

MODULE 1

Class Title: How to have a beautiful mind- part 1 of 2

Aim of the lesson: To see how a beautiful mind is reflected in our interactions with others.

Category: Personal Development

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with activity and discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(Taooz) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem

(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

(Du'a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

Teacher: Can anybody tell me what we talked about last week?

Student: How to have a beautiful mind.

Teacher: Do you remember what we talked about exactly? How we can attain a beautiful mind?

Student: We talked about having pure and good thoughts.

Slides 2-4:

Teacher: Absolutely, we talked about having pure and good thoughts. Today we are going to continue this topic. In the last class we talked about how we should be purifying our minds in order to have good thoughts. Today we will discuss how those good thoughts are reflected in our behavior. How can you tell if somebody has a pure mind?

Student: The way they talk, the topics they choose.

Student: The way they carry themselves.

Teacher: Exactly. We can tell how a person thinks by the way they converse and the way they carry themselves.

Slide 5:

The Prophet (pbuh) once said, "A man may speak a good word without knowing its worth for which Allah records for him His good pleasure until the day he will need it. Another man may utter an evil word without realizing its importance for which Allah records for him His displeasure until the day that he would meet Him" [Tirmidhi]

Whatever we say reflects the way we think and that is what Allah (swt) is interested in. He wants to know what kind of thoughts we are carrying in our hearts and minds. When we say something

good we become closer to Allah (swt) and when we say something bad we move away from the Mercy of Allah (swt). That is the reason Prophet (pbuh) has put a lot of emphasis on the fact that we have to be very careful about what we say and the words we use

Slide 6:

The Prophet (pbuh) said “Modesty and restraint in speech are two affects of true faith while foul talk and rhetoric are two affects of hypocrisy”. [Hanbal]

So the Prophet (pbuh) promoted modesty and restrain which means to have control over your speech. On the other hand, rhetoric means finding excuses to argue with other people. That is not appreciated. Foul talk i.e. using bad language and bad words, is also looked down upon. We sometimes use bad words when joking, but we must remember that Allah (swt) does not like this at all. Even using bad words in a joke reflects on what you have inside you. Why is it necessary to call your friend by using a bad word, just because you want to show that you are very close to that person? Why do we use words like stupid, crazy and *pagal* {Urdu word for stupid}?

We want to give the impression that we are very comfortable with that person and that we can say just about anything to them, but is it really required? If somebody does not call you crazy does it mean that they are not really your friend? How do you truly feel when somebody calls you crazy?

Student: It feels really bad if someone says that you are crazy or calls you bad names.

Student: I don't really mind it because everyone says things like these.

Teacher: That is because you have become so used to it that it doesn't bother you anymore; if you are constantly exposed to a bad thing you become immune to it. Suppose there is a foul smell in this room; when you first enter you will instantly be aware of the smell, but if you keep sitting here for a while, you will eventually stop sensing it. The recognition will be gone and the reason is that you have become exposed to it for some time so you think it is normal.

Student: If you throw a frog into boiling water he will jump out but if you boil the water slowly he would not know.

Teacher: Exactly!

Slide 7:

Today we will do an interesting activity for which I need 3 volunteers.

[Three girls come up and are given pieces of paper with a skit for them to act out. The skit is about preparing for Eid and involves a mother and two daughters]

Teacher: Okay, they will act out this skit for us, and then I will give you these papers as well and divide you into groups so that you can think of ways to fix what went wrong between the characters and what they should and should not have said.

Mom (coming from outside): *Assalam Alaikum* {peace be upon you}. Girls, my dentist's appointment has been cancelled so I have some time before your father comes home. Let's make a list for eid shopping. Ramadan is almost a month away.

Amna (over enthusiastically): Oh, let's do that! In fact, let's plan for my friend, Mona's, sister's wedding too, which is 9 months away.

Zara (arrogantly): Oh, you're being silly (*rolling eyes*). One month is ample time. Let's start preparing a week before Ramadan. It is so much fun shopping in Ramadan, especially at night.

Amna (stubbornly): No! You are being silly. The sooner we start the better. The tailors take so long to make clothes and they are always driving you crazy.

Mother (trying to calm down Amna and Zara): Okay, relax. Let's just jot down what we need. We can decide....

Amna (interrupting): Oh yes! First, let me find out what Mona plans to wear on her wedding day; that will help me decide what I want to wear...

Zara (interrupting): No! No! No! You are crazy! The only thing you can think about is your silly friend's silly sister's silly wedding. I want to.....

Mother: Now hold on girls. If you'd let me finish I would have told you that we don't have much choice here.....

Zara (interrupting): Oh but....

Mother (calmly): Let me finish first. I want you girls to not only help me prepare a list of clothes and stuff that you want for eid, but also a list of the supplies we need for Ramadan and the family dinner we have on the first day of Eid.

Zara (giving in unwillingly): Oh, okay.

Amna: Oh, all that boring work. Why can't you do it yourself?

Mother: Because I want you to be a part of it. Doing things together can be fun.

Amna (excitedly): Okay, but I really do want to plan for Mona's sister's wedding.....

