

## Well Arranged Marriage and...

Qamar was with his mother and sister in the big city bazaar for shopping early one morning on Sunday. When they were inside the large food supermarket, his mother saw Seyyid with his son of about 12 years of age and informed Qamar and his sister. This was the first time they had seen Seyyid outside his home and shopping. They stopped their own shopping and watched him stealthily carrying his own half-filled trolley. They followed him slowly and looked at him from a distance to see how he selected items.

They saw that he would sometimes use his mobile to talk to someone and then put the thing in the trolley. Sometimes, he would talk with his son. At other times, he would speak very softly with the salesman. He was careful in selecting a product before he bought. They were impressed by his sober and graceful manners. Finally, they decided to give Seyyid a surprise....

They went near him and said Salams together. Seyyid replied with a graceful manner and was surprised. Seyyid asked his son to say Salams to all of them. He was a bit shy and said it very softly. Qamar's mother smiled and took him near her and started talking with him, asking what grade was he. Qamar then introduced his sister. Seyyid said: 'Yes I remember Samana very well; the highly ambitious chemistry student. Am I right?' Seyyid said it with a meaningful style. 'Yes Seyyid. I have just given BSc exams and I am waiting for my results and after that I want to pursue higher studies abroad. Please pray for me,' she said. Seyyid replied: 'Yes. May God bless you with success. Are you reciting the du'a from *As-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah* that I advised you a few months ago?' She replied in affirmative.

Seyyid continued: 'You are very talented like Qamar. But remember that there are more difficult exams in life than studying chemistry. I think you are capable of achieving much more valuable things in your life.' She asked immediately: 'Seyyid, I don't get what you mean.' Seyyid looked at her and Qamar and then calmly said: 'Perhaps after your results you may know what I mean.' Then Seyyid asked them all to come to his house next Saturday and said goodbye to them and left the shop after payment. They also finished their shopping quickly and saw in the parking lot that Seyyid left in an old car and were very much surprised to see him driving it.

'Seyyid, my thesis defense was excellent, *alhamdulillah*,' Shahid called him from his mobile phone after he was declared successful in MSc thesis defense. He scored near perfect grades with distinction. He

then called Seyyid and continued... 'I am bringing sweets Seyyid. I will reach within an hour.' Seyyid asked him to first go to his house and say thanks to his parents and buy sweets for them and then come to his house. He thanked Seyyid for this advice.

Near *maghrib*, Shahid reached Seyyid's house with sweets. Seyyid asked him to keep it and distribute it after prayers. Then they performed their prayers. Seyyid gave a very inspiring short lecture on merits of seeking knowledge. He said that knowledge is the base for all good actions a person does. However, knowledge is a tool to worship God, it is not the aim. That's why it is *wajib* or obligatory so that we all worship God using our knowledge. Relieving suffering of human beings by doing research is one of the best forms of knowledge.

After prayers, Seyyid told the small gathering that *masha'Allah* Shahid has defended his thesis today with distinction and so he has brought sweets. Then, he prayed for Shahid's success and recited *salawat*. Other close students were also present and they congratulated Shahid. Then, Seyyid made an announcement: 'On Saturday, I will not give my lecture as I usually do. Shahid will present his research and we will listen to him,' he said. 'Please inform your friends and family members also, as the topic he is going to present is important for all of us,' he said. They all then left slowly, talking with Shahid and asking questions about his research and future plans. Seyyid was carefully watching who was talking to Shahid.....

On Saturday, Shahid arrived at Seyyid's house with his laptop and borrowed a projector and a screen as Seyyid wanted him to present in such a way that everybody would be able to see his slides and listen to him. Soon, people started arriving and all his friends came with their families. Seyyid started prayers and then, he asked few students to help people sit in such a way that everyone would be able to watch Shahid's lecture on screen.

The ladies were also sitting in the yard with a partition so that they could be comfortable. Shahid set the screen and computer with microphone and asked Seyyid's permission to start. First, Seyyid spoke a few words of high praise for Shahid. He said: '*Masha'Allah*, we have such a talented young, well-mannered, sober and very pious *mu'min* like Shahid who has done very valuable research on one of the prayers of Imam Zayn al-Abedin (as) and scientifically proved that it had very significant effect on depression. He got his MSc with distinction and has submitted his research paper in a top journal. Shahid has a bright future and I pray for his success.' Then, he asked Shahid to begin his lecture.

Shahid started with presenting some general information on depression as to how common it was in the society. He then presented his research, why he selected a du'a of Imam Zayn al Abedin (as) which he used to pray in the time of difficulty. He also talked about how he selected and evaluated patients with depression, how he requested the patients to participate in the study, tested their stress related hormones, checked their heart rates and parameters of depression and how he proved that that the patients who listened to du'a regularly significantly recovered much better and faster than those who were taking anti-depressant medicines.

