

# MIFTAAH SEMINAR

## PROPHETIC CONNECTIONS



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### SESSION 1

## Introduction

- It is important to learn and emulate the Prophetic model of connecting.
- There are three levels of connection:
  - Connecting with ourselves
  - Connecting with one another
  - Connecting with Allah
- Allah called human beings, insan. There are two opinions amongst the linguists for its reasoning:
  - Opinion #1: It is derived from the root letters of nisyan, which means forgetfulness. Allah has made us forgetful creatures and therefore, we are forgiven when we forget.
  - Opinion #2: It is derived from the root letters of uns, referring to compassion, connection. It reminds us that our entire existence is only effective if we cultivate relationships. This is the majority opinion.

## Connecting with One Another

- The Prophet's relationships remained very consistent and they continued to prosper because he always gave others without benefiting; he was the giver, not the receiver.

- We should cultivate such relationships where each person strives to give the other person more instead of thinking of what we were to receive.
- Relationships can only grow within a community when every individual has a sense of selflessness; when they are concerned about the betterment of others.
- Cultivating relationships keeps us humans. It is the essential need of every human being to be around people who love and care for us.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was brought into this world without a father. Then, his mother passed away when he was four or five, his grandfather passed away when he was eight, his uncle and his wife left him in the Year of Sorrow. However, none of these challenges broke him down as a person because he remained content with life.
- Our goal of life is never to be happy and wish we had more, but to be grateful and content with what we have. Allah said:

أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى

*Or is there for man whatever he wishes? (53:24)*

- The happiness we experience is temporary in this world – it will soon be met with sadness, struggles, challenges etc.
- Imam Ghazali said, in the ayah, “Surely with difficulty comes ease (94:5)”, difficulty denotes the aspect of the dunya, while ease is in reference to the akhirah.
- Regardless of the state we are in, we should not let it stop us from being giving, loving and caring to others.
- For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) lost six of his seven children. He had every reason to be angry or sad after losing his loved ones. But when the Companions described him, they say he was always smiling.

- Jarir ibn Abdullah reported:

مَا حَجَبَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُنْذُ أَسْلَمْتُ وَلَا رَأَيْتُ إِلَّا وَجْهَكَ

*The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, never avoided me ever since I embraced Islam. I would never see him but with a smile on his face. (Sahih Muslim)*

- The community prospered because the Prophet (ﷺ) understood what these gestures meant to the people.
- In dealing with others, we are also reminded to remain patient as it entails many challenges.

- Ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لَا يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ

*“The believer who mixes with people and is patient with their harm has a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people, nor is patient with their harm.” Sunan Ibn Majah*

- Three steps that aids a person in cultivating relationships:

- Step #1. The revelation; Qur’an

- We must understand who Allah is and educate ourselves about Him.
- Allah said:

أَقْرَأْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

*Read, ‘O Prophet, in the Name of your Lord Who created (96:1)*

- Step #2. Fortifying a relationship with Allah

- We should isolate ourselves by praying, as the Prophet did. He would spend half his night in isolation with Allah.
- Allah said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمَلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾ نُصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

*O you wrapped ‘in your clothes’! Stand all night ‘in prayer’ except a little – ‘pray’ half the night, or a little less (73:1-3)*

- Step #3. Spend time with people

- We have to spend time with others to strengthen our iman. We can either impact people or be impacted by them; we are either a caller or we're being called toward something.
- Allah said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ﴿٢﴾

