91514 - Problems Between Spouses Due to Children’s Poor Performance at School

the question

We have a son who is not doing well at school and his father is not raising him properly. When he was in the sixth grade he learned a bad word and said it to his brother. When I wanted to punish him, he stopped me, and that was not the first time, but for the first time I took a stance and stopped teaching him. After some time, during which his grades dropped, his father asked me to teach him, and I stipulated that he should not interfere if I needed to discipline him and that he should not prevent me from going to dar al-tahfeez (place for memorizing Qur’aan) no matter what happened, because he used to agree sometimes and prevent me sometimes for no other reason than to exercise control. He agreed and I started to teach our son, and I went to the tahfeez – level one. After we both succeeded in our study, by Allaah’s help, and a new academic year began, my husband forbade me to complete my study in the dar without any convincing reason, and I lost interest and did not try hard in teaching my son. The result was that he failed the first half of the new academic year. When the final exams drew close, my husband asked me to teach our son, and I asked him: If I teach him, will you agree to let me go to the dar next year in sha Allaah? He exploded and said: You are the reason why they are failing, I will not agree to any of your requests and there is nothing good in you, and Allaah will not accept your deeds. Since that day he has forbidden me to go out, and he always speaks ill of me behind my back in front of his children, to such an extent that he said to them, “I will keep her in the house like a she-devil, I will never take her anywhere.” He even intends to prevent me visiting my family. Is teaching the children an Islamic duty for which not doing it deserves such a punishment? What is the ruling on my insisting on going to the dar, which would have kept me from the sin in which I have indulged during this year in which I was forced to give up my studies?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Raising the children is a responsibility that is shared between both parent. If there is a conflict or shortcoming in their upbringing, that has a bad effect on the children, who will develop a bad attitude and will be lost. Hence it is obligatory for the parents to raise their children well and not to have any conflicts or shortcomings, especially in front of the children. They should agree on the Islamic educational means they will use to deal with their children's mistakes. If one parents thinks that there should be consequences for wrongdoing, but the other disagrees and thinks that they should be easy-going, they should discuss it and come to some agreement, so that the child will realize that they have agreed to be easy-going because of the intercession of one parent, so that he will have another chance to set himself straight. But if one of them objects to the other in front of the child and speaks harshly and with bad manners, this is wrong and will have a bad effect on the children.

The fact that the responsibility in raising children is shared between the father and mother is indicated by the following:

1 –Allaah 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, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded"

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

2 – It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The ruler of the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock. A woman is the shepherd of her husband's house and children and is responsible for her flock. The slave is the shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (853) and Muslim (1829).

See also the answer to question no. 10016 for more information.

Secondly:

The father’s responsibility for raising his child should be his first priority. The man has wisdom, experience and strength and he can speak with others to find the best means to raise his child. The salaf (early generations of Islam) were very keen to be directly involved in raising and disciplining their children. It is narrated that the ‘Abbaasi caliph al-Mansoor sent word to those of Banu Umayyah who were in prison to ask them: What is the hardest thing for you in this prison? They said: What we have missed out on of raising our children.

Some fathers think that raising their children and fulfilling this trust is achieved by giving them food, drink, clothing and shelter, but this is a false notion that is far removed from the laws of Allaah.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Treating daughters and the like kindly means giving them an Islamic education, teaching them and raising them to follow the truth, striving to keep them chaste and keeping them away from that which Allaah has forbidden of wanton display and the like, as also applies to raising sisters and male children, and other kinds of kind treatment, so that everyone will be raised to be obedient to Allaah and His Messenger and to keep away from that which Allaah has forbidden, and to do their duty towards Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted. Hence it is known that what is meant by kind treatment is not just providing food, drink and clothing, rather the meaning is more general than that and includes treating them kindly in both religious and worldly terms.

Majmoo’ Fataawa wa Maqaalaat al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (4/377)

Thirdly:

The most important thing on which you should focus is teaching your children sound Islamic belief

(‘aqeedah), the rulings of sharee’ah and good morals. This is more important than anything else, but it does not mean that they should not study other worldly sciences, so long as the study environment is acceptable and there is no mixing with girls or studying in Christian missionary schools or studying kaafir (non-Muslim)or corrupt material.

In Fatwa no. 4172, issued on 4/12/1401 AH by the Standing Committee for Academic Research and Issuing Fatwas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it says:

Fourthly: All Muslims must pay attention to teaching children, both male and female, true Islam with its beliefs, rulings, morals and etiquette. It is not permissible for educational programs to be devoid of that or to mix Islamic teachings with any other false beliefs, views or opinions.

Fifthly: Every Muslim should realize that Allaah has appointed him as a shepherd and that Allaah will ask him about this trust that He has given to him. If he has fulfilled it in the best possible way and has been sincere, then praise be to Allaah, but if it is otherwise then he has no one to blame but himself. Allaah 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 966:6]. And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock.” And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also said: “There is no one whom Allaah appoints in charge of a flock and he dies being insincere towards his flock, but Allaah will forbid paradise to him.” End quote.

