



How to Overcome Addiction through Faith: Ibn Al-Qayyim's Rehabilitation Program

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Preface

A flurry of highly curated images, sounds, videos, lights and colors designed to captivate our minds flood our consciousness on a daily basis. Mass production of food products engineered in labs to tease our taste buds fill our pantries and satiate our appetites. Intoxicants have never been more widely available with the decriminalization of recreational drugs in a number of countries and the pharmacological use of illicit drugs for pain relief and mental illness. The opioid epidemic has surged onto public concern as middle-upper class populations in developed nations are in the grips of a drug crisis. The spirit of modernity seems to allure humanity to an endless pursuit of instant gratification by using the most advanced technologies. Even the color of the notification icons on our phones are designed to keep us coming back for more.

It is not an overstatement to declare that we are living in a dopaminergic society. This means that society is structured in a way that aims to maximize the release of dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with pleasure in our brains. The consequences of this reality is that our hearts can become captive to the various forces that seek to dominate our minds. Addictions to devices,¹ social media, video gaming, films, Netflix, sexual content, and illicit substances have gripped all levels of society. One study in 2011 found that 59% of the 313 study participants self-reported feeling 'addicted' to social media.² In 2014, Griffiths et al. published a paper with international data warning of an impending epidemic of internet addiction. The data suggested that young people experienced symptoms found in addiction, including withdrawal and relapse.³ A recent study in Türkiye found that 16% of university students met the criteria for an internet addiction.⁴ Arguably the modern online addiction that seems to be the most disastrous in terms of its

¹ Mustafa Ozkan and Betul Solmaz, "Mobile Addiction of Generation Z and Its Effects on Their Social Lives: An Application Among University Students in the 18–23 Age Group," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 205 (2015): 92–98.

² Jaclyn Cabral, "Is Generation Y Addicted to Social Media?," *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* 2, no. 1 (2011): 5–14.

³ Cabral, "Is Generation Y Addicted to Social Media?"

⁴ Ugurcan Sayili, Betul Zehra Pirdal, Busra Kara, Nurefsan Acar, Emirhan Camcioglu, Erkin Yilmaz, Gunay Can, and Ethem Erginoz, "Internet Addiction and Social Media Addiction in Medical Faculty Students: Prevalence, Related Factors, and Association with Life Satisfaction," *Journal of Community Health* 48, no. 2 (2023): 189–98.

consequences is addiction to sexual content.⁵ Statistics show alarming usage with an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ While there is debate in the literature regarding the formal diagnosis of 'pornography addiction,' there are multiple studies that have demonstrated that problematic use as defined in the field correlates with mental illness.⁷ The International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11), a diagnostic manual used in mental health research, includes a category called compulsive sexual behavior disorder (CSBD) and lists problematic online pornography use as a symptom.⁸

There is a strong role that society plays in generating, maintaining, and exacerbating the problem of addiction. Poverty, broken homes, abuse and other chronic social stressors can make subpopulations in a society particularly vulnerable to becoming addicted to substances or behaviors.⁹ This problem becomes magnified when these vulnerabilities are exploited by multi-million dollar industries that promote alcohol,¹⁰ tobacco,¹¹ gambling,¹² pornography,^{13,14} and opioids.¹⁵

⁵ Haseeb Mehmood Qadri, Abdul Waheed, Ali Munawar, Hasan Saeed, Saad Abdullah, Tayyba Munawar, Shaheer Luqman, Junaid Saffi, Awais Ahmad, and Muhammad Saad Babar, "Physiological, Psychosocial and Substance Abuse Effects of Pornography Addiction: A Narrative Review," *Cureus* 15, no. 1 (2023).

⁶ Joshua B. Grubbs, Samuel L. Perry, Jennifer T. Grant Weinandy, and Shane W. Kraus, "Pornemic? A Longitudinal Study of Pornography Use Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in a Nationally Representative Sample of Americans," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 115.

⁷ Jonathan K. Noel, Sharon Jacob, Jennifer E. Swanberg, and Samantha R. Rosenthal, "Pornography: A Concealed Behavior with Serious Consequences," *Rhode Island Medical Journal* 106, no. 3 (2023), 29–34.

⁸ Dane Mauer-Vakil and Anees Bahji, "The Addictive Nature of Compulsive Sexual Behaviours and Problematic Online Pornography Consumption: A Review," *Canadian Journal of Addiction* 11, no. 3 (2020): 42–51.

⁹ Ewald, D. R., Strack, R. W., & Orsini, M. M. (2019). Rethinking addiction. *Global Pediatric Health*, 6, 2333794X18821943.

¹⁰ Karnani, A. (2013). Impact of alcohol on poverty and the need for appropriate policy. *Alcohol: Science, Policy and Public Health*, 354.

¹¹ Brown-Johnson, C. G., England, L. J., Glantz, S. A., & Ling, P. M. (2014). Tobacco industry marketing to low socioeconomic status women in the USA. *Tobacco control*.

¹² Markham, F., & Young, M. (2015). "Big gambling": the rise of the global industry-state gambling complex. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 23(1), 1-4.

¹³ McKee, A. (2007). The relationship between attitudes towards women, consumption of pornography, and other demographic variables in a survey of 1,023 consumers of pornography. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 19(1), 31-45.

¹⁴ Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2016). Adolescents and pornography: A review of 20 years of research. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53(4-5), 509-531.

¹⁵ Hadland, S. E., Rivera-Aguirre, A., Marshall, B. D., & Cerdá, M. (2019). Association of pharmaceutical industry marketing of opioid products with mortality from opioid-related overdoses. *JAMA network open*, 2(1), e186007-e186007.

It is encouraging to see these problems recognized and under investigation in various academic disciplines including medicine, psychology, neuroscience, social studies, and the humanities. But there are problems with society's tendency to medicalize social problems and limit analysis to exclusively empirical paradigms. This methodology produces gaping blind spots that ignore important spiritual factors in the genesis, prevention, and therapy of all these problematic addictions. As Muslims, we must recognize the role of the spirit (*rūḥ*), the ego (*nafs*), demonic entities (*shayāṭīn*), angelic entities (*malā'ika*), faith (*imānīyyāt*), guidance (*hidāyah*), and divine aid (*tawfīq*).

This shortcoming of the field of psychology, particularly in regards to addiction was recognized by Carl Jung in his letter to the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, William Wilson, "I am strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world leads the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition if it is not counteracted either by real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community."¹⁶

Muslims should recognize the advantage we have in possessing a revealed framework for understanding the spiritual realities that can deeply impact our mind, souls, and bodies. It is in reflection with this revelation that an entire tradition of dealing with problematic cravings and desires emerged within the field of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the self). In this vast tradition we discover insights into addiction that did not exist in the Western tradition of addiction science until centuries later. Suffice it to say, the Islamic tradition is an important arena of research for Muslims who are interested in appreciating a more realistic conception of addiction beyond material reductionism. It also contains great wisdom that can provide preventative and therapeutic strategies for believers to aid them in their journey through the dark worlds of addiction. This augments existing scientific research in addiction treatment and enables us to take an integrative approach that is rooted in the Islamic worldview.

¹⁶ Carl G. Jung and I. May, "The Bill W.—Carl Jung Letters," *AA Grapevine* 19, no. 8 (1963): 2.

Introduction

It has been claimed by Western scholarship that there was no formal recognition of the psychological effects of addiction until the 17th century. This recognition is attributed to a group of Christian theologians who wrote on the phenomenon of 'losing control' to substances, which became the basis for the modern concept of addiction.¹⁷ Moreover, specific interventions are thought to be non-existent until the 19th century.¹⁸ Prior to this, the dominant understanding of addiction came from the Roman physician Cornelius Celsus (d. 50 C.E.) who was considered to be the first to categorize 'dependence' on intoxicating substances as a disease. However, he conceptualized dependence as being solely physical without reference to the deep psychological effects. Furthermore, there is absolutely no mention of the concept of behavioral addiction until the modern period.¹⁹

It is in this context that we present a translation and commentary of the final chapter of *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn* (Garden of the Lovers)²⁰ written by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) on the topic of addiction. He predates the 17th-century Calvinist theologians by over 300 years in describing the psychological effects of addiction and the notion of 'loss of control.' He is also the first to explicitly describe the possibility of addiction to a behavior in addition to substances. We say explicitly, because there seems to be an implicit recognition even earlier in the field of *tazkiyya*, which conceptualized desires as diseases in the heart that require curative interventions and recognized phenomena like habituation (*i'tiyād*).²¹ Ibn al-Qayyim seems to have been the first to distill these ideas into a coherent concept of addiction. He also provides a substantive list of psychospiritual recommendations that can be used in the rehabilitation of addicts.²²

¹⁷ Jung and May, "The Bill W."

¹⁸ Jung and May, "The Bill W."

¹⁹ Jon E. Grant, Marc N. Potenza, Aviv Weinstein, and David A. Gorelick, "Introduction to Behavioral Addictions," *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 36, no. 5 (2010): 233–241.

²⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn*, ed. Muḥammad 'Azīz Shams (Jeddah: Dār 'Alam al-Fawā'id, 2010).

²¹ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān al-'amal*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1964), 251.

²² While a previous study covered the topic of addiction in the works of Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, it did not recognize his role as a pioneer in this field; See Abdul Wahhab Md. Ali, W. M. Y. bin Wan Chik, W. H. bin Wan

In this chapter, Ibn al-Qayyim provides his reflections on various verses of the Qur'an, prophetic narrations, and aphorisms from the early Muslims and systematically organizes them into 50 strategies for rehabilitation. The vast majority of the narrations are found in a similar order in *Dhamm al-hawā* (Blameworthy Desires) by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200).²³ Ibn al-Jawzī includes 1277 narrations across 50 chapters that include reports attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, his companions, and the early Muslim generations. Ibn al-Qayyim comments mostly on the narrations found in the second chapter entitled, "Blameworthy desires and passions" (*Fī dhamm al-hawā wa al-shahawāt*). His project can be seen as a reflective commentary on this chapter.

