

الْقَوْلُ السَّيِّدُ فِي خِدْمَةِ الْمَرْأَةِ لِزَوْجِهَا

**A Wise Saying
Regarding A Muslim Wife's Service to Her Hubby
[A Student's Compilation]**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah the Lord and owner of the worlds and their inhabitants, the Fashioner of creations into sexes, the One who put succor and tranquil in marriage and made it lawful between men and women. The One who allotted responsibilities to each of them as suiting upon the directive of His *Hikmah*, He favoured him with *Qawwamiyyah* over her (her custodian and maintainer) for He made him excel her in that, and He opened to her the door to righteousness in *Qunuut* (being devoutly obedient to her *Rabb* and her husband); serving him and guarding in his absence what Allah had ordered her to guard: herself from *fawaa'ish* (promiscuity) and her husband's properties from harm and destruction.

May He the exalted raise the rank of our noble prophet and grant him peace, and bless and be merciful to his household, his companions and the entirety of the Muslims upon his guidance and tradition.

PREFACE

To proceed:

From those matters which has been enjoying back and forth declarations and counter opinionating amongst our brothers and sisters lately is the issue of *Khidmatul Mar'ah li'Zawjihaa* (the wife serving her husband). The parties involved in this discussion are divided into two contrasting sides: those who opine that the woman's *khidmah* towards her husband is from the obligation upon her and those who say it is voluntary and she has the volition to either do it or leave it.

This issue though may seem like it, is not from the contemporary issues and it has been addressed by the early Muslims, and as a matter of fact the parties involved in the debate during their time also split behind positions similar to those being championed by the latecomers today, that is: whether or not the woman's service to her husband is an obligation. Al-Imaam Ibn Qayyim discussed this debate and their arguments in detail in his book *Zaadul Mi'aad* and Al-Haafidh ibn Hajar also expounded on it in *Fathul-Baaree* and the bulk of what was said regarding this will be mentioned later in this treatise *in shaa Allah*.

Before that, it is observed that subjects like the matter of *khidmah* of the woman and others similar to it are often the topics of conversation amongst Muslim youths in social gatherings of late, and this has generated so much confusion for a number of them because most of these arguments are not aimed at understanding those issues, they are rather started to stir up controversies. Due to this I will like to highlight a couple of points which I feel may have birthed the rejuvenated interest in issues like this amongst Muslim youths from observation, this being an attempt to illuminate the source of the problem so as to be wary and perhaps shut the door to many other possible differences and confusions which may take similar form and attempt to find their way through the same opening in future, and with Allah is the complete knowledge of all affair.

Firstly, it appears that majority of the Muslims nowadays have become lackadaisical and lazy, so much so that they now seek to streamline their religion to just the obligatory affairs, therefore you find them raising questions about judgments on the injunctions (*Ahakaam at-Taklifiyyah*) almost every time they are enjoined with lofty practices enshrined in the *sharee'ah* (Islamic Legislation), and they adopt the *Rukhsah* (respite) in rulings as the *Asl* (basis) they act by in numerous other occasions. The *salaf* (pious predecessors) weren't like that during their time, they were people avaricious upon learning their Religion and fervently devoted to the worship of their Lord, and they were people always preferring the honourable positions and never used to limit their effort to only necessities. Their way according to Allah the exalted is to hear and obey and not seek to wriggle their way out of every injunction by raising exploitative questions, and by that their Lord became pleased with them and they were prosperous. Allah said regarding them in surah An-Nuur:

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allah and His messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: “We hear and we obey.” And such are the prosperous ones (who will live forever in Paradise)” – [Surah An-Nuur: 51]

Therefore, it is upon the *khalaf* (successor) to take to their examples and always adopt the noble positions in all affairs and act by the most rewarding of every injunction whenever there exist choices between that which is acceptable and that which is better, and not seek to exploit the dispensation in rulings except when entitled to them, this is because the strong Muslim is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak Muslim.

The second reason which may have brought about raising questions related to woman's right and her responsibilities as a wife in Islam cannot be traced farther than the influence of secularism and Western Liberalism: the proliferation of corrupt ideologies being chunked out by the numerous rationalist and opinionist of the west on mostly the millennial Muslims. The most pertinent of them to our discussion being Feminism which is as of today a major corrupter of orientation, a disrupter of natural progression and a contradiction of logic and due course

And from the skewed perception of feminism is seeing the patriarchal norm designed by the Lord of Perfection and Justice, Allah the exalted who allotted to the woman the homemaker role and made man the breadwinner, as an unjust oppression and debasement of women. This, in their impaired perception and defective rationalization does not satisfy the requirements of their definition of justice, confusing equality for justice thereby likening women to men in every facets of life and disregarding all the confines which distinguishes either sex from the other. In their view, justice is when all holes take the same pegs regardless of the shape the holes are cut in, this is the best their feeble intellect can afford them, and should we marvel at the weakness of man's intellect when his origin is feebleness? And the Lord of perfection says:

وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنثَىٰ

"And the male is not like the female" – [Surah Aale-Imran: 36]

This impression has subconsciously rubbed off on the perception of some Muslim while some others consciously traded the pure guidance of Islam they have with them for the misguidance and futile pursuit of the innately illogical ideology of feminism. This idea which has crept up on the Muslims through the media (especially the social media) like numerous other vices imported from the modern Western value system, constitutes one of the biggest challenges Muslims now have to face at shaping the orientation of its youths; a fierce battle against devaluation of religion ethics and severe decadence of morality. So the Muslims should not trade what is better for what is worthless by taking to the ways of the disbelievers and imitating them in their transgressions, for this has always been the wish of the wrong doers. Allah the exalted said:

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً

"They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected (Faith), and thus that you all become equal (like one another)." - [Surah An-Nisaa' 89]

And the Muslims are not in any way like the *Kufaar* (unbelievers). Allah the most high said:

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَنْ كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَا يَسْتَوُونَ

"Is then he who is a believer like him who is Faasiq (disbeliever and disobedient to Allah)? Not equal are they." - [Surah As-Sajdah: 18]

HER STATUS WITH HER HUSBAND

After sharing thoughts on the causes of the confusions, it will be appropriate to set the course of this clarification by examining an aspect which is key in aligning our perspective for proper understanding of the forthcoming clarifications. This aspect is regarding the station upon which Allah had position women specifically in matrimony as obtainable from the Sharee'ah.

Allah the exalted mentioned the role of a woman in marriage in a number of places in the Qur'an and from them are:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them," - [Surah Ar-Rum: 21]

Here Allah described the woman with the attribute of comfort, that is: her husband find repose (comfort) in her

In another verse He the exalted described them with the attribute of being a tilth, He said:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ

"Your wives are a tilth for you, so go to your tilth when or how you will," - [Surah Al-Baqarah: 223]

Al-Imaam Ibn Katheer said on the description of 'Arth (tilth)' in this verse:

Ibn Abbas said: "'tilth' is the space for breeding and 'go to your tilth when or how you will' means; however you desire, either from the front or from the rear through a single valve (opening)" [Tafaseerul Qur'an Al-Azeem - Surah Al-Baqarah: 223]

The similitude drawn here is: like on a fertile land, the man sows his seed in his wife to breed and similar to how the owner of the land can approach it whenever and however he desire, the husband can approach his wife the same way as long as he is wary of transgressing the limits in that; which is not to copulate with her in other than her front opening and not during her hayd (menstrual period).

Also in An-Nisaa', Allah further clarify the roles allotted to each spouse in marriage in His statement:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.)" - [Surah An-Nisaa: 34]

Here Allah charged the men with *Qawwamiyyah* (protectors, maintainer and custodian) over women, and described the righteous women as *Qaanitaat*: devoutly obedient to Allah and their husband and preserve themselves and watch over their husband's properties in their absence.

Al-Imaam As-Sa'di said in his tafseer of this verse:

“They (Men) are *Qawwamuun* upon the women by way of imposing Allah’s right on them (the women), in preserving His obligations and preventing them from corruption, and it is upon the men to impose women with these obligations. They are equally *qawwamuun* for their spending on the women and clothing and sheltering them. Then Allah mentioned the reason which obligates the custodianship of men over women by saying: “*because Allah has made one of them to excel the other*”, that is; for reason of their excellence over the women and by giving them preference over them.”

He further said: “Similarly He chose him to spend over the wives, in fact the bulk of the spending is mainly by men and this distinguished them from the women. Perhaps this is the mystery behind His statement “*and because they spend...*”, and the object of the verb (spend) was omitted so that it implies all forms of spending, and it is known from all that has been mentioned, that the man is like the *Waliy* (guardian) and the master to his wife, and she is with him as a subservient slave, and his duty is to oversee that which Allah has made him shepherd over. And her duty is to uphold the commands of her Lord and then the commands of her husband and this is why He said: “*fasaalihaati qaanitaat*”: that is; women obedient to Allah, and obedient to their husband, “*Haafizaat lilgayb*”: and guarding herself and his properties in his absence. And that is due to Allah’s preservation on you women and His *tawfeeq* (harmonization). – [Tafseer Al-Kareem Ar-Rahman - An-Nisaa: 34]

