



Kahwin Course

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Imam
Afroz
Ali

Shaykh
Musa
Furber

Shaykha
Safia
Shahid

Dr
Robiah K.
Hamzah

9am-5pm,
Sunday
26.02.2017

Pusat Kreatif
Kanak-kanak
Tuanku Bainun,
TTDI, KL

Notes

Prepared by

KAH
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CARE



Notes from KahwinCourse organised by KahwinCare Malaysia

(The following notes were taken during the KahwinCourse held on 26th February, 2017. Notes were prepared by Amran Sofiyan, who was commissioned by KahwinCare to prepare notes derived from the delivery of the lectures from each of the speakers.)

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Kind, only through His immense graciousness are we able to spend this morning and afternoon learning, reflecting, and making commitments to actions that can construct a human society, that builds, prepares, and maintains the future generations to come.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the Worlds. May the complete and best blessings of peace be bestowed upon the Messenger, our Liegelord, Habibullah, Saidina Muhammad bin Abdullah, and upon his purified family, his noble companions, and those who follow their paths from then till the end of days.

The note taker's dua: May Allah Ta'ala make it easy for me to take down all notes, that will benefit myself and others, that it becomes a source of reference for us to build loving and sustaining marriages, instill goodness in the society, place the foundation of the society that we wish to live in, even though we may not live as long to live in it. Let it be a source of reference for those about to enter into marriage, who are already married, who are unsure of it, who have lost marriages, and who come from broken homes. May these notes spark some hope that they can plant the seeds and grow a fruitful marriage, with hopes that they become the starters of communities that are ethical and sustainable, pleasing Allah Ta'ala. I ask Allah to forgive me, my parents, my teachers, and the Muslim community. All mistakes and misinterpretations are mine alone. If you have any suggestions to improve these notes or comments please send them to my email: amransofiyan@gmail.com. May Allah grant all of us success as individuals and partners to our spouses.

The notes as follows:

The one day program "KahwinCourse" was organized by the social enterprise, KahwinCare. The objectives of the program include:

1. Providing traditional Islamic knowledge to the youth
2. Promoting healthy marriages amongst the young and the old
3. Building a good and prosperous community
4. Dispelling myths that marriages are difficult
5. Offering tools that couples can apply to build a lifetime relationship
6. Sharing of 'recipes' of a health marriage taking examples from the Noble Prophet's life.
7. Preventing further breakups of marriages

In his keynote address, Muhammad Afiq mentioned statistics that were alarming. Every year the number of divorces increase by 10%. The average rate of cases per day is 140 cases/day, about 51,100 cases per year. About 75% of breakups involve marriages that are 1-5 years old. (a: If we were to assume that each of these families have at least 2 children by 5 years, we are talking about a massive problem of child custody and psychologically dysfunctional children that grow up seeing no hope in marriages. In this sense, societies will start to collapse since the very values that holds it together is not practised. The unit of society or community is a family.)¹ Hence, the purpose of this KahwinCourse is to, firstly prevent marriages breaking and secondly, promote life-lasting marriages.

¹ The small "a" denotes a comment from the author. I have tried to keep it to a minimum, though it is unavoidable.

The notes will follow the Structure of the event and the sequence of delivery from each of the invited scholars. The scholars who were invited to speak were:

1. Shaykh Musa Furber
2. Imam Afroz Ali
3. Shaykha Safia Shahid
4. Dr Robi'ah K Hamzah

The chapters will be divided to the following:

1. Chapter 1: Definition of Marriage in Islam
2. Chapter 2: The Challenges
3. Chapter 3: Question & Answer
4. Chapter 4: The Solution

Chapter 1: Definition of Marriage in Islam

What is Marriage, by Shaykh Musa Furber

Shaykh Musa Furber came up first.² He spoke of the purpose and adab of marriage. Hence, we need to properly understand the meaning behind the terminology used to define and describe marriage. The word 'nikah'³ means (another word is dhomm, ضم)⁴ to mingle things together, to bundle things together. The legal meaning is based on the linguistic meaning. (a: This is how scholars defined what a thing is and what it is not.)

There are several verses in the Qur'an that tells us about the institution of marriage and its' importance to man. These verses include the following:

#	Verse	Translation ⁵
1	2:35	We said, 'Adam, live with your wife in this garden. Both of you eat freely there as you will, but do not go near this tree, or you will both become wrongdoers.'
2	13:38	We sent messengers before you and gave them wives and offspring; no messenger was given the power to produce a miracle except with God's permission.
3	30:21	Another of His Signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility: He ordained love and kindness between you.
4	36:55,56	The people of Paradise today are happily occupied – they and their spouses – seated on couches in the shade.

Allah Ta'ala created us to worship Him.⁶ (a: A part of that worship is to build communities in which the worship of Him is possible. Marriage is instituted as one of the ways of how men and women can worship Allah Ta'ala. Through marriage, a person can exercise the most intimate and deepest levels of fiqh, adab and Ihsan. A

² Shaykh Musa Furber has studied traditional Islamic sciences in Syria and Egypt since 1994. He received licenses to teach and to deliver legal edicts (fatwas) from senior legal scholars and jurists. He resides and works in Abu Dhabi. [taken from biographical info at

³ نكاح, (nikah) is meant "to marry, get married" [Hans Wehr, edited by J Milton Cowan. (1994). *A dictionary of modern written Arabic: Arabic-English*. Illinois: Spoken Language Services]

⁴ ضم, (dhamma) is meant "to bring together, join, draw together, contract" [Hans Wehr, edited by J Milton Cowan. (1994). *A dictionary of modern written Arabic: Arabic-English*. Illinois: Spoken Language Services]

⁵ Translation of verses taken from M.A.S. Abdel Haleem. (2004). *The Qur'an: a new translation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁶ Verse 51: 56. – I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me.

properly functioning marriage requires them.) The Shari'ah is in place so that we can worship Allah Ta'ala correctly.

It (the Shari'ah) seeks to preserve 5 important aspects, or objectives, which are collectively known as the Maqasid al-Shari'ah. The five are:

1) Religion, 2) Life, 3) Intellect, 4) Lineage, and 5) Wealth

(a: The loss of one of them would lead to problems. Hence the reason for exhorting others' towards it's preservation.)⁷

Before we move along, we should ask ourselves: Is it important to marry? Should I marry? Can I not marry? Rasulullah s.a.w. told the young in his community: If you have the means, then marry; however, if you are unable to, then fast.

Marriage is ok if you meet the conditions to marry, with what it protects and the responsibility that comes with it. One is not busy with acts of worship and one is able to fulfil the marital duties. Marriage is not ok if one cannot fulfil the marital duties.

We have to realise that the person who we have married (a: or about to marry) is a gift from Allah Ta'ala. The gifts that come with a marriage are ni'mah and gifts from Allah Ta'ala. And the best way to show gratitude of the gift is to use a gift correctly.

