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Transport

'It's getting late Asad. You must prepare yourself to reach in time. Today you have an exam.' said Asad's mother. 'Your motorcycle is no doubt very good but winter is coming and it will take nearly an hour for you to reach university. Come on, get ready and take your breakfast.' Asad came out of his bed and said: 'Thanks mother. Today I will take the bus for university. Don't worry, I will reach in time.' And then Asad hurriedly prepared himself and left for university. It was a usual scene every morning. Some days, Asad would go by bus while at others he went riding on his motorbike.

Asad was a computer engineering student in one of the top universities. He was doing his PhD and had secured a scholarship because of his very good grades in entrance exams. He belonged to a middle class family and had two sisters and two brothers, all of whom were studying in colleges and universities. He was the eldest and had to struggle hard to make his career and prepare to support his family as his father was going to retire next year. He was very close to Seyyid and regular in attending his lectures every Saturday. Sometimes he would visit Seyyid's house to take his advice on personal and ideological issues. Asad's brothers and sisters also used to attend his lectures whenever they had time. Asad's parents had brought up their children in such a way that they always practiced self-respect and never complained about any deficiency and never aspired to high material comforts in their lives.

The exam was over and Asad was preparing to select courses for the next semester and also writing his research proposal for PhD research. While going downstairs from his department, he saw a notice pasted on the wall that read "Top Computer Sciences PhD Students, Win Cash Awards and Prizes". The notice provided few other details. Asad noted them and the email and phone number given at the end for contact. While on his way back home, he called the mobile number; however, no one replied. After few minutes, his mobile rang and it was a WhatsApp message. He was added to a new group "Top PhD Students Scholarships Forum".

He found out that it was a new group with 10 members. There was an announcement which said that there is a golden opportunity for PhD students in computer sciences to win young scientist award. They have to send their CV, letter of recommendation from research supervisor and synopsis of their research proposal to an e-mail which was given in the message. They will have a choice between a cash award

which was limited to 2000 dollars or that they let the scholarship award committee to choose the prize item which could possibly be much more. The deadline was three weeks and prizes were going to be announced within a week after that. Asad saved this announcement in his computer and noted the mobile number of the scholarship forum. He was curious as to who was the sponsor of this group and decided to call the next morning. But before that, he started working on his proposal and planned to finish it within a week.

Next morning, he called the number, however, no one picked and it was on message and so Asad left a message that he was interested in participation and that he wanted to know about the sponsor of this scholarship scheme. He then went to university library. Winter was near and so it was becoming difficult for him and his brothers and sisters to go to their institutions.

Within the next five days, Asad finished his proposal and gave it to his supervisor Prof. Hameed. His results were also announced and he had once again secured top position in all the courses he had taken that semester. Prof. Hameed was very happy with him. He informed Prof. Hameed about the scholarship forum and their conditions. Prof. Hameed agreed and gave him the letter of recommendation but was a bit concerned about sending the synopsis by email. He said to Asad to ask them if they can accept only the extended abstract. Asad called the number again and left the message. After about three hours, he got a WhatsApp message from the same number that it was okay to send an extended abstract. Next day, Asad sent the CV, a letter from Prof. Hameed and the extended abstract of his research proposal by email.

‘Papa, I want to give back this new BMW you gave me.’ said Yusuf. ‘It doesn’t suite me. Its seats are so soft that I feel like sleeping while driving. Besides, I feel a bit proud when I go to university and also to Seyyid’s house.’ His father was quietly listening to his only son’s arguments against the expensive gift he had given him a few days ago over top class performance in his MBA exams. Yusuf was his only son and was being trained to take over his vast business after a few years. ‘Okay my son, if you really think this car doesn’t suit you, go ahead and give it back to Mr. Ameen’s show room and get another one,’ said his father. ‘But Papa, I will keep the money in my account if I buy another car. Agreed?’ His father smiled at his son and said: ‘Agreed my son. But don’t buy a more expensive car!’ Yusuf agreed. It was near *maghrib* and so Yusuf decided to go to Seyyid’s house.

