

BLESSED

with

Bipolar

The Muslim's 3-Step Guide
for Mastering Bipolar

Blessed with Bipolar

The Muslim's 3-Step Support Guide for Mastering Bipolar

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Disclaimer: "Blessed with Bipolar" is a compilation of the lessons I learnt from having bipolar for sixteen years. The advice in this eBook is based on my personal experience, opinion and basic research. This guide is not a substitute for professional help and by reading this, you agree to take full charge of your mental health. SabaMalik.com and Saba Malik deny any liability caused by a third party's misuse of the tips outlined in this guide. For clinical emergencies, please call 911 or contact a healthcare professional.

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BEFORE YOU START...

Before you start reading this book, check if any of the following apply to you:

1. Are you having thoughts of harming yourself or others? If you are reading this book to help someone you love, then are they having thoughts of harming themselves or others?
2. Are you currently in an episode where you are having hallucinations or delusions?
3. Are you isolated and don't have any medical professionals treating you?
4. Do you think you have undiagnosed bipolar disorder?

If any of the above questions are true for you, then seek medical help right away. If you are having thoughts of suicide, then call 911 immediately.

If none of the above questions apply to you, then please continue reading this eBook and enjoy :)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

“Satan rejoiced when Adam (peace be upon him) came out of Paradise but he did not know that when a diver sinks into the sea, he collects pearls and then rises again.”

- *Ibn al-Qayyim*

“Come on you can do it. This is what everyone wants. Everyone will be so happy if you do this. They are better off with you!”

It cheered me on with sheer tenacity and excitement. I didn't know who it was, yet the voices felt like they were coming from me. It was the first time my mind waived the white flag and surrendered to the suicidal screams. This time I could not fight them anymore. There was no voice left to shut them down.

I'm not sure how I survived that suicidal attempt. It was the deadliest one that nearly took my life. Yet, there's one thing I know for sure: Allah saved me. My mind checked out. My limbs were lifeless. The voices won and drowned out every ounce of sanity in me. On top of that, these screams were actually positive. They encourage me to end my life as if it was a *good* thing. They applauded me as if I was hitting a home run.

Try fighting these voices. You can't. They are too loud. So that day only one thing saved me: my connection with God, Allah. My mind was gone but not my heart. My soul rose in that moment and looked from above. It knew I would get through this and that I just had to hang on a little longer and help would come.

And help did come. I was rushed to the hospital and it took me over three years just to recover from that incident. But from something traumatic like that, you never do really recover. I still revisit that place, that moment in time where I nearly died. I survived only because of my faith. That is why I am so adamant about managing bipolar and mental illnesses in conjunction with spirituality and my faith, Islam. It's my belief and experience that if you don't have a big enough *why*, bipolar will eat you up. If there isn't something outside of you, something higher than you, you will be dragged into your demons until your own mind destroys you. It's worse than cancer. Tumors are physical. You can see them. You can talk about them. How do you talk about an illness you can't see? Worse, how do you talk about a disorder that you don't even have a vocabulary for? Good luck.

With this eBook, I hope to shed light on not just what bipolar is but how we can master it with Islam. If you are not a spiritual person and Islam is not your source of motivation, this guide is not meant for you. I'll be honest because I value your time even if you are not in my audience. Maybe, something else motivates you to seek treatment. That's great. Hold on to that reason and run with it. This guide works when Allah is central in your life and when you believe that religion can help you. If that is the case, you are in the right place my friend.

Yet, even if you have all the faith in the world, going at bipolar alone can be disastrous. Peer support matters because it can make the difference between recovery and destruction. "The Muslim's 3-Step Support Guide for Mastering Bipolar" is a product of my sixteen years of experience with this disorder and all the pearls I collected along the way. The greatest tool I use to dive in the ocean of life and collect gems is my faith. This search helps me find a greater meaning in the mundane, the mucky and the mental.

It isn't only experience that teaches me that peer support can make all the difference in the life of a bipolar Muslim but the research I find. Studies show that support from family members and Muslims in the community lead to changes in the stigma that prevents people from seeking treatment. So even if we have the best doctors, hospitals, medications and books in the world but no one is willing to get help because of the stigma, all those resources are pointless.

Thus, when I first accepted my bipolar diagnosis, I looked for spiritual resources on mental illness. I searched endlessly online and found almost nothing. I especially searched for Muslim support on forums, sites and blogs. I didn't ask anybody in my community at that time because I didn't want anybody to know I was "crazy." It actually hadn't even hit me yet that I had a mental illness.

And when I didn't find any spiritual blogs or sites on mental illness, bipolar specifically, I decided to share my experiences from bipolar with my friends on Facebook. My life coach suggested blogging so I could reach more people. I did all this to not only give support to others but rather to seek out other divers so we could journey together to find pearls. I took the "swimming lessons" through my research on bipolar. And I actively looked for the pearls by doing my best to put a positive spin to my blog posts, videos, eBooks and talks.

However, a one-time support session alone will not fix your bipolar. Recovery and eventual mastery are a process. It's a journey. And like any other journey, it takes time, dedication, perseverance, teamwork and an ability to enjoy the swim. Thus, I am not saying to discard doctors, meds, therapy, research or any other resource you might be blessed with. Rather I want us to join hands and get support from all these areas all the while seeking support from

different Muslims with bipolar. We must have a holistic approach. This support guide is just one part of the equation but a very important part, nonetheless. I say this because I have yet to find a bipolar support eBook tailored specifically to Muslims. When or if you find one, please do let me know. I feed off of bipolar insights.

This bipolar piece focuses on three areas. The first one is *Heart like Heaven*, the second is *Mind like Water* and the last one is *Breezy Body*. Put roughly, these three categories focus on the soul, mind and body. And although this trio is overused in other disciplines and blogs, I put a unique spin on these. I approach the heart, mind and body from an Islamic *and* bipolar mindset. It isn't merely about exercising or doing brain activities or even just meditation. Instead, I show you how to have a *Heart like Heaven* when all hell breaks loose. After all, prisoners are in solitary confinement because that's one of the worst tortures known to man. Why should we marry loneliness when help is waving at us?

