

# Islam Has a Problem with Dogs

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**Sniffer dogs sent to Egypt and Jordan** by the American government have been so mistreated or neglected that many have died, and the program to those countries has been suspended. The story is [here](#):

*The US has stopped exporting bomb-sniffing dogs to Egypt and Jordan after a number of animals died from mistreatment and neglect, US authorities said.*

*The decision, which is temporary, follows a US report released in September highlighting cases of negligence of dogs sent to Jordan, Egypt, and eight other countries.*

*Sniffer dogs are part of the Antiterrorism Assistance Explosive Detection Canine Program, which was established by the US government in 1983 to provide training and supplies to foreign law enforcement personnel.*

*A senior State Department official told reporters on Monday: "Any death of a canine in the field is an extremely sad event and we will take every measure possible to prevent this from happening in the future."*

*The official added the dogs "play a critical role in our counterterrorism efforts overseas and in saving American lives."*

*The September report, published by the State Department Office of the Inspector General, detailed unacceptable conditions in Jordan and included photographs of emaciated dogs and faeces-covered floors in kennels.*

*A follow-up report earlier this month found two dogs had died in Jordan of heat stroke and insecticide poisoning respectively.*

*And a CVC veterinarian said the lack of reinforcement training once the dogs settle in Jordan diminished the success rate of detecting an explosive to less than 50 percent, compared to about 90 percent when they first arrive.*

*It also found three out of 10 dogs sent to Egypt in August 2018 have died, but Egyptian authorities have not allowed US personnel to access the dogs or their kennels....*

The malign neglect, or even worse, the deliberate mistreatment of dogs in Muslim countries has its origins in a hadith in which the Angel Gabriel told Muhammad he would not enter a house in which there were "dogs or pictures":

**"Once Gabriel promised the Prophet (that he would visit him, but Gabriel did not come) and later on he said, 'We, angels, do not enter a house which contains a picture or a dog.'" – Sahih Bukhari 4.54.50**

But that was not enough for Muhammad. He went beyond merely avoiding dogs; he ordered that they should be killed:

**“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**

**There was one exception: dogs used for hunting or for guarding of herds [of camels] might be spared:**

**“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 for 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**

These hadith, nearly 1,200 years old, explain the attitude of Muslims today toward dogs. In the West, especially in the U.K., there are endless stories about Muslim taxi drivers refusing to pick up passengers who have seeing-eye dogs; Muslims on buses have gone into rages when passengers with service dogs came aboard, and even forced them to get off. In British hospitals, there have been reports of Muslims becoming furious at the sight of service dogs. Thus do three hadith, written in the early 9th century, affect the lives today not just of 1.6 billion Muslims, but also of the many non-Muslims among whom they have been allowed to settle. A blind man in London or New York can be told in the 21st century by a cab driver to get out of a taxi, AT ONCE!, with the service dog that he had managed to bring aboard, all because of some words supposedly uttered in the early 7th century in eastern Arabia.

A story that I posted here years ago conveys the scope of the Muslim hysteria about dogs. George Herridge, a 71-year-old blind Englishman and cancer sufferer, was asked to get off a bus because of the reaction to his seeing-eye dog by some

Muslim passengers. The driver told him to get off his bus when a woman and her children became furious at the sight of his guide dog. The mother flew into a rage and shouted at him to get off the bus.

Mr Herridge said: "Her child was kicking and screaming and someone on the bus told me her child was frightened of my dog. The driver said, 'Look mate, can't you get off? I stood my ground. I had not done anything, my dog had not done anything and I was getting off the bus for no one.'"

A day after the bus incident, an "Asian" woman began screaming "I don't like dirty dogs" at Mr Herridge in the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

A week earlier, he had faced an outburst from a Muslim couple at a grocery store. Herridge said he is unsure what had provoked these outbursts, but said he thinks some have come from "Asian" people [i.e. Muslims] and that it may be due to religious or cultural differences.

Yes, quite right. "Religious differences."

There have been many others with similar stories to tell all over the Western world. In Minneapolis, Somali cabdrivers have been known to refuse to pick up passengers with service dogs. In Paris, North African cabdrivers have been known to keep their doors locked when someone wants to climb aboard with his dog. In Germany, it is Turkish drivers who drive past would-be fares if they are accompanied by dogs.

