

177537 - Dealing With a Wife Who Visits Her Family Too Often and is Demanding

the question

I am a young man who got married three years ago and I have two children. My wife is falling short in her duties towards the house such as cleaning, and she has worn me out with her demands. She goes to her family's house too often; whenever any holiday come she wants to go to her family's house on the basis that her sisters are getting together, and I wish that she would stay with me and my children during the holiday, but she does not listen to me; rather she wants to go there. I could force her but it is against my principles.

Now I am thinking of divorcing her, because this is not a life. On any holiday she wants to go to her family's house, even during the New Year and Eid Holidays. Indeed matters have gone so far that the husband of one of her sisters is travelling and my wife wants to stay with her sister in her house. What is the solution? Please advise me, may Allah reward you, because by Allah I am very tired. I do not have any problem with taking another wife, but without this one being present, because I am not well off. Please do not tell me to give her advice, because by Allah I have tried to give her advice to no avail.

Detailed answer

You should not hasten with regard to the matter of divorce, and you should implement all the means prescribed in Islam to set your wife straight and solve the problem between you. Part of that is what Allah has taught us of admonishing, then refusing to share their beds, then hitting them lightly (meaning not injuring them in any way, shape or form and only if there is some benefit anticipated from it), then seeking the help of arbitrators from your family and hers. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) hit them (lightly, if it is useful), but if they return to obedience, seek

not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great.

If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things”

[an-Nisa’ 4:34-35].

You could seek help in admonishing or exhorting her by means of some tapes (or CDs etc, of lectures), or by advising her to ask scholars about her behaviour and attitude, or taking her to listen to a lecture that deals with family life and the marital relationship. You should try to find out the reasons why she is not keen to stay home and why she wants to go to her family. There may be some harshness in your treatment of her, or some shortcoming with regard to her rights. The way to deal with that is to speak frankly and try sincerely to resolve the differences. If you try to implement all the ways and means of dealing with the matter but you do not succeed in setting things straight, and you do not think that you could be patient with her, then there is nothing wrong with divorce in that case and you should divorce her with one revocable talaag (pronouncement of divorce), in the hope that that will bring her to her senses and prompt her to pay attention to her husband and her health.

There follows some advice that the scholars have given in this regard.

Shaykh as-Sa’di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct” [an-Nisa’ 4:34] that is, their refusal to obey their husbands by disobeying in word or deed. He should discipline her with the lightest method, then the next lightest. “admonish them” that is, explain the ruling of Allah about obeying and disobeying the husband, encouraging her to obey and discouraging her to disobey. If she stops, then this is the desired outcome, otherwise the husband should refuse to share her bed, not sleeping with her or having intercourse with her to the extent that will achieve the desired result. Otherwise, he may hit her lightly. If the desired outcome is attained by means of one of these things and they (wives) obey you (husbands), then “seek not against them means (of annoyance)” i.e., you have got what you

want, so do not keep on at her about things that are in the past or comment on faults the mention of which is hurtful and will cause problems. End quote.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked (19/225):

I have a wife who has five children, including an infant who is nursing and one who is walking. Their mother, my wife, does not take care of her duties towards the house or her marital duties, and does not pay attention to the cleanliness of her children, or take care of me, and she does not accept any advice from me.

They replied:

If the situation is as you describe, then advise her and explain to her the rights that the husband has over his wife. Use tact and kindness in explaining to her how she should perform her duties. If she mends her ways, then praise be to Allah. If she refuses, then refuse to share her bed. If that does not work, then hit her (lightly) as a kind of discipline, not a means of revenge or taking out your anger on her. If she obeys, then treat her kindly and nicely. But if she refuses and it is not possible to reconcile between you, then you have no choice but to bear it with patience or separate. Allah, may He be exalted, 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 husbands absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husbands property, etc.). As to those women on whose part you see illconduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful), but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great.

If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things.”

[an-Nisa' 4:34-35].

End quote.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said: If it is not possible to be patient, we try to bring about reconciliation, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation”

[an-Nisa’ 4:35].

This applies if there is fear of separation (a breach) between the two parties.

End quote from Fataawa Noor ‘ala ad-Darb.

And Allah knows best.