Some might confuse the word “mastery” with a magic wand. I am neither a fairy nor can I use my words to make bipolar disappear forever. I wish I could. The term “master” implies that you need to apply the tips in this guide on a regular basis. One of the main reasons I write and blog is so that I regularly remind myself of tips I share with you. I spread my knowledge so that it solidifies my own resolve to take action. Mastery requires consistent and persistent effort. Many people said to me that I should call this guide dealing with or recovering from bipolar and not “mastering bipolar.” One sister even asked me, “But have you mastered bipolar?” My answer is yes because mastery is a journey. As long as I work on my bipolar, I am its master. This disorder is a beast and I rise above it because the other option is deadly. A bipolar champion is not one who never gets sick. Rather they are the souls who despite shooting up the mountains and falling viciously in the dungeons decide to get up one more time and keep walking towards their Lord. They have full faith that bipolar is temporary but how they handle it leaves a permanent mark on them and the souls that follow. We have the privilege of mastering bipolar or letting it lead to our misery.

“Always look ahead and above yourself. Always try to improve on yourself. Always strive to elevate your craft. That's what he taught me.”

-Yoshikazu Ono from “Jiro Dreams of Sushi”

Lastly, I want to give credit to all the blessed hearts that helped me write this support guide and continue to help me every day. I am tremendously thankful to my loving husband, my selfless mom, my dear sisters, my brave brother, my mentors and my friends for helping me come this far. This eBook is really a product of their nights at the hospital and words of support. More than my bipolar experience, “Blessed with Bipolar” is a response to all the questions I

Blessed with Bipolar

receive from many of my bipolar brothers and sisters. May it help you master this mental illness, whether you are a new diver or an Olympic swimmer.

Saba Malik

June 1, 2020

STEP 1: HEART LIKE HEAVEN

Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.
- *Quran 13:28*

Imagine you go somewhere with a GPS. But that fancy compass is broken. What is your journey like then? Obviously, you feel frustrated, confused and probably blame someone or something for your troubles. Moreover, you end up in the wrong place. This is precisely what happens when you set out to master bipolar but neglect the heavenly heart. You think all the attention must be on the brain where bipolar resides. While that is true in a crisis, it doesn't work for long-term recovery. You need to focus on the heart before going to the mind.

Your heart and soul are your guide. With an internal functioning GPS, you direct yourself to your destination: Allah. If your soul is not at peace, you cannot deal with the chaotic external world. *Salah* is your internal GPS. It connects you with you Lord. Praying to Allah is what gives you that Heart like Heaven. You cannot expect to go from bipolar to blessed without a functioning compass.

With a focused and meditative *salah* you see the blessings within bipolar. When you truly focus on your conversation with Allah during *Fajr, Dhur, Asr, Maghrib* and *Isha* slowly, slowly, your outlook on life shifts. When your internal state is so calm and clear, you face the storm outside with intent and mastery. At that point, bipolar submits to you. You master it.

Sub han Allah, when I truly feel my prayers, my soul lifts and breaks away from all the shackles of this worldly life. I start to see bipolar as just a test. Like any other test, I realize there is a lesson to learn. This disorder starts to bring order into my life.

Everything we do on this earth is on a horizontal plane. In other words, you travel this way and that way around the globe. However, when you offer *salah*, it is the only time you go on a vertical journey as you connect to a Power much, much Higher than you can begin to imagine.

I didn't always feel this heart-to-heaven connection. It takes time. It also takes much active reflection and action. I often do this work in my journal where I list my lessons and blessings from bipolar. Writing this eBook is a perfect example of the action part. The advantages of bipolar I write here are not merely intellectual insights that look good or sound good in an eBook. They are actually diamonds I find. If a technique didn't work for me or it is not something I practice in real life, you won't see it here.

Imagine a sieve. You're making gravy but it has a lot of lumps. To get a nice, smooth consistency, you pour the sauce into the sieve. You collect the gravy in a pot and toss the clumps in the compost or garbage. What you now have is delicious condiment to pour on your mashed potatoes or roasted meats or vegetables. In other words, you enjoy the fruits of your labor. Also, when you first started out, you didn't have a smooth sauce to begin with. There was a process to follow.

You might be thinking, "Well Saba, doing *salah* sounds all nice and dandy but how do I pray when I'm manic or I've just been hospitalized because I tried to hang myself?" Well my friend, you don't. This eBook only works when you are not in a crisis and if you are reading this right now, chances are that things are bad but not bad enough that you can't use this guide.

Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) did not build the arc when the frightful flood came. He built it way before when those around him actually made fun of him. And *subhanAllah*, I've faced those taunts too where people make fun of my "useless" therapist or bipolar isn't even real. They criticize all the hours I spend writing and doing mental health advocacy work. I just nod, smile (not always) and keep hammering the nails. I know the storm is coming so I build my shelter. *InshaAllah* in the next section, I will show you how to build your own umbrella so you can dance in the rain and not curse it.

But before you can do all that, you must align yourself with Allah. His remembrance drives your heart and that is through *du'a*. Muslims have *salah* which is the ritualistic prayer and then there is *du'a*. Think of *salah* as a fixed appointment with Allah, five times a day. *Du'a* is like calling and texting Allah anytime and He is high above any analogy. When you can't do *salah*, then make *du'a* to Allah. Talk to Him. With His strong compass, the world is yours. But even still, taking medication or going to therapy is not easy. The bipolar stigma and shame, especially the self-shame, is not a breeze. It doesn't even mean that you never get sick again. Having a great GPS means your journey from bipolar to blessed is enjoyable and easier. With Allah at your center, you are calm even in the storm. You have hope and with that, you defeat bipolar.

I handle the side effects and the stigma attached to taking pills for my bipolar because after all, my body and the brain is a gracious gift from Allah. I must do everything in my might to cherish this gift for one day, I must return this vessel to my Beloved and I want to give it to Him in the best condition possible.

Salah gives you the bird's eye view to realize all these lessons. Use your spirituality as a motivation to swallow that pill. Through *salah* and *du'a*, work on your relationship with Allah so that you take your meds or follow your treatment plan because that's what The Most Caring wants from you. When Allah is happy, everything falls in place, even the mental beasts.

It is my experience that using *salah* is the most effective way to stick to my treatment plan. When my reason for popping in a 200mg pill or going to therapy is so high and divine, no mood, no stigma nor any loss can stand in my way. Medication is an important part of moving from bipolar to blessed but no worries my friend because pharmaceutical companies do not sponsor me so I do not promote them. I simply believe that bipolar has biological roots in the brain and you must use a biological method to remedy the neurotransmitter imbalance. The pills do just that: balance out the deficiency of chemicals in your brain that cause the extreme mood shifts, albeit with side effects. Life is not perfect but you must still live with excellence which means using tried and tested medications to help you master bipolar. It takes a while for the meds to kick in. Generally, the more severe the episode, the longer it takes for the meds to work and for you to come back to reality. A heavenly heart fuels your medication regimen has. *Insha'Allah* in the next section, we will focus on a Mind like Water.

