97011 - Is buying expensive perfume regarded as extravagance?

the question

Is buying expensive perfume regarded as extravagance?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Perfumes and fragrances are among the pleasures and adornments of this world. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stated that they had been made dear to him among worldly things.

It was narrated from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Among the pleasures of your world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my delight is in prayer.” Narrated by an-Nasaa’i (3939); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh an-Nasaa’i*.

One of the realities that cannot be denied is the fact that expensive perfume has a good fragrance and it lasts longer than cheap perfume. Hence buying expensive perfume is not regarded as extravagance; rather that is only disallowed in certain circumstances, including the following:

1.. When a person does not have enough money to buy that perfume, so he goes into debt in order to buy it, or he has enough money, but those on whom he is obliged to spend will be harmed if he buys it.

2.. When he intends thereby to boast, show off and compete with others.

3.. When he buys a great deal of it unnecessarily.

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

Nowadays there are a lot of feasts for weddings and other occasions, and some people go to extremes in purchasing ‘oud – meaning bakhoor (incense) – the price of which reaches astronomical amounts, and if we say something about that, they cite as evidence the reports narrated from ‘Umar, who said: If a man spends all his wealth on perfume, he is not being extravagant. What do you say, may Allah bless you?

He replied:

We say: Perfume is undoubtedly something that is well loved. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family): “Among the pleasures of your world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my delight is in prayer.” In fact, if perfume is not too expensive, then it is not extravagant to buy it. In other words, if – for example – people come to that place in crowds, and every time a group comes he offers them perfume, this is not extravagance, even if the perfume is repeatedly offered to the first group [every time the host comes round with the perfume or bakhoor]. In fact, this is not extravagance because the last round of perfume is intended for those who come last. Therefore we say that this is not extravagance. As for the one who brings a lot of perfume and uses it as bakhoor (incense) for the duration of the gathering, even if it goes on for a long time and there is no need for it, this is extravagance." (*Al-Liqa’ ash-Shahri* 37/question no. 16).

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Some of the scholars say that extravagance is something relative, and they say that this applies to buying perfume, so there is no extravagance, no matter how much someone buys, and they said that there is a hadith about that from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

He said:

With regard to going to extremes in acts of worship, that is not something relative, because worship is clearly defined in Islamic teachings. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did wudoo’ washing each part once or twice or three times, and he said: “Whoever does more than that has done wrong and has overstepped the mark.”

As for going to extremes or being extravagant with regard to customs and traditions, that is a relative matter. This thing may be extravagant for one particular group and not for another. It may be extravagance for the people of one land and not for the people of another. Hence it is a relative matter, and this is known from the principle that extravagance is overstepping the mark.

At-Teeb said: Undoubtedly if a person is wealthy, and he buys good, expensive perfume, he is not regarded as being extravagant, especially since the fragrance of good perfume – as is well known – lasts for a long time and it is better. But if a person is of moderate means or poor, then in his case buying such perfume is extravagance. (*Liqaa'aat al-Baab al-Maftooh* 8/question no. 24).

And Allah knows best.