



Scriptural Reasoning and Animals

Introduction

The following text packs were created for a programme called Animals Across Traditions which was run by Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders. It took place in the summer of 2021 and was sponsored by the Ginkgo Foundation. The programme was organised by Dr Doaa Baumi and myself and consisted of a series of online scriptural reasoning sessions aimed at fostering dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

Scriptural reasoning is an interfaith practice which places each faith's scriptures at its heart. Participants are invited to respectfully engage with the scriptures of others, noticing places where insights are shared and differences exist across the traditions. The goal of scriptural reasoning is typically not reducing difference, but rather learning to disagree well. Participants often discover that they emerge with a better understanding of their own scripture through bringing it into dialogue with the scriptures of others.

A typical scriptural reasoning session consists of a member of one faith giving a short introduction to the scripture of theirs they have brought and then reading it in the original language and in English. Other participants are then invited to ask questions about the text and share aspects of it they find beautiful or difficult. After around a half an hour discussing one text, the process is then repeated with the other. In person sessions are often followed with by a meal. More information about the practice of scriptural reasoning can be found at the website: <http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/>.

The following text packs are supplied as part of the Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare resources for TEIs in the hopes that they will spur students and faculty to think about ways of incorporating interfaith dialogue into reflection around issues related to animals and animal welfare. Please feel free to make use of these text packs or to develop your own!

-Dr Joel Pierce



Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals Made for People & People Made for Animals

Hebrew Bible Genesis 1:24-31

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

English Translation: NASB

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ
בְּהֵמָה וּבְרֵמֶשׂ וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן

וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-
הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת כָּל-רֵמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ ו
וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדֹמוֹתֵנוּ
וַיְרְדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה
וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֵמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם
אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם

וַיְבָרַךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ
וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִשְׁתֶּהּ וַיְרְדוּ בְדִגְתַּי
הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל-
הָאָרֶץ

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב
זֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-
הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִי-עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה
לְאֹכְלָהּ

וּלְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל-
רוֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת-כָּל-
יֵרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן

וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב
מְאֹד וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי פ





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals Made for People & People Made for Animals

Quran

The Bee (16:5-8)

And the grazing livestock He has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat. And for you in them is [the enjoyment of] beauty when you bring them in [for the evening] and when you send them out [to pasture].

And they carry your loads to a land you could not have reached except with difficulty to yourselves. Indeed, your Lord is Kind and Merciful. And [He created] the horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know.

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ
وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ
تَسْرَحُونَ
وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا
بِالْغِيَةِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ
رَبَّكُمْ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ
وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا
وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animal Sacrifice

Hebrew Bible Exodus 12:1-11

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt. He said, "From now on, this month will be your first month. Each of your years will begin with it. Speak to the whole community of Israel. Tell them that on the tenth day of this month each man must get a lamb from his flock. A lamb should be chosen for each family and home. Suppose there are not enough people in your family to eat a whole lamb. Then you must share some of it with your nearest neighbor. You must add up the total number of people there are. You must decide how much lamb is needed for each person. The animals you choose must be males that are a year old. They must not have any flaws. You may choose either sheep or goats. Take care of them until the 14th day of the month. Then the whole community of Israel must kill them when the sun goes down. Take some of the blood. Put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where you eat the lambs. That same night eat the meat cooked over a fire. Also eat bitter plants. And eat bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat when it is raw. Don't boil it in water. Instead, cook it over a fire. Cook the head, legs and inside parts. Do not leave any of it until morning. If some is left over until morning, burn it up. Eat the meat while your coat is tucked into your belt. Put your sandals on your feet. Take your walking stick in your hand. Eat the food quickly. It is the Lord's Passover.

Translation: NIV

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר
הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֲדָשֵׁי
הַשָּׁנָה
דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בְּעֶשֶׂר לַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה
וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ שֵׂה לְבַיִת־אָבִת שֵׂה לְבַיִת
וְאִם־יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת מִהֵיטֵם וְלָקַח הוּא וְשִׁכְנוֹ הַקָּרֵב
אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת נִפְשֹׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֶכְלוּ תִּכְסּוּ עַל־הַשֵּׂה
שֵׂה תָמִים זָכָר בְּיָשׁוּבָה יְהִיָּה לְכֶם מִן־הַכֹּבָשִׁים וּמִן־
הָעִזִּים תִּקְחוּ
וְהָיָה לְכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה
וְשִׁחְטוּ אוֹתוֹ כָּל קֵהַל עַדְתֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין הָעֲרָבִים
וְלָקַחוּ מִן־הַדָּם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־שְׁתֵי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וְעַל־הַמַּשְׁקוּף
עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ בָּהֶם
וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה צְלִי־אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל־
מַרְרִים יֵאָכְלוּ
אֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נָא וּבָשָׂל מִבָּשָׂל בַּמַּיִם כִּי אִם־צְלִי־אֵשׁ
רִאשׁוֹ עַל־כַּרְעֵיו וְעַל־קַרְבּוֹ
וְלֹא־תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וְהַנֶּתֶר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר בָּאֵשׁ
תִּשְׂרֹפוּ
וְכָכָה תֹאכְלוּ אוֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֶם חֲגָרִים נִעְלִיכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם
וּמִקַּלְכֶם בְּיָדְכֶם וְאָכַלְתֶּם אוֹתוֹ בַּחֲפֹזוֹן כִּסּוּחַ הוּא לַיהוָה





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animal Sacrifice

Quran

The Pilgrimage (22:36-37)

And the camels and cattle We have appointed for you as among the symbols [i.e., rites] of Allah; for you therein is good. So mention the name of Allah upon them when lined up [for sacrifice]; and when they are [lifeless] on their sides, then eat from them and feed the needy [who does not seek aid] and the beggar. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may be grateful. Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good.

