45687 - He is embarrassed to return the money to his neighbour because it is such a small amount

the question

When I was young, about 11 or 12 years old as I remember, I used to take public transportation to and from school. One day I found that I had lost my money and all I had left was not enough to pay my fare. I was 5 Egyptian pennies short of the fare, which is the smallest coin in Egyptian currency. A person who lived in my neighbourhood but whom I do not know personally and he does not know me gave me enough money to pay my fare and get home, and said I could pay him back later. Now a lot of time has passed but he has not come to take anything from me. Now I am 18 years old. Is this regarded as a debt that I must repay or not? Please note that I feel embarrassed to go to him and give him this money because it is such a small amount, after such a long time. May Allaah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Usually when a person gives such a small amount of money he gives it as a gift, not as a loan, which is why he did not come to take it back. Perhaps he told you that he would come to take it back so that you would not feel embarrassed, and so that you would take this money from him and not refuse. You should respond to his kindness in like manner, and reciprocate either by giving him a gift or making du’aa’ for him, etc. You could also – so as to overcome the feelings of shyness – go to him and greet him with salaam and ask him how he is, and tell him that you have not forgotten what he did for you in the past, and thank him for it; you can tell him that you still owe him this money and that the only thing that kept you from returning it was embarrassment. If he lets you off, then praise be to Allaah, otherwise you can repay him. This is a kind of calling people to Allaah, which lets you address the importance of people’s rights and paying them off no matter how much they are.

And Allaah knows best.

May Allaah make you more keen to do good and more honest, and help you to do all that is good.