This demonstrates an important methodological point regarding the Islamic tradition. We see here a practical example of a scholar building on the work of other scholars. Ibn al-Jawzī scoured the various compilations of narrations that had been compiled before him. He selects a comprehensive set of narrations that have to do with desire and categorizes them across 50 themes in his *Dhamm al-hawā*. Ibn al-Qayyim uses a chapter of his book to build a rehabilitation plan for those pathologically affected by their desires through a reflective commentary. It is the humble aim of the current article to analyze Ibn al-Qayyim's work and organize it in an accessible way so that others can benefit from and continue to build on it. When it comes to providing solutions to modern problems, it is important that Muslims produce academic work that is genuinely rooted in the Islamic tradition. This is our way of connecting to the light of prophethood that existed 1400 years ago and has traversed generations through the torchbearers of Islamic scholarship. Any work that marginalizes or ignores the Islamic tradition will inevitably be connected to one of the foreign paradigms of modernity that exist today, thereby severing any real ties to Divine revelation that the Islamic tradition enables us to maintain.

Jusoh, M. S. bin Mokhtar, "An Analysis on Stages of Addiction According to Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah's Theory of al-Ishq," *Man India* 97, no. 22 (2018): 425–32.

²³ 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1962).

The translation presented in this treatise is based on the critical edition by the late Bakr Abū Zayd (d. 1429/2008).²⁴ The article provides references for the in-text quotations cited by Ibn al-Qayyim that are not found in Bakr Abu Zayd's edition. A brief commentary on Ibn al-Qayyim's reflections is provided as is an analysis of his therapeutic recommendations. The text can be separated into (1) Prelude and (2) Rehabilitation program. The prelude has been further subdivided into three sections, A) Are all Desires Evil?, B) The Danger of Desires and C) From Desire to Addiction. A commentary is provided after the translation of each individual section to optimize the flow of content. The 50 strategies for rehabilitation are translated altogether with no subdivisions, followed by a commentary that contains a qualitative grounded-theory analysis.²⁵ Footnotes are provided for concepts that may require greater context for the reader to appreciate. Section headings are also added for clarity.

Translation and commentary on the final chapter of *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn*

[Chapter 29](#).²⁶ Concerning the blameworthiness of desires and its opposition to attaining all that one wishes.

Are all desires evil?

We have already mentioned the verses from the Qur'an and reports from the Sunnah regarding this concept.²⁷

Desire (*hawā*) is defined as an instinctual drive towards that which is believed will fulfill it. These drives have been created in humanity because they are necessary for survival. If there were not an impulse to eat, drink, or have intercourse, then

²⁴ 2010 publication by Dār 'Ālim al-Fawā'id in Jeddah, pp. 629-649.

²⁵ This refers to an iterative inductive analysis that seeks to identify an overarching theory from a dataset. The exact process is outlined in the relevant section.

²⁶ The Arabic text of the chapter is available online [here](#).

²⁷ Ibn al-Qayyim is referring to previous chapters of the book that have quoted these verses and narrations in detail.

human beings would not eat, drink, or procreate. Desires act as motivation for what a person wants, just as anger diverts a person away from what harms him. It is not appropriate to problematize all desires unconditionally, but it would also be wrong to say that all desires are praiseworthy. This is the same for anger that is neither praised unconditionally nor blamed unconditionally. Rather what is considered blameworthy is going to an excess of these inclinations such that it goes beyond bringing benefit or averting harm.

Commentary:

The Islamic conception of human desire is a positive one in distinction to other spiritual traditions that place great emphasis on denying basic human drives. The Qur'an references the movement of monasticism within Christianity and emphasizes that this was never commanded by Allah,

And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion, mercy, and monasticism—which they innovated. We did not prescribe it for them except (that they did so) seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance.²⁸

Ibn al-Qayyim discusses the relation of desires to ethics in the beginning of this work,

Since the servant can never be separated from his desire as long as he lives, the directive to leave all desires completely is essentially impossible. But what is realistic (*maqdūr lahū*) and expected (*ma'mūr bih*) is to divert his desires away from the places of destruction to lands of peace and security.²⁹

The example is given of the desire for the opposite gender being directed away from fornication to the institution of marriage.³⁰ He argues that Islamic law takes human desires into consideration and that anything forbidden is given an alternative outlet. For example, usury is forbidden as a means to grow wealth but

²⁸ Qur'an, 57:27, Sahih International translation.

²⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn* (Jeddah: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, 2010), 17.

³⁰ Ibid.

profitable business ventures are permitted. Gambling is forbidden, but earning wealth based on beneficial competition like horse racing, camel racing, and archery is permitted.³¹ Silk is forbidden, but many other luxurious fabrics are permitted.

The danger of desires

Having established that some desires are natural and beneficial, many people become consumed by their desires and anger and are unable to control themselves within the boundaries of what is beneficial to them. Thus, harm is incurred by a person who follows their desires, anger, and lust, which is why they are given a negative connotation. It is rare to achieve a balance of desires that would avoid harm. Similar to this, how rare is it for a person to truly achieve humoral equilibrium?³² Instead, people are affected by its fluctuations. Therefore, the sincere person should be keen to achieve perfect balance regarding their lusts and anger just as the doctor attempts to achieve perfect balance regarding the humors. But this is something impossible except for very few individuals in the world. This is why Allah exclusively mentions desires in a negative context along with the Sunnah. The only exception is the narration of the Prophet ﷺ, “None of you truly believes until his desires are made to follow what I have brought.”³³

It has been said that desires are dangerous and cannot be trusted. Al-Sha‘bī (d. 103/721) said, “It is called desire (*hawā*) because it brings a person down (*yahwī*).”

³¹ The issue of earning prizes from competition is a detailed one. The area of agreement among the four schools of Islamic law, the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shafī‘ī, and Ḥanbalī schools, is the permissibility of earning prizes for horse racing, camel racing, and archery. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Kitāb al-furūsiyya al-Muḥammadiyya* (Jeddah: Dār ‘Ālam al-Fawā’id, 2007), 254. This is based on the explicit narration of a hadith, “There are no competitive [awards] except in archery, camel racing, and horse racing.” *Jamī‘ al-Tirmidhī*, hadith no. 1700. There is a disagreement regarding the permissibility of competing in other modes like foot racing, swimming, wrestling, and knowledge. The interested reader can refer to Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Kitāb al-furūsiyya*, 254–65, where he analyzes these issues in detail and presents his own position.

³² The four humors was the classical model of physiology and pathology endorsed by physicians as a way to conceptualize health and disease. The humors were types of fluid found in the body: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood. Imbalance of these four results in disease and their balance results in health. Ibn al-Qayyim had trained in medicine while he was in Egypt and had thus absorbed this paradigm of medicine. With the advancement of empirical technology, we have grown in our understanding of human physiology and the various etiologies of diseases. This framework is no longer an adequate scientific model.

³³ Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Sunnah*, no. 15; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Madkhal ilā al-sunan al-kubrā*, hadith no. 209. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt and al-Albānī graded the chain of this narration to be weak (*ḍa‘īf*).

It unconditionally calls to immediate gratification (*al-ladhdhāt al-ḥāḍira*) without regard for the consequences. It drives a person to achieve their desires hastily even if it may be a means of great pain both in the short term and long term. There are consequences that come to a person in this life before the afterlife. Desires blind a person from noticing this while integrity (*murū'a*), religiosity (*dīn*), and intelligence (*'aql*) are meant to block a person from pleasures that end in pain. Lusts will only end in regret and so when the self wants some of this pleasure, all of the ethical faculties (religiosity, integrity, and intelligence) say to it, “Don’t do it!” And the self will follow whichever is the stronger impulse within. Do you see that children will prefer what they desire even if it leads to injury out of the weakness of their discerning intellect? Whoever has no religion will always prefer what they desire even if it leads to destruction in the next life due to the weakness of their religiosity. Whoever does not have any integrity will always prefer what they desire even if it strips away their dignity due to the weakness of their integrity (*marū'ah*). Then what about the aphorism of Imam al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/819) who said, “If I knew that cool water would compromise my integrity I would never drink it.”³⁴

When an accountable individual is tested with animalistic desires and in every moment a new desire emerges, he should set up two arbiters: intellect and religion. The desires are commanded to always be summoned to these two arbiters and to submit to their judgment. It is imperative that one trains oneself to resist desires that do not have negative consequences so that one can stay away from desires that have harmful consequences.

Commentary

Ibn al-Qayyim makes the case that desires on their own will inevitably lead a person toward the path of destruction. Desires can be directed to productive ends only with other factors—intellect, integrity, and religion. A person must be ethically motivated (integrity), informed by guidance (religion), and make the right

³⁴ Abū Nu'aym al-Aṣbahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), 9:123.

decision (intellect) regarding their desire. If these three are missing, then desires will lead a person astray.

In the introduction, Ibn al-Qayyim describes the objective of this work as the achievement of harmony between desires and the intellect through a recognition of the wisdom of religious guidance.

“They are not commanded with anything that He (Allah) needs from them. Nor are they prohibited out of stinginess from Him (Allah) toward them. Rather, His commandments come from His favor (*ihsān*) and mercy (*rahmah*) toward them and His prohibitions are meant to protect and preserve them. It is for this reason we have produced this book to achieve harmony between the desires and the intellect. When the peace treaty [between the desires and the intellect] is completed, it becomes easier for the servant to resist against the ego and the devil.”³⁵

Ibn al-Qayyim connects law, ethics, theology, and spirituality so the reader can appreciate the wisdom in religious guidance. A common misconception the public has regarding Islam is that it is merely a set of arbitrary rules of what is permissible (*ḥalāl*) and impermissible (*ḥarām*). Ibn al-Qayyim makes the case that revealed law is designed for the flourishing of life by directing human desires away from destruction toward excellence.

This also foreshadows the key ingredients in his rehabilitation framework that empower believers to resist using the intellect and religious guidance. This framework can correctly be termed ‘rehabilitation,’ as Ibn al-Qayyim sees desires as a natural part of life that can become disordered due to misuse. This misuse is inevitable without guidance since a person is unaware of their purpose in life and how to fulfill it. Hence, their aims and pursuits are driven by desires. The strength of their ethical motivation to regulate desire is also considerably dulled without an appreciation of the high-stakes consequences of the afterlife.

³⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawḍat al-muḥibbīn*, 19.

In addition to rehabilitation, Ibn al-Qayyim describes how conditioning the ethical and spiritual strengths enables individuals to effectively resist against the dark edges of desire. Analogous to physical exercise, he recommends a healthy regimen of daily resistance against non-problematic desires to strengthen willpower. Although he does not reference this, fasting is a recognized Islamic practice that fulfills these aims.

Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd narrates, "We were with the Prophet while we were young and had no wealth. So Allah's Messenger said, 'O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty and whoever is not able to marry should fast, as fasting is a shield for him.'"³⁶

From desire to addiction

The intelligent person needs to know that the ones who are addicted (*mudmin*) to their desires are transformed into a state where they no longer achieve pleasure through them and at the same time they are not able to abstain from them. They reach a state where indulging in their desires becomes necessary for their living. This is the reason why you find that the alcohol addict or sex addict does not experience even a tenth of the pleasure that a person normally experiences when engaging in those behaviors in moderation. This throws a person into destruction as he tries to seek what his addiction demands. If the stain of desire were to be removed, he would definitely know that he is made sad from where he thought happiness would come; he is grieved from where he thought joy would come; and he is in pain from where he thought there would be pleasure. So he is like a bird that tries to capture a seed that is in a trap. It is not able to obtain the seed and it is not able to leave the trap.

³⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5066.

Commentary

The term for addict employed by Ibn al-Qayyim is *mudmin*, which is used in modern Arabic to describe formal addiction as we understand it today. Classically, it was defined as, “A person who is habitually engaged with something; The *mudmin* of alcohol is someone who cannot stop drinking.”³⁷ We also find this term in the Sunnah, “The *mudmin* of alcohol is the like the worshiper of idols,”³⁸ “He who drinks alcohol in this world and dies while he is a *mudmin* to it, not having repented, will not be given [anything] to drink in the Hereafter.”³⁹ It is important to note with these narrations that *mudmin* was used to broadly describe intentional habitual use of something and not necessarily psychological addiction as we understand the term today.

Addiction is a formal psychiatric diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Version 5 (DSM-5), the mainstream reference used by mental health professionals in diagnosing mental illnesses. It is referred to as ‘substance abuse disorder’ and includes 11 criteria:

1. Taking the substance in larger amounts or for longer than you are meant to.
2. Wanting to cut down or stop using the substance but not managing to.
3. Spending a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from use of the substance.
4. Cravings and urges to use the substance.
5. Not managing to do what you should at work, home, or school because of use of the substance.
6. Continuing to use the substance, even when it causes problems in relationships.
7. Giving up important social, occupational, or recreational activities because of use of the substance.
8. Using the substance again and again, even when it puts you in danger.

³⁷ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1993), 13:159.

³⁸ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, no. 3375.

³⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

9. Continuing to use the substance, even when you know you have a physical or psychological problem that could have been caused or made worse by it.
10. Needing more of the substance to get the effect you want (tolerance).
11. Development of withdrawal symptoms, which can be relieved by taking more of the substance.

Severity of addiction is determined by the number of criteria that apply to an individual (Mild 2-3; Moderate 4-5; Severe ≥ 6). From the above criteria, four domains of addiction have been recognized: physical dependence, risky use, social problems, and impaired control.

Physical dependence refers to the neurobiological changes that occur due to repetitive activation of reward pathways in the brain.⁴⁰ One of these changes is described as 'tolerance' and is the 10th criterion listed in the DSM-5. Tolerance occurs when the same amount of stimulus evokes a smaller effect due to its repeated use.⁴¹ Dependence is evidenced by 'withdrawal symptoms' whereby an individual becomes physiologically unstable without the substance.⁴² Impaired control, risky use, and social problems constitute the behavioral manifestations of addiction.

Ibn al-Qayyim insightfully makes reference to all four of these domains in his poetic yet academically precise conceptualization of addiction.

⁴⁰ Samuel Turton and Anne Lingford-Hughes, "Neurobiology and Principles of Addiction and Tolerance," *Medicine* 44, no. 12 (2016): 693–96.

⁴¹ J. Vetulani, "Drug Addiction. Part II. Neurobiology of Addiction," *Polish Journal of Pharmacology* 53, no. 4 (2001): 303–18.

⁴² George F. Koob, "The Neurobiology of Addiction: A Neuroadaptational View Relevant for Diagnosis," *Addiction*, 101 (2006): 23–30.

Physical Dependence	Tolerance: “They no longer achieve pleasure through it” “People who are addicted to alcohol or sex do not experience even a tenth of the pleasure that a person (normally) experiences” Withdrawal: “They reach a state where it becomes necessary for their living.”
Impaired Control	“They are not able to abstain” “This throws a person into destruction as he tries to seek what his addiction demands.”
Risky Use	“So he is like a bird that tries to capture a seed that is in a trap. It is not able to obtain the seed and it is not able to leave the cage it is in.”
Social Problems	“If the stain of desire were to be removed he would definitely know that he was made sad from where he thought happiness would come; he is grieved from where he thought joy would come; and he is in pain from where he thought there would be pleasure.”

It is also intriguing that Ibn al-Qayyim references two categories of addiction in this passage—behavioral (e.g., sex) and substance (e.g., alcohol). The notion of being addicted to a behavior rather than a substance is only starting to be recognized and its relationship with substance addiction is hotly debated.⁴³ The

⁴³ Mark D. Griffiths, “Behavioural Addiction and Substance Addiction Should Be Defined by Their Similarities Not Their Dissimilarities,” *Addiction* 112, no. 10 (2017): 1718–20.

DSM-5 includes the broad diagnostic category of Substance-related and Addictive Disorders. There is a subsection of Non-substance-related Disorders that currently only includes gambling disorder. Internet gaming disorder has been mentioned as an area where further research is required.⁴⁴ Outside of the DSM-5, there is a recognition of other problematic internet behaviors including social networking, pornography viewing, and online shopping.⁴⁵ As mentioned earlier, the ICD-11 does include a category called compulsive sexual behavior disorder (CSBD).⁴⁶

It is interesting that the Qur'an groups alcohol (substance) and gambling (behavior) together,

O you who have believed, indeed, alcohol, gambling, (sacrificing on) stone altars (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.⁴⁷

This verse informs us of an essential dimension of addiction largely ignored by therapists. From a spiritual perspective, both substances and behavior share a common satanic pathway in the formation and maintenance of addiction. Al-Alūsī comments on verse 5:90, "It occurs from his (the devil's) actions because he causes it with his allurements (*tazyīn*) and temptation (*taswīl*). It is also said, the 'from' (*min*) indicates origin—that is to say it emerges from his actions."⁴⁸

It is important to understand when benefitting from empirical research that neural correlates in the brain to conscious states are only correlations. An important scientific axiom to keep in mind is 'correlation does not imply causation.'⁴⁹ Just because two things are correlated does not mean there is a causal relationship between the two. It is possible that there is a third variable that is unaccounted for to explain this correlation. For example, ice cream sales are correlated with shark

⁴⁴ Marc N. Potenza, "Non-Substance Addictive Behaviors in the Context of DSM-5," *Addictive Behaviors* 39, no. 1 (2014).

⁴⁵ Potenza, "Non-Substance Addictive Behaviors."

⁴⁶ Mauer-Vakil and Bahji, "Addictive Nature of Compulsive Sexual Behaviours."

⁴⁷ Qur'an, 5:90, Sahih International translation.

⁴⁸ Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-Arabī), vol. 7, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Zachary M. Laubach, Eleanor J. Murray, Kim L. Hoke, Rebecca J. Safran and Wei Perng, "A Biologist's Guide to Model Selection and Causal Inference," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 288, no. 1943 (2021): 20202815.

attacks.⁵⁰ Does this mean consuming ice cream is causing sharks to attack humans? Not at all. Rather, an interpretation of the data that makes sense is that when it is summer, people are more likely to consume ice cream and swim in the ocean. Therefore, there will be an increase in both ice cream sales and shark attacks. The cause of the increased shark attacks is simply the increased number of humans in the ocean.

When we return to the issue of neural correlates of consciousness, this problem is magnified. How can something physical like neurotransmitters cause something non-physical like conscious experience?⁵¹ This is a problem that philosophers of science like David Chalmers have recognized for decades and is dubbed, 'the hard problem of consciousness.'⁵² This is not a matter of an empirical 'missing link' that we will discover the more we study the brain. Rather, this is an issue of attempting to understand the connection between two qualitatively different realms—the objective and the subjective. Thomas Nagel famously elucidates this problem through the example of bat science in his 1980 work entitled, "What is it like to be a bat?"⁵³ He explains that no matter how much we learn about bats through objective data, we will remain ignorant of their conscious subjective experience. This failure of the scientific enterprise to understand consciousness indicates its limitations when attempting to describe something that is non-physical.

This is why we cannot exclusively rely on neuroscientific perspectives when attempting to understand why people become addicted to behaviors or substances. The manipulation from demonic forces through our desires is an essential aspect of the conscious experience of addiction. This is something that was recognized by the psychoanalytic movement in the early 1900s. David Schoen, a contemporary Jungian analyst reflects on his experience with addiction clients, "I believe that

⁵⁰ Zach, "Correlation Does Not Imply Causation: 5 Real-World Examples," *Statology*, November 5, 2021, <https://www.statology.org/correlation-does-not-imply-causation-examples/>.

⁵¹ Alva Noë and Evan Thompson, "Are There Neural Correlates of Consciousness?" *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 3–28.

⁵² David Chalmers, "The Hard Problem of Consciousness," *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, 2017, 32–42.

⁵³ Nagel, T. (1980). What is it like to be a bat?. In *The Language and Thought Series* (pp. 159-168). Harvard University Press.

people are drawn to it because of its allure of incredible power and energy, of unimaginable freedom, of the ultimate fulfillment of a desire for status, mastery, and prestige, and of the promise of superhuman potency.”⁵⁴

He later recounts, “Many addicted people tell of histories and experiences of complete inadequacy and impotency without their fix. Some men and women have no social courage or confidence without alcohol or drugs, but with them they feel invincible and powerful and self-assured.”⁵⁵

This is a fascinating insight in light of the first whispers of the devil into human consciousness,

Then Satan whispered to him; he said, “O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and a kingdom that will never waste away?”⁵⁶

But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, “Your Lord did not forbid you from this tree except that you become angels or become immortal.”⁵⁷

In addition to these individual factors there is a strong role that society plays in generating, maintaining, and exacerbating the problem of addiction. Poverty, broken homes, abuse, and other chronic social stressors can make subpopulations in a society particularly vulnerable to becoming addicted to substances and/or behaviors.⁵⁸ This problem becomes magnified when these vulnerabilities are

⁵⁴ David E. Schoen, *The War of the Gods in Addiction: C. G. Jung, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Archetypal Evil* (N.p.: Chiron Publications, 2020), location no. 1523.

