

With All My Heart...

**Reflections, Poems, and Muslim Addiction
Recovery Guidelines Project**

From a Tawqwa Seminary Student

TZK 101 / Summer, 2025
Diseases of the Heart and Their Cures

Based upon the Text
“Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth” by Imam Ibn Qudamah al-
Maqdisi and the lectures from Shaykh Chad Earl

Anya Breen

Anya Breen
TZK 101
Week One Reflection

On a hot summer day in June 2022, I sat in my backyard with a glass of wine in my hand. I stared at my hand and screamed, “It's me!” That was the moment I realized all the traumatic things that ever happened to me, or were happening to me that summer, had one common denominator, ME!

I always thought that I was a “good person.” I was a practicing Italian/American Catholic. I practiced being Italian more than being Catholic. I drank too much, I ate too much, I was loud, and I joined in “tawkin' smack” about people whenever I could. Also, I was always concerned with money, and feared poverty as I continued to overspend. As far as being Catholic – well that was just plain guilt, and I never felt forgiveness. So like many, I'd go to Church and just keep drinking away the fear of God.

I experienced a very dangerous domestic situation that June 2022, and I had no one to go to. I did not feel safe with any family members. So, and I don't know why I did this, I called the mother of my Muslim music students. I said, “This is Annie, I need to talk to you, and it has nothing to do with music lessons.” That was the day my journey into Islam and the Path to truly knowing God, Allah (S.W.T.), began! Alhamdulillah!

My friend and I have been speaking every morning for the past 3 years and discuss books we are reading. The books in which we really get absorbed deal with purification of the heart. I remember struggling so in the beginning and being told by one the brothers that I needed to have more faith, and that my heart needed to be polished. I didn't know what he meant. But, only by going through each struggle with an inner drive toward Allah (S.W.T.), and remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), did I start to experience actual joy, blessings and relief following each struggle, and a sense of Allah's (S.W.T.) closeness and ever watchfulness and guidance over me.

When I first converted, the thought of trying to find the time to pray, and not have it affect my work day, worried me. Now I worry that my work day won't affect my time to pray – and five daily prayers is no longer enough for me! Alhamdulillah! The more I pray and am in active remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), the more protection I have against myself and the whispers of Shaytan. Insha'Allah! Alhamdulillah!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Anya Breen
8/22/2025

TZK 101- The Heart Week Two Reflection

The Art of Worship – the meaning of your existence in relationship to your creator – is to worship with your heart. The heart should motivate the body, but if needed, practice “as if” we are not perfect.

I am a music teacher and not unfamiliar with the discipline of “practice.” But one can practice a piece, such as Beethoven's Fur Elise, and have all the correct notes, fingering, phrasing, timing – but with no “heart”, one is simply performing mechanics. The heart must be engaged in order to express the true purpose of the composition. If one doesn't understand the history of the composer and his affections for Eloise, the music has no “art” - no expression of the meaning of human existence – no “heart.”

The same is with one's spiritual life. One can perform the actions of prayer, but with no understanding of the meaning behind every action, every syllable and every word, the mind is moving the body with no understandable reason. Once knowledge is obtained, the mind now has a reason for the actions and the heart becomes engaged receiving what it has been yearning for – the joy of receiving love, mercy, guidance, and insights from its creator. The prayer becomes pleasing to Allah (S.W.T.) and one receives blessings and benefits and protection.

Sometimes, even though one has had studies for knowledge and understanding, there is still something blocking the elevation of the spiritual act of worship. The mind now has understanding, but the heart is not benefiting because it is covered, veiled, coated, tarnished by character defects that are not pleasing our creator. We all have them, character flaws, and Shaytan will take these incorrect behaviors and habits and weaknesses and use them to pull you away from your good deeds, until the act of not praying feels normal and you've lost your inner desire to pray. The heart is our natural motivator to goodness – ignore your heart, and you will not care anymore.

Anyone who has had to help Mom polish the silver, knows that polishing is hard work and takes time and patience. One has to keep rubbing over and over and over. Finally, you see the shine and you feel happy! But then two weeks later, you look again and the silver pot you worked so hard on is tarnished again. Then one realizes that daily touch ups were required to keep the shine. Thusly with ones heart, constant practice, patience, diligence will keep the Pathway between your heart and your Creator clear!

One can play a beautiful piano composition with all the correct notes and nuances, but if one is performing on an untuned piano, the music will most unpleasant. The same is for our spiritual life – mind, soul, body. We need to take care of our bodies and not let undesirable distractions and obsessions pull us “out of tune.” We were born with desires to help us. For example, the desire to want to eat, or else we'd starve. But when those desires take on an unholy preoccupation – we need to correct them. We want all our efforts to be pleasing to Allah (S.W.T.) on every level of our being.

Keep your intentions sincere, even if you're not “in tune,” remembering that addiction and

desires are also from Allah (S.W.T.) and our struggles remind us to reach out to him even more – the struggles handled gracefully are blessings themselves! The pain of addiction and desires is what the body feels – but the mercy and blessings for one's efforts through the pain will come from Allah (S.W.T.) - and eventually one is released and relieved of the suffering, Insha Allah. The joy from that release drives an addict to “keep on going” and not give up the spiritual life.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of a pure and open heart for guidance in the right way. Just as one learned to love to polish silver or practice the piano, or at least act “as if” you love it until you really do, one must learn to love the act of worshiping Allah (S.W.T.) in order to be on the enlightened path to receiving Allah's (S.W.T.) love, blessing, and mercy.

Be mindful to be moderate in your efforts as not to lose heart. Just as the musician must rest her muscles, take care not to be so excessive in your discipline that you lose the incentive to continue on the Right Path. This is a religion of ease.

Also, on a humorous note, I ask my adult son once why he was so upset with me. He responded, “You weren't strict enough with me as a child.” Go figure! Alhamdulillah.

“Teach your children well.”

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young

To conclude, Allah (S.W.T.) has the power to heal, restore, and mend broken hearts. One must turn to Allah (S.W.T.) with trust. Alhamdulillah.

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Anya Breen
8/29/2025

TZK 101 – The Heart Week Three Reflection and Additional Poem

Food-disease, from desires of the stomach, is when food takes on an importance, other than nutrition, that makes one obsessive about food to the point of a distraction that pulls the self away from Allah (S.W.T.)

Apples are good for you, but eating the apple did not work out so well for Adam (A.S.) Adam (A.S.) was deceived into thinking consumption of the apple would bring him immortality and authority over himself. Through Shaytan's trickery, the apple became something other than nutrition. It became disobedience and was the igniter of the human disease of desire, and disobedience to Our Creator.

For myself, the food-disease began when I was a child... a skinny little child who had no idea she was headed for a life-long struggle with eating-disorder. It began on my 7th birthday when relatives, unknowingly, brought a birthday cake for my baby sister on the day of my actual birthday. I was advised by my mother not to tell the relatives of their, most innocent, mistake. But I was seven, and I was sad! I climbed into my sister's crib while they sang "Happy Birthday" to her. When my mother found me in the baby's crib, I got most harshly disciplined. Thus beginning my unholy obsession with cake – it became a too important symbol of acceptance and love.

I didn't know how to get "loved." As an Italian child, I had the Pieta statue on my bed stand. I saw Mary holding her son and he was all skin and bones. So that's how you got Mommy to love you – you must be skin and bones. So I starved myself as a sacrifice for receiving love. I nearly killed myself at the age of seven, and no one noticed! Food, then, made me most angry!

Family arguments were resolved with gallons of ice cream as we swept up the residue of broken plates. Family gatherings were too much food, too much alcohol, and concluded with the ladies getting too upset as they carried away their husbands into their cars to go home – only to return for another round in a couple of weeks. I tried to write poems and songs to my father to explain how this was hurting me – but he'd say he didn't know what I was talking about and get cross with me. These increased issues and traumas accelerated my inappropriate behaviors with food, and literally broke my heart.

I ended up nearly dead again at the age of 27 after a doctor told me he would worry about me when I reached 87 lbs. He set an actual numerical figure for "love" and I reached the goal! I scared that doctor badly. I was angry for love. His "number" failed me, I ate again, with anger, and became bulimic. (Anorexics and bulimics are over-eaters in disguise.) People put a value on beauty and appearance. I was not outwardly beautiful, nor inwardly with all that anger. I wasn't in any shape for a proper husband. Again a broken heart.

Presently, with every meal I deal with Shaytan. How does one polish a broken heart? How does one polish over the scars of trauma and the cracks from anger? The heart needs mending or all attempts to spiritually ascend will be kept down by the character disease. Only Allah (S.W.T.) can mend a broken heart! Allah's (S.W.T.) process of mending then heals one's relationship with Him and one's loved ones. Through the remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), the hole in one's heart gets filled with his blessings!

The cure to the food-disease is not to pray for control over food – WE HAVE NO CONTROL – but to pray that Allah (S.W.T.) mends your heart. We have a choice and can pray for courage to change.

We should also ask Allah (S.W.T.) for forgiveness and mercy.

“Our Lord! Perfect our Light for us and forgive us! 'For' you are truly Most Capable of everything”

- Q66(8)

Insights and guidance will come from Allah (S.W.T.) and be received through prayers, duas, and remembrances. One will recover her soul. By doing extra sunnah prayers (prophetic practice) and nafls (voluntary prayers), being with supportive people, and keeping oneself in good company and good situations, Allah (S.W.T.) will also send his blessings. A healed heart, when pumping, will softly speak the name of Allah (S.W.T.) with every beat! Alhamdulillah! This is true inner remembrance and healing.

To get to a level of faith and trust that Allah (S.W.T.) will release one's character defects and desires, and replace the pain of withdrawal with relief and love, one must seek to communicate with a spiritual leader who understands addiction. Those who have addictions were born with them and, for many, they were triggered into active behaviors due to childhood events. Food can be a dangerous tool for discipline, reward and affection!

Another cure for food-disease is to eat a bit less, start out slowly. Stay away from foods that, for oneself, trigger compulsive eating. Before the meal, say “Bismillah.” I also add, “Allah (S.W.T.) is with me, Allah (S.W.T.) is watching me, Allah (S.W.T.) is looking at me.” Try, as the Prophet (S.A.W.) suggested : one third food, one third drink, one third leave it empty for air. Raise you hands at the end of the meal to say, “For the sake of Allah (S.W.T.) I am finished, Alhamdulillah!”

Shaytan's big mistake was disobedience to Allah (S.W.T.) He had an, “I'm better than them,” attitude. He tricked humankind with food because he knew it was something mankind would always need, and the ones who struggle with it will frankly never stop struggling. But we get to choose, we get to make our own choice to go through this struggle for the sake of Allah (S.W.T.). This great big struggle, that Shaytan thought he was cursing us with, is actually a struggle from which we get most blessed. We have to really fight to drive towards Allah (S.W.T.) and away from the Trickster! Three times a day!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

On the Path

*I took a walk
to travel on a
Path, and to quietly
complain, for I
wanted no one
else to hear.*

*Ya Allah, why am
I so thirsty, though
I have had so much
to drink? Why does
this thirst pain
me so? The thirst
is loneliness.*

*Ya Allah, why am
I so hungry, though
I've had so much
to eat? Why does
this hunger hurt
so badly? The hunger
is fear.*

*Ya Allah, why
does my body
shake so, though
I have nothing real
for which to be
anxious? The shaking
is worry.*

*Ya Allah, can you
release me of hunger, thirst and worry? Can
they, yet, all go away?
I really don't mind
if they must stay with me on this Path.
I will keep them for
your sake and carry them with me
on this Path.
But, can I feel better now, Insha Allah?*

*Ya Allah, I pray,
Alhamdulillah! And
take a few more
steps on the Path...*

*And then I pray
“ Alhamdulillah!” and
take even more steps
on the Path.*

*And then I pray
“ Alhamdulillah!”
And I keep going on
the Path.*

*-Anya Breen
8/26/2025*

Anya Breen
9/2/2025

TZK 101 – The Heart Week Four Reflection

Shaytan was created from fire, and anger is a fire in one's heart resulting in malice and envy. The fire will just keep igniting everything in its path and burn one's own heart so badly. Anyone who has ever had a burn wound knows that they are terribly difficult to heal. To cure the anger, “Stop, drop and pray.” Drop as far to the ground as possible, close to the mud. This is not only for humility, but for transformation. We humans are from mud, clay. Anyone who has had a child that played with clay knows that clay can be molded and transformed. Allah (S.W.T.) created us in a transformable matter, and in his guidance we can change our manners. Though following Quranic verses is in reference to the Hereafter, I believe Allah (S.W.T.) is always blessing us with the ability to transform, grow and change.

