

ADDICTION, IS THERE HOPE?

**In The Name Of Allah,
The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful**

PREFACE

The aim of this book is to help Muslims who have an addict in their family through better understanding of addiction and the role the family plays in recovery, not only for the addict but for themselves as well.

Sadly today the Muslim community has its share of drug and alcohol problems. Some have succumbed to the lure of taking the easy way out in life, following their desires, given in to materialism and forgetting sincere worship, obedience and gratitude to Allah (swt) [subhanallahu wa ta`ala - Glory to Allah Most High]. Some of our youth have especially been the victims of this. Their Islamic upbringing has been neglected. They have fallen prey to peer pressures and evil, which they are constantly bombarded with and are caught up in the awful grip of drug and or alcohol addiction and associated crime. Without the tools of Islamic knowledge and faith to guide, help and comfort them through the minefield of evil in this society, they are left without protection. They are lost unless they are given and accept the truth. The truth that only Islam has to offer.

It is our responsibility to face up to the problem, not covering it up, pretending it doesn't exist. We must accept the fact that our youth are suffering and are in desperate need of our help. It is up to every able Muslim to work towards solving this problem. This doesn't necessarily mean every Muslim has to be a trained social worker, working in this field: but every Muslim has the responsibility to at least educate themselves and their families, firstly about their deen (Islamic way of life) and about drug addiction, its causes, effects and solutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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May Allah reward them all in this life and the next.

SUPPORT NETWORK

Your comments, suggestions and advice regarding this book and related matters are welcome. If you would like to contact other Muslims to establish a support network please write to:

**Umm 'Umar
c/o SADAQAH,
P.O. Box 6191,
Lakemba Business Centre,
NSW 2195.Australia.**

INTRODUCTION

The life of the family of a person with drug addiction can become an existence of misery, anxiety, frustration, confusion, and desperation. Normal life is devastated. But there is a way to regain sanity and normality back into life. The keys to finding the answers are 1) turning to **ALLAH** (swt) for guidance and help, and 2) knowledge about drugs, addiction, and the role the family plays in recovery.

Alhamdulillah, (Praise Allah) Muslims should always have hope that Allah (swt) will help us out of our difficulties and not despair.

Qur'an Surah (Chapter) al-Talaq 65: 2+3

"...and whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out"

"...and whoever relies upon Allah, then indeed He is sufficient for him"

Allah (swt) often mentions the importance of seeking knowledge, for example:

Qur'an Surah az-Zumar 39: 9

"... Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?"

The following chapters will, insha Allah (if Allah wills), provide some information that will give a clearer understanding about drugs, addiction and related issues which will help the family to cope with the addict in their life and improve their situation.

What Does Islam Say About Intoxicants?

The warning against using intoxicants was revealed by Allah (swt) gradually to get the people familiar with the idea, until the total prohibition was declared.

Allah (swt) says:-

Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah 2: 219

"They ask you (O Muhammad) about wine and gambling. Say 'in them is great sin and (yet, some) benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit'...Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses (of revelation) that you might give thought"*

*"wine" – in Arabic "khamr":- includes all intoxicants.

Qur'an Surah an-Nisa 4: 43

"O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying"

This verse was revealed before the total prohibition of intoxicants.

Qur'an Surah al-Ma'idah 5: 90

"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling (sacrificing on) stone alters (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not then abstain?"*

* - the prohibition understood from the word 'avoid' is stronger than if Allah (swt) had merely said 'abstain'. The former requires distancing oneself from anything remotely related to these practices.

The use of medications prescribed by doctors or available over the counter, must not be abused and used with intention of becoming intoxicated.

What Are Drugs?

Drugs can be divided into three categories:

1. Prescribed Drugs (Medications)
2. Alcohol
3. Marijuana, Heroin, Cocaine, Ecstasy etc.

Generally speaking drugs and alcohol are used to satisfy the need to feel relief.

Addictive drugs cause either a reduction of pain or a heightening of mood, altering the mind's perception of reality. A person who has been abusing drugs for a long period of time may become emotionally desensitized and appear unfeeling.

Drugs have different forms, so depending on the drug, the amount taken and frequency used, the human body is affected in different ways. They have different short and long term effects. Addicts develop tolerance to and dependency on drugs and suffer different effects of withdrawal according to the type of drug/s they use.

Drug addiction reduces a person's ability to live a normal life. Dependence can lead to a variety of health, financial, legal, employment and relationship problems.