Below are five simple and tangible tips I use to have Heart like Heaven. Use the following tools as a checklist that you come back to when you feel yourself swaying away from The Divine.

1. Offer *salah* regularly, start off with the *fardh salah* even if that means you get just one prayer in. Just start. Then add in the *sunnah* and *nafl* because that protects the *fardh*. At the end of this guide is a simple checklist you can print and use to check off your daily *salah*.
2. Remember Allah often, especially outside of *salah*. At the end of this guide in the "Balance Bipolar" section is a list of *du'a* I regularly recite for bipolar and depression. Print them out or keep this guide so you can keep remembering those special prayers.
3. Surround yourself with righteous company even if it's through books, social media and online Islamic classes. You can see a list of my favorite online resources in the "Balance Bipolar" section at the end of this guide.
4. Make the Quran your best friend. My favorite apps and Quran tools are in the "Balance Bipolar" section as well

5. Take meds religiously if this applies to you. Ask your doctor about medication treatment. I'm not qualified for that.

For more *Heart like Heaven* posts, click [here](#).

STEP 2: MIND LIKE WATER

Your mind is like the water. When it is agitated it becomes difficult to see, but when you let it settle, the answer becomes clear.

- *Oogway From the "Kung Fu Panda"*

Mind like Water

We can be motivated by pleasure when we have a *Mind like Water*. The water needs to be a flowing stream. The crisp water needs to be moving and not stay stagnant. If it doesn't move, it will start smelling like dead fish. And who wants a mind that smells like dead fish. That's right. No one.

Then the question arises, how does one get a *Mind like Water*? It all has to do with attachment and fishing. Imagine you're sitting in a calm river with your fishing rod. The water is so clear that you can even see the beautiful bedrock at the bottom of the stream. The air is sweet and the birds are singing their morning song. Then you finally catch a fish. Hooray! You reel it in and instead of putting it back in the stream; you just let it hang from the hook. You become so fixated on this one fish you caught, that all other, and mind you bigger, fish are passing you by. You're missing out on the bigger catch. Well *Mind like Water* is kind of like fishing. You need to catch the thought that's good and necessary. Look at it and use it if need be. Then throw it back in the *Mind like Water*. The problem comes when we keep hooking on to these fishy thoughts. We keep reeling them in one spot of our mind. We keep hooking on to them until these thoughts start smelling really bad. Our mind almost feels constipated.

So watch your thoughts swim like pretty creatures in a flowing stream. Reel it in when you need it and let it go when you're done with it. You might be saying, "OK Saba, thanks for the analogy but how do I actually apply this practically into my life?" Read on.

I didn't grow up learning analogies like fish one. Nor did I have people teaching me about mental illnesses. It wasn't something that was discussed during school assemblies. We also didn't have a mental education class like we had a physical education class. I would love to point the finger at my teachers, parents and society and say they made me ignorantly ill. But that would be the easy thing to do. Nor do I blame myself for being ignorant. It just is. And when I accept that this plague of ignorance was destined for me, I can easily move on to dispelling this lack of knowledge.

“As much as you can, keep *dunya* (worldly life) in your hand--not in your heart. That means when someone insults you, keep it out of your heart so it doesn't make you bitter or defensive.

When someone praises you, also keep it out of your heart, so it doesn't make you arrogant and self-deluded. When you face hardship and stress, don't absorb it in your heart, so you don't become hopeless and overwhelmed. Instead keep it in your hands and realize that everything passes. When God gives you a gift, don't hold it in your heart. Hold it in your hand so that you don't begin to love the gift more than the giver. And so that when it is taken away you can truly respond with '*inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajioon*': 'Indeed we belong to God and to God we return'." (Yasmin Mogahed)

I wish people knew how mental illness can really disrupt your life. And even though people can't see it on the outside like a physical problem, it can be just as serious if not more.
– Nirgas

Being ignorantly ill about bipolar led to other people stepping in and making decisions on my behalf. Writing this statement, "my judgment was impaired" now hurts. For a long time, I was mad at myself over not taking care of myself. I blamed myself for "letting" my judgment getting impaired. That anger was directed inwards and that is how I went into a deep depression for over two years. I was digging my own dark dungeon and I still didn't even know it. I was still ignorantly ill.

During my two years of depression, I always wanted to be somewhere else. I hated my life. I hated school. I hated my body. I hated my family. I hated myself and may Allah forgive me, I hated God. I hated everything and anything. I hadn't learned to love my life yet. What was there to love! I would go to sleep late at night and sleep during the day just so I would have to face the least amount of people.

The big mistake I made was to personalize that hate the depression brought. I actually believed my life was full of hate. What I didn't know was that all that hate and negative thoughts were part of the depression I was going through. I also became less practicing during this depressive time. My salah wasn't as constant.

I thought my bipolar depression began when I was officially diagnosed. But that's hardly the case. There were signs of a disturbed Saba way before I actually had my first manic episode. It's just that no one, including me, recognized the early warning signs. During high school, the bipolar volcano was slowly getting ready to erupt. It would spew forth hot lava now and then. The ugly part was that I got blamed for the mess the early bipolar warning signs were leaving behind. I got called "jinn" often. In fact, I was called jinn or monster from a very young age. I had mood swings for as long as I could remember. Only, I didn't call them mood swings. I was told that I was moody and stubborn. I was rude and inconsiderate of other people. While the bewitching voices grew inside me, I only acted out more and more. I couldn't understand what was going on inside me. How could it be that one day I felt perfectly fine, actually much better than fine. I felt like I was the luckiest kid in the world who had just stepped into Willy Wonka's

Chocolate Factory. And the very next day, hour or even second, I felt like pulling my hair, punching anything that got in my way and screaming till I became voiceless. All the while, I was getting top grades and had all the love a child could wish for. Then what was so friggin' wrong with me. If only I knew what bipolar beast was swimming inside of me then.