*O you covered up 'in your clothes'! Arise and warn 'all'. (74:1-2)*

- Three stages of iman and the way it impacts others when cultivating relationships:
- Stage #1: Iman is like milk
  - When it is thrown inside of a body of water, it completely dissolves.
  - This is a description of a person who is assimilated without building a relationship with Allah.
- Stage #2: Iman is like butter
  - When it is thrown inside a body of water, it remains present for a little while before it dissolves.
  - This is a description of a person who brings some benefit and helps us establish a relationship with Allah.
- Stage #3: Iman is like oil
  - When it is thrown inside of a body of water, it remains there and will never lose its properties.
  - This is a description of a person who is a da'i; a caller whose speech is impactful that it makes a person love Allah.
- Human beings need these three things in building connections. Hence, Allah created Adam, then He created Hawa, because it is the nature of human beings to be attached and have relationships with one another.
- It is normal for a person to feel distressed when they lose the person they love in their lives.
- For example, Yaqub AS grieved for Yusuf AS until he became blind. Similarly, the Prophet (ﷺ) wept when he visited the grave of his mother.

- Abu Hurairah reported: The Apostle of Allah (ﷺ) visited the grave of his mother and he wept, and moved others around him to tears, and said:

" اسْتَأْذَنْتُ رَبِّي فِي أَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهَا فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي وَاسْتَأْذَنْتُهُ فِي أَنْ أَرْوَرَ قَبْرَهَا فَأُذِنَ لِي فَزُورُوا الْقُبُورَ فَإِنَّهَا تُذَكِّرُ الْمَوْتَ "

*I sought permission from my Lord to beg forgiveness for her but it was not granted to me, and I sought permission to visit her grave and it was granted to me so visit the graves, for that makes you mindful of death.*

*(Sahih Muslim)*

- We should cultivate relationships in this world in which its connection extends into the next realm. This is because when a person leaves this world, their soul transitions into the next and we will be able to connect with them through our deeds for them.
- When the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated, Madinah was an empty land known as Yathrib, which means sickness.
- People would avoid this path when they travelled to Syria because they would fall sick. Hence, upon his arrival, the Prophet (ﷺ) changed its name Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, which means "Enlightened City".
- Madinah became a sanctified and illuminated city because of the Prophet's presence. He was able to connect to the hearts of people and win them over his ability of building relationships.
- Despite being honorable, the Prophet (ﷺ) had no sense of formality when interacting with others, and he created a sense of honor within people.
- Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali said:

