241951 - She asked her husband not to have intercourse with her because she suffers from genophobia, and she is asking for a solution

the question

I have a friend, she is a very simple hearted person; she is married to a good man who takes care of her. The problem is that they have been married for 8 years. She hasn’t had any sort of relationship with her husband- and by that i mean, they don’t come near each other. She said to me she is very afraid and doesn’t want to do any kind of stuff like that. When she was first married she told her husband not to come near her at all , and she was crying; her husband said he won’t force anything upon her. So he also doesn’t go near her because he loves her and doesn’t want to see her upset. He does want children with her... and the family have been wondering why they are not having any children. My friend really likes her husband and he likes her to, but they don’t have that kind of close relationship . She is worried because she knows that in Islam having children is a blessing... and Allah may be upset with her as she is not having any sort of physical relationship with her husband. Could you please give me some advice about this?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Unjustified fear of sexual relations between the spouses is a medical condition that is known as genophobia. It is a psychological condition that appears in the form of extreme fear and anxiety, accompanied by increased heart rate, difficulty breathing and spasms in the muscles in the context of sexual relations between the spouses.

It may be that these fears are the result of her hearing about sexual assault or harassment during childhood, or they may be because of compulsive thoughts and whispers in which a woman sees herself in this context in an ugly or off-putting form, or there may not be any clear reason for them.

The way in which to remedy this problem and the symptoms that result from it is well known to doctors, and includes the following:

· Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which involves speaking with a psychiatrist or a specialist in clinical psychology, in which negative behaviours are changed by analysing and discussing negative thoughts and the negative feelings that result from them. That is because the individual's psychological well-being is based on these three foundations: thoughts, the emotions that result from them, and the behaviour that results from both.

· Relaxation therapy, which refers to various breathing and relaxation exercises that help to calm one down and reduce anxiety and what results from it of muscle tension, difficulty breathing and so on. This treatment is one of the very effective means of getting rid of the symptoms of genophobia.

· Medicinal treatment, which means taking some type of antidepressant or antianxiety medication, under the supervision of a specialist doctor.

Based on that, her husband – may Allah reward him abundantly for his understanding of her fear and for his kindness towards her – should seek treatment for her, by convincing her of the necessity of consulting a doctor who is specialised in this field, so that they may attain the aims of marriage, namely maintaining chastity and having righteous offspring, and other means of drawing closer to Allah that may result from the solemn covenant of marriage.

And Allah knows best.