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Marriage Proposal

It had been several days that Husayn was thinking of talking to his mother about plans for his marriage. He was a final year medical student and very intelligent in his studies. He was planning to finish his MD and then go for specialization in surgery and wished that his wife be a doctor too. In his university, they had weekly sessions of du'a Kumayl and other religious gatherings where students interacted. He knew that Sobhan's sister was a junior medical student in his university. He had seen her at the du'a Kumayl sessions and had also exchanged a few words about work related to organizing events there. He was impressed by her modest behavior and good manners.

Sobhan's family was of very noble background and the training given by Sobhan's parents to their children was exceptional. All of their sons and daughters were very well-mannered, knowledgeable and their lifestyle was truly exemplary. Once or twice a year, Husayn and other friends from Seyyid's students attended gatherings at Sobhan's house. Husayn truly admired Sobhan's family. Husayn thought that today evening was a very appropriate time to talk to his mother for seeking the hand of Sobhan's sister. Sometimes Husayn felt a very strong admiration for her and prayed to God that she be his wife.

At *dhuhr* time, Husayn went to Seyyid's house and without disclosing the name or identity of the person he was interested in, he asked Seyyid's opinion about how to go for a marriage proposal. Seyyid smiled and prayed for him. He said that you should re-evaluate the reason for your attraction or interest towards a particular person for marriage. What attracts you? Is it physical characteristics? Is it wealth? Is it social status? Or is it some godly or divine quality in her that you feel like marrying her will be good for you. He said 'You should first pray two *rak'at* prayers and ask God's favor for your marriage. Then as you have planned, you should talk to your mother and then father and seek their opinions too. They are more experienced and know you better.' Husayn thanked Seyyid and said that he will be in touch with him for further advice and left after *dhuhr* prayers to his home. He told his mother that tonight, after *maghrib*, he wanted her help over an important issue. She replied by saying that it will be very good that he going to seek her advice.

It was around 3 pm and Husayn's mobile phone rang. It was Vaheed at the other end and he was in an

urgent need to discuss a personal matter with Husayn and ask for his advice. He said that the matter was very important and affecting his personal life and that during the past few days, he was not able to focus on his studies. He wanted to see Husayn that same evening. Husayn asked Vaheed to come over to his house before *maghrib* prayers.

Vaheed was also a medical student and he and Husayn were classmates. They were good friends for the past several years. Vaheed also belonged to a good family and his father was a professor and all his uncles were highly educated, well settled in their lives. Vaheed's two brothers and sisters were in universities and among the top students of their classes. He and some of his family members were regular attendees of Saturday lectures of Seyyid. But Vaheed was closer to Seyyid than the rest of his family members. In fact, last week he went to meet Seyyid to seek his advice about this particular issue that was affecting his studies. He didn't mention exactly what the matter was as it was too early to seek his advice. Seyyid gave some supplications to recite and taught some psychological methods to reduce distraction and increase his focus on studies. Vaheed was feeling better but wanted to discuss the issue with Husayn and then go forth for the next step.

When Vaheed went to Husayn's house, he said Salams to Husayn and also saw his mother. He said Salams to her as well. His mother asked if all his family members were fine and asked Vaheed to convey her Salams to them as well. Husayn took Vaheed to his room. His mother was curiously watching both of them. She said that she will send tea and snacks to his room.

Vaheed began talking about his problem…and Husayn was silent… shocked, but he controlled himself and continued to listen to Vaheed for almost 10 minutes without any expression or reaction on his face. Vaheed said that he was serious in getting married and he admired and was emotionally attracted to Sobhan's sister. She was the same person Husayn was planning to talk about to his mother that very evening after *maghrib* prayers. Vaheed finished his emotional conversation and sought Husayn's advice if this lady was appropriate for him or not. 'You are my best friend whom I can trust and I need your opinion. If you think she's suitable, I will ask my mother who might have some concerns because she has seen someone else for me, and convince her with your help. If you say no, then of course I will follow my mother's advice and go for her choice. That family is also as good as Sobhan's. Whatever you say brother,' he said.

