Assalamu’alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh

Pretty much everything I wanted to say had already been said, so..this is gonna be awkward but insha Allahu ta’ala what I’m gonna be share with you are some very basic things about relationships within the family. And one of the thing that you might find peculiar in these 20-ish or so minutes we spending together, is that I’m not gonna be speaking about some very high ideals. I’m gonna talking about some very basic things. That I personally feel, actually I’m really convinced, our plaguing all family, muslim or non, and muslim btw are no exception to the problems of family in the modern times. So the problems that non muslims are facing in their family, we’re not too far behind. And to assume that we are somehow immune of the problems of the modern world, is a deception.

Anyhow, one of the first things I wanted to talk to you folks about is about education. What nowadays we consider a good education and why do people get an education to begin with. People get an education nowadays to get a good carrier, that’s probably the number one reason you’re going to school, or you’re sending your children to school or plan to send your children to school, that eventually they will have a good way of making money for themselves, a carrier, a meaningful carrier. The second reason why people pursue an education is to get credential. It’s kind of a show of respect, that I went to college, I graduated, I have a degree. It’s kind of a show of unrespectable member of society. When you’re not able to finish your high school, or diploma, or go to college or whatever else, it’s almost a disgrace in most of the society. Especially in the society where the parent did not have such an opportunity, like they were farmers, or taxi drivers or whatever else. They dream that their child when he grows up or she grows up, they will definitely get an education. So the 2 fundamental reasons for which people pursue an education nowadays, is either to get a carrier, or to gain some respect in society. These are the 2 reasons that are shared by all people. This is not a muslim thing, this is across the world. Go on and ask somebody why do they pursue an education in Australia, and china or in Pakistan and they will tell you the same thing.

But what I wanted to add to this discussion and what this had to do with family and relationship is that we’re living in strange times, where you can have a Phd in biochemistry and you can have a doctor in nuclear physic or history or political science..and the guy does not know how to be a good husband! The guy has no clue how to be a neighbor. He has no idea how to be a good son. Or a good father for that matter. He has no clue. I would consider it a basic education. To be a decent son, a decent father, a decent neighbor, basically a decent human being, a decent husband. These are the basic things. But people have pursued and we’ve defined for ourselves education and other things and **when it comes to the very basic of being a decent member of society and a decent member of your family, we are almost completely ignorant.** And a lot of times people that are completely ignorant may even be the extremely knowledgeable in religion. This is the crazy one. The religion that came to make you a decent person, the religion that came to make you respectable human being, that gives you your dignity back, people have knowledge of this religion, they’re attending courses, seminars, listening to speeches, memorizing surahs, studying tafseer, and yet they don't the ware with all on how to talk to their wife or talk to their mother. They don't know how to carry a conversation on the phone. They lose their temper all too easily. subhanAllah, it’s incredible. It’s really ironic. So what I wanted to focus on are some very basic things. Subhanallah, it’s a give from Allah to me, I’m grateful, eternally grateful, that I have had the opportunity to see over a hundred and fifty muslim comunitties all over the US. Masjid to masjid to masjid. Community to community to community. And you know what I see? I see the same thing. I see the same exact mistake being repeated by us, over and over and over again. And you know who comes to me all the time and says “Can you talk to my children?” Parents of teenagers. Parents of teenagers. “You know, my son, he just doesn’t listen to me anymore. Can you talk to him?” Like I have some prescription drug that I carry with me. Or you what it is, the son comes over and I’m gonna be like “fuuhh…” and all of sudden he’ll be this amazing kid. “But if you just talk to him…” “No no no..what if YOU talk to him…and where were you when there were times to talk to him?” Let me tell you something about, I’m gonna talk about parents first, a little bit, then I’ll talk about couple and that’s the only time we have. Two things. To kind of fundamentals relationships, your relationship with your children and your relationship with your spouse. So we’ll talk about some very basic things in regards to both.

When your children are little, when they little, when they were 5/6/7/2/3/4, you know what the most important thing for them is? I have 5 of those, I could tell you. **The most important thing for them is your approval.** They wanna make you proud, man. They wanna show you what they did.

