97083 - Advice to a father whose son has stopped memorizing Qur’aan because of the intention, and advice to his son

the question

I have a son who loves goodness a great deal and calls others to it, and who memorizes Qur'aan and has prayed regularly since he was small. But recently he has started to neglect memorization of Qur’aan and he does not want to go to halaqahs for memorizing Qur’aan. He says that he is only memorizing it for my sake, and he only leads the people in prayer for my sake, and he heard one of the Shaykhs mention a hadeeth which says that the one who memorizes Qur’aan or prays for the sake of his father or mother will be thrown in Hell, and a hadeeth which says that the one who memorizes Qur'aan so that it will be said that he is a reciter will be thrown in Hell. He says that since hearing this khutbah, he is always thinking about these words and about the punishment. But I told him that this was from the shaytaan and that the correct intention is to memorize the Qur'aan so that he could worship Allaah thereby, but he turned to me with tears flowing from his eyes and could barely speak. I do not know what to do with him. Please note that since that time I have not spoken to him or joked with him like his brothers, in an attempt to bring him to his senses, but he is insisting on not going to the halaqah for memorizing Qur’aan. He is in the third year of middle school.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We ask Allaah to guide your children and to reward you with the best of rewards for your concern and care and for advising them and teaching and guiding those for whom Allaah has made you responsible.

It should be noted that raising children is difficult and that it requires knowledge and wisdom,

patience and forbearance. Children – both male and female – go through different stages as they grow, and each stage has its own problems. You have to understand this and pay attention to it before starting to solve your son's problem and his stopping memorizing Qur'aan.

Secondly:

Parents should not give up their responsibility of guiding their children just because of some incident that happens with one of them. They should not stop guiding them and caring for them. The man is a shepherd of his family and he will be responsible for them on the Day of Resurrection. His flock – his wife and children – are a trust which Allaah warns against neglecting and failing to take care of properly.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire"

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

"Truly, We did offer Al-Amaanah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allaah has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allaah's Torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results)"

[al-Ahzaab 33:72]

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The ruler of the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock. A woman is the shepherd of her husband's house and children and is responsible for her flock. The slave is the shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (853) and Muslim (1829).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The one who neglects to teach his son that which will benefit him and leaves him to his own devices has wronged him severely. Most children only become corrupt because of their parents and their neglect of them, and their failure to teach them the obligatory duties and sunnahs of Islam. They neglect them when they are young then they are not able to benefit themselves or their parents when they grow up.

Tuhfat al-Mawdood (p. 229).

Thirdly:

What your son has done by ceasing to memorize Qur'aan and lead the prayer may be understood in two ways:

1 – That he is sincere in what he is saying, which is what seems to us to be the case. In that case you must advise him and guide him in the way that is best, and make him understand that there is no contradiction between what you are telling him to do and having a sincere intention. He can correct his intention if it was not right, and correcting it is better for him in this world and in the Hereafter than giving up the action altogether. You should also make him understand that the methods that the shaytaan uses to stop the Muslim doing acts of worship and continuing in them include whispering to him that his intention is not sound, and that he is not doing it for the sake of Allaah, so that this Muslim will give up his act of worship if he has started it, or he will refrain from starting it and doing it if he had not started it, and thus the shaytaan will have attained what he wanted.

You can ask your son this: What will he do with his children when Allaah blesses him with children and he is responsible for them on the Day of Resurrection? Undoubtedly – in sha Allaah – he will answer by saying that he will tell them to do that which is to their benefit, and encourage them to obey and worship Allaah, which includes memorizing Qur'aan and prayer. If he is honest with you

and gives you this answer, then he will have committed himself, and given evidence against himself, and this is what you yourself have done with him.

We advise you not to criticize him too much, and to discuss with him. You can go to a scholar or seeker of knowledge whom he trusts to discuss the matter with him, and hear something from someone other than you who has knowledge that will put his mind at rest. You do not have to be the one who advises him, changes his mind and convinces him, rather you should delegate that to someone else, so that he will do that on the basis of being pleased with what he has heard.

We also advise you to stop your shunning of him straight away, and stop refusing to treat him kindly. Right now he is in the greatest need of you and your compassion. He is suffering from something that the imams and scholars also suffered from, which is the issue of intention (niyyah). Imam Sufyaan al-Thawri (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: I have never dealt with anything more difficult than my intention. So beware of forsaking him, and beware of being too harsh with him, lest you lose him forever. We ask Allaah not to let that happen.

2 – The second possibility is that he is lying, in which case you have to find out whether your son has been affected by the sickness of loss of interest and ambition. There are many causes for these sicknesses, including the following:

(i)Influence of bad friends

(ii)Too many duties in school and at home, so that he feels overwhelmed and gives up on some of them.

