as al-Nawawī and al-Qari have also stated that despite the generality in reference to angels in these narrations, this refers to angels of mercy, blessing and forgiveness, and not angels that record deeds or remove souls. The Ḥadīth commentators have differed as to whether this applies to all dogs in general or whether there is an exception with regards to those dogs that have been permitted to keep. al-Nawawī has argued that this applies to all dogs and this is also the opinion of al-Qurtubī, while al-Khatābī, al-Qārī and others have stated that this does not apply to dogs that are permitted to keep.

Those who said that it is permissible to keep a dog to guard houses, alleys and the like argued that, dogs are loyal creatures that are deserving care and companionship. They cite the story in the Qur’ān, 18 about a group of believers who sought shelter in a cave and were protected by their canine companion who was “outstretched in their midst.” In verse 13 Allah says that they were good believers and that Allah guided them. In verse 18 Allah says that they had their dog with them. They argued that, if dogs are prohibited and dirty, would Allah speak of those dwellers of the Cave (who had a dog) as good believers? They further argued that, in the Qur’ān, it is specifically mentioned that any prey caught by hunting dogs may be eaten without any need for further purification. Naturally, the prey of a hunting dog comes into contact with the saliva of the dog; however this does not render the meat impure.

They consult you concerning what is lawful for them; say, Lawful for you are all good things, including what trained dogs and falcons catch for you. You train them according Allah’s teachings. You may eat what they catch for you, and mention Allah’s name thereupon. You shall observe Allah. Allah is most efficient in reckoning. (Qur’ān, 5:4)

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<sup>9</sup> Ibn Mājah, Muḥammad bin Yazīd: *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Edt. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī), Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, n.d, Ḥadīth, 3640.

<sup>10</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 72/833.

<sup>11</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth, 3322 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth, 2106.

<sup>12</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 7, Book 72, Ḥadīth, 843.

To the pro-dogs scholars therefore, if the dog is an animal which causes contamination by mere touch, would Allah said it is perfectly okay to eat what the dog catches with his mouth (let alone just touch the dog)?. And also, if it is not righteous to have dogs, Allah would not have said that story in which the dog has to be remembered as being there. They added that, there are also stories in Islam that tell of people who were forgiven their past sins through the mercy they showed towards a dog. They cited some following pro-dog *Ḥadīth*: Narrated by Abu Hurayrah that: The Prophet said: “A Prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it so, Allah forgave her because of that”<sup>13</sup>. In another *Ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayrah: that the Prophet said: “While a man was walking on a road, he became very thirsty. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank (of its water) and then came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself “this dog is suffering from the same state of thirst as I did.” So he went down the well (again) and filled his shoe (with water) and held it in his mouth and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him.” The people asked, “O Allah’s Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?.” He said, “(Yes) there is a reward for serving any animate (living being).”<sup>14</sup> In addition, it was narrated by ‘Adi bin Hātim that: I asked Allah’s Apostle about Al Mirad (i.e. a sharp-edged piece of wood or a piece of wood provided with a piece of iron used for hunting). He replied, “If the game is hit by its sharp edge, eat it, and if it is hit by its broad side, do not eat it, for it has been beaten to death.” I asked, “O Allah’s Apostle! I release my dog by the name of Allah and find with it at the game, another dog on which I have not mentioned the name of Allah, and I do not know which one of them caught the game.” Allah’s Apostle said (to him), “Don’t eat it as you have mentioned the name of Allah on your dog and not on the other dog.”<sup>15</sup>

From the foregoing discussions, there are two points of view. The first is that keeping dogs is prohibited save for the exception provided for hunting, herding livestock or farming these are the only three purposes exempt from the general prohibition. Therefore, it is not permitted to keep a dog for the protection of one’s house as the narrations in this regard do not provide an exemption for that. The provision to keep dogs also extends to other purposes where there is a genuine need, such as for the protection of one’s house.<sup>16</sup> The three exceptions

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<sup>13</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 4, Book 54, Ḥadīth, 538 and Volume 4, Book 56, Number 673.

<sup>14</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume: 8, Book 73, Ḥadīth, 38.

<sup>15</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume: 3, Book: 34, Ḥadīth, 270.

<sup>16</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl “Dogs in the Islamic Tradition and Nature” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, New York: Continuum International, 2004, 3-5.

provided in the sayings of the Holy Prophet are not exclusive, but are based on a common causative factor which is need. Therefore, where need exists, provision to keep dogs will be extended to include that. The view was classed as *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Nawawī and also classed as *Ṣaḥīḥ* by Shaykh Ibn Uthaymen. This paper therefore can conclude that, it is not *harām* to own a dog, though it is not hygienic to keep it in the house.

