97231 - She has given up working as a pharmacist and is now teaching Qur’aan

the question

I left my well-paid job as a pharmacist, which was also prestigious. I did this to have no contact with men, and to give my full time for learning Islam and the different recitations of Quraan. Now I work as a teacher in a Quraan school with a simple salary. I am happy, but everyone around me is blaming me and saying what I did was madness. What is your opinion?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Mixing between men and women at work has bad effects and obvious negative consequences for both men and women. That includes:

1 – Haraam looking. Allaah has enjoined believing men and women to lower their gaze. He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allaah is All-Aware of what they do.

31. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent”

[al-Noor 24:30-31]

In Saheeh Muslim (2159) it is narrated that Jareer ibn ‘Abd-Allaah said: I asked the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about an accidental glance, and he told me to avert my gaze.

2 – It may lead to haraam touching, such as shaking hands. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If one of you were to be stabbed in the head with an iron needle, that would be better for him than touching a woman who is not permissible for him.” Narrated by al-Tabaraani from Ma’qil ibn Yasaar; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, no. 5045.

3 – Mixing may lead to a man being alone with a non-mahram woman, which is haraam because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “No man is alone with a woman but the shaytaan is the third one present.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2165); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

According to another report: “Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day, let him not be alone with a woman who has no mahram with her, for the third one present will be the shaytaan.” Narrated by Ahmad and classed as saheeh by al-Haakim, and al-Dhahabi agreed with him; it was also classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Ghaayat al-Maraam (180).

4 – Another negative consequent to which it may lead is a man becoming infatuated with a woman, or vice versa, which results from mixing and prolonged interaction.

5 – That may lead to the break up of families. How many men have neglected their homes and lost their families because they have become attracted to a female colleague at school or at work? How many women have lost their husbands and neglected their homes for the same reason? How many cases of divorce have taken place because of haraam relationships formed by the husband or wife, for which mixing at work was the main cause?

For these reasons and others, Islam forbids the mixing that leads to these evils. The evidence that mixing is haraam has been discussed in detail in the answer to question no. 1200.

If you have given up work because of the issue of mixing with men, then you have done well, and you have done what is required of you, and there is the hope that you will be rewarded for that and you will find happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. If a person gives up something for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will compensate him with something better than it.

This compensation that comes from Allaah is not only material, rather it may also be peace of mind and contentment, and being enabled to do righteous deeds. All of these may be part of the compensation given by Allaah.

With regard to learning and teaching Qur'aan, this is one of the best of deeds and greatest acts of worship, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The best of you are those who learn the Qur'aan and teach it." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5027).

Muslim women and girls need people to teach them to read correctly and help them to memorize the Book of Allaah.

But if you need to work, and you can find an opportunity in your speciality (pharmacy) that is free of mixing, there is nothing wrong with you doing that, and you may be able to teach Qur'aan in addition to doing that.

Happiness does not come from status or appearance, rather it comes from faith and piety, and being close to Allaah, and being content with what He has given you, so do not pay any attention to what others say.

We ask Allaah to increase you in guidance and piety.

And Allaah knows best.