

## Concerning a woman's Mahr (Dowry)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Questioner:** I and many others have observed that many people are very excessive when it comes to the matter of the mahr (wedding dowry that is paid to the bride), and that they seek great amounts of mahr when it comes to the marriage of their daughters, and they stipulate as a condition the giving of other gifts to them, along with the mahr. This wealth that people demand in such cases, is it Halaal (lawful) or Haraam (unlawful)?

**Shaykh Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz** (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)<sup>1</sup>: What is prescribed in the Sharee'ah is that the mahr should be a small amount and that people should not compete with each other in this regard, acting in accordance with the many ahaadeeth which are related about this. They should also help facilitate marriages and be keen in preserving the modesty and decency of the young Muslim men and women. And it is not permissible for the awliyaa (guardians of the brides-to-be) to demand and stipulate gifts for themselves, since they have no right at all in this matter. Rather the right belongs to the woman, and in some particular cases to the father. He may stipulate a condition as long as it does not harm the daughter, nor lead to the delaying of the marriage. However, if the father forgoes such a right then this is better and more preferable. Allaah – the One free from all defects – says: "**And marry those amongst you who are single and also marry the pious of your male and female slaves. If they be poor, Allaah will enrich them out of His Bounty.**"<sup>2</sup>

In the hadeeth of 'Uqbah ibn 'Aamir radiiallaahu 'anhu, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "**The best dowry is that which is easy.**" This was narrated by Aboo Daawood and al-Haakim who authenticated it. And once a woman offered herself to the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam for marriage. However, one of his Companions desired to marry her, so the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said [regarding the mahr]: "**Bring something, even if it be an iron ring.**" So when he could not find even this, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam married them for the dowry that the man would teach whatever of the Qur'aan he knew to her.

And the dowry of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam's wives was five-hundred dirhams, which is equivalent to one-hundred and thirty riyaaals today. And his daughters were married

<sup>1</sup> (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

<sup>2</sup> Soorah an-Noor 24:32

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for the mahr of four-hundred dinaars, which is equivalent to one-hundred riyals today. Allaah – the Most High – said: "**Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a most beautiful example to follow.**"<sup>3</sup>

So whenever the difficulties relating to marriage are lightened, then preserving the modesty and decency of young men and women becomes easier, shameful and evil deeds decrease, and the Ummah – as a result – will increase in number. However if this matter is made difficult, and people continue competing with each other with regards to the mahr (dowry), then the number of marriages will decrease, fornication will become more widespread and more young men and women will remain unmarried – except those whom Allaah saves.

So my sincere advice to all the Muslims, wherever they may be, is to facilitate the marriage process and to cooperate in this and make it easy. They should turn away from demanding excessive mahr and avoid unnecessary hardships and difficulties in the waleemah (wedding-feast). Rather, they should content themselves with a waleemah that is according to the Sharee'ah, in which the burdens and difficulties for the husband and wife are minimal. May Allaah improve and rectify all the affairs of the Muslims and may He give them the guidance and ability to cling to the Sunnah (Prophetic guidance) in all matters.

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<sup>3</sup> Soorah al-Ahzaab 33:21