2528 - Marrying a man with a bad past

the question

In the Name Of God Most Gracious and Merciful.
Salam elkum.
First I would really like to commend you on the substantial information you have provided to the public. May God reward you all on your efforts. I do realize that every single question cannot be answered directly. However, I have done a lot of research on this matter and still I have come up with no answers to my question. What makes it even more difficult is the lack of knowledge of Islam from my parents perspective. I was born in Canada and one of the very few young teenage girls fighting to learn more about Islam. Unfortunatly, there is still a lot I do not know about our religion, yet I work at it every day.
Getting down to my problem, I am 19 years old and just got engaged to a Lebanese Muslim fellow. After getting engaged to this person I found out that in the past he has been with other girls and intimate relationships, before marriage. Of course, I realize that in our religon that is very wrong. Now I am left with the decision of whether to go ahead and get married to this person or not. I personally think that I shouldn't be with a person who has done such things while my family says forgive and forget... However, I would like your opinion on this matter. Is it ideal and acceptable for someone like myself to marry a person of this nature even if it was his past.
Thank you so much for your time . I would appreciate it if you had a chance to reply it would fill up so many unanswered questions but of course I fully understand if you cannot do so .
It is very difficult for me to learn more about Islam sometimes books don't fully answer my questions. Thanks again kindly for your time .

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

First of all, may Allaah reward you with good for your kind words. We apologize for not answering questions in full. With regard to your question about this man who has asked for your hand in

marriage, what you should concentrate on is the way he is now: is he doing his religious duties, like the five daily prayers, etc., is he keeping away from haraam things, has he repented for what he did in the past? Or not? If he is keeping his duty towards Allaah, then this is the good commitment to religion that is required according to the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): If there comes to you with an offer of marriage (for your daughter, sister, etc.) one with whose religious commitment and character you are pleased, then marry (your daughter, sister, etc, to) him. If you do not do so, there will be mischief on earth and widespread corruption.

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 1004; classed as hasan in Saheeh al-Jaami, 270)

It is not permitted to bring up the past of a person who regrets it and has repented and given up his sin; rather, this should be covered up. Whoever covers up his Muslim brother in this world, Allaah will cover him up in the Hereafter.

(A saheeh hadeeth reported by Imaam Ahmad; Saheeh al-Jaami, 6287)

But if a person is immoral and corrupt, and still has relationships from before, then you should never, ever agree to marry him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): The adulterer marries not but an adulteress or a mushrikah. And the woman who agrees to marry a mushrik or an adulterer, then she is either a prostitute or a mushrikah. Such a thing is forbidden to the believers. [al-Noor 24:3]

Ibn Katheer said, commenting on the phrase Such a thing is forbidden to the believers: i.e., (it is forbidden for) a man to marry an immoral woman, or for a chaste woman to marry an immoral man. Hence Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said that the marriage contract between a chaste man and an immoral woman is invalid, so long as she remains like this, unless she is asked to repent and she does so, in which case the contract becomes valid, otherwise it is not valid. Similarly, the marriage of a free, chaste woman to a promiscuous, immoral man is invalid unless he repents sincerely, because Allaah says Such a thing is forbidden to the believers.

There is no secret about the mischief, misery and problems that result from marriage to an

immoral man.

In many cases it is very difficult to get a true picture of a person and be sure about whether he is chaste or otherwise. But by researching, asking questions, consulting people and asking them for advice, whilst taking ones time and asking Allaah for help, one can get answers. We ask Allaah to choose the best for you, to help you and to guide you. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.