



## Animal Rights in some Contemporary Scholars' Viewpoints

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**ABSTRACT:** Human is the greatest creature that has specific place and dignity and also different rights. Approximately, similar definitions on rights have been offered and different rules have been codified in the societies. But all of these rules are not for human and these rights cover broad scopes of human rights, animals, children, women and labors rights and etc. This paper tries to investigate the rights of animals in the works of some contemporary literary men.

**Key words:** animals rights, animal in Persian literature, contemporary literature

### INTRODUCTION

One of the important issues concerning to animals is their rights. Do only humans have rights? What is animals right?

#### *a. Definition of animals right*

According to the international documents, "the right of animal is branch of environmental rights that specifies duties and responsibilities of the governments and individuals concerning to animals and environment and on other hand, it depicts natural right of animals that has been stipulated for creatures other than human being and these rights are based on the animals natural behavior" (Hussieni, 2010:38).

#### *b. Animals rights in Islam*

Brief glance on Quran miracles and life of the prophets clarifies this fact that justice is one of the important moral traits not only among humans but also it covers behavior with animals and other creatures.

There are different miracles and narratives on the behaving with animals that could solve problems regarding to codification of the animals rights in modern period.

Imam Sadeg said: an animal has seven rights on its owner (Mogimi, 2008:12).

One day the prophet (peace be upon him) saw a camel that its knees were tied and there was a burden on its back. He asked its owner and said that this camel will complain on its status in resurrection day (Darbandi, 2007:37).

Islam has codified rules for supporting of the animals rights. By investigation on these rules we find that Islam respects on the animals and distinguishes animals

from other creatures and advises human to behave kindly with them.

All divine religions have had rules and codes proportionate with time but in Islamic jurisprudence numerous rules have been specified for preservation and using of the animals. These rules ban misbehaving with animals. There are rules in the Islamic jurisprudence that the governments are responsible for conducting them and the individuals have to observe these rules. In general, there are numerous codes for supporting of the animals rights (Darbandi, 2008:13).

The first sentence of Iran constitutional law is begun by this miracle:

Indeed, we have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help Him (His religion), and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty (Hadid:25).

Establishing justice and behaving justly among creatures require observing animals' rights in the environment (Hussieni, 2010:54).

The animals deserve to respect that constitute the foundation of animals rights where the owners of the animals are responsible for observing these rules. The miracles, narratives and philosophical and mystical issues depict that animals are creatures with souls that comprehend our behaviors. We have to observe their rights. Although, the human is superior to animal it does not mean that we can misbehave with them (Darband, 2008:12).

So, Islam defends the animals' rights and refers to supporting of the animals in different narratives.

*c. Animals as the food source*

We use animals as source of food while we annoy them. We can control some illness by eating vegetarian foods and in this case we could live healthy and meet our bodies' needs.

One of the common ways to usage of the animals is using them as the source of food. The animals used for feeding encounter with pain and they are treated by different hormones. Some of these animals die before arrive at slaughterhouse due to illness and pressure. The poultries and ostriches are shocked and soaked in the water connected to electricity or soaked in the boiling water to use as food. Pigs and sheep were hung and then beheaded while they are alive.

The dairy cows are treated with growth hormone to produce approximately 50 kilo milk a day that is ten times more than natural amount. They are also treated by antibiotics and these antibiotics are transferred to milk and then enter to foodstuff (Bekuf, 2009:24).

Feeding with meat and some meat products causes to some side effects and illnesses. We have not to feed on meat and animal products for nutrition and we can eat vegetarian food and have healthy body.

**A. Animals in the contemporary stories**

There are many stories about animals in contemporary literature. These animals are misbehaved or they are threatened by humans. I will refer to some of these stories.

Stories depict good and bad events of life. We get familiar with mental and psychical aspects of human being in the stories. Pain, happiness, wishes and goodness and meanness and all human traits are reflected in these stories and the stories transfer experiences that sometimes we encounter with them after several years (Hadad, 2009:5).

We are fascinated by fables and even most of the writers, mystics and philosophers have employed allegorical fables in order to transfer of their ideas. Usually, animals are compared by humanly characteristics. Some of them are good and some of them are mean and demon. For instance the innocent virgins are converted to pigeon, swan and rabbit and the mean people are metamorphosed to vulture, fox and wolf (Mirsadeghi, 2000:84).

Many writers try to be different from others by employing different styles. I refer to some of these stories and I began by the Story of Human and Animal by Sadeg Hedayat. This story is about the benefits of vegetarian food.

