3043 - A father is neglecting his family and going out with the Jamaa’at al-Tableegh

the question

What is your ruling in regard to the father, which has been neglecting to the family? He does not support the family for living and he receives money from welfare for his living. He saves almost all the money from welfare that he receives. My mother money is spending on a daily basis such as food. She makes very little money from baby-sitting.
Am I committed a major sin, if my father does not talk to me and mad at me about the money. Is it also committed sin if my mother and I talk behind my father?
My father is following the JAMAH TABLIGH; he likes to do Dawah and worshiping but has no responsibility in the family. Is it true during the prophet lifetime that Sahaba went out to Dawah and left the family behind for ALLAH to take care?
I'm very sorry if my question is being offensive to individual or JAMAH TABLIGH.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

No doubt the cause of this problem and others is ignorance of many of the rulings of Islam, and a lack of understanding of a man’s responsibilities towards those whom he is supporting, and the duties towards his family that Allaah has enjoined upon him.

One of the greatest rights enjoined by wives in children is that the head of the family should spend on them; indeed, this is one of the greatest acts of worship and devotion to Allaah that a person can do. Spending on them covers their food, drink, clothing and shelter, and everything that a wife and children need to ensure their good health and physical well being.

Allaah has told us that men are the ones who spend on women, and so they have the status of

being qawwaamoon (maintainers and protectors) and of excelling over them, because they spend on them when they give them the mahr (dowry) and maintenance. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allaah 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 this spending is obligatory is indicated by the Qur’an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the scholars and of all wise people.

The evidence of the Qur’aan includes the aayat (interpretation of the meanings):

“Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allaah has given him. Allaah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allaah will grant after hardship, ease.”[al-Talaaq 65:7]

“… but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother’s food and clothing on a reasonable basis. No person shall have a burden laid on him greater than he can bear…”[al-Baqarah 2:233]

“… and if they are pregnant, spend on them until they deliver…”

[al-Talaaq 65:6]

With regard to the evidence in the Sunnah, many ahaadeeth were narrated which show that it is obligatory for the husband to spend on his wife and children, and those who are under his guardianship. Jaabir ibn ‘Abd-Allaah (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in his sermon during his Farewell Pilgrimage:

“Fear Allaah with regard to women, for they are your prisoners. You have taken them as a trust from Allaah, and they are permissible for you through the word of Allaah, and they have the right to be given provision and clothing by you on a reasonable basis.” (Reported by Muslim, 8/183).

‘Umar ibn al-Ahwas (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Messenger of

Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say during his Farewell Pilgrimage:

“Verily, you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you. As for your rights over your women, they are that they should not allow anyone to sit on your beds whom you dislike, or allow anyone into your houses whom you dislike. Verily, their rights over you are that you should treat them well with regard to their clothing and food.”

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 1163, and Ibn Maajah, 1851).

Mu’aawiyah ibn Haydah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said:

“I said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, what are the rights of the wife of any one of us over us?’ He said, ‘That you feed her when you feed yourself and clothe her when you clothe yourself, that you do not say to her, “May Allaah make your face ugly!”, and that you do not hit her.’”

(Reported by Abu Dawood, 2/244; Ibn Maajah, 1850; Ahmad, 4/446).

Imaam al-Baghawi said: “Al-Khattaabi said: this is a command to spend on women and clothe them, according to the capabilities of the husband. As the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) made this a right of women, it is necessary whether the husband is present or absent. If the husband is not able to do it, it become a debt which he owes, as with all other duties, whether or not the qaadi (judge) issues a decree to that effect.”

It was reported that Wahb said:

“A freed slave of ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Amr said to him, ‘I want to go and spend this month there in Jerusalem.’ He said, ‘Have you left enough for your family to live on during this month?’ He said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Then go back to your family and leave them what they need, for I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying: “It is enough sin for a man not to give food to the one whom he is supposed to feed.”’”

(Reported by Ahmad, 2/160; Abu Dawood, 1692).

The original report in is Muslim, where the wording is, “It is enough sin for a man to withhold food

from the one whom he is supposed to feed.”

Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah will ask everyone who has been given responsibility about whatever he was responsible for, until He asks a man about his family.” (Reported by Ibn Hibaan).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said:

“I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saying, ‘By Allaah, if one of you were to get up in the morning and carry firewood on his back, and sell it and meet his own needs from the money and give some away in charity, this would be better for him than coming to a man and begging from him, and either being given something or not. The upper hand (the one which gives) is better than the lower hand (the one that takes), and start with those for whom you are responsible.” (Reported by Muslim, 3/96). According to a report narrated by Ahmad

(2/524), it was said: “For whom am I responsible, O Messenger of Allaah?” He said, “Your wife is one of those for whom you are responsible.”

According to a hadeeth narrated by Jaabir ibn Samurah (may Allaah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If Allaah gives something good to any one of you, let him start with himself and his family.”

(Reported by Muslim, 1454).

With regard to the consensus of the scholars:

Imaam Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Mughni (7/564):

“The scholars are agreed that it is the duty of husbands to spend on their wives if they (the husbands) have reached the age of puberty, except in the case of a wife who is rebellious. This was mentioned by Ibn al-Mundhir and others.”

The above references to the texts of Islam indicate that it is obligatory for a man to spend on his family and to take care of their interests. Many hadeeth narrated from the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) demonstrate the virtue of this action and show that it is a righteous action in the sight of Allaah. Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When the Muslim spends on his family with the hope of earning reward, this is an act of charity for him."

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1/136).

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Fath (9/498): "Spending on one's family is obligatory according to scholarly consensus. Islam called it sadaqah (charity) lest people think that they are doing it as a duty for which there is no reward, because they knew how much reward there is in giving charity, so that they will not give charity to others until they have given enough to their families. This was to encourage them to give priority to the charity that is obligatory before they give voluntary charity."

Sa'd ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him: "Whatever you spend on your family, you will be rewarded for it, even the mouthful which you lift up and place in your wife's mouth."

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 3/164, and Muslim, 1628).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "A dinar that you spend in the way of Allaah, a dinar that you spend to free a slave, a dinar that you give to the poor, and a dinar that you spend on your family – the greatest of these is the one that you spend on your family. " (reported by Muslim, 2/692).

Ka'b ibn 'Ujarah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "A man passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and his Companions were impressed by the man's strength and energy. They said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, if only this was for the sake of Allaah!' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'If he goes out to work for the sake of his young children, he is striving for the sake of Allaah; if he goes out to work for the sake of his aged parents, he is striving for the sake of Allaah; if he goes out to work to keep himself from having to beg, he is striving for the sake of Allaah; but if he goes out to work for the purposes of

showing off and boasting, then he is striving in the way of the Shaytaan.”

(Reported by al-Tabaraani, Saheeh al-Jaami’, 2/8).

The salaf, may Allaah have mercy on them, understood this duty properly. It was their guideline in their day-to-day life with their families. No one put it better than Imaam al-Rabaani ‘Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mubaarak (may Allaah have mercy on him), who said: “There is nothing better than earning one's own living, not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah.” (al-Siyar, 8/399)

It is not permissible for a Muslim to neglect his family even if he claims that he is travelling for the purpose of worship and righteous deeds, because neglecting one’s family and failing to spend on them is haraam. We have quoted above the advice given by ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Amr to the one who wanted to stay in Jerusalem: he had to make arrangements for his family’s provision first. So you have to advise your father of the things we have said in this reply, and explain the matter to him politely and kindly. If you can fill the gap left by your father’s negligence by spending some of your own money on your family as much as you can, you will get a great reward, in sha Allaah. We ask Allaah to put all our affairs right. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.