

316965 - Ruling on keeping a seizure alert service dog

the question

I have epilepsy. Is it permissible for me to keep a dog that could help disperse electrical charge from the head and detect an imminent seizure. Please note that I sometimes get seizures in the bathroom.

Summary of answer

There is nothing wrong with you keeping a dog for the purpose mentioned (to alert its owner that a seizure is imminent), whilst taking precautions to avoid getting the impurity of its saliva on your body, clothes and so on, as much as possible.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to heal you, grant you well-being, and reward you.

We have come across articles which talk about dogs being able to detect that a seizure is imminent, but we have not come across anything about the issue of dispersing electrical charge from the head.

Secondly:

It should be understood that the basic principle is that it is forbidden to keep a dog except in the cases where a concession is granted according to Islamic teachings, because of the report

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narrated by al-Bukhaari (2145) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever keeps a dog, a qiraat will be deducted from [the reward for] his good deeds every day, except a dog for farming or guarding livestock."

Muslim (2974) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever keeps a dog that is not a dog for hunting or guarding livestock or land, two qiraats will be deducted from his reward every day."

If keeping the dog is deemed to be permissible, it does not prevent the angels from entering the house.

A number of scholars granted concessions allowing the keeping of dogs for specific purposes, by analogy with what is mentioned in the hadith text.

Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There is a difference of opinion concerning the permissibility of keeping dogs for any purpose other than these three, such as protecting houses and roads. The view that is likely to be correct is that it is permissible, by analogy with these three, based on the reason that may be understood from the hadith, which is necessity.

End quote from Sharh Muslim (10/236).

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Also included in the meaning of this hadith – in my view – is the permissibility of keeping dogs for all beneficial purposes and for warding off harm, if a person needs to do that.

End quote from at-Tamheed (14/219).

In the case of this woman, keeping this trained dog – if she has no one who can serve her, take care of her and protect her – is undoubtedly a stronger reason for it being permissible to keep it

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than guarding crops and livestock.

Shaykh Yoosuf ibn 'Abd al-Haadi said, quoting one of the scholars: Undoubtedly the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave permission to keep hunting dogs in several hadiths, and he stated that keeping a hunting dog does not detract from a person's reward. In other hadiths, he gave permission to keep dogs for guarding livestock, sheepdogs and dogs for guarding crops. Thus it is known that the reason for permitting the keeping of dogs is the purpose for which they are kept, and rulings are based on their reasons and whether the reason is present or absent. If there is an interest to be served, it is permissible to keep a dog; furthermore, some purposes and reasons are more important and greater than the purpose of guarding crops, and some reasons are equal to those mentioned by the Lawgiver. Undoubtedly fruits come under the same heading as crops, and cattle come under the same heading as sheep; the same may be said with regard to chickens and geese - to ward off foxes from them - so they come under the same heading as sheep. Undoubtedly fear of harm from thieves, and keeping a dog to warn and alert one to their approach is an even greater reason. The Lawgiver pays attention to interests and benefits, and to warding off harm. But when there is no benefit or interest to be served, then keeping a dog is regarded as problematic.

End quote from al-Ighraab fi Ahkaam al-Kilaab (p. 106, 107).

Based on that:

There is nothing wrong with you keeping a dog for the purpose mentioned, whilst taking precautions to avoid getting the impurity of its saliva on your body or clothes, and so on, as much as possible.

We ask Allah to heal you and to grant you relief and a way out.

And Allah knows best.