

Fatwa no. 6511

Q: According to the traditions of Muslims in India, when contracting a marriage the bride's family presents a large sum of money to the bridegroom's family. This causes a lot of problems; for example young men find it difficult to choose the right wife, as the families of brides who may not seem suitable enticingly pay large amounts of money. Besides, poor Muslim families find themselves obliged to borrow money in order to marry their mature daughters. This hinders the Muslims' progress in this state. In the state of Kerala, there are many Islamic societies, but none of them care about this matter. I hope you will clarify this question in the light of the Islamic creed. If this tradition violates the Shari`ah, I hope you will point this out.

A: When contracting a marriage the woman should receive Mahr (mandatory gift to a bride from her groom) that is payable by the husband on the spot or deferred, whether it is little or much. Allah (Exalted be He) says:

...so with those of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their Mahr as prescribed; but if after a Mahr is prescribed, you agree mutually (to give more), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allâh is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise.

It was narrated also that a woman presented herself to the Prophet (for marriage), then a man told him, "If you are not in need of her then marry her to me."

He (peace be upon him) asked,

"Is there anything with you (which you can give as a dower)?" He said, "No, Messenger of Allah, by Allah I have nothing."

Thereupon Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said,

"Go to your people (family) and see if you can find something." He went and returned and said,

"By Allah, I have found nothing."

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"See even if it is an iron ring."

If the bride's family give the bridegroom some money before or after contracting the marriage, in pursuit of their daughter's happiness and to ensure the bridegroom will be kind and compassionate to her, there is nothing wrong in doing this, for this is a way of doing good, and cooperating upon guarding from fornication.

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

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