1. Thank Allah by thanking His creation. You can make a gratitude journal about all your blessings and then thank loved ones through a kind word, simple card or small gift. Cherishing and taking care of something also shows gratitude. This could mean cleaning up your place, keeping your body fresh and making sure to minimize food waste.
2. Get some “me” time. This could be curling up with a good book, soaking in a warm bathtub filled with water and scented oils or just taking a walk. Try to make these relaxing activities a routine so even when the weather is ugly, you can use these hobbies to ground you. When you take care of yourself properly, you are now in the best position to give back. This means helping your sibling with their homework or volunteering at the soup kitchen or just supporting SabaMalik.com readers through your [forum posts](#) and comments.
3. The last tip is to prepare for upcoming tornados. I might seem pessimistic but for many bipolars, mania and depression episode recurrence is common. However, there are times when they can be prevented or the severity can at least be decreased. Thus, in the *Merry Meadows*, you want to build a support system net that can catch you if or when you fall. My care crew includes Allah, my husband, my mom, my siblings, close friends, psychiatrist, paramedics (in severe cases), psychotherapist, trainer, SabaMalik.com support blog and social worker. Yours might also include a nutritionist, caseworker, doctor and a support group. Different people need different kinds of help. Moreover, remember that you want to spread your network as much as you can. This prevents exhaustion. Thus, get the proper knowledge when times are good so you can face the beast.

“When the shark attacks, that’s not the time to learn swimming.”

For more information on *Mind Like Water*, click [here](#).

MANIA MOUNTAINS

“The purpose of an affliction is to reach a state of *tadaru*. *Tadaru* is humility before Allah-but it is not just humility. To understand the concept of *tadaru*, imagine yourself in the middle of an ocean. Imagine that you are all alone on a boat. Imagine that a huge storm comes and the waves become mountains surrounding you. Now imagine turning to Allah at *that* point and asking for His help. In what state of need, awe, dependency and utter humility would you be? *That* is *tadaru*.” (Yasmin Mogahed, “Reclaim Your Heart”)

Mania Hills

The Red, Velvet "Allah Frame

When my servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he call on Me: Let them also with a will listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way¹.

It's a warm autumn night. The soft breeze enters through my open window and makes the curtain dance happily. The sun is settled in a cozy slumber. I can't see the familiar big star anymore. Darkness now fills the sky. There are even some heavy, grey clouds creeping in from the south side of the sky. The house is slowly going to sleep. The gentle whispers of my siblings are heard from their room next door. My mom is still in the kitchen. I hear a faint click as she gently puts her teacup down in the saucer.

That's odd. How come I can hear the clicking of a teacup from downstairs all the way up to my room. And the door is closed just to let you.

Cause you're paranoid, Saba! That's why.

Oh shut up. Not you again. You know we have to stay quiet or else he'll hear us.

My hair is disheveled. I sit nervously on my floor. My knees are pressed tightly against my chest. I rock back and forth like a little crying baby, scared of a stormy night. I am hiding from someone.

Hiding! Who are you hiding from?

Shh...he'll hear you.

Saba, you're going crazy again.

No, I'm not. He's really there. I saw him outside my door.

¹ Quran (Surah al-Baqarah 2:186)

Okay, tell me who is after you?

The shaytan is after me you dumbo!

My room has a stuffy smell or as my younger sister puts it, "It smells like an old man." It has been a while since I last washed my clothes and bed sheet. But the carpet smells too. Why? I didn't drop anything on it.

Maybe you did!

No! I didn't. And shut up for God's sake!

Can't you just stop fighting and focus on a way to get out. You know if you stay in this room, he'll come after you.

Who'll come after me??

The shaytan! You're such an idiot. Can't you feel him? And I just told you about him. How can you forget?

Sorry. I'm not as smart as you.

The stench of the carpet hits my nose like a repugnant old pond. It hurts my head. My neighbor's patio light flies through my huge window. The beam screams into my eyes like a ghostly girl trapped between two worlds. My legs are numb from sitting in the same spot. My bum has fallen asleep. The less body parts that witness this episode, the better.

His red-blackish face jumps in front of my scared eyes. I jerk all of sudden and let out an audible shriek. But no one hears it. Except me. Allah hears it too.

Right?

I don't know. Stop asking me questions you annoying girl.

Shut up. You're the one making up all the devil garbage.

Fine! Don't believe me. You'd have to be moron not to believe me. Didn't you just see him??

Yeah...

So, then why are you saying I'm making up this devil crap. I'm telling you he is here in this room and he is after you. You got to run to Allah.

Run to Allah? What? How? Where is Allah?

You're a Muslim and you don't know even know where your own Lord is! You're pathetic.

Please just tell me where he is. Please help me.

"Help meeeee!" I scream out loud.

My mom frantically puts her tea down. I can hear her heavy steps climbing each stair at a time. She fervently opens my door and rushes in. Her breathing is quick and heavy.

"Saba baitay, what's wrong?"

I sit frozen in my position. I can't talk to her. My mouth won't open. I can't even look at her because I don't know how to move my pupils and turn my neck towards her. I've forgotten all that. I forgot how to be normal.

"Saba?" she says again.

Her voice is gentle and soothing. I wish I could keep hearing it for each syllable, she is pulled further and further away from me. It's as if a big, black hole is sucking her in. She stretches out her hand, trying to hold on to me and rescue me from this episode one more time. But it's too late. She's standing there talking but I can't understand her. My mind has been hijacked by the devil.

Unbeknownst to me, my legs quickly stand up, as stiff and straight as a strong tree trunk. And then they move with hurricane speed towards my open door. But amee is in the way.

What do I do?

Just push her God damn it! Why are you so stupid! I have to tell you to do everything. Ugh!

As I dart through the door, I push my mom with all my bipolar energy. She is swept to the side as her back hits the door with a loud thud. My feet quickly descend two steps at a time. Time is of the essence now. I must run away from the devil. I won't let him get the rest of my body. He's already attacked my mind.

My feet land with a thud on the wooden floor. I stand in my long hallway way now looking at the small living room ahead of me. My breathing is heavy. Beads of sweat rush down my scared face. My heart is ready to burst out of my heavy chest. My hands shake with nervous tremors. My jittery eyes still search for the hero to rescue me from this devil.

But where is He? Where do I find Allah? I need him! Where is He? I can't see Him anywhere. He's right there you idiot.

What?! Where? Where??

In front of you, you dumb ass.

My heavy eyes flash from left to right, frantically searching for Allah. Then I quickly realize that He was in front of me all along. The golden frame hangs calmly on the cream white wall. Inside the frame is a red velvet cloth. Engraved on this poppy velvet is "Allah" in Arabic. It's written with gold thread. The calligraphy shines through the glass frame and runs to hug my soul.

See you found Allah. He's right there on the wall, fatty. You see Him every time you pray. I told you you were messed up.

Yeah, but how do I get him out? He's stuck inside!

