118262 - How to Overcome Fear of Losing Means of Provision

the question

I am a student in a private university. I am currently in my third year, and I have two years left until I graduate. The university expenses are very high, and my family – may Allah bless them – are taking care of that by the grace of Allah.

But recently I have begun to feel anxious about the future, such as if those who are sponsoring me die, which would mean that I would no longer be able to continue studying. Moreover, people are calling me Doctor from now, and I am afraid of being looked down on by people after having been held in high esteem. Allah knows that I do not have any arrogance in my heart and I am trying hard to use my hoped-for degree from now to support our great religion. But these feelings of anxiety that I may never be able to graduate for some reason make me believe that my parents are the ones who are taking care of me, not Allah, may He be Exalted! I worry about my `Aqidah, and I hope that you can help me by showing me practical spiritual remedies to strengthen my belief in the fact that it is Allah Who does whatever He wills and that He wills good for us.

Summary of answer

You can overcome your fear of losing means of provision if you develop trust in Allah, and truly put your hope in Him and be connected to Him. Provision has nothing to do with the death or life of anyone, because Allah’s way in dealing with His creation is not to change anything for the death or life of anyone.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Difference between the means and causes and the One Who created them

The best remedy for you is to differentiate between the means and causes and the One Who created them, for it is Allah, may He be Exalted, Who decrees the means and causes and brings them into existence. As for humans, employment and work, these are nothing but means or causes.

It is Allah, may He be Exalted, Who is the Provider, and He, may He be Glorified, has decreed that there should be causes and means for provision. The one who has some problems in his `Aqidah regards the means or causes as being the same as the One Who creates and brings about these causes.

According to Islam, the Muslims should not rely on these means and causes and ignore the One Who created them, and at the same time there is no room for ignoring these means and causes and giving them up.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“What the Muslim should know is what was stated by a group of scholars. They said: Paying attention to means and causes is a kind of Shirk that undermines belief in the oneness of Allah (Tawhid); ignoring the means and causes and not taking them into consideration is a sign of a lack of rational thinking; and turning away from the means and causes altogether is contrary to Islamic teachings; rather putting one’s trust and hope in Allah is something that is in complete harmony with Tawhid, rational thinking and Islamic teachings.

To explain further: paying attention to means and causes means relying on them in your heart and putting your hope in them, but there is nothing in creation that deserves that, because nothing in creation is independent; there must inevitably be other factors that either enhance them or oppose them. Moreover, if the Creator of the cause does not make the cause lead to results, it will not work. This is one of the things that prove that Allah is the Lord and Sovereign of all things, and that the heavens and the earth, everything in between them, the stars and planets, and what they contain all have a Creator and Controller Who is distinct from them." (*Majmu` Al-Fatawa,* 8/169)

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The individual should rely in his heart on Allah, not on any means or causes, for Allah will make available to him means and causes that will rectify his condition in this world and the hereafter. If these means and causes are measures that he can take – and he is enjoined to take them – then he should do that, whilst putting his trust in Allah, just as he does obligatory duties, and just as he strives against the enemy, takes up arms and wears a helmet in battle, and he does not think that it is sufficient, when warding off the enemy, to merely put one’s trust in Allah without doing what is enjoined of striving in Jihad. The one who neglects the means and measures that he is enjoined to take is a failure, negligent and blameworthy." (*Majmu` Al-Fatawa,* 8/528, 529)

How to overcome fear of losing means of provision

In your case, for example, your parents are the means of your maintenance, but you should realise that Allah, may He be Exalted, has caused them to be like that. You must believe that Allah, may He be Exalted, is able to decree more than one means of your provision and maintenance.

Look around you: do you think that all the students are being supported by their families who spend on their maintenance? The answer is: Definitely not, and if you reflect on the means of their provision and maintenance, you will see that they are many and various.

So this matter is not limited to your parents, such that you should fear that the means of your maintenance may be cut off, and it is not right for you to put them on the same level as Allah, the Provider, may He be Exalted. There is a vast difference between the Creator and the created being, between the One Who decrees and brings about the means and causes, and the means and causes themselves.

Reflect upon the words of Allah, may He be Exalted (interpretation of the meaning): {Or who is it that could provide for you if He withheld His provision? But they have persisted in insolence and aversion.} [Al-Mulk 67:21] You will find that this matter is very clear.

