281587 - Ruling on tethering animals and detaining them in order to feed them and fatten them

the question

We work with livestock, fattening bulls. If we leave the bulls in the field to walk and play, then no matter what we feed them they will not grow as fat as bulls that are tethered. Personally, I do not tether the bull because I feel sorry for it, and because I regard that as torturing the animal. As for my relatives, all of them tether the livestock, and they laugh at me and say: Why are you so emotional and forbid what Allah has permitted? If that was prohibited, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would have forbidden it. So what is the ruling on tethering bulls to fatten them for 5 or 6 [days] or more, so that a single bull will be 90 centimetres or less, and that the animal cannot scratch itself or drive away flies from itself, and for all that time it cannot move. It is for this reason that sometimes its legs become swollen.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is not permissible to torture or harm animals, such as detaining them and not feeding them, or hitting them unnecessarily, or branding them on the face, because of the prohibition in the religious texts on doing such things, as in the hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “A woman entered Hell because of a cat that she detained, and did not feed it or let it loose to eat from the vermin of the earth, until it died.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3140; Muslim, 2242.

According to a version narrated by al-Bukhari: “A woman was punished because of a cat that she detained until it died of hunger, and she entered Hell because of it.” And he said: “Allah knows

best. Allah said (to the woman): You gave it neither food nor water when you detained it, and you did not let it loose to eat from the vermin of the earth."

What is meant by the vermin of the earth is insects and pests.

It was narrated from Jaabir ibn 'Abdullah (may Allah have mercy on him) from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he forbade capturing any animal for the purpose of killing it (for sport). Narrated by Muslim (1959).

What is meant by killing it for sport is detaining it until it dies or shooting it with arrows and the like.

It was also narrated from him (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade striking on the face or branding on the face. Narrated by Muslim, 2116.

And it was narrated from him (may Allah be pleased with him) that a donkey that had been branded on the face passed by the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he said: "May Allah curse the one who branded him." Narrated by Muslim, 2117.

From the hadith about the cat, it may be understood that if animals are detained and fed, there is nothing wrong with that.

Al-'Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: From this it is understood that simply tying up an animal that is owned by someone is not prohibited, because condemnation only applies to not feeding animals or letting them loose to find food themselves.

An-Nawawi said: This indicates that it is prohibited to kill cats and it is prohibited to detain them without giving them food or drink.

End quote from *Tarh at-Tathrib*, 8/243.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: From this hadith it is understood that if animals are given sufficient food and drink, then there is nothing wrong with [detaining them].

That includes birds that are kept in cages, if they are given food and drink in sufficient amounts, and they are protected from heat and cold, then there is nothing wrong with that.

But if they are not given sufficient food and drink, and they die because of that, then the person who does that will be punished for it.

End quote from *Sharh Riyad as-Salihin*, 6/293.

Secondly:

There is nothing wrong with tethering animals if they are fed, and tethering them is not regarded as torturing them. The Muslims have always tethered their animals in order to protect them and for other reasons without anyone criticizing them. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) tethered Buraq, as Muslim (162) narrated from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Al-Buraq – which is a tall white beast, bigger than a donkey and smaller than a mule, whose stride reaches as far as he can see – was brought to me and I rode it until I reached Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). There I tethered it to the ring which was used by the Prophets, and I entered the mosque."

At-Tirmidhi (2517) narrated that Anas ibn Malik said: A man said: O Messenger of Allah, should I hobble it [my camel] and put my trust in Allah, or should I let it loose and put my trust in Allah? He said: "Hobble it and put your trust in Allah." Al-Albani classed it as authentic.

It says in *Mukhtar as-Sihah*, p. 215: What is meant by hobbling the camel is tying up one of its forelegs with a rope [so that it cannot stray]. End quote.

This indicates that it is permissible to tether animals.

This tethering does not harm the animal and does not prevent it from driving off flies or scratching its skin, because it drives away flies with its tail and it scratches its skin on the walls and the like that are around it.

But if we assume that someone ties the rope on the animal too tightly when tethering it, to the

extent that he harms it, then he should be advised to loosen the rope a little, and to avoid harming and hurting the animal as much as possible.

And Allah knows best.