### III. Does Touching a Dog nullify Ablution?

There are differences of opinions among Muslim scholars as regard to the impurity/purity of dog saliva. Some said it is impure and therefore touching a dog nullifies Ablution, they based their arguments on the following *Ḥadīth*: Narrated by Abu Hurayrah that: Allah's Apostle said, "If a dog drinks from the utensil of anyone of you it is essential to wash it seven times."<sup>17</sup> In another tradition narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said: "The purification of the vessel of one of you, if a dog licks it, is to wash it seven times, the first time with soil."<sup>18</sup> According to another report by Muslim,<sup>19</sup> if a dog licks the vessel of one of you, let him wash it seven times and rub it with soil the eighth time. Based on these *Ḥadīth*, other scholars like Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah is of the opinion that: there are three views among the scholars on this issue:

1. That they are pure, even their saliva, he said this is the view of Malik.

2. That they are impure, even their hair. He classified this as the view of al-Shafi' and said it is one of the two views narrated from Ahmad.

3 Their hair is pure but their saliva is impure. This according to him is the view of Abu Hanifah and of Ahmad in the other report narrated from him.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, most scholars agree that the saliva of a dog is ritually impure. What the jurists declare is that, based on the reports of *Ḥadīth*, the saliva of a dog is unclean, and that the animal should not be in a position where it may pass in front of a praying person. This obviously refers not only to a *masjid*, but also to a house or similar type of place.<sup>21</sup>

The pro-dog scholars argued that, if the wetness of the dog's hair gets onto one's garment or body, that does not make it impure.<sup>22</sup> For instance, dog saliva

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<sup>17</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 1, Book 4, *Ḥadīth*, 172.

<sup>18</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Ḥadīth*, 279.

<sup>19</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Ḥadīth*, 280.

<sup>20</sup> Jesmin Jamar "What does Islam say about Dogs," Retrieved from, <https://www.quora.com/What-does-the-Quran-say-about-dogs>, on the 20/12/2019.

<sup>21</sup> Mufti Zubair Butt: *Islamic Rulings on the use of Guide-Dogs*, The Muslim Council of Britain, n.d, 2-5.

<sup>22</sup> Anonymous "Islam: Why is keeping Dogs as Pets Haram (forbidden) in Islam?, Retrieved from, <https://www.quora.com/Islam-Why-is-keeping-dogs-as-pets-haram-forbidden-in-Islam>, on the 20/12/2019.

touching a person or a person's cloths does not invalidate his *wudu* as it is not one of those things that break the *wudu*. They further argued that, the impurity is not in the dog in itself, rather it is in its saliva when it drinks from a vessel.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, if a person touches a dog or a dog touches him that does not mean that he has to purify himself, whether with soil or water. But if a dog drinks from his vessel, then he has to throw away the water and wash it seven times with water and the eighth time with soil, if he wants to use it. If he makes it just for the dog then he does not have to purify it. They intensified their arguments that, all of the above quoted *ahādīth* mention only licking of a vessel; they do not mention any other part of the dog, as impure. Moreover, the Prophet granted a concession allowing people to keep dogs for hunting, herding and farming. The one who keeps them must touch the wetness of their hair, just as in the case of mules, donkeys, etc. To suggest that their hair is impure when touching may not be true as this cannot be avoided by anyone keeping dog. Avoiding the touching its hair could impose undue hardship which is not the intentions for Allah's legislator.

This paper therefore, suggest that, to be on the safe side it is better, if a person touches a dog and there is something wet on his hand, or if there is something wet on the dog, to wash his hand seven times, one of which should be with soil. With regard to touching this dog, if there is no wetness then it does not make the hand *nājis*, but if he touches it and there is any wetness, then this means that the hand becomes *nājis* according to the view of many scholars, and the hand must be washed after that seven times, one of which should be with soil.

#### IV. Islamic Rulings on Buying and Selling Dogs

Regarding the rulings on buying and selling of dogs, there are also two points of view on it among Muslims scholars. The first is that buying and selling dogs is not permissible according to the following *Ḥadīth*: it was narrated by Abu Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī that, Allah's Apostle forbade taking the price of a dog, money earned by prostitution and the earnings of a soothsayer.<sup>24</sup> In another *Ḥadīth*, it was narrated that Abu Juhayfah said: The Prophet forbade the price of a dog.<sup>25</sup> Also, narrated from Abu Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī that the Messenger of Allah forbade the price of a dog, the wages of a prostitute and the fee of a fortuneteller.<sup>26</sup> Another *Ḥadīth* narrated that Abd-Allah ibn Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah forbade the price of a dog, and if a person comes asking for the price of a

<sup>23</sup> Ask Shaykh "Dogs Rights in Islam," Retrieved from, <https://blog.islamiconlineuniversity.com/author/askshaykh/>, on the 20/12/2019.