A righteous spouse is one who helps the other spouse get to Jannah. (a: Both spouses are partner in achieving Jannah. While there are spouses that one does not get to the Garden and the other does, Allah Ta'ala has given us examples of this in Surah at-Tahrim, 66:10 – "The wife of Saidina Nuh a.s. and the wife of Saidina Lut a.s., who married two of Our righteous servants butt betrayed them. Their husbands could not help against God." so that they availed them naught against Allah.)

5 benefits of marriage, as listed by Imam Al-Ghazzali rhm

1. To have children
2. To control sexual passion
3. To find peace of mind
4. To increase divine service
5. To get rewards of duties to family

Shaykh Musa spoke about the importance of lawful earnings. It is very important for the bread-winner to obtain lawful earnings, to ensure that it is free from any doubtful matters. (a: The quality of our earnings will affect our activities directly.)⁸ [The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, said, "Surely a body fed on haram will not enter Paradise – verily hell is more deserving of that body." (Ahmad, 14032)]⁹ Don't fall short of adab and duties by engaging in the haram. This would reduce our worship and obedience to Allah Ta'ala. It's very important to stay away from haram. (a: To stay away, we have to know what the haram are and have a firm resolve in Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger that the unlawfulness of certain things is for our own good, individually and collectively.)

(a: Suggestion from myself and for myself, make a list of different responsibilities that we will carry when we marry. Evaluate them and then decide: Is it good or not good to marry? What are the criterias of which we should or should not marry? Let's see whether this works for a husband. Here's a list of duties:

⁷ a: How does marriage protect the five aims of Shari'ah?

⁸ "The most important responsibility of the Muslim husband is to support and maintain his family with a completely halal (lawful) income. The gravity of this cannot be overstressed. ... It is said that if you eat halal, you will do halal; and if you eat haram, you will do haram in spite of yourself." Hedaya Hartford, *Islamic Marriage*, 3rd edition, (Jordan: Dar al-Fath, 2007), p66.

⁹ From Hedaya Hartford, *Islamic Marriage*, 3rd edition, (Jordan: Dar al-Fath, 2007), p66.

Criteria	Compliance?		Planned action
	Yes	No	
Earn lawful income		X	Change income into lawful income. Seek assistance of how to do away with unlawful income.
Behave well towards wife	X		
Guide wife to follow the limits of Allah Ta'ala		X	Seek a teacher to learn the basics. Ask around where is the best for wife to learn the religion.
Fulfill wife's sexual needs	X		
Provide wife's mahr (marriage payment)	X		
Can support wife and own parents, if still alive	X	X	Yes, we can. But since the income is unlawful, we need to rectify this before we marry.
.....			

As an example, a man has done an evaluation of his current state and whether he is ready to take on the responsibilities of husbandhood. It is clear that there are some very critical steps that he has to take before he ties the knot. The man should also share this with his future bride so that both are in accord of what needs to be done, the potential challenges ahead and be a pillar of support for each other. Allah knows best!)

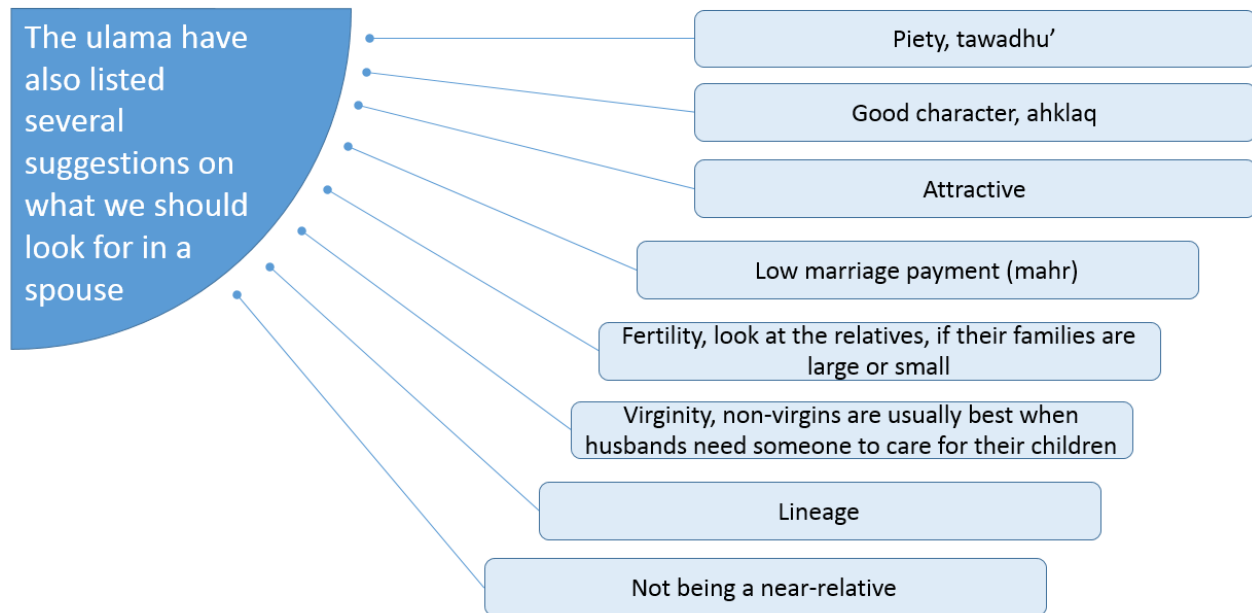
One of the key hadiths from the Prophet s.a.w. on the qualities we have to look for in a spouse, or a wife: The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w said: "A woman is married for her wealth, her lineage, her beauty or her religion. Choose the religious one or you will lose." (Bukhari, 5090)¹⁰

After mentioning this hadith, Shaykh Musa spoke of the criteria listed by Imam al-Mawardi in his commentary of this hadith.

(a: In *The Reliance of the Traveler*, Shaykh Nuh includes the order of preference that Ibn Hajar gave in his *Sharh al-Minhaj*. The order is: 1) religiousness, which takes precedence over everything, 2) intelligence, 3) a good character and disposition, 4) fertility, 5) a good family, 6) virginity, 7) beauty, and 8) and then that which fulfils some other relevant interest.)¹¹

¹⁰ From Hedaya Hartford, *Islamic Marriage*, 3rd edition, (Jordan: Dar al-Fath, 2007), p53.

¹¹ Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, edited and translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, *Reliance of the traveler: a classic manual of Islamic sacred law*, (Maryland, US: Amana Publications, n.d.), note m1.4, p510



To ensure that we find out about our future spouse, performing our own due diligence, we examine what is possible from the standpoint of the Shari'ah. Ask someone trusted to describe the person to us. There's more control over our inner beauty than our outer beauty. Important to consider only disparities of education. Be careful!

However, even though choosing the right wife is important, the choice of the husband is equally important, or more so. It has been reported that the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Choose well for your seed, marry suitable women and marry your daughters to suitable men."¹² One of the reasons for this is that the power to nullify a marriage is in the hands of the husband.

