10000 - Husband Not Particulat About School Selection for Children

the question

My husband is sending my son to an Islmaic school that I think is very lax in religion. My son is seven and has not been taught any of the Quran or any surahs. I have been working with him in English translation because I don't speak Arabic. I've spoken to him about this but he puts it off or he makes reference to sending my son to a school which is known for bidah and innovation. His other set of children from my co-wife attend this school and they recite the Quran and surahs in arabic Arabic fluently.
What do I do in this case; I want my son to learn the Quran and surrah's but the school he attends is lax and the school who gives this high priority is shuned by the Islamic community in XXX. The masjid in a way functions within its own little bubble sought ofso to speak.
Also my husband attends this masjid with my co-wife and his family and I on the other hand attend a more sunnah community who don't follow madthabs. This is becoming a problem because my husband doesn't understand the caution that the scholars relate to about the madthabs. His response it how can you go to a particular school and study under a particular sheikh and then come back to the community and say I don't follow madthabs. I'm not a scholar so I can't really offer him a concrete answer.
Inshallah if you could give me some direction in this matter I would greatly appreciate it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We appreciate the sister’s keenness for her children to learn Qur’aan, because this is part of raising children well. We ask Allaah to give her strength and help her to do that.

Secondly:

Our advice to her is to strive hard to learn the Arabic language because that is the means of increasing her knowledge of this great religion. In addition she may teach her children whatever she wants of beneficial sciences, because the mother has more influence on her children than anyone else.

Thirdly:

Our advice to her husband is to fear Allaah and to treat his children equally with regard to concern and keenness to teach them that which will benefit them in both their worldly and religious interests, chief of which is the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah (traditions) of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). According to the hadeeth (prophetic narration), al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: My father gave me a gift, and 'Amrah bint Rawaahah said: I will not agree until you ask the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to bear witness to it. So he went to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: "I have given a gift to my son from 'Amrah bint Rawaahah and she told me to ask you to bear witness, O Messenger of Allaah." He said, "Have you given something similar to all your children?" He said, "No." He said: "Fear Allaah and treat your children equally." He said, So he went back and took back his gift.

Nararted by al-Bukhaari, 2447; Muslim, 1623.

The relevant point from this hadeeth is that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) denounced the father of al-Nu'maan for giving something to him and not to his siblings. That also includes the ruling that the father should not single out one of his children for anything and exclude the others, whether that be teaching or anything else. Just as man would like all his children to honour and obey him equally, so he must treat them equally in all matters. One of the causes of envy and hatred among siblings is when the father shows preference to one of his children or loves him more than his siblings.

The story of Yoosuf bears the greatest testimony to that. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“When they said: ‘Truly, Yoosuf (Joseph) and his brother (Benjamin) are dearer to our father than we, while we are ‘Usbah (a strong group). Really, our father is in a plain error.

Kill Yoosuf (Joseph) or cast him out to some (other) land, so that the favour of your father may be given to you alone, and after that you will be righteous folk (by intending repentance before committing the sin)’”

[Yoosuf 12:8-9]

Fourthly:

The husband has to pay attention to his children learning Islamic knowledge, especially the Arabic language and Qur’aan, and especially because what they learn when they are young stays with them more than what they learn when they grow older. As the saying goes, “what is learned when one is young is like something carved in stone.” This is even more important if the Muslim is living in those countries where there is a lot of fitnah (trials) and temptation, and especially for children with a lot of distractions.

Fifthly:

The Muslim is obliged to follow the Qur’aan and Sunnah, because they are the source of divine law. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allaah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allaah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination”

[al-Nisa’ 4:59]

According to the hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I have left behind you that which if you cling to it you will never go astray after that: the Book of Allaah.”

Narrated by Muslim, 1218.

True guidance is based on following the Qur’aan and Sunnah, not on following the views of any human being, no matter who he is. This does not mean that we belittle the status of the imams (leaders in Islamic knowledge) (may Allaah have mercy on them), for we seek the help of their words in understanding the Qur’aan and Sunnah correctly and in learning the rulings of sharee’ah (Islamic law). The Muslim does not reject these madhhabs (schools of thought) or belittle their status, rather there is nothing wrong with the Muslim learning from them and benefitting from them. But what is to be denounced is when the followers of madhhabs cling to the madhhab and follow blindly, and insist on following the madhhab even if it goes against a saheeh (authentic) hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The imams of the madhhabs did not deliberately go against the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but it is well known that the Sahaabah (companions of the Prophet) scattered throughout the various regions, and the scholars of the madhhabs issued fatwas and spoke of what is halaal (lawful) and haraam (unlawful) on the basis of the evidence that reached them, and they may have missed some ahaadeeth that did not reach them, whether that was a few or many. So with regard to the issues for which no evidence reached them they engaged in ijtihaad (independent thought)and some of their ijtihaad turned out to be contrary to the Sunnah. What the Muslim must do in such cases is to follow the Sunnah and excuse the imams, and believe that they will be rewarded for their ijtihaad (exertion of efforts to attain the truth)and will be given either one or two rewards, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said.

They (the scholars and imams) commanded us to follow the Sunnah and to ignore their views if they go against the Sunnah.

Imam Abu Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: If a hadeeth is saheeh (authentic) then it is my madhhab.

And he said: It is not permissible for anyone to follow our view if he does not know from where we derived it.

And he said: If I say something that goes against the Book of Allaah or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah, then ignore what I say.

Imam Maalik ibn Anas (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: I am just a human being, I make mistakes and I get things right. So study what I say and whatever is in accordance with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, take it, and whatever is not in accordance with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, ignore it.

Imam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: If you find in my book something that goes against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), then follow the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and ignore what I say.

Imam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Do not follow me and do not follow Maalik or al-Shaafa'i or al-Awzaa'i or al-Thawri; refer to what they referred to.

The point is that the imams refused to let anyone follow their views without evidence, especially if they went against the Qur'aan and Sunnah. They were human beings and were not infallible. But we acknowledge their position, status and high level of knowledge, and we benefit from them, without adhering blindly to what they said.

Sixthly:

With regard to the other school that the questioner describes as being well known for innovation (bid'ah) but paying a great deal of attention to the Qur'aan, she has to look at the interests of her children and weigh up the pros and cons. If it is possible to do without this school and find a private tutor for her sons , then the protection of her children dictates that she should not send them to a school where they follow bid'ah. The same applies if the bid'ah has to do with serious issues that may lead to deviation from the way of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah.

But if the bid'ah is minor and does not reach this extent, and it is easy to explain it to the children and warn them against it, and there is no alternative to this school, then there is nothing wrong in

sha Allaah with sending the children to this school, but she should be constantly watchful. Then if it becomes apparent that it is going to affect the children then she should stop them going to that school at once.

Seventhly:

Undoubtedly the shaykh who teaches people from the Qur’aan and Sunnah and looks for saheeh ahaadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is better than anyone else. The Muslim must strive to benefit from him for himself and for his wife and children. Our advice to the husband is to listen to his wife who is keen to follow the Qur’aan and Sunnah, and to teach his wife and children Arabic and the Qur’aan, and to treat his children equally in that regard. He should adhere to the Qur’aan and Sunnah and not blindly follow any madhhabs or opinions that go against the Sunnah. And he should be kind and gentle with his wife, and try to advise her sincerely. May Allaah open his heart and help him to do good.

We ask Allaah to give the questioner strength and to bestow His bounty upon her and help her to adhere to the truth.

And Allaah knows best.