

# MIFTAAH SEMINAR

## PROPHETIC PARENTING



Dr. Hatem AlHaj

### Tools and Strategies for Success

- Start early
  - Allah says in Surah al-Kahf, "And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and your lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your lord. And I did them not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you could not hold patience."
    - Their father was a righteous man and because of his righteousness, Allah safeguarded his children.
  - Start in your own childhood if you want your child to be good. Whatever you will be to your parents is what your children will be like with you.
- Selecting the Right Parental Partner
  - Women should prioritize family and children. They can have careers, but they should focus on family in order for the family to operate as one cohesive unit.
  - When a man proposes to a women, they must understand that they are not only selecting a wife, but also selecting a mother.
  - What applies to men applies to women except when it is specified

- The Prophet ﷺ said, "If a man approaches you, whose conduct and religious commitment are commendable, accept his marriage proposal. "
  - You should still be concerned with compatibility, but the biggest concern you should have is a person's piety.
- Dua for intimacy

لو أن أحدكم إذا أراد أن يأتي أهله قال: بسم الله، اللهم جنبنا الشيطان، وجنب الشيطان ما رزقتنا؛ فإنه إن قضي بينهما ولد من ذلك لم يضره الشيطان أبدا

*"When one of you approaches his wife let him say: I begin with the name of Allah, oh Allah keep us away from Shaytân and keep Shaytân away from what you provide us. If Allah has foreordained that a child be born to them Shaytân will never harm him."*

- Intimacy is the highest form of carnal pleasure. The Prophet ﷺ is saying that even though you are about to engage in this pleasurable act, remember that you are a spiritual being and the bond between you two is a spiritual one.
- Reciting this dua adds a different dimension to the relationship. It gives it a fulfilling dimension that is not only driven by lust.
- Islam does not say that intimacy is not only for procreation. It is also for love and the sustainability of the relationship.
- Adhan and Tahnīk
  - Tahnīk is when you rub a soften chewed date against the baby's palette
  - Abu Rafi' said, "I saw the messenger of Allah calling the adhân in the ear of Alhassan after Fatimah delivered him."
- Give the baby a good name
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Indeed, the most favored of your names in the sight of Allah are 'Abdullah' and 'Abdul Rahman'"

- Performing 'Aqeeqah, Shaving the Infant's Head, and Donating an Equivalent Weight of the Hair in Silver on the Seventh Day
  - The majority of scholars say shaving the head is for both males and females
- Truthfulness
  - Abdullah bin Amer: "Once, while the Messenger of Allah was present in our house, my mother called out to me, saying: 'Oh Abdullah! Come! I have something to give you.' The Messenger of Allah then asked her: 'What do you intend to give him?' She replied: 'I want to give him some dates.' Upon hearing this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated: 'Had you not given him anything, it would have been recorded as a lie on your part.'"
  - You can never lie to your child, no matter how young they are
  - You can sometimes use equivocation, but you can never lie
- Justice between your children
  - When Alnu'man ibn Basheer's father wanted to give a gift to one of his children, the Prophet said: Have you given to all your children like you have to this one?" When the father said 'No', the Prophet responded: Then fear Allah and be just among your children." The Prophet refused to bear witness to such a gift, remarking: Find someone else to witness this, for I do not witness injustice." (Agreed Upon)
- Justice between sons and daughters
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever has a daughter and does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her, Allah will enter him into Paradise."
  - This emphasis on fairness had a profound effect on the Sahaba, who even ensured justice when it came to expressions of affection, such as kissing their children.
- Teaching by example
  - You cannot just talk the talk. You have to walk the walk.

- You must be an example of your teachings and principles
- Respect: valuing the young
  - Amr ibn Al'as once observed adults gathered in conversation, with children being left out. He advised: "Why did you neglect these kids? Don't do so. Make room for them amongst you, let them hear your talk for, they are today's kids, and soon they will be the elders among their people, and you were once kids, and now you are the elders."
  - Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri said, "Don't put yourselves down because of your young age. Omar ibn al-Khattab used to consult youngsters regarding major affairs, seeking the sharpness of their minds."
    - Older people get overwhelmed by thinking about intricacies that they may miss the truth
    - Younger people sometimes have more clarity and it is possible that they may point re truth out to their elders.
- Training, Repetition, and Character Building
  - Character building and refinement do not happen overnight.
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Good doing is a habit and evil doing is a disconcerting deviation. If Allah wants to favor someone, he will give him a good understanding of his religion."
  - Do not get tired of repeating yourself
- Teaching in increments
  - Children have a shorter attention span than adults
  - Even teaching adults was incremental during the Prophet's time.
  - Jabir ibn Samurah said, "The Prophet did not elongate his exhortations on Fridays, but kept it concise (in a few words)."
- Teaching by story telling
  - Teaching by storytelling is indirect, which makes it more effective and enjoyable.
  - You want your children to know that there are greater role models

