111793 - It is not permissible for the husband to force his wife to live with his father

the question

My wife and I live in a separate house from my family, because of many problems, and I promised my wife that I would not leave her. After a while, my father asked me to come back to the family home, so that I and my wife would live with him, but my wife refused. What should I do? Should I obey my father and break the promise between us? Or do I have to keep my promise, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *{And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned} [al-Isra' 17:34]*?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly the father's rights over his son are great, but so long as your wife does not want to live in his house, you cannot force her to do that. You can convince your father of that, and accommodate your wife in a separate house, whilst upholding ties with your father, honouring him, pleasing him and treating him kindly as much as you can.

Regarding divorce, it is permissible if you need to do that, and you can offer expiation for your vow. That is not contrary to the words of Allah, may He be exalted (interpretation of the meaning): *{And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned} [al-Isra' 17:34]*, because what is meant in the verse is a promise or commitment that does not make something that is permissible prohibited. End quote.

Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan.

Fataawa al-Mar'ah al-Muslimah (2/660).