It was Wednesday and Seyyid usually would give short interactive lectures that were of interest for young students who would come to meet him and requested him to talk. They would ask questions in the middle of the lecture. Today, there were some students and a few others. All of Seyyid’s favorite ones were also present. After prayers, Seyyid started the lecture on the topic ‘qualities of knowledgeable persons.’ He began with an ayah of Qur’an:

...وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ...

Be wary of Allah, and Allah shall teach you [*2:282*]*.*

Seyyid explained how fearing God or keeping His thought in mind makes one knowledgeable. He said that it was because it leads to several basic changes in human thinking. A person who keeps God in mind will be a good observer of nature and ponder over it to see the wisdom behind everything created. Thus, he will develop the habit of becoming a deep thinker. He will also be more focused in his thinking and will make choice of the best because he takes this life as a test from God and to serve Him in the best manner and so he will also avoid distractions. As he remembers that one day he has to go back to God, this will also make him quick in performing his work. He will automatically develop patience over failures and setbacks during knowledge acquisition process because he knows that God is all-knower and will help him acquire more knowledge…. He explained several aspects of God fearing that have an impact on knowledge acquisition. Everyone was just amazed as to how Seyyid was fluently talking with soft composure as if he has gone through all these things he is saying.

After the lecture, Asad asked him a question: 'Seyyid how it is possible for a knowledgeable person to be humble? What I usually see in my university is that students who are intelligent and even many faculty members are proud in their behavior only because they know something more than others.' Seyyid smiled and said: 'This is perhaps normal. It is because they are in the beginning stages of knowledge acquisition. When a person goes into the depth of knowledge and finds that there is a vast unending ocean in front of him that he doesn't know, then he automatically realizes his own ignorance of so many things and he becomes humble. He becomes self-aware of his ignorance and the limits of his own knowledge. Another reason for being proud is that such persons have worldly aims for the acquisition of knowledge and so they behave proudly. A third reason is that they don't realize that after every act of pride there will be a fall of humility for them. They will suffer a situation whereby they will be belittled. It is very interesting to see that there are over 30 characteristics of knowledgeable persons that are mentioned in Islamic traditions, and the first one is humbleness, then truthfulness, softness, compassion, good intention, visiting the learned, engaging in discussion with knowledgeable, loyalty and so on.' Then they all started talking informally with Seyyid. Asad informed him about his next semester preparations. As they wanted to leave, Seyyid said that they should wait as he will bring some sweets because Asad had secured top position in his exams. Everyone recited *salawat.* They all had sweets together. Seyyid prayed for Asad's success and also for all of them. One by one, all of them congratulated Asad. Yusuf was sitting away and didn't talk much with Asad like others and he left earlier. Seyyid was closely watching his behavior but said nothing. They all then left saying goodbye to each other and to Seyyid.

Next day, Yusuf went to Mr. Ameen's show room and told him that he didn't like the car and wanted to have another one. Mr. Ameen welcomed the rich guest, as Yusuf's family members and relatives were his regular customers. He asked Yusuf which car he wanted. Yusuf asked him to show new models of Korean cars and Mr. Ameen was a bit surprised at his choice. Ameen said that he was tired of these expensive cars and wanted to have a 'change'. He said: 'Mr. Ameen, you know me very well. If I didn't

like it, I will come again to you and then get a better one. I only have to talk to my father.' Mr. Ameen smiled and then showed him some new cars and finally Yusuf selected one. Mr. Ameen told him that the cost of the new one he had chosen was nearly one third of the BMW model he had. Yusuf then asked him to do the paper work for buying and transfer the balance to his personal account number. Mr. Ameen said that within two days this will be done.

Within two days, Yusuf had his new car and the remaining money was in his bank account. His father was surprised and his mother was not happy that her son was becoming spoiled. 'Mother, let me have a variety. This car is new, but it's a bit different from the previous one.' He defended himself. 'But you are changing things as if this has become your habit and this is not good. God doesn't like extravagant persons,' said his mother. 'But dear mother, this time I have got a cheaper car,' He replied. However, his mother said that she will see for how many days he will keep it. Yusuf promised that he will not buy a new car next time without her permission and made her happy. His father said that Yusuf is surely going to buy another one within the next three weeks. 'I know my son,' he said. His mother replied: 'Okay let us see who wins. He has promised me. I am sure he will keep it.'

