625399 - Is it permissible to reject a suitor because of health problems, even though he is pleasing in terms of religious commitment and character?

the question

A young man proposed marriage to me; his qualities are very good and his character and religious commitment are excellent, but he told me that he has multiple sclerosis (MS) and this disease varies from one person to another, but he is taking medicine to control its progression. I was reassured to some extent, but when I researched this disease on Google, I found out that in the worst cases, this disease can make the patient completely disabled, so I was very alarmed by this disease. But the young man is very decent, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: if there comes to you one with whose religious commitment and character you are pleased, then give your daughter in marriage to him. So what should I do? I prayed istikharah several times, and I am asking people who could give me advice and who have knowledge of religion. I hope that you will kindly answer my question and give me your opinion.

Please tell me if there was any incident similar to this at the time of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him); I hope you will quote it. Thank you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

We do not know of any case similar to this that happened at the time of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

II.

With regard to what the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said – "If there comes to you one with whose attitude and religious commitment you are pleased, then marry (your daughter or female relative under your care) to him, for if you do not do that, there will be fitnah in the land and widespread corruption." Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (1084) and Ibn Majah (1967); classed as sound (hasan) by al-Albani in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi* –

This does not mean that if there comes to you one who is pleasing in terms of his religious commitment and character that you must accept him and not pay any attention to other issues and matters.

The Sunnah indicates that attention must be paid to other matters and characteristics of the suitor.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) suggested to Fatimah bint Qays (may Allah be pleased with her) that she should reject Mu`awiyah's proposal to her, because he was poor, even though he was otherwise pleasing in terms of religious commitment and character.

And he advised her to reject Abu Jahm`s proposal to her, because he beat his wives a great deal, even though he was otherwise pleasing in terms of religious commitment and character. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

When Abu Bakr, then `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) proposed to Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) rejected their proposals and said that she was too young, even though they (may Allah be pleased with them both) were the most prominent among the believers in terms of religious commitment and character. Narrated by an-Nasa'i, 3221; its isnad was classed as authentic (sahih) by Shaykh al-Albani in *Sahih Sunan an-Nasa'i*, 2/412.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) implied in a hadith that a smaller gap in age between spouses is something desirable, and that a suitor may be rejected because of being too old.

So the Muslim should not focus on only one text of hadith and derive rulings from it; rather he should examine all the texts on the issue together, so that his decision will be in accordance with what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) intended.

Based on that, there is no blame on you for rejecting this person because of his sickness, even if he is religiously committed and of good character.

That is because this disease will undoubtedly put more pressure and responsibility on you.

You may think that the matter would be easy and that you would be able to put up with it and be patient, but after you find yourself confronted with the reality of this situation, you may realise that it is more than you can bear and that you were hasty in taking a decision, as has happened in many cases.

By saying this, we do not mean that we are advising you to reject him. All we are saying is that your rejecting him is not contrary to the teachings of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and that there is no blame on you if you reject him.

As for accepting or rejecting him, the decision is yours, and you should not take a decision on your own; rather you must let your family have a say and seek their advice, for they have more knowledge than you about what is required in marriage and about the demands of married life, and they have more knowledge about your circumstances and what is appropriate for you.

If you think that you will be okay if you go ahead with this marriage, then your decision should not be based on mere positive thinking or feeling that you are comfortable with this marriage; rather it is essential to base your decision on full awareness of what it entails. That includes the following:

- Your guardian should ask for a clear medical report which explains the true nature of the disease, what stage it is at, and what its possible progression may be.
- Advice should be sought from a trustworthy specialist doctor, so that he can explain the case on the basis of facts and explain what can usually be expected in such cases.
- The matter should become clear to you so that you will be fully aware and certain that you

will be able to deal with the consequences in the future.

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to make your affairs easy for you.

And Allah knows best.