23481 - The distress of a wife whose husband is active in da’wah and does not have time for her

the question

I got married to a person who is religiously committed, praise be to Allah, and my condition (in the marriage contract) was that I complete my study of sharee’ah. My husband agreed to that, but after we got married he began to tell me that the Islamic University in America is not recognized. (This does not bother me so long as it is teaching knowledge of sharee’ah). But he does not want to spend his money unless it is a recognized Arabic university. Now after four years I will be going home in sha Allah, but I have resolved not to go with him until I have completed my sharee’ah studies or at least completed my diploma in the study of the Holy Qur’aan, in sha Allah.

What advice can you give to me and to my husband? I want him to read this letter, noting that my husband does not have sufficient time for me to sit with him and read Islamic books.
My husband is very active in da’wah outside the home, but inside the home he is not like that. He sits in his den at home and locks the door, and he tells me that the people’s interests are more important than the family’s interests, but it should be noted that I need him to take the children away from me and take care of them because I become sick (praise be to Allah in all situations). I ask Allah Almighty, the Lord of the Mighty Throne, to heal me.
It has reached the stage where I now hate him for his shortcomings, for he spends all his time in meetings in the mosque. At the beginning of our marriage, four years ago, I was trying to memorize Qur’aan but he did not help me with that and he would never listen to my recitation. I tried to read Qur’aan to him, but he could not do that because he is busy with meetings and other things. He relaxes at home for fifteen to thirty minutes, but it should be noted that he has set aside one day to stay at home, following heated arguments between him and me. All the time I sit alone with my children and he has never appreciated that, to the point that I am fed up with him and the society in which I live. I turned to Allah and I do not complain to my family; in fact I praise my husband in front of them, hoping that Allah will change him and make him pay attention to his family. Note that I am living overseas far away from my family and brothers. He also has another

fault: if I ask him for money to buy what I need, he tells me that he does not have money, but I know that he is spending on his family and brothers. I am not telling him not to spend on his parents, rather he has the duty to spend on them. But he is very stingy towards me and my children. I want him to give me a monthly allowance for me and my children – is this permissible? I hope that you can advise me on this, for I am tired of asking him. I hope that you can advise us and him.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allah to relieve your distress, make things easy for you, console you in your loneliness, guide your husband and heal you of your sickness… Ameen.

Your question includes a number of matters, both issues of fiqh and social problems… Perhaps it is best if we look at each problem by itself so as to reach a useful solution.

The first problem is that your husband seems to have reneged on fulfilling the condition which he agreed to when he married you, which was that you should complete your studies. It is not permissible (for him to renege on the conditions of the marriage contract), because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The conditions which are most deserving of being fulfilled are those by which it becomes permissible for you to engage in intimacy” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2721; Muslim, 1418), i.e., the conditions of the marriage contract which are stipulated by the woman or her guardian; but it should be noted that these conditions should not go against the Book of Allah.

So your husband must fulfil this condition, and not prevent you from studying.

With regard to the costs of study and the choice of a university, reference should be made to the details of the condition; if you did stipulate the condition that he has to pay your fees or let you study at a particular university, then he has to honour that. If you did not stipulate these details, then he is only obliged to let you study.

With regard to your intention to stay there and not travel with your husband, if you will be staying in a safe place then it is permissible for you to do that, otherwise it is not. All of this depends on your study being acceptable by Islamic standards, but if it involves mixing of men and women or other objectionable matters as happens in many universities, then it is not permissible for you to study there or for your husband to honour this condition at all.

The second problem is that he does not have enough time to sit with you.

The answer to this problem is that he can find time, but it needs sound planning, a revision of priorities and an understanding of rights and duties.

We remind you that your husband's being busy with righteous deeds is a blessing; perhaps you might give him a break and praise Allah that he is not busy with sinful things as is the case for many wives who are suffering because their husbands neglect their families and are preoccupied with sinful activities.

It seems that your husband does not fully understand the priorities of the Islamic sharee'ah, and that there is a lack of balance in his approach to Islamic duties. Perhaps one aspect of the religion has distracted him from another aspect. He should be reminded of the aayah in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones"

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Your family has rights over you."

He should also pay attention to the order in which Islam tells us to direct our da'wah efforts, so he should start with himself, then his wife and children, then all his relatives, the closer ones before the more distant ones. It is important for you to make him realize that you are not opposed to his da'wah efforts and that you are not an obstacle in the way of his striving for the sake of Allah, but

you want the rights that Islam gives you.

Tell him to make you one of the targets of his da'wah, one of the people whom he pays attention to and follows their progress. Tell him to make his children one of his da'wah projects that he undertakes. For more information see question no. 6913.

After this problem is resolved, we are sure – in sha Allah – that the third problem will be resolved, which is your feelings of hatred towards your husband as a result of his bad treatment of you, because this feeling is simply a reaction to his neglect of you, and when the cause, his neglect of your rights, is no longer there it will disappear. At the same time, make lots of du'aa' asking Allah to open his heart to you and your heart to him, because the Shaytaan is keen to cause division between a man and his wife, and the hatred that exists in your heart is no more than the promptings of the Shaytaan, so seek refuge with Allah from his evil.

The fourth problem:

The husband is not fulfilling his obligations towards his wife and children, and instead he is spending on his parents.

This action on the husband's part involves both right and wrong. What he is doing right is spending on his parents and siblings, but where he is going wrong is his neglect of spending on his wife. This is going against his duty, because a man's duty is to give his wife precedence over his brothers when it comes to spending, because of the report narrated by Abu Dawood in his Sunan (1691) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined charity. A man said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have a dinar.' He said, 'Spend it in charity on yourself.' He said, 'I have another.' He said, 'Spend it in charity on your child.' He said, 'I have another.' He said, 'Spend it in charity on your wife.' He said, 'I have another.' He said, 'Spend it in charity on your servant.' He said, 'I have another.' He said, 'You know best (where to spend it).'" (Classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood, 1483).

If your husband persists in not spending on you and your needs, then you have the right to take

from his wealth what is sufficient for you and your children, even if you do that without his permission, without being extravagant or causing mischief, because of the hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said that Hind bint ‘Utbah said, “O Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyaan is a stingy man and he does not give me enough for myself and my child unless I take it from him without his knowledge.” He said, “Take what is sufficient for you and your child, on a reasonable basis.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5364).

We ask Allah to reconcile you both and make things easier for you both. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.