

# Muslim Excellence Program

Pillar 1 - Intention

Week 2

# Lesson 6

## What is Identity?

An identity is something that is specific to someone or something that helps us identify who or what they are.

What is the identity of a coach?

What is the identity of an athlete?

Think of things that make them who they are.

**Who are YOU? And what is YOUR identity?**

Describe yourself in your MEP Reflection Journal



# How do you Describe Yourself?

When you describe yourself, what is the first thing that comes to mind?



## Be mindful of your words

Never ascribe negative qualities to yourself



## Separate actions from identity

You may CHOOSE to procrastinate sometimes, but that is not who you are



## Embrace positive affirmations

Always say positive statements after "I am..."

The way you describe yourself shapes how you view your identity and potential.

# With everything that we are and can be - We Are Muslim first

Alhumdolillah!

Being **Muslim** should be the **foundation of our identity**.

WHY?

That is what makes us **mindful of Allah** at all times with respect to our **thoughts, choices, words and actions**.

**Islam** is our **Deen** which means "**a way of life**"

**A strong Muslim identity means being confident in our deen (faith) and making choices based on Allah's approval, not social pressure.**

# Owning Your Muslim Identity



## Enter Islam Completely

The Quran reminds us to embrace our faith fully, not partially.

**O believers! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and do not follow Satan's footsteps. Surely he is your sworn enemy.**

Surah Al Baqarah 2:208



## Seek Allah's Pleasure

**"Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah by the displeasure of people, Allah will suffice him against the people. Whoever seeks the pleasure of people by the displeasure of Allah, Allah will leave him to the patronage of the people."**

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2414

# Your Muslim Identity is a Blessing

## A Gift, Not a Burden

Your Muslim identity is something to cherish, not hide.

## True Confidence

Real confidence comes from knowing Allah is pleased with you.

## Natural Respect

When we live for Allah's approval, people's respect follows naturally. The greatest example of this is Rasulallah. Even the enemies of Islam would vouch for his honesty and good character.

**True identity is not about impressing people but pleasing Allah.**



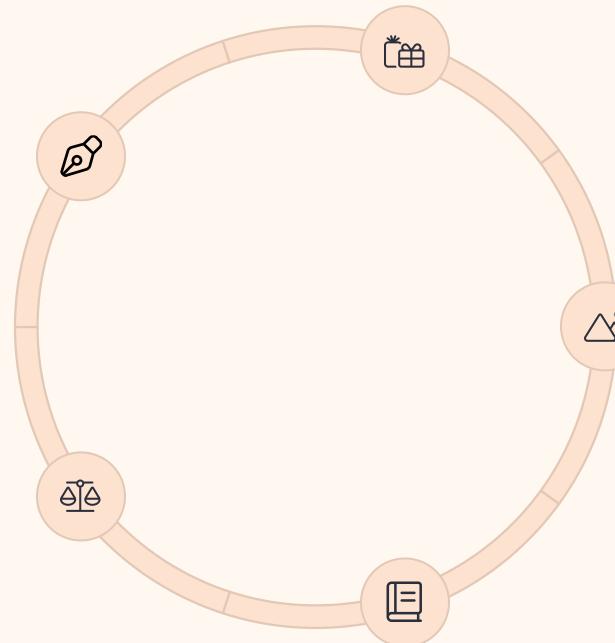
# Recognizing Individual Strengths

## Abu Bakr - As-Siddeeq

The Prophet ﷺ recognized Abu Bakr's truthfulness and gave him this title.

## Umar - Al-Farooq

The Prophet ﷺ recognized Umar's ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.



## The Generous

Like Uthman, giving freely for Allah's sake

## Sahabi with lanky legs

The Prophet ﷺ said his legs were as big as Mount Uhud in Allah's sight.

## The Knowledgeable

Like Ibn Abbas, seeking and sharing wisdom.

