

# MIFTAAH SEMINAR

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



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### SESSION 2

#### The Signs of Intrapersonal Emotional Awareness or Self-Knowledge

**Expert from the Book:** (pg. 53-54)

- Emotional intelligence is broken down in a dichotomous breakdown.

*“Howard Gardner divided emotional awareness into skills or intelligence: intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. They involve the capacity to notice moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions in one’s self (intra) and in others (inter) as well.”*

- In the RULER acronym, the final step is Regulate, which is essential for helping others. To regulate, one must first recognize and understand emotions. This requires both interpersonal and intrapersonal awareness and understanding.
- *“They involve the capacity to notice moods”* this phrase reminds us that the Hadith where the Prophet SAW tells Aisha RA, “I know when you’re happy and I know when you’re upset,” illustrates the Prophet SAW’s capacity to notice moods. Despite his many responsibilities, he remained aware of her emotions.

*“In emotional intelligence training, self-knowledge is considered to be not only as essential means for understanding and influencing the emotional states of others, but also the only means by which a person can gain control of themselves.”*

- Emotional intelligence training begins with self-knowledge: معرفة النفس (knowing yourself). This is the foundation for regulating one's own emotions, reactions, and behavior, and for effectively handling the emotions of others.

*"We fail to realize that there is a high price to pay for ignoring our own emotional states."*

- This reminds us that if one doesn't acknowledge their own feelings, those emotions remain and affect their relationships until they're faced. Avoiding them, like through overworking, won't make them disappear. Emotional intelligence involves recognizing one's emotions and asking, *"Why do I feel this, and what's behind it?"*

*Feelings and desires that have not been acknowledged and examined will continue to **haunt us and affect our behavior until we face them appropriately.***

- In this line, a key example of understanding one's own emotions is seen in the story of Wahshi RA: the companion who killed Hamza RA before becoming Muslim. After accepting Islam, Wahshi wanted to stay close to the Prophet SAW, but the Prophet SAW told him, *"Do not live near me."* He explained that seeing Wahshi reminded him of his uncle, which brought up difficult emotions. Wahshi understood and moved away.
  - The Prophet SAW showed emotional intelligence by recognizing his own feelings, having an honest conversation, and regulating the situation. This demonstrates interpersonal emotional understanding, knowing yourself. Even the Prophet SAW, the best of creation, had emotions he couldn't fully bear, and that's okay.
  - When getting to know a spouse or child, one should understand how *their* emotions make *them* feel, rather than telling them how they should feel.

- Facing such emotional challenges may require seeing someone or speaking with a Muslim health specialist who's grounded in deen. *"By ignoring our emotions, we slowly develop a lack of familiarity with ourselves and this lack of familiarity leads to avoiding moments of inner reflection and contemplation."*
- This reminds us that in Islam, we have a concept of meditation and reflection, such as مراقبة and تفكر. However, many people avoid reflection because they don't want to face themselves. By ignoring their emotions, they become estranged from their own selves and avoid sitting with their feelings. It's essential to take time for self-reflection and truly look inward.
  - Transcendental meditation, commonly used today for therapeutic purposes, closely resembles the Islamic concepts of muraqabah (مراقبة) and tafakkur (تفكر). Imam Al-Ghazālī wrote extensively *"that true knowledge of anything outside of the human being can only be obtained after one has understood themselves completely."*
  - **Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawzi** said: "من عرف نفسه عرف ربه" – "The one who knows himself, knows Allah." This means that by understanding our own weaknesses, limitations, and dependency, we begin to recognize Allah's absolute strength, knowledge, and independence. Realizing our ignorance allows us to appreciate Allah's all-encompassing knowledge. Our weakest moments become a source of strength when we recognize Allah's presence and rely fully on Allah's help.

## Interpersonal Emotional Awareness

**Expert from the Book:** (pg. 56-60)

*"Only after understanding people can one positively motivate them,"*

- An example given: if you are trying to motivate, influence, or move your child without first taking the time to understand them, then you've misunderstood human nature.

- Emotional understanding is key, without it, your efforts to connect will not be truly effective.
  - And this can only be done “when one recognizes the value of emotionally investing in those around them.”

*“We cannot study the emotional intelligence of the Prophet SAW without first appreciating the great empathy he had for Allah’s creation.”*

- The Prophet SAW was extremely patient with even the roughest of people. He showed gentleness in his interactions with them until they transformed. The change within them was so deep that they stood against their own families and fathers, and came to love the Prophet SAW more than anything else.

*“All this despite the Prophet SAW not having prior experience, and despite him not reading books from which the narratives of past nations could have been learned. Indeed, if you contemplate these things, you will come to the realization that he is the most intelligent of all creation!”*

- We have been misunderstanding what true intelligence really is. There are multiple types of intelligence, such as IQ or book smarts– but that can only take you so far in life. The type of intelligence that truly brings about deep change is the one that helps you interact with other human beings; something that cannot be learned from books or classrooms alone.

*“The unlettered Prophet Muḥammad was blessed with a heightened level of interpersonal intelligence. He taught that the ‘aql or intellect is a “light by which one walks among men.” He understood that the word emotion contains within it the word motion, and that emotion offers human beings a distinctive readiness for action.”*

- This reminds us that the Prophet SAW understood emotion deeply; the word “emotion” itself contains the word “motion,” highlighting that our emotions are tied to our actions.
- Wahshi RA’s example is significant because it shows that behavior

- is connected to emotion. If we do not understand and connect with emotion behind an action, we will never fully comprehend or connect with the action itself.

*“Attempting to develop interpersonal intelligence in his community, the Prophet had to awaken within them their capacity for primal empathy”*

- The core element of emotional intelligence is empathy, but the community the Prophet SAW lived in lacked the capacity to **feel** deeply. To prepare them, the Prophet SAW had to teach them how to develop this ability.
- One example of this is when a young man approached the Prophet SAW, asking permission to fornicate. *“The Prophet worked to develop and finetune his moral compass by first developing his capacity to think empathically,”* which means feeling someone else’s pain. He asked the young man if he had a mother or a sister, and when the young man affirmed, the Prophet SAW encouraged him to imagine how he would feel if someone did that to his own family. *“Judging by the disgust expressed by the young man, it seems that he had never thought of his actions from any perspective other than his own.”*
  - This is a significant issue in our communities and families today. We often refuse to feel what others are feeling. In this interaction, the prophet SAW was teaching his community emotional intelligence by cultivating empathy and the capacity to understand others.

*“After primal empathy has been developed, the next stage of interpersonal awareness is attunement. Attunement is defined as sincere, sustained presence facilitates rapport, which is the primary element needed between two people communicating with one another.”*

- The concept of deep listening is the ability to hear what the heart is saying, not just what the lips are saying. It involves learning to listen beyond the words.