Similarly, there are numerous report on the status of a woman with her husband in the pure sunnah of the noble prophet (ﷺ). From them is a report narrated by a group of companion, the likes of Abu Hurayrah, Mu'adh bin Jabbal, Suraaqah bin Maalik, Aa'isha, Ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Abee Awf, Umm Salamah, Abu Hudhayfah and others (Allah be pleased with them all):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَوْ كُنْتُ أَمِيرًا أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِأَحَدٍ لِأَمْرَتِ الْمَرْأَةِ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِزَوْجِهَا

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, the prophet (ﷺ) said: "If I were to command anybody to prostrate to anybody, I would have commanded the woman to prostrate to her husband..." - [Sunan At-Tirmidhi: 1159]

Al-Imaam Muhammad bin Abdur'Rahman Al-Mubaarakfoori said concerning this report in Tuhfatul Ahwadhyy:

"This is due to the numerous nature of the rights of the husband over the wife and her inability to fully appreciate him (for them). And in this is the peak of exaggeration due to the obligation of the woman's fulfilment of her husband's right, for *sujuud* (prostration) is not lawful for other than Allah." – [Tuhfatul Ahwadhyy 4/323 - 1169]

In another report:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ النِّسَاءِ خَيْرٌ قَالَ الَّتِي تَسْرُهُ إِذَا نَظَرَ وَتُطِيعُهُ إِذَا أَمَرَ وَلَا تُخَالِفُهُ فِي نَفْسِهَا وَمَالِهَا بِمَا يَكْرَهُ

Once again on the authority of Abu Hurayrah who said: "It was said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): 'Which woman is best?' He said: 'The one who makes him happy when he looks at her, obeys him when he commands her, and she does not go against his wishes with regard to herself nor her wealth.'" - Sunan an-Nasaa'i: 3232

Ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin Aliy Al-Ityooby said explaining this hadith:

"That is; the one who brings him joy whenever he sees her outer beauty or her pleasant character, and who is incessantly engrossed in obeying Allah and aware of Him, and who is obedient to her husband in whatever does not constitute sinning against Allah the exalted, and who does not contravene her husband regarding herself, that is; by allowing anyone to commit atrocity with her, and who does not

contravene him regarding his belongings, that is; spending out of what is not permissible to be spent from, that won't be pleasing to the husband. And Allah knows best what is correct.” – [Dhakhiratul Uqbah fiy Sharhul Mujtaba: 25/113 - 3232]

THE WOMEN OF THE SALAF SERVED THEIR HUSBANDS

Al-Imaam Ibn Qayyim recorded in *Zaadul Mi'aad* under the section: “*The Judgement of the prophet (ﷺ) regarding the khidmah (service) of the woman towards her husband*”. - [Zaadul Mi'aad: 1027 (maktabah niyaad print)]

Ibn Habeeb said in *Al-Waadi'ah*: “The prophet (ﷺ) - judged between Ali bin Abee Taalib and his wife Faatimah –Allah be pleased with both of them- when she complained to him (the prophet) about how burdensome home chores has been on her, so he adjudged that Faatimah continue to discharge the indoor duties while Ali takes care of the outdoor duties.”

He (Ibn Habeeb) continued: “And the indoor duties include: Kneading flour (making dough), cooking and baking, laying spreads and spreading mats, sweeping the house, fetching water, and all other house chores” (end of his statement).

The report mentioned above came in the *Saheehayn* and other books of Ahaadith on the authority of Faatimah and also her husband Ali bin Abee Taalib:

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ، أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ، اشْتَكَّتْ مَا تَلْقَى مِنَ الرَّحَى فِي يَدِهَا وَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَبِيًّا فَاَنْطَلَقَتْ فَلَمْ تَجِدْهُ وَلَقِيَتْ عَائِشَةَ فَأَخْبَرَتْهَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَخْبَرَتْهُ عَائِشَةُ بِمَجِيءِ فَاطِمَةَ إِلَيْهَا فَجَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْنَا وَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مَضَاجِعَنَا فَذَهَبْنَا نَقُومُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى مَكَانِكُمَا ” . فَقَعَدَ بَيْنَنَا حَتَّى وَجَدْتُ بَرْدَ قَدَمِهِ عَلَى صَدْرِي ثُمَّ قَالَ ” أَلَا أَعْلَمُكُمَا خَيْرًا مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمَا إِذَا أَخَذْتُمَا مَضَاجِعَكُمَا أَنْ تُكَبِّرَا اللَّهَ أَرْبَعًا وَثَلَاثِينَ وَتُسَبِّحَاهُ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ وَتَحْمَدَاهُ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمَا مِنْ خَادِمٍ

It is reported on the authority of Ali that Fatimah complained about the corns in her hands due to working at the hand-mill. She (Fatimah) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) but she did not find him (in the house). She met Aa'isha and informed her (about her hardship). When Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) came, she (Aa'isha) informed him about the visit of Fatimah. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came to us while we had gone to their beds. 'Ali further (reported):