⁵⁵ Schoen, *The War of the Gods in Addiction*, location no. 1531.

⁵⁶ Qur'an, 20:120, author's translation.

⁵⁷ Qur'an, 7:20, Sahih International translation.

⁵⁸ Ewald, D. R., Strack, R. W., & Orsini, M. M. (2019). Rethinking addiction. *Global Pediatric Health*, 6, 2333794X18821943.

exploited by multi-million dollar industries like the alcohol,⁵⁹ tobacco,⁶⁰ gambling,⁶¹ pornography^{62, 63} and even pharmaceutical companies.⁶⁴

Given the clear connection between demonic forces and falling prey to our desires, it behooves us to consider a rehabilitation program for Muslims that is rooted in a more realistic framework than the one provided by the scientific community. This framework includes essential elements of the Islamic worldview with regards to human consciousness. This project is taken up by Ibn al-Qayyim in the next section.

50 strategies for treating addiction

How can a person be cured from this after falling into it? It is only possible to be cured with the help of Allah and His guidance in a number of matters.

1. A resolute determination (‘*azīma*) to free himself from addiction along with a strong protectiveness (*ghīra*) over himself (that fuels his determination).
2. Ingesting the bitter potion of *ṣabr* (patience; self-regulation; willpower), capable of restraining the soul during those times of desire.
3. The strength and courage to ingest this “potion” for the entirety of the time of desire along with a good life that a person is able to attain his *ṣabr* from.

⁵⁹ Karnani, A. (2013). Impact of alcohol on poverty and the need for appropriate policy. *Alcohol: Science, Policy and Public Health*, 354.

⁶⁰ Brown-Johnson, C. G., England, L. J., Glantz, S. A., & Ling, P. M. (2014). Tobacco industry marketing to low socioeconomic status women in the USA. *Tobacco control*.

⁶¹ Markham, F., & Young, M. (2015). “Big gambling”: the rise of the global industry-state gambling complex. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 23(1), 1-4.

⁶² McKee, A. (2007). The relationship between attitudes towards women, consumption of pornography, and other demographic variables in a survey of 1,023 consumers of pornography. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 19(1), 31-45.

⁶³ Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2016). Adolescents and pornography: A review of 20 years of research. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53(4-5), 509-531.

⁶⁴ Hadland, S. E., Rivera-Aguirre, A., Marshall, B. D., & Cerdá, M. (2019). Association of pharmaceutical industry marketing of opioid products with mortality from opioid-related overdoses. *JAMA network open*, 2(1), e186007-e186007.

4. Imagining the desired outcome—being cured with the potion of *ṣabr*.
5. Realizing that the pain [associated with giving in to the desire] is more than the pleasure of following the desire.
6. Thinking about your station with Allah and your reputation in the hearts of His creation —this is better and more beneficial than the pleasure of the desire.
7. Prioritizing the pleasure, honor, and sweetness of chastity over the pleasure of sin.
8. Experiencing the joy of conquering your enemy and subduing him, handing him a humiliating defeat, making him angry, sad, and distressed. Allah loves when His servants subdue and enrage the enemy as He says in His Honored Book, “...Nor do they tread on any ground that enrages the disbelievers, nor do they inflict upon an enemy any infliction but that is registered for them as a righteous deed.”⁶⁵ And He said, “...in order to enrage the disbelievers through them (the believers)”⁶⁶ and He, Most High, said, “And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance.”⁶⁷ This means places where they will subdue the enemies of Allah. A sign of true love is angering the enemies of the Beloved and subduing them.
9. Considering the fact that you were not created for your desire, rather your purpose is much loftier. This purpose cannot be achieved except through resisting your desire as it is said, “You have been prepared for a [great] affair if you only realized it. So raise yourself lest you continue to graze with negligence.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Qur'an, 9:120, Sahih International translation.

⁶⁶ Qur'an, 48:29, author's translation.

⁶⁷ Qur'an, 4:100, Sahih International translation.

⁶⁸ Al-Ḥusayn 'Alī Ṭāhir al-Ṭughrā'ī, *Lāmīyyat al-'ajm* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Ānī, 1962), 18.

10. Realizing that by choosing sin, you reach a state lower than the animals. This is because animals can naturally differentiate between what will benefit and harm them. Consequently, they always choose benefit over harm. Human beings are given an intellect for this purpose. So, if they are unable to distinguish between what will harm them or benefit them or they know but still prefer what is harmful, then the animals are better than them. The evidence for this is that animals achieve a pleasure from eating, drinking, and sex that is not for the human being as they live a blissful life free of thinking or worries. This is why when they are driven to the place of slaughter: they are busy with their desires due to their lack of awareness of the consequences. Humans are not able to attain what animals attain because they have a strong capacity for thinking and multiple tools at their disposal. So if a person attains an excess of what they desire, then they have lost the status of humanity, who are the purest of the world, and they have been reduced to the level of animals. They have neglected the intellect, knowledge, and realization that defines humanity.

11. Thinking about the consequences of the desires. Reflect on how much virtue is lost and how much vice is gained. Reflect on how one (problematic) bite can stop one from eating altogether, or how one pleasure can prevent many pleasures. How many desires have destroyed a person's status, humiliating them, earning an evil reputation, resulting in disgrace, and ending in abasement. He becomes tainted, unable to be purified with water and (is unable to see this taint because) the eye of the one overcome with desire is blind.

12. The person should compare a discerning individual who achieves his purpose to a person who fulfills his desire and then imagine the consequences of both. What was lost (by the former) and what was gained (by the latter)? "The best of mankind are those who don't embark on a journey until they discern all the consequences they may reap."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ A couplet with no author attribution found in the following text with slight word variation: al-Ḥasan b. Mas'ūd al-Yūsī, *Zahr al-akam fī al-amthāl wa al-ḥikam* (Casablanca: Dār al-Thiqāfa, 1981), 1:254.

13. He should imagine this in relation to others and then make a judgment based on analogy.
14. He should deliberate on what the *nafs* really wants from that desire and then he should be advised by his intellect and religiosity, both of which will tell him that it is not worth anything. Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd said, "If a woman impresses one of you, then let him think about her foul odors." This is better than what was said by Aḥmad al-Husayn, "If the lustful one were to think about the ending of the beauty that captured him, he would not have been captured."⁷⁰ This is [better] because Ibn Mas'ūd mentioned an immediate state whereas the poet mentioned a future state.
15. His self-respect should prevent him from the disgrace of being defeated by his desires. Anyone who falls to their desires finds humiliation in their heart. Do not be deluded by the influence and status of those who follow their desires as they are the most humiliated of the people. They combine both qualities of arrogance and humiliation.
16. He should weigh the value of his religion, honor, wealth, and status against attaining the pleasure he is craving. He will find no comparison between the two and will realize that only a fool would sell all of that for fleeting pleasure.
17. He should prevent himself from being taken captive by his enemy. When Shayṭān (Satan) sees a servant who is weak in resolve and inclining toward his cravings, he (Shayṭān) is assured regarding him, he wrestles him and takes hold of the bridles of his desires and drives him to wherever he wishes. But when Shayṭān perceives a strong resolve, self-respect, and lofty ambitions, he is not assured regarding him except passing glances.
18. He should know that desire corrupts everything it mixes with. If it occurs with knowledge (*ilm*), it becomes misguided innovation (*bid'ah*) and the person becomes from the people of deviation. If it occurs with asceticism (*zuhd*), then

⁷⁰ Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt, 1983), 558.

it takes a person to ostentation (*riyā'*) and opposition to the Sunnah. If it occurs while giving judgment, then it takes a person to oppression and diverting from the truth. If it occurs in distribution [of wealth], then it diverts from a just division to an unjust division. If it occurs in allying and excluding, then it makes a person betray Allah and the Muslims since they ally according to their desires and exclude according to their desires. If it occurs in worship, then it takes a person away from compliance and proximity with Allah. As can be seen, desires corrupt whatever they associate with.

19. He should realize that Shayṭān can only enter the human being through the gate of desire. He roams around the heart to get to know where he can enter so he can corrupt the person's heart and actions. He does not find any entry except through the gate of desires. So he flows with a poison that affects all the body parts.
20. He should know that Allah has made desires opposed to what has been sent down to His Messenger ﷺ. He made following desires a hindrance in following the messengers. He has divided mankind into two categories—those who follow revelation and those who follow their desires. This occurs frequently in the Qur'an, for example, "If they do not respond to you, then know that they are only following their desires"⁷¹ and His saying, "And if you follow their desires after knowledge that has come to you..."⁷² and [verses] similar to these.
21. He should know that Allah analogizes those who follow their desires as the lowest of animals in form and meaning. In some instances [the analogy is] to a dog, "But he adhered [instead] to the earth and followed his own desire. So his example is like that of the dog";⁷³ in other instances it is to donkeys, "As if they were alarmed donkeys. Fleeing from a lion?"⁷⁴ And in other instances it involved transforming them into apes and pigs.

⁷¹ Qur'an, 28:50, author's translation.

⁷² Qur'an, 2:120, author's translation.

⁷³ Qur'an, 7:176, Sahih International translation.

⁷⁴ Qur'an, 74:50–51, Sahih International translation.