<sup>24</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth, 1944.

<sup>25</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth, 2083 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth, 2930.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph A Islam, "Does the Quran allow the eating of Lions, Dogs, Cats, Rats etc?," Retrieved from [www.quransmessage.com](http://www.quransmessage.com), on the 12/12/2019.

dog, then fill his hand with dust.<sup>27</sup> According to al-Hāfiz this *Ḥadīth* is *Ṣaḥīḥ*; it was classed as *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Albānīin *Ṣaḥīḥ* Abū Dāwūd.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Abū Dāwūd narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah said: The price of a dog, the fee of a fortuneteller and the wages of a prostitute are not permissible. Also, Abu Mas'ūd narrated that: The Prophet forbade the utilization of the price of a dog, the earnings of prostitute and the earnings of a foreteller.<sup>29</sup> Also, narrated by Abu Juhaifa that: The Prophet forbade the use of the price of blood and the price of a dog, the one who takes (eats) usury the one who gives usury, the woman who practices tattooing and the woman who gets herself tattooed.<sup>30</sup>

From the foregoing, Imām Shāfi'ī and Ahmad positioned that, buying and selling dogs is not permissible, even if they are hunting dogs, or used for farming or as shepherds. To keep one for these reasons is permissible, but buying and selling them and the revenue from such sales remains impermissible. They based their rulings on a text that orders to refrain from doing something is that the action is impermissible. al-Khattabe added that, the permissibility of making use of something in times of necessity is not something that proves the permissibility of its sale. This is like the meat of dead animals (not killed according to Islamic laws), it is permissible for someone to eat it under necessity, while its sale remains impermissible. Thus the price of a dog is among the most evil of earnings and is something vile.<sup>31</sup>

Those who regard it as permissible to sell hunting dogs quote as evidence the *Ḥadīth* narrated by al-Nasā'ī<sup>32</sup> from Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allah, according to which the Messenger of Allah forbade the price of dogs and cats, except for hunting dogs. Another *Ḥadīth* narrated on the authority of Abu az-Zubair, who said: I asked Jabir about (the ruling on) the revenue (from the sale) of cats and dogs. He replied, "The Prophet strictly forbade (zajara) that." It was collected by Muslim and an-Nasā'ī, who added that, "except for hunting dogs."<sup>33</sup> Due to this additional phrase "except for hunting dogs" the scholars concluded that it is permissible to buy and sell hunting dogs.

<sup>27</sup> Abū Dāwūd, Sulaimān bin al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī (1372 A.H): *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Cairo, *Ḥadīth* Number 3021.

<sup>28</sup> *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Ḥadīth*, 3023.

<sup>29</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume: 7, Book: 71, *Ḥadīth*, 656.

<sup>30</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume: 7, Book: 72, *Ḥadīth*, 829.

<sup>31</sup> M.S al-Munajjid "Keeping a Dog, Touching It and Kissing It" Retrieved from, <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/69840/keeping-a-dog-touching-it-and-kissing-it>, Retrieved on 10/06/2020.

<sup>32</sup> al-Nasā'ī, Ahmad bin Shu'aib al-Nasā'ī: *Sunan al-Nasā'ī al-Kubrā* (Edt. Dr. 'Abdul Ghaffār Sulaimān al-Bandāri and others), Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1991, *Ḥadīth*, 4589.

<sup>33</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book: 21.



## V. Islam and the Killing of Dogs

The killing of dogs is another area that scholars debated, some argued that, it is permissible to kill dogs based on the following *Ḥadīth* for instance, it was narrated by Hafṣa that Allah's Apostle said, "It is not sinful (of a Muhrim) to kill five kinds of animals, namely: the crow, the kite, the mouse, the scorpion and the rabid dog."<sup>34</sup> Another *Ḥadīth* by 'Abdullah bn 'Umar reported that: Allah's Messenger (SAW) 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.<sup>35</sup> Also, Abu Zubayr heard Gābir ibn 'Abdullah saying: Allah's Messenger ordered us to kill dogs, and we carried out this order so much so that we also kill the dog coming with a woman from the desert. Then Allah's Apostle forbade their killing. He (the Holy Prophet further) said: It is your duty to kill the jet-black (dog) having two spots (on the eyes), for it is a devil<sup>36</sup>. There are also *Ḥadīth* saying to kill all dogs except the ones used for hunting or guarding sheep.<sup>37</sup> As a result of these *Ḥadīth* it could be concluded that the killing of dogs is permissible in Islam.

