179557 - Can a Suitor Lie to the Non-Muslim Family of the Girl He Wants to Marry and Say He is Unmarried

the question

Last year I came to know of this brother who teaches Islamic classes and also through da'wah work. He seems to be like a religious brother (Hafiz of Qur'an and organizes Islamic activities maasha'Allah), and Allah knows best.
This brother will be getting married this year, and then wants to marry me next year insha'Allah (as I would like to get married after I graduate from unviersity insha'Allah)...so that would make me his second wife.
The issue is - my family is not Muslim (non-practicing Shi'a, atheist, agnostic, etc) - since two male family members have spoken to me about the topic of polygamy already, I suspect that they would ask any suitor if he has other wives.
I asked the person going between me and the brother how he could answer that...because I believe my family would only accept 'no, I don't' as an answer and if he said that, that would be lying.
His response was that it is permissible to lie in this situation to prevent family ties being broken.
I'm really unsure about if this would be a permissible situation for him to lie in? Do you think I should enter into this marriage? I would appreciate your advice.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

First:

If you have a Muslim guardian, he would be the one handling your marriage and the suitor would need to answer him truthfully if he were to ask him about that. The guardian has the right to look into these matters for the benefit of his principal and to enlighten her on matters she may not perceive the outcomes of.

And if you do not have a Muslim guardian from your relatives, your marriage should be handled by the Imam of an Islamic Centre, or someone similar who has a position of respect among the Muslim community and your relatives would have no authority over you. In that case we could say: If the suitor is a pious man and you fear that if he were to inform them of his previous marriage they would refuse him, then he can use what is known as tawriyah, which is basically the use of speech which can be understood in different ways (intending for them to understand other than the reality). For example, he may say: “I did not marry (i.e. a year ago)”. But he should beware of saying: “I am not married” or “I don’t have a wife” as that is considered as an implicit divorce according to some jurists and the divorce would be valid if he had that intention.

Second:

You should consider the consequences of your family finding out that he is married and that you both lied to them, and the effects that will have on their opinion of you and of Islam and your husband, the Islamic caller. It may have a negative impact and so we do not advise you to get into such a predicament, the results of which may not be commendable.

We also do not support your waiting a whole year for a man who has not yet married his first wife. Therefore, if a suitable suitor were to propose, you should seriously consider him for the sake of preserving your chastity and protecting yourself, and also for fear that this present suitor may change his mind about marrying you.

You should also know that the suitable, righteous and religious husband doesn’t necessarily have to be one who delivers lectures and sermons and is active in Islamic centres and mosques. Rather, he should be religious himself, venerating his religion and keen to worship his Lord.

Increase your supplications to Allah for ease, success and satisfaction.

And Allah knows best.