(iii)Finding the Qur’aan memorization program too heavy, which has led to him becoming tired and bored.

(iv)Not having the chance to relax in permissible ways, such as going on trips, playing games, and watching beneficial shows. Some fathers are too keen for their children not to pay any attention to these things that allow for relaxation and bring more energy for worship and obedience.

(v)Reaching the stage of puberty and adolescence, which is a dangerous stage in a young man’s

life. Parents must pay attention to their sons when they reach this age, and treat their sons as men, not children, and lightening up on the things they tell them to do. The stage of persuasion and understanding should begin, which is totally different from when they were small.

What we have mentioned are some of the possible causes. You know what is really going on, whether he is telling the truth or lying. Hence we said that raising children is difficult, and needs knowledge and wisdom, patience and forbearance. It is not a simple matter, especially with all the corrupt influences, distractions and the war against virtue, chastity and righteousness that is being waged inside and outside.

Look for the reason why he has stopped memorizing Qur'aan and given up his commitment. If he is telling the truth, then we have mentioned above is the way to deal with it. If he is lying, then check on the possibilities that we have mentioned, and seek the help of Allaah, asking Him to guide you and help you. And do not forget to pray for your son, for he is more in need of that than you.

This is the experience of a famous Qur’aan reader – Shaykh Muhammad Siddeeq al-Manshaawi (d. 1388 AH). Read what his son Muhammad al-Shaafa’i wrote about him and the way he took care of his children and taught them to memorize Qur’aan.

Professor Muhammad Husayn Ibraaheem al-Rantaawi said:

Al-Shaafa’i Muhammad Siddeeq – the name of the shaykh’s son – spoke of the methods of guiding and directing the children that his father followed and said: My father was very keen that we should do the obligatory duties, and he would often take us with him to the mosques where he read Qur’aan. That was an opportunity for me to visit and get to know most of the mosques of Egypt. He would also keep an eye on us when we chose our friends, and he would insist that they come from religiously-committed families of good character, and join his children in studying, and he would help them to do their homework and attend parents’ meetings in the schools that his children went to. During the summer holidays, he had us take part in sports such as swimming and archery during the day, and at night he would read to us the religious books that were suited to

our age. Then when one of us had acquired the habit of reading, he would supply him with books and encourage him to read more. Before all of that came memorization of Qur'aan, so that even the one who had been left out because he was too small was encouraged by his father Shaykh Siddeeq to memorize Qur'aan, and he did that. End quote.

Article entitled Muqri' al-Sahwah al-Islamiyyah al-Mu'aasirah al-Qaari' al-Shaykh Muhammad Siddeeq al-Manshaawi (1920-1969 CE).

Al-Firqaan magazine, published by Jama'iyyah al-Muhaafizah 'ala al-'Qur'aan, Jordan, issue no. 41, Jumaada al-Oola 1426 AH, 2005 CE.

Fourthly:

To this son of yours, whom we ask Allaah to help and guide to that which He loves and which pleases Him, we say:

You should understand first of all that this devilish trick to block people from following the way of Allaah has been known since ancient times. The accursed one wants to prevent people from doing good whenever he finds a way to do that, and he comes to each person in the way that is appropriate.

Hence al-Fudayl ibn 'Iyaad (may Allaah be pleased with him) said:

Refraining from doing an action because of the people is showing off, and doing it because of the people is shirk. Sincerity is when Allaah protects you against both.

Al-Adhkaar by al-Nawawi (18).

It was narrated that al-Haarith ibn Qays al-Ja'fi said: If you are doing something that has to do with the Hereafter then continue and if you are doing something that has to do with this world then be careful. If you intend to something good then do not delay it, and if the shaytaan comes to you when you are praying and says 'You are showing off,' then make it longer. Narrated by Imam Ahmad in al-Zuhd (430), with a saheeh isnaad.

Undoubtedly you know the status of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him), and we think that you know that he is one of the trustworthy scholars. We believe that you respect and admire him, and we would never misquote the Shaykh. We will let you read what he said about a problem similar to yours and we hope that you will pay attention to his answer and act upon it, because that will bring you happiness and goodness in this world and in the Hereafter.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is your advice to a seeker of knowledge who has worked hard to correct his intention and to be sincere, but he could not manage to do that? He is afraid that the ahaadeeth which carry a stern warning addressed to the one whose intention is not sincerely for the sake of Allaah alone will apply to him, and he will soon stop seeking knowledge. Please advise us, may you be rewarded.

He replied:

This is an importance question for the seeker of knowledge, for knowledge is one of the best and greatest acts of worship, which Allaah has made equivalent to jihad for His sake, as He says, may He be blessed and exalted (interpretation of the meaning):

"And it is not (proper) for the believers to go out to fight (Jihad) all together. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may get instructions in (Islamic) religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware (of evil)"

[al-Tawbah 9:122]

Allaah tells us that the believers cannot all go out to fight in jihad for the sake of Allaah; rather a few from every group should learn the principles of the religion of Allaah, so that they may warn their people when they return in order that they may beware (of evil), and the others should fight for the sake of Allaah.

