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## Substance Abuse: How to grow a loving heart

About thirty nine million Americans are addicted to drugs each year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These rates are extremely dangerous because they also mean that approximately ninety one people die in America everyday due to overdoses. This is because addicts are unable to stop misusing drugs without professional treatment. However, when one is able to stop his/her addiction, they are able to carry on normal lives. In Islam, Muslims must avoid drugs in order to grow a loving heart which is needed in order to become closer to Allah. Three major symptoms of drug addiction are gradually killing themselves, poor social interaction, and becoming paranoid. All of these symptoms can begin to distance one from Allah.

When one is abusing the use of any substance, they start to practically kill themselves. When a human hurts their own body, they become farther away from Allah. Protecting oneself is a very important part of being a good muslim. According to studies from the Brain Injury Association of America, nearly a quarter of people who require rehabilitation from brain injury are in need of help due to the misuse of drugs. One brain injury that is common after overdosing a drug is called hypoxic Brain Injury. This brain injury results in loss of brain cells that can cause death. Allah says in the Quran, "And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful." In this Ayah, Allah tells us that a Muslim is forbidden to kill him/herself. All of

the Ayah's in the Quran have meaning or rulings that we need to follow and learn from, this Ayah reminds us that we can not kill ourselves. Being addicted to drugs makes a human abuse his/her own body. Anybody who misuses drugs loses the ability to follow Allah's command because they are killing themselves. This problem can easily make us farther away from Allah.

Abusing drugs has many effects on the human mind. However, one major impact of abusing substances is on social interaction. When a human does not know how to interact with other people, they begin to become farther away from Allah. Many studies show that when a person is high on a substance, they verbalize things that they wouldn't say if their brain wasn't damaged. This behavior will take a person away from Allah (SWT) because in the Quran it says, "Worship Allah alone and associate none with Him. And be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, near and distant neighbors, close friends, needy travelers, and those bonds people in your possession. Surely Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful-"(4:36). This Ayah tells us that humans must be kind and respect other people. When someone is constantly abusing a substance, they lose control of their emotions and are not able to follow what Allah says in this Ayah. Allah tells us all of the rulings of Islam in the Quran and people can use the Quran to read the obligations that humans need to follow in order to become closer to him. Therefore, abusing drugs makes a human lose their connection with Allah (SWT) because being addicted makes a person have poor social interaction.

Lastly, being on a drug also causes abnormal human behavior. This is another situation that can make a person farther from Allah. According to American Addiction Centers, drug addiction makes a person irregularly paranoid. When a human is always

worried, they are unable to have good character. There is an authentic hadith that is narrated by Abu Ad-Dardh that says, "Nothing is placed on the Scale that is heavier than good character. Indeed the person with good character will have attained the rank of the person of fasting and prayer." This hadith shows that having good character is a Sunnah of the Prophet. When a person is addicted to overusing a drug, they are not able to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammed (SAW). When a human gets addicted to drugs, they are incapable of having good character. These behaviors are the reason for a human to become farther away from Allah.

Although it is clear to many people that drug addiction is not healthy for any person, some think otherwise. Many people believe that being addicted is a way to feel better about bad situations that might occur in a person's life or a way to fit into a society. However, this mentality is very inaccurate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, some people that get addicted are prone to lethal diseases after they have felt the pleasure of taking the drug. When one gets addicted to a drug, they become weaker people physically and mentally which makes them farther away from Allah. Even though being addicted can make a person feel good, it has a counter effect that makes the person a weaker muslim.

Muslims must strive to grow a loving heart because it is the key to getting closer to Allah. The believing heart has to be cared for if the Muslim wants to foster love inside of his/her heart. Drug use hinders the growth of a loving heart. When a person becomes addicted to a drug, they are unable to connect with Allah and worship him correctly with a sound mind and heart. Drug addiction makes a human practically kill himself. Drug

addicts also have very little social interaction, and bad character. These three things distance a person from Allah(SWT).