**If Rasulallah ﷺ happened to give you a title, what would YOUR title be?**

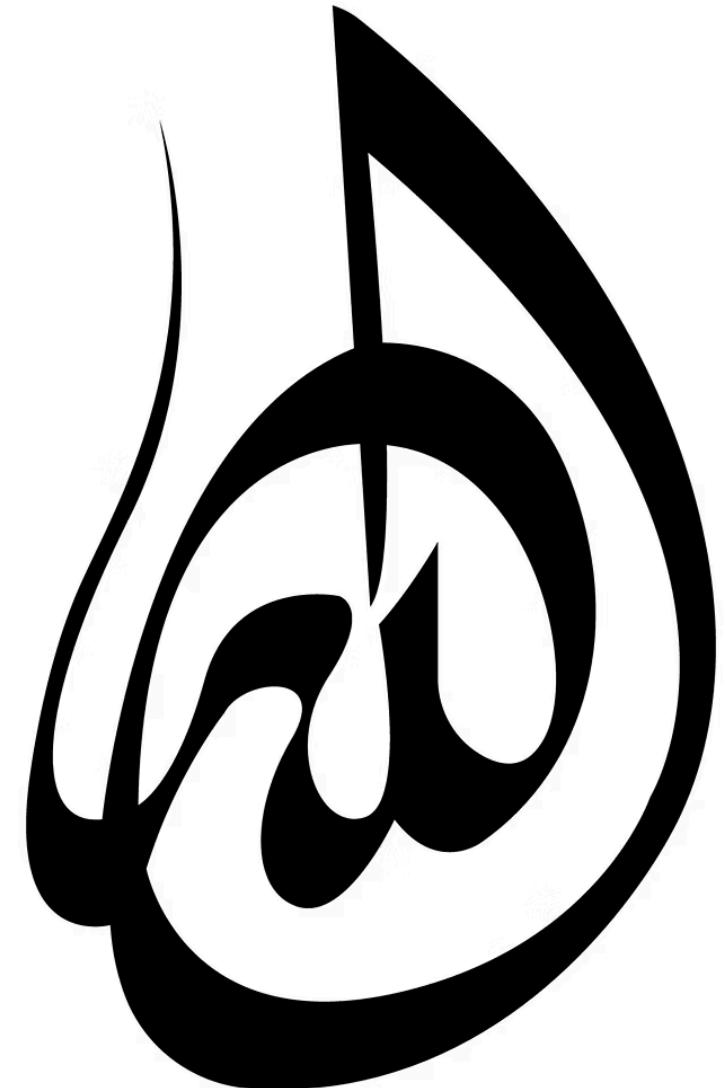
# Lesson 6 - Journal Prompts

1. *What is one challenge you face in showing your Muslim identity confidently? How can you overcome it?*
2. *If you didn't care what people thought, how would you practice Islam differently?*
3. *What does it mean to seek Allah's approval instead of people's?*

## Lesson 7

# How to Connect with Allah

*When do you feel closest to Allah? Is it during hardship, peace, or certain acts of worship?*



# Connecting with Allah

## Finding Peace



"In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Quran 13:28)

## Gratitude & Dhikr – Feeling Allah's Presence

**Quran 14:7** – *"If you are grateful, I will surely increase [My blessings] for you."*

## Turning to Allah



Whoever comes to Me walking, I will come to him running."

(Hadith Qudsi)

## Talk to Allah Anytime

Dua is like sending a personal message to Allah, and He always listens.



## Seeking Guidance

Allah is always near.

Strengthening our connection with Him brings peace, guidance, and purpose.

## Salah (Prayer) – The Lifeline to Allah

Imagine you only spoke to your best friend five times a day. Wouldn't that make you closer?



# Connect To Him Through His Words - Approach to Reading the Qur'an

Imam al-Ajurri said that when a person starts reading the Qur'an, they shouldn't just think, "When will I finish this chapter?" Instead, they should ask:



How can I learn from what I'm reading?



How can I use it to become a better person?

Reading the Qur'an is a special way of worshipping Allah, and worship should be done with focus and care, not just rushing through it.



# Tadabbur & Tafakkur: An Invitation from Allah

- Have you ever spent time reflecting on the creation of Allah?
- How often do you think deeply about the meanings of the Quran?

