

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

JOURNEY TO LOVE: MARRIAGE WORKSHOP



Shaykh Yaser Birjas

SESSION 2

What Questions Should You Ask?

- Do not make it an interrogation
- It is important to make it a conversation
- Let the questions come from the heart
- It is easier to mention some things about yourself and then ask them a question so that it creates a smooth conversation
- Are you allowed to ask about their past history?
 - You should not ask about past sins because that is only between that person and Allah.
 - It is not your business to ask that question
 - What matters is how the person acts today
 - If someone insists on knowing, then that is a red flag.
 - There are 2 exceptions: if it is related to some health issue or some legal issue (ex: that you have children and are paying child support, that you have been married before, etc.)

Common Myths About Marriage

- "It is all about love"
 - This can be true, depending on how you define love
 - It is not all about your sentiments and feelings
- "Marriage will make me happy"
 - Marriage is not supposed to make you happy. It is supposed to make you responsible

EDUCATION | PRESERVATION | APPLICATION

- You can be happy whether you are married or not
- Bring happiness to your marriage
- "Love, marriage, and beauty"
 - As human beings, we associate beauty with perfection. So, when we see someone beautiful, we assume that they must also be perfect.
 - This is a false notion because beauty is in the eye of the beholder
- "Marriage will make me quit my haram actions"
 - Do not get married to escape the sin. Escape the sin regardless of your marriage. If you do not do that, then you will carry the sin into your relationship with your spouse.
 - The sin is an addiction and a disease, so it will not matter if you are married or not.
- "If you get married, then you cannot have differences."
 - You can still love each other, even if you do not agree on things
 - The differences should not bring fitnah into the family

The Role of Istikharah in Making the Decision

- Istikharah is asking Allah to help you and guide you to make the right decision
- Istisharah, seeking counsel from the people, should come before istikharah
- Istikharah is not that the decision is made for you. It is that Allah guides your heart to make the right one. So, you are the one making the decision and you take responsibility for that decision.

The 5 Stages of Marriage

- In love stage
 - This is an irrational stage and it is all about the love
 - It is important for you to bring rationale into this phase in order to make the right decision about marrying the person
- Honeymoon stage
 - This is when you move in together and the most important thing that people do in this phase is having first time experiences together.
 - Never stop building new memories, no matter how long you have been married for
 - Social comparison is the number one thing that will destroy every happy memory you had
- Actualization stage
 - This is when you start realizing who the person you married really is. You start seeing the good, the bad, and the ugly
 - This creates the silent killer of all relationships, which is disappointment
- Adjustment stage
 - This is when a person makes 1 of 2 decisions: to stay or to leave
 - The number one problem we have that is causing people to leave their relationships so quickly is the culture of abundance.
 - We have too many options and our kids grow up with so many options.
 - With too many options, the younger people start invoking a sense of entitlement and control and when something breaks, you change it, you do not fix it.
 - We have too much of everything, so we are not satisfied with anything. This is something important to be aware of when raising children.

