82453 - His mother makes false accusations against his wife

the question

I was wondering if you could please explain to me about making the parents upset(the one where its haram to even say ouff to them). The reason I am asking this is, because I have been married for several and I have a couple of kids. But my mother always complains about my wife and they don't get along. She even calls me and tells me that my wife is evil. She say my wife disrespects even though she doesn't. She also says my wife does and says that my wife say she did not do or say. She does not live with us anymore, but still say my wife is disrespectful. I don't think my wife has really done anything wrong, but I am very upset that they can't get along. My wife stay away from my family, because she is afraid that they will accuse her of something she has not done. That makes my mother more angry because she says my wife doesn't care about her. What should I do in this situation so not to make my parents angry, but at the same time my wife hasn't done anything. She tells me that it is haram for me not to saying anything when they accuse her of thing she hasn't done, is this true? Please advise me of what to do in this situation. And is it haram for my mother to tell me to pick between them?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Your problem is one of the issues that arise in married life, and it is an ancient and complex problem, so much so that among the Arabs it has become the proverbial example of people who have to deal with one another and cannot do without one another, and between whom there is ongoing enmity; they say “The mother-in-law is too concerned about the daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law is too suspicious of the mother-in-law.” Al-hamaah (usually translated as “mother-in-law”) is the husband’s sister or mother, and the “daughter-in-law” is the man’s wife. What this means is that if the daughter-in-law hears anything, she will say, “This is what my mother-in-law is

doing to me!” [See: al-Mustaqsa fi’l-Amthaal by al-Zamakhshari (1/77)]. So in fact each of the two parties is watching out and taking a defensive stance.

In relationships such as these, many factors and influences are interwoven, each of which must be paid attention to and understood, then we should try to find a way to deal with them so that we can get the best results.

Perhaps you understand that jealousy – which Allah has created in man – is one of these main factors, especially between your mother and your wife, because your mother, who has been with you for many years, looking after you and taking care of you, is going to feel that you no longer belong only to her; indeed she will feel that her share of you is no longer enough to fulfil her rights over you, and that the division of your attention between her and your wife is not fair. Your wife gets love, compassion and care, and all the mother gets is your showing patience, with difficulty, for her troubles, and your giving her what she needs with reluctance and resentment. This applies if the son gives her her rights, so how about if he is disobedient and denies her her rights? In that case there will be problems.

Jealousy makes a person blind and deaf, and it soon destroys any happiness and tranquillity that the family might have. It is at its strongest when we do not handle it properly and do not try to tame it.

I have started by highlighting these fasts so that you may understand two important things:

1 – So that you may understand the real reason why your mother is treating your wife in this manner, and so that you may appreciate her excuse for doing so, which is that she may not have any control over her feelings, because women are very weak in the face of such feelings, and they cannot hide them despite their best efforts to show contentment and acceptance. If you understand your mother’s excuse, this will put your mind at rest and soothe your feelings towards her, and you will become certain that honouring, obeying and loving her are obligatory for you, and you should not doubt that for a single moment, no matter how bad the problem that is caused by jealousy gets.

2 – You should realize that it is only with love that you change the situation between your mother and your wife The mother needs more reassurance that her son loves her and that his love, respect and kind treatment of her have not changed. Indeed, you have to try to increase these feelings by repeatedly visiting her, giving her gifts and trying to make her happy with kind words and fulfilling her wishes. Then she will begin to calm down and her jealousy will diminish, and gradually the problems that she has caused will begin to ease off.

If your mother is quick to accuse your wife and the mother of your children unfairly, as seems to us to be the case, then we will address the situation by addressing you and your wife first, because this in fact is the easier of the two sides to deal with.

We say to your wife: Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly) then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend” [Fussilat 41:34].

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Charity does not decrease wealth. No one forgives, but Allah increases him in honour, and no one humbles himself before Allah but Allah raises him in status.” Narrated by Muslim (2588)

According to another hadeeth: “No one is wronged and bears it with patience but Allah will increase him in honour.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2325) and classed as saheeh by al-Albani.

How many problems can be solved if the wife trains herself to adopt this attitude, seeking to attain Allah’s pleasure and to avoid problems for her husband and to give him peace of mind at home?

She should try to regard her mother-in-law as being like her own mother, and put up with her anger and forgive her bad treatment, especially if they live separately. This will reduce problems and confrontation, to a large extent.

How many problems will be reduced, and even ended, by Allah's leave, if the wife can seek suitable opportunities to give nice gifts to your mother, even if there are some hard feelings between them. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Give gifts to one another, you will love one another." Narrated by Abu Ya'la and classed as hasan by al-Albani.

With regard to yourself, you have to open your heart to honouring and loving your mother a great deal, whilst also loving your wife and being happy with her. If you succeed, that is the beginning of the solution, but if you fail, the suffering will continue and increase. This matter needs you to be patient and to learn, for man is able to learn how to show feelings of friendship and love just as he is able to learn any other skill in this life.

In all of that, it is essential that you adhere to the guidelines that have been set out by Islam. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour"[al-Isra' 17:23]

"But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do" [Luqmaan 31:15]

Think about how the shirk and kufr of the parents – which are the worst of sins – should not prevent the son from behaving kindly with them, so how about if there are some problems with your wife?

The most important of these guidelines that Islam has set out is protecting your wife's rights and respecting her feelings and wishes, and not being unfair to her or wronging her in order to fulfil your mother's rights. You should not obey your mother if she tells you to leave your wife, and it is not permissible for you to believe what she accuses your wife of falsely, especially if your wife is of good character and religiously committed. She is a trust (amaanah) that has been given to you, so

you have to protect this trust.

If we had the opportunity to speak to your mother, we would say to her:

Dear mother, you have carried and borne your son, you have raised him with a great deal of selflessness and effort on your part, so do not spoil your kindness to your son by making his life difficult. Treat this wife whom your son has chosen for himself and through whom Allah has given him children, like your own daughter. Think about how you would like your daughter to be treated by her husband and family, and treat her in that way. Strive to be kind as our Lord has commanded us (interpretation of the meaning): “and do good. Truly, Allah loves Al-Muhsinoon(the good-doers)” [al-Baqarah 2:195].

If you are unable to be kind, then at least be fair. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and be equitable. Verily, Allah loves those who are the equitable” [al-Hujuraat 49:9].

Beware of wrongdoing. It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Wrongdoing will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection.” Agreed upon.

Some of the rulings on this topic have been discussed in detail in the answer to question no. 7653 and 44923 and 47040.

We ask Allah to set your affairs straight and to reconcile between you, and to bless us and you with a good life in this world and in the Hereafter.

And Allah knows best.