These two processes—contemplation and deep reflection—are called **Tafakkur** and **Tadabbur** in Islamic terminology.

Allah invites us to do **TAFAKKUR** and **TADABBUR** in many places throughout the Quran.

# Key Differences

## Tafakkur (تفکر)

**Meaning:** Deep thinking and reflection on creation, life, and existence

**Focus:** Observing Allah's signs in nature and the universe

**Goal:** Strengthening faith, realizing Allah's greatness

**Example:** Thinking about the vastness of space, the complexity of the human body, or the balance in nature

## Tadabbur (تدبر)

**Meaning:** Deep reflection and analysis of the Quran's meaning and guidance

**Focus:** Understanding deeper lessons in ayahs of the Quran and implementing its teachings

**Goal:** Extracting lessons from the Quran for action in our daily life

**Example:** Reflecting on a particular ayah to understand time management in life

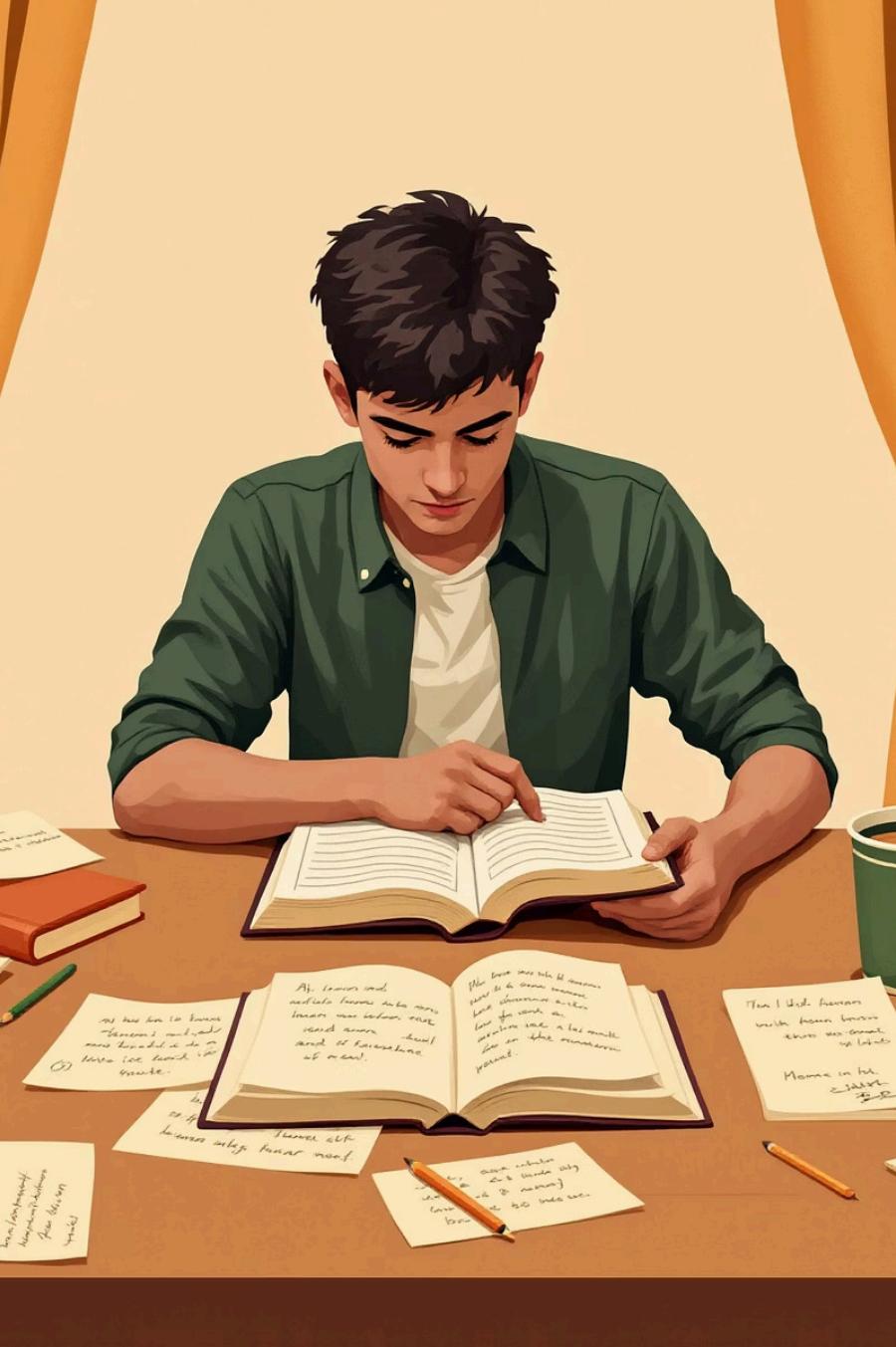


# How to Practice Tafakkur

-  Spend time in nature and reflect on Allah's creation
-  Observe daily experiences and see Allah's wisdom in them

## Contemplating Allah's Signs

Look at the intricacies of the structure of a snowflake...



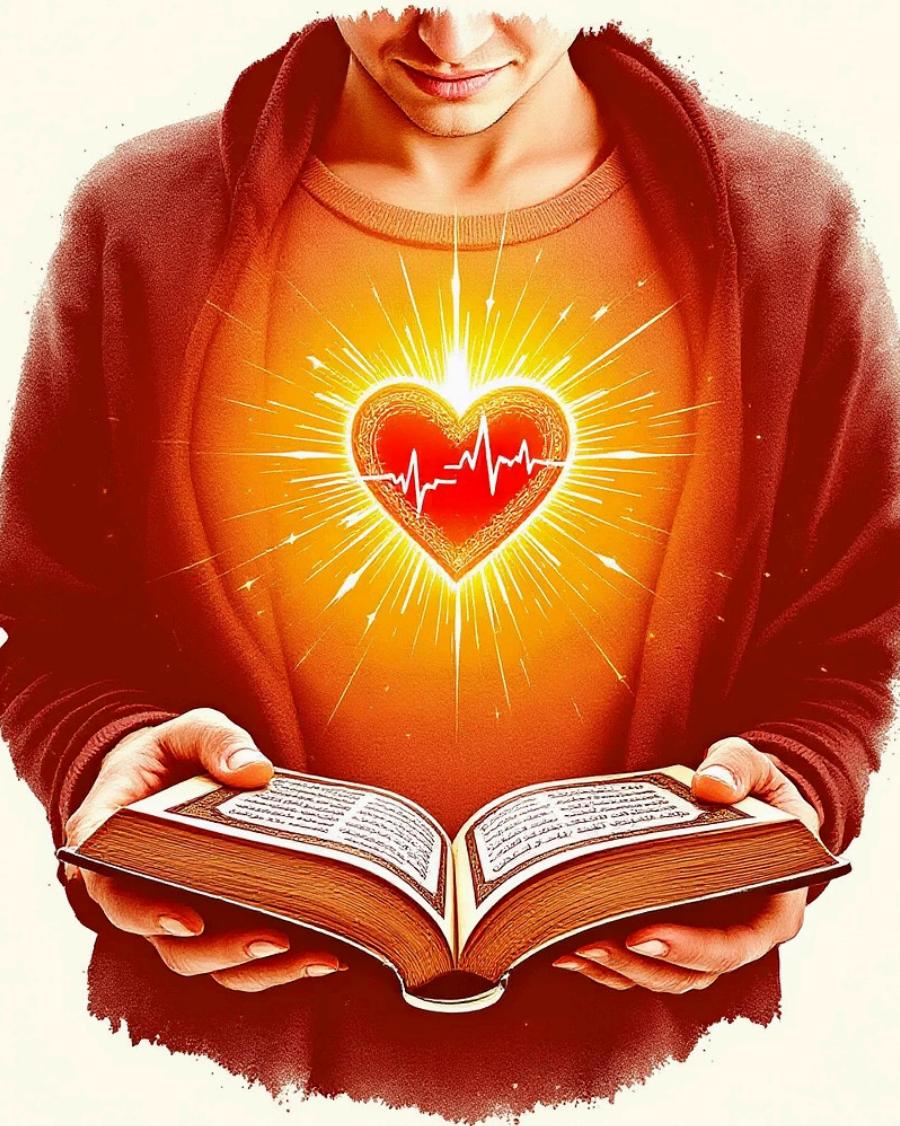
# How to Practice Tadabbur

- Read the Quran with an open heart and reflect on its lessons
- Keep a journal of Quranic verses and how they apply to your life
- Act upon the guidance of the Quran in daily decisions

