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Is it permissible to buy and sell cats and kittens?

THE QUESTION

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THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE

It is permissible to buy and sell domestic cats and their kittens. The animal being sold must have some benefit that the Shariah recognises, such as catching mice, even if that benefit will only come later. A wild cat may be sold only if it has such a benefit and the seller is actually able to hand it over.

Tuhfat al-Muhtaj states that birds valued for their song or their colouring may be sold, even when their price is higher because of it. By the same reasoning, cats that fetch a higher price because of their beauty may also be sold. (See Tuhfat al-Muhtaj 4/238, al-Majmu' 9/229, and Sharh Sahih Muslim 10/233.)

Separating the young of any animal, cats included, from its mother before it is weaned, and selling it, is haram, and such a sale is invalid. Once the young animal has been weaned, it may be separated, but doing so without a genuine need is makruh. (See Tuhfat al-Muhtaj 4/321.)

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