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The *Wajeb*

Weddings can be very expensive in any place. In Saudi Arabia, the average wedding can cost \$50,000. This amount of money may seem ordinary for some weddings in other countries like the United States or England. However, if the Saudi currency is compared with the dollar or euro, it is clear that weddings in Saudi Arabia are very expensive for a middle-class Saudi person. In fact, it has been said that young Saudi men are finding it hard to get wives these days because of high dowries demanded by girls and that this situation is a new social problem for this conservative kingdom. Because of the difficulties that can coincide with weddings, relatives in many Saudi tribes believe that their duty is to support anyone from the same tribe who wants to get married. According to the elderly in many tribes, this kind of support began fifty years ago, and it has continued until it became one of the crucial traditions in many tribes. The Arabic word for this kind of procedure is *wajeb*, which means the duty in which every member in a tribe participates to help either the groom or the bride financially. Tribe members support the bride and groom not only on the wedding day but also before and after the wedding.

Firstly, the period that precedes the wedding has its own procedures in which only close relatives subsidize the groom and the bride in different ways. Since the groom has to pay a dowry, his brothers usually give him part of it. Moreover, his cousins may take him to buy items needed for his wedding, such as his *thoob* and *besht*, traditional clothes for men in Saudi Arabia. The bride also gets support from the relatives before the wedding. If her dowry was not enough

for her expenses, her sisters or her aunts might help her to buy her gown. Furthermore, she might receive valuable gifts, such as jewelry, clothes, and perfumes.

Secondly, the foremost *wajeb* for all relatives, close or not, can be seen on the wedding day. For example, on that morning, the groom's brothers or cousins take him to a salon to prepare him before he goes to the hall reserved for the wedding. Moreover, since he is responsible for most of the wedding expenses, the close relatives usually participate in paying a considerable part of the dinner, the hall, and the band. Other relatives who are not that close also support him financially because every adult who has a job contributes to the wedding expense. Although everyone has to pay less than thirty dollars, the collected amount can make a huge difference on the groom's budget. Additionally, the bride can get financial support in different ways. In many cases in Saudi weddings, brides tend to be the responsible for decorating the hall. Since this procedure costs a lot of money, the close relatives pay part of the price. Furthermore, every female relative who is not very close also gives a small amount of money to the bride. Therefore, she can get a considerable amount when she puts the money together. This would really help her with any costs she needs to cover.

Finally, the supporting does not stop after the wedding day; both groom and bride continue to receive support from their relatives after the wedding. There are two different ways the *wajeb* can be used for the groom. He receives some help for furniture, TV, refrigerator, and oven for his house or apartment. He also may get a reservation in a hotel and a rental car for three days, but this depends on the budget of the tribe. On the other hand, the bride gets some financial support in different ways. For instance, when the relatives visit her in her home for the first time, they give her some gifts like china or anything else she might need. They also have a party for her after her honeymoon.

The financial difficulties that both groom and bride may face can be taken care of by the *wajeb*, which shows the support they need from their relatives. Additionally, it shows how the members of one tribe unite with each other because they believe it is the relatives' duty to sustain each other through the wedding process. They also believe that it is a shame if people do not give help to their relatives, with the only exception being an unemployed person who is not able to give financial help. The *wajeb* can be given at three different times: on the wedding day, before the wedding, and after the wedding. People in Saudi Arabia appreciate this tradition for its advantages of making marriage affordable.