Choose a short Quranic verse, such as Surah Al-Asr, and discuss its meaning, lessons, and applications in daily life.

# Lesson 7 - Journal Prompts

- *Choose one short ayah (verse) from the Quran that really speaks to you. What do you think Allah is trying to tell you through it?*
- *Surah Al-Asr says: "By time, indeed mankind is in loss..."*  
*What's one way you might be wasting time? What can you do to use your time better starting today?*
- *Is there an ayah or story in the Quran that makes you pause or gives you chills? Why do you think it affects you that way?*



## Lesson 8

# Quran and our Heart

# The Transformative Power of Quran

## Softens Hearts

The Quran can transform even the hardest hearts, as it did with Umar (RA).



## Offers Guidance

The Quran provides clear direction in confusing times.



## Provides Comfort

Surah Al-Duha reminds us that Allah never abandons us.



## Builds Strength

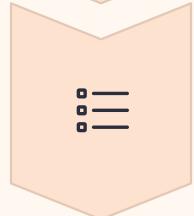
Regular recitation fortifies the heart against challenges.

# Umar Ibn Al Khattab's Transformation



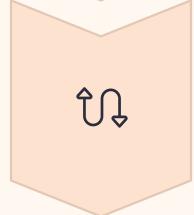
## Before

Known for harshness and opposition to Islam.



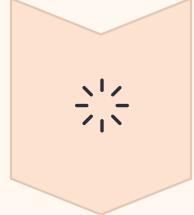
## Encounter

Heard his sister reciting Surah Taha.



## Transformation

His heart softened upon hearing Allah's words.



## After

Became one of Islam's greatest leaders.