Do not prosecute the ant that carries the seed  
It has body and likes it (Firdausi)

Hedayat begins his book with this beautiful couplet. This book is about the human behavior with animals and animals rights. He expresses the ideas of philosophers about animals and refers to this subject that the animals can feel their surrounding events. The he refers to benefits of feeding vegetarian foods and finally, he emphasizes that the animals have rights and they should not be prosecuted. They also seek happiness and we kill them without considering their rights.

ShahriyarMandanipoor has beautiful stories on animals. I refer to two stories:

The animals are seen in the stories of ShahriyarMandanipoor and the attendance of the animals is similar to the role of the animals in the works of Chuback. It can be referred to stories of Wax and Honey and the color of evening sun and the story of Banu and Shadow of the Cave shadows that are related to the accompaniment of the animals and humans (Mandanipoor, 2007:23).

**B. Disappointment of the animals**

In this part I refer to some short stories that depict disappointment of the animals.

The story of "Offense" is the story of a squirrel that is expelled from the jungle because of offense to the lion and it could not find a place to live and finally, a cart rides over it and it dies.

In the story of "Pigeon: return to your nest", a pigeon seeks its mate everywhere and finds her flying with other pigeon and the disappointed pigeon kills itself.

In the story of "Mouse and closet" by IpramShahidi, a mouse wishes to escape from the dark and narrow closet and it digs the ground several days and when it cannot find the way it returns to the closet.

Abbass Hakim in the story of "pigeon" introduces the pigeons that they are anxious and they are threatening.

Examples of the stories of IrajPezeshniya:

He is one of the writers that his fables are famous. In the stories of "Rabbits" and "fly" he describes life as a dangerous hunting ground that the strong animals are waiting for weak animals.

"Rabbits" is narrated from viewpoint of two rabbits. He depicts his dislike of haunting in a beautiful and emotional scene.

In the story of "Fly" a dove is released from the cage and flies happily until night. It cannot find any shelter in the darkness and it wants to sit on a roof but it is afraid of cat and finally, it flies in the direction of wind by wishing to return to the cage.

Example of the stories of Amir Golara:

In the story of "The Goat" he refers to the story of disappointment of the humans in a fable that a goat narrates it: the goat thinks about life but it does not know that it is going to the slaughterhouse by the herd (Mirabedini: 1998:338-364).

In the novel of "City" by Gasemzadeh the birds are main characters. This story is similar to Logic of Birds by Attar. The birds begin to journey by guidance of a hoopoe and they encounter with unpredictable events and get in trouble.

The crow describes the beginning of the story: "At the first we were one hundred thousand crows or more. The field was filled with crows but the hoopoe said: there are one hundred thousand crows and I cannot to say anything. When we began to fly the sky was dark. There was no pioneer bird. Many birds tried to be head of the birds but they knew that it is useless. We could not be managed by hundred leaders. Some of them had claimed but they knew the truth (Gasemzadeh, 2001:12).

### **C. Dependency of the pet animals**

#### **Vagrant dog**

This is a story that SadegHedayat analyzes a dog and shows his sympathy on it. Pat is a dog from noble race that goes to meet its sexual needs and finally it is lost and he is offended by everybody. Indeed, the writer looks at the human life from point of view of a dog. In other story the fame of a monkey is narrated that its owner is trapped in the chain of determinism. In another story the fame of a dog is narrated that is disliked by everybody except a person who wants to protect it. In the fifth stories of the mourners of Bayal, Abbass protects a vagrant dog but the people of Bayal kill the dog.

The strong point of SadegHedayat stories is their good ending. In this story, three crows try to empty the eyes of Pat: three hungry crows are flying over the head of the dog. One of them came closer and sat and looked carefully when he was assured that the dog is yet alive it flew away.

"Its head was dazzling and it felt sever pain in its stomach. It had stomachache and his feet and hands were weak and its body was cold. In the evening, three hungry crows were flying over the head of the Pat since they had smelled it. One of the crows came and sat on its head carefully, when it was assured that it was yet alive it flew away. These crows had came to empty its eyes" (Hedayat, 1959:9).

The monkey that its owner died

The other story is by SadegChuback. The story is begun when the owner of monkey dies and the monkey is

unaware. Then it becomes aware although he misbehaved with it but it is sad since it was dependent on him. The monkey is scared of people and finally, it is released and leaves his body and thinks that it is free. But he is regretted and returns and sits besides its owner corpus.