I’ll be on an important work phone call, and my son, my 2 years old son would come over, “Aba! Aba! Aba!” Like ok, “Hold on” “What is it?” “Ehe…” (laughs) nothing… I’ll go back on the phone and he’ll start calling me again I’ll be like “Ok ok ok..what is it?” “I will show you something.” “What do you want to show me?” (jump in the place) That is it! (Laughs) but you know what I’m supposed to do? “Oh my God! That’s awesome!! Do it again!!..” “I’ll call you back” (Laughs). You’re supposed to appreciate what children do, they live for that. They desire that more than anything else. I have 3 girls, and you know different between girls and boys? Boy can’t sit still and Girls can’t stop this. Right? So I pick my girls up from school, one from first grade and one from 3rd grade, I pick them up from school, it’s a 25 minutes ride back home and what are they doing the whole way? “You know what happen today in class? We colored the dinosaurs and we did this and that and I was coloring with purple but then I decided to put in some green…” And they’re going on and on and on and they cannot help themselves. And they cannot stop and I have to pay attention and listen. I have to listen and say “ooh what about blue?” “No I did only a little bit blue.” Right? I have to pay attention. And you know why I’m saying all of this? Just one more story on the side, just to wake you up a little. I share this story all the time. My eldest daughter, Husna, when she was younger she was really into finger painting. Just dip her hands and paint and just make a big all mess. And she brings this big cardboard to me and it’s a big blob of blue, I don’t see anything. And she says, “Aba! Look what I made!” and I’m sit in there and going “That’s awesome! A mountain!” and she says, “No, it’s mama!” and I was like “ooh..Don’t tell mama.” But the point I’m trying to make is they live for your approval. They live for it. But those of you that have children that are teenagers, do they get in the car when you pick them up from school and they can’t stop telling you what happened, does that happen? “Oh you know what happened in the school today, my teacher said this and that and the other and I got an A on my paper..” Nope, they’re quite. And you’re trying to ask “How was you day?” “It was okay.” “So what you do?” “Something” “Where you going today?” “Somewhere”. They don’t talk. Getting them to talk is like interrogation at a police station. And they’re not saying anything to you. And while you’re trying to ask them question, they’re texting their friends, “My Dad is asking too many questions today. I don’t know what’s up. Did you tell him something?” what I’m trying to get at is very simple. At a younger age, your children crave your attention. And when they got older, you will crave their attention. But if you don’t give them attention when they they’re tiny, when they come to you with their toys and you say, “Go to your room! I’m watching the news!” “The game is on, could you take him, please?” “Come on, I had a long day at work. I don’t want to deal with this right now.” “I have friends over, it’s a embarrassing, go to sleep! Go get out of here.” When you have this attitude towards your children, like they’re an obstacle in your path, your job was at work, when you come home you’re on vacation..No buddy! Your job began when you came home. That’s your job. What you did over there just to fulfill your real job at home. Be a father! I’m talking to the man here. Be a father, spend time with your children. They’re not just there so you put them up in school, and you come home from work and just wanna go to sleep, you don’t wanna bother with anybody, you don’t wanna talk to them, and actually the easiest way to not talk to them is to get them an ipod touch and iphone, and get them a computer, a laptop in their own room with high speed internet so you don’t even have to look at their face. They could just be on their room all day, facebook-ing, finding themselves a new set of parents online.

Seriously.. Be a father! Be a mother! Don’t replace your motherhood and your fatherhood with these things because if you do, when they become independent, you know what happens to most parents? To most of you, your children, they only see you as a bunch of elders walking around. And the only time they come and talk to you, “Dad, can I have 5 bucks?” Actually nobody asks for 5 bucks anymore, right? It’s 20’s nowadays? And I know youth, they haven’t seen money that small, they don’t know 5’s. “Can I have 20 dollars?” “Can I go to the mall?” “Can you drop me off?” “Can I go over my friend’s house?” Can I do this, can I do that, can I do the other..when they want something, they come to you. Otherwise, you don’t see them. And when they got to certain age, when they are old enough to make they own a little bit of money, guess what? You’re not gonna see them at all. ‘Cause your cash register is no longer relevant. That’s no longer relevant. If this is a relationship you are setting yourself up for, you’re headed for destruction. We gotta change this now. And the way to change it, and it’s gonna be hard for a lot of you to implement this, **but we have to be friends with our children. We have to be their best friends. They should enjoy hanging out with us the most, the parents. The parent should not be a nuisance. The parent should be a joy to children. They should be a joy to them.**

And being a good parent doesn't mean you get them toys, and you got them nice things and you nice cloths. That’s all there, that’s fine and dandy. **But the most important thing, you give them right now, is your time.** Especially in this society where so many things are pulling away at their time. And the thing you’re not able to give them, you can give them their own room, you can give them money, you can give them allowance, you can give them cloths, but you don't give them time. **And when you don’t give them time, they separate themselves mentally from you.** They cut themselves off. They learn to become independent in an early age. And independent in this society really means alienated. It doesn’t mean just independent.