سَأَلْتُ خَالَي هِنْدَ بْنَ أَبِي هَالَةَ، وَكَانَ وَصَافًا عَنِ حَلِيَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَأَنَا أَشْتَهِي أَنْ يَصِفَ لِي مِنْهَا شَيْئًا، فَقَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، -: قَالَ: فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ مَخْرَجِهِ كَيْفَ يَصْنَعُ فِيهِ؟ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَخْرُنُ لِسَانَهُ إِلَّا فِيمَا يَعْنِيهِ، وَيُؤَلَّفُهُمْ وَلَا يُتَفَرَّهُمْ، وَيُكْرِمُ كَرِيمَ كُلِّ قَوْمٍ وَيُؤَلِّيهِ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَيُحَذِّرُ النَّاسَ وَيَحْتَرِسُ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَطْوِي عَنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ بِشَرِّهِ وَخُلُقِهِ، وَيَتَفَقَّدُ أَصْحَابَهُ، وَيَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ عَمَّا فِي النَّاسِ، وَيُحَسِّنُ الْحَسَنَ وَيُقَوِّيهِ، وَيَقْبَحُ الْقَبِيحَ وَيُوهِّيهِ، مُعْتَدِلُ الْأَمْرِ غَيْرُ مُخْتَلِفٍ، لَا يَغْفُلُ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يَغْفُلُوا أَوْ يَمِيلُوا، لِكُلِّ حَالٍ عِنْدَهُ عِتَادٌ، لَا يَقْصُرُ عَنِ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَجَاوِزُهُ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُ مِنَ النَّاسِ خِيَارُهُمْ، أَفْضَلُهُمْ عِنْدَهُ أَعْمَهُمْ نَصِيحَتَهُ، وَأَعْظَمُهُمْ عِنْدَهُ مَنْزِلَةَ أَحْسَنُهُمْ مُوَاسَاةً وَمُؤَاوَزَةً قَالَ: فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ مَجْلِسِهِ، فَقَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يَقُومُ وَلَا يَجْلِسُ، إِلَّا عَلَى ذِكْرٍ، وَإِذَا انْتَهَى إِلَى قَوْمٍ، جَلَسَ حَيْثُ يَنْتَهِي بِهِ الْمَجْلِسُ، وَيَأْمُرُ بِذَلِكَ، يُعْطِي كُلَّ جُلَسَائِهِ بِنَصِيبِهِ، لَا يَحْسَبُ جَلِيسُهُ أَنْ أَحَدًا أَكْرَمَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُ، مَنْ جَالَسَهُ أَوْ فَاوَضَهُ فِي حَاجَةٍ، صَابِرَهُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هُوَ الْمُنْصَرِفُ عَنْهُ، وَمَنْ سَأَلَهُ حَاجَةً لَمْ يَرُدَّهُ إِلَّا بِهَا، أَوْ بِمَيْسُورٍ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ، قَدْ وَسِعَ النَّاسَ بَسْطُهُ وَخُلُقُهُ، فَصَارَ لَهُمْ أَبَا وَصَارُوا عِنْدَهُ فِي الْحَقِّ سَوَاءً، مَجْلِسُهُ مَجْلِسٌ عِلْمٍ وَحِلْمٍ وَحَيَاءٍ وَأَمَانَةٍ وَصَبْرٍ، لَا تَرْفَعُ فِيهِ الْأَصْوَاتُ، وَلَا تُؤَبَّنُ فِيهِ الْحُرْمُ، وَلَا تُثَنَّى فَلَئِنَّا، مُتَعَادِلِينَ، بَلْ كَانُوا يَتَفَاوَضُونَ فِيهِ بِالتَّقْوَى، مُتَوَاضِعِينَ يُوقِرُونَ فِيهِ الْكَبِيرَ، وَيَرْحَمُونَ فِيهِ الصَّغِيرَ، وَيُؤَثِّرُونَ ذَا الْحَاجَةِ، وَيَحْفَظُونَ الْغَرِيبَ.

*“I asked my maternal uncle, Hind ibn Abi Hala, who was an expert describer, about the finery of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), and I asked him to describe something of it for me, so he said: ‘Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) was an honored dignitary, whose face shone with the radiance of the moon on the night of the full moon.’” Then he related the tradition in its full length.*

*Al-Hasan said: “I concealed it from al-Husain for some time, then I related it to him, so I found that he had beaten me to it.” He therefore asked him about what he had asked him about, and he found that he had asked his father about his entrance and his exit and his outward appearance, so he did not leave anything out of it. Al-Husain said: “I asked my father about the entry of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), so he said: ‘When Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) betook himself to his residence, he divided his entry into three sections: a section for Allah’s sake, a section for his family’s sake, and a section for his own sake. Then he divided his section between himself and the people, so he was assigning that in particular to the common folk, and he was not keeping anything from them.*

*His conduct in the section of the Community included preference for the people of excellent merit, with his permission, and its allotment according to the value of their excellent merit in the religion, for among them was the one burdened with one need, and among them was the one burdened with two needs, and among them was the one burdened with multiple needs. He would therefore preoccupy himself with them, and preoccupy them with what would benefit them and the Community, including questioning them about it and informing them of what would be appropriate for them. He would say: 'Let the one of you who is present inform the absentee, and notify me of the need of someone who is incapable of notification, for if someone notifies a Sultan of the need of someone who is incapable of its notification, Allah will establish his feet firmly on the Day of the Resurrection. Nothing but that will be mentioned in His presence, and it will not be accepted from anyone other than him. They will enter as seekers, and they will not separate except on the strength of an intuition, and they will emerge as guides (meaning to goodness).'*" He said: "Then I asked him about his exit: 'How was he used to behaving in it?' He said: 'Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to hold his tongue with regard to anything that did not concern him. He used to bring people together and not alienate them. He would honor the noble, generous man of every community, and put him in charge of them. He would caution people and be wary of them, without concealing his good humor and his natural disposition from anyone among them. He would watch out for his Companions, and he would ask people about their affairs. He would present the beautiful in a favorable light and strengthen it, and he would reveal the ugly for what it was and weaken it. He was equitable, not argumentative. He remained vigilant lest others be negligent or deviate from the right path. He had a means of dealing with every situation. He would neither fall short of the truth, nor overstep it. Those who followed him were the best of people. The most meritorious in his sight were those most receptive to sincere advice and most elevated in status those most generous in consolation and support.'" He said: "Then I asked him about his session, so he said: 'Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) would neither stand up nor sit down without observing the remembrance of Allah.

