

The second question of Fatwa no. 3773

Q 2: Is it permissible in Islam for a man to marry his daughter off without receiving a Mahr (mandatory gift to a bride from her groom)?

A: The basic principle is that the Mahr is a compulsory part of an Islamic marriage contract. We know of no proof indicating that it is a fixed amount. Rather, the incidents that occurred during the Prophet's lifetime indicate that it varies according to the circumstances of the husband. It was narrated in Musnad (Hadith compilation) Ahmad and Sunan Al-Tirmidhy that the Mahr can be a pair of shoes. It was reported in Musnad Ahmad and Sunan Abu Dawud that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

If a man gives a woman a handful of food as Mahr, she becomes his lawful wife.

It was reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and in other books on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him):

The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw traces of yellow (color) on the hand of `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, "What is this (color)?" He replied, "I got married, paying a gold piece equal to the weight of a date-stone as Mahr. The Prophet said, may Allah bless you! Give Walimah (wedding dinner), even if with one sheep.

It also was narrated in the Two Sahih and in other books on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa`d that:

A woman came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have come to give myself (in marriage) to you.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) paused and thought for long time. A man from among the attendants said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if you are not interested in her, then marry her to me.' He said, 'Do you have anything to give her as Mahr?' The man said, 'I have nothing except my garment.' The Prophet said, 'If you give it to her, you will find nothing to wear'. He said, 'Go and see if you can find anything.' So the man went, then he came back and said, 'I could not find anything.' The Prophet said, 'Do you know any part of the Qur'an?' He said, 'Surah such-and-such and Surah such-and-such.' The Prophet said, 'Then go, you are married to her by what you know of the Qur'an.' (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

In another agreed upon narration:

I let you marry her for that much of the Qur'an which you know.

In another wording in the two Sahih of the Hadith reported by Sahl ibn Sa`d Al-Sa`idy (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the suitor of this woman:

See (if you can find anything), even if it is only an iron ring.

Accordingly, we know that Mahr, even if it is little, is essential for marriage. Proof is provided by Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) who says concerning marriage:

All others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property.

However, the marriage is still valid even if the Mahr is not stated. In such a case, the woman is entitled to a Mahr like that of her peers, as indicated by the authentic reports.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions.

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