# Why Does Our Heart Need Tadabbur?

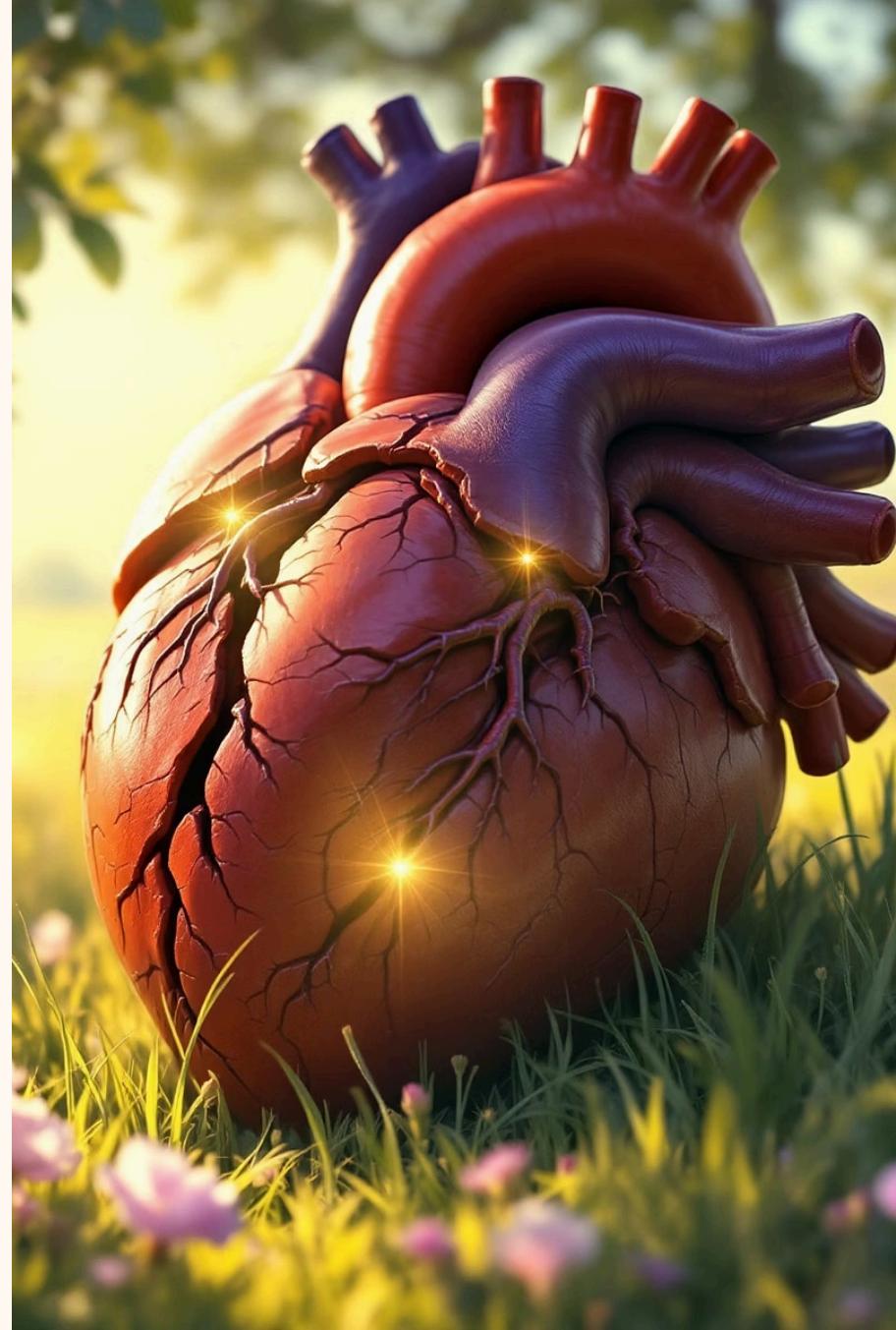
"There is nothing more beneficial for the heart than reading the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection." - Ibn al-Qayyim (raḥimahullāh)

This is what inspires love and longing for Allah. It generates fear of Him and hope in Him. It makes one turn in repentance to Him and rely on Him.

# Benefits of Tadabbur for the Heart

- It causes one to fully submit to Allah
- It helps one leave matters in His Hands
- It allows one to be pleased with His Decree
- It inspires patience and gratitude

**Tadabbur** is a means of acquiring all of the characteristics that give life to and perfect the heart.



# Some Keys to Tadabbur

- The goal isn't to rush through but to connect emotionally and mentally with the message.
- When reading verses, take note of all du'as (supplications) and dhikr (remembrance of Allah) that come to mind.
- Put yourself in the context of the verse and find the message Allah is sending to your heart. This key helps make the Qur'an personal.



# Lesson 8 - Journal Prompts

- *What do you think **Ibn al Qayyim** was telling us by saying, "There is nothing more beneficial for the heart than reading the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection."*
- *If you chose to contemplate on Allah's signs in nature, what would you observe and contemplate on?*
- *Do Tadabbur on this ayah that highlights **Strength in Hardship** -"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear." (Quran 2:286) OR this one about **Hope After Difficulty** -"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease." (Quran 94:5)*



# Lesson 9

## Understanding Fitrah

Are you aware of what is your natural disposition or signature strength that Allah has created you with?

**Fitrah is the innate human nature or predisposition towards faith, seeking truth, and living a life of good, which is instilled in all people by Allah.**

# Fitrah in the Quran and Sunnah

## Quranic Foundation

"So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness 'O Prophet'—the natural Way of Allah (fitrah) which He has instilled in 'all' people." (Quran 30:30)

## Prophetic Teaching

"Every child is born with a natural disposition (fitrah), but his parents make him a Jew, Christian, or Magian." (Sahih Muslim)

# We are all born upon our fitrah



## Natural Disposition

Fitrah is the pure state Allah created all humans in.