Before going into anything, we need to be aware of the duties and rights expected of us, so that we can be held accountable for our actions. This in effect, will empower us to act correctly. In a marriage, this also applies. The parties in the marriage are husband and wife. Each has their own set of duties towards each other and rights due from each other. The minimum of duties and rights is the standard that everyone should adhere to. Do not stop there. The standard serves as a launch pad to excellence. Take steps to be excellent towards each other. Seize every opportunity to practice ihsan towards each other. Here are some examples of situations that may call for this:

- A spouse annoys the other – the worst form of response, is to respond with aggression, presuming the other is an annoyance. The best response, on the other hand, would be to be patient and ask the reasons for such a behavior. This simply an application of problem solving in the marriage.
- Not seeing eye-to-eye on a matter. The worst response would be to stand each other's ground, be in conflict with each other. The best response may be to listen to your spouse first before coming to conclusions. Understand that your spouse may not share the same opinions as you. They may have a totally different worldview. Getting the other person to go with your worldview would sometimes mean letting go of your own agenda for the agenda of the other. If the intent is to protect the marriage, this is

¹² Ibn Majah, 1068, from Hedaya Hartford, *Islamic Marriage*, 3rd edition, (Jordan: Dar al-Fath, 2007), p51. In a lecture by Habib Ali Zainal Abidin al-Hamid, he described that the key characteristic to look out for in a woman is her religiosity. For the man, he said there are two key characteristics to look out for: his religiosity and his character.

easy. One of the intents must be to create a harmonious situation. However, beware of falling into a tit-for-tat contest. This will only bring up ugly matters, making any resolution difficult to be achieved. It is important for the husband to realise that his capacity to be patient is very high. Sadly, many do not apply this.

Imam al-Shafi'i r.h.m advised that if we truly loved someone, we should refrain from whatever our loved ones dislike and do more of what they like.

Fiqh focuses on what can be done and what has to be done, which in one respect is the basic minimum expected of one. It teaches the minimum level of adab to do something in which no unnecessary harm will be inflicted or the violation of another's rights. This also means that one can do more than just the minimum. As long as it is within the boundaries. InshaAllah. And Allah knows best!

With respect to adab, the husband should exert himself to do more than just putting up with annoyance. Do more. Some of the actions that can be done are smiling and finding out ways that will mend the wife's heart. Put those ways into action. A small gesture goes a long way in a relationship. Take the time to understand each other. A marriage is the most personal relationship that two people who are unrelated may have. Invest in it.

Shaykh Musa tells us that many of the auliya' are where they are, in their spiritual stations, because of the way they put up with their spouses. Sometimes the wife may disagree with something that the husband decided upon. Instead of approaching her with displeasure, he holds a good opinion of her and seeks clarification from her. Hears her out. This will work for the better for you as she may start to listen to you more. We have to realise that everyone has a unique contribution to make. (a: The degree of success of a relationship is connected to the degree of the contribution and trust amongst the parties in the relationship.)

Men and women are required to know their personally obligatory fiqh (jurisprudence) as well as that which they are mutually obligated to do. This is to ensure that each can do what is ncorrect in the situation they are in, thus transact with one another correctly. Not knowing the basics of fiqh has resulted in some couples going through very difficult marriages, which sometimes result in accidental divorces. Be careful of this. It is a responsibility of the husband to ensure that his wife and family are given the means to seek religious knowledge. This is a reminder for myself firstly.

In whatever we do, we have to ensure that we will cause/affect effective change that is in accordance with the Shari'ah.

Imam Ibn Ashur r.a. has said that men who do not discipline their wives properly are men who are being oppressive towards their wives. [Imam al-Haddad says: Devote especial protection and solicitude to the women of your household.]¹³

Shaykh Musa spoke as well of some etiquettes that a husband and a wife should know about divorce. There are four:

- a) Time, the divorce must be done at a time of purity, and no intercourse had.
- b) The husband can only issue a single divorce, for every divorce. This means he cannot issue a triple divorce in one go.
- c) Be gentle when explaining the reason for the divorce. Do not humiliate the wife. Give the wife a gift for the divorce.¹⁴

¹³ Imam al-Haddad, *The book of assistance*, translated by Mostafa Badawi, (Liverpool: Quilliam Press, n.d.), p88.

¹⁴ One of things to do when upset with someone or when someone is upset with you is to give that person a gift. Follow a wrong with a right. Shaykh Muhammad al-Ninowy: Do not let anyone tell you that humanity is bound to hate and violence. In every heart, there is a light of love. Rekindle one at a time, rekindle on. (retrieved from [Instagram.com/universoul.my](https://www.instagram.com/universoul.my))

d) Do not expose each other's secrets to others.

Shaykh Musa mentions then a quotation from Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller's book *Sea without Shore*:

Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller's advice: "... a good marriage is for Allah. He shows His favor to such a marriage by success, harmony, and happiness between family members. The key is good character. Dhul Nun was asked: "Who among men is the most plagued by troubles?" and he answered, "The worst of them in character (akhlaq)." I was once visiting Sheikh Nuh al-Qudah at his home in Zarqa in the 1980s, when a man came in and spoke of long, bitter conflicts between a husband and wife. The sheikh listened, and finally remarked, "Thus do We consign wrongdoers one another, for that which they would earn. [Koran 6:129]. The sovereign advice for most marriage difficulties is simply "Be Muslims". Were our character as Allah had commanded, our marriage and family life would be smooth sailing, which has a great deal to do with our Sufism."¹⁵

Everyone took a break. Before continuing, everyone was treated to a recitation of qasa'id, songs. The songs were *Qasidah Muhammadiyah* by Imam al-Busiri and *Talama Ashku Gharami*.

Chapter 2: The Challenges

Section 1: Marriage Expectations in the Modern Context by Imam Afroz Ali

Something we have to take note of first is what we mean when we say "expectations". Here are some points to consider:

1. Have expectations in marriage changed from those of our parents and our grandparents?
2. Can expectations change?
3. Whose expectations and which ones?
4. How come we need to even consider expectations?

Firstly, we must understand that the expectations in marriage has not changed. Only that most of the material

Expectations -> not changed	that
Material teaching expectations, do's and don't's -> from classical times	we
The time that we are in -> modern times	have
(a: the issue is about translating the classical to a modern context)	today
	is
	from
	classi
	cal

times and we have not updated them to make it relevant for our times.

¹⁵ Nuh Ha Mim Keller, *Sea without shore*, (Maryland: Amana Publications, 2011), 266. Elsewhere Sheikh Nuh advises: "Every Muslim understands that a good marriage is a sunna, help, and blessing to whomever Allah gives it. From a single decision of who should be one's mate for life comes a great deal of one's future happiness or misery. In the path, few things furnish a comparable touchstone of one's taqwa and character." *Sea without shore*, 253.

When the problem is reframed, it's how we can make sense of the material of the past, and make them applicable in our modern times. Have we understood the essential meanings that allows us to apply it every time? Therefore, our response to changing times is what we have to develop and disseminate.

