300874 - How can I make the hereafter my main concern?

the question

In a hadith of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) it says that the one whose main concern is focused on the hereafter, Allah, may He be Exalted, will grant him peace of mind and make him content in his heart, and worldly gains will inevitably come to him. What is meant by the hereafter in this hadith? Does it mean Paradise?

Well, if that is the case, then all people care about Paradise, including the hypocrites and those who commit major sins, and the weak in faith, because if we ask anyone, Would you prefer to stay in this world or go to Paradise? they will say Paradise, of course.

I have been practising my faith for three years, and I was surprised when I read this brilliant hadith; it is the most beautiful hadith I have read in my life.

I want my main concern to be Paradise, as the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) meant it in the hadith, not as all people do, as they lie when they say that their main concern is Paradise, but they do not say it from the heart, and they only pay lip service to the idea. How can I achieve that? What are the things that will help me to focus on the hereafter as my main concern?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

It was narrated by Imam Ahmad in *Al-Musnad* (35/467), Ibn Majah (4105) and Ibn Hibban in *Al-Ihsan* (2/454) from `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Aban ibn `Uthman, from his father, that Zayd ibn Thabit came out after meeting Marwan around midday and we said: He only sent for him at this hour to

ask him about something. So I went to him and asked him (what had happened) and he said: He asked us about things that we had heard from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Whoever is focused only on this world, Allah will confound his affairs and make him fear poverty constantly, and he will not get anything of this world except that which has been decreed for him. Whoever is focused on the Hereafter, Allah will give him peace of mind and make him feel content with his lot, and his provision and worldly gains will inevitably come to him.”

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It was narrated by Ahmad… and ad-Darimi and Ibn Hibban… from Shu`bah: `Umar ibn Sulayman told us, from the descendants of `Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), from `Abd ar-Rahman ibn Aban ibn `Uthman, from his father, that Zayd ibn Thabit came out after meeting Marwan around midday …

This isnad is sound (sahih) and its narrators are all trustworthy. Ibn Majah (2/524-525) narrated the last half of it via this isnad. Al-Busayri said in *Az-Zawa’id* (1/252):

This isnad is sound (sahih) and its narrators are all trustworthy. Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi narrated a similar report from Shu`bah. And at-Tabarani narrated it with an acceptable isnad.

End quote from *Silsilat al-Ahadith as-Sahihah*, 1/761.

II.

What is meant by the hereafter here is salvation from the Fire and attaining Paradise, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in the land or spread mischief. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous} [Al-Qasas 28:83]

{And he who believed said, “O my people, follow me; I will guide you to the way of right conduct.

O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is

the home of [permanent] settlement} [Ghafir 40:38-39]

{And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew} [Al-`Ankabut 29:64].

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words {And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement} mean: The life of this world is no more than a delusion which will soon end, but the home of the hereafter, meaning Paradise, is the real life.

What is meant is that it is the abode of life, in which there is no death and nothing to spoil its delights, as is the case in this world.

End quote from *Zad al-Masir*, 6/283.

III.

For the Muslim to focus his main concern entirely on the hereafter and turn away from worldly matters, there are measures that he should take, including the following:

1.Putting his trust in Allah, may He be Exalted, to achieve this important aim, because nothing is easy except what Allah, may He be Exalted, makes easy for a person to do.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{So whatever you have been given - it is but enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord} [Ash-Shura 42:36].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

{So whatever you have been given - it is but enjoyment of the worldly life} means: no matter what you obtain and accumulate, do not be deceived by it, for it is no more than enjoyment of the worldly life, which is an insignificant and transient world which will inevitably come to an end. {But

what is with Allah is better and more lasting} means: the reward of Allah, may He be Exalted, is better than this world, for it is everlasting and eternal. So do not give precedence to that which is transient over that which is eternal. Hence Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord}, meaning: for those who show patience in refraining from worldly pleasures and put their trust in their Lord, relying on Him to help them to be patient in doing obligatory duties and refraining from what is prohibited.

End quote from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 6/557.

2.Turning away from wishing for the life of the rich and not looking with longing at what they have of houses, mounts (or vehicles), clothing and wealth, for the more a person covets that, the more he will focus on the glamour of this life and will desire it, and he will forget the bliss of the hereafter.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Do not look longingly at the good things We have given some among them to enjoy, the splendour of the life of this world, so that We may test them thereby. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting} [Ta-Ha 20:131].

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

When Allah, may He be Exalted, instructed the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to be patient and glorify Him, He forbade him to look longingly at the good things that He gave to the disbelievers; what is meant by looking longingly at the good things that He has given to the disbelievers is to keep staring at it and coveting it, thinking of it and analysing it.

It was said that what is meant by this is: do not be impressed, O Muhammad, by what We have given them of wells, children, houses, mounts, clothing and food. For all of that is like a flower that does not last and will soon come to an end and vanish. Although these words appear to be addressed to the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), they are intended for his ummah…

Saying “do not look longingly” is more eloquent than simply saying “do not look,” because it implies prolonged staring and appreciation, unlike a quick glance. Glancing at beautiful things is something instilled in human nature, and whoever sees something beautiful will want to continue looking at it. But the righteous emphasize the importance of averting the gaze and not looking at the buildings of the wrongdoers and the items used by evildoers, whether they are mounts, garments or other things, because they chose these items to attract attention and make people look at them so that they can boast and feel proud of them, thus the one who looks at these things is giving them what they want, and is like one who encourages them to acquire such items.

