22453 - She has received a marriage proposal from a person who has some shortcomings which she is trying to deal with and discuss

the question

I am in need of some scholarly advice about a personal situation that I am facing presently. I have recently received a marriage proposal and have prayed Salat-ul-istikhara, however I never seem to receive any clear signs or indications about what to do. This has happened to me in many situations and the same is happening now too. I am a practising Muslim but obviously have flaws as all of us do have. I have a thirst for knowledge of the deen and am currently working on myself as a Muslims and acquiring sacred knowledge at the same time. What I look and hope for in a partner is a role model who is beyond me and someone who can help me in becoming a better person. Someone who loves and lives for Allah swt and who I can turn to for knowledge and who will be a good companion for me. The current proposal has many good qualities, except a few things that are concerning me. Firstly we are on a slightly different level of speaking, ie. Although he is a graduate he is not extremely intellectually spoken (I suppose this is something I should overlook). Secondly he has been practising for less time than me and therefore I feel he has less knowledge than me, which I find an of put as I feel he should be my guide not vice versa. However he does have a thirst for knowledge and does study the deen and also wishes to take out a year or so to go abroad and study the deen (which is what I also want to do). Apart from these two issues I feel we are compatible in many other ways. We have the same vision in life. Whilst paying Salat-ul-Istikhara I am getting no clear sign, except at times I get a tight feeling in my heart at times, which puts me off, but then I also think I should go for this as he has many good qualities. Im not sure as to what to do and am really confused, I dont know what this feeling in my heart means. I have met him once and there will be another meeting this Friday, but I dont want to lag it on any longer than necessary as it is playing with peoples emotions. Please get back to me with a reply soon as I really need some advice, especially regarding my Istikhaara as it is confusing me.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The basic principle is that if a woman receives a marriage proposal from a man whose religious commitment, attitude and trustworthiness are satisfactory, then she should accept, so long as there is not another offer from one whose attitude and religious commitment are better. So if the one who has proposed marriage to you meets these criteria, and he is keen to learn more about Islam as you say, then this is a good sign. But if the shortcomings to which you refer in your question are major sins or sins in which he is persisting or committing openly, then we advise you to wait for someone better, so long as there is no risk of you doing something haraam or exposing yourself to greater fitnah (temptation).

Secondly:

It is not necessary in the case of istikhaarah to feel something specific afterwards. Rather if you consult people and think deeply about the matter, and it becomes clear to you that this matter will be beneficial both in religious and worldly terms, then you should pray istikhaarah and go ahead, and not wait for a sign or a dream or a feeling. You should rather put your trust in Allaah and go ahead after praying istikhaarah. You will find a detailed answer concerning istikhaarah and its rulings in Question no. 5882.

Thirdly:

Beware of being alone or of uncovering in front of this man who is still a non-mahram to you. In the answer to question no. 12182 you will find a detailed answer to your question regarding marriage proposals and sitting with and meeting the one who has proposed marriage to you. Please refer to this question.

Fourthly:

Your wish concerning what you hope to find in a husband, meaning that he lives for the sake of Allaah, is a great wish, and we hope that Allaah will grant you that. But you should know that a righteous woman is one of the greatest means that will help a man in this regard, by helping him and advising him, and encouraging him to do more, and patiently putting up with anything that

affects her rights because of his being involved in doing righteous deeds.

We ask Allaah to help you to do that which is good. Ameen.