However, the pro-dogs jurists rejected the traditions mandating the killing of dogs as fabrications. They based their reasons on the fact that such behavior would be wasteful of life. These jurists argued that there is a presumption prohibiting the destruction of nature, and mandating the honoring of all creation. Any part of creation or nature cannot be needlessly destroyed, and no life can be taken without compelling cause.<sup>38</sup> For the vast majority of jurists, since the consumption of dogs was strictly prohibited in Islam, there was no reason to slaughter dogs. They further argued that, as for the *Ḥadīth* that ordered the killing of dogs were only within the precinct and not a general command. The command to kill dogs has been abrogated.<sup>39</sup> It is said that the killing of dogs in general was abrogated to kill only the black dogs and then it was abrogated to not kill any dogs whether it is black or not. They therefore said that, dogs could not be killed for any reason.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 3, Book 29, *Ḥadīth*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 010/3811.

<sup>36</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 010/3813.

<sup>37</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 010/3812 and 010/3814.

<sup>38</sup> Religion News Service "Islam On Dogs: Can You Be A Good Muslim And Still Have A Dog?," Retrieved from, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/islam-on-dogs-can-you-be-\\_n\\_1885580](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/islam-on-dogs-can-you-be-_n_1885580), on 01/09/2019.

<sup>39</sup> Ahmed Shaaban "Is Keeping Dogs allowed in Islam or Not?," Retrieved from, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/general/is-keeping-dogs-allowed-in-islam-or-not>, on 01/09/2019.

<sup>40</sup> Abdul-Rahim Reasat "Is Killing of Dogs an Islamic Command?," Retrieved from, <https://seekersguidance.org/answers/halal-and-haram/killing-dogs-islamic-command/>, on

Furthermore, they affirmed other *Ḥadīth* stating that the killings of dogs have been abrogated except for the killing of black dogs.<sup>41</sup> Some of the narrations mention “the dog that bites indiscriminately.” Others said: “The jet-black dog.”<sup>42</sup> One can therefore infer from this that a wild-looking dog, or one known to be dangerous, has the greatest potential for distracting attention. Since they have argued that the *Ḥadīth* quoted shall not be used out of its context in the sense that the Prophet’s command to kill dogs refers to a very specific period in time.

The superstition about black dogs is not inclusive only to the Arabic culture. Throughout the history there have been many communities that discriminated specifically the black dogs and held them related to omens, evil spirits, or bad luck.<sup>43</sup> However, this paper suggests that, dogs are of two types: those which are permissible to be killed and those which are not to be killed. As for those which are permissible to be killed, they are the black dogs because they are regarded as devil and the vicious dogs because they are harmful. All other dogs are not to be killed. If these dogs are attacking the sheep and killing and eating some of them, then these are harmful dogs whose harm is to be warded off and they should be killed because of the mischief that they are causing. al-Bukhārī<sup>44</sup> and Muslim<sup>45</sup> narrated that ‘Ā’ishah said: I heard the Messenger of Allah say: “There are four (creatures), all of which are vermin and may be killed inside the sanctuary and outside: kites, crows, rats and vicious dogs.” With regard to dogs that are harmful because they are vicious or are predators or have rabies, and other kinds of aggression and fearful matters, there is nothing wrong with killing them in ways that do not cause harm to others that are not harmful.<sup>46</sup>

It is not worth to say that the owner of a sheep should appoint someone to guard them or a shepherd to look after them in case dogs attack them but that does not mean that it is not prescribed to kill these dogs, because they have got used to attack them and killed the sheep, the dogs shall be killed.

## VI. Ruling on praying in places passed by dogs

The anti-dogs and the pro-dogs scholars equally differ on whether the passing of a dog in front of a praying person nullify his *salāt* or not. The interpretation of the phrase “cut off the prayer” as used by the Prophet in a

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01/09/2019.

<sup>41</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 010/ 3813 and *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 16/2839 and 16/2840.

<sup>42</sup> Robin Pomeroy, “Dogs “unclean” and not to be kept as pets,” Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65I0M220100619>, Retrieved on 18/06/2020.

<sup>43</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth, 1829.

<sup>44</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth, 1198.

<sup>45</sup> Abu Amina Elias “Killing dogs in Islam?, Retrieved from, <https://abuaminaelias.com/is-it-permissible-to-kill-dogs-in-islam/>, on the 15/12/2019.