22. He should know that following desires disqualifies from leadership or being followed. Allah excludes them from leadership and prohibits obeying them. As for excluding them, Allah said to His beloved (*khalīl*) Abraham, “‘Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.’ (Abraham) said, ‘And of my descendants?’ (Allah) said, ‘My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.’”⁷⁵ That is to say My covenant of leadership does not include an oppressor. Whoever follows his desires is an oppressor as Allah said, “Those who commit oppression follow their desires without knowledge.”⁷⁶ As for prohibiting obedience to them, then it is from His saying, “Do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever (in) neglect.”⁷⁷
23. He should know that Allah made the follower of desire in the same category of a worshiper of idols, “Have you seen the one who takes his own desires as his god?”⁷⁸ This occurs twice in His book. Al-Ḥasan⁷⁹ (d. 110/728) said, “He is a hypocrite, anything he desires he fulfills.” He also said, “The hypocrite is a slave to his desires, anything he desires he does.”
24. Desires are what surround Hellfire and so whoever falls into them, they have fallen into Hellfire as the Prophet ﷺ said, “Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hellfire is surrounded by desires.”⁸⁰ The Prophet ﷺ also said, “When Allah created Paradise and the Fire, He sent Jibrīl to Paradise, saying: ‘Look at it and at what I have prepared in it for its inhabitants.’” He ﷺ said: “So he came to it and looked at it, and at what Allah had prepared in it. He (Jibrīl) said: ‘Indeed, by your Might, none shall hear of it except that he shall enter it.’ Then He gave the order for it to be surrounded with hardships. He said: ‘Return to it and look at it, and at what I have prepared in it for its

⁷⁵ Qur’an, 2:124, Sahih International translation.

⁷⁶ Qur’an, 30:29, author’s translation.

⁷⁷ Qur’an, 18:28, Sahih International translation.

⁷⁸ Qur’an, 25:43; author’s translation.

⁷⁹ He is referring to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the famous early Muslim scholar from the second generation (*tabiʿin*).

⁸⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, no. 6487, author’s translation.

inhabitants.” He ﷺ said: “So he returned to it and found it surrounded with hardships. He returned to Him and said: ‘Indeed, by your Might, I fear that none shall enter it.’ He ﷺ said: ‘Go to the Fire and look at it and at what I have prepared in it for its inhabitants.’ So he found it, one part of it riding the other. So he returned to Him and said: ‘Indeed, by your Might, none shall hear of it and then enter it.’ So He gave the order for it to be surrounded with desires, then He said: ‘Return to it,’ so he (Jibrīl) returned to it, then he said: ‘Indeed, by Your Might, I fear that none shall be saved from it except that he shall enter it.’”

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25. He should fear his faith being taken away without even realizing it as a consequence of following his desires. It has been attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, “None of you truly believe until his desires follow what I have come with.”⁸² And it has been authentically established that he said, “The thing I fear most for you all is the deviating appetites of your stomach and private organs along with misleading desires.”⁸³

26. He should know that following desires is from among the destructive qualities. The Prophet ﷺ said, “There are three redemptive qualities and three destructive qualities. As for the redemptive qualities, they are being God-fearing (*taqwa*) in private and public, speaking the truth when content and when angered, and being balanced in richness and poverty. As for the destructive qualities, they are following desires, selfishness, and self-aggrandizement.”⁸⁴

27. He should know that resisting desires results in strength of the body, heart, and tongue. The early Muslims would say, “The conqueror of his desires is stronger

⁸¹ Al-Tirmidhī, *Jamī' at-Tirmidhī*, no. 2560, Darussalam translation, Accessed [online](#).

⁸² Ibn Abī 'Āsim, *al-Sunnah*, hadith no. 15; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Madkhal*, hadith no. 209. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt and al-Albānī both graded the narration to be weak (*ḍa'īf*).

⁸³ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Imām Aḥmad*, hadith no. 19772; *Musnad al-Bazzār*, hadith no. 3251; Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt stated the narrators of this report to be reliable and al-Albānī graded it authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*); *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb*, 52. The wording found in existing publication is “misleading trials (*muḍillāt al-fitan*)” rather than “misleading desires (*muḍillāt al-hawā*)” as quoted by Ibn al-Qayyim in this text.

⁸⁴ Al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'b al-imān*, hadith no. 6865. Al-Albānī declared it *ṣaḥīḥ*.

than a person who single-handedly conquers a city.”⁸⁵ And in an authentic narration attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, “Strength is not through wrestling; rather, strength is being able to control one’s self in anger.”⁸⁶ Every time a person trains to resist their desire, they become stronger and stronger.

28. Integrity (*marū’a*) is proportional to the opposition of desire. Mu’āwīyah [Ibn Abī Sufyān] (d. 60/680) said, “Good character is leaving off lusts and opposing one’s desires.”⁸⁷ Hence, following desires makes one’s character stale and opposing desires refreshes one’s character.
29. He should know that every day the intellect and desire hurry to their owner. Whichever one is stronger disposes of the other and makes the decisions for the day. [The Companion] Abū Dardā’ said, “When a person wakes up, his intellect and desire gather together. If his intellect follows his desire, then it will be an awful day. But if his desires follow his intellect, then it will be a good day.”⁸⁸
30. He should know that Allah has paired mistakes with following desires and has paired accuracy (*ṣawāb*) with opposing desires. Some of the early Muslims would say, “If you face a dilemma and are unsure which decision is best, then oppose the one closer to your desires because mistakes come with the bias of following desires.”⁸⁹
31. He should know that desire is a disease and its cure is resistance. Some of the spiritual masters would say, “If you want I will inform you of your disease and if you want I will inform you of your cure. Your disease is your desire and your cure is leaving your desire and opposing it.”⁹⁰ [The famous ascetic] Bishr al-Hāfi (d. 227/842) said, “All calamities are actually found in your desires and all of the cure is found in your opposition toward them.”⁹¹

⁸⁵ This saying is attributed to Maṣūūr bin ‘Ammār (d. 225/840) in al-Aṣḥabānī *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 9:326.

⁸⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 6114, author’s translation.

⁸⁷ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm*, 22.

⁸⁸ Ibn Abī Dunya, *Muḥāsabat al-naḥs* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1986), no. 84.

⁸⁹ Al-Aṣḥabānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 10:18.

⁹⁰ Attributed to Ibn Sammāk in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 23.

⁹¹ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 31.

32. He should know that waging jihad against one's desires, even if it may not be greater than physical battle, is not lesser than it. A man said to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, "O Abū Sa'īd, which jihad (lit. striving) is the best? He said, "The jihad against your desires."⁹² And I heard our Shaykh say, "Jihad against the ego and desires is the foundation of jihad against enemies of Islam. That is because a person cannot participate in that jihad until they have done jihad against their egos and desires first."
33. He should know that desires are like humors⁹³ and opposing them is a means of achieving equilibrium. He should fear that he goes to excess in any of the humors and maintain a state of equilibrium lest he falls into disease. 'Abd al-Mālik b. Qurayb [aka al-Aṣma'ī], (d. 216/831) said, "I came across a bedouin man who had severe conjunctivitis with discharge flowing down his cheek. So I said 'Why don't you wipe your eyes?' He said, 'The doctor prohibited me from that and there is no good in someone who does not desist when something is prohibited and who does not seek counsel before he commands something.' So I said, 'Don't you desire anything?' He said, 'Of course I do, but I am guarding myself. Verily the people of Hellfire had their desires overcome their guard so they were destroyed.'"⁹⁴
34. He should know that following desires closes the gates of guidance and opens the door of humiliation and you see (the one who follows desires) attached to this (door of humiliation). Had Allah guided him he would have been upright, but he diverted himself away from the paths of guidance and chose to follow his desires. Al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ (d. 187/803) said, "Whoever is overcome by his desires and follows his lusts, the inputs of guidance are cut off."⁹⁵

Some scholars said that disbelief occurs in 4 things: anger, lust, craving, and fear. Then it is said, "An example is a man who is angry and kills his own

⁹² Ibid., 23.

⁹³ See footnote 1 for an explanation of the concept of "humors."

⁹⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 23–24.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 24.

mother.⁹⁶ Another example is a man who lusts and so he becomes Christian.”⁹⁷,
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A report comes from the early Muslims of a person performing circumambulation (*tawāf*) around the Kaaba and seeing a beautiful lady. He walks to her side and composes the following poetry,

Both the desire of religion and pleasures are attractive to me
So how can I have both the desire for pleasures and religion?

The lady replied, leave one and you will attain the other.⁹⁹

35. He should know that a person's opinions and intellect become corrupted whenever a person gives in to his desire. This is because they betrayed Allah for it and it is the custom of Allah that when someone betrays Him regarding something, it eventually becomes corrupted.

[The Abbasid Caliph] al-Mu'taṣim (d. 227/842) said to one of his companions one day, “O so-and-so, if your desires win, then your reasoning will go.”¹⁰⁰

I heard a man say to our Shaykh,¹⁰¹ “When a man betrays his position as a money appraiser, Allah strips him of his ability to appraise.” So the Shaykh said, “This is also the case for those who betray Allah and His messenger in matters of knowledge.”

⁹⁶ This would be an example of *kufr asghar* (lesser disbelief) or *kufr dūna kufr* (a disbelief less than major disbelief).

⁹⁷ The person is overcome with desires that are unlawful in Islamic law, so they change their religion to a more permissive one.

⁹⁸ Attributed to al-Ḥajjāj b. Muḥammad al-A'war (d. 206/821). Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 24.

⁹⁹ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 24–25.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰¹ This likely refers to Ibn Taymiyya as Ibn al-Qayyim refers to him with multiple titles including “Shaykh al-Islām” and “Shaykhunā.” He also refers to Abū Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭī (d. 711/1311) as “Shaykhunā” in Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Shifā' al-'ilāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1978), 16. He was one of the spiritual masters of Ibn al-Qayyim and could also be potentially referred to here. However, in *Mustadrak 'alā majmū' fatāwā shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya*, which is compiled by the late Shaykh Muḥammad b. Abd al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim (d. 1421/2000), the latter attributes this quote to Ibn Taymiyya: Muḥammad b. Abd al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim, *Mustadrak 'alā of the majmū' fatāwā shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya* (self-pub., 1998), 5:229.