So just free Him you idiot! If you don't free Him, He'll be stuck in there forever and then you won't have any Allah at all.

You're right...

Of course I'm right. Now get to work. Quick. Ameer is coming.

So? She won't say anything.

Ugh! Do I have to explain every single thing to you! That's her favorite piece. Don't you know she got a matching red cushion to go along with it. She even made maroon curtains to complete the ensemble.

Oh yeah, I remember. But she'll get hurt then if I touch her frame.

You're not touching her frame, you ugly thing. You're freeing Allah because He is stuck in that box. If you don't wrap Allah around you then the devil is going to come and take over your whole body. He already took your brain. Do you want him to hijack the rest of your body too!

I run towards the wall with the golden frame. It's too high to reach from the rug I stand on. So I put my one foot on the creamy white sofa. I quickly yank the frame off the wall. The little nail holding the frame quickly falls on the ground with a little click. My mom is running behind me now. I know she wants her frame back. But she is delusional. She doesn't know that Allah is stuck in here. I have to help her understand. Or else, she'll be lost forever.

So I quickly run into the dining room. I push the chairs aside and slide under the table. She can't come under the table for she is too old. May Allah bless her. I touch the frame but there is a thick layer of glass covering the velvety canvas. Allah is stuck and the devil is after me. I must get Him out or else the shaytan will get me.

I turn the frame over. There are six heavy-duty staples on the back of the wooden frame. I put my thumbnail under each one and pop them out as if unbuttoning a baby's shirt. Once the nails are off, I remove the rectangular cardboard behind the frame. My mom's cries are heard in the back. I know she is crying over her broken frame. But she doesn't know I'm in grave danger. She'll thank me later.

Finally, my fingers reach the smooth velvety cloth. I rip the cloth out of the frame, leaving the glass intact. I hug Allah like a baby hugging its blanket for life. I let out a sigh of relief and finally feel peace descend on me.

But now my whole family is gathered around the dining table. They try to come under the table where I sit. But I push them away one by one. I know they want my Allah but I won't let them. So as soon as I see an opening on the left side of the table, I hastily slide out. Before I know it, I am at the front door. I pull the door open. It's dangerously dark outside but I don't care. I run out the door barefoot towards the park near my house.

As I turn my head to glance back at my home, I see a cop car and an ambulance parked in my driveway.

"And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say, 'My Lord bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cared for me when I was little.'" Quran (17:24)

The calligraphy decorative piece that I destroyed that day was one of my mom's favorite frames. She got it especially from Pakistan to match the red cushion, the red lamp and the red floral carpet in our living room. The amazing thing is that even though I ripped out her beautiful velvet red cloth from the frame, she didn't get mad. The velvet cloth even had Allah written on it in Arabic with golden thread. But she didn't even try to make me feel guilty about ruining something "sacred." I don't know how sacred the actual cloth is. It's the message that is behind it that conveys all the sacredness. Anyways, my mom was even smart enough to restore the frame. It now hangs in the same spot and not a soul can tell what torture it went through at the hands of the *Muslim Bipolar*.

As I write about this incident, a prayer comes to my mind. I was listening to this prayer on my nature walk yesterday morning:

And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say, 'My Lord bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cared for me when I was little'².

You see, whenever I go into an episode, I become very "little." So there are times when my mom still cares for me as I become a little child again. This really makes me want to lower "the wing of humility" over her. The wing of humility. What a great metaphor. I love how Allah conveys the message in the Quran. No one can beat his writing style. Anyways, back to the topic. By the way: that's another symptom of bipolar: jumping from topic to topic because my thoughts come and go very quickly.

I am going to memorize this du'a just for my mom. And God willingly I will recite it often so that I am reminded to be kind to her as she reaches old age. And what about my dad? I haven't really talked about him. Actually, this is the first time I mentioned him. I haven't lived with him for long. He was mostly travelling during my childhood. I communicate with him

² (Quran 17:24)

through email every now and then. I was lucky enough to get the bipolar from him. And there is very little sarcasm or resentment in that last statement. But it wasn't always like that.

For a long time, I hated his guts because the bipolar runs in his genes. But I feel very different now. He is a part of me that I cannot deny. So instead of resisting what is, I've learned to tolerate it, accept it and even love it at times. Thank you, Byron Katie. Thank Eckhart Tolle. And thank you God for teaching me tolerance, acceptance and love. The little angry side or actually the big angry side of me would not be able to forgive on its own. The main way I've learned to "love", if you can say that for an illness, the inherited bipolar is to look at the good in it.

For non-bipolars, mania is extremely hard to understand, that is until they witness you having an episode (you can watch [this video](#) I made to get a little taste of the wonderful mania). Even then, as I speak with different Muslims, I realize each one has a unique mania episode. Of course, there is a textbook definition of the common symptoms such as delusions, euphoria, reckless behavior, decreased sleep and appetite. However, there is one common aspect of mania that very few talk about. Some people outright deny this feeling and others are overwhelmed by it. This part of mania can be present as you start climbing the icy mountain or when you crash to the bottom. Humility. Planning and humbleness is the flag on top of the *Mania Mountains*.

When you first feel high, it does feel very good. You get more work done, have more energy and the world just seems clearer and fresher but not for long. When the high gets too much, avalanches come. What you once thought was insight becomes delusions. You might start spending recklessly, act promiscuously, feel irritated and need very little sleep or food. And before you know it, you're in a psych ward wondering what just happened.

I lost count as to how many times I've had mania episodes and ended up in a psych ward. And *subhanAllah*, even though I'm the author of this support guide and run the SabaMalik.com blog, you would think that I had a grasp on bipolar by now. Some might see this as sad or even hypocritical but I just see it as a test in humility.

“Never curse a fall. The ground is where humility lives”. (Yasmin Mogahed)

Mania Mountains do seem to have a nice climb but they also have an inevitable fall. And what a fall it is! As laws of gravity, potential and kinetic energy dictate, the higher up you go, the more severe the fall. Moreover, the mania mountain doesn't just take you down: it erupts like a volcano and your family and work life and every other aspect of your existence suffer. But it doesn't have to be that way when the second mania episode hits. I'm not trying to be pessimistic when talking about an upcoming episode. Chances are that when you have bipolar, especially

bipolar I, there might be another mania or depression trip. The silver lining is that you can do a lot to prevent it or at least reduce its intensity. Hence, instead of a mountain, mania becomes a hill. Focus on getting balanced all the while having your rope and ice axe handy in case you need it. After all, just because we are in a safe house or building, we still keep the alarms, the fire extinguishers and first-aid kits handy.

