

# Hunting of Animals

Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Baha

Partial translation



## Hunting of Animals

*"If ye should hunt with beasts or birds of prey, invoke ye the Name of God when ye send them to pursue their quarry; for then whatever they catch shall be lawful unto you, even should ye find it to have died. He, verily, is the Omniscient, the All-Informed. Take heed, however, that ye hunt not to excess. Tread ye the path of justice and equity in all things. Thus biddeth you He Who is the Dawning-place of Revelation, would that ye might comprehend."*<sup>1</sup>

**“Question:** Concerning hunting.

**Answer:** He saith, exalted be He: *"If ye should hunt with beasts or birds of prey" and so forth. Other means, such as bows and arrows, guns, and similar equipment employed in hunting, are also included. If, however, traps or snares are used, and the game dieth before it can be reached, it is unlawful for consumption."*<sup>2</sup>

"O thou who art voicing the praises of thy Lord! I have read thy letter, wherein thou didst express astonishment at some of the laws of God, such as that concerning the hunting of innocent animals, creatures who are guilty of no wrong.

Be thou not surprised at this. Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the interrelationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever. In the physical realm of creation, all things are eaters and eaten: the plant drinketh in the mineral, the animal doth crop and swallow down the plant, man doth feed upon the animal, and the mineral devoureth the body of man. Physical bodies are transferred past one barrier after another, from one life to another, and all things are subject to transformation and change, save only the essence of existence itself—since it is constant and immutable, and upon it is founded the life of every species and kind, of every contingent reality throughout the whole of creation.

Whensoever thou dost examine, through a microscope, the water man drinketh, the air he doth breathe, thou wilt see that with every breath of air, man taketh in an abundance of animal life, and with every draught of water, he also swalloweth down a great variety of animals. How could it ever be possible to put a stop to this process? For all creatures are eaters and eaten, and the very fabric of life is reared upon this fact. Were it not so, the ties that interlace all created things within the universe would be unraveled.

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1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 60

2. Baha'u'llah, Q&A No. 24



And further, whensoever a thing is destroyed, and decayeth, and is cut off from life, it is promoted into a world that is greater than the world it knew before. It leaveth, for example, the life of the mineral and goeth forward into the life of the plant; then it departeth out of the vegetable life and ascendeth into that of the animal, following which it forsaketh the life of the animal and riseth into the realm of human life, and this is out of the grace of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”<sup>3</sup>

“By this law, Bahá’u’lláh greatly simplifies practices and religious regulations of the past relating to hunting. He has also stated that hunting with such weapons as bows and arrows, guns, and the like, is included in this ruling, but that the consumption of game if it is found dead in a trap or a net is prohibited (Q&A 24).”<sup>4</sup>

“While hunting is not forbidden by Bahá’u’lláh, He warns against excessive hunting. The Universal House of Justice will, in due course, have to consider what constitutes an excess in hunting.”<sup>5</sup>

“... Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf has also indicated that, in an emergency, when there is no legal force at hand to appeal to, a Bahá’í is justified in defending his life. There are a number of other situations in which weapons are needed and can be legitimately used; for instance, in countries where people hunt for their food and clothing, and in such sports as archery, marksmanship, and fencing...”<sup>6</sup>



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3. Abdul-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdul-Baha, no. 137

4. Notes to the Kitab-i-Aqdas, No. 83

5. Notes to the Kitab-i-Aqdas, No. 84

6. Notes to the Kitab-i-Aqdas, No. 173