

4334 - How to deal with a brother's wife who has a bad attitude

the question

I have a brother wife Who has no respect for any-one even her husband and I live with them - can I say something to her to change her attitude . If she refuses, what shall I do?

Do I give her Slam. Jazaka Allah Khira.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

A kind word opens the doors to people's hearts and removes enmity from them, and tolerance, forgiveness and sincerity restore love between people. When a person speaks a kind word and turns a blind eye to bad treatment, he earns people's respect and makes the one who has done something bad apologize for his bad behaviour or stop persisting in it. Undoubtedly some people may choose a way of dealing with people that they themselves would not like to be dealt with, and they think that being tough and confrontational is what will make people respect them. When a person insists on persisting in sin, and faces harsh criticism, he finds himself lost in a vicious circle of hatred and revenge, so he can no longer tell right from wrong or true from false. So nobody can advise him, because whatever is said is taken as the opening of a confrontation or a continuation of enmity, and he is always watching and waiting for trouble. It is safer in this case to think about how we are going to deal with such a person, so we leave him alone for a while, trying to calm his fears of criticism and being called to account. We use some kind words, gentleness and smiles to make him feel that we forgive him and care about him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"... Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e., Allaah ordered the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily! He between whom

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and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it (the above quality), except those who are patient, and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e., Paradise, and in this world of a high moral character).”[Fussilat 41:35]

Leaving the person alone does not mean cutting all ties and refraining from returning greetings or talking to him; what it does mean is avoiding mixing with him so that we give him the opportunity to prepare himself to accept advice. Then we can start by mentioning his good points and saying what good things we wish for him and the hopes we have for him. Then we can give him advice (naseehah) in an appropriate manner, without hurting his feelings, offending him or boring him. We should do this in the hope of earning reward from Allaah, and with patience and tolerance. From our behaviour and good treatment we should set an example to the one whom we wish to advise. We should listen to the direction given by Allaah to His Messenger (interpretation of the meaning):

“Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e., don’t punish them).”[al-A’raaf 7:199]

Rushing to condemn and criticize without looking for the appropriate moment usually leads to the opposite of the desired results. Humility and a gentle approach lifts barriers and removes aggression and hostility. According to a saheeh hadeeth narrated by ‘Ayaad (may Allaah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah has revealed to me that you should be so humble that no one oppresses another or boasts to another.”

(Reported by Muslim, 2865).