“from transforming and recreating you in forms unknown to you.”

- (Q56:61)

There are three levels of anger. The first, excess in anger, makes one so “fired” up inside that thinking clearly, or self-control, are impossible. This paves the way for incorrect choices. This is not praiseworthy. The second is having no anger. This is not good either because one loses the motivation to protect and discipline one's soul. It can be beneficial to get upset with one's own behavior and desires. Thusly, the third level, moderation, is more beneficial than the other two extremes.

Anger can burn your heart to death, change your appearance and color, make you manic and change your character, and may lead you into behavioral health issues. To remedy anger, one must remove its causes, such as pride, controversy, argumentation, betrayal, covetousness for wealth and status, and inappropriate joking. Cure anger with an opposite response – be charitable (smile), forgive, be compassionate and gentle. Remember also to fear Allah (S.W.T.) and that one's anger for someone else can turn into Allah's (S.W.T.) anger with you. The consequences for one's anger can be revenge from the person you showed anger towards. That can destroy your life in this world. It will also displease Allah (S.W.T.) such that it can destroy your Afterlife as well. Your Afterlife is the consequence! Have humility now, so on the Day of Judgment you will not have to fear humiliation. Honor Allah (S.W.T.) by suppressing your anger! (I try so hard personally to say to myself, “You don't always have to be right!”)

When angry, douse the fire of rage with the water of wudu and seek tranquil refuge. Give up your pride and live near the earth, your place of origin, and release the need to do what you want and give yourself to Allah's (S.W.T.) will.

I have been a teacher for nearly 50 years, and I always have to check myself for being impatient or bossy, or I will be the one in ignorance. A teacher must share knowledge with humility and serenity.

One must be cautious of slanderous speech and defaming another. Seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge, not for fame and recognition. Seek knowledge to share knowledge, not to be better than others, but to compete with your friends and family to be as best as you can for Allah (S.W.T.) To keep oneself from self-amazement and pride, one should be kind and charitable, and gentle in manner. (This is something this “hot-blooded” Italian is still working on.)

The best way to heal that burn scarred heart is with forgiveness. Give up the hurts and angers of the past- forgive, move on, heal, restore, mend. This is most important when it comes to family.

The first human war was brother against brother – and the flames from that war linger to his day. If the two brothers only knew that they were fighting the wrong species. The fight should be with Shaytan. Peace in the world begins with peace in each and every individual's heart, spread to your family, spread to your community, and so on. If the fires of war can rage on, can't we rescue ourselves with “Salaam” and spread that instead?!

The fight between the two sons of Adam was prompted by envy and jealousy over who had the better sacrifice prepared for Allah (S.W.T.) Even the religious can get ridiculously envious of each other. This is so silly, yet so dangerous to the world!

I might also add, to watch inadvertently boasting when saying to another person that you suspect someone is envious of you. Be cautious to be humble with what you've been blessed. One may also be slandering the person that you really have no true knowledge of their envy of you. It's nice to share about an answered dua, for it spreads affirmation to the young about Faith, but try not to brag.

To be envious of someone else's blessings will come back in incremented force to ultimately only hurt the one who was envious. One's envy upon another, without the Will of Allah (S.W.T.), will never hurt the person upon which you are envious. Envy will not hurt them, but it will increase your anger and destroy you. Our protection is to always be in remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.) and pray for his protection. Not even Shaytan can harm us without Allah's (S.W.T.) Will. Stay close to Allah (S.W.T.) and remain favorable in his sight and He will protect you always!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Plant the Tree, Anyway

*The very old man tried
so many, many years
Finally, he cried out,
“Hearts will not turn!”*

*So, from the trees he built a ship
When the waters came he sailed away from them
and stopped the ship
at a tree*

*Many men came after
the old man had gone,
teachers of cultivation
respecters of Creation*

*But, again and again...
hearts turned...
to gold and silver
and against each other*

*Knocking down trees
making statues
and grand buildings
blocking the view of Beauty*

*Hearts stopped...
stopped growing
stopped planting
Then came the quakes*

*But, a final instructor came
Blessed and wise
Others before him had taught what
could only be understood at their time*

*About re-growth and hope
now, ready, the last lesson given...
how to plant a tree
with one's heart*

*No more floods, not really
No more quakes, not really
Just drizzles and quivers
in comparison...*

*To motivate to effort and responsibility
To pick up the tools
and plant...
Plant the tree!*

*Pride will say the trees are dead
and hope is hung.. deception!
Nothing intended has died
but for hearts and understanding of the ignorant*

*Hopeless will hide shovels
Hopeless will sneak in the weeds
Patience will know the earth is still...
ours on which to plant*

*So if a grand angel slowly lifts his trumpet,
hurry to the tools...
Plant the tree, anyway!
In'sha Allah (S.W.T.)!*

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*“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah.
Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”*

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

“I don't mean to gossip, but...”

How many times these words are spoken without realizing their true danger. Our words affect those around us and can hurt the world, especially in this age of social media.

Every morning I pray, “Allah (S.W.T.), protect me from my mouth. Protect me from the foods I eat and the words I speak.”

Years ago I was still in the habit of talking behind others' backs. Also, I would say something to one friend, and another thing to another friend on the same issue, trying to please whomever I was speaking with. Then I started realizing the trouble I was causing for myself. I felt very poorly about my behavior and decided to do a nafl every time I opened my mouth incorrectly. I shared with my dear friend that if I didn't change my speaking behavior soon, I'd be in my prayer room all day! I am getting better. Alhamdulillah!

There is no protection or salvation from the dangers of poor speech except for silence. I would pray so hard to keep my mouth closed... very difficult for a professional teacher. But I am on the path to training myself to speak “good words.” I train myself to listen to the voice inside of my head before I speak... the voice that says, “Don't say it!”

Speaking poorly of others was a sickness in my heart. The more aware I became of my words and how horrible they were, the more remorseful I became of my speech behavior. I pray for forgiveness every time my tongue slips because what I say does matter and will affect those around me and can damage other people's perspective of the person of whom I spoke ill. I don't think an hour goes by that I don't regret something I've said. This is a difficult defect, the defect of the tongue.

There are many aspects to the defect of the tongue. Firstly, speaking of what does not concern you. I remind myself everyday that there are some things I don't need to know about! It is wise to be silent!

Secondly, to engage in vain and sinful talk motivated by the want for prominence. Prideful talk can lead to quarrels and disputes. To be truthful is to avoid arguing.

Thirdly, being talkative to show-off and boast. This can lead to condescending sermonizing without the intent to move hearts or generate interest.

Fourthly, vulgar and abusive speech. This kind of speech can be discourteous and sexually demeaning.

Fifth is excessive joking that is not slight and not truthful and done too much. Some people have a characteristic prose that is always a joke and always making fun of others. It is hard to have a serious conversation with this kind of person, or to trust that they are not mocking you.

This leads me to the sixth defect, belittling and mockery. This is when one brings attentions to another's faults or deficiencies causing others to laugh at the person.

Seventh is backbiting, speaking poorly about a person behind his back. This is literally unforgivable, and only forgiven when the backbiter seeks Allah's (S.W.T.) forgiveness.

There are several reasons for backbiting : anger, joining in with associates, desire to raise one's own status by defaming others, amusement and jest.

Backbiting brings Allah's (S.W.T.) Anger!! This should be the motivator to not occupy oneself in this form of speech. One should feel ashamed at trying to shame others. One should speak about others the way he would want to be spoken of. Be aware of the motive for backbiting before you even open your mouth. Then strive to close your mouth and rest your tongue.

It is permissible to complain of an injustice, change an evil, stop an oppression.

The eighth defect is Tale-Carrying. This defect is personally important for me to discuss. Being a child of abuse, I constantly had to re-frame reality and invent scenarios in my head to protect myself. These tales became so well rehearsed that they became my truth. It has taken many years to unwind the past tales and locate my true history.

The ninth defect is Two-Faced speech. This is very common also between family members from an abusive childhood. I learned to tell the tales the others needed to hear in order to survive. The danger was in the tales getting confused between us. To this day, my family is confused as to what was the truth in our history... we all told tales and we told different tales to different people... just to be safe.

The tenth defect is Excessive Praise. Again, I refer to my childhood. I was never praised and emotionally and physically belittled. This led to my wanting praise so badly as an adult as validation that I was worthy. So many times I've achieved things as an adult and have wondered why I was not praised. I believe that is Allah (S.W.T.) protecting me from myself and keeping me humble so I continue to do my work for His sake, not mine.

The eleventh error is speaking about religion, especially regarding Allah (S.W.T.), without knowledge. If someone asks a question about religion, one must have the humility to say, "Of this I have no knowledge," if you don't have a truthful answer. The wise scholar is the silent scholar.

Finally, Insha' Allah (S.W.T.), I'd like to add another defect not mentioned in our reading, internally or verbally degrading yourself. I say to my life coaching clients, "Watch what you say, your brain is listening." You can break your own heart with your own heart with your own words about yourself. Constantly speaking ill of yourself will create a false-truth in your brain and give you a negative feeling about yourself. Allah (S.W.T.) loves you... you are not a mistake... you can love yourself.... it's OK to speak well of yourself to yourself.

"Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

The Light I Want to Listen To

Anya Breen

9/12/2025

*How do I listen to Silence
The Light*

*My noise
So many mistakes*

*Clatter and babble
Nonsense, hurt, wasted time*

*Stop my noise
Safety from myself*

*Closed chambers in my Heart
Opened by my silence*

*Enters the Light I need to hear
Pure, free, ease, time*

*The Light I couldn't hear
Around all my talking*

*Silence
The Light I was to listen to*

*Lying
Shut the Light*

*Tales
Shut the Light*

*Silliness
Shut the Light*

*I spoke poorly of you
And the Light stayed off*

*I forgot about the Light
So sorry in this darkness*

*Forgiveness
Merciful Light*

*Opens my Heart
With Patience*

*Silence is the Light
I want to listen to...*

So I can hear you!

TZK 101 – The Heart
Week Six
Love of the World

9/15/2025
Anya Breen

Considering my little story...

The Boy on the Bridge

A young child is crossing a bridge to go on an exciting journey. He brings with him an apple, his favorite blanket and a very special book.

As the journey proceeds, the child grows into a young man. He is big and strong now and he thinks, “Maybe I'm strong enough to go back and get more 'stuff' that I may need for this journey.” So he goes back and returns to the bridge, now carrying a refrigerator filled with all kinds of food, a big bed with lots of blankets, and so many more books. The special book being lost at the bottom of this enormous pile of “stuff.”

As the man proceeds on this journey, he begins to grow old and very tired from the load he has had to carry across this bridge for so many years. The load has become quite painful. What gave him so much pleasure in his youth now seems to have become a burden.