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ ۗ فَأِذَا جَبَّتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعَمُوا الْأَقْنَاعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ ۚ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

The Ranged Ones (37:107-109)

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. and blessed Abraham with honourable mention' among later generations."Peace upon Abraham."

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ
وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ
سَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

Translation: Sahih International





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals Communicating with Humans

Hebrew Bible
Numbers 22:21-31

Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite officials. But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat it to get it back on the road.

Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path through the vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat the donkey again.

Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff. Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"

"No," he said.

Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

Translation: NIV

כא וַיָּקָם בַּלְעָם בַּבֶּקֶר, וַיַּחְבֵּשׁ אֶת-אַתְנֹו; וַיֵּלֶךְ, עִם-שְׂרֵי מוֹאָב.

כב וַיַּחֲרֶ-אֵף אֱלֹהִים, כִּי-הוֹלֵךְ הוּא, וַיִּתְנַצֵּב מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ, לְשֹׁטֵן לוֹ; וְהוּא רָכַב עַל-אַתְנֹו, וּשְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו עִמּוֹ.

כג וַתֵּרָא הָאֱתוֹן אֶת-מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וַסִּרְבוּ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ, וַתַּט הָאֱתוֹן מִן-הַדֶּרֶךְ, וַתֵּלֶךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה; וַיַּךְ בַּלְעָם אֶת-הָאֱתוֹן, לְהַטֵּתָה הַדֶּרֶךְ.

כד וַיַּעֲמֵד מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה, בְּמִשְׁעוֹל הַכְּרָמִים--גְּדָר מִזֶּה, וְגְדָר מִזֶּה.

כה וַתֵּרָא הָאֱתוֹן אֶת-מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה, וַתִּלְחֹץ אֶל-הַקִּיר, וַתִּלְחֹץ אֶת-רַגְלָהּ בַּלְעָם, אֶל-הַקִּיר; וַיִּסֹּף, לְהַכְתֶּהּ.

כו וַיִּוָּסֵף מִלְאָךְ-יְהוָה, עֵבֹור; וַיַּעֲמֵד בְּמַקּוֹם צָר, אֲשֶׁר אֵין-דֶּרֶךְ לְנִטּוֹת יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאלוֹ.

כז וַתֵּרָא הָאֱתוֹן אֶת-מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה, וַתִּרְבֵּץ תַּחַת בַּלְעָם; וַיַּחֲרֶ-אֵף בַּלְעָם, וַיַּךְ אֶת-הָאֱתוֹן בַּמַּקֵּל.

כח וַיִּפְתַּח יְהוָה, אֶת-פִּי הָאֱתוֹן; וַתֹּאמֶר לְבַלְעָם, מָה-עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ, כִּי הִפִּיתָנִי, זֶה שָׁלַח רַגְלִים.

כט וַיֹּאמֶר בַּלְעָם לְאֱתוֹן, כִּי הִתְעַלְלִתְ בִּי; לוֹ יֵשׁ-חֶרֶב בְּיָדִי, כִּי עָתָה תִּרְגְּמִתִּיךְ.

ל וַתֹּאמֶר הָאֱתוֹן אֶל-בַּלְעָם, הֲלוֹא אֲנִכִּי אֲתַנֶּה אֲשֶׁר-רָכַבְתָּ עָלַי מֵעוֹדָךְ עַד-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה--הֲהִסְכַּן הִסְכַּנְתִּי, לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ כֵּה; וַיֹּאמֶר, לֹא.

לא וַיַּגֵּל יְהוָה, אֶת-עֵינָיו בַּלְעָם, וַיֵּרָא אֶת-מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וַסִּרְבוּ שְׁלֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ; וַיִּקַּד וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ, לְאַפָּיו.





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals Communicating with Humans

Quran

The Ant (27:18-19)

Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not." So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants."

Translation: Sahih International

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا
يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ
فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ
أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ
صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي
عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals as Signs

New Testament
Matthew 6:25-27

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Translation: NIV

Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν · μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε, μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε · οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστὶ τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος;
ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συναγοῦσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά · οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;
τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἓνα;





Scriptural Reasoning Across Borders

Animals as Signs

Quran

The Bee (16:66-69)

And verily in cattle (too) will ye find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it. And from the fruit of the date-palm and the vine, ye get out wholesome drink and food: behold, in this also is a sign for those who are wise. And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thought.

Translation: Yusuf Ali

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُمْ
مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا
خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ
وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ
تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ
وَأَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ
الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ
ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي
سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا
يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