We tried to stand up (as a mark of respect) but Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Keep to your beds, and he sat between us and I felt the coldness of his feet upon my chest. He then said: May I direct you to something better than what you have asked for? When you go to your bed, you should recite Takbir (Allahu Akbar) thirty-four times and Tasbih (SubhanAllah) thirty-three times and Tahmid (al-Hamdu li-llah) thirty-three times, and that is better for you than a maid servant. Ali said and I never left it afterwards. - [Sahih Muslim 2727a]

Another example of the service of the wives of the companions towards their husband is the khidmah of Asmaa' bint Abee Bakr, -Allah be please with her and her father- towards her husband Az-Zubayr which has also been authentically reported in the saheehayn and the musnad of Imaam Ahmad.

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا . قَالَتْ تَزَوَّجَنِي الزُّبَيْرُ، وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ مَالٍ، وَلَا مَمْلُوكٍ، وَلَا شَيْءٍ غَيْرَ نَاصِحٍ، وَغَيْرَ فَرَسِهِ، فَكُنْتُ أَعْلِفُ فَرَسَهُ، وَأَسْتَقِي الْمَاءَ، وَأَخْرُجُ غَرَبَهُ وَأَعْجِنُ، وَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَحْسِنُ أَخْبِرُ، وَكَانَ يَحْبِرُ جَارَاتٍ لِي مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ وَكُنَّ نِسْوَةَ صِدْقٍ، وَكُنْتُ أَنْقُلُ النَّوَى مِنْ أَرْضِ الزُّبَيْرِ الَّتِي أَقْطَعُهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى رَأْسِي، وَهِيَ مِيَّ عَلَى ثَلَاثِي فَرَسَخٍ

Narrated Asmaa' bint Abu Bakr: "When Az-Zubair married me, he had no real property or any slave or anything else except a camel which drew water from the well, and his horse. I used to feed his horse with fodder and drew water and sew the bucket for drawing it, and prepare the dough, but I did not know how to bake bread. So our Ansari neighbors used to bake bread for me, and they were honorable ladies.

I used to carry the date stones on my head from Zubair's land given to him by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and this land was two third Farsakh (about two miles) from my house..." - [Sahih Al-Bukhari:5224, Sahih Muslim:2182]

In these two reports are clear indications that the wives of the salaf did serve their husbands in discharging home duties.

And lastly in his Saheeh Al-Imaam Al-Bukhari, brought the report of Jaabir bin Abdullah regarding his marriage to a matron under the heading, "*Baabu awn al-mar'ah zawjuhaa fi waladihi*" (the section regarding the woman helping her husband in caring for his children).

This title explains the fiqh (understanding) of Al-Imaam Al-Bukhari on the report; which is the service of a woman to her husband in caring for his households.

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا . قَالَ هَلَكَ أَبِي وَتَرَكَ سَبْعَ بَنَاتٍ أَوْ تِسْعَ بَنَاتٍ فَتَزَوَّجْتُ امْرَأَةً نَيْبًا فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَزَوَّجْتِ يَا جَابِرُ " . فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ . فَقَالَ " بِكْرًا أَمْ نَيْبًا " . قُلْتُ بَلْ نَيْبًا . قَالَ " فَهَلْ جَارِيَةٌ تُلَاعِبُهَا وَتُلَاعِبُكَ، وَتَضَاهِكُهَا وَتَضَاهِكُكَ " . قَالَ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ إِنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ هَلَكَ وَتَرَكَ بَنَاتٍ، وَإِنِّي كَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَحْبِبَّنَّ بِمِثْلِهِنَّ، فَتَزَوَّجْتُ امْرَأَةً تَقُومُ عَلَمِهِنَّ وَتُصَلِّحُهُنَّ . فَقَالَ " بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ " . أَوْ قَالَ خَيْرًا ."

Narrated by Jaabir bin `Abdullah:

My father died and left seven or nine girls and I married a matron. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to me, "O Jaabir! Have you married?" I said, "Yes." He said, "A virgin or a matron?" I replied, "A matron." he said, "Why not a virgin, so that you might play with her and she with you, and you might amuse her and she amuse you." I said, "Abdullah (my father) died and left girls, and I dislike to marry a girl like them, so I married a lady (matron) so that she may look after them." On that he said, "May Allah bless you," or "That is good." - [Sahih al-Bukhari 5367]

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqallaani said commenting on this introduction by Al-Bukhaari:

“He (Al-Bukhaari) mentioned the hadith of Jaabir regarding his marriage to a matron so she may look after his sisters and care for them, and it seems like al-Bukhari deduced the duty of a woman taking care of her husband's children from the duty of Jaabir's wife taking care of his sisters and the understanding to be perceived from this deduction is that it is even more befitting that she takes of his children.