He then said: 'Our research clearly shows that if people recite du'a on a daily basis, they will never suffer from stress and depression.' When his lecture finished, everyone recited *salawat* and many voices of *masha'Allah* and *subhanAllah* were heard from the audience. Then, Shahid said if anyone had questions. Seyyid asked a question: 'Dear Shahid, tell me if you didn't get the significant results, would that mean that the du'a had no effect?' Shahid intelligently replied: 'No Seyyid. It would mean that our experiment was not designed properly. We would then test the du'a with a better experimental design.' Everyone was surprised at the extempore answer given by Shahid. Seyyid said: '*Masha'Allah*, great answer.' Then few questions were asked from both ladies and gents sections. Finally, one question was asked from ladies: 'Mr. Shahid, what are your future plans for research?' Shahid said that he wished to pursue PhD in Spiritual Psychology abroad and work on other du'as, especially some of the du'as of Imam Zayn al Abedin (as) and Imam Ali (as). 'If God wishes, I will do this type of research which is a new area in experimental and spiritual psychology for the propagation of Islam. I have already told Seyyid about it,' he replied.

Seyyid then asked Shahid his final question: 'Dear Shahid, I am asking you a personal question. I know you are not married. What do you expect from your wife-to-be?' Shahid was a bit shy and looked down and then said: 'Seyyid, this is a difficult question. If I do research, I would like my wife to support my research and make home life suitable for it so that we can serve Islam more by doing this type of research.' Seyyid said that it was difficult to find such an educated and believing wife who would sacrifice her career for him. 'Shahid, dear you are looking for an educated *mu'mina* to support your research. It's almost impossible. But God will help you.' Then he asked everyone to recite a *salawat* and pray for Shahid.

After the lecture, all of the guests had food. Shahid was at the center; everyone was congratulating him and asking him questions. Some of his friends had brought gifts for him. Seyyid was closely watching who was meeting and talking with Shahid. Finally after dinner, people started leaving. Seyyid said goodbye to everyone. Seyyid sat for a while on his seat when he was all alone and thanked God for his help.

On Tuesday morning at 10, Seyyid's house bell rang. Qamar's mother was there. Seyyid immediately went to the gate and welcomed her. Seyyid asked his wife to take her inside. Then, he asked if everything was okay as this was unusual of her to come like that. 'Seyyid, I want your advice on an important issue,' she said. Seyyid requested her to be comfortable and talk without any fear or hesitation. She said: 'Seyyid as you know, we all came here on Saturday to attend Shahid's lecture. I really liked that young man. His manners were so humble. He was brilliant and his future and his reply about married life really impressed me. Samana has been also talking highly of him. I know my daughter very well. I think she is inclined towards him but she is too shy to say it.' Seyyid was attentively listening to her. He said: 'It is possible. However, your daughter wants to study chemistry abroad. Remember last week that's what she told me in the bazaar.' Qamar's mother said that it is possible that she took your words seriously that there are higher levels of good deeds that intelligent persons like her can achieve.

‘Remember Seyyid you challenged her. Perhaps she has accepted a difficult challenge to marry a person like Shahid and support his research for the sake of Islam and give up something she loved to study as an aim of her life,’ she replied.

Seyyid smiled meaningfully. He then said: ‘Shahid is a very good person. If Samana marries him, that would be very good. They both will have a good productive life to serve Islam. Insha’Allah. But Shahid doesn’t belong to a rich family. He cannot afford his PhD.’ Shahid’s mother said: ‘Shahid is like my own son. Even if they don’t marry, I give you my word that we will support his studies because his research will benefit Islam. I will ask Qamar to start supporting him so that he prepares for his PhD.’ Seyyid replied: ‘Thanks, May God bless you. But please don’t tell Qamar to talk to Shahid directly about support as this will hurt his self-respect and I would not recommend it.’ She agreed. Seyyid then asked her to talk to her daughter about Shahid and then if she agrees, talk to Qamar about it and then if he agrees, they all should inform him and come to see him. She agreed and thanked Seyyid for his wise advice.

Two days later, Seyyid received a call early in the morning from Qamar’s mother that her daughter has agreed and so has Qamar and they want to see him. Seyyid told them to come over the next day. He then called Shahid and asked him to come over with his mother. Shahid came with his mother about an hour before *dhuhr*. Seyyid guided them to his living room and then they sat together. Seyyid’s wife brought tea for them.

Then Seyyid told them about a marriage proposal for Shahid. Seyyid said: ‘I have selected a good bride for your son. I know that Shahid will agree with my choice.’ Shahid immediately said: ‘Yes Seyyid. Your choice is an honor for me.’ Shahid’s mother also said: ‘Thank you Seyyid. But we are not so well-off, who will support my son for his studies and if he goes abroad, he will not be able to take his wife.’ Seyyid smiled and calmly said: ‘God has accepted your prayers. Everything is arranged for your son. Then he told them that he has selected a good family and if they agree, he will propose for Shahid.