End quote from *Al-Bahr al-Muhit*, 7/399.

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah, may He be Exalted, says to His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): Do not look at these people who are living a life of luxury and their ilk, for what they are enjoying of an easy life is like a flower that will fade and a blessing that will soon depart, with which We are testing them, and few of My slaves are grateful.

Mujahid said: {some among them} refers to the rich, but He has given you something better than what He has given to them, as He says elsewhere:

{And We have certainly given you, [O Muhammad], seven of the oft-repeated [verses] and the great Qur’an.

Do not look longingly at the good things We have given some among them to enjoy} [Al-Hijr 15:87-88].

End quote from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (9/383).

This prohibition on looking longingly at the glamour of this worldly life is more important if the people of wealth at whose wealth people look longingly are people of misguidance and disbelief, because admiring them is more dangerous, as happened to those who admired Qarun and his wealth.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.”

But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient”} [Al-Qasas 28:79-80].

3.You should not be keen to keep company with people whose main aim is worldly gain and who strive to attain it; rather you should make sure to keep company with people of faith and attend their beneficial gatherings, and do not be too arrogant to sit with the poor and needy.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Content yourself with (the company of) those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon, seeking His Countenance, and do not turn your eyes away from them, desiring the adornment of the life of this world. And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own whims and desires, and is reckless in his deeds} [Al-Kahf 18:28].

Shaykh `Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Here Allah, may He be Exalted, instructs His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – and others who are also subject to divine commands and prohibitions – to content themselves with the believers who are obedient and always remember Allah.

{those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon} that is, at the beginning and end of the day, seeking thereby the Countenance of Allah. He describes them as worshipping Him sincerely, which implies that one should keep company with good people and strive to make oneself content with their company and mix with them, even if they are poor, because there are many benefits in keeping company with them.

{and do not turn your eyes away from them} that is, do not overlook them and turn your gaze away from them.

{desiring the adornment of the life of this world}, for that is harmful and is of no benefit, and it may undermine one's religious interests, because it leads to being attached to this world and focusing one's ideas and thoughts on it, which leads to the heart losing interest in the hereafter. That is because the adornment of this world is pleasing to the onlooker and bewitches the mind, which in turn distracts the heart from the remembrance of Allah and causes it to focus on pleasures and desires. This will cause him to waste his time and will cause his affairs to be in disarray, and it will lead to eternal loss and everlasting regret. Hence Allah says: {And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance}, so he becomes heedless of Allah, and He punishes him by making him heedless of His remembrance.

End quote from *Tafsir as-Sa`di*, p. 475.

4.You should be keen to visit the graves and think of the Day of Resurrection and the reckoning every time you feel attached to worldly gains and glamour.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Visit the graves, for they will remind you of death." Narrated by Muslim (976).

It was narrated from Sulayman ibn Buraydah that his father said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "I forbade you to visit the graves, but Muhammad has been given permission to visit his mother's grave, so visit [the graves], for they are a reminder of the Hereafter." Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (1054); he said: The hadith of Buraydah is a sound and good (sahih hasan) hadith. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

A person should visit the graves at any time, night or day, morning or evening, on Friday and on days other than Friday. There is no specific time for that, and whenever you find yourself becoming heedless and immersing yourself in worldly matters, go out and visit the graves.

End quote from *Sharh Riyad as-Salihin*, 3/473.

5.You should be keen to strengthen your faith and do righteous deeds, for Allah, may He be Exalted, will grant the righteous believers contentment with what they have in this world.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do} [An-Nahl 16:97].

A number of scholars interpreted “a good life” as referring to contentment [with one’s lot].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This is a promise from Allah, may He be Exalted, to the one who does righteous deeds – which are deeds that are in accordance with the Book of Allah, may He be Exalted, and the Sunnah of His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), male or female, among the children of Adam, who believes in Allah and His Messenger and believes that this deed that he is enjoined to do is prescribed by Allah – that Allah will cause him to live a good life in this world and that He will reward him in the hereafter according to the best of what he used to do, and that good life includes all kinds of contentment and peace of mind, in whatever situation he may be.

It was narrated from Ibn `Abbas and a number of other scholars that they interpreted it as referring to good, lawful provision.

And it was narrated from `Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) that he interpreted it as meaning contentment [with one’s lot]. This was also the view of Ibn ‘Abbas, ‘Ikrimah and Wahb ibn Munabbih…

The correct view is that the good life includes all of that.

For it says in the hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad: … It was narrated from `Abdullah ibn `Amr that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “He has succeeded who is

given sufficient provision and Allah makes him content with what He has given him.” Narrated by Muslim.

End quote from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 4/710.

Conclusion:

What is meant by being attached to and mindful of the hereafter is that a person’s concern is focused on what could save him from Hell and admit him to Paradise.

That may be achieved by holding fast to faith and persisting in doing righteous deeds, which includes putting your trust in Allah, may He be Exalted, keeping company with people of faith and attending their gatherings which will remind you of the hereafter, and visiting the graves. At the same time, you should also turn away from people whose main concern is worldly gain, and pay no attention to what they have of worldly glamour.

And Allah knows best.