Husayn, who was silent until that moment, asked Vaheed to wait and read Qur'an for a few minutes until he comes back with tea and snacks his mother had prepared.

Husayn went to another room and sat silent for a few moments and asked God's help to give him strength to control his emotions. He was puzzled and shocked. He then calmly thought that if he advises Vaheed to seek what his mother wishes for him, everything will be okay and he will also be able to talk to his own mother tonight for his own proposal with Sobhan's sister. No problem would occur then, no one's feelings would be hurt. For a while it seemed fair to him. But then…suddenly he recalled what Seyyid said few weeks ago about '*birr*'. Husayn now clearly understood that this was a test from God

and that he should make the right but a tough decision now. After all, Vaheed was a believer and a very good person. For this very reason, he should respect Vaheed's personal choice over his own. So, after giving some thought, he asked God to help him control his emotions and make him stable. He then went to his mother, took the tea and snacks and entered his own room with a firm decision.

Vaheed was reading Qur'an when Husayn entered the room. He looked at Husayn. Husayn asked him how he was feeling. Vaheed said that he was waiting for his advice and help. 'Well my brother, I think Sobhan's sister is the best choice for you. If you allow me, let us talk to my mother because Sobhan's mother is a very close friend of hers and she also knows your mother. Your proposal is done. Let us see then how Sobhan's family responds,' said Husayn. Vaheed jumped in the air… 'Thanks brother,' he said and hugged Husayn. They then had their tea and snacks. It was *maghrib* time then. They performed their prayers together. Then, Husayn asked Vaheed to pray the two *rak'at* prayers Seyyid asked him to pray before taking practical steps for proposal. Then Husayn went out of the room to bring his mother.

'Sobhan's family is very good and suits you my son.' said Husayn's mother to Vaheed. 'But auntie, my mother has some other family in her priority. She knows that I am inclined towards Sobhan's sister very much. Can you please talk to her?' requested Vaheed. 'Why not, I will call her now. I will also call Sobhan's mother if your mother allows me,' said Husayn's mother. 'Thank you very much auntie.' Vaheed was quick to thank her.

Husayn's mother then called Vaheed's mother and informed her about Sobhan's family, their status and her son's inclinations to marry their daughter. She also said that Vaheed is like her own son, Husayn, and that she personally knows Sobhan's sister. Both the mothers discussed this important issue for a few minutes. Finally, Vaheed's mother was convinced and requested her to allow her to seek Vaheed's father's opinion.

Vaheed's mother then called back in a few minutes and said that Vaheed's father says Salams to her and has agreed. He has also requested that as she was a close friend of Sobhan's mother, she kindly talk to her about the proposal. Vaheed and Husayn were patiently watching how their mothers talked and how fast things were moving forward. Husayn's mother then called Sobhan's mother and as usual, both invited each other over and talked on different family issues. Finally, Husayn's mother said to her: 'Sister, I have another son that you probably also know. His name is Vaheed, the son of…..' She then praised Vaheed and his family. Sobhan's mother was an intelligent person and soon understood why her close friend brought Vaheed in the conversation today. She said: 'Sister, why don't you and Vaheed's mother come to our house next Friday and we will have a talk in everyone's presence. By that time, I will also discuss this matter with my husband and daughter. I would also like to take Seyyid's opinion if everything is okay. How about all of us going to his lecture on Saturday evening?' Both the mothers agreed.

Vaheed then thanked Husayn and promised a dinner if all went well and his proposal was accepted. He also planned to see Seyyid the next day and tell him what happened today so that he can get his

support on Saturday. He then left. Husayn's mother came to his room and said: 'So son this was the problem you wanted to discuss with me today after *maghrib*? See how God helped!' Husayn replied 'Yes mother. Many, many thanks. I pray all goes well and that we see Vaheed married to Sobhan's sister soon.' His mother said that she is now concerned about him too and will look for a good bride of his match too. Husayn smiled and said: 'Thank you dear mother.'

That night Husayn felt elevated, free and calm. He had never experienced such a state before in his life. It was difficult for him to sleep because of the inner joy he was experiencing. He then read Qur'an and read supplications. He woke up early before *fajr* and prayed his night prayers and thanked God for his favor and sought his help for keeping this important deed secret.

