139025 - She wants to leave the land of disbelief and go back to her family, but they refused to let her do so. What should she do?

the question

I am a young woman, twenty-three years old. I have been studying in Germany for four years. I used to live with my family in a Muslim Arab country, but after high school I travelled to join my brother who lives in this western country. After a while, my brother finished his studies, and because of his work he had to travel to another city, but I stayed in this city to study with my (female) friend with whom I live. I began to distribute pamphlets about Islam, calling people to the religion of Allah thereby, and I hope that Allah will bless me with a husband who will help me to continue this project. But I feel that remaining in this country to study without a mahram is a sin. So I decided, if Allah wills, to finally go back to my family, but my family emphatically refused and they are saying: How can you come back after we have spent so much money on you? Please note that I did not know that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) disavowed the Muslim who lives among the mushrikeen. I'm sorry for writing such a long message. Please advise me.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

For the Muslim to reside among the mushrikeen poses a grave danger, because of what there is in such environments of a lack of virtuous attitudes and deviation from sound human nature. No wise person who has knowledge of such environments will doubt what there is in them of negative effects on the Muslim who lives there.

Wise people should look at what Islam brought of rulings which seek to protect people's religious commitment and honour, and they should hold fast to them and act upon them. That is better for them in terms of both this world and the hereafter. We see this noble Sahaabi woman, who lived in

a pure and decent society, and she wanted to go to Makkah al-Mukarramah to perform the obligatory Hajj as enjoined by Allah, may He be exalted, but her husband wanted to go and fight for the sake of Allah, may He be exalted. So the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not allow her husband to go for jihad, and he instructed him to travel with his wife and be a mahram who could look after her whilst she performed Hajj. Al-Bukhaari (3006) and Muslim (1341) narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) that he heard the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “No man should be alone with a woman without there being a mahram present, and no woman should travel unless she has a mahram with her.” A man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, my wife has set out for Hajj and I have enlisted for such and such a campaign. He said: “Go and do Hajj with your wife.” If that was the shar‘i ruling at that time, with such good people and in such a pure environment, then what would be said about our own times, in a situation where a woman wants to travel to the land of disbelief on her own, and she wants to study in a mixed environment with the disbelievers, and to reside among them without any of her family present?!

The circumstances in which the questioner is living in that country makes us urge her and exhort her to insist on what she has decided to do, namely returning to her Muslim country and living among her family. For a single woman to live in a land of disbelief, and study in a mixed environment, when she has no family there to take care of her and look after her – all of that undoubtedly poses a danger to the religious commitment of that woman, except for one who is not aware of that situation or does not attach any significance to the danger that is posed to religious commitment and honour.

Your family should not regard what they have spent as an obstacle to your going back to them. They should reflect on the situation of those who have fallen into the clutches of the enemies of Islam and of good morals and sound human nature, both men and women in those countries, male and female students, and they should reflect on the consequences of that for their families and how those families are now prepared to spend all that is precious in order to put right what has been corrupted by those environments in their sons and daughters. Not everything that has been corrupted can be set right. The one who is blessed is the one who learns a lesson from others.

Your father should understand that he will be questioned about you on the Day of Resurrection, for he is the shepherd of his household and he is responsible for it. Al-Bukhaari (853) and Muslim (1829) narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The ruler is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock.”

We ask Allah to guide your family to do that which is in their best interests in both religious and worldly terms, and to enable them to do that which Allah loves and is pleased with. Try to make sure that your return is with their approval, to the best of your ability. If you do not succeed in that, it is not permissible for you to obey them by staying there, and you must return to them. By doing so, you will please your Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, so do not worry about your family or anyone else being displeased with you. Understand that that state of affairs will not last for long, in sha Allah; your stance on this issue will be recorded to your credit, and they will eventually be pleased with you, and it will become clear to them that what you have done is undoubtedly the right thing. It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever seeks to please Allah by displeasing the people, Allah, may He be exalted, will be pleased with him and will make the people pleased with him. But whoever seeks to please the people by displeasing Allah, Allah will be displeased with him and will make the people displeased with him.” Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (1/501); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in as-Silsilah as-Saheehah (2311).

Please see also the answer to question no. 27211

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to make you steadfast, to enable you to do that which pleases Him, and to bless you with a righteous husband who will help you to practise your religion, and to bless you with righteous offspring, for He is All-Hearing, Ever Responsive.

And Allah knows best.