***What Is Addiction?**

The brain and other systems in the body have functions and tasks to perform. Specific substances control these functions. These substances either activate or block these functions. The substances that activate the functions are called activators or stimulants while the substances that block these functions are called blockers or depressants. Each function in the body has an ON switch and an OFF switch, these switches are called receptors. So, for a drug to have an effect on the body, it must work on these switches (receptors) throughout the body including the central nervous system by binding to them.

The drugs replace important natural substances (activators or blockers) produced in the body and brain for its natural function. When the drug supply to the body continues, the body reduces the production of its own natural substances to provide a healthy balance for functions required, this is the point when physical addiction starts.*

Tolerance, Dependence and Withdrawal

The person becomes psychologically (habitually) and physically addicted to the drugs or alcohol because they develop a tolerance to and dependence on them.

***Tolerance** means that a person builds up the ability to tolerate more and more of the drug. They take higher amounts of the drug to achieve the same effects they used to have with lower amounts.*

Dependence on a drug means that it takes up a lot of the person's thoughts, emotions, and activities. The person constantly seeks the relief that drugs give him/her and also seeks to avoid the mental and physical horrors of withdrawal.

Addiction takes hold of the person's life. Daily life for the addict is obsession with the getting and using of drugs. The initial problem he/she was trying to avoid has perhaps now faded from memory. The more they use drugs the guiltier they feel and the more depressed they become. An addict will sacrifice his/her personal integrity, relationships with family and friends, studies, employment, savings, anything, to get more drugs.

* Medical facts by Dr. Tamer El-Kahil *

The Cycle Of Quitting, Withdrawal, Craving And Relapse

The addict's body becomes unable to make its own natural substances (activators and blockers) so when an addict tries to quit taking drugs, the brain sends demands for more to maintain normal functions. The person then suffers withdrawal and cravings that are so powerful he/she will find any excuse to use drugs again, which causes relapse.

Addiction is often called an "illness" or a "disease". The Islamic view of these terms does not mean that the addict is not responsible and accountable for his/her own choices and actions. The addict has choices; get help to recover, or continue his/her miserable existence.

*Dangers Involved With Drug Abuse

Major dangers include:

1) Toxic reaction or overdose with potentially lethal consequence. This occurs because the drug (heroin for example) is often mixed to different degrees with other substances (lactose, powdered milk, etc). A person may use the same quantity but because of higher purity (ie; stronger) unintentional overdose may result.

2) The use of dirty needles by intravenous users causes increased risks of infection of hepatitis B and C, infection of the heart lining (bacterial endocarditis), and infection with the AIDS virus (human immunodeficiency virus or HIV), and are causes of death in intravenous drug users and their sexual partners.*

* Medical facts by Dr. Tamer El-Kahil *

Why Does A Person Become An Addict?

People do not intend to become addicts. Drug and alcohol use can start because of a variety of reasons such as socializing, peer group pressure, curiosity, medical or other reasons.

Everyone experiences problems in their lives. People without true iman (faith with submission) and tawakol (reliance) in Allah (swt) find they cannot cope with their problems and turn to drugs because they appear to solve their problems. Of course their problems remain and when the person becomes sober they once again find they can't cope so repeat the drug use to gain relief. So begins the process of habitual use that leads to addiction.

As Muslims we have the comfort of knowing that Allah (swt) purifies and strengthens us through trials and afflictions. These trials can come as a result of our own wrong doing and or come our way to test and strengthen our faith and purify us from our sins. We also have the comfort of knowing that we can rely on Allah (swt) to help us through our problems.

Allah (swt) says:

Qur'an Surah al "Ankabut 29:2-3

"Do the people think that they will be left to say "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars."

Qur'an Surah al-Baqaroh 2:286

"Allah does not charge a soul except (with that within) it's capacity. It will have (the consequence of) what (good) it has gained, and it will bear (the consequence of) what (evil) it has earned...."

Qur'an Surah al-Mu'minun 23:62

"And We tax not any person except according to his capacity, and with Us is a record which speaks the truth, and they will not be wronged."

Qur'an Surah al-Mulk 67:2

“Who (Allah) has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed, and He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.”

S'ad (raa) [radiallahu anhu – may Allah be pleased with him] reported that the Prophet Muhammad (saaw) [sollAllahu alayhi wassallam - Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him] said:

“The most in their suffering among the people are the prophets, then the best, then the (next) best. One is afflicted in accordance with his deen (faith). If his deen is firm, his affliction is hard, and if his deen is weak, his affliction is light. Indeed, one would be so much subjected with adversity until he walks among the people without any sins.”