I learned to be realistic when my therapist said, “What will you do when you notice yourself getting to the point where your life or someone else’s life is in danger?” Naively, I responded, “Well, I won’t get to that point because I will do everything I can to prevent it.” Then I became silent because I realized I *had* done everything I could when my last suicide attempt happened.

Thus, sometimes episodes do just happen no matter what you do. It feels like you are trying to hold all the sand in your cupped hands but it just keeps slipping through your fingers until it’s all gone. Mania is a little bit different because you might not want to harm yourself. However, the moment you start hearing voices, can’t sleep or eat and the world is just starting to spin too fast, call 911 or at least tell your immediate support group that you need help. When you realize you are going in the wrong direction, it is easy to jump off the train and put a bandage on your scratches. However, when you keep riding the mania train and it’s at full speed now, chances are you can’t just jump up anymore. Now, accidents and crashes are very much in sight.

“If We had sent down this Qur’an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of *Allah*. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought.” (Quran 59:21)

At times, just having some humility can be a lifesaver. Even when you are super manic and are on top of the mania mountain, pay attention to that humbleness flag. Be willing to ask for help and let go of the notion of you are the best and everything you say or think is also momentous. I know it seems hard. “Saba, how am I to get help when I cannot understand anything? When I am delusional?!”

The key is to know the signs of mania as soon as they hit. When you start climbing a mountain, you do notice that it becomes rocky, the vegetation changes and the air starts to thin. Pay attention to these reminders and get help. Part of this means learning what the symptoms of mania are which you can ask your doctor or read a bipolar book. Also, there are times when you do everything in your power yet you still find yourself atop the psychotic peak. That’s okay. I’ve experienced that a couple of times. *Alhumdulillah* I had my support team around who called the ambulance and police. They admitted me to the psych ward involuntary. And though I would get offended when that first happened, I now realize that it was necessary. Plus, I don’t remember

most of it and what a blessing that is. Establish a support team now, even if it's just one or two people. It should be people who love you and are willing to make the tough call when you are sick and can't decide for yourself.

When mania hits, you tend to become aggressive, irritable, hyper sexual, hyper religious, and paranoid. Make sure your family or loved ones keep an eye on you and that they also keep their distance. Calling the ambulance and police might be the smartest thing you will do for yourself and your family. Being sent to the hospital doesn't mean no one cares for you. It also doesn't mean you have failed. A hospitalization can often be the best thing during a severe mania episode. After the hospitalization, follow up is crucial. That means offer your *salah* on time, stick to the medicine, go to the therapist, keep eating healthy, and have a regular sleeping schedule.

You probably feel lots of pain when you're being tied down and wheeled away on the stretcher. Stay away from rejecting or projecting the anger, frustration, sadness and disappointment. Feel that pain and let it motivate you to be more proactive in preventing another mania episode.

“Mania is a very good teacher because it will keep hitting you until you make a permanent decision to improve your life.”

Another aspect of mania is the blame game. “I mean, who really makes me feel manic anyways. Certainly not me. And who really put that huge mental mountain there in the first place? It's my mom's fault because *she* gave me bipolar. And it's because of all the stress I have in my life that made me sick!” We can keep playing the blame game. However, you need to decide whether you will be a victim or a victor of your situation. There are many factors as to why you got sick. We can't blame anything. Moreover, the factors could be different each time you have an episode. Maybe your meds need to be adjusted or you need less stress or you need a healthier lifestyle or you need to pray better. Figure out the reasons you got sick and get help so you can prevent a future episode.

"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand." (Randy Pausch)

You are simply being tested with this illness. Some people have high cholesterol, some have diabetes and some have a missing leg. It's all a test from Allah. And no one is spared from it. This test is here to bring out the best in you. Accept bipolar as one of your trials from Allah. This will distance you from the disorder and make you see it for what it really is: an illness. Once you separate yourself from the illness, you will start to detach yourself from the disorder. Moreover, it's possible to get to a point your bipolar becomes your buddy rather than beast. Yours truly concurs.

The trickiest part of mania, especially for practicing Muslims, is the hyper sexuality. I've said a lot of taboo things during my mania episodes. My smart, caring and patient family saw that as part of mania. They helped me treat it and quickly saw the old me return. May Allah bless them all.

So yes, during mania your "hijab" or covering might momentarily come off, literally and figuratively. Have patience and again, look at the hyper sexuality objectively. See it as part of the disorder and not as your personality. Look for the good in it. As one man passed by a donkey's carcass, all his companions commented on its ugliness. But he praised it for its white teeth.

What good came out of the mania? Question because your mind will answer whatever you ask of it. Make a list of ten things you are grateful for after your mania episode. Add them to your gratitude journal we talked about in the last section. Then make a list of ten things you've learnt from your last episode. How will these lessons affect and improve your treatment plan?

Jinns Know Jack

"I wish people in general didn't judge me like it's my fault I have a mental illness. Or for example, I did something wrong and now Allah is punishing me. Or that the devil is not responsible for everything. I didn't get delusional disorder because someone put a bad eye on me. I am not possessed by Jinns!"

– Zinab

Too often, Jinns or spirits are blamed for mental illness. This notion of blaming demons for mental illness has existed for a long time. "Archaeologists have unearthed skulls datable back to at least 5000 BC which have been trephined or trepanned - small round holes have been bored in them with flint tools. The subject was probably thought to be possessed by devils which the holes would allow to escape" (Porter, pp10). With thinkers like Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, people slowly started moving away from the idea that madness originated from the supernatural. Instead, insanity was "neither diabolical nor humoral but essentially delusional, a fault in cognition rather than in will or passion" (Porter, pp 60). This new understanding of madness started in the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, many Muslims scholars and thinkers still blame mental illness on Jinns.

Most Muslims often confuse bipolar mania or psychosis with jinn possessions.

Here's a quick checklist to help you distinguish between a mania episode and a jinn possession.

Symptoms of a Bipolar Episode

1. Elevated mood with euphoria and hyperactivity
2. Reckless driving, spending and impaired judgment
3. Delusions, grandiosity and increased irritability and anger
4. Decreased sleep, appetite and increased libido
5. Excessive talk and preoccupation with religion

Symptoms of *Jinn* Possession

1. Delay/Negligence of religious obligations
2. Abhorrent reactions to Quran or *adhan*
3. Detesting of “religious” people
4. A decrease in cleanliness
5. Change in social attitude, often towards solitude

All too often, Muslims with mental illnesses are told that they are possessed by Jinns. Even knowledgeable imams have made this mistake. Getting the jinn label is hurtful and unhelpful. The Muslim with a mental health condition needs to seek professional help. They need support and understanding. Erroneous accusations like "you're possessed by Jinns" only hurt their recovery.