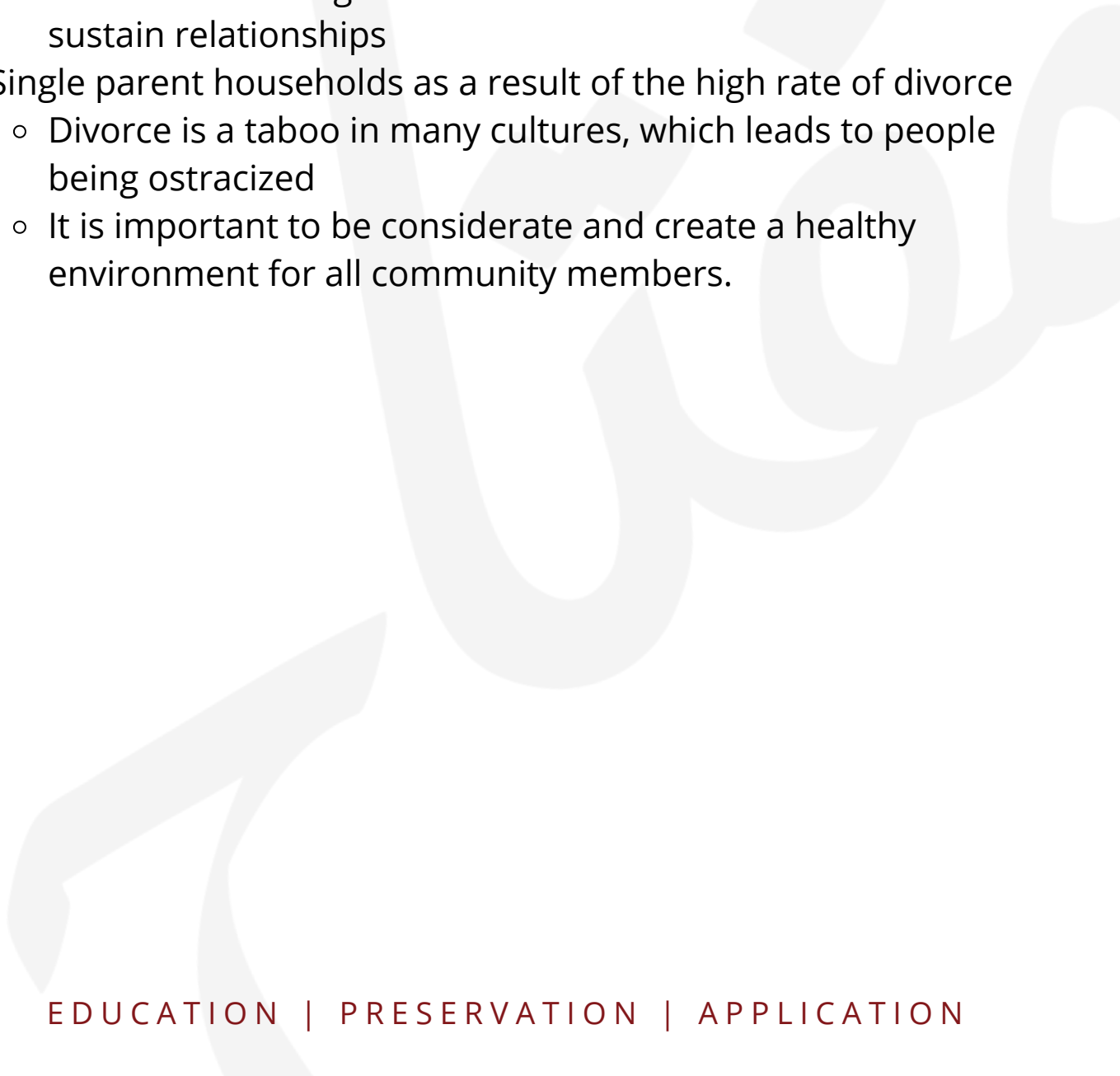
- Autopilot stage
 - This is when a person decides to stay and the relationship is put on autopilot
 - The number one quality that a husband and wife need to have in order to put their relationship on autopilot is trust.
 - Learn how to build trust with each other
 - Trust is built up over time and it can get knocked down in an instant. It is not just about having trust, but it is about maintaining and safeguarding it.
 - Cross-gender interaction is something that causes trust issues between spouses.
 - It is important for young men and women to identify their boundaries when they are speaking for the purpose of marriage.

Family

- When it comes to family, we believe that it is a divinely inspired institution
- Faith is at the core of it and the instruction to establish that family can be found in the Quran and Sunnah
- We need to make sure to set the boundaries in the right way with respect.
 - There are certain rights that a couple has that other people in the family do not have the right to

The Change in Muslim Families Today

- The size of the family shrunk
 - It was very common to have many children, but now people have less kids
 - Having less children in the house leads to huge emotional dependence. Parents cannot let go easily and children become to dependent on their parents which makes them socially awkward, especially when their parents are too overprotective and do not allow their children to make mistakes and they cannot handle negative emotions and therefore cannot sustain relationships
- Single parent households as a result of the high rate of divorce
 - Divorce is a taboo in many cultures, which leads to people being ostracized
 - It is important to be considerate and create a healthy environment for all community members.



What do Men and Woman Look for in a Relationship?