## Moral Compass

It's our innate recognition of right and wrong.



## Belief in Allah

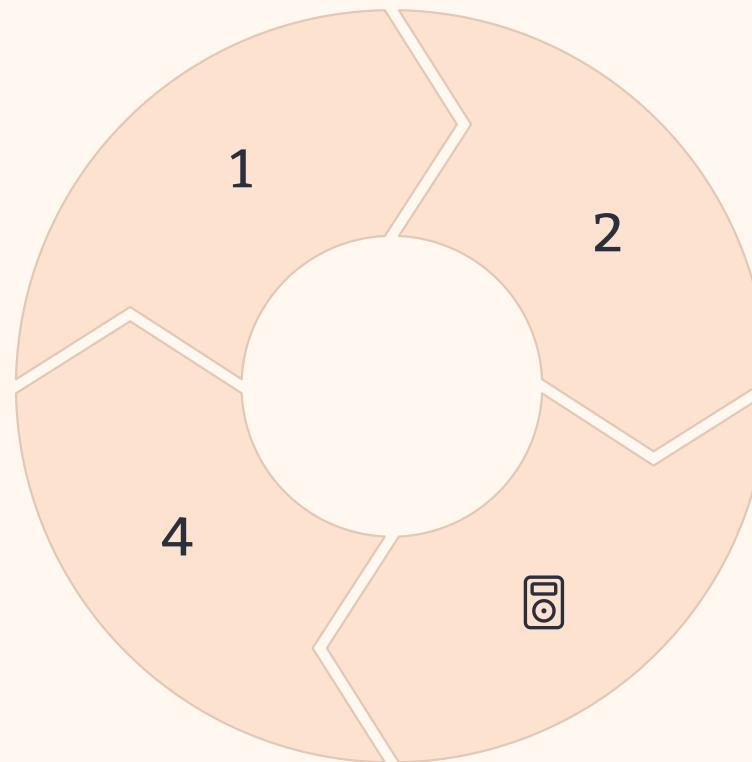
Fitrah naturally inclines us toward faith and goodness.



## Desire for Justice

We naturally seek fairness and truth.

# When Actions Align with Fitrah



## Telling Truth

Honesty brings inner peace.

## Showing Kindness

Compassion feels natural.

## Standing for Justice

Defending right feels fulfilling.

## Connecting with Allah

Worship brings contentment.



# When Actions Contradict Fitrah

## Inner Conflict

Going against your values creates internal discomfort.

## Spiritual Distance

You may feel disconnected from Allah and yourself.

## Guidance Signal

This discomfort is your fitrah calling you back to alignment.

# Reconnecting with Your Fitrah

- 1 Help Someone in Need
- 2 Resist Negative Peer Pressure
- 3 Practice Self-Compassion
- 4 Strengthen Spiritual Connection

## Help Someone in Need

Acts of service align with our natural compassion.

## Resist Negative Peer Pressure

Say no when something contradicts your values.

## Practice Self-Compassion

Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes.

## Strengthen Spiritual Connection

Regular prayer and Quran recitation purify the heart.



# Maintaining Fitrah in Society



## Find Supportive Community

Connect with like-minded Muslims who share your values.



## Seek Islamic Knowledge

Understanding strengthens conviction in challenging environments.



## Balance Cultural Influences

Embrace positive aspects while staying true to Islamic principles.



# Lesson 9 - Journal Prompts for Self-Reflection

- *In your own words, what does it mean to have a 'natural fitrah' as a Muslim? Do you think your environment—friends, media, school— influences how you feel or act on your fitrah? Explain how.*
- *Have you ever done something that felt wrong or made you feel uneasy inside—even if others said it was okay? What do you think your fitrah was trying to tell you in that moment?*

# Lesson 10

## Consciousness - a Character Trait

What is consciousness?

- Consciousness is the state of being aware of and responsive to one's surroundings, thoughts, and emotions
- It represents the ability to reflect on one's actions and make intentional choices
- In simpler terms, consciousness is about being aware of your thoughts before you act on them

Latin origin, "**conscientia**," means "**to know from direct personal experience.**"