(a: Let's take an example from communication. Our expectations for any communication device is to be understood by the party being communicated to. That's the quality we are expecting of the device. It does not matter whether we are using signs on trees, smoke signals, or whatsapp messages. The expectation is the same. Only the medium to perform or realize it is different and changes with time and technology.)

Imam Afroz tells us then:

1. Return to basics: look back at what Shaykh Musa Furber shared because it is related to what we already know.
2. Then, return to tradition: we have to be careful about some of the books that are available today because some of their ideas are strange. Why so? If you were to look at any secular text on marriage, it will not be discussing about the Hereafter and it's connection with marriage. (a: In Islam, our marriage is connected to our afterlife. There is a hadith related from Saidina Abdullah ibn Mas'ud r.a., a famous companion of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., who said: Rasullah s.a.w said to us, 'O group of young men! Whoever amongst you possesses the means should marry, for it helps lower the gaze and safeguard the private parts. Whoever is unable to [marry] should fast, for it is a shield for him.'" (Bukhari 4779 and Muslim 1400) Both instances, marriage and fasting, are shields protecting the person from harm. Only marriage involves wealth, which can also mean wealth, strength, intellect, that which we already have. The aims of marriage are also far reaching and does not involve the present alone, but also the future generations. Among "the objectives of marriage, include: seeking pious offspring, desiring chastity, protecting oneself from indulgence in fornication and other corrupting activities, achieving tranquility and peace of mind through the company of one's spouse, and caring for and sharing with others."¹⁶)

Many of these books do not reflect our worldview as Muslims. We should look back into the Qur'an, at the verses where Allah Ta'ala tells us to not take from the non-believers and understand how this applies even to our knowledge. We have to learn about the epistemology of knowledge.

Imam Afroz also reminds us that we are not a man and a woman on an island. Hence, as spouses we should be careful of spelling out our expectations of each other. Imam goes as far as to say that we should not lay any expectation additional to the rights and obligations already stated in the Shari'ah. Instead, we should be thinking along the lines of how we can facilitate our spouse. Imam says: "You as a spouse, should facilitate for your spouse his or her way to reach Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala." Be people who support their permissible ethical life towards Allah Ta'ala. (a: Marriage is a journey both parties share together towards a common goal.)

One of the problems we have in the modern world is that we have reduced our religion to a ritualistic practice. This has developed into a schizophrenic view of the religion. (a: What makes only mechanical movements? A machine. It has motion and no emotion.) As a result, we have installed harmful values into our heart. How? We should ask ourselves about the magazines that we read and the movies that we watch. (a: The websites, Instagram, etc that we visit, too.) We should question whether the Cosmopolitan and the next Bollywood show carries values that we cherish in our religion.

¹⁶ Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari, *Al-Arba'in: elucidation of the forty hadiths on marriage*, (London: Turath Publishing, 2013), p30.

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Another thing that Imam reminded couples about was that marriage does not equate to parenting. Some couples, once they have children, go into a parenting operation mode, many times forgetting about the relationship between themselves. So, the parents have to take note of this. (a: The health of your family depends on the health of your marriage, partnership.)

Imam then finished by giving two constructive forces and two destructive forces to a marriage. I have summarized them in the table below:

Destructive Force	Constructive Force
<p>1. Ignorance</p> <p>We do not understand the essence of what we believe in, or what we profess to believe.</p> <p>We ignore the adab, appropriateness required of us, almost purposefully doing so.</p> <p>We may know the form, but the motive force – our intent itself – comes before the form maybe wrong. Ignoring the importance of our intent has led many of us to loss of many opportunities.</p> <p>We have been told to operate within the realm of Ihsan. Do not ignore this. Islam is the Olympics of Life.</p>	<p>1. Returning to Faith, completely</p> <p>We need to really live it to be able to succor the beauty that our predecessors have spoken of and experienced.</p> <p>We have to start implementing the good and transform ourselves and each other so that we go from here to there. We have to stop being self-centered.</p>
<p>2. Inhumane Values</p> <p>Many of us expect others to live in our expectations. Likewise, we also feel the same way about has others deal with us.</p> <p>Material consumerism.</p> <p>Looking for sensorical pleasures.</p> <p>Problem of pornographic material – destroys families and individuals.</p> <p>We have to sort out our neighbourliness, that we live in a society. We need to connect it to knowledge. In fact, everything we do has to be basethemd on knowledge. When we do not know, we have to ask those who do.</p>	<p>2. Dedication towards love for one another</p> <p>There is no human force greater than love. (look back at verse 3:134)</p> <p>We have to allow our spouse to experience love.</p> <p>Marriages is the means for us to express a very deep kind of love.</p> <p>(a: Probably, if we have to assess our love for others, we have different kinds of love. If divided them across gender, let's say to a man, our love to our father would be different from our love to our son and grandson. It would be different again to a teacher we greatly respect to the random man we meet in the street. Ask yourselves then, how do we express my appreciation of others to them?)</p>

Session 2: The Secular Challenge to Spirituality in Marriage by Shaykha Safia Shahid

Info on heart beats	
The average human heart beats at:	
Age	Beats per minute (bpm)
Newborn -> 1 month (mth)	70 to 190 bpm
1 mth -> 11 mths	80 to 160 bpm
1 year -> 2 years old	$80 < x < 130$
3 years -> 4 years old	$80 < x < 120$
5 years -> 6 years old	$75 < x < 115$
7 years -> 9 years old	$70 < x < 110$
10 years -> adults	$60 < x < 100$
Athletes	$40 < x < 60$
So, as adults, our hearts beat at an average of 80 bpm, which for a year sums to 42,048,000 beats. If we were heedless, that would mean a massive loss!	

What is “ultimate reality”? It is when the angel of death comes for our soul. The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, was sent to us to wake us up about his reality.

There is a narration from the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace: “The likeness of a person who remembers his Lord and one who does not is the likeness of a living and a dead person.” (in al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Shaykha asked us to ponder: How many heart beats have gone by heedlessly, that we have missed those opportunities to remember Allah Ta’ala?

The true world is the world of the heart. We produce our happiness from within it, not from outside of it. It is contentment that we seek, Qana’ah (قناعة) (a: means satisfaction, contentment, content, temperance, moderation.)¹⁷

All of us are seeking contentment. (a: How does contentment feel like? Depends on each person. It could be the feeling of fulfilment, even though after the attainment, one is exhausted.) Hence, marriage is one of those opportunities that Allah Ta’ala has allowed us to take and use. It is a laboratory where you can experiment with and experience the highest levels of conduct, exemplifying the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Hikam of Shaykh Ibn Atha’illah al-Askandari: “What has he found who has lost God? And, what has he lost who has found God?”¹⁸

Shaykha spoke then about how we deal with our arguments with our spouses. What is our state when arguing? Are we being patient? Are we being reasonable? Allah Ta’ala reminds us in the Qur’an to be patient, to have sabr. Allah Ta’ala elevates this state of being to one which He Himself loves and will love those who are patient.

