

Is It Wajib To Provide The Wife With The Same Food As The Husband Consumes?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

Question

What is the perspective of Islamic scholars and Muftis on whether, according to Islamic Shari'ah, a husband is obligated to provide his wife with the same food, drink, and clothing that he consumes or wears?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

According to Shari'ah, it is Wajib for a husband to provide three essentials: food, clothing, and a place to live. What will be the standard of these provisions? It is determined by the circumstances of both husband and wife. If both are affluent, the husband is required to provide items befitting their wealth. In the case of both being poor, the husband should furnish items used by the poor. If one of the spouses is rich and the other is poor, the obligation is to provide items of average quality.

Beyond the aforementioned essentials, if the husband indulges in additional refreshments, Shari'ah does not obligate him to provide the same for his wife. Nevertheless, from an ethical and social standpoint, it is encouraged for the husband to continue offering extra food items to his wife. Islam highly values such considerate gestures.

The blessed Hadiths strongly advocate treating wife with kindness. According to a blessed Hadith, when a person spends anything to seek Allah Almighty's pleasure, he is eligible for reward. Even he will be rewarded for putting a morsel in his wife's mouth. It is stated in another blessed Hadith that placing something in the wife's mouth with a good intention is Sadaqah (charity).

Furthermore, there are numerous social benefits to treating a wife well. On the occasion of Hajjat-ul-Wada' (the Final Pilgrimage), the Greatest and Final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ delivered a historic sermon. The golden teachings of this sermon include:

فاتقوا الله في النساء فانكم اخذتموهن بامان الله

Meaning, fear Allah Almighty in the matter of women as you have taken them under the protection of Allah Almighty (*Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, p. 886, Beirut*)

There is a blessed Hadith regarding treating wife well:

ومهما انفقت فهو لك صدقة حتى اللقمة ترفعها في امراتك

Meaning, whatever you will spend is Sadaqah (charity) for you, even the morsel that you put in the mouth of your wife. (*Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 7, p. 62, Dar Tauq Al-Najah*)

Under this blessed Hadith, it is stated in Mirqaat al-Mafatih:

والمعنى أن المنفق لا يتغاء رضاه تعالى يؤجر

It means that the one who spends for Allah Almighty's pleasure, deserves reward. (*Mirqaat al-Mafatih, vol. 6, p. 230, Hadith 3071, Beirut*)

It is stated in Fatawa Tatarkhania:

والنفقة الواجبة: الماكول والملبوس والسكنى

(*Fatawa Tatarckhania, vol. 5, p. 358, Hind*)

As stated in Bada`i` al-Sana`i`:

اذا كان الزوج معسرا ينفق عليها ادنى ما يكفيها من الطعام والادام والدهن بالمعروف ومن الكسوة ادنى ما يكفيها من الصيفية والشتوية وان كان متوسطا ينفق عليها اوسع من ذلك بالمعروف ومن الكسوة ارفع من ذلك بالمعروف وان كان غنيا ينفق عليها اوسع من ذلك كله بالمعروف ومن الكسوة ارفع من ذلك كله بالمعروف وانما كانت النفقة والكسوة بالمعروف لان دفع الضرر عن الزوجين واجب وذلك في ايجاب الوسط من الكفاية

(*Bada`i` al-Sana`i`, vol. 4, p. 24, Beirut*)

After fulfilling the obligation of Wajib Nafaqah (providing food, cloth, and shelter to the wife), it is not necessary for the husband to provide additional items, as described in Bada`i` al-Sana`i`:

لا يجب عليه ان يطعمها ما ياكله ولا يطعمها ما كانت تاكل في بيت اهلها ايضا ولكن يطعمها خبز الحنطة ولحم الشاة وكذلك الكسوة على هذا الاعتبار

(*Bada`i` al-Sana`i`, vol. 4, p. 24, Beirut*)

When a husband provides the necessary items to his wife as per Shari`ah, it is not required for him to provide the same food to her as he consumes. However, it is definitely Mustahab (recommended) as described in Fatawa Hindiyyah:

وقال مشائخنا رحمهم الله تعالى: والمستحب للزوج اذا كان موسرا مفرط اليسار والمرأة فقيرة ان ياكل معها ما ياكل

بنفسه

(*Fatawa Hindiyyah, vol. 1, p. 548, Egypt*)

Considering the importance of good behavior, it is recommended (Mustahab) for a husband to share the same food with his wife, which he consumes himself, after fulfilling the obligatory Nafqah, as outlined in Majma-ul-Anhur:

والمستحب ان يطعمها الزوج ما ياكله لانه مأمور بحسن المعاشرة

(*Majma-ul-Anhur, vol 2, p. 176, Beirut*)

As stated in Fatawa Razawiyyah:

Food can be categorized into two types. The first is the essential Nafqah, which is Wajib for a husband to provide for his wife. The second category includes additional items, such as fruits, betel-leaf, cardamom, and gifts. (*Fatawa Razawiyyah, vol. 12, pp. 276-277, Raza Foundation, Lahore*)

According to Shariah, it is not necessary to provide additional items to wife other than the Wajib ones. As stated in Bahar-e-Shariat:

“It is better to feed the woman the same food he consumes, but it is not Wajib (compulsory).” (*Bahar-e-Shari`at, vol. 2, part 8, p. 265, Maktaba-tul-Madinah, Karachi*)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ knows best.)

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