Zara (getting hyper): You're stupid! Can't you think of anything else!!!!

Mother (getting annoyed): Stop it! If you keep fighting we won't get anywhere. Can one of you please go and get a pen and paper.....

Amna (waiting impatiently to interrupt): Oh and I also....

Mother (ignoring Amna's interruption and continues): And both of you sit and write down the things you need for yourself. (Looking at Amna) Yes Amna, what were you saying?

Amna: What about the *fitra* {*sadaqah* of *Eid-ul-Fitr*} bags we always give away before Eid? Should I make a list of what to put in those bags?

Zara (rudely): No! We don't need to do that now, it's too far away! We can do that in the last week of Ramadan! That would be fun!

Amna (indignantly): I don't agree with you. It should be done now.

Zara: That won't be fun. I say lets

Amna: No...

Mother (interrupting Amna): Okay, enough for now! We just wasted thirty minutes arguing. We'll have to do this some other time. I need to go prepare dinner. Your father will be here any minute. And the next time I hope the two of you will act mature and try to listen to each other's ideas. Time's up now. Just go and do your homework, I don't want to see any of you in front of the television.

Amna and Zara (to each other): It's all your fault!

Slide 8:

Teacher: Okay, *alhamdulillah* very good. Now, divide yourselves into groups of three (or more depending on the size of the class). Read the whole thing again and try to fix it and then each group will tell the class about how the situation can be rectified, what the characters should not have said and what they could say.

[The students discussed the skit and made changes and each group acted out the corrected play. The teacher asked each group to point out mistakes and the corrections they had made. Only the answers are recorded here]

Teacher: What things did you feel were not correct in the last scenario, and what did you do about them?

Group 1: We took out the bad words and also the dialogues that conveyed arrogance and annoyance and we took out the constant interruptions.

Group 2: Firstly, when the mother comes home, Amna is so excited that she does not even remember to say *salam* {greeting}. Secondly, Zara is being too hyper, rude and arrogant and she is continuously calling Amna names like stupid and crazy and mocking her for being obsessed with things. Meanwhile, Amna is being selfish. She does not care about helping her mother with the Ramadan or Eid preparations; all she wants to do is make preparations for Mona's sister's

wedding. Mother is speaking calmly, but Zara, on the other hand, is continually criticizing her sister. Amna also criticizes the tailors without knowing what they go through, as they have many other orders. Also, she keeps interrupting others. Zara is reluctant about helping her mother with the Eid party and all Amna is thinking about is her friend's wedding. She does not want to help and tells her mum to do it herself because it will be boring.

Teacher: *Alhamdulillah*. Well done!

Slide 9:

Now let's learn to handle such situations. Let's see what we should do in order to handle arguments.

Slide 10:

During a discussion, sometimes you agree with what is going on and, if you are agreeing with something, you should genuinely seek to find points of agreement. You should not just agree for the sake of agreement but be genuine and honest with yourself. Don't agree for the sake of agreeing, but be open to the other people's point of views. In this scenario, Amna was constantly talking about her friend's sister's wedding, even though nobody else was interested in it, but it was something very close to her heart, so Zara should've tried to understand that it is very important for her.

Slides 11 and 12:

If you are having a disagreement about something and you feel that you are saying the right thing then stick to your point of view in a respectable manner; you don't need to argue about it. If you don't know how to disagree, you do not have a beautiful mind because people do disagree, even people with beautiful minds disagree with each other on certain points and there is nothing wrong with that because every individual has their own preferences and their own likes and dislikes. At times, you have to put your foot down and disagree, but without being offensive.

Also, always avoid name-calling; name-calling is something that should always be avoided. Always remember that there can be many ways of interpreting a certain line of argument. Everyone has their own point of view and their own way of thinking. The best thing to do is to try and understand what the other person is trying to say.

Slides 13 and 14:

It is also important to listen to other people. A good listener shows that he/she is listening to the speaker, respects the speaker, shows genuine interest in what is being said and values what is heard and shows it. You need to listen to other people very carefully in order to understand their point of view. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Listening gives you new ideas, so listen carefully and attentively. Also, impatience is offensive to the speaker.

Slides 15 and 16:

There was a lot of interruption in the skit and interrupting is not a good habit at all. Sometimes you do need to interrupt other people, but there are tactful ways of doing so. Let's suppose that you go to a supermarket and see a lady who meets somebody and starts talking to them. You realize that a shampoo bottle is leaking in her trolley. Will you wait for her to finish talking before you tell her, by which time all the shampoo will be gone? No! You will have to interrupt her, but there are ways of interrupting.

You will have to go up to her and say, "*Assalam Alaikum*. So sorry for interrupting but there is this problem."

Sometimes you should wait. You have to judge according to the situation. If the situation wants you to take action then you take action immediately. In cases of emergency you have to act fast, otherwise you wait. I am sure this is something we all learn in school: raising our hand in order to interrupt. There are all kinds of signals that you can use for interruptions.

So I hope that from now on, *inshaAllah*, you will handle discussions, agreements and disagreements in a more amicable and cordial manner.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*