This responsibility should be shared with regard to teaching and guiding, each according to his abilities, and Allaah does not burden any soul beyond its scope. It is not permissible for the father to throw the burden of teaching the child on the mother’s shoulders and then become a mere spectator or become heedless about his child’s upbringing nor is it permissible for the mother to do the same thing. It is a shared responsibility to discipline and teach the child. If the father is working hard and the mother has no other job, then her share of the burden will be heavier, and vice versa. They should consult one another and discuss matters so that the mission will be fulfilled in the best possible way, but the basic principle with regard to discipline is that the one who is in charge and bears most responsibility is the father, not the mother.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Sons and daughters have a shepherd to take care of them, when they are small, and the one who takes care of them and directs their affairs is their father or older brother. “The man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock.” Guardians and shepherds of households must direct their families to worship Allaah and to be keen to seek knowledge. They should encourage their children and say, “Come, my son, what have you memorized (of Qur’aan) today? Recite to me what you have memorized,” so that he will be encouraged and he will know that there is someone following up on him. The same may be said of daughters: encourage them and teach them to seek knowledge and act upon it. Be approachable, do not be like some fathers who are like planks of wood in their houses, they do not do anything. Each man is responsible for his family and flock.

Al-Liqa’ al-Shahri (67).

Fourthly:

We advise our sister not to go out of her house except with the permission and approval of her husband, not even to learn or teach Qur’aan, because obedience to one's husband is obligatory and going out of the house without one’s husband’s permission is haram (impermissible). Putting pressure on him to make him let her go out is also not permissible. Do not open a door to evil by going out in this way. You can divide your time between teaching your son and learning yourself. Then convince your husband of this division of time. We think that he will appreciate this move on your part and it will be a means of working out both issues.

You should note that your husband is not sinning by preventing you from going out to halaqahs (circles of learning)for memorizing Qur’aan. It is a sin only if he prevents you from going out to pray in the mosque or to learn essential knowledge that you cannot learn at home. Allaah has made it easy for people to learn, a woman can read books or listen to tapes on all kinds of knowledge. There is nothing to prevent her from benefiting from modern means of learning. She will never get more by going out than she will get in her house, if she wants that. You could also

hold a halaqah for sisters to memorize Qur'aan and seek knowledge in your own house, with no need to go out.

Whatever the case, do whatever you can to help take care of your son and teach him, treat your husband kindly and do what Allaah has enjoined upon you towards him, and you will see that bear fruits for yourself, your husband and your children, in sha Allaah.

Fifthly:

Our advice to the husband is also to treat his wife kindly. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The best of you is the best of you to his wife." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (3895); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheehah (385).

If he thinks that her going out to the daar al-tahfeez is beneficial for her, and this benefit extends to her children and to the household as a whole, then why would he deprive her of that goodness? It is also affecting the relationship between him and her because she thinks that he is denying her something that would be beneficial for her. The life between them should be based on mutual understanding and shared responsibility, and keenness on the part of both for that which benefits the other.

You (the husband) should understand that your trying to make your wife happy and helping her in something that does not constitute disobedience towards Allaah will bring benefits to you and your children too. We ask Allaah to join you together in goodness and to help you both to do that which will benefit you in this world and in the Hereafter.

Sixthly:

There follow some comments by experts in the field explaining the shared role of the father and mother in raising and teaching children: a mother said, objecting: why does the husband accuse his wife of falling short and neglect if the son does not achieve high grades, when he himself is forgetting his duties that are essential with regard to this matter?

Dr. Muhammad Abu Daff, a professor of education in the Islamic University of Gaza said:

Both the father and the mother have to cooperate with regard to this matter. The father should make up for the shortcomings that the mother cannot because she is too busy or because she does not have sufficient knowledge of that particular subject.

Dr. Abu Daff emphasized the importance of fathers playing an effective role in following up on their children's studies so that they will feel that it is important.

He attributed the reason why fathers try to evade responsibility to some negative ideas in their mind which says that the educational role is part of the mother's job like any other job within the home, and he continued: This is a grievous error, because this educational responsibility needs the cooperation of both spouses. The father has to understand that his role is not only outside the house in order to provide food and the necessities of life, rather he has an important role to play in the house as well, which includes teaching the children. It is not to be taken lightly.

And he urged fathers to understand this point and to realize their responsibilities in this area so as to avoid conflicts that may have a bad effect on the family and the children.

Professor Usaamah al-Muzayni, a lecturer in the College of Education in the Islamic University, said: The father has to follow up on his children's studies and make it an important priority.

He also said: Your wife is your life partner, and by taking the responsibility of teaching the children and following up on their schoolwork, you will have fulfilled your role in their shared responsibility. Otherwise ask yourself: What is my role? Remember that there is something more important that just providing material comforts to children, and that is to take an interest in their academic future.

And Allaah knows best.