102538 - His father wants him to travel for work and his wife insists on him staying

the question

I am very confused. I got married 9 months ago; I stayed 4 months with my wife then traveled abroad. My wife has objected to this. She tried to stop me but this did not work. Alhamdulillah, we love and understand each other. I tried to persuade her that after traveling I will look for a flat and send her a visa to come and live with me abroad. But I did not find a suitable flat. It is too expensive to rent a flat here; even all my salary is not enough for half a month. When she knew this she started sending messages to me telling me how much she suffers, her tears do not dry up, and her heart is burning of missing me.
On the other hand, my father encourages me to stay abroad and work in order to help in my brother's marriage. While my wife says she cannot live alone and asks me daily to come home, my father wants me to stay abroad.
Shall I return to my wife and not be unfair with her, or stay here and help my father in my brother's marriage?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The husband may travel and be away from his wife for the sake of work or others interests that are Islamically acceptable, for a period no longer than six months. If it is longer than that, then he must ask his wife for permission.

The basic principle concerning that is that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab asked his daughter Hafsah (may Allah be pleased with her): O my daughter, how long can a woman bear to be away from her husband? She said: Subhan Allah, would one such as you ask one such as me about that? He said: Were it not that I want to make a decision concerning the Muslims I would not have asked you. She said: Five months or six months. So he set a time limit for the people on their campaigns of six

months: they would march for a month, then stay there for four months, then take another month for the journey back.

Al-Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: How long may a husband be away from his wife? He said: It was narrated: Six months.

See: al-Mughni (7/232, 416).

Ash-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to a man travelling and being away from his wife, if she is in a safe place there is nothing wrong with it, and if she lets him stay away for more than six months, there is nothing wrong with it. But if she asks for her rights and asks him to come back to her, then he should not stay away for more than six months. But if there is a reason such as a sick person who is being treated and so on, then cases of necessity come under their own rulings. Whatever the case, it is the wife’s right, and if she allows that and is in a safe place, there is no sin on him, even if the husband is away a great deal. End quote from Fatawa al-‘Ulama fi ‘Ushrat al-Nisa (p. 106).

Based on that, it is your wife’s right that you should return to them, especially since your salary is not enough for accommodation, as you say. This means that you are staying away from your family when they need you.

It is no secret that fulfilling rights and protecting one’s family and looking after them, and maintaining love and stability, takes precedence over accumulating money.

You are not obliged to obey your father even if he tells you to stay abroad, because that may result in loss of your wife’s rights. It is well known that there is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience towards the Creator, but you should speak kindly and convince him, and explain that there is nothing to be gained from being away from your family.

We ask Allah to help and guide you.

And Allah knows best.