<sup>46</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4/1032.

*Ḥadīth* is the bone of contention. The anti-dogs scholars stressed that a dog spoils prayer based on the Ḥadīth reported by Abd ‘Allah ibn al-Samit said: Abu Dharr said: The Messenger of Allah said: “When one of you stands in prayer, what definitely constitutes a barrier for him is an object placed in front of him of the same height as the back of a camel-saddle. If it is not in front of him and of the same height as the back of a camel-saddle, then some (stray) donkey, or some woman passing, or some black dog will cut off his prayer.” I said: “O Abu Dharr! What is it that makes a black dog different from a red or yellow dog?” He replied: “O dear cousin! I asked the Messenger of Allah the exact same question, he said that the black dog is a devil”<sup>47</sup>. Another *Ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Abbas: Qatādah said: I heard Gābir ibn Zayd who reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas; and Su‘ba reported the Prophet as saying: A menstruating woman and a dog cut off the prayer.<sup>48</sup> Also it was narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Abbas that Ikrimah reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas, saying: I think the Apostle of Allah said: When one of you prays without a *sutra*, a dog, an ass, a pig, a Jew, a Magian, and a woman cut off his prayer, but it will suffice if they pass in front of him at a distance of over a stone’s throw.<sup>49</sup>

The pro-dogs scholars argued that, the passing of the above-mentioned in front of the person at prayer does not invalidate his prayer. They opined that the vast majority of the Imāms of Law, Salaf and Khalaf (early and late authorities) who concur that the meaning of “will cut off his prayer” is not literal but means: “will make his prayer imperfect” due to the distraction they will cause in people’s hearts. Though, Imām Ahmad considered that only the passing of a black dog actually invalidates prayer. This was mentioned by Imām al-Nawawī in Sharh *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and al-Mubārakfūrī in *Tuhfa al-Ahwadhī*.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that, Islam does not view women as impure or equal to animals; rather it believes that the beauty of a woman could be a distraction to a praying person like the beast could a distraction due to its wildness. It could be argued that mere fact that a dog passes through a place may not make the place impure based on the narration of the Prophet as contains in Bukhārī that Ibn ‘Umar said: I used to stay overnight in the mosque at the time of the Messenger of Allah when I was young and single, and dogs used to urinate and come and go in the mosque, and they did not sprinkle water over any of that.

They also quoted the *Ḥadīth* narrated by Hamza ibn ‘Abdullāh that his father said: “During the lifetime of Allah’s Apostle, the dogs used to urinate, and pass through the Mosques (come and go), nevertheless they never used to sprinkle

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<sup>47</sup> Abū Dāwūd, 2/0703.

<sup>48</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2/0704.

<sup>49</sup> Naveeda Khan “Dogs and humans and what earth can be” *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 2014, 4 (3): pp.245–264.

<sup>50</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 001, Book 004, Ḥadīth, 174.

water on it (urine of the dog).”<sup>51</sup> In another instance they referred to the Ḥadīth reported by ‘Ā’ishah: The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before her. She said, “Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people).” I said, “You have made us (i.e. women) dogs. I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in my bed between him and the Qibla. Whenever I was in need of something, I would slip away, for I disliked facing him.”<sup>52</sup>

There are also disagreements among the Muslims scholars as regard to dogs urinating in the mosque, some of the scholars believed that they did not actually urinate inside the mosque, rather they would come and go in the mosque and urinate outside. Others stated that this occurred before the ruling came that dogs are impure and it is necessary to purify (things and places) of their impurity. al-Hāfiz Ibn Hajar said: The most correct opinion is that this happened at the beginning, on the basis of the principle that all things are permissible (unless there is evidence to the contrary), then the command came to honour and purify the mosques, and doors were put on them.<sup>53</sup>

Also, according to Shaykh Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Mukhtār ash-Shanqīti, there are two issues in this Ḥadīth. The first issue is the coming and going of dogs. The scholar argued that by saying in the version of this Ḥadīth that mentions (the dogs) coming and going, it refers to them coming and going in the mosque. With regard to their urinating, that was not in the mosque; rather the coming and going was inside the mosque, but urinating did not happen inside the mosque. al-Hāfiz ibn Hajar referred to this in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.<sup>54</sup> But if it is assumed that what is meant is that coming and going and urinating all happened in the mosque, then it may be said that with regard to urinating inside the mosque, one of the following two scenarios must apply:

(i) It could be assumed that it is either the dogs urinated or the people were aware of where it happened; in this case we can conclude that dogs are not impure. The second scenario could be that the Prophet and the *Sahabah* knew where it was and prayed in the place where the dogs had urinated. However, there is nothing that has indicated this in the Ḥadīth.

