

[the latter] divorces her, there is no blame on either of them if they return to each other, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the limits ordained by Allah, which He makes clear to those who understand.

- 2:231. When you divorce women, and they have approached [the end of] their waiting periods, either retain them on equitable terms or release them on equitable terms. Do not retain them in order to harm them, thus overstepping the limits; if anyone does that, then he has wronged himself. Do not make a mockery of Allah's revelations; remember the favours Allah has bestowed upon you, and what He has revealed to you of the Book and wisdom, to teach you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah has knowledge of all things.

«And if he divorces her [the third time]», that is the third *talâq* «she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband» that is, a genuine marriage in which he has intercourse with her, because the legitimate marriage is that in which there is a contract and intercourse. This is according to scholarly consensus.

It is stipulated that the second marriage should be a genuine marriage; if the aim is to make it permissible for her to go back to the first husband, then it is not a marriage and it does not make her lawful for the first husband. But if she marries the second husband in a genuine marriage and he has intercourse with her, then he leaves her and her 'iddah comes to an end, then «there is no blame on either of them» that is, on the first husband or the wife «if they return to each other» that is, if they make a new marriage contract between them, with mutual consent. Because it refers to them (with no mention of a third party), this indicates that there must be mutual consent.

But it is stipulated, in the event of returning to each other, that they should think «that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah»,