Recorded by Ahmed, at-Tirmithee and others, authenticated by al-Albaanee (Saheeh ul-Jaami' no. 993)

Aisha (raa) narrated that once some pain afflicted the Prophet (saaw), causing him to suffer and turn about in his bed. He (saaw) said to her:

“An ailment is intensified for the righteous. Whenever a believer is afflicted by a hardship, whether it is a thorn or more, a sin is taken off from him because of it, and he is elevated by one rank (in jannah).”

Recorded by Ahmed. Authenticated by al Haakim, ath-Thahabee and al-Albaanee.

Abu Hurairah (raa) reported that the Prophet (saaw) said:

“Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by harm from sickness or other matters, Allah will drop his sins because of that, like a tree drops it's leaves.”

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others.

Why Can't An Addict “Just Stop”?

Addicts cannot stop using drugs for a combination of reasons:

- The addict has not got iman (faith with submission) or tawakol (reliance) on Allah (swt).
- Mental and physical cravings for the drug.
- The habitual addiction (the addicts lifestyle).
- The original problem may not be resolved.
- Fear of the horrors of withdrawal.

Behaviour And Character Of An Addict

The addict personality includes behaviour and characteristics such as:

- Mood swings.
- Unreliability.
- Unable to finish projects.
- Unexpressed resentment and secret hatreds.
- Dishonesty;- lying to family, friends and others.
- Withdraws from those who love him/her and isolates self.
- Intentionally causes arguments with loved ones.
- Uses intimidation, threats, violence.
- May appear chronically depressed.
- Pawning or selling anything of value and getting into increased debt.
- May begin criminal activities to raise money for drugs.

The Relationship Between An Addict And The Family

Most people naturally think that the solution to the problem is to get the addict to just stop using, then life will return to normal and all the problems will go away. Unfortunately it's not that simple nor is it realistic.

Firstly you cannot “just stop” an addict from using drugs. There are spiritual, psychological and physical problems involved that have to be dealt with and these things need professional help and take time.

The addict has an enormous amount of control over the family. He/she can escape the responsibility of facing up to doing something about his/her addiction in different ways.

For example the addict:-

- Refuses to discuss the problem, withdraws from his/her loved ones and isolates him/herself.
- Begs for forgiveness and promises that it won't happen again.
- Deliberately causes arguments to make the family angry with him/her, then uses this conflict to justify his/her using drugs.

The addict keeps his/her drug habit supplied on a daily basis by methods which can involve lying, manipulation, promises, threats, intimidation, emotional blackmail, stealing, borrowing money, pawning things of value etc.

This continual cycle of behaviour causes the family to become more and more anxious over the addict. Eventually the family members become obsessed with the addict's problems and the problems he/she causes the family.

Family Actions and Reactions

The addict has the ability to manipulate the family into behaviour that actually “enables” him/her to continue using drugs. The family needs to understand how their behaviour affects the situation and how to modify it. When the family improves their own understanding, attitudes, actions and reactions this will not only help them to recover but also improve the addict's chance of recovery, insha Allah.

The family members find themselves behaving in ways that they wouldn't normally. Some of these behaviours are:

- Lying, making up excuses for / pretending / covering up for addict's behaviour in front of others.
- Becoming antisocial so that they do not have to answer questions about the addict.
- Always being cautious during conversation with people, unable to relax and talk freely.
- Trying to out manipulate the addict.
- Their thoughts are always about the addict; how to make them stop, what will happen next, the financial problems etc.
- Unable to concentrate on tasks at hand.
- Neglecting the needs and welfare of the other members of the family and themselves.
- Becoming unwell;- suffering anxiety, depression, nervous tension, headaches etc.
- Finding themselves nagging, arguing, lecturing and recalling the addict's past mistakes.
- Paying the addicts debts to keep them out of trouble and to cover up for them.
- Hiding money and valuables.
- Searching the addict's room and belongings for drugs and associated tools.
- Borrowing money for the addict.
- Going to charity organizations for help to buy food and or pay bills.

Generally their lives become unmanageable and miserable. Some families feel so ashamed of the problem that they cannot bring themselves to seek help. Sometimes, the addict ends up in jail, which may mean partial relief for the family but not complete. The family suffers anxiety over the addict's stay in jail and what is going to happen when he/she is released. A woman whose husband is an addict, may be in the situation where he is not providing for her and the children properly. She should not wait until there is no food in the house, the electricity, gas and telephone are being cut off, and eviction notices are being sent to the house because the rent has not been paid. She must take serious action. Allah (swt) has decreed rights of support and protection for women and children, she should demand those rights and do what is necessary to obtain them.

Sometimes a family member may have psychological problems or an illness of their own. In cases like this the family member needs professional help, and Islamic guidance.

