22003 - His son got to know a girl through chat rooms, and he wants to marry her

the question

My adult son who is twenty-one years old got to know a girl in another city through chat rooms. They kept in touch through the chat rooms, then he spoke to her on the phone and he liked her and she liked him. The relationship between them developed over a number of months until they agreed to marry, knowing that – according to what he tells me – they have not met. Then he asked me to arrange his marriage to this girl, but at first he did not make it clear to me that he had gotten to know her through chat rooms. At first he went to his paternal aunt who has a job and spoke to her confidentially, and he asked her to say that she knew this girl through one of her female colleagues at school and to get in touch with the girls' mother and tell her that his family was keen to get to know them with a view to arranging a marriage with one of their womenfolk. His aunt indeed did that, but I absolutely refused to agree to his request to marry her for a number of reasons:

1 – The way in which he got to know this girl was not Islamically acceptable.

2 – He does not know a lot about how she really is. All that he knows about her is through telephone calls only.

3 – He lied to me at first, and went to his aunt about a sensitive subject which should have been kept secret even from the closest of people until arrangements were complete, then it could be announced to others.

4 – We – praise be to Allaah – are a conservative family, and this way of getting in touch with a girl is not in accordance with our principles and values, let alone our traditions and customs.

To sum up, I am very confused about this matter, because now it is affecting his university

studies and he has become withdrawn.

Please note that he was previously a high-achieving student. Every time we try to tell him to forget about this matter and to focus on his studies, he insists that if we agree to let him marry this girl it will make him happy again, and that we will accept this girl and like her.

What is your opinion on this confusing problem?.

Detailed answer

This problem – and many others – confirm the truth of what many daa'iyahs and reformers are saying about the necessity of being careful about how our sons and daughters are using the internet, and to beware of entering conversations between men and women in chat rooms, because of the very real fitnah (temptation] to which that may lead, with subsequent contact and meetings.

Undoubtedly your son made a mistake by forming this relationship with a non-mahram woman who is not permissible for him. He made a mistake by lying to you and by discussing this matter with his aunt. But we do not agree with the idea of refusing his marriage to this girl, especially if you think that your son is deeply attached to her. That is for the following reasons:

1 – Not every girl who acts in this manner can be judged to be deviant, badly brought up or of bad manners and attitude. This may have been a mistake on her part, as in the case of your son.

2 – What is happening to your son now, with his wanting to be alone and his falling behind in his studies may be because of intense love for this girl on his part. In such cases it may be that the only efficient remedy is for him to marry the one whom he loves. According to a hadeeth narrated by Ibn Maajah (1847), "There is nothing better for two who love one another than marriage." (This hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah).

3 – The fact that your son does not know much about the attitude and character of this girl may be dealt with by asking about her and finding out more about her background.

Hence we think that you should hasten to find out about this girl and her family. If her character is not good, then this will convince your son to stop thinking about her.

But if, after thoroughly investigating the matter, you like what you find out about her and her family, then there is no reason why your son should not marry her, rather this will be the best remedy for him and for her.

This suggestion applies if you feel that he is strongly attached to her and is keen to marry her, as referred to above. But if it is simply the matter of an idea that has occurred to him, and it is not the matter of love or deep attachment, and you hope that he will forget about her, then be firm in your refusal and help him to look for a woman who has good manners and is religiously committed and chaste. There are so many righteous and chaste women who have never had anything to do with men and have never faced temptation.

Turn to Allaah and ask Him to guide you, and seek His help by praying Istikhaarah concerning all the matters in which you want to take a decision.

And Allaah knows best.