"It wanted to get rid of its owner dead body and chains but it could not rescue. It was trying and its body was painful. He was chewing the chains and its mouth was bloody. It was crying. The people were moving and the hunters were coming and their axes were shining" (Chuback, 2012:83).

In the story of the lamenters of Bayal, Golam Hussein Saedi expresses the struggle between sympathy and violence of the people of the village toward animals. Abbass the protagonist is alone and unemployed and he only protects an old vagrant dog so that he forgets his life and preserves the vagrant dog. But the people plot to kill the dog and for implementing their plan they invite Abbass to the home of Ismaeil in order to talk about his marriage and at night the son of Mashdi Safar and the people of the village show their violence:

"The son of Mashdi Safar came forward and stand raised the pick and hit on the back of the dog. A loud sound was heard as a tree fell down then it was changed to dreadful sound that all people of the village heard that sound. He raised the pick again and hit again and there was no sound no longer" (Saedi, 1977:195-196).

### **D. Examples of torment of animals**

#### **Justice**

In the story a horse with broken hands and leg falls in the puddle and the people are surrounding it and they are indifferent and look at the dying horse.

"Vapor was coming out of its nose and body. Its ribs were seen under the skin. On its back and neck there was the trace of dried flowers burned on its skin. The skin of some parts of its body was pale. It was trembling. It never groaning and it was calm and it seemed healthy and looked at the people calmly" (Chubak, 1999:133).

#### **Cage**

In this story the hens and roosters are in the cage and they sometimes come out and one of them is captured and none of them protest and then they get accustomed and return to their animalistic life.

"The hen slept and then awaked and shook its body and went. It paused and then began to eat. Another hen was sounding. It sat on the ground and it was sacred. A dirty hand came and opened the cage and stole an egg and the other hens were looking this scene" (Chubak, 2011:79).

*The kitten with closed eyes*

The kitten with closed eyes is the story of a kitten that had trapped in a hole and a boy tried to rescue it. In the stories of Chubak the animals play an important role and they are sometimes minor characters and sometimes protagonists.

“At that moment a black and thin cat with fatigue eyes and with hanging skin came through the people who were looking the quarrel. At first it went to the chick and smelled it and then it jumped into the hole on the pillar and the sound of the kitten was stop” (Chubak, 1999:165).

*Quick walk*

In this story a mouse is trapped in the shop of Hydar and Hydar collect the people and everybody offers a plan for killing the mouse. Everybody tries to kill it in worst conditions while they could transfer it to other place and not kill it. But Hydar insists on killing of the mouse and finally they fire it and the mouse goes to the tank of oil. Chubak describes this scene well.

“The mouse ran way rapidly as comet in the sky at midnight and when they people saw it they ran. The mouse went quickly then it arrived under the oil tank and when it wanted to ran the tank was exploited loudly and the gasoline was poured on the head of people and shops and then the gasoline warehouse was exploded and the village was fired and the people ran away” (Chubak, 1999:99).

*Dying of an ass*

This is the story of an ass that is dying and it is fatigue of living and wishes to die and complains about tortures.

“It was trembling because of pain. It is the reward of the services on this ignorant creature. This is my last day and so I am happy. After living in hardship and bearing difficulties and hearing offenses I will be free. Here is Shemiran Street and an automobile broke my legs because of indifference of my owner. They pulled out my body after hitting me and left me. They forget they could use my horse shoe and skin. Perhaps they are disappointed. Finally, I must to die hungry since I am useless now” (Hedayat, 1955:67).

The other story of animals is the story of Ibrahim Golestan. He wrote this story in 1969 and it was published in 1995 in London.

“A rooster that was sounding in the house every morning threw its excrement on the goat that was respected in the house. Since the rooster is symbol of awareness and warns it causes to movement and awareness and this is the wish of the narrator. All member of the family ran to catch the rooster and the stones that they threw on the rooster hit the goat and the superstitious owner of the house wanted them to sound and walk like a rooster. Only a son who was blamed by

the master every day sat and moved the fan. Finally, the rooster was caught and killed” (Mirabedini, 1998:783-784).

The story of “short legged hen” by Najaf Daryabandari is about members of a house that live in misery and die in poverty and they torment a hen that the only animal in that house (ibid:399).