- You want your children to know that there are greater role models than you
- 1/3rd of the Quran is stories and there is wisdom in that. People learn through stories.
- The collective consciousness of Muslims comes mainly from the stories of the Quran. It is formed and shaped by the stories in the Quran.
- Embrace curiosity
  - A child's question is a prime opportunity for education. It is irresponsible to waste it.
  - The Salaf allowed their students to ask questions and were not annoyed by this. Hammad even praised Abu Hanifah's persistent questioning.
  - If a question requires an age-inappropriate answer, never lie to your child or deny them an answer. Instead, like our prophet, use parables, allegories, and symbols.
    - Use age-appropriate language to explain age-inappropriate concepts.
  - Using symbolic speech and parables also teaches your child haya' (modesty), the moral of Islam as the Prophet called it. However, modesty should not be an obstacle before learning. You can always find ways to teach without compromising modesty.
    - Haya is the signature characteristic of Islam
- Encourage Observation, Contemplation, and Creativity
  - Allah wants us to be deep thinkers and not stop at the exterior of things. We're invited to ponder over everything in the universe and contemplate our observations.
  - Allah's invitations to look at the sun and moon and ponder over them is meant to break the routine, which numbs the sensations and leads to taking things for granted.

- You should cultivate this in your children's character - to be amazed.
- Make it easy
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Educate, make it easy and not hard, give glad tidings, and if one of you got angry let him be silent."
  - Be respectful of the phase of development your child is in and make sure that learning is easy
    - Easy does not mean not challenging. Learning should be somewhat challenging because you always want to take them to the next level. But, there should not be too much pressure and you should support their progress.
- Encouragement, particularly for the gifted
  - Our predecessors recognized the importance of young minds in carrying forward their wisdom and legacy.
  - Umar ibn al-Khattab invited Ibn Abbas to sit with the elders and consult with him
  - Imam Abu Hanifah supported Imam Abu Yusuf financially. He saw potential in him and wanted him to carry on the legacy of Islam.
- Autonomy
  - Adolescents need to feel their distinct individuality.
  - Allow them some freedom, but within certain guidelines.
  - Overlook minor shortcomings to foster independence.
- Peer effect
  - The companionship your child chooses plays a significant role in their character.
  - It's unrealistic to isolate your child; they need companionship. Help them in finding suitable friends.
  - This might require tough decisions, like changing neighborhoods or even countries.



- No matter how good the seeds are, if they are sown in the wrong soil, then they will not grow. Make sure your child's environment is conducive to their growth and development as good Muslims
- Playtime
  - Never ignore playtime because it is normal for nurturing them and for your connection with your children
  - Anas ibn Malik said, "The Messenger of Allah used to be the most humorous with kids."
- Importance of sports
  - Omar ibn al-Khattab advised: "teach your kids swimming, archery, and horseback riding."
  - Sports should be seen as a means, not an objective in itself. Overemphasis can lead to stress, arrogance and diversion from more important matters.
- Humor and fun must be in moderation
  - Overuse of TV, video games, and other digital devices can impact a child's attention span and focus, and morality and should be limited.
    - This includes TV and video games that contain good content too. They are still harmful in excess.
  - Pediatrics advise that screen activity should be limited to 1 and a half to two hours per day and if you can limit it even more, then you should.
- Choosing the Best Education Path
  - There are different options for you to choose in terms of your child's education and every model has its drawbacks.
  - Investing in schooling is very important
  - Our predecessors would mortgage their homes to send their children to study with scholars. This is how much they valued it and sacrificed for it.

- We should sacrifice and invest in our children's education - both secular and religious.
- The best choice of schooling depends on factors such as parents' ability to teach, availability and quality of Islamic schools, and affordability.
- We must continue to support and improve Islamic schools as a community.
- As parents, our investment in children's education is paramount, both in terms of money, time, and effort.