How Does The Family Stop “Enabling” The Addict And Start Their Own Recovery?

As was mentioned before the behaviour of the family of the addict can actually “enable” the addict to continue using drugs. The bottom line is that the family’s behaviour protects the addict from facing up to his/her own responsibilities. The family is always pretending, covering up for and bailing the addict out of trouble.

The family members of the addict are not the right people to treat the illness of the addict. They are too close and emotionally involved and do not have the expertise. The addict needs professional help.

It is imperative for the recovery of the family and hopefully the addict, that the family learns to modify their own behaviour.

Some examples are:

- Do not try to “control” the addict, he/she is responsible for his/her own choices and actions.
- Don’t nag, lecture and remind the addict of past mistakes.
- Do not be drawn into arguments with the addict. You don’t need the stress and the addict will use the arguing to justify his/her using.
- Do not assist the addict by bailing out him/her of debt, lending or giving them money, lending them items to pawn etc.
- Let them face the consequences of their own actions.
- Calmly but firmly explain to the addict that their addiction is their own problem and if they choose to disobey Allah (swt) by using drugs then they can do it without your help. But let them know that if and when they choose to take steps to get help to quit, then you will be there to help and support them. You can tell them that there are places they could go to for help, perhaps offer them some literature to read.

- So much of your time and energy has gone into the addict, now instead spend some time and energy on looking after yourself and your family. Do some activities that will make you and them happy.
- Don’t tolerate the addict using drugs in the family home.
- Strictly guard your prayers, read Qur’an often, for this is a healing and mercy
- Release the addict into the care of Allah, you have no power over his/ her addiction
- Have hope but remember to accept qadar Allah, [destiny]
- Keep company with other Muslims who are practicing their deen (Islamic way of life) correctly.
- Attend Islamic classes regularly and learn about your deen. It will, insha Allah, increase your love for Allah (swt) and instill iman, tawakol and taqwa in your heart which will help you to cope with any problem in life, (insha Allah).
- Attend meetings with people who have similar problems. Often sharing your experiences is helpful in the process of recovery.

As well as this, the family members should do some sincere soul searching. Have they done their best to nurture their relationship with their loved one prior to the addiction? Did they have good two-way communication? Did they practice Islam correctly and share their knowledge about the beauty and blessings of Islam. They must answer honestly because they must be prepared to resolve relationship problems. There is no guarantee but it may help their loved one to recover from their addiction, insha Allah.

Reliance on Allah (swt)

The individual family members must turn to Allah (swt), making sincere tauwbah (repentance) for their own sins and shortcomings, remember Allah’s favours and mercy with gratitude and humbleness, put their trust in and reliance on Allah (swt) as He has the power to do anything.

Allah (swt) says in **Qur’an Surah ash-Shoora 42: 25**

“ and it is He who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do.”

Qur'an Surah Hud 11; 123

“And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth and to Him return all affairs (for decision), so worship Him and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do.”

Qur'an Surah al-Imran 3: 150

“Nay, Allah is your Protector, and He is the Best of Helpers”

Qur'an Surah al “Ankabut 29:2-3

“Do the people think that they will be left to say “We believe” and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars”

Qur'an Surah al-Baqaroh 2:286

“Allah does not charge a soul except (with that within) it's capacity. It will have (the consequence of) what (good) it has gained, and it will bear (the consequence of) what (evil) it has earned.

Accept that every person is accountable and responsible for his or her own choices and actions.

The next thing the family must understand and accept is that every person is accountable and responsible for his or her own choices and actions, and Allah (swt) will not help a person unless they open their heart to Him and ask His help sincerely.

Qur'an Surah al-Anfal 8: 53

“That is because Allah would not change the favour which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.”

Qur'an Surah Al-An`am 6:17

“And if Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it but He, and if He touches you with good, then He is able to do all things.”

Alhamdulillah, Allah (swt) hears the do`a (supplication) of His servants. So make do`a to Allah (swt) in hope but always accept with patience the qadar that befalls, because you can't change the past and Allah is with those who are patient.

Qur'an Surah Ash-Sharh 94:8

“And to your Lord turn your invocations”

Qur'an Surah Al-Anfaal 8:46

“And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you lose courage and your strength depart, and be patient. Surely, Allah is with those who are patient.”

Sincere Advice For The Family Of The Addict

The family can offer the addict advice on where to go for help but the addict must take responsibility for their own recovery. If, after repeated attempts to offer help, advice and support the addict still does not make any real effort to get help to recover and continues to cause his/her family misery and hardship, then the hard truth is that the best thing a family can do is to demand that the addict leave the family home and not return until they are clean from drugs. The sooner the addict hits bottom, hopefully and insha Allah the sooner he/she will seek help. It is often very difficult for a family to take such serious action. Unfortunately though they will find that in the end, after maybe months or even years of living in pain with their addict, this is the action they will finally have to take.

