

Part 6: Another Meeting

Warqa posted the letter the following day and waited for Miyad to fix a date for their next meeting. A letter soon arrived and Warqa planned to meet her friend at the hospital the next day. Warqa told her grandmother she would be late in coming home and she went to the hospital directly from college. She waited a moment to calm down and then knocked on the doctor's door. Dr. Miyad met her with a bright face, and Warqa felt like crying. The doctor said, "Welcome, dear. I have missed you very much, as if I had lived with you all my life."

"I have also suffered a lot. God knows how worried I was that you might be angry at me."

"Why should I?" asked Dr. Miyad. "You are free to make your own choice. Perhaps you think that my brother is not good enough for you."

"Please don't say that. What happened was not my own decision. I was satisfied with what you told me about him."

"What then?"

"It was my grandmother," Warqa confessed.

"Has she given a reason?"

Warqa became confused and remained silent, but the doctor repeated her question and Warqa told her, "There is a reason."

"A good enough reason for your refusal?"

"Yes."

"Then I won't insist on discussing it further. Let us keep our friendship," said Dr. Miyad.

"Yes, please. I feel quite at ease with you. I was very upset these past few days. I have many girlfriends, but you are the most trustworthy one. I have had difficult times, but never one such as giving up your

friendship."

"Forget it, and be sure of our friendship," said Dr. Miyad reassuringly.

"Now we must continue our discussion," said Warqa. "You promised to explain the relationship between empiricists and science."

"What do you know about empiricists?" asked the doctor.

"They rely on observation and experiments, not on theory. They deny the role of brain and rational reasoning. Every issue should be proved through experimenting." "Right," said Dr. Miyad. "So we shall refer to this fact in our arguments. If a piece of iron is kept near fire, it expands, so the general rule is that fire causes the expansion of metals. This is accepted through observation of iron, but the general rule is a mental calculation. The brain produces such knowledge."

"It is quite interesting," noted Warqa. Dr. Miyad continued, "There is something else; the thesis and anti-thesis doctrine. Opponents never agree. This is a basic fact in mathematics and without it this science would be nullified."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that we cannot say that the water in this glass, for example, is both hot and cold. It is either hot or cold. We cannot say that the sun is both bright and dark at the same time, or that something is long and short."

"What does this have to do with mathematics?"

"For instance, we say that one plus one equals two; a basic fact in this science. We cannot say one plus one equals three, it is in contradiction with the symbol meaning equal to. It is a well-known fact. So the empiricist either believes it or doesn't. If he does, is it from experimenting?"

"So it is impossible to bring opposites together."

"Yes," said Dr. Miyad. "Such a result is the outcome of rational reasoning, which needs no experiment. Warqa then said, "It may be the result of long experience. Opposites in the universe cannot be found together."

"Such a thing may indicate the non-existence of opposites being together, not the probability of such an occurrence. Such a thing can never be the result of experimentation."

"What if they believe in its possibility?" asked Warqa.

"Then they might abolish the most important science: mathematics."

Dr. Miyad was silent for several minutes to give Warqa time to think about the discussion. Warqa was interested in the subject and had listened attentively. She said, "I was in need of such information and I still need more."

"When will you come again then?" asked Dr. Miyad. "I will come as soon as I get the chance. Now I should go home, my grandmother might be worried."

Warqa visited Dr. Miyad from time to time. One day she arrived home late and found that her grandmother was angry and demanded to know where she had been. Warqa guessed that her grandmother knew of her visits to Dr. Miyad and waited for her to say so. "Why are you asking me, grandma?" she inquired.

"Have you come directly from the college?"

Warqa did not lie, but simply replied, "No."

"From the hospital," said Warqa.

"I know that you see Dr. Miyad often," said her grandmother angrily. "Admit it. I thought you were wise enough not to meet with the daughter of your father's murderer."

Warqa said quietly, "How did you guess?"

"I asked your friends."

"What's wrong with that? I refused the proposal of her brother, but I won't give up her friendship. I need a sister, and there is nothing wrong in that."

"You are not interested in the girl but in her brother, who is an attractive gentleman," her grandmother remarked.

"That is not fair! " cried Warqa. "I have only seen him twice, quite by chance. I beg you to stop imagining things. "

The next day Miyad waited for Warqa to come, and when she saw her, she noticed how pale Warqa looked. "What is wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing. I was up late last night. Please continue with your talk."

"You are in a hurry, it seems. Has anything happened? "

"No, nothing," Warqa replied.

Dr. Miyad began, "The empiricists don't even believe in authenticated matters." "What are authenticated matters?" asked Warqa.

"Matters, which are true beyond a doubt. In fact, any authentic fact needs a preceding fact and so on, until we come to a starting point. Otherwise, we can't receive any kind of knowledge."

"How is that? "

"Suppose you want to become acquainted with a particular girl and you want to know about her conduct. Where would you get such information?"

"I 'd ask her friends," said Warqa.

"You may contact a friend of hers indirectly, through someone else. It is logical that your enquiry might end with someone you know. This is the starting point."

"Quite right," Warqa admitted.

"This is the case with authenticated matters. There should be a starting point well-known, with the least experimenting."

Warqa then asked, "Can you give me an example?"

"For instance, if we say that a part of a book is smaller than the whole, someone might say: 'How do you know?' This is quite simple. Since we refer to a part, surely there must be a whole."

"If simple facts need no experiments, since the brain comprehends them," Warqa asked, "then why can't a person learn these facts at an early age? Why can't they be retained until old age?"

Dr. Miyad explained, "There are two types of mental faculties: reasoning comprehension and imaginary comprehension. We can perceive such things as water, flowers, gold and so on, through our senses."