So the old man goes back and unloads all the “stuff” he has been dragging across the bridge for all these years, fearing that the load has gotten so enormous that the bridge may actually break and he will never reach the other side.

So now the old man returns to the bridge with an apple, peanut butter, dates, a cookie, his favorite blanket, and the very special book that he had thought he lost.

With just exactly what he needs, the old man crosses the bridge! Alhamdulillah!



The Prophet Isa (A.S.) said : “ The world is a bridge, so cross it and do not waste time on it.”

The world is the place for the Pathway to the Afterlife to be traveled. On this Path we are tested and we learn. We make mistakes for which we seek mercy, and we gain rewards and blessings to ease our travels.

Personally, I don't think I've ever experienced a completely comfortable day. From the moment we come out screaming, life is not easy! Life is but a testing ground. Who will you seek for answers? Will you deal with the trials gracefully and patiently? A good life is a long lesson learned. A good life doesn't mean lots of money and lots of ease. A good life is in accepting the laughter and tears both with... Alhamdulillah!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

TZK 101 – The Heart
 Week Seven
 Miserliness, Covetousness and Greed

9/19/2025
 Anya Breen

Now, whenever a human being is tested by their Lord through 'His' generosity and blessings, they boast, "My Lord has 'deservedly' honored me!" But when He tests them by limiting their provisions, they protest, "My Lord has 'undeservedly' humiliated me!"

- Q 89:15-16

Allah (S.W.T.) urges us to be gracious and feed the poor and not love wealth too much. He urges us to send forth something good for the benefit of our Hearts. This pleases Allah (S.W.T.)

Allah (S.W.T.) has created us in 'constant' struggle. He has shown us what is right and what is wrong. The Path of goodness is challenging, but we are capable of succeeding on this Path, as proven by the human example of our Prophet (S.A.W.) (My reflection on Q 90:4).

To make the choice to be a giving person, to help those in need, and to urge each other to be successful on the Path, is true charity and the Right Way (my reflection on Q 90:11-20).

One should realize that being charitable will ultimately make life easier.

As for the one who is charitable, mindful 'of God,' and firmly believes in the finest reward, We will facilitate for them the Way of Ease.

- Q 92:5-7

We must learn to make our wealth “good” for us and use it wisely and charitably, or it will be of no use.

I recall when I first converted. I was quite low on monetary funds due to a divorce and a series of things that I needed to repair in my life. It was Eid, and I so wanted to make a donation to the Mosque. I put \$50 in the box very enthusiastically without worrying about my personal need for the money. That afternoon, I visited my friends for Eid feast and they handed me an envelope with \$100 in it... Alhamdulillah! I was so happy to call myself Muslim!

I reflect now on a time in my life when I experienced true charitable co-existence in a melting-pot community on Adams Street in Hoboken. I was 23 years old and my husband and I could only afford a very tiny first floor apartment. The residents of our building were all poor struggling artists as well. My husband and I only had \$25 a week for groceries, which was more than some of our neighbors had. When we bought cheese, the whole building came and joined us to feast on slices of Velveeta!

We all shared our talents and skills to help each other beautify our living space... the carpentry skills of a scenic designer, the painting skills of a visual artist.

The neighbors across the street were always watching out for us, not to be “nosey,” but to protect us. When word got out that my infant wouldn't eat, the nona's came over with food for me and helped me feed him.

When I got sick, the Salvadoran woman who owned the laundromat next door surprised me with my laundry already done! She was also the first face I saw at the end of my bed when I was hospitalized. The entire street took turns helping my husband with our son until I returned home.

These are only a few examples of that most generous “village.” Even though we were all struggling, we were rather happy... and we had each other. May Allah (S.W.T.) send his blessings to all those friends who knew charity as a normal way of life!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

The Prophet ﷺ feared most for his community the hidden desire to impress. Sometimes the scholars themselves are unable to notice that they are being tested with ostentation. Finding some joy in being held in high esteem, and wanting to be accepted, a believer may think he is sincere and is unaware of his heart's disease.

Some people love leadership and reputation. But people of good don't seek out fame, nor are they over joyous if it comes to them... they flee from it. For in their sincere hearts they know that they are not perfect. It is best not to like fame. Fame can tempt the most ascetic and pious person. A person can do good in all his acts of worship and daily life, but crave to impress others by his good deeds; thusly, the deeds are negated.

Scholars should be able to spread knowledge and give guidance but stay within the virtues of obscurity and not seek out such fame. Fame will be a trail for a weak person.

Reputation and wealth are things of this world we naturally like. But mostly, people love reputation. Wealth and reputation should not be sought after just for the sake of money and fame. But if one has a purpose for Allah (S.W.T.) and for the good of his community through his reputation, this is permissible.

If one intends to hide a flaw so as not to lessen his status, if his purpose for his reputation is sincere for the good of others, this is permitted. But it is not permitted to gain people's approval based on falsehoods about one's actual abilities or knowledge in order to gain wealth and approval via deception.

To cure one's love for reputation, one must have self knowledge of why he seeks it and know the dangers of seeking fame. One must take actions to remove reputation from his heart. For example, if one wants a reputation for being an ascetic recluse, he should do the opposite and begin mingling with others.

Also, one should not fear losing the praise of others. Rather, one should fear losing Allah's (S.W.T.) joy with one's merits.

One should not be upset or angry if someone tries to give counsel, as it is a gift to see one's own bad traits.

If one gains reputation without seeking it, and would not be upset if it was gone, then there is no harm in his having a reputation.

We naturally want to look nice and present ourselves well to others, but we should not let pride destroy our beauty. No one is any more special than another. We should not let pride destroy truth and make us belittle others.

If sincere, one will fear hidden desires for fame and reputation. For example, if one's motive for worship is to “show off,” then one's acts of worship are worthless. This fact alone should help one remove hidden desires for reputation. Humility is the opposite of “showing off.”

One should not crave, or even like, being praised. One should be humble enough to be corrected and one should not just make speeches for “show” with no truth or knowledge.

A scholar or religious educator should speak of things that are beneficial to others to help others gain a closer relationship with Allah (S.W.T.) in such a careful way as to not tarnish his own relationship with Allah (S.W.T.)

The gain a scholar should seek is to use his purpose in life as an educator to be for others and himself to obtain a closer relationship with Allah (S.W.T.) If his purpose is getting tarnished with fame, he will lose his favor with Allah (S.W.T.) and mislead others who innocently wanted to just learn Truth from his scholarship.

If one feels the pull of this disease in his heart, it's best to change your frame of reference about fame and be aware of anything you're doing to displease Allah (S.W.T.) Change your thoughts, change your actions. Pray for mercy, and move on to a better self for the sake of Allah (S.W.T.)

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

TZK 101 – The Heart
 Week Nine
 Pride, Self-Admiration and Delusion

10/7/2025
 Anya Breen

Being aware of the Truth, though it is beyond my human understanding, that Allah (S.W.T.) is always with me, how do I let myself still sin? How can I have pride, how can I feel more important than another, how can I come up with my own ideas about God, how can I be so deluded?! I am aware of the Truth, but still my faith has not brought me to a level of truly fearing Allah (S.W.T.). I am aware he is All Knowing, but still, there I am again with my arrogance and pride.

How do I fix myself? How do I get to a level that I can please Allah (S.W.T.) more than displease him? I must remember my source of being – I am clay, I am of the dirt, I am of the mud!

Lately, I feel stuck in the mud. My feet are dragging and I can't pull myself up, I can't ascend. I pray for forgiveness, yet I don't correct my thoughts and actions. I must work with my Shaykh, who has knowledge, to help me comprehend what are righteous and sincere actions.

It all comes down to pride. I am a human being who thinks she can control her life and those around her. Yet, I have no control over my earthly situation! I must submit and be in constant remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.) every minute I am aware of myself. I keep sinking into the mud and must raise my hands in the hope that Allah (S.W.T.) will pull me up and free me from the bottom I am dwelling in and teach me to correct myself. I am so afraid that I Will never get to see Him! And this is the fear I need to hopefully meet Him, In'sha Allah (S.W.T.)!

So many times in my life Allah (S.W.T.) has held back the applause. My pride made me tough inside and said to me I was being held back for some special reason. No! Maybe I just didn't deserve the applause. I have to realize that maybe I'm being held back because I'm just not that “good.” I have more work to do to get myself ready to cross the bridge and get “good” for Allah (S.W.T.). I am not here for the praise of this earth. I am here to praise Allah (S.W.T.) in the best of manners – and that's the achievement for which I should strive. I want to wash off this mud and cross the bridge freely! (I pray Allah (S.W.T.) blesses me with a bit more earthly time to get myself ready, In'sha Allah (S.W.T.))

Purification of the Heart is a personal, intended, journey of self assessment to get oneself in a healed and pure state in order to worship and connect with her Creator on as high a level as she can possibly obtain on this earth, each day, through self correction of actions and thought, and continued remembrance. One's intent to worship should be humble with an attentive heart.

This course on Spiritual Growth has helped me personally. May Allah (S.W.T.) have mercy on me, In'sha Allah (S.W.T.)! May Allah (S.W.T.) protect me from the whispers of Shaytan, and protect me from myself! The struggle to be able to pull my heart away from worldly distractions during acts of worship is what I fear at failing at the most. I must work on concentrating on the meaning of words in my prayer and not just performing rote action. I keep fearing, and keep asking Allah (S.W.T.) for safety, and keep my intent sincere. I keep trying so very hard to please my Creator. Fear keeps one's intent sincere.

I give thanks for the blessing of having the opportunity to take this class,
Alhamdulillah!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Muslim Addiction Recovery Meeting Guidelines and Information

By Anya Breen

anyabreenlifecoaching.com

with the assistance of James Murphy and
research assistance of Esa Hajee

On Anonymity

We hide our sins from others to please Allah (S.W.T.) and to trust in His healing us. We work together supporting each other in our common addictions through the guidance of Allah (S.W.T.) who inspires us to guide each other.

It is proven that addicts help other addicts recover and stay in recovery. Those with more sobriety than others maintain that it is a "one day at a time" recovery process and no senior member is better than the one who just walked into his first meeting. We strive to maintain sincerity in our recovery and our humility keeps us sincere. But we don't have to announce it to the whole world – Allah (S.W.T.) knows!

We encourage each other to success, but it is Allah (S.W.T.) who encourages all those in the meeting. Family members must respect the anonymity of the addict. The addict will learn who in the family / friends to talk to safely and make amends. Family members can go to Al-Anon, which is also anonymous, and can go to Al-Anon even if the addict won't go to AA.

Family members can go to the appropriate specialist to talk-such as medical facility, recovery specialists, spiritual advisors and if needed, law enforcement to get the addict the help they need. Please do not gossip about the struggling addict. Do not reveal the addict's struggle to family and friends without the addicts permission or the advice received from experts.

Prayers Used in Muslim Addiction Recovery Meeting

YouTube

Surah Al-Asr

103

(THE DECLINING DAY)

JUZ' 30

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝١ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ خَسِرٌ ۝٢ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝٣

1. Wal 'asr
2. Innaal insaana lafee khusr
3. Illal lazeena amanoo wa 'amilus saalihaati
wa tawaasaw bilhaqqi wa tawaasaw bissabr

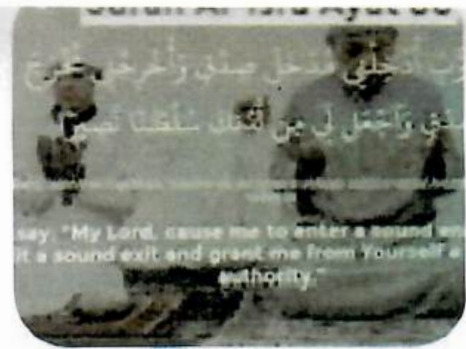
1. By time.
2. Indeed, mankind is in loss.
3. Except for those who have believed and
done righteous deeds and advised each other
to truth and advised each other to patience.