Three weeks later, Asad got a surprise email of congratulations that he has won the scholarship award. They also asked his bank account and other details. He was asked to reply and inform them of his choice whether he wanted 2000 dollars or allow the scholarship sponsors to choose for him. They also informed his supervisor Prof. Hameed who gave him a congratulations call and asked him to take the award. Everyone was happy. Such occasions were not uncommon in Asad's family, as all of them used to win such prizes. However, this was a big amount, not won by anyone before. At dinner, his brothers and sisters were giving their opinions on the two choices. Seeing their enthusiasm, Asad decided to take a vote. Four votes out of seven were in favor of giving sponsors the choice. Asad immediately replied to the email by saying that he gives the choice to the sponsors.

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'Mother, I really like my new car. It's really good. I feel very comfortable driving it. Why don't you allow me and Maryam to go for a week-long trip to my auntie's house? Hasan and Ameer want to learn a few basics of their sociology and business ethics courses from me and Fatima also wants to spend time with Maryam and learn mathematics. It's just a three hour drive, 200 km is not far.' said Yusuf. 'Ask your father,' replied his mother. Yusuf and his sister Maryam were waiting for their father to come back home in the evening. At dinner, Yusuf took the opportunity to request his father to allow them to go. He also winked at his sister to make her request. Yusuf's father knew that they both loved their aunt's kids and so he agreed on one condition. 'Both of you will take your books with you and study there. I know you are very responsible but I want to make sure that you will study,' he emphasized. 'We promise, Papa,' they both said. 'Thank you very much. If you allow us, we will leave tomorrow morning,' they said. Their parents agreed, but their mother was a bit concerned. However, Yusuf convinced her that he will drive carefully. They left the next morning.

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After three days, Asad was informed by email that he has won a new car. The address of the show room was provided and he was told that all the paperwork had been already done. He only had to go and submit a valid copy of his national ID and see the car model and choose the color of the car and get the ownership documents already prepared for him. He was asked to call someone by the name of Mr. Qadir. Asad was reading the email and thinking that he was in a dream. He thanked God and then informed his mother, father and everyone at home. They were all happy. All his brothers and sisters asked him to give them a dinner. Asad promised. They all planned to go to the showroom together the next morning. But Asad's father was a bit concerned. He asked Asad to immediately write an email of thanks and then ask who the sponsors were. He should get their address and go to see them personally and make sure that they were not involved in any illegal business or activity as they might use Asad in future. Asad told his father that they had called Prof. Hameed and so he probably knows them. But he wrote the email accordingly to please his father. No reply came until next morning. He then left a WhatsApp message. Reply came immediately that he should get the prize car and Mr. Qadir will inform him about the address etc. Asad then told his father that first, he will go to see Seyyid and seek his opinion and then if he agrees, they will go to the showroom to get the car.

Seyyid listened to the whole story of scholarship forum and the way it announced car prize for Asad. He knew Asad's family very well. Asad's father would often come to his lecture. Once or twice a year, Seyyid used to visit their house on invitation to give a lecture there. He smiled and said to Asad that he should not worry and go to the showroom and get the car. Inform me if there is any problem or you feel uncomfortable. They all left thanking Seyyid for his advice.

They all reached the showroom. On their way, Asad bought some sweets to give to Mr. Qadir. He was waiting for Asad. They all were shocked to see that the car given in prize to Asad was a brand new Japanese car. Asad's youngest sister selected the color and everybody agreed. However, Asad said to Mr. Qadir that he would like to call the sponsors of this scholarship. Mr. Qadir said that they will call you soon. They called him last night to tell you that you should not worry about their identity and profession. They are sponsoring this prize for intelligent students like you for the past several years. Asad asked for their phone number. This number was different from what he had. He noted it. Mr. Qadir prepared the documents and took his signatures and then gave them to Asad. He asked Asad if he had a driving license. Asad replied that he knew how to drive and has the license. They all left. While in car, Asad called Seyyid and informed him of the car and the situation. Seyyid prayed for him and told him not to worry. He also asked Asad to inform his close friends who come to Seyyid's house of the car prize. Asad did so and everyone wrote back, congratulating him. Yusuf also wrote and added that he was far away in another city and will return after a few days.

