12465 - Does she have to obey her husband if he tells her to work outside the home?

the question

To begin, I state that I embraced Islam about 15 years ago, part of what is so impressive to me is the true revolution to women and their rghts which Islam has made, alhumdo lillah. But regretfully, so many Muslims do not acknowledge nor apply these standards and I have seen many women taken advantage of due to it. So my question is rgarding "Womens Rights"...
men are obligated to certain maintanance of women, but women are not prohibited from certain things with her husbands permission. So how can a woman protect herself from being taken advantage of by her husband?
For instance, he wants her to work within his business, still take care of the children an even have more children, bringing the infant to work following the delivery as early as the first week out of the hospital. She is repsonsible for the grocery shopping, taking the older child to day care, working at his business, preparing meals, and keeping the house neat. He will assist periodically but not without stating that he has done so as if she should have done it herself.
Can she insist on staying home and being supported? Or must she obey her husband - since he is not asking her to do something haram? But she is tired of being tired and unable to convince him her place is in the home, or even be considerate of her needs and he is always unsatisfied by how she isn't performing to his level of satisfaction.
Sorry this is so lengthy, but it is a common problem among many sisters I have seen, taking the rights Allah gave us and not being taken advantage of.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allah has made men the protectors and maintainers of women for two reasons, what Allah has given to men and what men earn. Allah 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”

[al-Nisa’ 4:34]

The fact that Allah has given men more than women in terms of reasoning, thinking and physical strength is something concerning which there is no dispute. This is what Allah has given to men. With regard to what men earn, this refers to the husband’s spending on his wife, which is something that is obligatory and is the basis for the man being the protector and maintainer of the wife.

It was narrated that Jaabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Fear Allah with regard to women for Allah has entrusted them to you and intimacy with them has become permissible for you by the word of Allah. Their rights over you are that you should provide for them and clothe them on a reasonable basis.”

Narrated by Muslim, 1218.

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This indicates that it is obligatory for the husband to spend on his wife and clothe her. This is established by scholarly consensus. Sharh Muslim, 8/184.

One of the reasons why it is obligatory for the husband to spend on the wife is that the wife is prevented from earning an income because of her duties towards her husband, children and house.

Al-Bukhaari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The obligation of spending on one's wife and children.”

Then he narrated the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The best of charity is that which leaves one independent of means, and the upper hand is better than the lower hand, and start with those who are dependent upon you.”

Al-Bukhaari, 1426; Muslim, 1034.

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said:

The reason why it is obligatory to spend on the wife is that she is prevented from earning because of her duties to fulfil the husband’s rights. There is scholarly consensus that this is obligatory.

Al-Fath, 9/625.

The husband has to fear Allah his Lord, and take care of the wife and children that Allah has entrusted to him. It is not permissible for him to force his wife to do that which she is unable to do. She does not have to work and spend on the house and on him; rather it is obligatory for him to spend on her even if she is rich.

The role that the woman plays in the home is very important, because she looks after the house and takes care of it, and she fulfils her husband’s rights by preparing the house for him, keeping it clean and tidy, making food, looking after the children, and many other things.

The woman does not have to work outside the house, especially if going out will expose her to mixing with non-mahram men and failing or falling short in her duties towards her house and children.

As mentioned above, it is obligatory for the husband to spend on her, according to scholarly consensus. He has to realize this and make his wife feel safe and protected in her house so that she can do that which Allah has enjoined upon her.

See also the answer to question no. 5591.

And Allah knows best.