Q Surah Asr in English trar



Verse 80 of chapter 17 of the Quran, Surah Al-Isra, is "And say, 'My Lord! Grant me an honourable entrance and an honourable exit and give me a supporting authority from Yourself'".



Explanation

The verse is a prayer that the

Prophet Muhammad made when he migrated to Madinah. The prayer asks Allah to make his entry into Madinah and his exit from Makkah smooth and good. Some say that Muslims should pray this verse at the beginning of any goal they want to achieve.

God
grant me
the Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
the Courage
to change the things
I can, and
the Wisdom
to know the
difference.

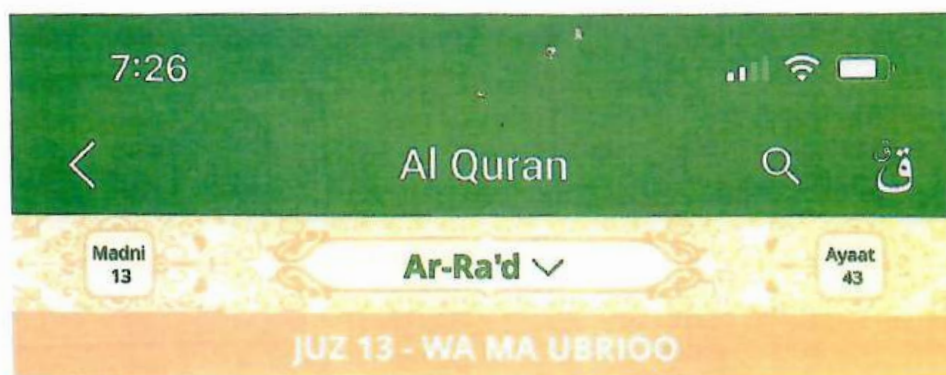


Ayatul Kursi

ul lahuw ilah illa huwal
Allahu laaa ilaaha illaa huwal
hi yul hi yuum la
haiyul qai-yoom; laa
taakhuzuhoo sinatunw wa laa
nawm; lahoo maa fissamaawaati
wa maa fil ard; man zallazee
yashfa'u indahooo illaa be iznih;

ya'lamu maa baina aideehim wa
maa khalfahum; wa laa
yuheetoona beshai 'immin
'ilmihee illa be maa shaaaa;
wasi'a kursiyyuhus samaa waati
wal arda wa la ya'ooduho
hifzohumaa; wa huwal aliyyul
'azeem

This beautiful verse emphasizes
the greatness and might of Allah,
portraying His power and His
magnificence in all things.



*Allatheena amanoo
watatmainnu
quloobuhum bithikri
Allahi ala bithikri Allahi
tatmainnu alquloobu*

Those who have believed
and whose hearts are
assured by the
remembrance of Allah.
Unquestionably, by the
remembrance of Allah
hearts are assured."

- 20:25. [Moses] said, "My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance]
- 20:26. And ease for me my task.
- 20:27. And untie the knot from my tongue.
- 20:28. That they may understand my speech.

your Lord. It also helps us to realize everything that one receives is ultimately from Allah and Him alone.

Text, transliteration and translation of sayyid al-istighfar can be found below.

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ
وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ
وَأَبُوءُ لَكَ بِذُنُوبِي فَاعْفُرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

Allahumma anta Rabbi la ilaha illa Anta
Khalaaqtani wa ana abduka, wa ana 'ala
ahdika wa wa'dika mastata'tu, A'udhu bika
min Sharri ma sana'tu, abu'u Laka
bini'matika 'alaiya, wa Abu'u Laka bidhanbi
faghfirli fainnahu la yaghfiru adhdhunuba illa
anta

O Allah, you are my Lord. There is no god but you. You have created me, and I am your servant—and I am upon Your covenant and promise as best I can. I seek refuge in You from the worst of what I have done. I fully admit to You Your blessings upon me, and I fully admit to You all my sins. So forgive me, for there is none to forgive sins but You.

No one says this by day except granted paradise. No one says this by night except granted paradise.

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ISTIKHĀRA: HOW & WHY

Istikhāra (Seeking Goodness) : To seek blessings & guidance from Allāh ﷻ for a decision

- 1 Make Intention for Istikhāra
- 2 Pray 2 Raka'āt of Prayer
- 3 Recite the du'ā' of istikhāra and mention your need

Du'ā' al-Istikhāra

— English Translation

Dear God, I'm asking You for goodness through Your [Infinite] Knowledge, and I'm asking You for strength through Your Divine Ability, and I'm asking You from Your Infinite Grace. Because You're completely able to do, while I simply cannot. You know everything, and I do not, and You know everything that's unseen. Dear God, if You know that this decision *[mention decision here]* is good for me in terms of my religiosity, my worldly life, and afterlife, then decree it, facilitate it for me with ease, and bless me through it. But if You know that this has bad consequences on my religiosity, my worldly life, and afterlife, then get it away from me and get me away from it, and *[instead of that]* decree what's better for me, whatever it may be, and make me content with it.

The members of this Muslim addiction recovery meeting experienced the necessity in the Muslim community to help Muslim addicts recover, researched the extent of this problem of addiction in our community and aid its members to purification of the Heart. This is an anonymous program.

Muslim Addiction Recovery Meeting Guidelines:

- ***Upon entering the meeting***
 - Members are urged to be prompt as time is a blessing
 - Wudu
 - Play Surah Al-Baqarah (for protection)
 - Refreshment table
 - Do prayer if it is prayer time
 - All are welcome. One does not need to be Muslim. It can be a form of Dawa
 - There will be special meetings for friends and family
 - No cross talking during the meeting
- ***Beginning the meeting***
 - Host gives Salaam and a Dua
 - Members give Salaam and identify their addiction (alcohol, drugs, food, nicotine, sex, gambling, etc.). First names only. Meeting is anonymous
 - Prayer beads passed out for celebrants counting days, months, and years
 - A brother leads Surah Al-Asr (to urge each other to be steadfast and patient)
 - A brother leads Al-Israa: Chapter 17, Verse 80 "And say, My Lord! Grant me an honorable entrance and honorable exit and give me supporting authority from Yourself" (this prayer is to help with a change in direction in your life, discuss the history of this prayer)
 - Someone picks a card from the 99 Names Card Deck
 - AA Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference"
 - Read the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous from the Big Book
- ***What Is An Addict and how do you recover? Different types of Addictions – discussion topic for newcomers***
 - Allah (S.W.T.) gave you your addiction and it is your struggle to fight against it. There is no cure but through Allah (S.W.T.)
 - What is Muslim Recovery?
 - Purification of the Heart
 - Faith
 - Working on Character Defects that block faith
 - Polishing the Heart is hard work and enlightening
 - Allah (S.W.T.) can transform you: refer to Quran 56 Verse 61
 - Only Allah (S.W.T.) should be your higher power
 - Why Muslims can't partake in drinking and other Haram activities: refer to Quran and Sunnah
 - What is Sobriety for your addiction?
 - Addicts help other addicts recover and help keep each other in recovery

- ***What is AA? Anonymous Spiritual Addiction Recovery Program***

- AA does not endorse any religion or politics, but our program endorses Islam
- AA has different anonymous programs for different addictions and their family members
- AA is a 12 Step Spiritual Recovery Program for Addiction based on the "Big Book" by Bill
- Rules:
 - Do not discuss with people not in the program and what you have heard from other people in the meeting
 - No cross-talking while someone is sharing

- ***How AA Recovery Works***

- Identify, don't compare
- Tools of Recovery Abstinence, Sponsorships, Phone Calls, Literature, Writing
- Beginners 90 Meetings in 90 Days (for over-eaters 30 day assignment)
- Meetings online, in person, or on the phone
- Chips for anniversaries
- Giving service. Examples – setting up and cleaning up for meetings, visiting addicts in the hospital, giving transportation to meetings, donating refreshments.
- Muslims recovery can be by being charitable. Example – being more agreeable at home and using what they would have spent on their addiction to help others
- Phone calls: boys with boys, girls with girls; same with sponsors
- Doing 12 Step work with sponsor (a sponsor should have one year of recovery)
- Change the people, places, things that surrounded your addiction. Surround yourself with good people and places
- Dress modestly and presentably – look pleasant
- Stay in Wudu – may Allah (S.W.T.) have mercy on the things you saw, ate, did with your hands, traveled to on foot that lead you to unacceptable vice, May Allah (S.W.T.) keep you pure in your intent to recover – Insha Allah !
- Perform extra duas, sunnahs, and nafl prayers.
- For Muslims in Muslim Recovery Meeting, it is advisable for Muslims to come to our meetings in addition to attending AA
- No major decisions for one year (use Istikhara)

- ***Different types of AA meetings and Muslim Recovery Meetings***

- Open or closed
- "Big Book"
- 12 Steps and Traditions
- Speaker Led for Beginners
- Round Table Sharing
- Testimonies
- Celebrating Milestones
- Guest Speakers
- Purification of the Heart and Discussing Character Defects
- Sharing recovery poems, essays, collages
- Discussing how to make amends with family and friends safely
- Sharing personal vision statements orally, written, or through artwork

- ***Muslim Concepts***

- Allah (S.W.T.) gives us trials, don't feel ashamed to want to improve yourself through this program
- Family and friends should not shame those in the program
- Don't worry about what others think, others will be proud of you
- Making amends safely – do not make amends to a person if it is not safe for you or the other – make your amends with Allah (S.W.T.)
- This is a big problem not being addressed enough in our community and families are trying to hide the problem or are completely unaware, so, when discussing your motivation to recover, use this prayer: Chapter 20 Verses 25-28 before discussing with family
 - “My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance]. And ease for me my task. And untie the knot from my tongue. That they may understand my speech” This prayer is to ease anxiety and make it easy to explain your striving to recover, and have friends and family understand you. Discuss the history of this prayer.
- Awareness of the problem of addiction in the community and bringing addicts to the mosque is needed, so the community can help individuals recover without shame
- Invite other struggling addicts to a recovery meeting – give service.

- **Host and Guests give Testimonies and Reflect on the 12 Steps of Recovery as well as Muslim Steps of Recovery**

- ***Muslim Steps “Polish” the Heart***

- Remembering for Muslims that our Higher Power must be Allah (S.W.T.), but we encourage addicts to also go to AA (OA, NA, GA, etc.)
- Work on Character Defects (purification of the heart and curing diseases of the heart) starting with moderation
- Remembering Allah (S.W.T.) gave you your defects to struggle against for his sake
- Cure your defects with the opposite action and act “as if” it is natural. Strive to behave the opposite of your flawed behavior and act as if your new behavior is natural to you until your Heart makes it natural for you.
- Remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.)
- Having patience and willing to put in the effort and time
- Fighting your desires and impulses, knowing evil only has the power you give it so fight with prayer and charity one moment at a time
- Prayers for protection and Wudu
- Playing Al- Baqarah
- Finding inspirational passages in the Quran and the life of the Prophet ﷺ
- Service to other Muslim Addicts and share the program
- Receiving advice from other actively recovering members
- Islamic studies: lectures, books(gain more knowledge of your Deen)

- ***More Recovery Strategies***

- Two Nafl Prayers when you feel the urge
- Distract, delay, discuss, deep breath, drink water
- Daily food list (eat halal), see a nutritionist
- Work on your mandatory prayers/ see "Being Muslim" Book
- Join a prayer group
- Duas, supplications and remembrances of Allah throughout the day
- Stay in Wudu
- Exercise (keep up with medical appointments)
- Be with other muslims
- Go to the mosque
- Be with family and Muslim friends with healthy activities
- Change the people, places, and things that caused you to be active in your addiction
- Dress modestly and try to look your best. If you look better you'll feel better and people will view you as better.
- No big decisions for one year
- One day at a time
- Let go and let God
- Fake it till you make it
- Easy does it
- Allah (S.W.T.) is with me, Allah (S.W.T.) is watching me, Allah (S.W.T.) is looking at me

- ***Closing the Meeting***

- A brother leads Ayatul Kursi and then recites Quran Chapter 13 Verse 28.
 - Chapter 13 Verse 28: "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.). Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.) hearts are assured" .