Ibn Battal said: And the woman assisting her husband in caring for his children is not binding on her, rather it is from nice relation and from the attributes of the righteous women.”

[Fathul Baariy bi'Shar'iy Al-Bukhari vol.16/364 (12/5376)].

And from the above, it is even more reasonably suiting and expected of her to take care of her husband as well.

All the above reports and more, presents to us a clear perception into the disposition of the wives of the salaf regarding khidmah for their husbands.

THE DEBATE: IS KHIDMAH COMPULSORY ON HER OR NOT?

Al-Imaam Ibn Al-Qayyim –Allah be pleased with him- expounded the debate of the jurist concerning the compulsion and otherwise of khidmah of the woman towards her husband in his book *Zaadul Mi'aad*, and as earlier promised in the beginning of this treatise, what follows is what has been said regarding it by the parties involved and the evidences they presented for the positions they subscribed to are also included, with the khidmah of Faatimah and that of Asmaa' forming the epicenter of their arguments.

The Imaam said: The Jurists differ over this: the compulsion of the service of the woman to her husband, some of them made it obligatory (for the woman to serve her husband) while others differ with them in the obligation of her service towards him in taking care of the home.

Abu Thawri said: "it is upon her to serve her husband in all aspects", and a party opposed to her service to him in every aspect, and from those who support this opinion are; Ash-Shaafi'i, Abu Haneefah, and the Zhohiriyyah and this is the view of the majority, they said: "this is because the *nikaah* contract connotes pleasure (enjoyment) and not servitude and offering benefits." They again said: "as for the mentioned reports about khidmah, they only expressed voluntary and generous characteristics, so where is the obligation?"

In response to the questions raised above, those who opine its obligation proved their position by their statement: "The obligation of khidmah of the woman to her husband is known by the one whom Allah the sublime addressed with His speech (the prophet (ﷺ)), and as for leaving the woman alone in luxury without discharging any duties such as sweeping for him, milling, kneading flour, washing, laying spreads and spreading mats, as well as other house chores, then that is *makrooh* (objectionable), because Allah the exalted said:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

"And they (women) have rights (over their husbands) similar (to those of their husbands) over them to what is reasonable," - [Surah Al-Baqarah: 228]

Also

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

"Men are the custodian, protectors and maintainers of women," - [Surah An-Nisaa':34]

And when the woman is not of service to him, then he in turn becomes her servant and then she is *Al-Qawwamah* (custodian and maintainer) over him.

Also the *Mahr* is given in return for enjoying the genital and each of the spouses gratify his/her cravings through the other. This is why Allah made spending over her, clothing her, and giving her shelter compulsory, in exchange for enjoying sexual relations with her and for her services towards her husband, and other things brought about by the customs of marriage.

From their argument is also that an absolute marriage contract is hinged upon the known tradition, and the tradition is that women serves their husband and discharge home duties.

And their statement (those who oppose its obligation) that: “the khidmah of Faatimah and Asmaa’ was voluntary and out of kindness, is rebuffed by the fact that Faatimah used to complain about the hardship she experience in discharging the duties (Asmaa’ also complained as in the report above), and the prophet (ﷺ) did not say to her husband Ali: “It is not upon her to serve (do chores), it is rather upon you”, and He -Allah raise his rank and grant him peace- was never bias in his judgment towards anyone. Also when he saw Asmaa’ with the fodder upon her head and Az-Zubair came to him, he never said to Az-Zubair: “this is injustice towards her”, rather he approved of her serving her husband and also allowed the services of several other female companions towards their husbands regardless of the fact that some of them disliked doing that and it is clear that he (ﷺ) was pleased with it (their service to their husbands)

And it is not correct to make distinction between noble women and the commoners or the poor and the rich in this affair, for this is the most noble of the women on the face of the earth (Faatimah) who used to serve her husband and went to complain to her father, the prophet (ﷺ) about the hardship she encounter in her service towards her husband and to her household, yet he did not acknowledge her complaints.

Moreover, the prophet (ﷺ) had likened women to captives in a hadith reported in the Sunan of At-Tirmidhi, where he (ﷺ) said:

أَلَا وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّمَا هُنَّ عَوَانٌ عِنْدَكُمْ

“And I order you to be good to women for they are like captives with you.” – [Sunan At-Tirmidhi: 1163]

And *Al-'Aaniy* (singular form of "Awaan" as was in the report) is *al-Aseer* (captive of war), and the role of al-aseer is to serve the one in whose custody he is, and there is no doubt concerning the fact that nikaah is a form of enslavement and due to this, some of the salaf would say:

النكاح رق فالينظر أحدكم عند من يرق كريمته

“An-Nikaah is an enslavement, therefore let each one of you be wary of who he enslave his daughter to”.