- The ultimate goal of any relationship is to find peace or emotional fulfillment with each other
 - If you disturb that peace, then people will struggle
- The number one reason for people to quit a relationship is because they feel emotionally dissatisfied. They feel emotionally dissatisfied because there is a lack of appreciation. The reason they do not feel appreciated is because they do not get complimented for anything (physically or verbally).
- The way to bring peace into a relationship is with compliments
- If we do not compliment others, then we are silent and the first thing that will come out of your mouth will be negative. Negative judgement and criticism is what eventually leads a person to quit their relationships
- Reduce your criticism, increase your compliments, and show your appreciation more frequently in order to be satisfied and find peace.
- The Prophet SAW was speaking to some women and he said, "You women need to give more charity because I saw that a lot of women end up in Jahannam." They were shocked and asked him why. He said, "Because of their denial." They asked, "Denying Allah?" He said, "Denying their husbands."
 - Qadhi 'Iyadh said this hadith can also be applied to the husbands, meaning a man can also be ungrateful to his wife. This is only about women because the Prophet SAW was speaking to them in that moment.
 - You need to frequently appreciate each other in the household in order to keep the peace.
- It is important to still be reasonable. Do not expect your spouse to show appreciation to you if you are doing something objectively wrong.

How Can We Bring the House Together?

- Remember that the one who brings the house together is Allah
- No matter how much effort or money you spend, it is Allah who brings the house together
- Make dua for Allah to bring your hearts together and make your marriage healthy
 - Do not wait for troubles to make dua. You can make dua no matter the state of your marriage.

The Silent Killer of Relationships

- Unmet expectation is the silent killer of relationships
- When someone does not meet your expectation, you get disappointed. When that happens often, you start to become angry because uncertainty/doubt has been building up and the brain hates uncertainties.
 - Allah designed the brain to always give us a safety net. The moment you deal with uncertainty, the brain kicks in the first defense mechanism, which is anxiety.
 - When your mind is put in an uncertain situation, it always expects the worst.
 - Anxiety leads to fear of the unknown. There can never be a sure solution to emotional uncertainty, so the brain gets confused and the thoughts are all put into your subconscious. Eventually, it all builds up and the next time you have a problem with your spouse, it all comes out because those issues were not resolved.
 - We always browse our problems and never solve them. As a result, we go into safety mode, which is resentment and being number. Then, we go into chronic resentment and compassion fatigue (sick of being a nice person), start fighting each other, go into depression, and then anger becomes the manifestation of that.

How Do You Remove the Uncertainty?

- Effective communication
 - There are 3 layers:
 - Basic communication: having a healthy husband and wife routine together (ex: having breakfast together, going to sleep together, having tea together, etc.)
 - Connection: connecting with each other
 - Just because you communicate, that does not mean that you connect with your spouse
 - You need to connect in a way that is meaningful to your spouse, on their terms, not on your terms.
 - Your spouse might need your time more than your gifts, so it is important to connect with them through their needs.
 - Men and women communicate differently.
 - Men generally speak about information and women generally speak about their feelings. Men focus on the contents and what was said. Women focus on how and why it was said. As a result, when a man listens to his wife, he is looking for information and misses the point. When a woman listens to her husband, she is wondering why he is speaking to her like that.
 - Synchronization: being on the same page and thinking alike
 - It is important for a couple to have a future plan together so that they are on the same page
 - This can be achieved by simply having a conversation about how you want your relationship to grow in the next few years.

- If communication fails, then you want to steer the relationship in a way that makes you feel better. That is when the spouses start fighting for control.
 - Conflict is not necessarily a problem. It is just an indication that something different is happening that requires your attention.
 - The way that you deal with conflict is what makes it good or bad
- The first sign of control is criticism. When you start seeing a lot of criticism, that means that you are headed towards conflict.
 - Instead of fighting for control, work on your communication.
- When people want to control their relationship, they use 2 things that cannot be argued with: deen and tradition
- Instead of avoiding conflict, learn to negotiate.

The Art of Forgiving

- The Quran uses 3 words with the meaning of forgive:
 - Maghfirah: this is when you conceal someone's mistakes
 - 'Afw: this is when you conceal and forget someone's mistakes
 - Safḥah: this is when you never even make someone else feel guilty for their mistakes
- It is always better for you to forgive your spouse, but it is up to you which type of forgiveness you choose.

Love Languages

- There are 5 love languages: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical contact
 - These can all be found in the life of the Prophet SAW
- Many women love to see their husbands help around in the house without being told. Many men love to be complimented by their wives.