- ***Suggested Books***

- The Quran
- 99 Names of Allah (S.W.T.) Flash Cards
- "Being Muslim" by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf
- "Purification of the Heart" by Hamza Yusuf
- "Alcoholics Anonymous" (Big Book)
- "The Power of Du'a" by Aliyah Umm Raiyaan
- "Patience and Gratitude" by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah
- "Hidden Blessings" by Tameem Ahmadi
- "Softening The Heart" by Kitab az-Zuhud wa'r-Raqaiq
- "A Handbook of Spiritual Medicine" by Ibn Daud
- "Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth" by Imam Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi
- "Sins The Poison of the Heart" by Dr. Haifaa Younis
- "Daily reflections" (AA literature)
- "The Devotion" of Imam al-Nawawi
- "Overeaters Anonymous" (OA literature)
- "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" (AA Literature)
- "A Beautiful Patience" by Shabbir Hassan

- ***Location of Meetings***

- Muslim Addiction Recovery Meeting Anya's Place
 - 244 River Rd. Red Bank, NJ 07701
 - Cell: 848-218-3424
 - anyabreenlifecoaching.com
 - Mondays and Fridays 8PM
- The Prayer Room
 - Anya's Place
 - Saturdays 4PM
- Locate AA and other Anonymous Meetings info online
- There is s Monday 7:00 PM Beginners AA Meeting at Holy Trinity Church, a block away from Anya's place. It is recommended to attend that meeting first and proceed to Anya's place for the 8:00 PM Muslim Recovery Meeting. (There is a 7 PM Men's Al-Anon meeting Monday nights at the same Holy Trinity Church) It is suggested for family to attend that meeting first at 7PM and then attend the Muslim Recovery meeting at 8PM at Anya's place.
- Apps such as Meeting Guide are plentiful and show in-person meetings based on location, day, time, etc. as well as available online meetings.

Muslim Addiction Recovery Meeting

This is a closed, anonymous meeting for addicts (there will be opportunities to invite family & friends)

For the purpose of helping fellow Muslims recover from various addictions using the 12 Step spiritual program of AA, with Islamic Creed, Muslim prayers, and the Quran. Any teen/adult Muslim, male or female, who believes they have an addiction problem is welcome!

**EVERY MONDAY AND FRIDAY AT 8:00 PM
(BEGINNING AUGUST 4TH, 2025)**

**LOCATION: ANYA'S PLACE
THE PRAYER ROOM**

ADDRESS: 244 RIVER RD, RED BANK, NJ

**CALL: SISTER ANYA'S #848-218-3424
PARK ON SIDE STREET OR ANYA'S PARKING
LOT**

**WOMEN, PLEASE WEAR HIJAB
(THERE WILL BE SUGGESTED READING
MATERIALS.)**

**NO CHARGE
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED**

**Hosted by Sister Anya Breen, BA, CPC
anyabreenlifecoaching.com**

**Anya's Place
The Prayer Room**

**Teen/Adult Arabic/Quranic Prayers + Islamic
Study Group**

Purpose: Understanding the meaning of your
prayers and the purpose of your good deeds
to ascend and grow spiritually

Address: 244 River Rd, NJ

Call Ahead to join: 848-218-3424

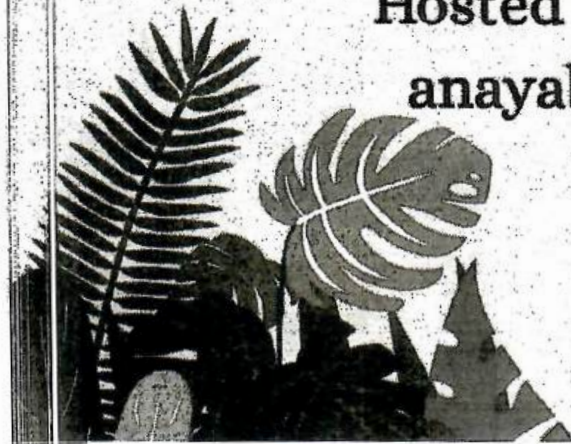
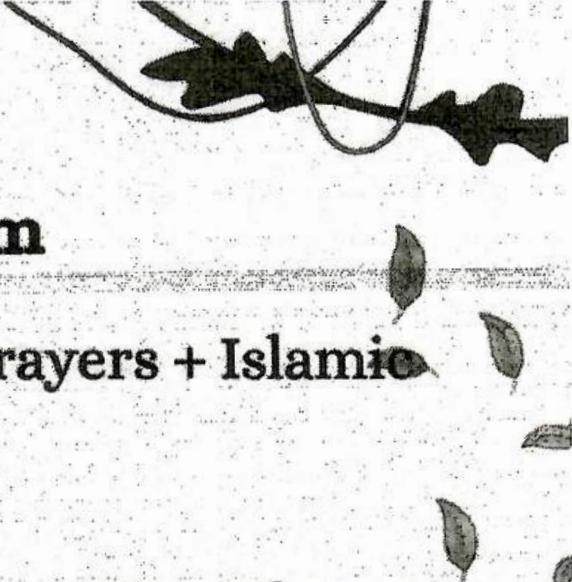
Saturday's 4-5:30

**Park on a side street or in Anya's lot
Textbook (Being Muslim), and a Notebook
required**

Sisters wear hijab

No Charge!

**Hosted by Anya Breen, BA, CPC
anayabreenlifecoaching.com**



Reflective Essays, Poems, and Collages on Purification of the Heart and Recovery

The plate stares back at me.
I tell myself, *it's wasteful to leave it.*
So I eat — not from hunger,
but from duty,
as if clearing crumbs could clear the ache
inside.
Full becomes too full,
yet still I obey the plate.

**Anya Breen
TZK 101
Week One Reflection**

On a hot summer day in June 2022, I sat in my backyard with a glass of wine in my hand. I stared at my hand and screamed, "It's me!" That was the moment I realized all the traumatic things that ever happened to me, or were happening to me that summer, had one common denominator, ME!

I always thought that I was a "good person." I was a practicing Italian/American Catholic. I practiced being Italian more than being Catholic. I drank too much, I ate too much, I was loud, and I joined in "tawkin' smack" about people whenever I could. Also, I was always concerned with money, and feared poverty as I continued to overspend. As far as being Catholic – well that was just plain guilt, and I never felt forgiveness. So like many, I'd go to Church and just keep drinking away the fear of God.

I experienced a very dangerous domestic situation that June 2022, and I had no one to go to. I did not feel safe with any family members. So, and I don't know why I did this, I called the mother of my Muslim music students. I said, "This is Annie, I need to talk to you, and it has nothing to do with music lessons." That was the day my journey into Islam and the Path to truly knowing God, Allah (S.W.T.), began! Alhamdulillah!

My friend and I have been speaking every morning for the past 3 years and discuss books we are reading. The books in which we really get absorbed deal with purification of the heart. I remember struggling so in the beginning and being told by one the brothers that I needed to have more faith, and that my heart needed to be polished. I didn't know what he meant. But, only by going through each struggle with an inner drive toward Allah (S.W.T.), and remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), did I start to experience actual joy, blessings and relief following each struggle, and a sense of Allah's (S.W.T.) closeness and ever watchfulness and guidance over me.

When I first converted, the thought of trying to find the time to pray, and not have it affect my work day, worried me. Now I worry that my work day won't affect my time to pray – and five daily prayers is no longer enough for me! Alhamdulillah! The more I pray and am in active remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), the more protection I have against myself and the whispers of Shaytan. Insha'Allah! Alhamdulillah!

"Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."

Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Anya Breen
8/22/2025

TZK 101- The Heart Week Two Reflection

The Art of Worship – the meaning of your existence in relationship to your creator – is to worship with your heart. The heart should motivate the body, but if needed, practice “as if” we are not perfect.

I am a music teacher and not unfamiliar with the discipline of “practice.” But one can practice a piece, such as Beethoven's Fur Elise, and have all the correct notes, fingering, phrasing, timing – but with no “heart”, one is simply performing mechanics. The heart must be engaged in order to express the true purpose of the composition. If one doesn't understand the history of the composer and his affections for Eloise, the music has no “art” - no expression of the meaning of human existence – no “heart.”

The same is with one's spiritual life. One can perform the actions of prayer, but with no understanding of the meaning behind every action, every syllable and every word, the mind is moving the body with no understandable reason. Once knowledge is obtained, the mind now has a reason for the actions and the heart becomes engaged receiving what it has been yearning for – the joy of receiving love, mercy, guidance, and insights from its Creator. The prayer becomes pleasing to Allah (S.W.T.) and one receives blessings and benefits and protection.

Sometimes, even though one has had studies for knowledge and understanding, there is still something blocking the elevation of the spiritual act of worship. The mind now has understanding, but the heart is not benefiting because it is covered, veiled, coated, tarnished by character defects that are not pleasing our Creator. We all have them, character flaws, and Shaytan will take these incorrect behaviors and habits and weaknesses and use them to pull you away from your good deeds, until the act of not praying feels normal and you've lost your inner desire to pray. The heart is our natural motivator to goodness – ignore your heart, and you will not care anymore.

Anyone who has had to help Mom polish the silver, knows that polishing is hard work and takes time and patience. One has to keep rubbing over and over and over. Finally, you see the shine and you feel happy! But then two weeks later, you look again and the silver pot you worked so hard on is tarnished again. Then one realizes that daily touch ups were required to keep the shine. Thusly with one's heart, constant practice, patience, diligence will keep the Pathway between your heart and your Creator clear!

One can play a beautiful piano composition with all the correct notes and nuances, but if one is performing on an untuned piano, the music will be most unpleasant. The same is for our spiritual life – mind, soul, body. We need to take care of our bodies and not let undesirable distractions and obsessions pull us “out of tune.” We were born with desires to help us. For example, the desire to want to eat, or else we'd starve. But when those desires take on an unholy preoccupation – we need to correct them. We want all our efforts to be pleasing to Allah (S.W.T.) on every level of our being.

Keep your intentions sincere, even if you're not “in tune,” remembering that addiction and

desires are also from Allah (S.W.T.) and our struggles remind us to reach out to him even more – the struggles handled gracefully are blessings themselves! The pain of addiction and desires is what the body feels – but the mercy and blessings for one's efforts through the pain will come from Allah (S.W.T.) – and eventually one is released and relieved of the suffering, Insha Allah. The joy from that release drives an addict to “keep on going” and not give up the spiritual life.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of a pure and open heart for guidance in the ^{Right} way. Just as one learned to love to polish silver or practice the piano, or at least act “as if” you love it until you really do, one must learn to love the act of worshiping Allah (S.W.T.) in order to be on the enlightened path to receiving Allah's (S.W.T.) love, blessing, and mercy.

Be mindful to be moderate in your efforts as not to lose heart. Just as the musician must rest her muscles, take care not to be so excessive in your discipline that you lose the incentive to continue on the Right Path. This is a religion of ease.