(ii) The second issue that may bring out is that this might have happened before the Prophet (SAW) instructed people to wash a vessel if a dog licks it. This argument could be strengthened by the fact that the mosque of the Prophet (SAW) did not have doors (at that time). There is also a report from Ibn ‘Umar

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<sup>51</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Volume 1, Book 9, Ḥadīth, 490.

<sup>52</sup> Bassam Zawadi “Islam and The Killing of Dogs,” Retrieved from, <https://www.ask-a-muslim.com/en/islam-and-the-killing-of-dogs-by/>, on the 15/12/2019.

<sup>53</sup> Vera Subasi “Dogs in Islam” Master’s thesis, Wien University, Turkey, 2011, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

to which al-Hafiz also referred in *al-Fath*, which states that he paid attention to the mosque after that, and took measures to prevent dogs entering it. This proves that the later development was the Prophet's paying attention to the mosque. It may also be noted that the *Ḥadīth* that enjoin washing vessels if licked by a dog, were narrated by Abu Hurayrah and 'Abdullah ibn Maghfal who both became Muslim later on. Based on this, one can say that what is narrated in the *Ḥadīth* (about dogs coming and going in the mosque) occurred earlier on, and the instruction to wash vessels if licked by a dog is what came later.

## **VII. Can other means such as soap be used to purify the impurity of a dog instead of soil?**

Opinion of scholars differed on whether something else may be used instead of soil, such as soap or other cleaning materials to purify the impurity of a dog instead of soil. For instance, Imām al-Shāfi'ī was of the view that it is obligatory to use soil, and nothing else will do, because the Prophet mentioned soil specifically and enjoined using it. He added that, if something else is used instead of soil, such as potash (a substance used for cleaning in the olden days) or soap even if it is washed eight times. It will not be acceptable. He based his opinion on the fact that it is the way of purification that has been enjoined and nothing else can take its place.<sup>55</sup>

Other opined that, sand will suppress the bacteria that might have contaminated the vessel first because it's a physic washing, and then the chemical washing with soap and water can thus follow. It is noteworthy to say that science and Islam has always been intertwined; but since the former can change in theory, practical and discoveries, it can never over rule the later for that is ordained by Allah even if one do not understand yet. Hence, science must agree with Islam putting aside fabrication, superstitions etc in religious texts. However, one can equally postulate that the reason why the Prophet ruled on washing with earth (7times) is to ensure thorough washing and removal of these deadly germs. One can even say that he knew about these germs but might have being very hard to explain to his companions. Even the knowledge of these microbes only come some decades ago.<sup>56</sup>

In the view of a Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymen concerning the phrase "nothing else will instead a soil" consist of the following:

1- The Lawgiver mentioned soil in particular, and it is obligatory to follow the text.

2- Lotus leaves and potash existed at the time of the Prophet, but he did not

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

refer to them.

3- Perhaps there are some substances in soil that kill the germs in the dog's saliva.

4- Soil is one of the two things that purify, because it takes the place of water in the case of *tayammum* if water is not available. The Prophet said that the earth has been made a place of prostration and a means of purification for me.

Some pro-dog scholars asserted that soap or any other detergent or sanitizer can be used to wash vessel that has been licked by a dog. This according to them can adequately replace the seven times washing including with sand that the Prophet ordered in similar situation. They said what is most important is for the said item to be free of harmful germs. Imām Ahmad is an example of note in this regard. He said it is permissible to use something other than soil, such as soap etc.<sup>57</sup> Equally, some of the Hanbalits said that it is permissible to use something else instead of soil if soil is not available, or if it will damage the place to be washed. But if soil is available and it will not cause any damage, then it is not permissible to use something else. One of the proponents of this view is Ibn Hamid.

With all the aforementioned evidences by the pro and the anti-dog scholars, this paper therefore conclude that they both agreed that using of sand as prescribed by the Prophet is the best. However, one need to remind the pro-dog scholars that their excuse that how can ordinary sand that everybody stepped on be more secured than using soaps or detergent or chemicals? But they need to be reminded that just like performing *ghusl* with even a liter of water is best than swimming in a pool of water.

## VIII. Observations and Recommendations

From the foregoing, there are evidences that:

1. It is not forbidden to own a dog, though it is not hygienic to keep it in the house.

2. It is not forbidden to touch a dog. If the saliva of a dog touches someone or any part of once clothing, then it is required to wash the body part touched and the item of clothing touched by the dog's mouth or snout.

