4036 - She wants to embrace Islam but does not want to leave her kaafir husband

the question

In the Islamic centres and when calling non-Muslim women to Islam, we are faced with the problem of the wife's attachment to her kaafir husband who does not want to become Muslim. It is difficult for the woman to sacrifice her marriage, especially when the couple has children and the husband treats her well and she feels a great deal of love for him. We know that if a kaafir woman becomes Muslim it is not permissible for her to remain in a marriage with a kaafir man, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "… they are not lawful (wives) for the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful (husbands) for them…" [al-Mumtahinah 60:10]. How should we deal with this problem? Is it permissible for us to focus on the issue of the woman becoming Muslim and ignore the rest of the matter?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We put this question to Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen:

A woman says, I want to become Muslim, and my husband is good and I do not want to leave him. What should I do?

He answered:

"She has to leave him, but is it possible for her to call him to Islam? She could say, 'I want to become Muslim, but if I become Muslim, the marriage will become null and void unless you become Muslim too.' Hopefully if she says this to him, he will become Muslim too.'"

Question:

If she become Muslim, can she stay in the marital home while she calls him to Islam, or should she leave?

Answer:

“If she is hopeful that he will become Muslim, she can stay in the marital home until the end of her ‘iddah (waiting period following the dissolution of a marriage).”

Question:

Can she uncover herself (go without hijab) during the ‘iddah or not?

Answer:

“To be on the safe side, she should not uncover, because there is no certainty that he will agree to become Muslim.”

Question:

And she should not be alone with him?

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Question:

If telling her about this could turn her away from Islam, is it permissible for us according to sharee’ah to conceal the second part of the answer from her, so that we could tell her, “Become Muslim first, then we will tell you about the ruling on staying with your husband”?

Answer:

“No, if we say this, and then we tell her about the ruling and she leaves Islam (becomes an apostate), this will make the problem worse. For this reason the Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) told ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib, when he sent him to the people of Khaybar: ‘Call them to Islam and tell them what they have to do in the way of duties towards Allah.’”

Question:

So now if she continues to live with him after she becomes Muslim she is guilty of a major sin (kabeerah)?

Answer:

“Yes that is the case, but she should not persist in zinaa (unlawful sexual relationship).”

Question:

Briefly, how should we answer her?

Answer:

“Tell her: Become Muslim, and know that if you become Muslim and your husband does not, the marriage will become null and void.”

When we are talking to women who will be faced with this issue, we should focus on the following points:

Giving priority to love for Allah and His Messenger over love for anyone else.

If she is sincere in calling him to Islam and in praying for him, Allah may guide him at her hands.

-Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him or her with something better.

Allah will never forsake His slave who gives up something he or she loves for His sake.

When a woman like this becomes Muslim and leaves her husband, one of the Muslim brothers should come forward to marry her and take her children into his family, or good-hearted Muslims

should undertake the responsibility of spending in charity on her and her children. We ask Allah to guide us and grant us strength and help us to do the right thing. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad.