121467 - His wife behaves badly towards him and he has children from her. Should he divorce her?

the question

My question may be summed up as a problem with my wife that has been going on for seven years. My wife was the wife of my brother -- may Allaah have mercy on him -- and he had four daughters and one son from her. My aim in marrying her was to take care of the orphans, even though she is 10 years older than me or more. The ongoing problem has to do with two things which are:
1. She is extremely jealous all the time, and there is no reason for this extreme jealousy. She is so jealous that she gets suspicious when I speak to my relatives or anyone else.
2. If there is any problem, we do not speak to each other for a period of no less than a week or two weeks, and it may last almost a month. Unfortunately, we brought in people we wanted to reconcile between us, but to no avail. These problems that I am facing are happening almost every month and I have tried to divorce her three times, so that I might have a break, but what has prevented me from doing that is that I love my three children and my brother's children very much. What is the solution with this weird wife? By Allaah, I have begun to hate her very much, and were it not for my children, I would have divorced her a long time ago.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Many women do not understand the difference between jealousy, doubt and suspicion, and they do not understand that this jealousy could destroy the marriage and lead to break-up of the family. When will women understand that?

This jealousy on the part of the wife of the brother who is asking this question is going to destroy

trust between her and her husband, and lead to her wrecking her home with her own hands. This way of treating the husband will destroy his love for her and cause it to be replaced with hatred; it will destroy his desire to continue the marriage and will bring it to a hasty end.

The wise wife is the one who weighs up matters carefully and does not cause trouble to her husband or develop doubt and suspicion about his normal activities. Rather she strives to generate trust between her and him and to lay the foundations of love and happiness between her and him, so that their married life will be harmonious, otherwise she will soon be numbered among the divorcees.

Secondly:

Our advice to the husband is to take it easy and not be hasty. The nature of women is different from that of men, and there is no one who is happy with his wife but there is some crookedness in her actions and behaviour, which may be more or less according to her level of religious commitment, common sense and good behaviour.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allaah (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him) said: “Woman is created from a rib that will never become straight. So if you enjoy her, then enjoy her with the crookedness that is in her, for if you try to straighten her you will break her, and breaking her means divorcing her.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3153) and Muslim (1468).

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

This hadeeth indicates being kind towards women and treating them gently, and putting up with crookedness in their nature and the possibility of weakness in their intellect, and shows that it is not right to divorce them for no reason, and that a man should not hope to straighten her.

Sharh Muslim (10/57).

What we think you should do is put up with her attitude and try to reconcile with her and increase her knowledge and faith, giving her what is required for that of beneficial books and tapes and good companions. And you should make your kind treatment of her another means of achieving

that, as well as offering a great deal of supplication.

You should understand that divorce is a means of breaking up and scattering families, and it affects the wife and children in most cases. Many people put up with bad behaviour on the part of their wives for the sake of their children and in the interests of the children, so that they raise them in a good way so that they could help their mother to be obedient and to mend her ways. This is something that is tried and tested, and this is what we think you should do.

But if you cannot put up with her behaviour and you would end up mistreating her and denying her her rights, then divorce her. Perhaps she will come to her senses after the first or second divorce (talaaq), but if she persists in the way she is behaving and you cannot put up with her, then there are many other women besides her and Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But if they separate (by divorce), Allaah will provide abundance for everyone of them from His Bounty. And Allaah is Ever All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Wise”

[al-Nisa’ 4:130].

And Allaah is the source of strength.