Asad called the phone number given to him by Mr. Qadir. However, he got a message that this number didn't exist anymore. He resent his email and it was returned back with a message that his email could

not be delivered. He tried to use some techniques to trace back the source of email. However, the IP address was in USA, where none of his friends or relatives live. He then went to Seyyid's house and informed him of all of these developments. Seyyid patiently listened and then advised him to call his supervisor, Prof. Hameed. 'I am sure he knows the sponsors,' said Seyyid.

Asad called Prof. Hameed and after Salams, asked him about the sponsors of the car award. 'You are not the first student to receive this award. I have had several students who have won awards from unknown sponsors,' he said to Asad. Asad then conveyed Seyyid's Salams to the professor. Prof. Hameed wanted to talk to Seyyid. Asad gave the phone to Seyyid. Prof. Hameed said Salams in return and praised him for his ethical training. He held Seyyid in high regards and said that Asad always speaks about him. Then he said to Seyyid: 'Respected Seyyid, this car award is given to Asad by someone who knows you too and comes to your classes. I am telling you this because you are their teacher. However, that person who called twice never disclosed his name and also wanted this to remain a secret. I request you to kindly not inform Asad.' He then said goodbye to Seyyid.

After the conversation was over, Seyyid didn't say anything about it to Asad. He just smiled and said to Asad that he should not worry about the identity of the sponsor as Prof. Hameed told him that so many intelligent students get awards and gifts from unknown sponsors. Asad was however, not pleased with it but he didn't say anything. Seyyid knew his expression and so he smiled at Asad and then asked him to pray two *rak'at* prayers to thank God for this gift. He then asked him to come on Saturday as he will give a dinner. 'I will try to find who the sponsor is for you,' he said. He asked him to come about thirty minutes earlier before *dhuhr* as he had some special task for him and his brothers. Asad thanked him but was also surprised....

On Saturday, after *maghrib* prayers, Seyyid as usual sat on his seat to start his lecture. By that time, almost everyone close to Seyyid knew about the car gift given to Asad by an unknown sponsor and also Seyyid's approval of it. He said: 'Our today's topic is 'putting ones trust in God which is also known as *tawakkul.*' He then recited a verse of Qur'an

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ...

... then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust (Him)' [3: 159].

He explained the meaning of *tawakkul* in practical life and how it affects human being's thinking and protects a person from anxiety, stress, feeling of helplessness and depression. 'Those who trust God are psychologically strong because they know that the All-powerful God is with them and can do anything for them. Thus, if they suffer any hardship or difficult circumstances or lose something valuable, they, even though become sad for a while, do not lose hope because of their trust in God's power. A lot of psychological problems in our society are because of lack of *tawakkul*.' He continued and everyone was totally absorbed in his words...

As the dinner started, Seyyid looked for Asad and whispered something to him. They all sat together, including Seyyid's close students. They were all talking about Asad's gift and its anonymity. Seyyid said to them not to worry about it as this is a way to do good and avoid becoming known. Asad said that he was now going to university with his new car and his brothers and sisters are also going together with him. Asad then came close to Seyyid and whispered something in his ear. Seyyid smiled and said nothing.

After the dinner was over, people started leaving one by one. Seyyid asked Yusuf and Asad to stay. Yusuf was surprised. Seyyid smiled and asked Yusuf to come closer to him so that no one would listen to their conversation. He then asked Yusuf if he knew about the gift given to Asad by some unknown sponsor. Yusuf replied: 'Respected Seyyid, I know that a car is given to brother Asad for his top research proposal. I am an MBA student and I don't know about PhD level research on computers.' Seyyid smiled and asked him: 'So you don't know anything about it?' He replied: 'Seyyid I was away at my auntie's house in another city when this all happened. I have just returned last night.' Seyyid then asked him why his car was different. He replied: 'Seyyid today I have brought my sister's Toyota car as my own car was not in a good shape after the long trip. I have given it for service. It is the same car as before.' Seyyid smiled at him and then prayed for both Asad and Yusuf. He then said to Asad to forget about the sponsors. He said: 'The person who has done this good deed is very smart. You may never be able to find him.' They all then left thanking Seyyid.

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