He concluded the section with the remark: "and the most preponderant position and the stronger of the two proofs is not obscure to the author." - [Zaadul Mi'aad: 1028 (maktabat niyaad)]

GETTING HER A SERVANT

And regarding issue of *Khaadimu Al-Mar'ah* (getting the woman a servant), *Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar* said in *Fathul Baariy* explaining the title choice of Imaam al-Bukhaari in one of the sections where he brought the Hadith mentioned above about Faatimah's complaints:

"His statement "Section on getting the woman a servant", that is; is it legislated and binding on the husband to get her a servant? Under it he mentioned the hadith of Ali (and Faatimah) which has preceded.

At-Tabariy said: it could be deduced from the report that for every woman who is capable of serving in her home in duties like baking (cooking), grinding and other than these, it is not binding that the husband get such a woman a servant when it is a known custom that her kind do all these chores by themselves.

And this is deduced from the fact that when Faatimah asked her father (ﷺ) for a servant, he did not command her husband to avail her with that, either through getting her a servant or paying wages for people to do the chores, or by discharging the duties himself. If this was for Aliy to avail her in, he (ﷺ) would have commanded him with it just as he commanded him to offer her her *mahr* (bride price) before entering upon her, even when presenting the *sodaq* immediately is not obligatory as long as the wife is satisfied that she receives it later, then why did he command him in what is not obligatory upon him and left off commanding him with what is obligatory?

Ibn Habeeb also narrated from Asbag and Ibn Al-Maajishuun from Maalik, that serving at home is binding on the woman even if she happens to be a wife of a powerful and eminent man, and more so if the husband is not as endowed financially, he said this is the reason why the prophet made the indoor duties binding on Faatimah while Aliy is to see to the outside duties.

However, Ibn Battal reported from a number of scholars that they said:

“We do not know of any athar from the prophet (ﷺ) that he ruled over Faatimah that she is to discharge the indoor duties, rather the affair between them took the course of what is known from pleasant companionship and nice character.

And as for compelling the woman upon any aspect of servitude, then that has no basis, rather consensus is established that: “the husband is to assist the wife in all of them.””

At-Tohaawiy also relayed a consensus that:

“The husband have no right to expel the wife’s servant from his home”. And the implication of this is that it makes the expenses on the servant binding on him upon a measure of the necessity for it (the servant).”

Ash-Shaafi’iy related that the Kuufiyuun (the scholars of Kuufah) said: “Allocation should be set aside for her (the wife) and her servant if she is with a servant.”

And Maalik, Al-Layth and Muhammad bin Al-Hasan all said: “Allocation is to be made for her and two servants if she is an eminent and important figure.”

Then the Zhoohiriy deviated totally from what has preceded and said: “It is not upon the husband to get her any servant, even if she is the daughter of the *Khalifah* (the supreme leader of the Muslims).

And the evidence that the *Jumhoor* (majority) presented as their proof (why the woman can have a servant) is the statement of Allah in An-Nisaa’:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

“And live with them honourably”. - [Surah An-Nisaa’:19]

Then if it was necessary for a woman to have a servant and was denied that, then she has not been related with *bil’maaruf* (with kindness).

CONCLUSION

It is appropriate to end this discussion on this note by highlighting the most balanced view on this affair, the view favoured by the likes of Abu Bakr ibn Abee Shaybah, At-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi, Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, and also Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaaniy by inference (may Allah have mercy on them all), they bounded the compulsion of a woman's servitude to her husband and household by the customary demands of her people and what is known in the land they live in, their view is expressed thus in the words of *Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*:

"It is obligatory on her to serve her husband within the bounds of what is customary, like women like her will serve husbands who are like him. And this varies according to circumstances, what the bedouin wife will do is not the same as what the urban wife will do, and what the strong wife will do is not similar to what the weak wife will do." - [Fatawa An-Nisaa: 265, Majmoo Al-Fatawa: 2/234-235]

She also has to take care of the house, doing chores like cooking, milling, kneading flour, washing, laying spreads and so on, in accordance with what is customary among people like her and her husband.

Also from those who subscribe to this view among the contemporary scholars are Shaykh Abdul'Azeez bin Baaz (Fatwa Nuur alaa Al-Darb) Shaykh Muhammad bin Saalih Al-Uthaymeen (Sharhu Mumti: 12/441), Shaykh Muhammad bin Nasir'deen Al-Albaani (Ikhtiyaaratul Fiqhiyyah Li'Shaykh Al-Albaani: 381), and Shaykh Abdullah bin Abdur'Rahman Al-Jibreen (Fatawa Al-Ulamah fiy Ishratin-Nisaa': 20), may Allah have mercy on them all.

