

Can we keep Dogs as Pets? Quran's Guidance

Why is it that dogs are considered dirty & unclean in the Muslim world?

Why as per most Muslims it is prohibited to keep dogs as pets, especially inside the house?

Why is it that a mere sight of a dog during prayer is considered to nullify a Muslim's supplications?

These and many such practices and concepts surround the issue of keeping dog as pets. But if as Muslims, have Emaan on Allah and Emaan on Kitaab, we know that the only Hikm - the only lawmaker, the only judge in matters of Deen is Allah. Therefore, all laws of Deen are mentioned in Quran.

[Quran 6:114] Shall I seek other than Allah as Hikm (lawmaker/judge), when Allah is the one who has revealed upon you this Kitaab (the Quran), fully explained? Those upon whom We gave the Kitaab know that it is revealed from your Rabb in Haqq (Absolute truth and justice). So never be among the doubters

Never be among the doubters is the last phrase of this ayah telling us in very clear terms that all laws of Deen, all rules and boundaries are mentioned in the Kitaab (the Quran) as Allah is the only Hikm - the only lawmaker the only judge in matters of Deen. Therefore, we look at Allah's word to seek guidance in this matter as well. All that have been prohibited considered Haram by Allah is mentioned in Quran in very clear and concise manner. Whatever is not mentioned as Haram is allowed and cannot be deemed haram as per Deen. Refer to the following Ayah

[Quran 7:32] Say, "Who has forbidden the Zyynat of Allah which Allah has produced for Allah's Aabid and the Tayyibaat from Rizq?" Say, "They are for those who have Emaan during the worldly life and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection." Thus do WE detail the Ayaat for a people who know.

Thus, one can not prohibit what Allah has not. All of Allah's creations and bounties are there as Rizq during the worldly life - that is ways and means of personality and character development. No one can prohibit, what Allah has not, not even our beloved Nabi Mohamad pbuh as Allah has even addressed him directly as follows

[Quran 66:1] O Nabi, why do you prohibit (made Haram) what Allah has made lawful (Halal) for you....

Prohibitions are those aspects of Deen, that are clearly and distinctly mentioned as Haram by Allah in Quran - For instance refer Ayah 7:33 which lists a set of prohibitions others than the food category. Whatever is Haram and prohibited in Islam, is clearly mentioned in Quran as prohibition; everything else is allowed. Hence if anything is not mentioned as prohibition in Quran, in specific clear words by Allah, then it is permitted and allowed. Allah does not need to highlight all that aspects which one can do; For instance, nowhere in Quran it is mentioned to fly a plane or to keep cats as pets is allowed or not allowed. Therefore, whatever is not mentioned as prohibition in specific terms is allowed. With regards to the Dogs, it is interesting to note that dogs are mentioned in the Quran 6 times, not just once, 5:04, 7:176, 18:18, 18:22 (three times). NO WHERE does Allah call the dogs dirty animals or give any indication that they should be avoided or treated the way many Muslims think they should. On the contrary there are two ayahs which needs our close study and considerations.

The Story of the Righteous People of Cave

The righteous and guided people of the cave are mentioned in the Quran in Surah Kahf - Chapter no. 18 and every time Allah insists on letting us know that their dog was there with them.

[Quran 18:18] You would think that they were awake, when they were in fact asleep. WE turned them to the right side and the left side, while their dog stretched his arms in their midst.

[Quran- Al-Kahf 18:22] They will say there were three, the fourth of them being their dog; and they will say there were five, the sixth of them being their dog - guessing at the unseen; and they will say there were seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say, "My Lord is most knowing of their number. None knows them except a few. So do not argue about them except with an obvious argument and do not inquire about them among from anyone."

As we can see, Allah is telling us in very clear and categorical terms that a dog was with them as their companion i.e., the companion of the righteous and guided people. Their story can be as complete without the mention of the dog as well. What Allah is telling us that these righteous people were in the cave with their dog, and the most important aspect of the story is that the Allah and Allah's powers the angles were looking after those people in the cave during their sleep by moving them right and left (18:18), on the contrary many Muslims have a completely wrong concept that angles cannot come near or inside the house in the presence of a dog. If it is not righteous to have dogs, Allah would not have told us that story in which the dog has to be remembered as being there.

Permission to eat Animal Caught by a Hunting Dog

As we all know as Muslims, we are not allowed to eat any dead animal which has already died but in Surah al-Maidah 5:4 Allah says if your hunting dog catches something for you, eat it.

[Quran 5:04] They ask you, what has been made lawful for them. Say, "Lawful for you are Tayyibaat (Good, lawful, pleasant and desirable) and what you have trained of your dog which you train as Allah has taught you. So eat of what they catch for you, and mention the name of Allah upon it, and fear Allah." Indeed, Allah is precise in account.

