**DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN OUR YOUTH**

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What is Intelligence? What is Wisdom? What is the difference between Intelligence and Wisdom? Why is it that highly intelligent and accomplished people often remain unhappy and dissatisfied in their personal and family life?

As parents and teachers, we often come across children who are very intelligent and do well in their studies, but are unable to do well socially with their classmates and friends. They end up with behavioral and emotional problems; consequently, failing academically as well.

Abdullah is 10 years old. He is very intelligent and capable of being a high achiever. For a while, he complains to his parents about being bullied in school. His parents ask him to ignore the bullies, stay away from them, and focus on himself and his school work. He keeps going to school. A while later, he is expelled from school for behavioral issues and hanging out with problem kids. The parents are totally surprised. What happened?

One common factor in all these situation is a lack of Emotional and Social Intelligence – a lack of emotional maturity and wisdom.

We are all born with some cognitive and behavioral skills. Our intelligence is measured based on how efficient some of these skills are – how good is the memory, how quickly we can figure out something, how quickly we can do some tasks, how quickly we can solve some puzzles, how correctly we can comprehend, draw conclusions, and act appropriately.

But, we are not born with emotional and social intelligence and wisdom. These must be taught and learned. What is Emotional Intelligence and Wisdom? It has been explained in many ways, but all of them have some essential common elements. Here are two examples.

Emotional Intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. “Emotional intelligence is the key to both personal and professional success.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. It also involves your perception of others: when you understand how they feel, this allows you to manage relationships more effectively.

The key elements in Emotional Intelligence are self-awareness of one’s own thought processes that lead to certain emotions and how they affect the person. Secondly, an awareness of others’ thought processes and emotions. And, last but not least, an ability to determine how best to handle and express these thoughts and emotions and, at the same time, acknowledge the thoughts and emotions of others.

In the pseudo-scientific world of psychology, the concept of Emotional Intelligence remains controversial. The term first appeared in 1960’s in a couple of papers published by Michael Beldoch1 and B. Leuner2. However, the term became widely known with the publication of Goleman's book: Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ3. To this date there remains substantial disagreement regarding the definition of Emotional Intelligence with respect to both terminology and operationalization.

Different models of Emotional Intelligence have been proposed over the last fifteen years, namely, the Ability mode, Mixed model and Trait model. These models have led to the development of various instruments to measure Emotional Intelligence. Once such instrument is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)4, which is based on a series of emotion-based problem-solving items.

The goal of this paper is not to review and critique the various theories and studies related to this topic, but to emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and maturity in the personal and interpersonal lives of people, and how it may lead to good emotional and mental health as well as peaceful interpersonal relationships.

In our daily life, we often experience difficulty in appropriately dealing with our emotions. Emotions are like energy. If they are not provided a safe outlet, they become destructive. Domestic abuse, marital issues, parent-child issues, ineffective communication, and various other emotional, behavioral and interpersonal issues emerge as a result of inappropriately handling emotions.

It is, therefore, crucial to develop emotional intelligence and maturity in ourselves and our children to promote healthy personal and interpersonal life. An emotionally intelligent person is highly probable to live a successful and peaceful life here as well as succeed in the life hereafter. The success in the life hereafter will largely depend upon how we carried out our interpersonal responsibilities.

Allah (subhanahu wa ta’ala) says in the holy Qur’an:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good words, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”5

“And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy.”6

Dealing with others with wisdom and good words without harmful arguments is not possible with developing Emotional Intelligence and Maturity.

This seminar is intended to explain what Emotional Intelligence is and how to facilitate its development. Briefly, here is a step by step process for the teachers.

1. Explain What are Emotions?
2. What triggers Emotions?
3. How do Emotions affect us?
4. Can we choose to feel or not to feel an Emotion
5. Can we control Emotions
6. What is Emotional Intelligence
7. Control your thinking – Manage your Emotions.

Digital PowerPoint slides will be made available to the participants in PDF format

**REFERENCES:**

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3. Goleman, D., (1995) Emotional Intelligence, New York, NY, England: Bantam Books, Inc.
4. Mayer, J.D.; Salovey, P.; Caruso, D.R.; Sitarenios, G. (2003). "Measuring emotional intelligence with the MSCEIT V2.0". Emotion. 3: 97–105.
5. The Holy Qur’an, 16:125.
6. The Holy Qur’an, 17:53