I say regardless, it is upon the Muslim to be avaricious upon goodness and always prefer the noble and most rewarding position in all affairs. It is clear that the wives of the pious salaf with their nobility and status served their husbands and households diligently and the noble prophet (ﷺ) encouraged it doing that as deduced from the clarifications which has preceded. Therefore Muslim women today are implored to take to the examples of their pious predecessors in this and in other laudable aspects of their exemplary lives rather than to dance to the tune of Western liberalism in leaving off their noble role of homemaking to favour a place in the labour market where they are saddled with the burden of galvanizing the engines of capitalism in its place.

However, the salaf are also the best in setting exemplary models of good relations with their women, in obedience to the statement of Allah:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

"And live with them honourably". - [Surah An-Nisaa':19]

Also the prophet (ﷺ) said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ، قَالَتْ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي ،

On the authority of Aa'isha who said the prophet (ﷺ) said:

"The best among you is the best to his wives and I'm the best of you to my wives" - [Sunan At-Tirmidhi: 3895]

And there is no objection to this fact, rather the declaration here has been further strengthened by his wife's testimony to his pleasant relations with them; in assisting with house chores regardless of his status and in his finding them relief.

عَنِ الْأَسْوَدِ ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ مَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَصْنَعُ فِي بَيْتِهِ قَالَتْ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مِهْنَةٍ أَهْلِهِ . يَغِي خِدْمَةَ أَهْلِهِ . فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلَاةُ خَرَجَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ .

Al-Aswad reported that he asked `Aa'isha

"What did the Prophet (ﷺ) use to do in his house?" She replied, "He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was the time for prayer he would go for it." - [Sahih Al-Bukhari: 676]

The salafs are loving and merciful towards their women and they do not use to overburden them. An indication of this is obtainable in the hadith of Asmaa'

mentioned earlier: firstly in the gesture of the prophet towards her by offering to give her a ride, and secondly in the action of her father Abu Bakr in eventually getting her a servant to assist her in the duties mentioned, as reported in the concluding part of the report:

She said:

فَجِئْتُ يَوْمًا وَالنَّوَى عَلَى رَأْسِي فَلَقِيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَدَعَانِي ثُمَّ قَالَ إِيْحُ إِيْحُ لِيَحْمِلَنِي خَلْفَهُ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ أَنْ أَسِيرَ مَعَ الرَّجَالِ، وَذَكَرْتُ الزُّبَيْرَ وَغَيْرَتَهُ، وَكَانَ أَغْيَرَ النَّاسِ، فَعَرَفَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّي قَدِ اسْتَحْيَيْتُ فَمَضَى، فَجِئْتُ الزُّبَيْرَ فَقُلْتُ لَقَيْتَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى رَأْسِي النَّوَى، وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ، فَأَنَاخَ لِالرَّكَبِ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْهُ وَعَرَفْتُ غَيْرَتَكَ فَقَالَ وَاللَّهِ لِحَمْلِكَ النَّوَى كَانَ أَشَدَّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ رُكُوبِكَ مَعَهُ قَالَتْ حَتَّى أُرْسَلَ إِلَيَّ أَبُو بَكْرٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ بِخَادِمٍ يُكْفِينِي سِيَاسَةَ الْفَرَسِ، فَكَانَتْمَا أَعْتَقَنِي

"...One day, while I was coming with the date stones on my head, I met Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) along with some Ansari people. He called me and then, (directing his camel to kneel down) said, "Ikh! Ikh!" so as to make me ride behind him (on his camel). I felt shy to travel with the men and remembered Az-Zubair and his sense of Gheerah (jealousy), as he was one of those people who had the greatest sense of Gheerah. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) noticed that I felt shy, so he proceeded. I came to Az-Zubair and said, "I met Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) while I was carrying a load of date stones on my head, and he had some companions with him. He made his camel kneel down so that I might ride, but I felt shy in his presence and remembered your sense of Gheerah. On that Az-Zubair said, "By Allah, your carrying the date stones (and you being seen by the Prophet (ﷺ) in such a state) is more shameful to me than your riding with him." (I continued serving in this way) till Abu Bakr sent me a servant to look after the horse, whereupon I felt as if he had emancipated". - [Sahih al-Bukhari 5224]

The salafs are known for being compassionate towards their women and their women are in turn respectful and dutiful to them, this is the good relation enjoined

by Allah in the verse quoted from An-Nisaa'; doing more than the obligatory affairs as an extra gesture of kindness.

Moreover the jurists who favoured the opinion that khidmah is not obligatory on the woman also recognize that doing it regardless is from pleasant companionship and nice character as mentioned by Ibn Battal. And character this can only beget similar good treatment, and this is why it is also from pleasant relations and doing more than what is obligatory on the path of the husband to care for his wife in aspects outside what is binding on him: feeding her, clothing her and sheltering her, along with that he should tend to her when ill and indulge her in luxury within his means and capability.

