85239 - He regrets his first marriage and wants to take a second wife

the question

I have been married for a year and a half, but I do not find in my wife anything to keep me chaste, because she is not beautiful and I regretted marrying her, which made me think about taking another wife, although my wife loves me and is good. But my problem is that I look at women with the aim of marriage, but when I mention the idea of a second marriage to my wife, she says that she could not live with me if there was another wife.
What should I do? I do not want to divorce her.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Your real problem is what you mentioned about looking at women, even if that is with the aim of marriage, as you say. Whoever looks at women spoils his religious commitment and weakens his faith, and he no longer appreciates his wife and he spends all his time thinking another woman. This, of course, puts him off his wife even more and makes him think more of a second marriage, which he thinks is the way out. Whoever is aware of how people are will realize that because of this haraam looking, what was beautiful yesterday becomes ugly to them today, and as time passes, what was new becomes old and boring, so they will live a restless life and will never settle down, and one wife or two wives will never be for them.

Hence we say: Fear Allaah, may He be exalted, and lower your gaze and avoid looking at that which Allaah has forbidden. Go back to your wife and think about some of her attractive features and her good qualities, and you will find a lot of goodness, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her qualities, he will be pleased with another.” Narrated by Muslim (2672).

If a person wants to get married, it is not permissible for him to look at every woman who is coming and going, rather it is permissible for him to look at the one to whom he wants to propose marriage when he has decided to propose. So if he is told about a woman and he is pleased with her religious commitment, character and family, then all that remains is for him to look at her. It is permissible for him to do that whether it is with or without her knowledge, a look without desire.

As for what some people do, looking freely at women right and left, on the grounds that they will choose one of them, this is haraam and is not approved of in sharee'ah or accepted by sound human nature; no one would accept this for himself or his family.

We think that you understand all of that, and that deep down you understand that choosing a second wife by looking at women who are coming and going, is nothing but a trick by means of which the shaytaan has fooled you into haraam looking which will only make you more restless, in addition to it being disobedience towards the Most Merciful, may He be exalted, and obedience to the Shaytaan and falling into his trap.

Secondly:

It is permissible for a man to marry one or two wives, up to four, if he is able for that both financially and physically, and he thinks that he will be able to treat his wives fairly.

It is not essential for him to have the first wife's permission in order to take a second wife. Most women would not agree to plural marriage and they think that it is impossible to live with it. This is due to many reasons, including the biased media which regards plural marriage as a crime and an action that will make the first wife feel that there is something wrong with her; in many cases men also abuse this right and tend to be unjust and transgress the limits, except for those whom Allaah protects.

The wise man must look at his family and how prepared they are to accept a plural marriage; he must weigh up the settled life that he has now and what may happen in the future, and think thoroughly – without emotion – about whether he needs a second wife, and how able he is to take care of two households and two families. He has to pray to Allaah for guidance (istikhaarah) before

making any move towards marriage, and he has to make a good choice, so that he will not feel regret again and realize, when it is too late, that he is seeking something unattainable, no matter what type of woman he marries.

If he decides that he wants to take a second wife and his circumstances would allow for that, as we have mentioned above, and he is serious about it, then and only then is it permissible for him to look at the woman to whom he wants to propose marriage.

But at this point we would like to point out a mistake that many a husband makes, when his life and that of his family is disturbed when this issue comes up from time to time. What is the point of bringing up this issue that causes problems – do you want to make her miserable for the rest of her life?

If you are serious – and we think that it is too early for you to be serious about it because you have only been married for a short time – then put your trust in Allaah and you will be able to deal with matters as they arise.

May Allaah help us all to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.

And Allaah knows best.