Also, on a humorous note, I ^{over}ask my adult son ~~once~~ why he was so upset with me. He responded, “You weren't strict enough with me as a child.” Go figure! Alhamdulillah.

“Teach your children well.”

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young

To conclude, Allah (S.W.T.) has the power to heal, restore, and mend broken hearts. One must turn to Allah (S.W.T.) with trust. Alhamdulillah.

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

Ar-Ra'd (13):28

Anya Breen
8/29/2025

**TZK 101 – The Heart
Week Three Reflection
and Additional Poem**

Food-disease, from desires of the stomach, is when food takes on an importance, other than nutrition, that makes one obsessive about food to the point of a distraction that pulls the self away from Allah (S.W.T.)

Apples are good for you, but eating the apple did not work out so well for Adam (A.S.) Adam (A.S.) was deceived into thinking consumption of the apple would bring him immortality and authority over himself. Through Shaytan's trickery, the apple became something other than nutrition. It became disobedience and was the igniter of the human disease of desire, and disobedience to Our Creator.

For myself, the food-disease began when I was a child... a skinny little child who had no idea she was headed for a life-long struggle with eating-disorder. It began on my 7th birthday when relatives, unknowingly, brought a birthday cake for my baby sister on the day of my actual birthday. I was advised by my mother not to tell the relatives of their, most innocent, mistake. But I was seven, and I was sad! I climbed into my sister's crib while they sang "Happy Birthday" to her. When my mother found me in the baby's crib, I got most harshly disciplined. Thus began my unholy obsession with cake – it became a too important symbol of acceptance and love.

I didn't know how to get "loved." As an Italian child, I had the Pieta statue on my bed stand. I saw Mary holding her son and he was all skin and bones. So that's how you got Mommy to love you – you must be skin and bones. So I starved myself as a sacrifice for receiving love. I nearly killed myself at the age of seven, and no one noticed! Food, then, made me most angry!

Family arguments we resolved with gallons of ice cream as we swept up the residue of broken plates. Family gatherings were too much food, too much alcohol, and concluded with the ladies getting too upset as they carried away their husbands into their cars to go home – only to return for another round in a couple of weeks. I tried to write poems and songs to my father to explain how this was hurting me – but he'd say he didn't know what I was talking about and get cross with me. These increased issues and traumas accelerated my inappropriate behaviors with food, and literally broke my heart.

I ended up nearly dead again at the age of 27 after a doctor told me he would worry about me when I reached 87 lbs. He set an actual numerical figure for "love" and I reached the goal! I scared that doctor badly. I was angry for love. His "number" failed me, I ate again, with anger, and became bulimic. (Anorexics and bulimics are over-eaters in disguise.) People put a value on beauty and appearance. I was not outwardly beautiful, nor inwardly with all that anger. I wasn't in any shape for a proper husband. Again a broken heart.

Presently, with every meal I deal with Shaytan. How does one polish a broken heart? How does one polish over the scars of trauma and the cracks from anger? The heart needs mending or all attempts to spiritually ascend will be kept down by the character disease. Only Allah (S.W.T.) can mend a broken heart! Allah's (S.W.T.) process of mending then heals one's relationship with Him and one's loved ones. Through the remembrance of Allah (S.W.T.), the hole in one's heart gets filled with his blessings!

The cure to the food-disease is not to pray for control over food – WE HAVE NO CONTROL – but to pray that Allah (S.W.T.) mends your heart. We have a choice and can pray for courage to change.

We should also ask Allah (S.W.T.) for forgiveness and mercy.

*"Our Lord! Perfect our Light for us and forgive us! 'For' you are truly
Most Capable of everything"*

- Q66(8)

Insights and guidance will come from Allah (S.W.T.) and be received through prayers, duas, and remembrances. One will recover her soul. By doing extra sunnah prayers (prophetic practice) and nafls (voluntary prayers), being with supportive people, and keeping oneself in good company and good situations, Allah (S.W.T.) will also send his blessings. A healed heart, when pumping, will softly speak the name of Allah (S.W.T.) with every beat! Alhamdulillah! This is true inner remembrance and healing.

To get to a level of faith and trust that Allah (S.W.T.) will release one's character defects and desires, and replace the pain of withdrawal with relief and love, one must seek to communicate with a spiritual leader who understands addiction. Those who have addictions were born with them and, for many, they were triggered into active behaviors due to childhood events. Food can be a dangerous tool for discipline, reward and affection!

Another cure for food-disease is to eat a bit less, start out slowly. Stay away from foods that, for oneself, trigger compulsive eating. Before the meal, say "Bismillah." I also add, "Allah (S.W.T.) is with me, Allah (S.W.T.) is watching me, Allah (S.W.T.) is looking at me." Try, as the Prophet (S.A.W.) suggested : one third food, one third drink, one third leave it empty for air. Raise you hands at the end of the meal to say, "For the sake of Allah (S.W.T.) I am finished, Alhamdulillah!"

Shaytan's big mistake was disobedience to Allah (S.W.T.) He had an, "I'm better than them," attitude. He tricked humankind with food because he knew it was something mankind would always need, and the ones who struggle with it will frankly never stop struggling. But we get to choose, we get to make our own choice to go through this struggle for the sake of Allah (S.W.T.). This great big struggle, that Shaytan thought he was cursing us with, is actually a struggle from which we get most blessed. We have to really fight to drive towards Allah (S.W.T.) and away from the Trickster! Three times a day!

*"Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah.
Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."*

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

How is one to recover?

When doing the thinking for five others.

What is a power greater than me?

Something that affects you all (I see)

Not me

I'm grateful the bottle shattered these myths

Because what I was looking for

I was looking with.

J. M.

On the Path

*I took a walk
to travel on a
Path, and to quietly
complain, for I
wanted no one
else to hear.*

*Ya Allah, why am
I so thirsty, though
I have had so much
to drink? Why does
this thirst pain
me so? The thirst
is loneliness.*

*Ya Allah, why am
I so hungry, though
I've had so much
to eat? Why does
this hunger hurt
so badly? The hunger
is fear.*

*Ya Allah, why
does my body
shake so, though
I have nothing real
for which to be
anxious? The shaking
is worry.*

*Ya Allah, can you
release me of hunger, thirst and worry? Can
they, yet, all go away?*

*I really don't mind
if they must stay with me on this Path.*

*I will keep them for
your sake and carry them with me
on this Path.*

But, can I feel better now, Insha Allah? ← *Spoken*

*Ya Allah, I pray,
Alhamdulillah! And
take a few more
steps on the Path...*

*And then I pray
" Alhamdulillah!" and
take even more steps
on the Path.*

*And then I pray
" Alhamdulillah!"
And I keep going on
the Path.*

*-Anyia Breen
8/26/2025*

Vision Statement from a Member of our Recovery Group



The Light I Want to Listen To

Anya Breen

9/12/2025

*How do I listen to Silence
The Light*

*My noise
So many mistakes*

*Clatter and babble
Nonsense, hurt, wasted time*

*Stop my noise
Safety from myself*

*Closed chambers in my Heart
Opened by my silence*

*Enters the Light I need to hear
Pure, free, ease, time*

*The Light I couldn't hear
Around all my talking*

*Silence
The Light I was to listen to*

*Lying
Shut the Light*

*Tales
Shut the Light*

*Silliness
Shut the Light*

*I spoke poorly of you
And the Light stayed off*

*I forgot about the Light
So sorry in this darkness*

*Forgiveness
Merciful Light*

*Opens my Heart
With Patience*

*Silence is the Light
I want to listen to...*

So I can hear you!

Considering my little story...

The Boy on the Bridge

A young child is crossing a bridge to go on an exciting journey. He brings with him an apple, his favorite blanket and a very special book.

As the journey proceeds, the child grows into a young man. He is big and strong now and he thinks, "Maybe I'm strong enough to go back and get more 'stuff' that I may need for this journey." So he goes back and returns to the bridge, now carrying a refrigerator filled with all kinds of food, a big bed with lots of blankets, and so many more books. The special book being lost at the bottom of this enormous pile of "stuff."

As the man proceeds on this journey, he begins to grow old and very tired from the load he has had to carry across this bridge for so many years. The load has become quite painful. What gave him so much pleasure in his youth now seems to have become a burden.

So the old man goes back and unloads all the "stuff" he has been dragging across the bridge for all these years, fearing that the load has gotten so enormous that the bridge may actually break and he will never reach the other side.

So now the old man returns to the bridge with an apple, peanut butter, dates, a cookie, his favorite blanket, and the very special book that he had thought he lost.

With just exactly what he needs, the old man crosses the bridge! Alhamdulillah!

*

*

*

Plant the Tree, Anyway

*The very old man tried
so many, many years
Finally, he cried out,
“Hearts will not turn!”*

*So, from the trees he built a ship
When the waters came he sailed away from them
and stopped the ship
at a tree*

*Many men came after
the old man had gone,
teachers of cultivation
respecters of Creation*

*But, again and again...
hearts turned...
to gold and silver
and against each other*

*Knocking down trees
making statues
and grand buildings
blocking the view of Beauty*

*Hearts stopped...
stopped growing
stopped planting
Then came the quakes*

*But, a final instructor came
Blessed and wise
Others before him had taught what
could only be understood at their time*

*About re-growth and hope
now, ready, the last lesson given...
how to plant a tree
with one's heart*

*No more floods, not really
No more quakes, not really
Just drizzles and quivers
in comparison...*

*To motivate to effort and responsibility
To pick up the tools
and plant...
Plant the tree!*

*Pride will say the trees are dead
and hope is hung.. deception!
Nothing intended has died
but for hearts and understanding of the ignorant*

*Hopeless will hide shovels
Hopeless will sneak in the weeds
Patience will know the earth is still...
ours on which to plant*

*So if a grand angel slowly lifts his trumpet,
hurry to the tools...
Plant the tree, anyway!
In'sha Allah (S.W.T.)!*

*

*

*

*"Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah.
Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."*

- Ar-Ra'd (13):28

**Research
for
Muslim Addiction
Recovery Meeting
Guidelines and
Information**

The 12 Steps of Recovery in Alcoholic Anonymous

(The 12 Steps of Alcoholic Anonymous is a spiritual program of recovery where alcoholics help other alcoholics with a spiritual connection to a Higher Power. 12 step recovery programs are not just for alcoholics – one can substitute their own addiction in replace of the word alcohol – ex. Drugs, gambling, sex, food. There are also 12 step meetings for family / friends (ex. Al-Anon, Gamblers Anonymous)

Research by Esa Hajee:

- 1) Admitting powerless
 - a) Identifying problem
 - b) Accepting outside help
- 2) Believing in a Higher Power
 - a) Find Spiritual Connection with Allah (SWT)
 - b) Find Purpose (Allah SWT)
- 3) Turing Over Control
 - a) Sacrifice and be willing to let go addiction
 - b) Attempts to lose dependency
- 4) Moral Inventory
 - a) Reflection on Past (What went wrong? How did it start?)
 - b) Identify weakness, resentment, past wrongdoings
- 5) Admitting Wrongs
 - a) Trusting people with your story (Sponsor, Family)
- 6) Being Ready for a Change
 - a) Letting go of Haram behaviors
- 7) Asking for help
 - a) "Addicts help recover addicts" –Anya Breen
- 8) Making Amends
 - a) List of individuals who may have been harmed during addiction
 - b) Be willing to make amends except when doing so can cause harm
- 9) Direct Amends
 - a) Actively making amends
- 10) Continuing Inventory

- a) Recognizing mistakes
- b) Trying to make change

11) Seeking Spiritual Awareness

- a) Seeking help with Allah (SWT) through prayer

12) Helping Others

- a) Sharing experiences, inspiring strength and hope with others in need

Substance Abuse and Addiction in the Muslim Community: Facing Stigma and Seeking Support

- Almost 21 million Americans have at least one addiction, yet only 10% of them receive treatment.
- Drug overdose deaths have more than tripled since 1990.
- From 1999 to 2017, more than 700,000 Americans died from overdosing on a drug.
- Alcohol and drug addiction cost the U.S. economy over \$600 billion every year.
- In 2017, 34.2 million Americans committed a DUI, 21.4 million under the influence of alcohol and 12.8 million under the influence of drugs.
- About 20% of Americans who have depression or an anxiety disorder also have a substance use disorder.
- More than 90% of people who have an addiction started to drink alcohol or use drugs before they were 18 years old.
- Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 are most likely to use addictive drugs.