Scanning the above symptoms, the difference between bipolar mania and jinn possession is clear as water. If your neighbor blames your illness on *jinn*s and tells you to rub one pound of beef liver on your arms for 30 days as a remedy (true 'advice' I got from someone, I kid you not!), take solace in knowing that others go through the same.

A plague of ignorance causes weird claims and actions. Dispel ignorance, jinn labels and these odd remedies by educating yourself, and loved ones about bipolar. It's the best ammunition against ignorance. Start by sharing this eBook. Show Allah, yourself and others you can succeed despite the illness you're challenged with 24/7. You leading an extraordinary life is the coolest stigma buster.

Bipolar aside, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) taught us many ways to protect ourselves from the jinn's harm by seeking refuge of Allah from the accursed *shaytan*, reciting *surat al-Ikhlās*, *surat al-Falaq* and *surat an-Nas*. (*Symptoms of jinn possession provided by Skaykh Navaid Aziz.*)

To prevent the mania hills from turning into mountains, practice these three routines daily:

1. Offer *salah* on time and stay balanced because mania can also bring hyper religiosity
2. Journal all the racing thoughts. See the “Balance Bipolar” section at the end for some awesome journaling techniques.
3. See a therapist, take meds regularly (depending on the type of bipolar you have)

For more information on mania click [here](#).

DEPRESSION VALLEYS

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together.”(Quran 3:103)

I should actually call the *Depression Valleys* “depression dungeon.” That’s what it feels like at times. Moreover, suicidal thoughts and attempts sometimes come on so strong and fast even though you have done everything you could to prevent it.

Thus, I always have a rope handy when I fall in the dungeon or even roll down the valley. The trick with the depression hole is that even if it doesn’t feel like hell, you need to take the symptoms seriously. When you don’t pay attention to the negative thoughts, the change in appetite or sleep, the lethargicness, the clouded judgement, these signs only exacerbate. At that point, you can go from the valley to the dungeon. The path might be a slow roll or the depression dictator might just take you and shoot you down the dark well.

What does the rope actually mean? It means that you get help right away or at least before you totally lose it. For example, I recently had the worse and most severe suicide attempt recently. I went down very quickly and started to have very strong suicidal thoughts. I even started acting on them and I knew at that point that if I didn’t do anything, the little speck of sanity that I had would soon disappear and I would be under the mercy of black dog. I knew I had to call 911. The only problem was that I was in my room and my phone was outside. Every little colour, sound, smell and stimulation was unbearable. My mind my spiralling so fast that I could hardly process my environment. So I blocked my ears with my fingers and tiptoed outside with all my muscles tensed up. I felt like I was using my heart to navigate because my brain was checking out. When I finally managed to get the phone, it took me at least five minutes to dial 911. And when I did managed to get the operator, I could only mutter, “she’s trying to hang me.” The “she” was that depression dragon. I dropped the phone and just waited to be rescued. Alhumulillah, the paramedics came at the right time.

That call was the rope I held on to. I gave you this example so you know what to do in the worst case scenario. Before, I was often ashamed to call the ambulance and police. However, I think that shame would be nothing compared to how my family would feel knowing “I” took my own life. Mental illness is the only disease where the person is blamed. That is sad. Yet, I think there is a silver lining to that. Bipolar is one of the few disorders where the patient has so much power. Yes, at times it can be debilitating but most of the time, it is very manageable.

Though we are not to blame for bipolar, we do have a lot of power over it. Therein lies the blessing.

“To all those suffering from sadness or depression, know that it isn’t your fault. It isn’t because you’re weak. It isn’t because you’re just not grateful enough. It isn’t because you’re just not religious enough. It isn’t because you don’t have enough faith. It isn’t because God is angry with you. To all the well-meaning people who tell you this, just smile. And know deep in your heart that the tests of God come in different forms to different people. And know that, by the help of God, every test can become a tool to get closer to Him. And that, verily, with hardship comes ease—and like all things of this world—this too shall pass.” (Yasmin Mogahed)

With the depression valley, you want to set up a routine that includes regular *salah* and sleep, healthy meals, therapy, medication (when prescribed), regular exercise, good personal hygiene and a low stress lifestyle. Another tool that really helps me is giving back. When I help my family, volunteer or blog, I really get out of my misery and broaden my horizons. If you already don’t know, make sure to learn the common symptoms of depression from sites like WebMd, books or your doctor.

Always keep a check list of the most common depression signs on the fridge or somewhere on site. When you start feeling down, see what item you are missing and adjust as needed. Moreover, you can make an inventory of what lifts you up. For example, my top mood boosters is to talk to my husband or mom, praying, coloring and working out. Taking a nice shower and doing my hair also makes me feel better. Do what makes you happy.

Before things get severe, let your family or support network know that they need to keep an extra eye on you when you are depressed. Always make sure someone is present with you physically and emotionally. Moreover, keep sharp objects and medicine out of reach. Enlist a loved one to take care of your pills and ensure that you take them as prescribed. Get help with your school or work. If need be, get extensions for your papers and some time off from work. In both cases, you can use doctor notes to get bipolar recognized and get reasonable accommodation.

Your best weapon during the depression disaster is positive talk. During this down time, your brain is low on the hormone that makes you feel good. That is why you are feeling down. It has nothing to do with what kind of a Muslim you are and how much you pray or don’t pray. I’m referring to clinical depression here, not the misery and sadness one faces when you disobey Allah.

“Love of Allah is a sweetness or pleasure that if you are without it, life becomes a thing of worries and of pain.” (Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyyah)

Depression is nobody’s fault nor is it your own fault. If you’re born with a missing arm, would you say, “I’m horrible. It’s my fault I’m born like this. I should have been a more grateful embryo”? That’s absurd. That’s just how things are. Having bipolar was the arrow that was meant to hit you. It was never an accident. It is Allah’s wisdom that we get ill. Trust that wisdom and do the best you can with it. Turn bipolar into a blessing. See it as a reason to get closer to Allah, not curse the world.