Allah the exalted said:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا

"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect." - [Surah Ar-Rum: 21]

And from the greatest means of achieving marital bliss is when the spouses treat each other with mutual honour and respect.

FATAWA OF CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS ON WOMAN'S KHIDMAH TO HER HUSBAND

SHAYKH ABDUL'AZEEZ BIN BAAZ

Q: A Sudani woman (with initials م. ه. ع.) residing in Saudiyyah sent message asking about a very important matter, we will like for people to have a proper understanding of it, She said: "I want to ask about the wife's service to her husband, in tidying up the house, preparing food, cleaning the house, washing and ironing his clothes, and also bathing the children and feeding them, is this binding on her

to do, an obligation from Allah, or considered to be usual human services between both of them (her and her husband), and what judgment applies to her in the religion if she does not serve him in the mentioned aspects? Is there any sin on her or not?

R: The Shaykh responded:

"This is an important matter and the correct position in it is that: it (khidmah) is obligatory on her towards her husband, and similarly, the wives of the companions of the prophet (ﷺ) served their husbands, even Faatimah used to serve her husband and take care of the home necessities (chores), from milling, to sweeping, to cooking and other things, for this is either from nice relation or it is the foundation.

Except when the woman is from a community where it is known that they serve in this region or this period, then for the people is their customs; because Allah said:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

"And live with them honourably" [An-Nisaa':19]

and if the woman is from a community where it is the custom that the services are done for them and they do not use to serve in the home, then the husband is to get her a female servant if she (the wife) didn't agree to serve in her home, however if she permits then praise be to Allah, and the foundation is that she serve her husband in all aspects mentioned by the questioner, sweeping the house, cooking food, washing clothes and ironing them and everything else similar to that, this is the prevalent custom during the time of the prophet (ﷺ) and the time of those after him, however if you find a community or household with a different custom from this in their land and that is widespread and known amongst them and the husband is also aware, then they are should act by their custom because it is like a stipulation, something which is adhered to by the custom and the husband is aware of it is like a stipulation, except if the wife permits abandoning that thing and serve him instead, and for her to abandon what is known in the custom of her people and

her land (in this), then by doing that she has done something laudable and there is no harm.

And what is meant is that: she should act by the demands of the custom in her land and her household, aside that, the foundation is that she is to serve her husband, and this is the foundation regarding the necessities of the house (chores) and the necessities with his clothes and everything else similar to these. That's all."

[Shaykh Abdul'Azeez bin Baaz: Fatawa Nuur alaa Al-Darb]

SHAYKH ABDULLAH BIN JIBREEN

Q: Shaykh Abdullah bin Jibreen was asked: Is it from the obligation upon the wife to prepare food for her husband, and if she doesn't, will she become a sinner by implication?

R: The Shaykh responded thus:

"The custom of the Muslims did not cease to be upon that the wife is to serve her husband in accordance with their custom, in preparing the food, washing the clothes and utensils and in cleaning the house and similar to it, for everyone is what is suiting for him, and this is the custom which has been employed since the time of the prophet (ﷺ) up until this our time without any difficulty, however it is not appropriate to compel the wife with something strenuous and difficult, rather that should be a function of ability and what is customary, and it is Allah who grants success" – [Fatawa Ulamaah fiy Ishratin Nisaa': 20]

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD BIN SAALIH AL-UTHAYMEEN

Shaykh Muhammad bin Al-Uthaymeen said: "With regards to her serving her husband, then that should be referred back to the custom, and in whatever aspect the custom demands that she serve her husband in, then it is obligatory on her to serve him in it, and whatever aspect is not expected of her to serve him in according

to the course of the custom is not obligatory on her, and it is not permissible for the husband to compel his wife to serve his mother or his father or for him to be annoyed with her for not doing that, it is important for him to fear Allah and not exert his authority (in this), for Allah the exalted is more superior than him and He is Magnificently Supreme, Powerful and Sublime. Allah the exalted said:

فَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ فَلَ تَبْغُوا عَلَيْنَ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

"But if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great." - [Surah An-Nisaa': 34]

End of his statement from [Fatawa Nuur alaa Al-Darb]

He also said in *Sharhul Mumti'*: "And what is correct is that He makes it binding on her to serve her husband according to the custom" [Sharhul Mumti': 12/144]

On a final note; and seek Allah's aid in all your engagements and be devoted upon His remembrance.

I beseech Allah in His infinite bounties to benefit the Muslims by this effort and reward the author with His immense favour.

And may Allah raise the rank of our noble prophet and grant him peace and have mercy on his household and companions.

Subhaanaka Allahumma wa bihamdik ashhadu an laa ilaha ilaa ant astaghfirka wa'atuubu ilayk.