Supplications

Qur'an Surah Ash-Sharh 94:8

“And to your Lord turn your invocations”



Supplication for seeking refuge with Allah from anxiety and sorrow etc.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ ،
وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ ،
وَضَعْفِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ .

Allahumma innee a`oothubika minalhammi walhuzni,
wal`ajzi walkasali walbukhli waljubni,
wa doliddaini wa ghalabatirrojaal.

*“O Allaah, I take refuge in You from anxiety and sorrow,
weakness and laziness, miserliness and cowardice,
the burden of debts and from being over powered by men.”*



Supplication when stricken with a mishap or overtaken by an event.

قَدَّرَ اللَّهُ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَّ
حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ وَزِعَمَ الْوَكِيلُ .

Qoddarollahu wamaa shaa'a fa`ala
Hasbiyallaahu wa ni`mal wakeel

*“Allah has decreed and what He wills, He does”
“Sufficient is Allah for me and how fine a trustee (He is).”*



Supplication for one afflicted by a calamity

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ
اللَّهُمَّ أَجِنِّي فِي مُسِيبَتِي وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا .

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raaj`oon
Allahumma ajurnee fee museebatee wakhluf lee khoiyron minhaa.

*“To Allah we belong and unto Him is our return.
O Allah, recompense me for my affliction and
replace it for me with something better.”*



Where To Go For Help

Some suggestions:

- A Muslim doctor.
- An Imam or Sheik who has knowledge and understanding of the problems associated with drug abuse.
- Islamic Centres, Islamic Women's organisations, Islamic Youth organisations. [These may not be able to offer you immediate help, but your asking may motivate them to start working towards projects that will help in the future].

Many Muslims are reluctant to go to non-Muslim agencies for help and advice, fearing that the advice they receive will be un-Islamic. This is understandable but until an Islamic alternative is established it is better to take what is good and beneficial from their knowledge and ignore what is not, rather than not seek help at all.

NOTE: You and your family have the right to live in safety. If you and or members of your family become victims of violence – get help! In emergencies call 000 (Australia) for police assistance. Or, if it's not an emergency you may call your local Police Station. They have special Domestic Violence Liaison Officers who can offer you help, and protection.

The following is a list of Government and private agencies, which can help insha Allah.

Address: Rozelle Hospital Grounds
Balmain Rd. Rozelle
Postal address: Private Mail Bag 6 Rozelle NSW 2039
Phone: (02) 9818 0444
Email: ceida@ceida.cs.nsw.gov.au
Website: <http://www.ceida.net.au>
Services: CEIDA is a branch of the NSW Health Dept. Their role is in research and education. They offer help and support to organisations and individuals who work or want to work in this field.

NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Postal address: P.O. Box 1189
Lane Cove NSW 1595
Phone: (02) 9418 8728
Services: Nar-anon Family Groups is an anonymous self-help fellowship for the family and friends whose lives are affected by the drug abuse in a loved one. They provide literature and meetings in many areas.

NARCANON

Phone: (02) 4377 1107
Website: www.narconon.org
Services: Drug Education and Rehabilitation

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Address: 1st Floor, 204 King St.
Sydney NSW
Phone: (02) 9212 3444

ADIS - Alcohol And Drug Information Service

Phone: 24 hours - (02) 9361 2111

HEALTH CARE INTERPRETER SERVICE

South West Syney (02) 9828 6088
West Sydney (02) 9840 3456
Central Syndey (02) 9515 3222

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Address: Level 1, Trades Hall
4 Goulburn St. Sydney NSW

Phone: (02) 9264 9255

Address: Allen Arcade
114 Henry St. Penrith NSW

Phone: (02) 4731 1442

Services: Al-anon Family Groups is an anonymous self-help fellowship for the family and friends whose lives are affected by alcohol abuse in a loved one.

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Dr. Tamer El-Kahil, MB. BS. Aleppo University, Syria. AMC.

FRACS I, Australia.

CEIDA - Centre for Education & Information on Drugs and Alcohol –
Printed Resources

Nar Anon Family Groups – “A Guide For The Family of the Addict and Drug Abuser”

Narcanon – “The Life Cycle and Mechanics of Addiction”

**May Allah grant His ummah forgiveness and mercy,
guidance and strength to pass the tests in our lives,
and grant us success in this life and the next.**

Ameen