3. It is incumbent upon all Muslims who own dogs, whether for farming or work purposes or as pets, to provide adequate shelter, food, water, and, when needed, veterinary care for their dogs. Arrangements must be made, if one is going to be away from home, to have one's dogs taken care of as well.

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<sup>57</sup> Enza Ferreri "Islamic Dog Hatred & Animal Rights Activists' Silence," Retrieved from, <http://solsticewitch13.blogspot.com/2013/11/islamic-dog-hatred-animal-rights.html>, on 15/05/2020.

4. It is forbidden to participate in any blood “sport,” like dog fighting and trophy hunting.

5. A dog has its value but its value is not above humans. Muslims must value humans above animals. Unlike many non-Muslims who sometimes value dogs equal to humans and sometimes above Humans. For instances in the west some people value the life of a dog more than a Child. Many times one will hear women in the west praised for the large number of dogs they rear but they are looked down upon if they have many children. There was a bizarre incident where non-Muslims in the west left whole estates to their dog. What exactly is the dog going to do with millions of pounds? In the 90's, United Nations ran by non-Muslims was giving lots of meat to its dogs in Iraq whilst it was starving and preventing enough food going to Iraqi children as a result one million Muslim Iraqi babies died of Malnutrition. The USA secretary of State was asked why the UN dogs were getting so much meat and the Iraqi children so little meat. She replied that the UN dogs had a difficult job to do.<sup>58</sup>

6. The diseases that people may get as the result of going against shari'a by kissing dogs or drinking from their vessels before purifying them are many, such as pastorella which is a bacterial disease, the cause of which exists naturally in the respiratory systems of humans and animals, but under certain circumstances this germ can invade the body and cause disease. Another example of a disease that dog saliva could cause is a parasitic disease that affects the intestines of humans and animals, and usually affects the liver and lungs, the abdominal cavity and the rest of the body. This disease is caused by tapeworms, which are small worms 2-9 millimeters long, which are formed of three sections, a head and a neck; the head has four suckers. The adult worms live in the intestines of their hosts, such as dogs, cats, crows and wolves. This disease is transmitted to human who love dogs, when they kiss them or drink from their vessels.<sup>59</sup>

7. Dogs which are kept for a purpose, such as hunting, guarding cattle or crops are permissible. On the basis of this *Hadith* some jurists argue that the keeping of dogs as pets can be classified as makruh rather than haram, as the haram is absolutely prohibited without regard to whether there is a decrease in reward or not. However, the prohibition of keeping dogs in the house does not mean that dogs may be treated cruelly or that they should be eradicated. Referring to the following verse of the Qur'an, There is not an animal on the earth, nor a bird flying upon two wings, but comprise nations like yourselves. (6:38), the Prophet said, “If dogs were not a nation (*umamah*) among nations, I would have ordered that they be killed.”<sup>59</sup> (This was said by the Prophet

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<sup>58</sup> Samer Hijazi, “The Doggie Debate: Muslim Dog Owners Debunk Stigmas,” Retrieved from, [Dogs%20in%20Islam/Dogg/Dogs/The%20doggie%20debate%20%20Muslim%20dog%20owners%20debunk%20stigmas.htm](https://www.doggy.com/Dogg/Dogs/The%20doggie%20debate%20%20Muslim%20dog%20owners%20debunk%20stigmas.htm), on the 15/05/2020.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

following Jibril's remark that angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog).

8. If a dog is permissible for hunting purposes;; surely when the dog catches the prey saliva will go on the animal. Now if the saliva of a dog is so impure and 'dirty how are we allowed to eat what it catches?. As long as the meat is washed, and with cooking killing of germs

## IX. Conclusion

This paper has brought to fore the two opposing views of the anti-dogs and pro-dogs on the permissibility to keep a dog to guard houses, alleys and the like. It also delved on the impurity/purity of dog saliva, buying and selling, touching, killing dogs etc. The study therefore, revealed that, there are two points of view among the Islamic Scholars as regard to the keeping dogs as a Muslim. The study also point out that, it is not permissible to keep dogs except for hunting or guarding livestock and crops, and it is permissible to keep them for guarding houses if there is no other means of guarding the house. Provided that the dog has it is own space which does not overlap with human living spaces. For hygienic reasons, when an individual comes into contact with dog saliva, one needs to wash. Just because one does not keep a dog inside his home and doesn't drink after it, doesn't give him the right to neglect it, mistreat it or kill it. Owning a pet is a huge responsibility, which Muslims will need to answer for on the Day of Judgment. Those who choose to have a dog must recognize the duty they undertake to provide food, shelter, training, exercise, and medical care for the dog. Muslims are to recognize that pets are not there "children," nor are they humans. They should therefore, keep things in perspective. The Qur'an describes pious people who had a dog living among them, and dogs are loyal and intelligent creatures that make excellent work and service animals. It recommended that, one must be careful not to come into contact with the dog's saliva. And not imitate the *kuffār* by running with the dog or touching its mouth and kissing it, which causes many diseases. The diseases that people may get as the result of going against shari'a by kissing dogs or drinking from their vessels before purifying them are many, such as pasturella which is a bacterial disease, the cause of which exists naturally in the respiratory systems of humans and animals. Finally, Muslims must not let their misunderstandings about dogs lead them to neglect, mistreat, or harm them.

