

Part 1: The Meeting

Dr. Miyad was half asleep when the telephone rang. She struggled between sleep's powerful domination and her duty to answer the phone. It rang insistently until she finally answered it, as she knew she must. It was after mid night.

An urgent case on the hospital's seventh floor made her quickly put on her Islamic modest dress and soon she was hurrying towards the patient's room. A nurse near the door told her that an elderly woman in the room was seriously ill.

Dr. Miyad quickly entered and saw a young woman, modestly dressed, standing next to the old woman's bed. The young woman said anxiously, "Oh doctor, this is my grandmother. She was complaining of severe pain and she's unconscious."

The doctor carefully examined the elderly woman, who began to moan, and the young woman paced the nearby corridor. Her grandmother had had a serious heart attack and needed to be hospitalized for a number of days. After giving the patient the needed medicine, Dr. Miyad approached the young woman, whose eyes were filled with tears. The doctor felt that she had to comfort her and give her hope. She smiled, saying, "I'm sure she will soon be well I have done all that is necessary."

"I am very grateful, doctor."

"Don't thank me. It's my duty to help all my patients." She noticed that the woman's face was pale, so she took her hand, which was cold to the touch, and told her kindly, "You are tired. Why don't you sleep for a while?"

"Yes, I am tired, but I can't leave my grandmother alone."

"Don't you have a sister or anyone else to help you?"

"No," the young woman replied sadly. "She is not only my grandmother, but is a mother to me as well."

The doctor felt sorry for her and comforted her, saying, "I'll look after her for you so that you can rest."

"Oh no, you need rest. You work so hard."

"I 'm used to it, and I don't feel tired. I 've slept for a few hours and that is enough for me. Now it is your turn to rest, but first I'll get a book to read. I'll be right back."

The young woman thought the doctor was a wonderful woman and felt she could depend on her.

Dr. Miyad soon returned with a book in her hand and said, "Now you can sleep, I 'll sit here and read. By the way, I'm Dr.Miyad."

"I'm Warqa, I'm pleased to meet you."

Warqa stretched out on the sofa and soon fell asleep. When she awoke she found that she had slept for over an hour. The doctor was still reading near the sick woman, who slept well with the help of an oxygen mask. Warqa got up and approached Dr. Miyad. She asked about her grandmother's health. The doctor put aside her book and said, "She's all right. Now I shall sleep for a while after doing my morning prayer. I 'll see you later today, God willing."

"I don't know how to thank you," said Warqa. "You have been very kind and helpful. I am all alone."

"You're not alone; Almighty Allah is with you. You seem to be a committed believer, and faith can help you throughout life."

Warqa thanked the doctor again and walked with her to the door. When she came back into the room, she saw the book, which the doctor had just left, and the title attracted her attention. It was entitled, **Medicine: A Sanctuary for Faith**. She wondered, "What does it mean? What relation is there between the two? Isn't medicine a science which cures bodies or diseases, and religion worship of Allah in order to escape from Hell? How can medicine be a sanctuary of faith?"

Curiosity prompted her to pick up the book. First she examined the cover, which showed a drawing of a human brain and the Qur'anic verse:

This is Allah's creation, but show Me what those beside Him have created. (Luqman, 31: 11)

Warqa read a few lines from the book and thought deeply for some time, and then she read more until she got up to perform her morning prayer.

A nurse entered the room in the morning to give Warqa's grandmother a dose of medicine. A specialist and another female doctor also came in later.

The doctor's hair was uncovered and her high heels clicked as she walked. She turned to give Warqa some instructions and Warqa noticed that her face was heavily made up. Warqa saw a big difference between this doctor and Dr. Miyad, whose appearance was natural, and she was eager to see Dr. Miyad again. She needed her encouraging words wanted to ask her a few questions about her book. She

wondered why Dr. Miyad had not returned. Warqa's grandmother was feeling better, and Warqa was glad to see her getting well.

"I 'm so happy that you are well again," said Warqa. "You don't know how worried I was yesterday."

Her grandmother replied, "I'm sorry to see you worry; especially since you are alone."

"This time I wasn't alone. Dr. Miyad was here. She is a wonderful woman and she insisted that I sleep while she sat near you for over an hour."

"Praise be to God for sending you such a person at this time."

Warqa pleaded with her grandmother to sleep and not to talk or otherwise tire herself. She continued to read and she occasionally glanced at the door. At noon, she became quite anxious to see Dr. Miyad and thought to herself, 'Why am I so anxious to see her? I've known her for only a few hours. She is just a doctor performing her duty. Maybe she won't even come again.' Some inner voice told her: 'You have a right to feel this way. This doctor is filled with compassion and sympathy. She is not only a doctor, but is also a good person without whose help you would have suffered more hardships.'