(Source: Addiction Center)

Though Muslims are the Least Likely To Report Knowing Someone With Addiction Issues, more Than a Third Know a Person Who Has or Is Struggling With Addiction

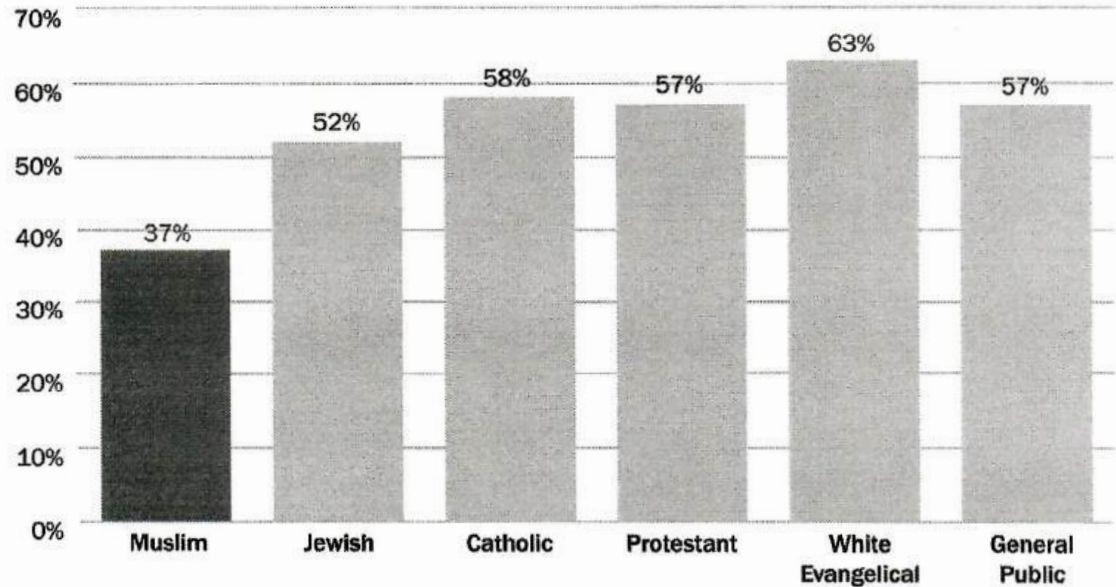


Figure 1: Do you know someone in your faith community who is currently or has in the past struggled with addiction to alcohol or other drugs? ("yes") Base: Total Respondents with a faith community

Recovering Addicts Least Desired Potential Spouse for Child Among Muslims

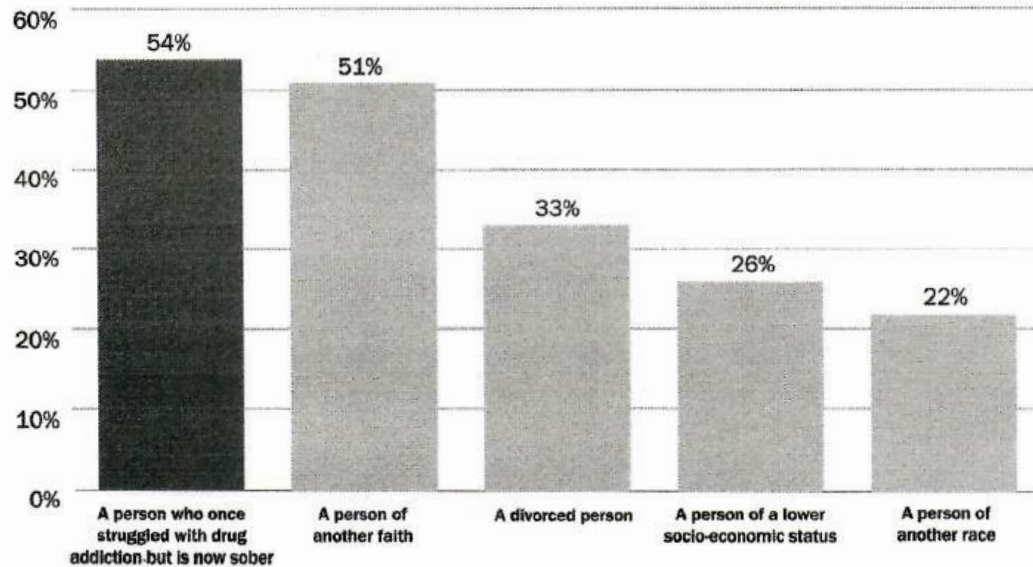


Figure 2: *If you had a son or daughter, how would you feel about them marrying the following potential partner? How about...? ("Would bother me")* Base: Total Respondents

Most Muslims Favor more Support for Those Struggling with Addiction But One in Five Favor Being “Tougher”, More Than Any Other Community

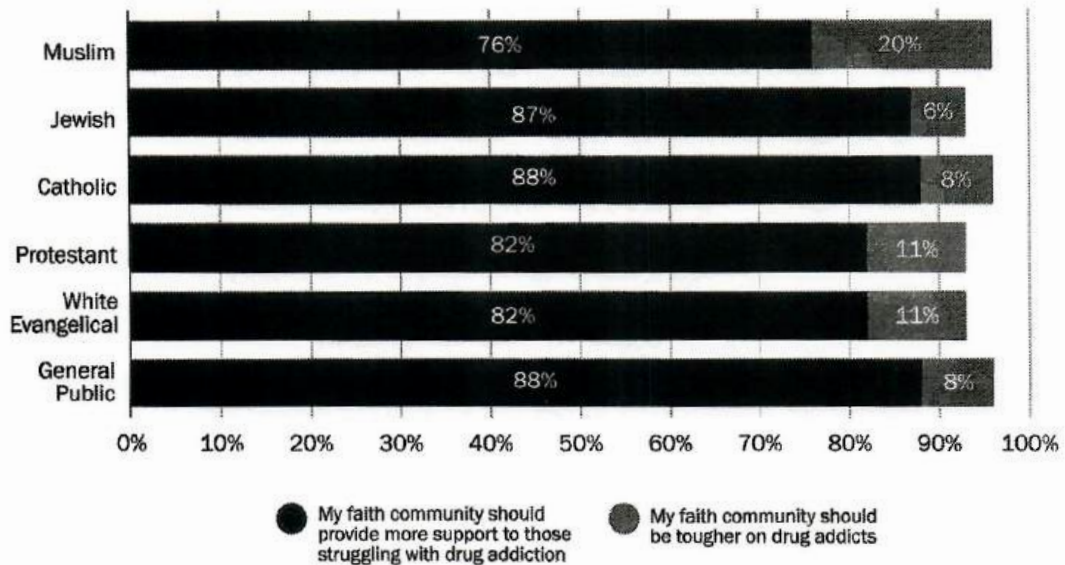


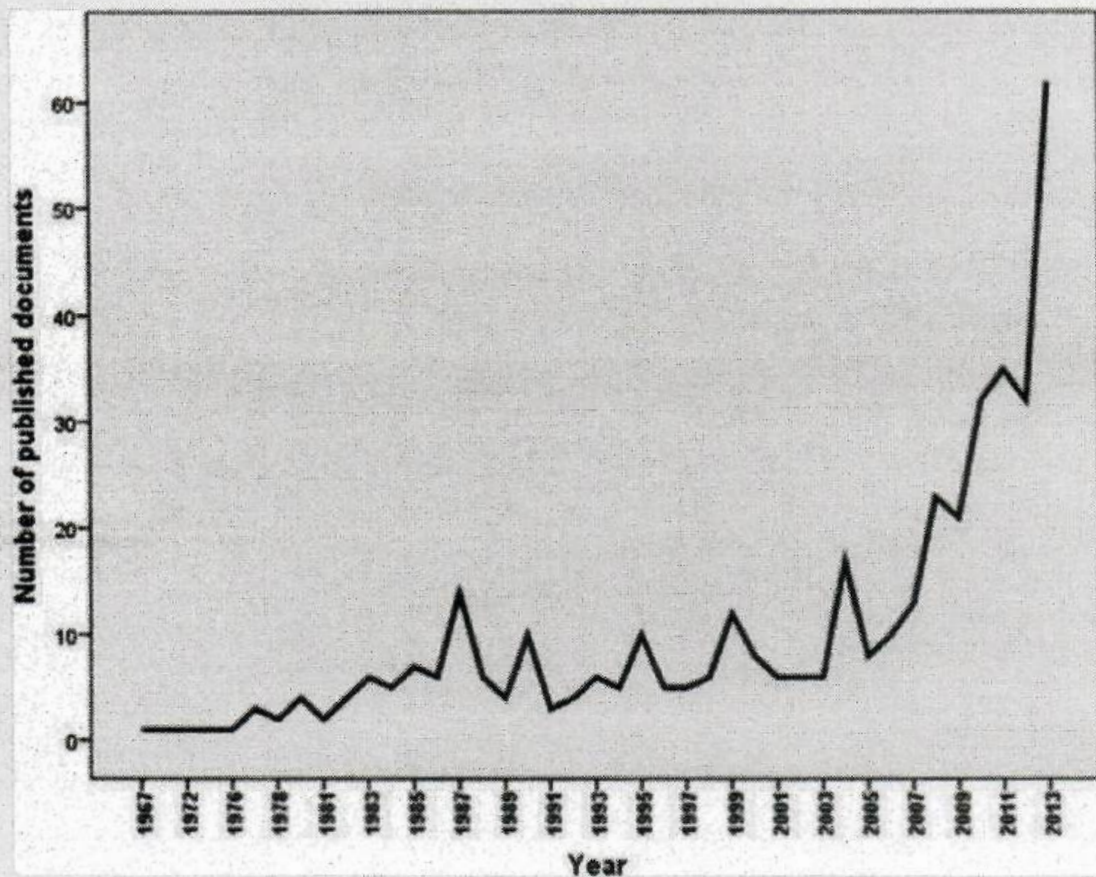
Figure 4: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? Base: Total Respondents with a faith community

“Ghandour and colleagues (2009) analyzed surveys at two universities in Lebanon and found 44% of Muslim students reported alcohol use. Alcohol abstinence was higher among those reporting that they believed in God and practiced their faith regularly. They found alcohol use was not related to the number of other Muslims enrolled at the university.”

“Baron-Epel and colleagues (2015) found a similar pattern – heavy drinking in secluded place – among young Muslim men in Israel. Likewise, focus groups among Somali Canadians reported that Somali who drink try to hide it from others in the community (Agic, Mann, & Kobus-Matthews, 2011).”

“According to some counselors, American Muslim substance abuse patients, especially women, may seek care where they will not be seen by others in the community.”

(UMich Study)



[Open in a new tab](#)

Annual growth of substance use disorders research in Arab countries.

(<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4144697/#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20abuse%20of%20illicit%20drugs,was%20reportedly%20considerable%20%5B44%5D.>)

"It could be that they do whatever is not good to their bodies ... They don't want people to know that they are smoking and they are drinking because they know that is a bad habit. It is forbidden in Islam. It is haram."