Next day, Vaheed went to see Seyyid at *dhuhr* prayers. After prayers, he sat close to Seyyid and told him the reason why he came earlier last week and then about what had happened the day before at Husayn's house and how Husayn and his mother had helped the proposal for his marriage. Seyyid was surprised at first and then he smiled and said: '*Masha'Allah* you have made the right choice and the right move. You should be very thankful to Husayn for it.' Vaheed said that he will give a dinner to Husayn after his marriage proposal goes well. Seyyid said: 'No, Husayn deserves much more. Do you know the *thawab* of introducing two parties to meet and making them agree upon marriage? It is equal to 70 Hajj! But he deserves still more.' Vaheed asked him the reason and he said that it is because Husayn has sincerely helped him for the sake of God. Then Seyyid gave him few general guidelines about marriage and how he should behave with his wife and her family members if all goes well.

Husayn visited Seyyid on Thursday morning and knew that Vaheed had visited him earlier. Seyyid welcomed him with a smile. He was then a bit curious and asked him: 'Dear Husayn, why did you come to me for marriage proposal earlier this week? I thought it was for your own marriage and that you liked someone. Isn't it?' Husayn looked at Seyyid's face with a smile and said: 'Dear teacher, you have taught us to do good deeds for our brother as if we are doing it for ourselves. Based on this, it didn't make any difference if this was for Vaheed or for myself,' Seyyid admired his reply and wanted to know more. 'So it was for Vaheed?' he asked. Husayn replied: 'He is my brother, so it was for him.' Seyyid smiled again at his answer and prayed for him. Husayn then said good bye to him and left for his university.

On Friday, both the families and Husayn's mother met. Overall, it was positive and Sobhan's family and his sister had no disagreements with Vaheed's family. It was then decided that next day they will all go to Seyyid's house before *maghrib* and attend his lecture and finally seek his opinion about dowry and other issues since he knew both the families very well and their kids were close to him.

After *maghrib* prayers on Saturday, Seyyid gave lecture on ideal family life and mutual duties of husband and wife in a modern society. He explained several delicate points that a couple should take care of while living in a sophisticated busy life of a modern city and how to take care of each other in a better way and train children according to the Islamic principles. Everybody appreciated his depth and pragmatic approach to solve minor problems that affect families especially newly married couples.

After the dinner was over and only two families and Husayn and his mother were left, Seyyid took them inside his living room. They were surprised to see the simplicity of Seyyid's family life. His wife welcomed them. They all sat on sofas and looked at Seyyid as he was the judge to pass a final judgment. Seyyid recited a few verses of Qur'an and Islamic traditions related to marriage and then looked at Vaheed and Sobhan's sister and smiled. He then asked Sobhan's father if he agreed with the marriage proposal. He replied: 'Seyyid we have agreed, but your approval is the final word. You know both the kids, in fact they are your kids not ours.' Vaheed's father said similar words. Seyyid then said a few words of advice on the simplicity of marriage and avoidance of unnecessary rituals as they bring *bala* (difficulties and hardships) for the newly married couples. He then said that if Sobhan's sister agrees, her *mahr* will be 5 gold coins. He then looked at her.

She kept quiet and then said: 'I agree, Seyyid.' Every one recited *salawat*. Seyyid then proposed that after 10 days, it will be *wiladat* of Hazrat Fatima (sa) and that it will be a very auspicious day for their *nikah* at his house. They all agreed. Seyyid then thanked Husayn and his mother and said that it was their sincere effort for Vaheed that brought the two families closer to tie this heavenly knot for their son and daughter. He was having a deep look at Husayn. He kissed his forehead in front of everyone and prayed for him. Husayn's mother said to Seyyid: 'Seyyid, I request you to find a bride for him.' Seyyid smiled and said: '*Insha'Allah*, I will.' They then thanked Seyyid and left together. Soon preparations for their marriage began and Husayn was forgotten.

Husayn thanked God that his secret had remained a secret as Seyyid was not able to find it and perhaps no one ever will…

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