Mahmud Dolatabadi in the story of the “I missed Seluch” offers scene of fight between human and drunken animal. Abbass, the son of Morgan raised the camels and took the camels to the desert and hit Luk the drunken camel. The drunken camel took vengeance of Abbass and he was scared and jumped in to the well but the camel stood there and groaned. When Abbass woke up it was night and saw that the camel was standing there. He felt a snake moving on his leg, stomach and shoulder and neck. His hair became grey because of fear although he was rescued by he did not look like alive man (Dolatabadi, 1995:246-260).

*E. Depencecy on the animals*

In this story Chubak shows loneliness and dependency of the human that his pleasure is friendship with animals. “One night sleepless” is the story of a man that wants to sleep but the dogs of his mother that had killed in an accident do not let him to sleep and he thinks about them though he lives in misery. But the reader of this story feels sympathy with the dogs more than the man.

“He threw away the blanket and left the bed. He looked around and touched his hair. He put on his garment. The moon was shining and he had a light on his hand. The ground was dirty by melting the snows. He saw corpus of a dog that was bloody and its pets were sucking its cold breasts” (Chubak, 1999:58).

*Pigeon fancier*

Pigeon fancier is the story of a man that likes his pigeons and he never gets married. In some stories Chubak refers to animals for describing the life of animals and enters the reader to the world of animals.

“Palang was an agile bird that flew higher than other birds in the sky. The birds flew in the sky so that they were hit and fell down but then flew away and they were happy and Shokri was also happy. At once Palang flew toward the sun and Shokri was anxious. The sun was setting and the wings of the bird were shining. He knew that if the bird flew toward the sun it falls down at night. It was unique bird and Shokri was anxious” (Chubak, 2012:185).

In the story of the “Dog in the rain” by Nasim Khaksar, animal accompanies human and this story depicts sympathy and dislike of human to animal (Mirabedini, 2005:45).

The narrator with feeling of loneliness and bored wanders in the city that was raining for several days and he has no friend except a dog that is wet that doubles his feeling of loneliness.

### ***F. Example of human selfishness and discontent of animal***

#### *Green as parrot and black as crow*

This story written by Hoshang Golshiri narrates the attachment of the man to the parrot. One of the characters likes a parrot and wants to talk with it but every time that he tries to talk the bird sounds roughly and its feathers become black as a crow and he gets angry (Golshiri, 2003:305).

“The person buys a parrot to talk with it and spend his time with it not it cannot distinguish Bi Bi, Hussein, Hassan or Seyed Mohsen Razavi even if it is not the best parrot in the world” (ibid).

Nima Yushij employs fable elements in some of his stories and he transfers his allegorical messages by fables. Some animals are seeking water and they choose a duck as leader but gradually the duck becomes proud and finally a white duck comes and gives the animals glad tidings (Mirabedini, 1998:182).

Tuka in the cage

Tuka was looking over the tree. He got ready to fly and told: good morning dear. I am not discontent and I trapped due to my greed. Many people are trapped because of greed. Try to read yourself and do not need to me.

The owner of the cage said: no, come down and sing song here.

But it did not listen and flew away toward the mountains (Yushij, 2002:8).

Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh has a satirical story (Dialogue between two flies). In this story he criticizes the human proud and selfishness: One of the flies was unbeliever and the other was believer and they discussed about God and the universe and third fly that was mystic entered to their discussion. They were close to hit each other suddenly a mouse urinated and three of them were drowned. Finally, two ants ate their dead bodies and they talked about supernatural events (Javadi, 2005:297).

Jalal Ale Ahmad narrates the story of the honey bees in allegorical way. Ali Bak extracts their essences by difficulty and for protest the bees have to immigrate to other land.

Nader Ibrahimi tries to personify the objects and animals and offer social concept. In the story of the Big Family a bird in the cage describes his life for a hen that is killed soon (Rahbarian, 2011:20).

### **CONCLUSION**

There are numerous fables in the literature unfortunately due to the limitation of this paper we could refer to some of them. As we have rights and try

to defense our rights the animals have rights and we have to observe their rights. The mentioned writers have defended the rights of animals and some of them have expressed their opinions and some others have defended directly. Saedeg Hedayat condemns the humans to prosecute of the animals and offers his opinions in this regard:

Ass is used for carrying of load in Iran. It suffers from the wounds when it is hungry and it has to work all day long and it is only rewarded by offense and slaps. The people hit the dogs in the street and throw the cat in the well. They fire the mice.

The aim of this paper was to survey on the animals' status and their rights to prevent prosecution of the animals. They have rights and we have to behave kindly with them.

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