"Some of them [imams] tell the people, 'stop it or you will find yourself in the hell fire.' [In contrast, God] says when approaching people, treat them with respect and dignity for them to listen to you."

"You know, [God] is a load of forgiveness. His first aim is not to punish and he also can give a lot of second chances. We do not see a sinner as a cursed person. You have to love them... As long as they are alive, they have a chance to overcome [substance use] and have a chance for God to forgive them."

"We cannot cut the hope of people and say ... you are weak ... We have to say to them, you are strong, you are good..."

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740547220304815>)

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

— Surah Az-Zumar (39:53)

"Indeed, Allah loves those who repent and loves those who purify themselves."

— Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222)

"And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins — and who can forgive sins except Allah?"

— and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”

— **Surah Aal-Imran (3:135)**

“All the children of Adam are sinners, and the best of sinners are those who repent.”

— **Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 5, Book 37, Hadith 4251**

“The one who repents from sin is like one who did not sin.”

— **Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 5, Book 37, Hadith 4250**

“Show mercy to those on earth, and the One above the heavens will show mercy to you.”

— **Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 3, Book 18, Hadith 1924**

Community Response

- Reduce stigma: Encourage masjid and imams to speak with compassion, not only condemnation.
- Provide safe spaces: Confidential support groups.
- Integrate Islamic guidance: Qur'an, hadith, and prayer as healing tools.
- Encourage family support: Families can be allies in recovery.
- Model other programs: Look at successful Muslim recovery initiatives worldwide.

Muslim Recovery Groups:

Muslim Recovery Network (UK)

- A 12-step Islamic addiction recovery program grounded in Islamic principles. It combines the traditional 12 steps with the Five Pillars of Islam, following the prophetic example as a route to healthier, drug-free lives. [KIKIT](#)

Millati Islami (USA)

- A fellowship that integrates the Twelve Step approach with Islamic spiritual principles, offering a faith-specific recovery path. millatiislami.org

Serenity Light Recovery (USA)

- Provides Muslim-friendly addiction treatment, offering faith-based counseling, halal meals, prayer accommodations, and Islamic teachings integrated with traditional therapies. [Serenity Light Recovery](http://SerenityLightRecovery.com)

Zulu Islamic Treatment Institute (Minneapolis, MN)

- Offers outpatient treatment with a focus on Islamic values, including individual, group, and family counseling, along with recovery support services. [Recovered](http://Recovered.org)

Resources:

Overcoming Addiction: An Islamic Approach to Recovery (Book)

- A guide that outlines a recovery plan based on Islamic principles, providing a detailed explanation of the process. Amazon

Islamic Spiritual Alternatives to Addiction Treatment

- A study exploring the role of Islamic spirituality in addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. aljamiah.or.id

A Qualitative Study of Imams' Perspectives on Substance Use

- Research examining how imams perceive substance use within Muslim communities, offering insights into community-based interventions. ([PMC](#))

"It is normalized to drink in college. Everyone drinks. It's the culture" – Anonymous

From Muslim Voices

- "I was addicted to alcohol. It wasn't because I liked drinking, it's because being drunk made me forget the things that made me sad and anxious." [MuslimMatters.org](#)
"Overdosing hurts. And I'm never sure if the last time will be my 'last time'. I don't want to keep thumbing my nose at Allah's mercy without realizing how many times I've been saved before." [MuslimMatters.org](#)
- "As if by magic, I feel no desire to drink. It is not a struggle. I am not controlling myself in any way nor do I feel afraid of alcohol. I simply cannot understand how I lived as I once did. I value my time, my faculties, and my life enormously and it seems repulsive to throw them away in drinking as if they were garbage." [Morocco World News](#)
- "I grew up in the Middle East in a Muslim household. Alcohol was never in or around my home ... I began my journey in Alcoholics Anonymous just over four years ago. My life up until that point had been a complete mess. I couldn't form honest relationships, I was constantly in pain and completely lost." [renascent.ca](#)
- "Allah's grace and mercy helped him maintain his sobriety fairly easily. He says that drugs and alcohol just simply became revolting to him as if the desire was completely erased from his mind." [About Islam](#)

- **From “Successful Stories of Reverts Freed From Addictions”**

“I made a self-discovery that the only thing I even had in common with my ‘friends’ – was drinking. They didn’t even get along unless they were drunk. So, she cut off all the people she was associating with who drank.”

THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY

ABSTINENCE. Abstinence is following the food plan prescribed by your physician. Or, abstinence is following the Basic Food Plan, refraining from sugar, flour, starches and compulsive overeating, eating three weighed and measured meals, no between meal snacks, one day at a time. It's working the Twelve Steps as a program of recovery, and refraining from "stinking thinking." Physical abstinence is a daily reprieve from the disease of compulsive overeating. It enables emotional abstinence, which is a positive change in attitude due directly to the program.

SPONSORSHIP. A sponsor is a person committed to abstinence and has taken the first three steps of the program. A sponsor has at least 30 days of continuous Basic Food Plan abstinence. A sponsor is the newcomer's guide during their first thirty days and a continuing helping hand in their recovery program.

TELEPHONE. The telephone is a daily link to our sponsors; a way to reach out for help and to extend that same help to others. We make four telephone calls each day: the first to our sponsor, and, using the Outreach Directory, three calls to other members of the program.

LITERATURE/WRITING/BURNING. Reading and writing is how we learn about the program and ourselves. Because we identify so closely with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), we've adopted and study their "Big Book" and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Writing about our frustrations and mixed emotions, then burning or destroying the writing, acts as a safety valve, releasing us from negative thoughts; "stinking thinking."

ANONYMITY. Anonymity is placing principles before personalities. Our sharing with other members is confidential. Anonymity offers us freedom to express ourselves, and protection from gossip. Each member agrees not to reveal another's participation in the HOW program.

**For the Families
of the Addict**

As children we go through experiences or traumas that created roads mapped in our brain – bumpy roads. We've driven our lives on these roads our whole life – alcohol was a place to get off the road and run away. Now, the alcoholic in recovery has to create new roads – but the family is on the old ones – therefore, everyone must be in recovery.

Alcoholism is a disease one is born with and can be inherited. You might not know you have it until you take your first drink.

Alcohol may also be used by the addict to self medicate clinical mental health disorders that have been undiagnosed or left untreated.

As the addict goes through recovery, the family must heal also from the harms placed on them by the addict and from any diseases of the heart they themselves have as well. The family needs to be in recovery also and this takes time, patience, prayer and safe communication skills. These skills the family can learn in Al-Anon and in a Muslim Recovery Meeting, benefiting from the knowledge acquired in these meetings. Al-Anon is a 12 step, anonymous, and spiritual program also. Families go to meetings and work on the 12 step program of recovery with a sponsor also.

In our Muslim Recovery Meeting Family Nights we pass out recovery beads, have guest speakers, round table discussions, and Big Book readings. We also give families assignments of passages to read in the Big Book and writing projects.

We help them find Al-Anon meetings in their town. We also have family meetings to discuss diseases of the heart and their cures.

Just because an addict is Muslim or from a certain cultural background does not mean that AA can not be used as a supplement to a Muslim Addiction Recovery Support Group. For example, if it was

cancer, the family would seek the medical protocols for a cure that all other people from different religions and cultures benefit from, and supplement with their own prayers and duas. Addiction is a disease and the tools for recovery are AA, 28 day in-patient rehab (if needed), and Al-Anon. The families need to use all of the tools, and Al-Anon is an important one. All of this should be supplemented with a Muslim Recovery Program. Addicts help other addicts recover. Families who've gone through it help new families recover. Muslims continue to increase their spiritual life alongside these recovery programs.

We receive blessings through our struggles, our tests, and how we handle them. We can not take the test for someone else, no matter how hard we want to “fix” the addict. There is no quick fix – it's the addicts life long recovery process that he has to do on his own with your support and love. You, the family, have to take your test as well.

Don't deprive each other of your blessings – let each take his own test and establish his own relationship with Allah (S.W.T.) - you the family member, as well.

This is ultimately a tremendous opportunity for spiritual growth that each person has to accomplish on their own with each other's support and care and love.

You can not live the addict's life for him. This may be hard. At some point you must trust in Allah's (S.W.T.) Will to bring the addict to recovery and the family to healing and recovery. The addict needs to experience whatever “bottom” Allah (S.W.T.) chooses. We must trust that Allah (S.W.T.) knows each of our abilities to handle what we can. It is ultimately a test in Trust!

“Let Go and Let God!”

Because one is Muslim does not mean you don't need AA or Al-Anon. AA has been proven a successful spiritual program for decades around the world. It would be my hope that more Muslim recovery meetings are created to supplement our addicts in AA.

An addict is not necessarily a “bad” person. He is sick with a spiritual disease, and most likely other diseases of the heart – character flaws. These character flaws must be continuously worked on with long-term efforts and patience. AA is a spiritual program designed for living. It applies to work, family, and relationships. An addict in recovery usually finds comfort and fellowship in attending meetings in his life long recovery program.

There is no cure. It's a one-day-at-a-time recovery assisted through the fellowship of other recovering addicts.

Muslims can be addicts if Allah (S.W.T.) Wills. Families should not blame themselves or feel guilty, nor should they shame the addict. The addict and his family can heal together and pray for Allah's (S.W.T.) Mercy, and Forgiveness, and Healing.

Another issue to be addressed is the Disease of the Heart concerning love of money and reputation. The family should not hold back on getting the addict appropriate care for recovery due to concerns of reputation, pride, and wealth. Allah (S.W.T.) holds back and Allah (S.W.T.) provides as he Wills. We should not question God's Will.

Also the addict may himself be gambling with misuses of the family's finances in manipulative efforts to acquire funds to support his addiction. Address any issues of your enabling the addict in your Al-Anon meetings.

Tough love does not mean you do not love!

But on all accounts, all parties involved should be respectful and kind, and appreciative that this is a private matter to be discussed only with the members of the family, and community that the experts advise, and with the people the addict gives permission to be included in the process of recovery. Be respectful of the addicts home, possessions, and family. Safe places to talk are in Muslim Recovery Meetings, AA, and Al-Anon – as these are all anonymous.

Families must continue to pray for Allah (S.W.T.) to take care of their affairs and facilitate their needs. Remember that none of this is within our “control.” The addict cannot control his addiction and has to give it to Allah (S.W.T.) The family cannot control the addict – they have to Trust in Allah's (S.W.T.) Will! This is ultimately a test in surrendering to and trusting in Allah! (S.W.T.)

“Let Go and Let God!”

Pray to Allah (S.W.T.) to guide you on how to guide your family member, the addict. This is a serious illness with serious consequences if recovery is not sought. Be loving, and kind, and tough, and forgiving. Pray for each other! Through prayer, Allah (S.W.T.) will lead you to the people and resources you need to help you and the addict to recover – In'sha Allah (S.W.T.)!

“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

The Goal

This booklet and this Muslim Addiction Recovery Program is a work in progress.

In'sha Allah! (S.W.T.)

It is to be used in conjunction with other 12 Step Programs, such as AA.

We are a work in progress, Alhamdulillah!

We must be mindful of the Goal... and, In'sha Allah (S.W.T.), we will get There together.

“...from transforming and recreating you in forms unknown to you”

-Q (56:61)

Future goals would be for this Muslim Recovery Program to work with local mosques, hospitals, out-patient programs, and eventually have our own 28 day recovery rehab clinic for Muslims, In'sha Allah! (S.W.T.)

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Charity in recovery is to help other addicts!

“To keep it, you gotta give it away!”

It is my prayer that Allah (S.W.T.) blesses this project and sends advisors and support to help us grow and improve in order to help Muslim addicts heal and have successful lives.

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