In the above ayah Allah did not mentioned weather the animal caught by the Dog through dog's mouth is dead or not, it means that the trained dog has been considered similar as if a human killed an animal. Even if that animal is dead which was hunted by the dog, has the dog's saliva all over it; instead of a dead animal being haram under normal circumstances, since now, it is hunted by our trained dog, it is made halal by Quran. Therefore, contrary to the general Muslim perception of a dog being Najis, dirty or impure, in this case, a hunted animal by the dog is now being made allowed and permitted only because it is hunted by a trained dog with dog's saliva all over it. In respect of hunting animal for food, a trained dog is considered as human by the Quran and therefore the dog's hunt is made halal for us as humans. This concept is very similar to a trained police Dog considered as a police officer and get similar respect and badges same as a human police officer. There is no ayah in Quran which talks anything negatively about Dog let alone prohibiting it or terming it haram as a pet to be kept in houses. As per Quran in light of all the ayahs about dogs, dogs are supposed to be used by Muslims as a pet - as man's best and most loyal friend.

Role of Hadith in Matters of Deen and Keeping Dog as pets

First and foremost, all the rules as per Deen is mentioned in Quran. Since Allah is the only Hikm, the only lawmaker, the only judge in matters of Deen, whatever Allah has ordained for us, is mentioned in Quran. Thus if anything is mentioned as a law, has to be as per Quran. If there is no prohibition to keep dogs as pets in Quran, we cannot take the law, any new

ruling outside of Quran. The purpose of hadith is to provide more explanation, if needed, in respect of any ayah in Quran; it is NOT to give us any new law, any new rule of Deen.

Secondly, we need to realize that Allah's Rasool would never go against Quran. Any hadith, that contradicts the Quran, cannot and must not be relied upon or believed to be authentic. Any hadith that falsely attributed to the Nabi Muhammad PBUH, anything that contradicts Quran cannot be authentic, as our beloved Nabi or any Rasool of Allah for that matter can never go against Allah. A Nabi or a Rasool would always be living example of the Quran itself and can never say anything which contradicts the Divine guidance. Does it really make sense then that Muhammad PBUH, or any messenger of Allah would place prohibitions on these loving creatures when Allah has not mentioned them as prohibited in Quran?

Therefore, when Quran says in Surah Maidah, that it is permitted to eat an animal hunted by your dog, how can we as Muslims, with firm Emaan on Allah, Allah's Kitaab and Allah's Rasool & Nabi would believe such an hadith that says that "anything a dog touches must be washed seven times, once with dust and 6 times with water?" This is inconsistent with the Quran's instruction. Similarly keeping in mind, the story of the righteous and guided people of cave with dogs as their companion, as their partner, who were looked after by Allah's Malaik during their sleep in the presence of a dog, how can we as Muslims believe the hadith which tells us that angels won't enter a room where there is a dog? It means that for several hundreds of years these sleepers were in the cave, and no angel ever entered? Yet Allah says "We turned them...." This clearly indicates the participation of Allah's Malaik. There is absolutely no reason to mention the dog as part of this story, except to make it clear to future generations that dogs are permitted to live among people, right "in their midst." And this clearly shows that the dog was counted right along with the Momineen and the righteous people.

Dogs as Man's Best Friends

Dogs are wonderful creatures of Allah. They bond with humans, protect them and serve them. Allah has given dogs qualities that make perfect companions and helpmates for humans. The fact that dogs like to be around people and like to please them makes them Man's best friends; easy to breed for specific characteristics and to train for a variety of wonderful jobs. In addition to being companions, dogs perform a vast array of jobs for us- Some dogs have a natural desire to protect. Dogs are excellent herders and guards of sheep and cattle as well as they are wonderful in searches and rescue efforts. Police and the military frequently make use of this attributes, using German Shepherds, Dobermans and Rottweilers in their work. We as mankind have come to rely on the dog more for companionship and affection than anything else. And out of that has come the use of dogs as eyes, ears, arms and legs for the disabled. To watch a seeing-eye dog guide a blind person down a busy street or through a crowded mall is a truly inspiring sight. It allows freedom and independence that this person would not otherwise have. For a deaf person, a hearing-ear dog allows him or her to live alone without fear. The dog can be taught to alert his owner to the doorbell, telephone, alarm clock, and smoke alarm. A deaf couple can respond to their baby crying, for the dog will alert them. The world is not so frightening and they do not feel so alone, with a dog being their companion. For someone in a wheelchair, or someone whose arthritis won't allow them to bend or lift, a dog can provide so much help and comfort. The simple act of picking up a dropped object is something we take for granted. But to a disabled person, it might mean the humiliation of always having to ask for help. With a service dog by the person's side, that same person achieves independence and self-esteem.

We hope and pray that this huge wall of misconceptions that have been built over years of fabricating stories and lies in the name of Allah, Nabi and the Deen; built between us as Muslims and Man's best friends as dog; be shattered and better sense prevails. This is in your hands as a Muslim, a bare minimum duty - Pick up Quran by yourself and hear the words of Allah rather than relying on anyone else. Read and see for yourself and realize why dogs are called man's best friends.