154172 - What is the best approach for the wife to adopt when calling her husband to what is good and objecting to some of his actions?

the question

What is the best approach when calling my husband to what is good and urging him to obey Allah, and also to object to him for doing things that are objectionable?

I hope that you will quote evidence for that from the Quran and Sunnah, and from the biography of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and those who followed in his footsteps.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The sister has done well in the choice of topic that she has asked about. If this indicates anything, it indicates that she shows great concern for her family, and foremost among them the head of the household, the father. We hope that our sisters will realise the importance of this matter and look for good approaches and recommendations when women – whether as wives, sisters or daughters – seek to call their family members to what is good, for they have a great mission, so let them fear Allah with regard to it and beware lest evil and corruption find a way into a woman's household as a result of her letting her guard down.

II.

What we advise righteous wives to do when calling their husbands to what is good and objecting to what they see of sins and bad deeds that they commit – and we hope that they will pay attention to this advice and put it into action – includes the following:

1. Patience and forbearance

Whatever the wife sees in her husband’s shortcomings in doing religious duties and falling into sin will never be resolved by a word that he has from his wife or some action that she does in front of him, because it is difficult for a man to put an end to following whims and desires as easily as many women think. Rather the matter requires our sisters to be patient with what they hear and see from their husbands of shortcomings in doing religious duties or doing things that are contrary to Islamic teachings. Hastening to seek separation because of that, or shunning the husband or engaging in conflict between the spouses will never be to any avail. So let her be patient and forbearing, until Allah, may He be Exalted, grants her relief from this problem.

2. Supplication

Many of our married sisters think little of supplication and never resort to it at all, and many of them quickly begin to despair if they do not see any immediate response to their supplication. What is required of the Muslim woman is to have absolute trust in her Lord, may He be Exalted, and be confident that He will respond to her supplication in all cases, either by granting her request, or warding off evil from her, or delaying the reward until the Day she meets Him. So supplication should be a very important part of her life, for it is a great act of worship between the individual and his Lord, and undoubtedly it has a great impact in causing many people to be brought back to the straight path.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Muslims in the east and the west are united in their love for Allah and His Messenger, and for His believing slaves, and in their enmity towards the enemies of Allah and His Messenger and the enemies of His believing slaves, and their sincerity and supplications are like troops that cannot be defeated or disgraced.

Majmu` al-Fatawa, 28/644.

3. Listening and obeying, and showing kindness [to their husbands]

The Arabs used to urge their daughters to be easy-going and loving towards their husbands. A mother would say to her daughter: Be humble towards him like flat earth and he will be like a canopy for you.

So the wife should not be like a mountain or a valley; rather she should be like flat earth, kind and soft and easy to deal with, so that her husband will be like a canopy shading her and protecting her. In this manner, households will be in a good state, and thus life will become good and pleasant to the extent that the husband will feel as if he is in a paradise on earth where al-hur al-‘iyn await him with their beauty, glamour, pleasant fragrance, kind treatment and sweet words.

That will have a great impact on the appreciative husband. The wife should not meet her husband with a frowning, angry face; rather she should meet him in the best way a loving wife receives her husband, as Allah, may He be Exalted, has enjoined her to obey him and has given him immense rights. One of the requirements of being a good wife who listens to her husband and obeys him is that the good wife should hold her husband in high esteem. When that is the case, her words, advice and exhortation will be effective in bringing him back to the straight path, as she hopes, and will make him give up some sins out of embarrassment and respect for her good manners and attitude.

4. Raising her children properly

The wise woman can deliver important and eloquent messages to her husband through raising her children, boys and girls, well. Then through their good manners and attitude, she may be able to make him fulfil his religious duties and strive hard in that, and give up a sin that he has been committing. The wise and smart woman can turn her children into examples for her husband who is falling short or committing sins, if she manages to send messages of advice and exhortation through them. For the husband may feel embarrassed to commit sin in front of them, if he wants to smoke – for example – when the children have learned that it is prohibited and they denounce others for it. He may feel embarrassed to listen to and watch unlawful things on satellite channels at a time when the children have averted their gaze and their hearing when they heard that. Thus the way she raises and educates her children will be a subtle and indirect way of objecting to what

her husband does, exhorting him and calling him to what is good.

5. Books, tapes [or CDs] and satellite channels

The wife can buy books written in an easy style and with few pages and leave them around the house so that her husband can read them in his free time. And she can program the antenna to receive Islamic satellite channels which carry useful and purposeful programs that will spare her the effort of speaking to her husband directly and advising him. For the Shaytan could come to a man and make him reject the advice of a woman, but if the advice and exhortation comes from a respectable Sunni shaykh he will have no reason not to accept what he says. It does not matter for the smart wife that she should be the direct cause of her husband being guided; rather all she cares about is that he should be guided and mend his ways, and she will be extremely happy when she sees his condition change for the better.

6. Friends and relatives

If the smart and wise wife knows that among her husband’s friends and relatives there is a good person who can influence people, she should invite him and his wife to her house so that he can meet frequently with her husband, and perhaps that will be a cause of him being guided and mending his ways.

7. The approach she should use

The approach that the smart and wise wife should use so that her husband will hold her in high esteem includes honouring his family and taking care of them. So she should frequently invite them to her house and give them gifts, for that will lead to them being happy with her, and then her husband will be happy with her, and she can take advantage of that to advise him or offer exhortation that he may listen to, or inform him of a ruling, and perhaps that may have a good impact on him.

8. Avoiding advising and exhorting him in front of the children

She should avoid advising or exhorting him in front of the children, because that could be hurtful

to him and give him an excuse to reject what she says or prevent her from speaking about the same issue again. In the case of some foolish men, that could even lead to a man beating his wife in front of her children, so she will not be able to change his condition or help him to mend his ways.

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to rectify the affairs of the Muslims and to show them the truth as true and enable them to follow it, and to show them falsehood as false and enable them to avoid it.

And Allah knows best.