Warqa was deep in thought when she heard a knock on the door. She hurried to the door. It was Dr. Miyad. They shook hands warmly, and the doctor said, "I heard

from a colleague that your grandmother was better. I was busy all morning in the delivery room, so I must apologize for not coming sooner. "

"Oh, there's no need to apologize; you were not obliged to come. However, I did want to see you."

The doctor looked concerned and examined her patient. "Has she complained of any pain?" she asked.

"No, she is much better, thank God. As a matter of fact, I was in need of you. Won't you please sit down?"

"I will stay for a while. You look tired, you need to sleep," said Dr. Miyad.

"Oh, I don't need sleep, but, rather, a thorough waking up. I would like to ask you about some of the things I have read in this book," Warqa told her. She sat near the doctor, who said, "Oh, I see I have left my book here. You must have enjoyed reading it."

"Yes, it really made me think deeply."

"How?"

"Well", Warqa explained, "I never thought there was any relationship between medicine and faith. I know medicine deals with human bodies, while faith is only worship."

Dr. Miyad said, "But science leads to faith. The more knowledge one has, the more one believes in the Creator. "

"How is that so?" asked Warqa.

"If someone ignores something, he cannot appreciate its value. For instance, if you take a look at this electric heater, you don't think about the great effort and care it took its maker to make it. You won't think about the numerous experiments that preceded this final product. Yet, anyone with a little knowledge can talk about its complex technical design."

Warqa tried to suppress a smile. Dr. Miyad was silent for a moment and then said, "Are you a student? "

"Yes, I'm in my final year at the university." She did not mention what her major was. Dr. Miyad told her, "You're studying at the Engineering College, aren't you?"

Warqa was surprised, and said, "Yes, but how did you know?"

"Because of your small smile on hearing me mention the electric heater. I guessed that you are familiar with the subject. It wasn't a good example but you didn't object, out of courtesy."

"It is a good example, " Warqa said. "Please go on."

"So you see, even a minimum of knowledge about something doubles its value. Science, with all its branches, brings scientists nearer to Almighty Allah. Medicine is the most important and accurate science. To a scientist who is not a fanatic, science is a road which clearly leads to faith."

"My religious knowledge is very limited," said Warqa.

"It is only traditional commitment, such as fasting, praying and observing Islamic modest dress. Sometimes I feel embarrassed about my lack of religious information. Would you be kind enough to explain some matters to me?"

"I'm ready to answer all your questions. Consider me as your sister, since we share the same beliefs. Now, what do you want to ask me?"

"Why has a drawing of a brain been chosen for the cover of the book?"

"You know that the brain is the most important part of the human body. It is the organ, which controls the entire body, including the nerves and the cells. Every cell obeys the brain which, though small, contains thousands of millions of nerve cells."

"How amazing!" exclaimed Warqa.

Dr. Miyad continued, "You know that every cell has its own function but, at the same time, it cooperates

with other cells. If some cells are damaged, the result will be bad."

"I never imagined that the brain was such a delicate structure."

Dr. Miyad noted, "A scientist lectured about the brain in 1957 and said that if all the world's telephones, telegraphs, radar systems and televisions were made into a small, complicated device, it would not be as complex as the brain."

"How wonderful for one to have such a marvelous apparatus in one's head. But what a pity it is that we know so little about our bodies."

"It may take a long time to discuss the human body. You know that the nervous system has a two-fold function: voluntary and involuntary. The nervous system controls the body's muscles, the hands, the feet, the tongue, etc.

Of course, some organs function automatically, such as the lungs, the heart, the stomach and so on. Here, the Wisdom of our Creator becomes manifest. If they functioned at the will of a creature, it would be impossible for him to motivate and monitor the processes of these organs all the time, even during sleep, thus they would cease to function.

"The same can be said of the organs which function voluntarily. If they functioned automatically, a human being would go on, for example, talking and talking all his life."

Warqa was very interested in the discussion and listened attentively. The doctor suggested that she read the whole book and told her that she would learn much about the body's secrets. In fact, Warqa wasn't very enthusiastic about reading, but Dr. Miyad said, "Hearing isn't enough. One should depend on one's brain to comprehend matters. If one listens more than one reads, then one will depend on others for knowledge."

Warqa's grandmother awoke, and both women approached her. Dr. Miyad asked her how she felt. She smiled and thanked the doctor for her help, saying, "I prayed for you. You have been kind to Warqa. I shall always remember that."

Dr. Miyad said, "Oh, I've done nothing. I pray that you will have a long life."

"What is your name, my dear?" she asked.

"Miyad."

"That's a nice name. What's your family name?" asked the grandmother.

The doctor didn't reply but said; "I'll see you everyday until you fully recover, which will be soon. God Willing, with Warqa's help." Dr. Miyad left and Warqa kept the book to read.

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