"And we can imagine unreal objects, such as a sea of milk or a mountain of mercury," added Warqa.

"Here comes the perceived information through the power of the senses. But, again, we depend on previously received information. We cannot say, for example, there is a date palm without imagining the date tree first. It depends on imaginative perception. That is why a child cannot comprehend authentic information; he cannot imagine the actual thing."

"It is so interesting to listen to you, but I am afraid I cannot stay any longer," said Warqa.

"We can continue tomorrow," the doctor said.

Warqa said good-bye and left. When she reached home, her grandmother was quite upset. Warqa kissed her and said, "Please don't be angry at my seeing Dr. Miyad. I will obey all your other wishes." Then her grandmother asked, "You will obey me in other matters?"

"Yes, except with regard to Dr. Miyad."

"Will you swear to that?" asked her grandmother.

Warqa was about to swear that she would when something stopped her. "I won't swear, but I do promise. That is sufficient."

"You will keep your word of honour, won't you?" asked her grandmother.

"I will do that," said Warqa. Her grandmother's face brightened and she kissed her granddaughter with an easy mind. She told herself, 'She has promised to obey me. I am sure she will accept her cousin's proposal. Poor man, I was the cause of the delay until now. I was waiting for Warqa to finish her studies, but he has again expressed his wish to marry her. He is rich and educated, even though he is not religious. She can guide him to the right path. When she marries, she will have no time to see Dr. Miyad.'

The next afternoon, Warqa attended some lectures and went to see Dr. Miyad again. The doctor was waiting for her at the hospital door and she greeted her, saying, "We shall go home together. I have some work to do."

"Whose home?"

"My home, of course," said Dr. Miyad.

"Will anyone else be there?" asked Warqa.

"No one, be sure of that. We will leave before sunset."

"As you like," Warqa agreed.

"It is not far; we can walk."

They soon reached the doctor's home and she unlocked the door. It was a small home with a tidy little garden. The house furniture was simple but in good taste. Warqa asked, "Who cleans your home for you?" "I come here twice a week," said the doctor. "I usually clean it myself and arrange it for my brother."

"Does he live alone?" Warqa asked.

"Yes, I am his only sister. We are alone in the world." Warqa felt sorry for them. She knew that the doctor was lonely but tried to conceal it.

Warqa was deep in thought when the doctor said, "What is the matter? Won't you give me a hand?"

Warqa was happy to help her friend. When they finished their work, they sat in the shade of a tree. Warqa was looking at a small orange tree in front of her and Dr. Miyad said, "I planted that tree and I am very happy that it is bearing fruit."

"It is nice to see plants grow, flourish and bear fruit," Warqa commented.

"But how sad it is to see such trees uprooted by a wicked hand or a strong storm."

"Oh yes," agreed Warqa. "But I want to ask a question. Is it you or the seed that caused the plant to grow?"

Dr. Miyad answered, "Neither I nor the seed. Almighty Allah has done it. We are only means created by Him. He created the whole universe, and caused all things to come into existence."

"How wise our Creator is. I don't know how some people can deny His existence and relate existence to causes other than Him, such as materialists who claim that the unceasing motion of matter has made all creatures."

"Such people, if they think rationally, will confess that Allah has designed all life. Sometimes they agree with us on the rudiments of a subject, but they differ at the outcome," said Dr. Miyad.

"In what ways do they agree ? "

"They, too, agree that we have not come from nothing; that there is an everlasting One Who created life. One Who is the Owner of the things that He bestows upon us. What we have cannot have come from nothing. These are matters they agree with us upon. What do we believers say?"

Warqa said, "We say Allah is the Creator."

"The materialists claim that the everlasting motion of matter is the cause of life. One could ask them: When did it start to create countless living creatures? If it is everlasting, how, then, can it have a beginning?"

"They cannot answer that," said Warqa.

Dr. Miyad continued, "Science says that the earth separated from the sun billions of years ago, and that it took one billion years for the earth's surface to cool."

"That means that life on this earth had a beginning," noted Warqa.

"Yes. Such scientific facts are undisputable. Thus, if motion is everlasting, then creation must be everlasting."

"Otherwise, scientists could not have calculated the age of this planet, " Warqa added. "This fact cannot be denied. But if the materialists confess that motion is not everlasting, it must be something separate from and, hence, added to matter. Then we can ask: Who has created motion? How could it create when it itself was created? How can they claim motion is the source of creation?"

Warqa asked, "Suppose they say that motion is everlasting and that matter designated the time of creation."

"This is unacceptable," said Dr. Miyad, "for creation is a process, the result of great Wisdom; substance is not."

"How can a person prove that matter lacks intelligence?"

"Science has proved that it is comprised of electrical charges," said the doctor. "Hence it cannot think or comprehend. According to our belief, it is under some influence, which causes its motion and existence."

Warqa suggested, "They might say that the beginning of creation was postponed in order to prepare the rudiments, like a traveller who begins his journey four hours later than he intended. Maybe the matter needed time in order to create life."

"What prevented it from starting earlier?" asked Dr. Miyad.

"Well, like the traveller who was delayed because he needed time to prepare for the journey, so life came into existence after billions of years," said Warqa.

Dr. Miyad replied, "The answer suits the traveller, but not in the case of the universe, because it is claimed that time exists through everlasting motion. Such answers could be true if the universe actually did begin in a manner similar to that of the traveler, which would mean that motion is accidental and that time is limited; an excuse for a late start."

"Thank you for this explanation. By the way, sometimes I hate time, because it moves so quickly, as in the case of our meetings," laughed Warqa.

"I hope you won't be late," said Dr. Miyad. "Let us leave now. We will come here again sometimes, just for a change."

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