181044 - He is complaining about his wife and wants to divorce her, but he is worried about the impact on the children

the question

I am a young man, thirty-seven years old. Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, enabled me to get a postgraduate degree, and my financial situation is excellent, praise be to Allah. My only problem is with my marriage. I married a girl with the help of my family about eight years ago, but I feel that I was not lucky in my marriage at all. Even though my wife is a good person, she takes marital duties very lightly, and she is falling short with regard to taking care of herself, her house and her children. I have tried very hard with her, and I spoke to her family, but no one listens. She is lazy and loves chaos, the exact opposite of how I am, and at the same time, I find that I have nothing in common with her. By Allah, I have been suffering a great deal of distress all these years because of my wife, and I find no pleasure in life at all. I have tried to bear that with patience, but I have become short tempered because of my wife. I always feel guilty when I get angry, but I can no longer put up with her attitude and behaviour. At the same time, I cannot divorce her because of my four children. Sometimes I ask myself: is my marriage to her a test or a punishment from Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted? By Allah, I always hoped for a righteous wife who would understand me and help me to obey Allah, but for all these years I have felt regret, because I always feel that I was too hasty and made a bad choice. What you advise me to do, O Shaykh?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is not possible to imagine married life being without some problems. Was life in the most honourable households on the face of the earth, namely the households of the Prophets, free of troubles or disagreement between the spouses?

If you wish, we could tell you about the household of our father Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his disagreement with his father, or the household of Nuh and his disagreement with his wife and son, or the household of Lut and his disagreement with his wife.

And our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) kept away from his wives for an entire month and stayed in the mosque.

So no Muslim household is free of such problems, but they will be fewer when the husband is wise and mature in thinking, has a strong character and is wise in dealing with issues, and they will be more numerous if the husband is reckless, unduly strict and harsh.

There is no wife who will entirely match what the husband seeks of perfect human qualities, and the converse also applies. So let the husband examine himself and his faults and shortcomings, for the fortunate person is the one whose mistakes are not innumerable.

The wise husband should put up with that if he wants to have a normal married life, for there will never be any joy between him and her unless he accepts her as she is, with her imperfections, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said.

Secondly:

Before deciding on divorce, we hope that you will reflect on the following points:

-1-

It may be that you are the cause of your wife’s shortcomings, either because of your mistreatment of her, or because of the sin that you are committing, and what she is doing may be a punishment for you because of that. So look for the cause and rectify your situation with your Lord by obeying Him and doing acts of worship, and with your wife by advising her sincerely and teaching her about the rights that her husband has over her, and you will soon see the outcome of that, in sha Allah.

-2-

In many cases the wise husband will bear his wife’s behaviour with patience for the sake of the children, because he does not want them to go through upheaval and neglect, and he wants them to be successful and righteous, and that can never happen in the event of divorce. Hence he is patient and puts up with his wife, in the hope that his staying in the marital home will be a cause of his children growing up to be righteous and successful.

-3-

Before you divorce her, you must think about the impacts of this divorce, which include:

a.. Your wife will have little to no opportunity to marry again, because she is a divorcee and has children, and surely you are well aware of what could result from that.

b.. It will cause upheaval and suffering to the children. Their physical energy will be drained by having to move between the houses of their mother and father; their mental energy will be wasted on thinking about their parents’ situation; and their emotional well-being will be disturbed as a result of their missing the compassion of their mother and the strong character of their father.

You are right to think that this issue should deter you from going ahead with divorce, because in fact the issue of children is very important and the presence of children from broken homes is a bad sign in a community. So do not break up your marriage and cause upheaval to your children because of an issue that you could put right without having to break up the household.

We agree completely that you should think about the bad consequences for your children and the fact that you will be answerable for them before Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted. In fact, the consequences that will affect this wife, the mother of your children, should also be sufficient to deter you from thinking of divorce.

Our advice to you is: speak frankly to your wife, advise her with wisdom and beautiful exhortation, and be patient with her until she becomes as you want her to be, in sha Allah.

Assuming that you have done all of that and seen no improvement, then you could take a second wife, if your financial situation allows, but as for divorce, do not do that!

May Allah make things easy for you, grant you reassurance and rectify your affairs in your marriage.

And Allah knows best.