Shaykha told us about a story of a man who waited for a friend. (a: Unfortunately, I do not remember the whole story to be able to include it into these notes. My apologies.)

Why is patience elevated as such? No tribulation happens but that there’s a reward for it.¹⁹

¹⁷ Qana’ah (قناعة) from qani’a (قنع), to be content of something, be content, be satisfied, to be convinced. Definition taken from Hans Wehr, edited by J Milton Cowan. (1994). *A dictionary of modern written Arabic: Arabic-English*. Illinois: Spoken Language Services

¹⁸ Though this is a well-known saying, I have so far not been able to find the source. If anyone knows, please let me know so that I can update the notes. Barakallahu fik!

¹⁹ Hikam of Ibn Atha’illah al-Askandari: *Sometimes He gives while depriving you, and sometimes He deprives you in giving*. Also: *A gift from man is deprivation, but deprivation from God is beneficence*. (Ibn Atha’illah, translated by Victor Danner, *Sufi Aphorisms*, retrieved from <http://themathesontrust.org/library/al-hikam-aphorisms>)

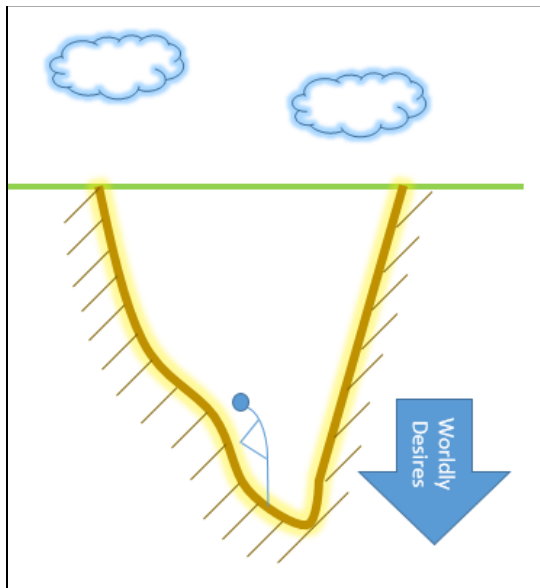
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As a spouse we have to show gratitude to one another. This means, we cannot have any resentment for each other. Leave all the negative feelings, emotions, thoughts, and states outside of the house. (a: An interesting story I heard that may explain this is the following:

The Problems Tree - A contractor that I hired to do some repair work had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw broke down, and now his old pick-up truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in total silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. After opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterwards, he walked me to my car. We passed the tree, and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. "Oh, that's my problems tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having problems on the job, but one thing for sure, problems don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning, I pick them up again." "Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."²⁰

We have to remember to never see ourselves better than our spouses. In fact, this applies to everyone we know and come into contact with directly and indirectly. (a: Do not let a small ounce of *riya'* destroy the place we have been promised in Paradise.)

Do this: take yourself to account at the end of the day. (a: review, ask yourself reflection questions, seek Allah's forgiveness and make a commitment to change the next day.)²¹



Picture 1 Shaykha spoke of how the pursuit of worldly desires is like digging a hole into the ground that goes deeper and deeper the more we pursue it.

Shaykha shared another story with us. A story of Imam Ibrahim ibn Adham r.a. A man was eating with the Imam. When the man had finished his meal, he got up. Before leaving, he asked the imam: "is there anything wrong with me? Please let me know." The Imam answered: "there's nothing wrong. I looked at you with the eyes of love."

This brings us to an interesting point. People say that love is blind. From the story above, this is not because it cannot see, but because it does not judge, it does not expect from others. Hence, to love means having no expectations of others. We love not because we want to be loved back. A no expectation mindset means that we will be happy. With an expecting mindset, we are actually imposing on others our own worldview, we are not accepting the fact that a woman's and a man's worldviews are very different. The concerns of the two are different. (a: This does not mean we simply let people be. No, it means that we are appropriate according to the situation. A parent disciplines a child not because of anger, for himself, but out of love for the child.)

The session closed with Shaykha reminding us to ask ourselves, who am I a servant of? Of Allah? Of the world? Of myself? Then, she reminded us of the purpose of the Messenger's message. That is to perfect our character so that we are ready for the Ultimate Reality.

Before starting with the question and answer session, everyone was treated to a gambus²² demonstration.

²⁰ Retrieved from <http://www.toastfinder.com/the-problems-tree-inspirational-story-about-problems/>

²¹ The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "He whose two days are equal, is a loser." [Daylami].

Chapter 3: Question & Answer Session

with Shaykha Safia Shahid, Dr Robi'ah and Imam Afroz Ali

The questions were sent to the organizers via a card that was distributed in the goodie bags. Participants were encouraged to write down their questions and submit them at the reception during the break. The organizers would screen and categorize the questions according to topic and which scholar to answer. I have tried my best to copy down each question as closely as possible and their responses. Each question is followed by a parentheses that indicates the scholar that responded to it.

1. Statistics show that most divorce cases are from Muslim families. Is there a fault among the Muslims? Don't divorces happen to non-Muslims, too? (ans: Imam Afroz Ali)
 - a. It is not true that Muslims have the highest number of divorces. Probably, in the Malaysian context, since the majority group is Muslims, the number of couples divorcing may be higher. However, from a per capita viewpoint, we will find that the value is lesser. One thing for us to consider when we read statistics is the meaning or the assumptions behind that statistical value before we come to any conclusion.
 - b. Piety is not a condition that everything will be ok. Saidina Ali kwj²³ said: A good husband will always be a good ex-husband.²⁴
 - c. Piety should be the general concern as it will be that that saves the marriage. Many people marry even though they may be incompatible, but piety makes the marriage work. If the husband has piety, then he will love you. Even if the marriage breaks down, he will not oppress you.
 - d. Conflict should not break down into using aggression against each other. Remember that when in conflict, deal with each other with great utmost respect towards each other. That is the way of piety.
2. Should we share our past history with our spouses? Does our spouse have the right to read our private messages? (ans: Dr. Robi'ah)
 - a. With regards to our handphone and past experience, it is not allowed and one does not need to show that. Remember, once we have agreed to be a partner to the other, we should accept the way the person is. Will the knowledge actually be of benefit, be effective towards strengthening the relationship? If it does not, then it's better to leave it. If it does, then do it with that intent and seek permission first.²⁵
 - b. Suka: is our liking and loving another based on wahyu, or based on nafsu? (al-Mumtahanah: 1 – You who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as allies, showing them friendship when they have rejected the truth you have received, and have driven you and the Messenger out

²² The Gambus: the plucked lutes of the Malay world. There are a few types: the arched back (gambus melayu) and the pear shaped (gambus Hadhramaut). Adapted from a paper by Larry Hilarian from Nanyang Technological University titled "The gambus (lutes) of the Malay world: its origins and significance in zapin music" that was presented at the UNESCO Regional Expert Symposium on Arts Education in Asia, Hong Kong, 2004.

