

PURIFICATION OF THE HEART

TEA & CHAT • 15 APRIL 2026



Ethnicity of Participants – 82 Attendees

Pakistani 70%



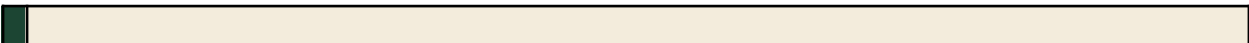
Indian 25%



White British 3%



Afro Caribbean 2%



Led by Yasmin (Um Usamah)

Location: Golden Palms

Time: 12:00pm – 2:30pm

Attendance: 82 women

About the Speaker

Yasmin is an education leader and policy expert who has held senior roles across UK government, international organisations and global development institutions. She has led national initiatives to raise standards, improve inclusion and strengthen performance across thousands of schools, and has played a key role in shaping curriculum reform, school inspection frameworks and equality policy, while advising ministers and senior leadership on governance and social justice.

Internationally, she has worked with organisations including the World Bank, Islamic Relief Worldwide, the British High Commission and various UN agencies, contributing to education policy, research and development programmes across Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Her work spans global education strategy, community cohesion and youth leadership, alongside large-scale system transformation affecting millions of learners and public services. Outside her professional work, she enjoys learning languages and has studied French, Arabic and German.

Yasmin has recently been offered the role of Chief Executive of a new national charity, launching in Manchester, dedicated to Islamic approaches to mental health and wellbeing for Muslim women and their families.

Session Overview

A Personal Reflection on Time

Yasmin opened by sharing that she was diagnosed with stage four bowel cancer several years ago, and has since prepared an end-of-life plan. She described this not as a tragedy, but as a gift: a diagnosis that sharpened her sense of time, purpose and what she considers truly meaningful. Reflecting on the instruction to live each day as though it were our last, she said the diagnosis had given her exactly that clarity, and that she holds firmly to the belief that Allah is the best of planners, accepting what has been decreed for her. It was this reflection on time and purpose, she said, that led her to accept the invitation to speak.

The Power of Du'a

Yasmin introduced the session's subject, drawn from the work of Imam al-Ghazali, with the story of his own upbringing. Born in a village in northern Persia, al-Ghazali was raised by a father who loved Islam and its scholars, and who wished the same path for his sons. He died while they were still young, asking a friend to see that they received a proper education. That request, and the du'a behind it, Yasmin said, helped shape one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history. She encouraged the women present not to be shy in asking Allah for big things as well as small ones, since no du'a goes unanswered, whether the answer comes now or later.

Defining Success

Turning to al-Ghazali's writing on purifying the heart, Yasmin asked the room how they would define success. Suggestions ranged from good character to the people around us, to belief in Allah. She pointed to the Qur'anic answer: that true success lies in purifying oneself. Just as we invest time in blood tests, check-ups and screenings for physical health, she argued, our spiritual health deserves the same attention, since a pure heart is what allows us to truly know and relate to Allah. She spoke of His many attributes, among them Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim and Al-Ghafoor, the Ever-Forgiving, and asked how much gratitude we show, through dhikr and shukr, for everything we are given.

The Diseases of the Heart

Yasmin gave a brief introduction to al-Ghazali's list of the diseases of the heart, of which he identified around thirty. Envy, jealousy, showing off, ingratitude, bitterness and heedlessness of the life to come were among those she touched on, describing them as a starting point for reflection rather than an exhaustive account.

Understanding and Managing Anger

The session spent longest on anger, something Yasmin said everyone experiences at different points in life, however much some might deny it. She encouraged the women present to be honest with themselves and self-aware, since progress is only possible once a person takes account of their own state, rather than waiting until they are called to account for it.

She distinguished between anger at genuine injustice, citing the situation in Gaza as an example many in the room would recognise, and anger that oversteps its limits, becoming reckless or vengeful. Holding on to that anger, she said, poisons the heart; forgiveness and compassion, even toward those who have caused harm, is repaid by Allah's own forgiveness toward us.

Yasmin also spoke about how anger affects the way we are perceived and carry ourselves, arguing that no amount of outward beauty holds up against the sight of someone shouting or using harsh language, and that dignity and composure matter more. She recalled the hadith in which a man asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, for advice, and was told three times simply not to become angry, and cautioned that no one, particularly those in positions of authority such as teachers or judges, should make decisions while angry.

Practical suggestions included performing wudu to cool down, and changing position: sitting if standing, lying down if sitting, to slow the body's response. She reminded the group of the Prophetic promise that whoever restrains their anger will be granted a place in Paradise, and closed by affirming that controlling anger, while difficult, is always within a person's capacity to learn.

The session ended with a reminder that self-improvement is a matter of consistent intention and effort rather than instant results, and that the invitation to reflect on our own hearts is one we can act on immediately.

**Report created by the Tea & Chat participants
supported by the MWC Team**