You need to look at the depression part of bipolar objectively and deal with it. It’s challenging because the suicidal thoughts are so emotional. You must see this disorder as a disease, with a biological cause that can be treated. That is eighty percent of your work: distancing yourself from the depression. Then you can love yourself for who you are and work on treating the depression. For digging out of depression, use these three tools I have turn to regularly:

1. Memorize the *du'a* for depression and anxiety and recite it often. I used to write the *du'a* out until I memorized it. I also put it up on my fridge so I was reminded to say it often. Here is one *du'a* you can start with:
2. Listen or recite *ayat* from the Quran that lifts your soul. The Quran Explorer app is great. They also have a website (QuranExplorer.com). I have many favorite *ayat* on there that I put on repeat and let them caress my heart and calm my mind.
3. Eat moderately and healthy. Think of it as taking care of the body Allah gave you.
4. Exercise regularly. Even a ten-minute walk counts. This will really boost your mood and make you feel light and calm.
5. Sleep moderately and regularly.

For more information on depression, click [here](#).

STEP 3: BREEZY BODY

“Your body is the harp of your soul and it is yours to bring forth sweet music from it or confused sounds.” (Kahlil Gibran)

Before I was diagnosed with bipolar and especially afterwards, I had a very hard time accepting my body the way it was. I still struggle with having gratitude for the amazing body Allah has blessed me with. I don't mean amazing in a cocky kind of way either. It is more out of appreciation for the great body Allah blesses me with.

It's very hard to see our bodies as perfect and we probably never will so the best thing is to perfectly accept our “imperfect” bodies. Even then, I think we need to be cautious of calling our brains defective simply because we have bipolar. It was just meant to be. After all, this is earth, not heaven. I know that once I admit that I do have pimples and am fatter than I need, I start detaching myself from this flesh and bones. I start realizing that only in heaven can we have perfect bodies.

Don't get me wrong but just because I accept my imperfections and limitations, doesn't mean I stop working on improving my body. Hey, when I'm working out, eating right, sleeping well and I still don't fit into that size or look like I'm twenty-one, then so be it. At least I know that I'm taking care of the gift Allah gave me to the best of my ability.

And yes, there are and will be days when I don't eat the best or miss my workout, but that's okay. The point is to stop being mean to ourselves. When you fall, pick yourself back up and keep going. Life is not about the moments you get the trophy. It's about the falls and how many times you get back up to keep going. It's about the struggles and wars we silently fight in the darkest points of our lives all the while knowing that Allah is watching us and He is there every step of the way no matter how high or low the number is on the scale.

Chances are you have probably gained a lot of weight from your bipolar meds. Or you might be on the other end and you have lost a lot of weight because of the lovely anxiety that comes with bipolar. I've gained and lost a whole person's worth of weight, more than once! So now it's normal to me and I expect it whenever I have a severe depression or manic episode. With bipolar, weight fluctuations are almost inevitable.

Blubber doesn't just come from the med's side effect. It's more complicated than that. Usually after a severe episode, your med dosage is increased. You stay in bed more. After or before mania, you sleep less. Coming out of or going into depression, you sleep more. So, all these changes in your routine and in your mental state are bound to affect your diet and hence your waist size.

Expect it and prepare for it. Being shocked the first time is acceptable. But because you have read up to this sentence now, you must be proactive in preventing mania and depression episodes and putting things in place so you minimize weight changes. Prevention means living a balanced and healthy lifestyle. That is the best way to say bye to any new bipolar blubber. If you keep serving your body well for Allah's sake, you will be repaid with a much, much higher return.

Meds do some of the work and exercise is a big part of the remaining work. It's not all about losing pounds. Jogging or swimming or lifting weights keeps you sane. So don't follow a workout routine that makes you go insane. Choose a routine or a sport you enjoy. Let exercise be your retreat like *salah*. Reward yourself with a fresh dip in the pool or have fun with your friends as you shoot hoops. Eat a new vegetable each week and choose to love your rainbow-colored vegetables (meaning eat a variety).

As long as you hate exercise and vegetables, you will not stick to it. You must choose to enjoy a jog and the crunchy taste of a carrot. I'm not saying you have to love them to death because let's face it, sometimes you want to eat chocolate or just sit around. That's not a bad thing. But don't make that your habit. In the beginning, it might be hard to start eating better and moving more but keep at it and *inshaAllah* it will get better.

Living a healthy lifestyle is not torture. It can be very enjoyable when it accentuates your personality and makes you more grateful towards Allah. Moreover, once you start eating better, sleeping regularly and working out, your confidence will *inshaAllah* soar through the roof. Find your motivation to move because without that, it is very hard. I can give you books upon books about the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle but this information will have no effect until you decide to change.

To conclude, I stayed away from giving you the same health spiel. Chances are that you know what and how to live a better lifestyle. I want to tell you something different which is that bipolar can very much be mastered through a healthier lifestyle. Exercising does wonders for the mood.

“Take advantage of five matters before five other matters: your youth, before you become old; and your health, before you fall sick; and your richness, before you become poor; and your free time before you become busy; and your life, before your death.” (Musnad Imam Ahmad)

With bipolar, we tend to abuse our bodies either through numbing our emotions with fatty and sugary foods. We might watch hours and hours of TV and then stay up all night. I was once there and sometimes I still end up doing that. But then I remember that Allah will ask me how I spent my time, my health and my free time. All these are blessings and do not belong to me. I need to spend them wisely lest I lose them and be overwhelmed with regret. Here are the top three tips I use to have a beautiful, bipolar body.

1. Move and exercise only to please Allah. Stay away from showing off your body to others. Only be for your spouse's eyes.
2. Fill your day with meaningful activities or work. When you are busy, you are likely to eat and sleep less.
3. Baby steps are right and best. Gradually add healthier fruits, some activity and better sleep hygiene to your routine.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, work towards a *Heart like Heaven* and a *Mind like Water*. Conquer those *Mania Mountains* and dig the diamonds from the *Depression Valleys*. All this hard work will lead you to a *Breezy Body* where you take care of your physical self to the best of your ability.

When you begin with a heart that is anchored towards Allah, the next steps become easy. You cannot expect to control mania if you don't have control over your mind. And the way to your mind is through your heart.

In the end, this is all a quiz from Allah. The pencil and tools are in your hand so your chances of succeeding are very high. After Allah, there is no one who can improve your situation except you. Yes, Allah will run to you but you have to walk to Him first. Your family, doctors and the meds can only do so much. The rest is in your hands. How will you seek the blessings within bipolar?

Check out these other publication by Saba Malik:

S.M.A.S.H. – 5 Quick and Easy Ways to Crush Stressful Thoughts

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