Dogs Bites in Children and a Spiritual View to Dogs
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In the United States, nearly 56% of households owned a pet in 2011 and approximately 70 million dogs lived during the same year. It is estimated that 4.5 million dog bites occur in the United States each year in both adults and children.1 The number of European fatalities due to dog attacks increased significantly at a rate of several percent per year. Children, including infants were common victims.2 Here, we present our observations about dog bites, taking a spiritual approach to dogs, and to draw attention to the importance of dog bites.

The vast majority of animal bites are caused by dogs (85–90%).3 Majority of dog bites incurred by children are inflicted by a family dog or a neighbor’s dog rather than by strays or by dogs whose owners were not known.4 In the series including 799 dog bites, the dog or the dog owner was known to the victim (55%) with bites from family dogs accounting for 33% and dogs owned by acquaintances of the victim accounting for 22% of reported bites. The majority of dog bites occurred in the property of the owner (53%).5 It has been reported that 69% occurred at a private residence or property in 4,958 dog bites requiring hospitalization.6 Morales et al7 reported that the dog bites including 206 cases occurred in the house of a third person (39%), on the street (33%), or in the victim’s house (27%). In 986 persons of dog-bite injuries, half (50%) of the bite injuries requiring hospitalization occurred at the street and a quarter (25%) at home; subgroup analysis by age revealed, that children in the younger age range were specifically found to have borderline significant higher incidence of dog bites that occurred at home.8

In our region, the vast majority of people keep their dogs in their yards and avoid living with a dog at home, because they believe in following Islamic teachings; therefore, majority of dog bites in children occurred outside of house and by stray dogs: The dog’s saliva, urine, feces, and other body fluids are dirty (najis).8 The cleansing of the utensil belonging to one of you, after it has been licked by a dog, is to wash it seven times, and using soil for cleaning at the first time.9 Whoever keeps a (pet) dog which is neither a watch dog nor a hunting dog, will get a daily deduction of two Qirat from his good deeds.10 Each Qirat is like the size of the (Mount) Uhud.11 The angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog.12 Angels do not accompany the travelers who have with them a dog.13 The reason why angels do not enter houses with dogs is because they stink and eat dirt. For this reason, the person who takes a dog unnecessarily was punished by being deprived of angels from entering his house.8 Nursi14 explains why dogs are adjudged dirty by Allah as follows: The dog has a few beautiful features such as loyalty and fidelity among all animals, and it has become famous for these features. Due to this beautiful morality, while it was worthy of being regarded as a blessed animal among people, unfortunately, it was regarded as dirty (najis), not blessed, among people. The reasons for this are because the dog has a high level of greed, it clings to the apparent causes with such care that it causes all its heedlessness from Allah, the real bounty giver. That’s why, knowing the mediatrix as an influential person, it took the word dirty as a punishment for the negligence it made from Allah, the real influencer, so that it would be clean. Because judgments, punishments, forgive sins. And it was punished by humiliation among people as a means of forgiveness for the sin of heedlessness.14

As a result, we would like to emphasize that majority of dog bite injuries in children are occurred by a family dog at home. So we strongly believe that the frequency of dog bites in children will decrease significantly when Islamic teachings are followed, that is, dogs are kept outside the home. More importantly, angels who always worship and glorify Allah will enter the houses when dogs are driven away from the house.

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References