In this verse, Allah, may He be Exalted, informs the disbelievers that He, may He be Exalted,

decrees provision by means of its causes, such as rain, rivers, and springs, and that if He, may He be Exalted, willed, He could withhold these means, so He could prevent the rain from falling and the rivers from flowing, and could cause the springs to dry up. Who is it that could prevent that, and who is it that could bring these means of provision?

Another remedy for your issue is to reflect upon the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out,

And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.} [At-Talaq 65:2-3]

You think that if your parents die, your maintenance will be cut off, but Allah, may He be Exalted, is telling you that if a person fears Him, does what is required and refrains from what is forbidden, He will grant him provision from where he does not expect!

In other words, He will make available to him means of provision that he did not expect and that never crossed his mind. If a person truly put his trust in Allah, Allah, may He be Exalted, would suffice him and take care of all his worries. This is the exact remedy for your case, for your conflation between the means of provision and the One Who created those means, and for your anxiety and worry.

Read the words of this great scholar to find the remedy to heal your anxiety, distress and sorrow:

Shaykh `Abd Ar-Rahman As-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on the verse, {But if they separate [by divorce], Allah will enrich each [of them] from His abundance. And ever is Allah Encompassing and Wise} [An-Nisa 4:130 - interpretation of the meaning]:

“This verse indicates that the individual should put his hope in Allah alone, and that if Allah decrees for him some means of earning a living and being comfortable, he should praise Him for

that and ask Him to bless it for him. If that means of provision becomes no longer available, or it becomes difficult for him to attain it, he should not feel anxious, for this is just one of many, unlimited means, and a person's provision is not dependent upon that particular means. Allah may make available another means that is better and more beneficial than it, or He may make available to him a number of means. Whatever the case, he should always keep in mind the blessings of his Lord and hope for His generosity, and he should focus on that, and offer a great deal of supplication accompanied by hope. For Allah says in the Hadith Qudsi: "I am as My slave thinks I am. If he thinks well of Me, then that is what he will get, and if he thinks ill of Me, then that is what he will get." (Narrated by Ahmad; classed as authentic by Al-Albani in *Sahih At-Targhib*, 3386). And He says: "So long as you call upon Me and put your hope in Me, I shall forgive you regardless of your sin, and I will not mind." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 2805; classed as authentic by Al-Albani in *Sahih At-Tirmidhi*)." (*Taysir Al-Latif Al-Mannan fi Khulasat Tafsir Al-Ahkam,* p. 85, Al-Ma`arif edn.)

Then reflect upon the Hadith of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which he heard the Prophet of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: "If you truly put your trust in Allah as you should, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds: they go out in the morning hungry and they return in the evening with full bellies." (Narrated by Ahmad, 205 and At-Tirmidhi, 2344; classed as authentic by Al-Albani)

You should understand that your remedy is to develop trust in Allah, and truly put your hope in Him and be connected to Him. It has nothing to do with the death or life of anyone , because Allah's way in dealing with His creation is not to change anything for the death or life of anyone.

Get rid of sins and repent to Allah

One last thing: it may be that what you are feeling of anxiety, worry and distress is because of some sins that you have been committing. So examine yourself and deal with whatever you may have fallen into of sins, for Allah, may He be Exalted, may hasten the punishment for the one who is like this. We know about the wrongdoing and sins that occur in mixed universities, so strive to rid yourself of them and repent from them .

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“One of the punishments for sin is that Allah, may He be Glorified, casts terror and fear into the heart of the sinner, so you always see him nervous and scared. Obedience to Allah is the great fortress , and whoever enters it will be one of those who are safe from the punishments of this world and the hereafter, whereas the one who exits it will be surrounded with fears on all sides. So for the one who obeys Allah, his fears will dissipate and turn into feelings of security, but for the one who disobeys Him, his feelings of security will turn into fear. You will never find any sinner but it is as if his heart is filled with anxiety: if the wind moves the door, he thinks that people are coming to get him; if he hears footsteps, he fears that he will soon be finished; he thinks that everyone is against him and that every bad thing will happen to him. The one who fears Allah will be safe from everything, but the one who does not fear Allah, Allah will cause him to be afraid of everything." (Al-Jawab Al-Kafi, p. 50).

For more details, please see the following answers: 20088 and 22704 .