They asked a few questions and when Shahid came to know that it was Qamar’s sister, he was a bit shy and concerned. ‘But Seyyid, they are very rich. I don’t have money to study abroad and take my wife with me. We don’t have the high class expensive living that they have. I am sure Qamar’s sister will not be happy with us. We will also feel belittled when they will come to our apartment and when we will visit their expensive big villa. I will not be able to provide my wife with the living facilities which she has now. Our life is very simple. We live in an apartment.’ he said. Seyyid listened patiently and said that in Islam, the criterion for marriage is faith and piety, nothing else. ‘You should not feel inferior. You will have to respect her and try your best to make her life comfortable. Remember that it is an honor for them that a believer like you will be their son-in-law and an honor for you that a good, believing and intelligent girl will be your wife who will support you.’

Then, he told Shahid’s mother that she has to treat her bride like her own daughter and give her respect. ‘The respect you will give her is because of her faith and she will do the same. Faith is much more valuable than money and material possessions and it is tested in difficult situations. Your adjustment

with her will be a test of your faith,' he explained. Shahid's mother then called his father and took his advice. He agreed. They then requested Seyyid to propose. Seyyid said he will do that and inform them when he gets a reply. They left thanking Seyyid.

Seyyid then called Qamar's mother and told her that he has contacted Shahid and his family and got their approval. 'They asked me to propose for your daughter,' he said. Qamar's mother was very happy. She said that her daughter wanted to talk to him on the phone. Seyyid then asked Qamar's mother, her daughter and Qamar to come to his house for a short visit as he wanted to talk to them. They asked his permission to come near *maghrib* but then Seyyid said that he didn't want anyone to see them so they should come around 3 pm. They agreed. Seyyid then told his wife a few things and got ready for them.

They arrived at 3 and Seyyid and his wife led them inside his living room. His wife brought tea and snacks for them. Seyyid started talking to all of them about the differences between their life and Shahid and his family's life. 'Shahid, as you saw him, is a very pious and intelligent young man. His mother and father are more respectable as they brought him and his brother and sister up in a very noble manner, despite the fact that their life was simple and their earning were limited. They could have had a better life if they hadn't spent their money on their children's education. I am sure you have heard the story of Imam Husayn (as) giving a very big amount of money to a teacher who taught something very small to one of his sons. Knowledge with piety is the most valuable thing one can have and Shahid has it. You know that both of his parents were school teachers,' he continued. 'Yes Seyyid, I know Shahid very well since I started coming to your lectures about four years ago and became his friend,' said Qamar. 'So another dimension is added to your friendship and that is family relationship. You will surely give him and his family more respect and you will get it in reciprocation. Never let them feel that they have differences in financial status with yours. I am sure you are all well trained,' said Seyyid with a smile. 'It is all your training respected Seyyid,' said Qamar's mother. Samana was listening to Seyyid very attentively. Then, she said to Seyyid that she has left something valuable that she loved and that was her desire to get PhD in chemistry and pursue another path for the sake of Islam and help a good person like Shahid.

Seyyid prayed for her and then said: 'Good daughter, you are blessed to have such a good *mu'min* and intelligent husband. Thank God for this special favor and always support him. But you can still pursue your studies if it doesn't affect your home life. You will get much more *thawab*. You will manage home, support him and also continue your studies. But remember, your first priority is to support him with a peaceful home and your good manners.' 'Seyyid I am worried how Shahid will continue his studies. He must get a scholarship and that should be sufficient to support both of us,' she said of her concerns. Seyyid smiled and said: 'My daughter, God is great. He knows what's going on in the heart of his servants. The moment one determines to do a good action, help from God starts right there. I am sure Shahid will secure a very good scholarship for his PhD. You should also pray to God for his blessings.' While he was saying this, he quickly glanced at Qamar. Qamar knew what Seyyid meant and smiled faintly for a moment so that his sister and mother wouldn't notice. He then said that now he will proceed with informing Shahid and his family that you have accepted his proposal.

Next day, the families met at Seyyid's house and soon the date for *nikah* was fixed. As usual, Seyyid was very strict about simplicity in marriage. He chose 5 gold coins as *mahr* for the bride. After a few days, Shahid got a 'scholarship' for his studies and he then started filling his admission application to join a PhD program in Spiritual Psychology in a top university. Samana also decided to continue her MSc in chemistry in the same university as Shahid. He and Samana were married soon in a very simple manner and then started their new life together. They were planning to leave for their studies after a few months....

Seyyid thanked God for His special favors.....

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