126316 - Spending On a Wife Who Works

the question

I work full-time every day, so all the money I earn I spend on clothes, shoes and cleaning materials, whilst my husband spends on rent, bills and some other things. What are the things my husband must spend on for me?

For example, does he only have to clothe me if all my clothes are worn out? And my husband tells me: “If you want me to spend on you for everything, then you should stay home and not work.”

Summary of answer

It is obligatory for the husband to spend on his wife, according to his means, and he does not have the right to make her pay for her own expenses, even if she is rich, except with her agreement. This spending on the wife’s maintenance includes everything having to do with her clothing, summer and winter.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Should the husband spend on his wife?

In the answer to question no. 3054 , we quoted sufficient evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, and scholarly consensus, to prove that it is obligatory for the husband to spend on his wife, according to his means, and that he does not have the right to make her pay for her own expenses, even if she is rich, except with her agreement.

How much should the husband spend on his wife?

This spending on the wife’s maintenance includes everything having to do with her clothing,

summer and winter. It does not mean that he has to do that every year or every season, even if she already has clothing, some of which she may not have worn. And it does not mean that he should not do that except when her clothes wear out. Rather clothing her should be done according to what his wife needs and his ability to pay for her clothes, without that having an impact on his other commitments, or, as the Quran puts it, it should be on a reasonable basis:

“Upon the father is the mothers' provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable (on a reasonable basis).” [al-Baqarah 2:233]

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“That is, it should be in line with what is customary among women like her in her country, without any extravagance or stinting, and according to what the husband can afford, whether he is well off, of moderate means, or in financial difficulty.” (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/634)

We should point out here that a woman who is working may need clothing that a woman who is not working does not need, because she wants to have new clothes to wear in front of her female colleagues at work. This is not something that she is entitled to from her husband; rather his duty towards her is to provide for her the clothing that she wears at home, and what she wears to go out on religious permissible occasions, with his permission. This is something that is not judged by a particular standard; rather it varies according to the wife’s nature and environment.

Can the husband prevent his wife from working?

If the wife stipulated, at the time of marriage, that her husband allow her to work, then he must allow her to carry on with her work, unless the nature of her work changes and it becomes unlawful, such as if she is working with non-mahram men, or the nature of the work is unlawful, such as working in riba-based banks or insurance companies, and the like.

The same applies if her work requires her to travel, and she does not have a mahram. If any such things occur, then the husband must intervene to prevent her from continuing with her work, and in this case he is not contravening that condition; rather he is acting in accordance with the

teachings of Islam which makes him responsible for his wife: “Whoever stipulates a condition that is not in accordance with the Book of Allah, he has no right to do so, even if he stipulates a hundred conditions.” [Agreed upon]

But if her work does not involve any of these things, then he has no right to prevent her from working; rather he must fulfil the condition to which he agreed when he married her. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts.” [al-Maidah 5:1]

‘Uqbah narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The condition which most deserves to be fulfilled is that by means of which intimacy becomes permissible for you.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2572) and Muslim, 1418)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The Muslims are bound by their conditions.”(Narrated by Abu Dawud (3594); classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud)

With regard to the salary of a working wife, it is hers by right, and her husband has no right to take any of it except with her consent. All of this applies if it was stipulated in the marriage contract that she be allowed to work, as noted above.

Should the wife give her salary to the husband?

If it was not stipulated in the marriage contract that the wife be allowed to work, then the husband may allow her to work in return for her contributing to the household expenses, according to whatever they agree to, because the time she spends at work is something to which he is entitled, so he has the right to be compensated for that, on a reasonable basis.

Al-Bahuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“A woman may not be employed, after the marriage contract is done with her, without her husband’s permission, because that impacts upon the husband’s rights.” (Ar-Rawd al-Murbi‘, 9271)

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih al-‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The husband is obliged to spend upon his family, upon his wife and children, on a reasonable basis, even if the wife is rich. The husband is obliged to spend, and that includes cases where the wife is a teacher, and it has been stipulated that the husband allow her to continue teaching. Yet he has no right to take anything from her salary, not half and not more or less. The salary is hers, so long as it was stipulated in the marriage contract that he should not prevent her from teaching and he agreed to that. So he does not have the right to prevent her from teaching, and he does not have the right to take anything from her salary; it is hers.