²³ KWJ: karamallahu wajjah, may Allah ennoble his face. A honorification said after Saidina Ali's name is mentioned. Also can use radhiyallahu 'anhu, may Allah be pleased with him.

²⁴ I cannot find the source or original saying of this. Probably someone can update me if they do find it.

²⁵ "Know that it is not necessary for anyone to search for hidden reprehensible things so that he may forbid them, rather this is forbidden for He says – Exalted is He, *Do not spy*. [49:12] ... what is obligatory is to enjoin good when one sees those who do wrong. Understand this, for we have seen many people erring in this matter." Imam Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad, translated by Mostafa Badawi, *Counsels of religion*, (Kentucky: Fons Vitae, 2010), p14.

simply because you believe in God, your Lord). If it is based on nafsu, then iblis will easily come in.

- c. Important then: how do you apply wahyu to build the trust between each other, having the courage to trust another, and be grateful for each other's courage?
 - d. Never have suspicions towards each other. (a: If you do suspect your partner, invite them to sit down and have a chat. You are there not to judge, but to understand and to dispel your suspicions, not to confirm it. Therefore, your intent in resolving any issues has to be right.)
 - e. Which first comes first? Cinta or rindu dulu? Cinta dulu. (a: Which is first? Love or yearning? It has to be love. Without love, one would not yearn.)
 - f. 3 ways to see: 1. Seeing with the physical eye. The appearance, the surface. 2. Seeing with the mind. 3. Seeing with the heart, with one's iman. (a: each way we look there is a set of biases)
 - g. If you want the marriage to last, what kind of characteristics do we want to instill in the marriage? Ask yourself: what kind of values do I want to instill in my family? Have a shared vision, have a family mission. What sort of intent/s do you want have and aspirations you want to achieve as a family? (a: Some of us may have experience in crafting mission statements and strategies for the corporate organizations and teams. The principles are the same.)
 - h. Say to your spouse: **I love you, because God sent you to me.**
 - i. Most Malaysians stop planning after the marriage starts. Many are not able to ask themselves the question, who am I? Regardless of where you are and stage in life, pause and ask yourself this question. Know your current state and where you want to go. Then, activate the plan and if needed, upgrade yourself. (a: Life is sometimes depicted like a river. It does not stop flowing to the sea. Every instance is different. The constant on the river is change. There is something for us to reflect in this, as Allah mentions in verse 13:3.)
 - j. Impart the values to your children. Live the values that you want your children to embody and practice.
 - k. Give meaning to what it means to be a partner.
3. How can we be content while at the same time be striving for more? (ans: Shaykha Safia)
 - a. We have to remember that striving for more does not mean striving for more wealth. What it means is to be content with the material wealth we have been given and strive continuously for our spiritual betterment. (a: Material wealth is limited, while spiritual wealth is limitless.)
 - b. Our life is a constant struggle against the nafs, even in Ramadhan. (a: Understanding this, let us take steps to know the best ways for us to struggle with the nafs.)
 - c. The believer is one who when he is striving, he is proving himself towards Allah Ta'ala. At the beginning of their spiritual journey, they may have the worst possible traits. But with persistence, mujahadah, they make a complete transformation.
 - d. There's never a point where we can say we have reached the highest point.
 - e. Be a people of gratitude, thank Allah Ta'ala for the items that you have and what you don't have.
 - f. How many of us have taken the time to take a time out, and thank Allah ta'ala for the gifts that we have? Do this. (a: One good practice is to write down daily 3 things you are grateful to Allah for. E.g. Alhamdulillah for the ease to breathe.)
 4. How can we stop pornography?²⁶ How can we love the faith? (ans: Imam Afroz)

²⁶ Sheikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller gives advice regarding this: "He [Hajji Baba] ... warned men and women against "soul fornication" (ruh zina), meaning sexual fantasies about other than one's spouse. How easily this is dismissed today merely shows how normative sexual license has become. That such license is a viral infection in the body of mankind is shown by its effects upon the demography, the very survival, of peoples in the present age, whom it proceeds unchecked, or even encouraged by purblind myths of "personal freedom." It may

- a. If we truly enjoy living the faith, then we would be close to it. We would love it.
 - b. When we are engaged in meditation, sometimes we get an itch and we try to fight it. The trouble is, no matter how we try to fight it, the itch will not go away. Instead, we should appreciate it and leave it for the time being. It will eventually go away. (a: If we were on a boat, and we stopped at the river bank to see something. Whatever caught our interest has us now engaged and we can move onwards to our destination because of it. An itch is like that. If we just acknowledged whatever it was on the riverbank without stopping, we would have continued our journey and left the "itch" behind. Wallahu a'lam.) Similar to how a qasidah: the more you try to stop the song, the more it is in your head.
 - c. If you want to leave the wrong, you have to make the reason to leave it the most important thing. Find people who embody the characteristics you want to also embody. Sit with them. Learn from them.²⁷
 - d. Pornography: sensorial corruption, many usually do it in a place where they are alone. So move out of there, and go close to the people. Important to be in the suhba of good people. It becomes addictive, when we are with people.²⁸
 - e. Try not to fight something without a strategy. When we speak about enjoying faith, lots of problems will go away. Return to faith, have excitement in the faith. Experience the faith, and you will see how experientially fulfilling it is.
5. What should I do? My husband remarried and spends more time with the second wife, especially since they have now conceived a child. (ans: Dr. Rabiah)
 - a. The wife should not think that she is the most unfortunate person, after the husband takes another.
 - b. If you love your husband, then love him wholeheartedly. Replace your husband with Allah. This applies to husbands; they should make Allah their primary concern. Intend that their marriage is for Allah Most High. Their actions towards their wives and family will follow based on the strength of that intent.
 - c. Do not think that you are not beautiful, do not fall into depression of our material aspects. Understand that Allah's love is much, much bigger than the love of our husbands to us.
 6. I would like to understand the meaning of sabr? How should I maintain sabr when I am being physically abused? (ans.: Imam Afroz)
 - a. What is sabr? Sidi Ahmad Zarruq described it as: persevering with the decree of Allah Ta'ala in the manner that is pleasing to Allah Ta'ala. Sabar is not waiting for another day. A better word to understanding sabr is constancy.
 - b. An African proverb: When you pray, move your feet. Paraphrasing of a haidth: Do your bit, then rely on Allah Ta'ala. (a: The hadith of tying one's camel comes to mind.)

gradually dawn on mankind that sexual license produces utterly selfish men and women who lack the patience to have and care for families sufficient in size and psychic stability to maintain a people's survival. Women simply do not empathize with men's low fascination with sordid sexual images. It merely repulses them, and they find it pathetic. Time alone will tell how love or trust or marriage can exist between a woman and a man for who her respect is absolute zero. Where there is no respect, there is nothing any woman would want to regard as a man, making friendship and intimacy impossible." *Sea without shore*, 118.