*When he eventually joined a group of people, he would take whatever seat was available, and he instructed others to do the same. He would give each of his sitting companions his share of time and attention, and every one of them would feel equally honored. If someone sat with him, or conferred with him about a need, he would bear with him patiently, so that the person who had sought him out would be the first to leave. If someone asked him for something he needed, he would not send him away without what he had requested, or least some comforting words. His munificence and his good nature encompassed people such that he became a father to them, and they became truly equal in his presence. His session was a session of knowledge, forbearance, modesty, trust and patience. Voices were not raised there, there was no talk of women, and people's lapses were not broadcast. They were on a par with one another, contending with each other only in piety, humbly revering the elderly and showing compassion for the young. They were solicitous to the needy, and took good care of the stranger.” (Ash-Shama'il Al-Muhammadiyah)*

- Prophetic connection is not about building relationships for ourselves but building relationships within people for themselves.
- We should be able to spread peace within our community irrespective of our different backgrounds, where we are from etc.
  - ‘Abdullah bin Salam said: “When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Al-Madinah, the people rushed to meet him, and it was said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come!’ Three times. I came with the people to see him, and when I saw his face clearly, I knew that his face was not the face of a liar. The first thing I heard him say was when he said:

*" يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ "*

*‘O people! Spread (the greeting of) Salam, feed others, uphold the ties of kinship, and pray during the night when people are sleeping, and you will enter Paradise with Salam.” (Sunan Ibn Majah)*



- Before the Prophet's arrival, the tribes Aws and Khazraj were fighting against each other. However, after embracing Islam, they became united after years of conflict.

- Allah said:

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

*He brought their hearts together. Had you spent all the riches in the earth, you could not have united their hearts. But Allah has united them. Indeed, He is Almighty, All-Wise. (8:63)*

- The community continued to thrive even after the Prophet (ﷺ) left this world because of the love they had for each other which was instilled by the Prophet (ﷺ) through the nucleus of it; Islam.
- Our interactions with one another that is filled with kindness and love, goes a long way.
- Allah speaks about the worst type of people who will face the harshest punishment in wayl, which is the deepest valley of Jahannam. He said:

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

*Woe to every backbiter, slanderer (104:1)*

- Ibn Abbas said, "Humazah Lumazah means one who reviles and disgraces (others)." Al-Humazah is with the hand and the eye, and Al-Lumazah is with the tongue.
- This implies that this person looks down upon others simply by their facial expressions, gestures or with their words.
- In Deen, when interacting with others, our intention does not matter. Instead, how the other person received it matters; this will define our reward or sin.
- Akhlaq derives from the same root word as Khalaqa which means to create. This is because we are constantly creating on our character – we must constantly work on it.

