

A Wife who Does not Allow her Husband to Sleep with her

Q: Prohibitions and Permissions-50: What is the ruling of the Shari'ah concerning a woman who does not allow her husband to cohabit with her solely out of stubbornness and obstinacy?

Answer: Such a woman will be termed as Naashizah (disobedient) and the Qur'aan advocates that she first be given advice. If she fails to heed the advice, the husband may separate their beds. If she does to heed even after this, he may use a mild form of punishment, ensuring that he never hits her face, does not cause any blood to flow and does not fracture any bone. If no reconciliation takes place even after all these measures, then the wife needs to select an arbiter from her family and the husband selects one from his family to settle the dispute.

Allaah states in Surah Nisaa that He has granted men a level of seniority over women to the point that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "If I had to command any person to prostrate before another, I would have commanded the wife to prostrate before the husband.

Allaah has granted many rights to the husband, which the wife needs to fulfil. Hadhrat Aa'isha RADI. once asked Rasulullaah SAW. who it was that had the greatest rights upon a woman. Rasulullaah SAW. informed her that (after the rights owed to Allaah and Rasulullaah SAW. it was the husband who had the most rights upon her. Rasulullaah SAW. also said that a woman will not be absolved of her rights due to Allaah until she fulfils the rights she owes to her husband.

Rasulullaah SAW. also said that as long as woman's husband is angry with her, none of her salaahs are accepted and none of her other good deeds either. In another Hadith, Rasulullaah SAW. said, 'A woman will not be able to enter Jannah unless she fulfils the rights of her husband.

The gist of it all is that because of the rights that is owed to the husband, pleasing him is an act of great reward and displeasing him is a sin. A Hadith states that if the husband summons his wife to the bed and if he then spends the night in anger because she refuses, the angels continue cursing her until the morning. Another narration states that Allaah remains angry with her for as long as her husband remains angry with her. Rasulullaah SAW. also mentioned that it is compulsory for her to respond to his call to the bed even though she may be busy at the stove. Yet another Hadith states that she is required to respond even though she may be riding a camel at the time.

In brief, the rights a woman owes to her husband are even more than those she owes to her parents. She needs to honour and revere him and, while she may not obey him in matters that are not permissible, she will be committing a grave sin if she refuses sleeping with him merely on account of stubbornness. In fact, a Hadith states that a woman will fall short of showing gratitude to her husband even if she has to lick off pus flowing from his body from head to toe.

If a woman happens to have a husband who is unattractive or unpleasant in any other physical

way, she should exercise patience and convince herself that whatever Allaah does is for the better. A saint by the name of Isma'eel RAH. once saw a couple that seemed very happy together even though the wife was extremely beautiful while the husband was extremely unattractive. When the saint asked the woman how she could be so happy with such a man, she replied, "I always think to myself that it is perhaps on account of some good deed he carried out that my husband got me and on account of some sin that I committed that I got him. Nevertheless, this is the decision of my Rabb and I am pleased with His decision."

It is also reported that a beautiful wife once addressed her unattractive husband saying, "I wish to convey to you the glad tidings that we shall both be together in Jannah." "How do you know this?" the husband enquired. "Because." she explained, "Allaah has tested me by giving me a husband like you and I have exercised patience. The abode of the patient ones in the Aakhirah shall be Jannah. Allaah has also tested you by giving me as a wife to you and you have been grateful. The abode of the grateful ones in the Aakhirah shall also be Jannah. We are thus both destined for Jannah."

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