10196 - What is the ruling on a father preventing his daughter from marrying who she wants?

the question

Some fathers prevent their daughters from marrying someone who is compatible with them. What is the ruling on this? What is the daughters' position?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This question was put to Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him), who said:

This is a serious issue and a major problem. Some men – we seek refuge with Allah – betray Allah and betray their trust, and cause problems for their daughters. The guardian is obliged to do that which pleases Allah and His Messenger. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): {And marry those among you who are single (i.e. a man who has no wife and the woman who has no husband)} – i.e., give your daughters in marriage – {and (also marry) the Salihun (pious, fit and capable ones) of your (male) slaves and maid-servants (female slaves).} [An-Nur 24:32]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "If there comes to you one with whose character and religious commitment you are pleased, then marry (your female relative under your guardianship) to him, for if you do not do so, there will be tribulation and great mischief on earth."

Some people – we seek refuge with Allah – make their daughter a commodity to be sold to whoever they want, and they prevent her from marrying whoever they do not want. So they marry their daughter to a man whose character and religious commitment are not pleasing, because that suits their whims, and they prevent her from marrying one whose character and religious

commitment are pleasing, because that does not suit them.

How nice if we could reach the level where a woman whose father prevents her from marrying one whose character and religious commitment are compatible could go to the qadi and he would tell her father, “Marry her to him or a guardian other than you will do so,” because a girl has the right, if her father prevents her from marrying someone, (and she complains to the qadi). This is a right given by shari`ah. How nice if we could reach this level, but most girls are prevented by their shyness from doing this.

Our advice to the father is still to fear Allah and not to prevent her from marrying, because that may cause her to do something wrong and may lead to mischief. Let him ask himself, if he were prevented from marrying, what would happen to him?

His daughter whom he prevented from marrying will become his opponent on the Day of Resurrection:

“That Day shall a man flee from his brother,

And from his mother and his father,

And from his wife and his children.

Every man that Day will have enough to make him careless of others” [‘Abasa 80:34-37 – interpretation of the meaning]

Guardians, including fathers and brothers, must fear Allah and not deny women their right to marry the one whose religious commitment and character is pleasing to them.

Yes, if a woman chooses someone whose religious commitment and character are not pleasing, then he (the father or guardian) may prevent her from marrying him. But if she chooses a righteous man whose religious commitment and character are good, then he prevents her from marrying because of his own whims and desires, this is haram, by Allah, and it is a sin and a betrayal. If any mischief results from this, the sin will be on him (the father).

And Allah knows best