## Discipline

- You need to be as compassionate and loving as you can with your children. But, that does not rule out being assertive and firm when needed. Disciplining them must come from a place of compassion.
  - Even when we are firm, we must always be coming from a place of compassion.
  - Being kind to your children does not exclude the need for discipline.
- The Prophet ﷺ was the most compassionate person with kids. But, he also understood discipline. He ﷺ said, "Enforce the prayer on your children when they become seven years old. And spank them [lightly] for [neglecting] it when they become ten years old and separate them in their sleeping places then."
- Reward and punishment within an environment of love and mercy
  - Emulate the system that Allah employs with His servants.
    - Allah wants to invite us back to Him and He is happy with our repentance.
    - Allah tells us that His mercy precedes His anger.
  - Balance kindness and discipline. Assertiveness and kindness are not mutually exclusive.



- Positive reinforcement should be used
  - Most of the time, you are using positive reinforcement.
  - Positive reinforcement is the reinforcement of good behavior through rewards. The reward does not always have to be monetary or physical and, in fact, it should not always be because your child will become greedy and always look for physical reward.
  - Most of the time, it should be in the form of praise and admiration.
- Negative reinforcement
  - Negative reinforcement involves pointing out when an action is incorrect. It can often be sufficient to point out the right action if a child does something wrong.
  - Consider the example of Amr ibn Abi Salamah: When his hand roamed around the dish while eating, the Prophet simply guided him with instructions to say "Bismillah", eat with his right hand and consume what was near him.
  - This is not a form of punishment yet, but rather a guide for the child to understand their actions.
  - Al-Hassan ibn Aly picked up a date meant for charity and attempted to eat it. The Prophet removed the date from his mouth, and gently reminded him: "kikh, kikh, throw it, did you not know that we [the Prophet's household] cannot eat from charity?"
  - The uncle of Abu Rafi' reported that he said: "As a child, I was throwing pebbles at the date palms owned by the Ansar. People brought me to the Prophet who asked: 'Young boy, why are you throwing pebbles at the date palms?' I replied, 'I wish to eat the dates.' The Prophet advised, 'Do not pelt stones at the date palms, instead, take from the dates that have fallen to the ground.' He then gently patted my head and prayed, 'O Allah, satiate his hunger.'"

- Privilege withdrawal
  - This includes an array of actions such as not taking your child out when they expect it or other actions.
  - May also include temporary emotional distance, such as withholding the usual smiles or refraining from speaking to them for a day or two.
    - This must be temporary because children cannot handle it for too long.
- Corporal punishment
  - After employing the full spectrum of the aforementioned strategies, the need to resort to corporal punishment would be extremely rare, if it ever arises.
    - There are many other forms of discipline that should be employed before this.
  - Some behavioral specialists don't condone corporal punishment, others believe it can be reasonable when administered within a secure, loving relationship – aligning with Islamic principles.
  - The Prophet ﷺ never got to this point. He never beat a woman or a child.
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Afford your children according to your means, and do not neglect your stick with which you instruct them. Let them fear you for Allah's sake."
    - Some scholars say this hadith is not acceptable and others say that it is
      - We should not rush to reject a hadith just because we do not like it
    - We have to understand this hadith in the context of other hadiths. Aisha said about the Prophet ﷺ, "I have never seen the Messenger of Allah ever beat a servant or one of his women..."

- The Prophet ﷺ is the ultimate role model, so this is how we should strive to be.
- Most times, you will not need to get to this stage, but sometimes you will.
- Corporal punishment is not given just for any mistake and it is not something that you start with. You have to go through all of the phases before this first and try your best in doing that.
- The misconduct of the child must be something that is really bad, not something that is trivial.
  - Ibrahim al-Nakhaī said that they used to be hit if they broke their promises or lied.
    - These were huge violations of the Islamic value system, so that is when they would hit them.
- Compassion means that you have concern for the well-being of your child. It does not mean that you let them do what they want because it will give you peace of mind.
- Your discipline is contingent on two things: the size of the child and the severity of their crime
- Do not do anything when you are angry. Restrain yourself from doing anything in that moment.
- Most of the abuse we hear about is not for discipline at all. It is actually just venting and letting out anger.
- When you are angry, you need to stay silent and cool off and that is when you can discipline them for the sake of Allah.
- Never make dua against your kids
  - The Prophet ﷺ said, "Avoid invoking curses upon yourselves, your children, and your wealth, for there might be a moment when your supplications coincide with a time of acceptance from Allah, and hence they get accepted and fulfilled."
  - The Prophet ﷺ was even prevented by Allah from making dua against the disbelievers and enemies of Islam.