96103 - His wife reviles him and insults him. What should he do?

the question

There is a very ill mannered wife who slanders and insults her husband. He has warned her more than once, but she insists on insulting him. He cannot tolerate this but he has a daughter, and he fears for his daughter if he divorces his wife. What should he do?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the wife insults and reviles her husband, then he must advise her and warn her, and explain to her that her bad talk incurs sin, especially since the husband is the most deserving of people of her respect and good treatment, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If I were to command anyone to prostrate to anyone, I would have told women to prostrate to their husbands, because of the rights that Allah has given them over them.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (2140) and al-Tirmidhi (1159); classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

You should follow with her the method that Allah has mentioned in His Book, of admonishing, forsaking in bed and hitting in a way that does not cause injury. If none of that is successful, then you should seek help in advising her from a righteous person in her family, so as to preserve the family and take care of the rights of the children, if there are any.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“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 and their husband’s property). As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their

beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful and in a manner that does not cause any physical pain or leave marks); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great”

[al-Nisa 4:34]

Among the admonishment that you may use with her is telling her of the sin that she is committing by disobeying her husband, and the great reward that she will attain if she obeys him.

You should also explain to her the harm that will be suffered by her, her husband and her daughter in the event of a divorce or if she continues to behave in this manner.

If the wife responds and is affected by this admonition, and she gives up this bad behaviour, then this is what is wanted. If she persists in her evil ways and foolishness, then there is no blame on the husband if he divorces her.

The scholars have stated that divorce may be permissible if it is needed because of the wife’s bad attitude and bad conduct, and if he is harmed by that and the purpose of marriage is not being achieved.

Al-Mughni (10/324).

What you have mentioned about being afraid for your daughter if you separate is something that should be taken into account. If you are afraid that you will not be able to bring her up, or that the girl will be harmed because of this divorce, then you should weigh up the two evils, that of staying with a woman whose attitude is bad and who is mistreating you, and that of what might happen to your daughter after a divorce. One of the basic principles of sharee’ah is doing the lesser of two evils in order to ward off the greater.

You should pray istikharah, asking Allah for guidance, before making your decision, and you should strive for reconciliation if possible. If that is not possible then strive to protect your daughter and get custody of her, and do not leave her for this woman to raise her with her attitude.

We advise you to pray to Allah and always fear Him, for Allah has promised provision and a way out to the pious who always fear Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).

3. And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things”

[al-Talaq 65:2-3]

We also advise you to repent to Allah from all sins, for the wife’s bad attitude may be a punishment for sins that one has committed, as it was narrated that al-Fudayl ibn ‘Iyad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I disobey Allah then I see that in the attitude of my mount or my wife.

We ask Allah to set our affairs and the affairs of the Muslims straight.

And Allah knows best.