This is a serious matter on how to raise our children. We have to openly communicate with them. And that’s the other thing. And part of the communication, only one more thing about parent before I go to marriage, just one more basic thing about parenting in this society. You know there’s certain things in islam that are absolutely unacceptable. They’re taboo, they’re forbidden, they’re haram, they’re evil…But our children see it everyday. They see this stuff everyday. You can’t even avoid it. They’re looking out their window and they see a billboard. You know.. They just watching cartoon and an ad comes on. they see this stuff. And when you put, most of you, put them in school, and I don’t even say an Islamic school are safe, because most kids in the Islamic school are watching the same show the kids at the public school are watching. And they’re talking about it at the school too. Let’s face a reality for a moment. They are exposed to a lot of stuffs. They really are. So the first time your daughter comes home and start to talking about some, you know, Disney boy, that they’re pushing on the media, or some girl that sing a lot of songs and these are the filthy role models. Filthy. They are worse than the animals. I’d rather, my children watch like puppet animals than watch this people. ‘Cause they behave worse than animal, Wallahi. This the “Hannah Montana of the world”, are the filth of the planet. They really are. And I have seen this. Little girl, muslim girl with a hijab on, going to Islamic school with a Hannah Montanah bookbag. What is wrong with you, parents? What happen to you? This is unacceptable.

But once your children brings something like that up, they say something like that. They say something that completely unacceptable for you. What happens to most of the parents? “This is wrong! You don’t talk about this thing. Astagifirullah! Say Astagfirullah!” “ Fine, I guess you don’t want to talk about it. I’ll just talk to my friends about it then.” And you know what you just did? You just basically told them, if you have something of this nature, the controversial nature, don’t talk to me about it, but does that mean they won’t talk about it at all? They will talk to someone, and who it is gonna be? Their friends. Most of the time, their non muslim friends. From whom they will get non muslim kinds of advice. You, close the door to communication. And me, being from the back ground I am, my ancient history is afghan, so I have a hot temper. So my daughter came home one day, pre-school, my daughter was in pre-school. But we have this, we are very possessive to our daughters, you know. So she goes and says “You know, Ahmad was so funny in class today” I was like, “Who’s Ahmad?!?” And my wife says to me, “Calm down, let me talk to her. You go away, you can’t handle this.” And she talks to her..”It was nothing, he was just fell off the chair, she was thinking it was funny, it’s very innocent.” But if she hears, “My Dad really get upset when he hear the name Ahmad or syarif, or whatever, so I better not bring it up. I better not tell my parents what happen at school then I’ve shut the door of communication. I’ve made that mistake. And a lot of parents made that mistake and they are paying the price now and listening to this and shedding tears cause they remembering the mistake they made. They really are.

But lets switch gear, quickly insha Allahu ta’ala. And talk a little bit about marriage; the other fundamental, the core component of the healthy society. We cannot talk about dakwah, we cannot talk about establishing a harmony in Islamic society until we have the harmony inside the household. But our households are the places of the chaos. How are we talking about the higher ideals in dakwah when our homes are broken? Husband and wife are arguing every day. Sarcasm inside the house. Nasty commentary towards each other. “You know you not really that pretty” “Oh you’re no Yusuf AS yourself. You don't see me cutting my hands.” Unnecessary sarcasm. Hurtful commentary towards each other. Hurtful words toward each other. And you know, a lot of times you know exactly what’s gonna annoy your wife. And you do it anyway. And a lot of times the woman they know exactly what’s gonna get under his skin. And they’ll say it anyway. Just to see what happens. Right? And who’s watching all of this? While you’re doing this to each other? These word games you play with each other and this battle inside the house, who’s watching, who’s the real victim? The children. The children are learning this behavior. What kind of parents are they gonna be when they grow up? There’s no sense of forgiveness inside the marriage. you know, the muslim men, a lot of you who work in a public sphere, in a corporate or whatever else, you’ll go to work, your secretary highly inappropriately dressed, just smiling at you “How is it going, Mohammed? How was your day?” and you’re like, “It was pretty good, you know..” You come home, the wife at the house “I don’t wanna talk about it I had a long day at work.” This is what we’re doing inside our homes. Ruining our own relationship with our spouses. When was the last time, let me ask the brothers, I’m not at the position to speak on behalf of the sisters cause I’m not one. They should be getting advice from sisters. But let me talk to you and get on your case for a minute, on my own. When was the last time you got her a gift, Man? When was the last time you took her out the bazaar over there, and she picks up, and you’re like “No no no put that back” When was the last time you got here something? Without her asking? When was the last time you hang out with her? Just took her out for ice cream for no reason. They don’t ask for much, they also just ask for your time. They only ask for your time.