Let's get back to the source of all this Muslim hysteria and hate about dogs.

Why should the Angel Gabriel have refused to enter a house where there were "dogs or pictures"?

That hadith represents an attempt to clearly distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims. "Pictures" came to mean any

representation of living beings. Icons, statues, paintings of living creatures, are all forbidden in Islam. But these are the very things – these icons, statues, paintings – not least of Jesus, Mary, and assorted saints – that were to be found in Christian households and communities. Gabriel, then, was telling Muhammad, and through him all Muslims, not to be like the Christians, but to forbid what they allow. And thus, for nearly 1,200 years, on the basis of that hadith, Muslims have both vandalized and destroyed hundreds of thousands of works of Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist art.

But why did Gabriel also refuse to enter a house that had dogs in it? And why did that prohibition then metamorphose into something far more terrible, going beyond mere avoidance of dogs, with Muhammad's command that dogs be killed? The reason, I believe, was again to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims – in this case, from the Zoroastrians in Persia whom Muslim Arabs conquered.

In Zoroastrianism, dogs are considered righteous, clean, and beneficial for human beings, who have an obligation to feed and care for them. Dogs are held in high regard for the aid they give to human endeavors, as well as because they are seen as having particular spiritual properties. The look of a dog purifies human beings and drives away daevas (demons). Dogs also have a particular link to the next world: dogs guard the Chinwad Bridge from Earth to Heaven, and Zoroastrians feed dogs to commemorate the dead. *Ihtiram-i sag*, "respect for the dog," is a well-known precept among Zoroastrians in Iran.

What better way for Believers to distinguish themselves from the Zoroastrians whom they conquered, then by mistreating, and even killing, the dogs that those Persian Unbelievers held in such high regard?

The fiendish cruelty with which, in Muslim Iran, Zoroastrians and their dogs are treated, have been described by the leading historian of Zoroastrianism, Mary Boyce:

*In Sharifabad the dogs distinguished clearly between Moslem and Zoroastrian, and were prepared to go...full of hope, into a crowded Zoroastrian assembly, or to fall asleep trustfully in a Zoroastrian lane, but would flee as before Satan from a group of Moslem boys...The evidence points...to Moslem hostility to these animals having been deliberately fostered in the first place in Iran, as a point of opposition to the old (pre-Islamic jihad conquest) faith (i.e., Zoroastrianism) there. Certainly in the Yazdi area...Moslems found a double satisfaction in tormenting dogs, since they were thereby both afflicting an unclean creature and causing distress to the infidel who cherished him. There are grim...stories from the time (i.e., into the latter half of the 19th century) when the annual poll-tax (jizya) was exacted, of the tax gatherer tying a Zoroastrian and a dog together, and flogging both alternately until the money was somehow forthcoming, or death released them. I myself was spared any worse sight than that of a young Moslem girl...standing over a litter of two-week old puppies, and suddenly kicking one as hard as she could with her shod foot. The puppy screamed with pain, but at my angry intervention she merely said blankly, 'But it's unclean.' **In Sharifabad I was told by distressed Zoroastrian children of worse things: a litter of puppies cut to pieces with a spade-edge, and a dog's head laid open with the same implement; and occasionally the air was made hideous with the cries of some tormented animal. Such wanton cruelties on the Moslems' part added not a little to the tension between the communities.***

Muslims no longer have the need, and haven't for centuries, to distinguish themselves from Zoroastrians, of whom there are fewer than 200,000 left in the world. Might there be a reconsideration of the hatred of dogs that Islam inculcates? After all, that hatred "harms the image of Islam and Muslims." Muhammad, in a hadith, having ordered the killing of dogs, made an exception for those that are used for hunting or as "guard" dogs. Perhaps many more dogs could be covered by that

latter exemption, on the not implausible grounds that all dogs nowadays, whatever other roles they may have as family pets, are also “guard” dogs. Merely by barking, dogs can alert their owners, or scare off intruders; they can also attack malefactors. Surely there are Muslim scholars who can fashion an appropriate justification for concluding that “whatever else they do, dogs also perform guard duty,” so as to allow Muhammad’s exemptions to become the rule.

First published in *Jihad Watch*.