70469 - Should she cut off ties with her family who are trying to lead her astray and are opposed to her becoming righteous?

the question

I am married -Alhamdulillah- I live with my husband abiding by Allah’s path. My family is not religious; they even fight us for our adherence to Islam (including my niqab and our obvious way of life). They overstepped that by interfering in the details of my life, and they want me to obey them in everything. Because I refuse their orders that are contrary to Allah’s command, they increase their enmity to me, especially my mother. I do not see them but as a factor destroying my religion, righteousness, and even my marriage life. It nearly led us to divorce, but Allah saved us from that. I am far from them now. I do not visit them or keep the family relations with them, to protect my religion and save my family. My mother claims that I have cut the ‘womb’ relation with them by doing that. Am I sinful?
Knowing that being with them forces me to hear what displeases Allah, this may sometimes be cursing Allah, the religion, the companions and all the aspects of religion and righteousness. Note that I have tried so many times to guide them but they never listened.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Verily to Allaah we belong and unto Him is our return. By Allaah, it fills the heart with sorrow to hear that there is such severe suffering and pain in Muslim families for the one who wants to adhere to his religion and straight path. We have often heard of Muslim men and women who suffer because of their Christian or idol-worshipping families, but for a Muslim woman to suffer because of her family who claim to be Muslims and to flee from her so-called Muslim family for the sake of her religious commitment is something that is very sad.

We ask Allaah to make you and your husband steadfast in adhering to Islam and true guidance, and to make you strong in adhering to the truth, and to make you righteous and bless you with righteous offspring.

Muslim narrated in his Saheeh (145) that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Islam began as something strange and will revert to being something strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.” If the people regard you as strange because of your religious commitment, then glad tidings to you. If the Muslim sees that he is a stranger because of his Islam, even among his family, then this is glad tidings for him that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) conveyed to him: “Glad tidings to the strangers.”

There can be no doubt that reviling the Lord and Islam, as done by your mother and other family members, is major kufr that puts a person beyond the pale of Islam and dooms them to Hell for eternity, if the one who did that dies without coming back to Islam.

Hence your duty towards those among your family who have fallen into such sins is to call them to refrain from this kufr and tell them that they must come back to Islam, and they should understand their situation and the Islamic ruling on their case, which is that they are apostates whose good deeds have been cancelled out.

You should realize that the fact that your mother has fallen into kufr does not mean that you should sever your relationship with her, rather you should be more concerned about it lest she die in this state.

You have to honour her and treat her kindly even if she is a kaafir and, moreover, even if she calls you to kufr and strives hard to do that, as our Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents; but if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not”

[al-‘Ankaboot 29:8]

“But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly”

[Luqmaan 31:15].

It was narrated that Asma’ bint Abi Bakr (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: My mother came to me when she was a mushrik. I consulted the Messenger of Allaah (S) and said: O Messenger of Allaah (S), my mother has come to me and she is expecting (something), should I uphold the ties of kinship with my mother? He said: “Yes, uphold the ties of kinship with your mother.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2620) and Muslim (1003).

But this honouring and showing kindness does not mean that you have to mix with them in their homes and get involved in their lives where they commit sins and revile Allaah and His Messenger and His Religion, unless your presence will put a stop to this kufr and these sins. But if they will are ongoing and there is the possibility that you may be affected by what you hear, then it is haraam for you to stay in that gathering with them. If they repeat that every time you visit, then there is nothing wrong with you not visiting them, and that is not being disobedient to them, rather it is a shar’i obligation. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Qur’aan) that when you hear the Verses of Allaah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them”

[al-Nisa’ 4:140]

Do not pay any attention to your family’s forsaking you because of your and your husband’s commitment to the rulings of sharee’ah on clothing and other matters, because this is one of the tricks of the shaytaan.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said, concerning a similar issue:

Obeying one's parents is required in that which is good and proper, but if they tell you to commit sin, then there is no obedience to them, because it is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Obedience is only in that which is good and proper.” So adhere to your hijab and try to convince them and explain the rulings to them, and do not pay any attention to their threats. Seek the help of Allaah, may He be glorified, in that, then seek the help of good people among your relatives who can advise them, in the hope that Allaah may benefit them thereby. End quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah li’l-Buhooth al-‘Ilmiyyah wa’l-Ifta’ (1/541)

It is strange that your mother has fallen into kufr, evil and sin, then we see her showing concern about your disobedience to her, and accuses you thereof. This contradiction is indicative of ignorance of sharee’ah and a lack of concern about its rulings.

To sum up: The Muslim woman is obliged to treat her family and parents well, and to do her utmost to advise them with goodness, wisdom and beautiful preaching. She should regard the period when she cuts off ties with them – for the sake of her religious commitment – as a temporary remedy, and if she feels that her family have made some change for the better, she should hasten to resume ties with them and guide them towards that which is good.

Do not forget to pray for your mother and your family, asking Allaah to guide them and bring them back to their true religion before it is too late.

And Allaah knows best.