Wallahi they are sister who complains to me and I couldn’t believe my ears. They complain to me that they haven’t seen their husband forever because when they come home, they sit on the computer and just youtube away the whole night. And they haven’t seen they’re crying. It’s like we’re not even married anymore. Get off of the computer, man! You have a wife, you have a children to deal with. That’s your priority. What are you sitting there listening to Islamic lecture, what islam is that? You know I was late to this lecture. I was supposed to be here on 10 o’clock, I got here on 10.25, you know why? I was taking the, you know how crazy the elevator in the marriot? I was at that cus I have to deliver the burgers to my kids. How am I gonna come here and give a lecture about the relationship with family and my kids are hungry? “It’s all like, I’ll be late. I’ll deliver the burgers first” We have to be courteous to our family. We have to extend, we have to be the best to them. The messenger SAW says “Khairukum li ahlihi. Wa anna khairumminkum li ahlihi”. The best of you are the one who’s best to their family. Who can actually claimed ‘I’m my best self to the family”? You guys are so much nicer to your friends! So much nicer to your coworkers! So much more courteous to the police officer who pulls you over. But you cannot extend that kind of courtesy to your mother, you can’t talk to her for 10 extra minutes, the moment she starts getting a little annoying and starts telling you all the thing you don’t do right, you say “I gotta go, I got another phone call. Can’t talk right now.” Listen to her! Sit there and listen to her! This is what you’re supposed to do. That’s your job. She didn’t do that with you “I can’t hear your crying right now, go on to the other room, shut it.” You know? “Deal with it yourself”. Your mother carried you, she took care of you.

We have to be the best to our spouses, we have to be the best to our parents. These are the fundamentals in the relationship. And by the way all the relationship get fixed if this two are fixed. And these two, the only way they’ll be fixed, if the relationship with Allah is fixed. So if you have marriage problems and parental problems, you know what the real problem is? **Taqwa and Iman**. You’re not grateful enough.Your spouses are the gift from Allah to you. And to be ungrateful to a gift is to be ungrateful to Allah SWT. Your parents are the gift of Allah to you. So if you don’t have a good relationship with them, who are you actually being ungrateful to? Think about that! SubhanAllah!

I urge you, seriously, start having dinner with the family. Don’t eat by yourself. Don’t eat at the separate time, make a time. I’m not demanding to much from you at all. Seriously make small commitments. Set a time in the day where the whole family gets together and praise together. And it’s a set time. Just like there’s a set time for the TV show, there’s a set time for homework, and the set time for you to get back from the work, there’s a set time to pray maghrib together. There’s a set time to pray Isha. Just one pray at least. You get together with the family and you pray together. That, in it of itself is a huge, it’s enormous. You can at least to this. This much. Just start with this. Inside the house. And you’ll begin to see a better relationship with your wife and your children.

