82138 - Is it permissible for a woman to change her name and take her husband’s name?

the question

As you know, the religious curriculum that is taught in Saudi Arabia is based on the teachings of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab. After I graduated from high school I went to complete my studies in a western city. When I entered into a religious discussion with some Muslim women about the prohibition on a woman taking her husband’s name, I was surprised to hear them say: You are Wahhabis (followers of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab) and this madhhab is not correct. What is the ruling on this response? What is the evidence in the Sunnah that speaks specifically about the issue of a wife taking her husband’s name, if such exists? Please note that I have read the answers which discuss naming and all the evidence quoted in those answers, but I hope to find a hadeeth that speaks specifically of the wife.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The religious curriculum that is taught in the schools of Saudi Arabia isnot based on the teachings of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab, rather it is based on the Quran and Sunnah and the consensus of the early generations of this ummah. Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab was a follower of Quran and Sunnah, and he was one of the renewers and reformers who called the ummah to come back to the Quran and Sunnah and to follow the example of the righteous salaf (may Allah be pleased with them). He did not introduce anything new from himself, rather he called people to the Quran and Sunnah. In that regard he is like every renewer (mujaddid) of this ummah. As for the appellation of “Wahhaabi” this is a word used by the enemies of the call of truth against the way of Ahl al-Sunnah and the way of everyone who calls for pure Tawheed and

rejects innovations and myths, seeking thereby to put the people off their call. For more details please see the answer to question no. 36616.

Secondly:

It is not permissible for a Muslim man – let alone a Muslim woman – to study in the kaafir lands, because that comes under the prohibition on staying among the mushrikeen, and it exposes one to doubts and desires, especially if one is young and has no Islamic knowledge, so one is exposed to physical temptation and specious arguments.

We have discussed this in more than one question. Please see questions no. 13342, 27211.

Thirdly:

There is nothing in the Sunnah to indicate that a woman should take her husband's name, rather this is an innovated matter that is not approved of by sharee'ah. The wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are the Mothers of the Believers, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who was the noblest of people, married them but not one of them took his name, rather each of them kept her father's name even if her father was a kaafir. Similarly the wives of the Sahaabah and those who came after them did not change their names.

In the answer to question no. 1942 we have explained the ruling on naming oneself after someone other than one's father.

In the answer to question no. 6241 we have mentioned in detail the reasons why a wife should not take her husband's name.

And Allah knows best.