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When Allaah wills good for a person, He causes him to understand the religion.” If a person thinks that Allaah has caused him to understand his religion, then he should accept the glad tidings that Allaah has willed good for him, and he must be sincere in his intention towards Allaah when seeking knowledge, by having the following intentions in his pursuit thereof:

Firstly: Obeying the command of Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “So know (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that Laa ilaaha illAllaah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah” [Muhammad 47:19]. Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: He started with knowledge, before words or deeds.

Secondly: He should intend by his learning to preserve the laws of Allaah, for sharee’ah is preserved in people’s hearts and in books.

Thirdly: he should intend by his learning to protect the sharee’ah of Allaah against its enemies, because its enemies have been trying to undermine it since the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sent and they will carry on trying to do so until the Hour begins. So by seeking knowledge let him intend to protect the great sharee’ah.

Fourthly: He should intend thereby to defend sharee’ah if anyone attacks it, and in that case he must learn the weapons with which he will defend his knowledge. Rather we say that he should focus on the issues concerning which the enemies of Allaah try to cause confusion, and tackle each issue in the manner that befits it. People vary with regard to this matter. Some people may try to cause confusion about ‘aqeedah, so one needs to learn ‘aqeedah by means of which he can ward off false beliefs. Some people may attack Islam by means of bad manners, so he has to learn good manners and learn the consequences of bad manners, and so on.

Fifthly: The seeker of knowledge must also intend by his pursuit of knowledge to worship Allaah in the manner that Allaah approves of, because without learning a man cannot know how to worship Allaah whether that is in his wudoo’, his prayer, his charity, his fasting or his hajj. He should also call others to Allaah with his knowledge, explaining sharee’ah to people and calling them to

adhere to it.

In fact knowledge is one of the best acts of worship and one of the greatest and most beneficial. Hence you will find the that Shaytaan is keep to keep people from acquiring knowledge; he will come to a person and tell him that he is seeking knowledge to show off, so that the people will see him and think that he is a scholar, so he will lose interest and will say: I should keep away from showing off? Or he will come to him and tell him: Have the intention when seeking shar'i knowledge of making some worldly gain, so that the warning "The one who seeks knowledge that should be sought for the sake of Allaah, but he does it only for some worldly gain, will not smell the fragrance of Paradise" will apply to you. And he comes to him with many things that will prevent him from seeking knowledge. But one must seek refuge with Allaah from the accursed shaytaan, and go ahead with his plans, and not pay any attention to these whispers that enter his heart. Every time he feels that something is distracting him from seeking knowledge – by whatever means – he should say, "A'oodhu Billaahi min al-shaytaan il-rajeem (I seek refuge with Allaah from the accursed satan)" and " Allaahumma a'inni (O Allaah, help me) and so on.

And I say to this student:

Go ahead and seek knowledge, and do not let the shaytaan keep you from remembering Allaah or seeking knowledge. Carry on even though you will encounter difficulty and hardship in making your intention correct, but correcting one's intention is something easy. Go ahead, O young man, and seek the help of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, and seek refuge with Allaah from the accursed shaytaan.

Fataawa Noor 'Ala al-Darb (al'Ilm), quoting from the website of Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him).

We think that there is a great deal of good in you, in sha Allaah, and that the words of the imams of knowledge and faith, and the advice of Shaykh al-'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) will all have an effect on your heart, mind and life.

You should remember that your father does not want anything but good for you, and that every

act of worship and obedience that you do is for you and your father.

And remember that attaining victory by the blessing of the Qur'aan in the Hereafter will be shared between you and your parents, and the loss caused by neglecting it will also be shared between you and them.

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “It will be said to the companion of the Qur'aan: Recite and rise in status, and recite as you used to recite in the world, and your status will be at the last verse you recite.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (1464) and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

It was narrated that Buraydah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever reads the Qur’aan and learns it and acts upon it will be given a crown of light to wear on the Day of Resurrection, the light of which is like the light of the sun, and his parents will be clothed with two suits the equivalent of which is not to be found in this world, and they will say: Why have we been clothed with this? And it will be said: Because your son learned the Qur’aan.”

Narrated by al-Haakim (1/756); he said it is saheeh according to the conditions of Muslim. Al-Albaani said It is hasan because of corroborating evidence, as it says in Saheeh al-Targheeb.

Goodness and happiness lie in obeying Allaah in this world, and obeying your parents is obligatory for you. The acts of worship that you do are not for any human being, rather they are for Allaah your Lord. We ask Allaah to guide you and help you to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.

And Allaah is the Source of strength.