87815 - Is the son sinning if he refuses to let his mother travel to visit him because he is concerned about her husband and family?

the question

My 45 year old brother lives in Europe, and he is married and has two children from a foreign woman. The problem is that he refuses to do the paper work for my mother to stay there, because when she went to stay for one month with him she ended up staying for nine months, and she left her children and husband back home. When he asked her to go back to her home and husband, she started swearing at him in front of his wife and children, and when she came back he refused to get the visa for her so as to avoid problems with her, especially since she is bad-tempered and she gets angry for the slightest reason, which led to him taking drugs. He is asking whether he will be a sinner if he refuses to let her come.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Honouring one's parents, which Allaah has enjoined in His Book and that His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also encouraged, means that one should hasten to serve one's parents and make them happy and please them, by all available permissible means, and at every possible opportunity.

One of the best ways in which a person can honour his parents is by striving to ensure the success of their married life, and creating love and compassion between them. Wise children can bring about love between their parents in ways that no one else can, and they are often able to deal with anything that may cause trouble in the family.

I think that your brother’s keenness for his mother to stay with her children and husband is a sign of his wisdom, especially if the family will be harmed by the mother’s frequent absences, as is usually the case.

But he should deal kindly with her and choose the best ways of overcoming this conflict of interests, the conflict between his wanting to keep his mother with her family and home, and the mother's wanting to visit him overseas and stay with him.

He will definitely find a good answer to this problem, in sha Allah. If he can renew the visa for his mother to visit for one month, then that is good, and he can apologize to his mother when the month ends by saying that the visa has expired and she must go back. An even better solution would be if he could accommodate the whole family and get visas for all of them to visit, so that they can be with their mother wherever she goes.

If he can advise his mother in a kind way and explain clearly to her that she is obliged to obey and serve her husband – especially if the husband does not agree to her being away for this length of time – then he should try to do that, and he should not feel too shy or give up, and it will not matter if his mother accuses him of disobeying her or not liking her to visit, because Allaah knows what is in his heart and He knows his real intentions.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance"

[al-Isra' 23:25]

Imam Ibn Jareer al-Tabari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Allaah, may He be exalted, says: "Your Lord", O mankind, "knows best" i.e., better than you, "what is in your inner-selves" of respect, honour and kindness towards your fathers and mothers, and what is in them of disregarding their rights and disobeying them, and other things that are hidden in your hearts. Nothing of that is hidden from Him, and He will reward or punish you for good or bad deeds, so beware of ill feelings towards them or disobedience towards them.

The words "If you are righteous" mean: if you ensure that your intentions towards them are correct and you obey Allaah in what He has enjoined upon you of honouring them and fulfilling the

rights they have over you, after you make any mistake or fall short in your duties towards them, and also doing other duties that have been enjoined upon you, then “He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance” who turn to Him after slipping and erring.

Tafseer al-Tabari (17/421, 422).

This verse is a sincere call to your brother to purify his heart and rectify his intention, so that his motive for not getting a visa for his mother to visit will be his concern for the wellbeing of her household and her family by staying with them, and not helping her with the sin that she would be committing if she disobeyed her husband and travelled without his consent.

But if his real motive is because he dislikes his mother and does not want to welcome her, host her and serve her, then he is sinning in that case, and he is committing the major sin of disobedience to parents, because one of the greatest rights that parents have over their children is that they should take care of them when they grow old and serve them.

If your brother cannot control his mother’s visit in an appropriate and proper manner, then he should make up for that by going to visit her as often as he can, and not staying away from her for too long. And he should strive to uphold ties with her and treat her kindly by sending gifts and the like, especially things that she likes.

With regard to what you say about your brother taking drugs, if what you mean is tranquillizers that are taken by those who suffer from panic, anger and anxiety, then the basic principle is that these pills are not permissible because of the addiction they cause, which is forbidden in sharee’ah. But if that is because of need as determined by a specialist doctor, then it is permissible for him to take them in that case, under the supervision of a doctor only, because that is a case of necessity.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on taking sleeping pills or tranquillizers? Do they come under the heading of

drugs or not? Are they permissible if there is a need for them or if a doctor tells one to take them?

He replied:

It is not permissible to use these pills except in the case of need, so long as that is with the permission of a proficient doctor, because there is some risk involved, and they have an effect on the brain. If a person uses them, he may calm down for a little while, but they more cause more harm later on. The point is that it is permissible to use them in cases of need, so long as that is under the supervision of a doctor and with his permission.

Fataawa Noor ‘ala al-Darb (tape no. 82/side1).

If these pills cause the body to relax then they come under the same ruling as haraam drugs.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

What is the ruling on tranquillizers that are used to treat some nervous diseases etc, and which come under the category of relaxants?

They replied:

It is not permissible to use for medical purposes that which has been forbidden by Allaah. One of the things that is forbidden is taking relaxants.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (25/32).

But if what you mean is haraam drugs – Allaah forbid – which addicts take in response to their cravings, then this a grave sin, and you must advise your brother about it and strive to make him give it up, by consulting specialist doctors who can supervise treatment in such cases. We have previously stated on this site that these substances are haraam because of the great harm that they cause to individuals and societies.

See also the answer to questions no. 6540, 32466 and 66227.

We ask Allaah to protect and guide you and your brother.

And Allaah knows best.