- When giving to others, we should give without diminishing their honor. It is important not to let the other person feel like we are better than them.
  - Abdullah ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,
 

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَلْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْيَدِ السُّفْلَى وَالْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا الْمُنْفِقَةُ وَالسُّفْلَى السَّائِلَةُ

*"The upper hand is better than the lower hand. The upper hand is one that gives and the lower hand is one that takes."* (Bukhari and Muslim)
  - 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir reported: I said, "O Messenger of Allah, what will save us?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,
 

مَسِيكَ عَلَىكَ لِسَانُكَ وَلَيْسَعَكَ بَيْتُكَ وَإِذْكَ عَلَى خَطِيئَتِكَ

*"Restrain your tongue, let your house be enough for you, and weep for your sins."* (Sunan al-Tirmidhi)
- Generosity is not only from our wealth. People should be able to benefit from our talents and skills; as these are blessings from Allah.
- Among some of the things we can do for people: open our homes to them, be sensitive towards their feelings etc.
- The right of every believer is fulfilling five things in their connection with others – this is the bare minimum. Without it, the word insan is not fully being amplified in our lives.
  - Abu Hurairah reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,
 

حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ خَمْسٌ: رُدُّ السَّلَامِ، وَعِيَادَةُ الْمَرِيضِ، وَاتِّبَاعُ الْجَنَائِزِ، وَإِجَابَةُ الدَّعْوَةِ، وَتَشْمِيْتُ الْعَاطِسِ

*"Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim (i.e., he has to perform five duties for another Muslim): to return the greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral processions, to accept an invitation, to respond to the sneezer [i.e., to say: 'Yarhamuk-Allah (may Allah bestow His Mercy on you),' when the sneezer praises Allah]."* (Bukhari and Muslim)
- We should spread the practice of saying 'Salam', whether or not we know a person. The one who initiates 'Salam' first is the one that has more iman.

- The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِاللَّهِ مَنْ بَدَأَهُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ

*"The person nearest to Allah is one who is the first to offer greeting." (At-Tirmidhi)*

- We must respond to invitations that we receive, regardless of whether we accept the invite or respectfully decline it.
- We must make du'a when someone sneezes because we are encouraged to make du'a for people behind their backs. This is a sign of truly loving someone for the sake of Allah.
- We should visit the sick simply to give a sense of hope; to bring some joy to the sick person or to their family.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was able to tell when someone was missing within his community, as he would often visit the sick and he was constantly connected to the people.
  - Narrated Abu Hurairah: A black man or a black woman used to sweep the mosque and he or she died. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked about her (or him). He was told that she (or he) had died. He said,

" أَفَلَا كُنْتُمْ آذَنْتُمُونِي بِهِ دُلُونِي عَلَى قَبْرِهِ "

*"Why did you not inform me? Show me his grave (or her grave)." So he went to her (his) grave and offered her (his) funeral prayer." (Al-Bukhari)*

- We must be present for someone's janazah, as this is a connection that continues through the afterlife. The deceased knows and hears our presence.
- We should be present for others in their moments of their sadness, despite our moments of happiness.

## Connecting with Ourselves

- Fulfilling these five rights mentioned, creates a beautiful community. Nevertheless, building a relationship with the community has a lot to do with the connection to the self.

- If we do not understand ourselves, we will not have the ability to connect to other people; we will be misunderstood.
- One of the key aspects of the Prophet (ﷺ) teaching to bring a community closer is by teaching people to connect with themselves first before others, and connecting with Allah.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was an active listener and was emphatic to others. He would listen to people's complaints and paid great care and attention to those who he interacted with before making any assessments.
- True Prophetic character is listening to people first and simply being there for them. We need each other; humans need humans.
- Sometimes, people just need someone in their lives to listen to them when they are going through something.
- We listen to others not to solve, but for them to reflect and this requires reflection on our part as well.
- When a person expresses their feelings, it is an articulation of their thoughts. Articulation is part of the reform, especially when a person expresses their feelings to an empathetic listener.
- In any transition we go through in our lives, we need someone. The Prophet (ﷺ) ran to his wife first in his moment of fear after receiving revelation.
- Revelation began with a hug from an angel, in the embrace of a woman, and then, it left in the arms of another woman.
- Our Deen teaches us that we all need someone in our lives; we need to know how to connect and express our emotions to others.