22760 - Do I have to obey my father in choosing a husband, and how can I make him more even-tempered?

the question

I have a question about marriage, my father believes that being Bengali, he's daughters should only get married to a Bengali man, the thing is, my dad likes to be a pillar of society and likes to have control over everything we do, Can you give me proof that it is ok for the daughters to choose who they get married to, despite whether they are Pakistani, Indian or Bengali, as long as he is good in terms of religion and suitability, my father believes that girl's haven't got the right to choos who they get married to, only he does, but I think the people he chooses are only chosen for the fact that they will give him a good name and because he they are Bengali. Is it possible for the girl to make her own choice in terms of who she gets married to if she finds a suitabaly compatible, religious and good man of a different nationality with similar status and wealth, even if her dad doesn't like him because of his nationality?
Also my father is very controlling, picking and choosing what he wishes to believe in terms of religion, he likes to show off his wealth and power and build his name, can you give me any supplications which will help to make him a more mild mannered and diplomatic man? I would be very grateful if you could help me in this matter.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The presence of the wali (guardian) is one of the conditions of marriage, and a woman’s marriage is not valid unless this condition is met. This is the correct view and is the view of the majority of scholars. See question no. 2127.

The person who has the most right to be a woman’s guardian is her father, but if it is proven that

he is not qualified for this role then it moves to the next closest relative, such as her grandfather for example.

For more information on this issue, with evidence, please see question no. 7193 and 31119.

Secondly:

With regard to the conditions and qualities that should be present in the husband, the most important of these is religious commitment. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If there comes to you one with whose religious commitment and character you are pleased, then marry [your daughter or female relative under your care] to him, for if you do not do that there will be fitnah (tribulation) on earth and much corruption.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (1005) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 1084.

See also question no. 6942 and 5202.

Thirdly:

One of the shar’i conditions of marriage is the consent of the wife, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “A previously-married woman should not be married without consulting her and a virgin should not be married without asking her permission.” They said, “O Messenger of Allaah, how does she give her permission?” He said, “If she remains silent.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4741; Muslim, 2543.

No one has the right to force a girl to marry anyone, but at the same time she does not have the right to get married without her guardian’s permission.

The presence of the guardian is an important condition for a marriage to be valid, but a girl should not be forced into marrying someone who she does not want to marry, and she is not regarded as disobeying her parents in this case. Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] said: “The parents do not have the right to force their son to marry someone whom he does not want, and if he refuses he is not being disobedient, like eating something that he does not want.” Al-Ikhtiyaaraat, p. 344

Fourthly:

With regard to your father and the way he is, we offer the following advice:

(i) Make du’aa’ for him in his absence. There is no specific du’aa’, so pray to Allaah to reform him and open his heart.

(ii) Seek the help of some of your father’s friends or relatives whom you trust to try to change him.

(iii) Give him some books or tapes in your language that will encourage him to have a good attitude and warn him against the opposite, and give them as a gift using a good approach when you do so. Allaah may make this a cause of his reforming.

We ask Allaah to help you to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.

And Allaah knows best.