But if it was not stipulated that he allow her to teach, then when they got married he said: Do not teach, then in this case they should come to an agreement however they wish. For example, he could say: I will let you carry on teaching on condition that you give me half of your salary, or two thirds, or three quarters, or one quarter, and the like, according to whatever they agree upon. But if it was stipulated (in the marriage contract) that she may teach, and he accepted that, then he does not have the right to prevent her and he does not have the right to take anything from her salary.” (Sharh Riyadh as-Salihin, 6/143, 144)

Spouses should not argue over money

We advise both spouses not to create troubles between themselves by arguing over money, which may make their relationship more like that of partners in business! Rather they are partners in establishing a family and building a home, so such disputes between spouses are not appropriate. The woman should willingly help her husband to deal with the difficulties of life, and the husband should refrain as much as possible from taking money from her, because that has a negative impact on his position as qawwam (protector and maintainer), which Allah has based on the fact that he spends on her, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth.” [an-Nisa 4:34]

The husband must differentiate between what the wife contributes to maintenance of the family

and house, and what she gives him by way of lending. It is not permissible for the wife to ask him for the former, because she spent it willingly and it is not permissible for her to take it back, unlike the latter, which is within her rights.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“There is nothing wrong with you taking your wife’s salary with her consent, if she is a woman of mature thinking, and the same applies to everything that she gives you by way of help. There is nothing wrong with you accepting it, if she gave it willingly and is a woman of mature thinking, because Allah, may He be exalted, says at the beginning of Surat an-Nisa (interpretation of the meaning):

“But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease.” [an-Nisa 4:4],

even if that is without any written documentation. But if she gave it to you with written documentation, then that is more prudent, if you fear some objection from her family or relatives, or you fear that she may change her mind.” (Fatawa ash-Shaykh Ibn Baz, 20/44)

Ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Mukhtar ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“She should not take any employment or work except with her husband’s permission. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Men are in charge of women” [an-Nisa 4:34].

One of the rules that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has assigned to men is that they should be in charge of their wives’ affairs.

Therefore, the husband should note that he is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock, and the woman is part of his flock. If he thinks that there is an interest to be served by her going out to work, he should give her permission and help her, especially nowadays. How many righteous

women there are through whom Allah benefits people by means of their going out to teach and the like, which is good for her and for the ummah. So men should not deprive women of their rights, mistreat them or make things difficult for them.

But if he thinks that it is better for her not to do that, then I advise the woman to give thanks to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and to obey her husband, for by Allah besides Whom there is no other god, there is no woman who believes in Allah and at the Last Day, who listens to her husband and obeys him, out of faith in Allah, especially if he has an attitude of protective jealousy and loves good for her, and he seeks reward with Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, but Allah will grant her joy in this world and the Hereafter. She has to accept and be content, and not look down on the ruling of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Rather she should accept that and be wholeheartedly content with it, for whoever accepts Allah's ruling will attain Allah's pleasure. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has promised to the one who hears and obeys success and victory, which includes success in religious matters, worldly matters and in the Hereafter, and it includes victory in religious matters, worldly matters and in the Hereafter. Each woman should examine her own situation, for no hour or day passes when she is listening to her husband and obeying him on a reasonable basis, but she will find in doing so such goodness as only Allah knows.

How many incidents and stories we have heard of concerning righteous women whose husbands told them to do something so they did it, and told them not to do something so they refrained from it, and as a result of that Allah granted them goodness such as only He knows. And how much trouble lies in wait for women when they go out. Therefore, Allah has given their husbands the power to prevent them from going out, and if they fear Allah, Allah will suffice them against trouble. Perhaps if they went out they would go astray and lead others astray, but Allah, by His grace, guided them to hear and obey. This is something known from experience." (Sharh Zad al-Mustaqni' by ash-Shaykh ash-Shinqiti)

And Allah knows best.