### **“A Debate on the Islamic Rulings on the Natures and Functions of Dogs in the Light of Hadith”**

**Abstract:** One of the most important and heated discussions nowadays is about the keeping of dogs as pets since Muslims differ from those in the western societies on the subject. The topic



is also a matter of controversy among the contemporary Muslims themselves. A search in Google or YouTube will show that there are hundreds of articles written and videos uploaded on the subject. The basic aim of this study therefore is to reconcile between the two opposing views of the anti-dogs and pro-dogs on the permissibility or otherwise of keeping a dog to guard house. It will also delve on the Islamic rulings on touching dogs after Ablution, buying and selling, killing dogs, praying in places passed by dogs and purification of impurity of a dog by other means such as soap instead of soil. This study will be conducted by purposefully collecting authentic guidelines in Islam such as Islam the Glorious Qur'an and Ahadith and exploring the view of Muslim scholars. Library materials books, journals, and Islamic manuscripts will be accessed. The study reveals that, there are two points of view among the Islamic Scholars as regard to the dogs as a Muslim. And it is permissible to have a dog for the purpose of security, hunting, or farming but to ensure that the dog has its own space which does not overlap with human living spaces. It recommends that one must be careful not to come into contact with the dog's saliva. And concludes that, Muslims must not let their misunderstandings about dogs lead them to neglect, mistreat, or harm them.

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#### "نقاش حول أحكام الشريعة في الطبيعة والوظائف: من الكلاب بين علماء الإسلام المعاصرين"

لملخص: واحدة من أهم المناقشات وأكثرها سخونة هذه الأيام هي الحفاظ على الكلاب كحيوانات أليفة لأن المسلمين يختلفون عن تلك الموجودة في المجتمعات الغربية حول هذا الموضوع. الموضوع هو أيضا مسألة جدلية بين المسلمين المعاصرين أنفسهم. سيظهر البحث في غوغوا أو يوتب أن هناك مئات المقالات المكتوبة في مقاطع الفيديو التي تم تحميلها حول هذا الموضوع. الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة هو التوفيق بين وجهات النظر المتعارضة من الكلاب المضادة للكلاب والمؤيدة للكلاب على جواز أو غير ذلك من الحفاظ على كلب لحراسة البيت. كما سيتطرق إلى الأحكام الإسلامية حول ملازمة الكلاب بعد الوضوء، والشراء والبيع، وقتل الكلاب، والصلاة في الأماكن التي تمر بها الكلاب وتنقية كلب النجاسة بوسائل أخرى مثل الصابون بدلاً من التربة. سيتم إجراء هذه الدراسة من خلال جمع أهداف لمبادئ توجيهية حقيقية في الإسلام مثل القرآن الكريم والأحاديث واستكشاف وجهة نظر العلماء المسلمين. سيتم الوصول إلى كتب المواد المكتبية والمجلات والمخطوطات الإسلامية. وتكشف الدراسة أن هناك وجهة نظر بين علماء الإسلام فيما يتعلق بالكلاب كمسلمة. ويجوز امتلاك كلب لغرض الأمن، أو الصيد، أو الزراعة، ولكن للتأكد من أن الكلب له مساحة خاصة لا تتداخل مع مساحات المعيشة البشرية. توصي بأن على المرء توخي الحذر حتى لا يتلامس مع لعاب الكلب. وتخلص إلى أنه يجب على المسلمين ألا يدعوا سوء فهمهم للكلاب يؤدي بهم إلى الإهمال أو سوء المعاملة أو الأذى بهم.

**عطف:** كمال الدين وألواني سليمان، "نقاش حول أحكام الشريعة في الطبيعة والوظائف: من الكلاب بين علماء الإسلام المعاصرين"، مجلة بحوث الحديث، المجلد الثامن عشر، العدد الثاني، 2020، ص. 41-57.

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