36. He should know that whoever makes space for following his desires will find constriction in his grave and the day of his reckoning. Whoever constricts his desires will find expansiveness in his grave and in his reckoning. Allah alludes to this in His saying, "He repays them for their patience with paradise and silk garments."¹⁰² Since patience (*ṣabr*), which involves preventing the self from desires, is something tough and restrictive, they are rewarded with soft silk and expansive paradise. Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 205-820) commented on this verse, "They are repaid because of their patience over their desires."¹⁰³
37. He should know that following desires prevents a person from moving on the Day of Judgment and from running with those who are saved on the bridge over Hellfire. This is just as their hearts prevented them from their friendship in this world. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Ward said, "Certainly Allah will not save the one who submitted to his desires and the longest delay from moving on the Day of Judgment will be the delay due to one's desires. When the intellect comes to the arena of motivation, it becomes filled with whatever it wants in accordance to the level of willpower (*ṣabr*). The intellect is precious metal and contemplation (*fikr*) is a chisel."¹⁰⁴
38. He should know that following desires weakens a person's motivation (‘*azā'im*, sing. ‘*azīma*). Opposing desires strengthens it. Motivation is the vehicle by which the servant journeys to Allah and the abode of the Hereafter. When the vehicle is gone, then the journey will be halted. It was said to [the famous Muslim sage] Yaḥyā b. Mu‘ādh (d. 258/872), "Who is the most determined among humanity? He said, "The one who conquers his desire."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Qur'an, 76:12, author's translation.

¹⁰³ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 26.

[Hadith narrator] Khalaf bin Khalīfa (d. 181 AH) entered upon [the Abbasid ruler] Sulaymān b. Ḥabīb b. al-Muhallab,¹⁰⁶ and he was with a girl named Badr who had the most beautiful face. So Sulaymān said to Khalaf, “What do you think of this girl?” He replied, “May Allah rectify the Amīr (ruler), my eyes have not seen anything more beautiful than her.” So Sulaymān said to him, “Take her away!” Khalaf said, “I don’t wish to harm the Amīr, for I see he is also very taken by her.” Suleyman said, “Woe to you! Take her away because of how much I am taken by her! This is so that my desires know that I have defeated them.” So Khalaf took her by the hand and exited and he composed the following verses,

I have been gifted, given and favored
without Sulayman asking for anything in return
I have been given Badr with all her beauty
while the full moon (*badr*) has not been given to any human or jinn
From this day I will never forget his kindness
Until I am covered by my shroud in my grave¹⁰⁷

39. He should know that the one who rides his desires is like the one who rides an iron horse. It is stubborn and he is unable to control it and he will inevitably be thrown off its mount or it will take him to a place of destruction. One of the spiritual masters said, “The quickest path to paradise is nonattachment to worldly matters (*zuhd*) and the quickest path to the Hellfire is the love of desires. Whoever is taken by his desires will be swiftly taken to the valley of destruction.”¹⁰⁸ Another said, “The most virtuous scholar is the one who flees with his religion away from worldly temptations and prevents himself from being driven toward his desires.”¹⁰⁹ [Sage and exegete] ‘Aṭā’ (d. 309/922) said,

¹⁰⁶ He was a ruler under the Abbasid caliphate. This author is unable to find a death year, although given the historical context, he likely lived in the early to middle of the second century hijri.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 26–27.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 27. Attributed to Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Jarīrī.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Attributed to Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā (d. 234/849).

“Whoever’s desire overcomes their intellect and extinguishes their willpower (*ṣabr*) will become exposed.”¹¹⁰

40. He should know that the worship of Allah alone (*tawḥīd*) and following desires are opposed to each other. Everyone has an idol in their heart that is made up of their desires. Allah sent His messengers to destroy the idols and to establish the worship of Allah alone without any partners. The intention was not to merely destroy the physical idols while leaving others in the heart. But rather what was intended was to break the idols in the heart first and foremost.

[Hadith narrator] al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī at-Muṭawī’ī (d. 371/981) said, “Everyone fashions an idol from their desires. Whoever breaks them with resistance is worthy of being called a hero (*futuwwa*).”

Ponder upon this quote from Ibrāhīm ‘alayhis-salām, “What are these statues that you are devoted to?”¹¹¹ See how it applies to the statues of what the heart desires, being devoted to them and worshiping them alongside Allah. Allah said, “Have you seen the one who takes his desires as his god? How can you be made responsible for him? Or did you think that most of them actually listened or gave thought? They are nothing but cattle. In reality they are even more lost from the path.”¹¹²

41. He should know that opposing desires is curative for illnesses in the heart and the body. Following desires brings about disease in both. All diseases of the heart can be reduced to following desires. If a person were to pay close attention to the physical diseases they would find that the majority of them come from preferring desires over what is meant to be avoided.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Qur’an, 21:52, author’s translation.

¹¹² Qur’an, 25:43–44, author’s translation.

42. He should know that if a person follows their desires, their heart is filled with animosity, hatred, jealousy, and evil. Whoever abandons their desires feels tranquil in the heart and body.

[Muslim sage] Abū Bakr al-Warrāq (d. 280/893) said, “When a person is overcome by desire, his heart becomes dark. When his heart becomes dark, his chest is constricted. When his chest is constricted, his character becomes foul. When he has a foul character, he will be angry at the creation and the creation will be angry at him.”¹¹³ Then see the evil, animosity, and injustice that emerges from this hatred.

43. He should know that Allah has created desires and the intellect within the human being. When one gains dominance, the other one hides. As Abū ‘Alī al-Thaqafī (d. 328/940) said, “When a person is defeated by his desires, the intellect hides from him.”¹¹⁴ Then see the consequences of the one who is veiled from his intellect. ‘Alī b. Sahl (d. 256/870) said, “Intellect and desires are in a constant struggle against each other. Guidance is the outcome of the intellect and humiliation the outcome of desires. The self is suspended between them. It will be with whichever of the two wins the battle.”¹¹⁵

44. He should know that Allah has made the heart the king of the body. It is also the center for knowing Allah, loving Him, and worshiping Him. He tests the heart with two rulers, two armies, two sets of allies and two armories. *Ḥaq* (Truth), *rushd* (conscience) and *hudā* (guidance) form the Sultan (ruler). Its allies are the angels and its army is composed of *ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *ikhhlās* (sincerity) and opposing one's desires. On the other side, *bāṭil* (falsehood) is the Sultan and its allies are the devils and their armies, while following desires is the armory. The *nafs* (ego) is between these two armies. The army of *bāṭil* can only advance in the heart through its gaps until it mixes with the heart and surrounds it. Thus, the *nafs* is with its enemy surrounding the heart. In fact, the

¹¹³ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 29.

¹¹⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 30

¹¹⁵ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*.

nafs is the one who gave its enemy the armory beforehand. At this moment, the enemy opens the gates to the city, enters, and conquers it. The heart is humiliated and defeated.

45. He should know that the most harmful enemies to an individual are his own desires and Shayṭān. The most faithful companions for him are his intellect and the angels that inspire him toward goodness. If a person chooses to follow his desires, he willingly submits to his enemy as a captive and is humiliated. He is the worst of friends and allies. This is a severe calamity (*jahd al-balā'*), a miserable end (*darak ash-shaqā'*), bad fate (*sū' al-qadā'*) and the malicious joy of our enemies (*shamātat al-a'dā'*).¹¹⁶
46. He should know that for every individual, there is an initial action and then the inevitable consequences of that action. Whoever starts with following desires will inevitably become humiliated, debased, deprived, and struck with a wide array of calamities according to the number of desires followed. This will all eventually become a punishment that his heart is tormented with as it is said,

The ill treatment of family is appealing to the youth
But in old age it will become punishment

If you were to think about every evil state you would see it began with being carried away by desires and preferring desires over the intellect. Whoever begins by opposing their desires and yielding to the call of forthrightness, then his end will be honor, nobility, richness, high status with Allah, and high status with the people.

[Jurist and sage] Abū Alī ad-Daqāq (d. 405/1014) said, "Whoever controls his desires in his youth, Allah will honor him in his old age."¹¹⁷ It was said to Muhallab bin Abī Šufrah (d. 83/702), "How did you attain what you attained?"

¹¹⁶ This last sentence is referencing a popular prophetic invocation found in *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Bukhārī*, no. 6616, "Take refuge with Allah from the difficulties of severe calamities, from having an evil end and a bad fate and from the malicious joy of your enemies."

¹¹⁷ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 31.

He said, "Through strong determination and opposing desires."¹¹⁸ So this is the beginning and the end in this worldly life. As for the Hereafter, Allah has made Paradise the end of resisting desires and Hellfire the end of the one who follows their desires.

47. He should know that desire is slavery of the heart, a chain around the neck, and shackles around the legs. Following desires is imprisonment by every evil master. Whoever opposes their desires is liberated and achieves freedom. It breaks the shackles on his neck and legs and he becomes like a man who is only owned by one master after having quarreling masters.¹¹⁹

The impulses of desires may be covered
But when the cover is removed he is exposed
The one with desires is a slave
So when he overcame his desires he became the king¹²⁰

[Hadith master] Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) composed the verses,

Ushering from calamities are signs and indications
Do you not see the agitation of the one who is overcome with desires?
The real slave is the one who is a slave to his desires
The free person is both full and hungry at times.¹²¹

48. He should know that whoever opposes his desires has entered a contract with Allah. Allah has guaranteed to fulfill the desired need with much more than what a person has given up. So he becomes like a person who wants dung but is given pearls as a replacement. Following desires makes a person lose what is beneficial for him in this world and the next. An incredibly blissful life emerges from victory over one's desires. Look at the blessings that came to Prophet

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ This is an allusion to the Qur'anic metaphor in 39:29 that explains idolatry as a person being ruled by multiple quarreling partners.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 34.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Yusuf, peace be upon him, after prison as a result of his restraint against unlawful desires.

[Hadith master] 'Abdur-Rahmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814) said, "I saw Sufyan al-Thawrī (d. 161/787) in a dream so I said, 'What has Allah done with you?' He said, 'As soon as I was placed in my grave I was standing before Allah and He gave me an easy accounting then He sent me to Paradise. So I started to roam around its trees and rivers, I did not hear anything until someone said, "Are you Sufyān ibn Sa'īd?" and I said, "Yes I am Sufyān ibn Sa'īd", so the caller said, "You preferred Allah over your desires one time?" I said, "Yes indeed by Allah," Then I was given a spread of treats from all of Paradise.'"¹²²

Abd al-Razzāq said, "[The Caliph] Abū Ja'far sent loggers when Sufyān al-Thawrī escaped to Mecca. He told them to crucify him. So they made a wooden plank and called for Sufyān. At this time Sufyān was hiding in the house of al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād. His companions said to him, 'Fear Allah and do not let the enemies have their way with us.' So he went to the curtain and grabbed it with his hand and said I will leave this if Abū Ja'far enters the city. Abū Ja'far died before entering Mecca."¹²³ So reflect on the good consequences of opposing desires. Look at how he was able to achieve such a status.