²⁷ "Keep the company of the best of people and avoid that of the worst; sit with the virtuous and avoid the unjust. The Prophet has said, may blessings and peace be upon him: A man's religion is that of his intimate, so let each of you consider who to be intimate with." Imam Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad, translated by Mostafa Badawi, *The book of assistance*, (Liverpool: The Quilliam Press, n.d.), p90.

²⁸ "The one who associates closely with a particular group of people, inevitably ends up loving them, whether they are good or evil, and a man is with those he loves both in this world and in the hereafter." Imam Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad, translated by Mostafa Badawi, *The book of assistance*, (Liverpool: The Quilliam Press, n.d.), p90.

- c. Men, you do not have a right to oppress your women, even with polygamy. We are not there to control our wives. It is not becoming of a man to be violent to their women. In these times, it seems like the rights that Allah Ta'ala has given has gone hiding. So we have to bring them back.
 - d. Recommendation: always be principled. Always make sure that we do the right thing. Even though others may not do so.
 - e. Anyone who quotes the Qur'an when they beat their women, may want to remember what Saidina Ali r.a. said: "Do not quote the Qur'an all the way to Jahannam. Because it is tantamount to hiding the truth that Allah Ta'ala has sent."
 - f. Take constructive and affirmative steps, to remove the ills, and ensure that the children are the least affected.
 - g. 1.4 women die from domestic violence in Australia. It's a male problem not a men's problem. A man would not do this.
7. The effect of social media on marriages? How can we deal with it? (ans: Shaykha Safia)
- a. It is true that social media has a devastating effect on individuals and couples.
 - b. In a relationship, the recommendation is then to agree to do away with it and protect the relationship.
8. How do we deal with anger in a marriage? How was it in the Prophet's household? (ans: Shaykha Safia)
- a. Address anger in a proper way. We have to remember verse 3:134.
 - b. It is anger, not being angry. Our anger should be controlled. The person who can control one's anger, is a strong person. We have several ways of dealing with anger, to get ourselves out of that state. Among them is to seek refuge from the devil, to move away, to make ablution, and to change our positions.
 - c. Approach every issue in a state of calm. That's the best way to convince them and to win people over.
9. What is the opinion of the claim that there are more women than men? (ans: Imam Afroz)
- a. Polygamy, is conditional
 - b. It is actually makruh, the command is therefore to marry one. Based on Imam Al-Kharafi.
 - c. Spiritual base: Shaykh Hamza Yusuf speaks about the rights of men, and the khatib tells the men that there is no polygamy, etc. If men can start doing their duties towards the community, thus making sure that the wife works together with him in her respective sphere.
10. A woman finds out that the husband has ED, and the husband does not want not want to take action to address it? (ans: Imam Afroz)
- a. The husband should take professional advice. It is in his good will to get some advice.
 - b. Look at the food first,. Remove the food that may cause these problem.
 - c. We should reduce the amount of food.
 - d. Blood flow problem, ED. If you have thicken arteries, than it is connected to your food.
 - e. It is really about how we view the problem. See a problem as an opportunity.
 - f. Exercise.
 - g. Renewing the relationship, add some more flavour to the relationship. Rekindle the love between each other.

Chapter 4: The Solution

Session 1: Prevention & Solutions for Women by Dr Robi'ah K Hamzah

Dr Robi'ah started by asking about prevention. If we were to prevent something from happening, are we really

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going to solve the problem? With that she started her delivery. She wanted to focus on “how to develop and maintain a healthy marriage.” This would be better than prevention. (a: Prevention has the meaning that we are fire-fighting, but not going to the root of the problem, or problem-focused instead of being solution-focused.) Prevention is just one of the many solutions available. Before using it as a solution, we should explore other solutions first. Ask ourselves, before we implement any plan, what do we have to do?

We should at least ask ourselves:

- a) Who am I? Where are we going?
- b) What is my contribution to this relationship? What is expected of me? How can I be excellent?

Once we have this in mind and heart, we have the resolve and intent to become what we aspired to be, we will behave in that manner. (a: our attention will be focused on it.)

Every now and then, we should use these questions to reflect and realign ourselves to our “mission” and “goals” in life.

There’s a lot of food for to make the physical appearance beautiful. These include muscle building food, skin softening supplements, and vitamins. Have we ever asked ourselves what is the food for the heart and soul? For our Iman to grow, what do we need to feed it? How often do we look for opportunities to grow our iman? Do we even recognize what it looks, sounds, or feels like?

A woman has many roles. Though so, they must remember to not hurt anyone.

Check our internet. We have internet with the world, continuous connection at the touch of our fingers. Do we have “internet” with Allah, our Creator, our Benefactor, the One whom all creation relies on for their existence? Do we have a continuous connection with Allah?

So, the woman has several roles. All this can be summed into the role of the muslimah. How can we “free” this muslimah to be one that excels? If you want to build a muslimah, a woman who is solehah, see the following:

- ☐ The husband’s role – protect your family from the fires of Hell. (Allah Ta’ala has revealed in surah at-Tahrim, verse 66: 6 – “Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire fueled by people and stones, over which stand angels, stern and strong; angels who never disobey God’s commands to them, but do as they are ordered.”)
- ☐ The grandparent’s role – make sure that your children become better parents to their children

When we are asked about our vision, how do we respond? It’s likely many of us will say that we want to be rich, have a house, take care of our parents, or have a well-paying job. Think again. That’s not what Allah Ta’ala and His Messenger taught us. How many of us tell ourselves to be khalifahs, protectors of the religion, become people of value to others? For example, look at cooking. If cooking goes as far as the stomach, then it stops there. However, if we are cooking because of Allah Ta’ala, then when we cook, we will be including prayers, dzikr, and salawat, and we would be performing it most excellently. (a: compare the following intentions for cooking:

- ☐ I cook because I am hungry.
- ☐ I cook so that I can satisfy my hunger so that I can focus on my work
- ☐ I cook to satisfy my hunger and replenish my energy to help people who are hungry
- ☐ I cook to keep my back straight so that I can stay the night up in worship.
- ☐ I cook to satisfy the hunger of my family and to give strength to do good works and to give some to my neighbours, to build a bond between us.

Looking at the above intentions, which ones would you rather take? When you make intentions, have a high himmah (aspiration.)

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If you handle your marriage with wahyu (revelation), you can go anywhere. Your marriage will be safe.

Avoid bringing up what you may have done for others. It's not good and can be detrimental to the relationship. It will usually end in arguments. (a: One should only bring up matters of the past if it serves a mutual benefit. If it does not, it is better to stay silent.)

Dr Robi'ah tells us to hold fast to Surah at-Tahrimi, the 66th chapter in the Qur'an. To a marriage, it is like the rudder to a ship.

