

Compulsory present given in wedding party - "Tarzift"

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Question: It is in our customs in Morocco that when we hold a feast or a party, the host obliges his guests to bring gifts with them, otherwise they will be disparaged and defamed, they call it "Tarzift", so what is the ruling regarding this custom? And may Allaah reward you with good.

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

The collective custom which is known by people can be divided into: a valid custom and an invalid one. The right and accepted custom is that which does not make licit something illicit and does not make something illicit licit, as the custom of giving an earnest payment in a manufacturing contract, or the custom which consists in the wife staying at her husband's house until she receives a part of the dowry. The invalid custom which is not accepted is that which makes illicit things licit, like the custom of mixing between men and women and flaunting themselves in their presence in wedding halls and in public or private assemblies, at universities, in the different stages of education, in educational institutions and the custom of dealing in usury with banks, giving illicit parties and holding heretical occasions, playing the different competitions of gambling and wager, abandoning the obligatory prayers during assemblies of managers or those of a lesser grade and postpone it to another time and others.

Hereupon, the general rule stipulates that, "***In principle, the customs of people are permissible and licit***" and we should not give up such principle only if they are linked with a religious interdiction which is due to a corrupt belief or because they harm certainly or probably or they contradict an established religious text or a fundamental rule.

What is established as regards imposing to bring gifts upon the guests in legal banquets is included in this meaning, because it implies an amendment to Sharee'ah by imposing to bring a gift which the Sharee'ah does not impose by basing one's judgment on custom, while Allaah تعالى perfected His religion so that it lacks nothing and agreed it so that. Besides, this custom contradicts the objectives of the Sharee'ah, as it imposes on the guest things he finds difficult, and this contradicts Allaah's saying:

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لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

[Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope]¹

It leads also in one way or another to neglect the obligation of answering the invitation in case the guest cannot offer a gift. In addition, the guests receive reproofs and denigration of their honour and being the subject of backbiting and contempt, especially if the gift is under what the host expects.

To sum up, this custom is corrupt and it is not permissible to accept it or take it into consideration as it is linked with forbidden things, in addition to the fact that continuing to perform this custom will ruin the Sharee'ah, alter its ruling and change its objectives, since the aim of Sharee'ah is to remove the hardship and embarrassment and to bring ease and benefit, in accordance with Allaah's تعالى saying:

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

[and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship]²

And :

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ

[Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you]³

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers, Rajab 14th, 1428H. Corresponding to: July 28th, 2007.

¹ Soorah al-Baqaraah[2:286]

² Soorah al-Hajj [22:78]

³ Soorah al-Baqaraah[2:185]