49. He should know that opposing desires brings about nobility in this world and the next. A person is dignified outwardly and inwardly. Following desires lowers a person in this world and the next and he is humiliated outwardly and inwardly. When Allah gathers all of humanity in one plain and a caller calls out, "So that the people in the gathering can know who the noble people are on this day and so the pious can stand on a station of honor,"¹²⁴ then those who

¹²² Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 56.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ This is a paraphrasing of a statement attributed to the Prophet's companion and early followers (*athar*), found in multiple collections, attributed to the companions 'Uqbah b. 'Āmir and Ibn 'Abbās as well as an early follower (*tabi'ī*), Rabī'a al-Ḥārshī. It is found in *Kitāb al-zuhd li-Asad ibn Mūsā*, report no. 77; *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, 6:62 and *Shu'b al-Imān*, no. report 3242. Al-Suyūṭī has declared the chain to Ibn 'Abbās as authentic: al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 10:111.

followed their desires will be turned on their heads from the heat, sweat, and pain while the other group will be under the shade of the throne.

50. When you reflect on the seven categories of individuals whom Allah shades in the shade of His throne—a day where there is no shade except His,¹²⁵ you will find each attained this shade through opposition of their desire. The ruler cannot achieve justice except by going against his own desires. The youth preferring worship of his Lord over his youthful impulses can only develop by opposing his desires. The man whose heart is attached to the *masjid* can only do that by opposing his desires and opposing the temptation to go to places of carnal pleasures. The anonymous donor can only remain anonymous by conquering his desires. The one who refused the call by a beautiful noble woman is doing so out of fear of Allah and opposing his desire. The one who remembers Allah in solitude and cries from his reverence of Allah can only attain this by opposing his desires. So the heat, sweat, and severity on the place of gathering will not reach any of them on the Day of Judgment. The heat and sweat will reach all those who were accomplices to their desires. At this point they will be waiting to enter the true prison of their desires. So Allah's help is sought to protect us from the desires of the self that commands us to evil and He makes our desires follow what He loves and what He is pleased with. Certainly, Allah has power over all things.

Commentary on the 50 points

Methods

Ibn al-Qayyim lists 50 distinct instructional benefits for those struggling with addiction. We conducted an inductive qualitative grounded-theory analysis of these benefits using an iterative approach.¹²⁶ This analysis consisted of five steps: (1)

¹²⁵ This is referring to a hadith found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, no. 6806.

¹²⁶ Ylona Chun Tie, Melanie Birks, and Karen Francis, "Grounded Theory Research: A Design Framework for Novice Researchers," *SAGE Open Medicine* 7 (2019): 2050312118822927.

analyzing the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) identifying subcategories; (4) identifying major categories; and (5) Formulating the theory.

The first two steps consisted of reading and reviewing Ibn al-Qayyim's 50 points and coding them based on the number provided in the chapter. The third step consisted of grouping items together based on similarities. There were 5 distinct subcategories created: negative consequences of addiction, positive consequences of healing, facilitators of healing, barriers to healing, visualizations. Themes were generated through analyzing the similarities within each group. Some points contained multiple ideas and so some appeared in more than one category. The fourth step identified two major categories (Psychoeducation and Behavioral Instruction). The fifth step generated an organized structure to Ibn al-Qayyim's rehabilitation program.

Ibn al-Qayyim's rehabilitation program

 Psychoeducation	A. Negative Consequences of Addiction (10; 17; 18; 20-26; 30-31; 34-43; 45-47) B. Positive Consequences of Healing (27-28;30 33;36;38;41;43;47-50) C. Facilitators of Healing (1-3; 7; 9; 15; 17; 44-45) D. Barriers to Healing (19; 44-45)
 Behavioral Instruction	A. Visualizations (4-6; 8; 11-14; 16; 29; 44)

Psychoeducation

Negative consequences of being addicted (10; 17; 18; 20-26; 30-31; 34-43; 45-47)

- State of humiliation, disgrace, and abasement
- Loss of control
- Loss of worldly blessings
- Loss of spiritual blessings
- Pain and suffering in the next life

Positive consequences of healing (27-28;30-33;36;38;41;43;47-50)

- Strong character

- Strong resolve and determination
- Achieving inner freedom
- Clarity of purpose
- Protection from calamities in this world and the next
- High status with Allah and with people

Facilitators of Healing (1-3; 7; 9; 15; 17; 44-45)

- Commitment
- Sincerity
- Truth
- Guidance
- Protective love over one's self
- Strong motivation and determination for success
- Strong aversion to failure
- Courage
- Self-regulation

Barriers to Healing (19; 44-45)

- Arousal of desire
- Idle thinking and heedlessness
- Sinful lifestyle
- Shayṭān

Behavioral instruction

Visualizations (4-6; 8; 11-14; 16; 29; 44)

- Imagine the end-state of being cured and all of the associated joy and delight.
- Imagine the end-state of acting on the impulse and the pain that occurs shortly thereafter.
- Think about your status with Allah if you commit the action.
- Think about how the people you care about would feel if they knew.

- Imagine a transaction where you sell your honor, wealth, property, and faith in exchange for fleeting pleasure.
- Visualize the battlefield and aid the forces of good against the forces of evil.

Discussion

Psychoeducation is a recognized part of almost all therapies, mental and physical. It consists of the knowledge imparted regarding addiction phenomenon including consequences of addiction, factors that aid in healing, and factors that prevent healing. It is a specialized form of education that is delivered to patients and families to empower them with essential knowledge regarding the condition to prevent relapse and maintain therapy.¹²⁷ The majority of the discussion by Ibn al-Qayyim can be categorized under psychoeducation. He dedicates significant attention to the negative consequences of addiction and the positive consequences of healing. This serves to reinforce the desire to change. He also describes positive qualities that are part of the journey of healing and that need to be cultivated. This highlights that, to Ibn al-Qayyim, addiction serves a starting point for an ethical and spiritual transformation through the acquisition of positive qualities like sincerity, courage, and patience. The negative qualities are listed as barriers to healing and should be overcome during the rehabilitation process.

Behavioral instruction is centered around an intriguing theme of visualization. Visualization is actually a recognized part of guided imagery therapy that has only recently been empirically evaluated for addiction.¹²⁸ Guided Imagery therapy is used to bring about positive changes in thoughts and behaviors, reducing symptoms of mental illness and improving coping skills.¹²⁹ There are various techniques and types of visualization that are used including ‘reinstatement of

¹²⁷ Ashutosh Atri and Manoj Sharma, “Psychoeducation,” *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 5, no. 4 (2007): 32–39.

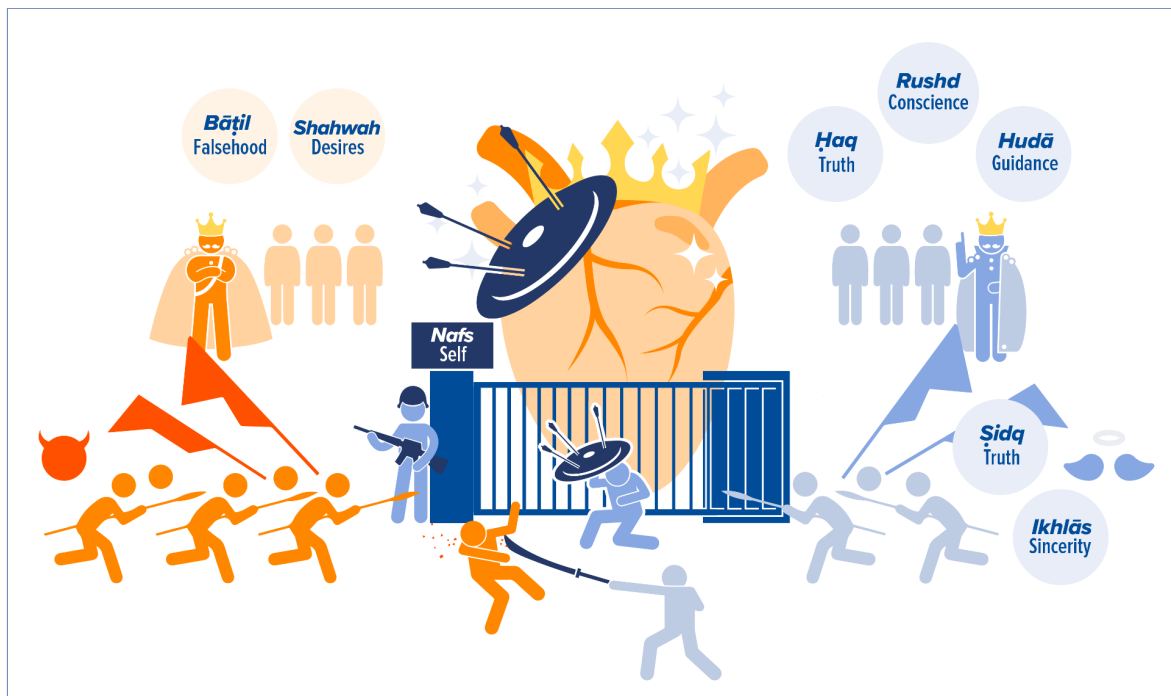
¹²⁸ Kathleen M. Murphy and Douglas M. Ziedonis, “Group Guided Imagery and Music for Adults in Addiction Treatment: A Pilot Randomized Control Trial Feasibility Study,” *Journal of the Association for Music and Imagery* 15, 2016; Srinivasan Aarti, “Effectiveness of Guided Imagery on Stress and Coping among Wives of Alcoholics: A Systematic Review,” *Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology* 14, no. 3 (2020): 146–50.

¹²⁹ Joe Utay and Megan Miller, “Guided Imagery as an Effective Therapeutic Technique: A Brief Review of its History and Efficacy Research,” *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2006).