Determine what values you and your spouse want to uphold in your marriage and family.²⁹ Do this early, so that both parties learn how everyone views every value. This is important because a marriage is not the joining of two people together to build a family, but also a meeting of different worldviews. Ask: what is honesty to you? What is trust to you? What do you like most? If said 5 minutes every time I wake from sleep, is that ok with you? (a: You cannot learn all this at once, so treat your marriage as an exploration, an adventure to discover each other. As the saying goes, *bila tak kenal, maka tak cinta*. The more you know of your spouse, the more you will love them.)

All the 4 imams have said that the husband's duty includes washing and cooking for his wife and family. (a: Due to the changing norms in society where the time a man spends is mainly outside of the home, women would normally cook and run the household chores. This would be considered a charity on behalf of the wife.)

Dr Robi'ah tells the men: "If you want a wife like Siti Khadijah, Allah be pleased with her, then you have to be a man like Rasulullah, Allah bless him and grant him peace."

It's important for both parties to realise that they are in a partnership. Every partnership has a goal to which the partnership seeks to achieve. In a marriage, the goal is to seek the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, spreading one's progeny, protecting one from harm, etc. So, if these are the reasons for a marriage, then both parties have to learn how to maintain the relationship. Otherwise, the partnership will fail.

Once we have trust towards one another, the partnership flourishes. Once there is discord, any manner of partnership falls apart.

Develop yourself by equipping yourself with knowledge and skills that will maintain the relationship for the long term. Dr Robi'ah emphasized on emotional quotient (EQ) and spiritual quotient (SQ). The priority given to SQ and EQ should be 70%, while the remaining 30% is for intellectual quotient (IQ). Why? IQ cannot develop love. It's usually very mechanical and dry.

Another question to ask ourselves: why did we fall in love with our spouse? What is it about her/him that made me feel special? And, how is what I say, do and feel affecting my partner? Ask these questions and start building your love map. It is the map you will use to chart the course of your family to achieve its goals and to realign it if it strays off course. (a: Like a in a business, partners will agree on the mission and vision of the business and do whatever it takes to achieve these goals. They will reassess and review these goals every now and then (periodically), after achieving their goals or losing them.

Here are some of Dr Robi'ah parting advice:

- ☐ Isteri adalah harta terbaik bagi seorang suami. Isteri adalah amanah terbaik daripada Allah Ta'ala.
- ☐ Apabila kita membahagiakan orang lain, anda pasti akan bahagia.^{30, 31}

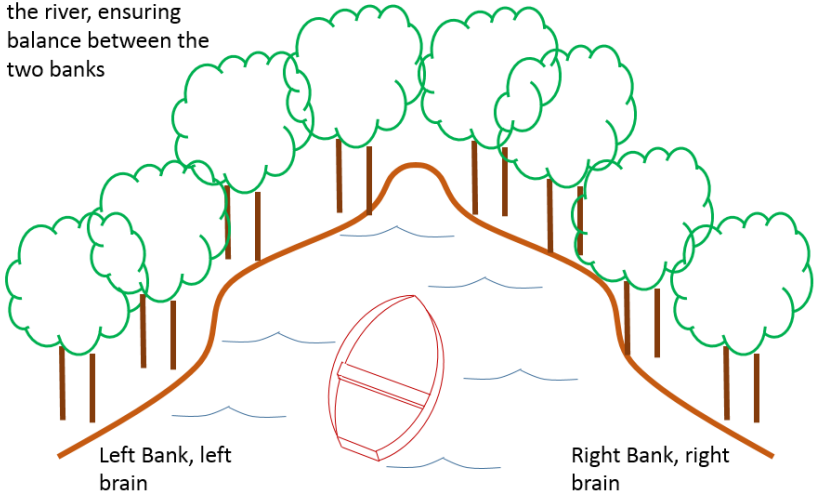
²⁹ "From the beginning of the relationship, good habits are crucial. Successful marriages are built and refined with the help of good habits established from the beginning.... Do not wait for a good marriage: unless you make it, it will never happen." Hedaya Hartford, *Islamic Marriage*, (Amman: Dar al-Fath, 2007), p124.

³⁰ The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, said: If someone meets his brother Muslim with that which Allah loves in

Session 2: Prevention & Solutions for Men by Imam Afroz Ali

Imam Afroz Ali started off by outlining his talk to 5 suggestions:

- Fulfil your responsibilities out of unconditional love
- Listen and empathise
- We need to consult. Do not tell or inform
- Your actions will speak louder than your fluff (words)
- Revitalise and romanticise

#	Suggestion	Deliberation
a)	Fulfil your responsibilities out of unconditional love	Invest in love. It's better than continuing to withdraw love from the marriage until there's nothing left. (a: Cultivate love with your spouse and family by doing that which they would love and appreciate. This builds gratitude between each other, which in turn leads to mercy.)
b)	Listen and empathise	<p>Normally, we quickly jump to conclusions, give advice and solve problems. This is because we are using too much of our left brain, the analytical and logical part of our brain. Instead, to listen and empathise, we have to use our right brain more. It is the side that deals with the feelings and abstract matters. Best is to be balanced, and navigate the river of our minds and our hearts. Let our emotions inform our logic.</p> <p>The sampan traverses the river, ensuring balance between the two banks</p>  <p>Picture 2 If life is a river and the river banks on each side are our right and left brains, the sampan (boat) is ourselves, we can see that we have to balance our boat in the middle of the river. Our boat may get pulled to the right or to the left. It is the job of the sampan conductor to manage it back to the middle of the river.</p>

order to please him, Allah will give him joy on the Day of Judgement. (Narrated by Al-Tabarani).

³¹ The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, said: The best of you are those of you who treat your wives best, and I treat my wives better than all of you. (Narrated by Ibn Majah, al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban)

c)	We need to consult. Do not tell or inform	When we consult, it means we include our wife into the discussion, seeking her opinions. It also means we need to forego our own judgement, especially if the wife's suggestion is the better opinion. Because there are differences between men & women, consultation allows a person to develop a trusting relationship with one another.
d)	Your actions will speak louder than your fluff (words)	Loving is doing things the beloved loves. The root of the word mawaddah – the essential nature of it, difference with hubb and isyq. Mawaddah arises from acting, it is something that arrives from doing, actions. Men have to strive to do more than needed. Don't just meet the requirements. Go beyond, be excellent towards your spouse.
e)	Your actions will speak louder than your fluff (words)	<p>We have to become vulnerable, it means affirming that we are human. The khatib is to lure people to listen to him and make a change.</p> <p>We have to say I love you and say why we say it.</p> <p>Imam challenged the men to come up with 10 reasons why we love our wives and tell them, tonight.</p> <p>Conscious work, we need to think outside the sphere, the box. To make each other feel chaste, inject joy into the marriage. Innovate into your marriage. Marriage is a 2 way street. The husband and wife have to invest into the relationship. The problem happens when people stop investing. Imam says that the women normally stop investing earlier than the men.</p>

Alhamdulillah, the notes have been completed on 1st May, 2017. May Allah forgive me and my parents. May Allah bless the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and give him peace. All praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.