The final comment I wanted to make for you insha Allahu ta’ala, is about balance. And this is a long discussion I’ll open it but I’ll leave you to think about it. One time the messenger SAW was asked about ‘what islam is’. ‘What is this deen’. So he has to give a brief answer. He has to sum up the entire religion in very brief language. And he chose this ayat from suratun nisa. (qs.4:58) There’s one ayat, which summarizes the entire deen. And what ayat is this? “Inna Allaha ya/murukum an tu-addooal-amanati ila ahliha..” It is no doubt that Allah who commands you to fulfill the rights of people, the trust that have been given to you to give them back in full, to those who deserve them. People have a right over you, people are having trusted you for something and you should fulfill it completely, that is what Allah commands you. “…wa-itha hakamtumbayna annasi an tahkumoo bilAAadl” And whenever you make decision between people, make those decisions with justice. Make them with justice. And I won’t even go through the rest of the ayat, let me tell you something. Especially to the men, those who are responsible, the shepherd of the household. You are pulled in a different directions. The deen is pulling you, your job is pulling you, your wife is pulling you, your children are pulling you, your parents are pulling you. You have all these obligations to all these different things. And sometimes your mother asks you to do something, which will be a violation of your wife’s rights. And your wife will ask you to do something that will be a violation of your mother’s rights. And there’s a battle going on. And who’s stuck in the middle? Who’s taking the beating? On one phone call with wife, the other with the mother, who’s in the middle? The husband. And a lot of times, what ends up happening is either he’s sides this way or he’s sides that way. What should we have to be? We have to be just (adil). We have to be the nicest, the kindest to our parents but we cannot lose the side of justice. You don’t have the right to violate the rights of your wife. Allah didn’t give you that right. No, you cannot fulfill somebody else’s obligation at the expands of somebody else’s. You can’t do that. Your children have a right over you. Nothing can take that away. You’ll be answerable to Allah for not fulfilling the rights of your children. You have a obligations to your spouse, you have an obligations to your parent. And each of them are separates fear. Don’t confuse them with each other. You have a tough job! You sign up for it! You’re the one who want to get married! You signed up for it already. You better learn to deal with it! This is the balance you have to establish. And Wallahi IF you don’t establish balance in your house, there will be chaos. There will be fighting all the time. There will be fighting between in laws, and children, and husband and wife and all kind of craziness in your home, because you haven’t learn how to balance yet. You haven’t learned how to fulfill your obligation yet.

And the role of the spouses, the wife is to help their husband find the balance. Not just to fulfill their agenda because the will answerable to Allah as well. They’re supposed to support their husband and help them. Stop being sarcastic towards each other. Stop complaining about each other, just do your part! Don’t expect from your wife, don’t expect from your husband, just expect from Allah! Just do what you’re supposed to do! What you deserve, will come from Allah, it will not come from your spouse. Get over it! Stop whining and stop complaining! The moment you start complaining, you are already not taking in to consideration all the good things Allah has given you.

And this is what I conclude with. How many things Allah has given us that we should be grateful for? How many things has Allah given us that we should be grateful for**? We can’t count**. We can’t even count one ni’mat. If you were try to count one ni’mat of Allah, one blessing of Allah, you would not be able to incompose it. Allah’s favors are countless upon us. So if you find the time to complain, that means you didn’t have enough time to thank Allah for so many things, that you have enough times to complain about things. This is the height of ingratitude, when someone’s start to complaining. Quit complaining. If you have problems, learn to be grateful to Allah first and have sabr. **The key to sabr is to being grateful to Allah. And if you don’t have patience, it means you ‘re not grateful enough. Really, if you don’t have patience, the secret is, you’re not grateful to Allah enough**. You open up the fridge, there are 10 different kind of soda, you say, “Where is the orange juice?” “God! I told you to get it!” you’re not grateful enough to what you have in front of you. We have to learn to be grateful. We have to teach our children gratitude, we have to teach them to be grateful for what Allah has given to them. We have to make them children that are used to giving, not getting. We’re making them consumers! We’re making them zombies, “Get me this, get me that, get me this, get me that!” If they’re like this one them children, what are they gonna be like when they are adults? How is it a shock then that they’re gonna be fighting over the inheritance when they get older? You take them to “Toy’s R us” yourself so they can cry about over the 2 millions worth of merchandise that you still left behind after you left the store. We’re doing that to our own children. These are not high and the holy things, these are basics that form the foundation of healthy relationship. Let’s educate each other about them. Let’s make a serious commitment to raise the right kind of family. Let’s fix ourselves. Let’s spend time with our family together. Let’s make that our first priority. Wallahi if the family is good, the community is okay. And all of the problems you see in the community, you know, they’re not the community problems. They start with the family problems. Let’s fix those first.

May Allah SWT make us of those who are able to save themselves and their family from the hellfire

May Allah SWT make us of those who are able to be patient, the most patient with their own family, be the most merciful to their own family, the most forgiving to their own family, and

May Allah SWT make us of those who are able to reconnect the bonds that have been cut because of the fighting, the disputes, the arguments…May we become those who make the call back and says “You know what? No more silence. I’m gonna call my dad back. So what if we had a fight six months ago? I’ll call him back today after this conference. At least that’s one promise I make to Allah, I will reconnect that relationship.” “I will go apologize to my wife for what I said.” “I’ll go apologize to my husband for what I did.” “I will fix my self now because this is what I owe to Allah SWT”

May Allah make us of those people, may Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings.

Barakallahuli walakum

Assalamu’alaikum wr wb