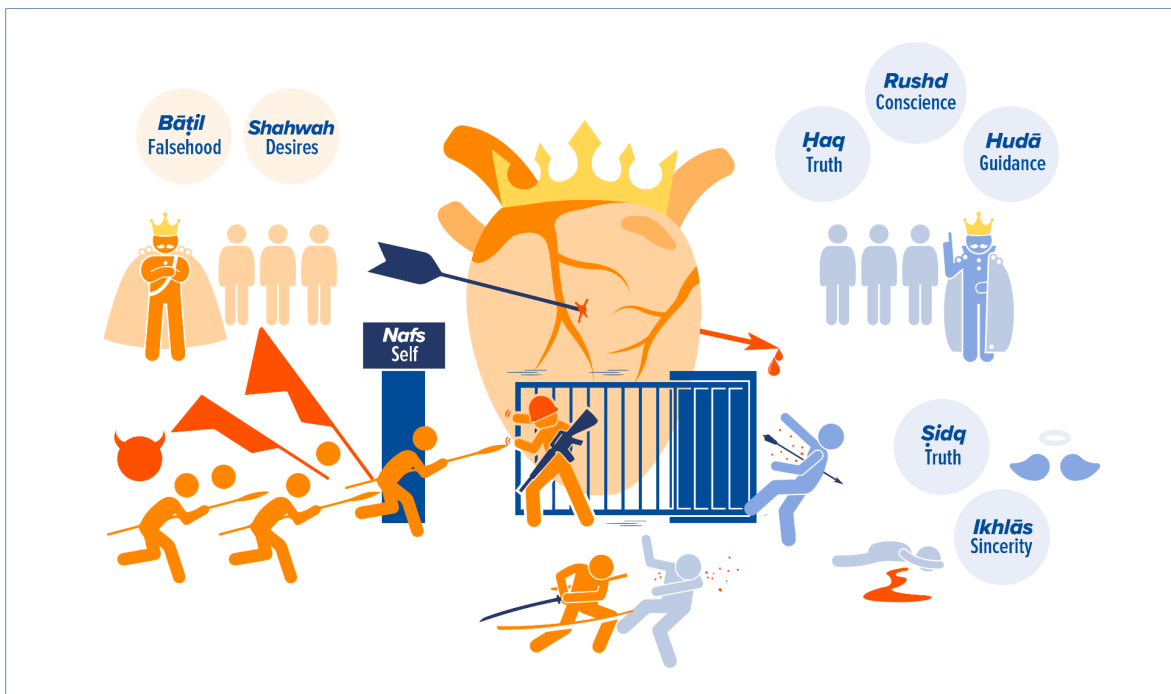
dream image.' This can include actual dreams, fantasies, or daydreams. It appears that Ibn al-Qayyim's visualizations can fit under this genre of guided imagery tools.

His rehabilitation program in its entirety can be conceived as a system of guided imagery. All 50 strategies can be centered around the imagery he builds of the heart and the various forces that exist within. The psychoeducation components provide the ingredients necessary to construct strong visualizations. But they can also be synergized to enhance the depth of the visualization. For instance, the 12th idea is, "The person should compare a discerning individual achieving his purpose against a person who is fulfilling his desire and then imagine the consequences of both. What was lost [by the former] and what was gained [by the latter]?"

Although a person may be able to achieve unaided visualization of this idea, its strength and potential for change can be enhanced when their visualization incorporates the ideas in the 44th point, "He should know that Allah has made the heart the king of the body. It is also the center for knowing Allah, loving Him and worshiping Him. He tests the heart with two rulers, two armies, two sets of allies and two armories. *Ḥaq* (Truth), *rushd* (conscience) and *hudā* (guidance) form the Sultan (ruler). Its allies are the angels and its army is composed of *ṣidq* (commitment to truth) and *ikhhlās* (sincerity) and opposing one's desires. On the other side, *bāṭil* (falsehood) is the Sultan and its allies are the devils and their armies, while following desires is the armory. The *nafs* (self) is between these two armies. The army of *bāṭil* can only advance in the heart through its gaps until it mixes with the heart and surrounds it. Thus, the *nafs* is with its enemy surrounding the heart. In fact, the *nafs* is the one who gave its enemy the armory beforehand. At this moment, the enemy opens the gates to the city, enters, and conquers it. The heart is humiliated and defeated."



if *nafs* is controlled



if *nafs* is weak

Another example is the connection with *ṣabr* (willpower). The second and third points explain the importance of building the resource of *ṣabr*. If a person has low levels of *ṣabr*, then the visualizations will lack the potency to produce strong motivational states. Higher levels of *ṣabr* can augment visualizations and produce strong motivational states.

Conclusion

We can organize Ibn al-Qayyim's rehabilitation program into a coherent narrative. Ibn al-Qayyim calls addicts to learn and reflect about the consequences of indulging in forbidden desires. This learning results in increased motivation to conquer their desires and a strong aversion to failure. Such a psycho-spiritual state is the first step toward recovery. He should become reconnected with the concept of *tawḥīd* (Islamic monotheism) in his life and have a consistent means for guidance to enter his heart. This can be achieved through good company, regular recitation of the Qu'ran, contemplation of scripture, studying prophetic traditions, and gaining general beneficial knowledge. After this, he should actively ensure that his environment does not arouse his desires and actively protect himself from the *Shayṭān* through physical and spiritual hygiene. He or she should consistently seek refuge in Allah from *Shayṭān* and mention Allah's name before eating or entering his or her home. He or she should be cautious of free time that can lead to idle thinking and remove this possibility through proper scheduling and time management. The person should gradually develop their *ṣabr* through a steady increase in positive actions, while ensuring adequate rest and residual fuel.

The above represents the important lifestyle changes that should occur in periods where a person does not feel the impulses or urges. When a person feels cravings and urges, he must engage in the prescribed visualizations or 'guided imagery.' A person should spend time to train their mind and soul to engage in the visualizations at the onset of craving. The images that a person brings to

consciousness, combined with his firm resolve, determination, and willpower can offset the impulse.

Step 1: Develop Strong Motivation for Healing

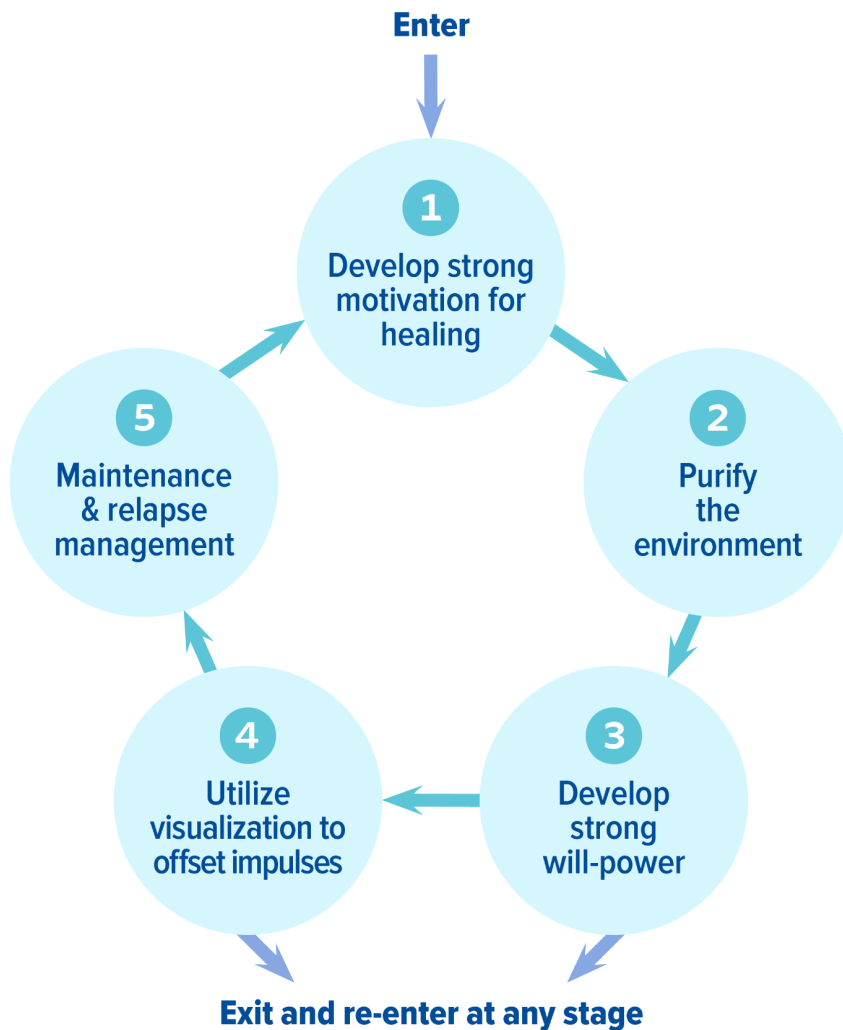
Step 2: Purify the Environment

Step 3: Develop Strong Willpower

Step 4: Utilize Visualization to offset impulses

Step 5: Maintenance & Relapse Management

“Ibn al-Qayyim’s 5-Step Rehabilitation Program”



This piece demonstrates the incredible richness of the Islamic tradition. Ibn al-Qayyim’s reflections on the phenomenon of addiction represent the most detailed treatment of the subject recognized to date. Behavioral and substance addictions are a growing issue affecting Muslim communities in the West and in the Muslim world. There has been great progress made in the field of addiction medicine, psychology, counseling, and group therapies that we can benefit from.

The benefit of studying Ibn al-Qayyim is to center our approach within the Islamic ecosystem. It is important that therapy emerges from Islamic beliefs, motivating factors, spiritual practices, and its view of the human mind, body, and spirit. We can contribute further wisdom to the tradition by integrating modern empirical insights that can help package some of these ideas within practical therapeutic frameworks. It is our hope that this line of inquiry continues in the field of addiction as an extension of the Islamic tradition.

For instance, Ibn al-Qayyim's interventions are largely based on the individual and he does not mention the role of the community explicitly in his discussion. The importance of positive company is emphasized in our tradition and the role of a therapeutic community in treating addiction has long been recognized in the empirical literature.¹³⁰ Organizing Ibn al-Qayyim's ideas into group therapy would be an example of an important area for future development that is rooted in the Islamic tradition while benefiting from other academic fields.

This translation and commentary is the beginning of a wider project that aims to provide guidance rooted in the Islamic tradition for believers struggling with addiction. Ibn al-Qayyim's ideas presented here are fertile ground for the development of faith-based therapies that recognize a person's Islam as the most important therapeutic factor.

¹³⁰ Flores, P. J. (2001). Addiction as an attachment disorder: Implications for group therapy. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 51(1: Special issue), 63-81.