

While preparing for final exams...remember the Final Exam

Advice for parents and students by Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Al Badr¹

In the coming days our sons and daughters will receive secular exams to determine their achievement for the academic year. They will be tested on what they have learned, and tested upon the knowledge they received in the form of questions directed towards them in this exam. They are not aware of the specific questions they will be asked, but rather they will be surprised by the questions at the time of testing. These exams are frightening to the students; rather these exams are also frightening to the parents.

How beautiful are the actions of the fathers and mothers as they turn to their children during these days giving them advice and direction and reminding them to continue to study! And how beautiful would it be if in addition to their diligence upon seeing their children pass these exams, hoping they succeed and fearing their failure if the parents would also be diligent in preparing them for the greatest exam which will occur on the Day of Judgment when these children stand before Allah and He questions them concerning what they did during their lifetime.

There is no blame for working hard so the children can pass secular exams; rather this provides the children with a good education, good upbringing and excellent guidance. The blame is when this is the only thing the parent gives attention to and this is their main concern and advice to their children without preparing them for what they will encounter on the Day of Judgment in front of Allah. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would supplicate saying:

اللهم لا تجعل الدنيا أكبر همنا ولا مبلغ علمنا

O Allah, don't make this worldly life our main concern nor the extent of our knowledge.²

This supplication shows that you are not blameworthy for having concern for the worldly life; the only blame is when the worldly life is your main concern and the extent of your knowledge.

¹ وقفة بمناسبة الامتحانات <http://al-badr.net/detail/AnpZbS6rP4gz>

² Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 3502; classed as hasan by al-Albani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi

As the students prepare for these tests it is incumbent upon them to reflect upon the obligation of preparing from the test on the Day of Judgment. If you understand you will be tested, and the exam requires preparation, and the exam comprises questions and answers, and the person's success on the exam is based upon their preparation for the exam; then likewise is the test in the grave and the test on the day you meet the Lord of all creation. These tests remind you of the greatest test which will occur on the Day of Judgment. As you prepare yourself and plan for these secular exams, let this be a door to push you to prepare yourself for the exam of the hereafter on the day you meet Allah the Exalted.

Fudail ibn Iyad may Allah have mercy upon him said to a man: "How old are you?"
The man replied: "Sixty years old."

Fudail said: "Therefore, for the past sixty years you have been journeying towards your Lord and you have almost reached your destination."

The man said: "Verily from Allah we come to Him we shall return".

Fudail said: "Do you know the explanation of what you have said?"

The man said: "Explain it to me O Abu Ali!"

Fudail said: "You have said you are a slave belonging to Allah and to Allah you shall return. Therefore whoever knows that he is a slave of Allah and to Him he shall return; then let him also know that he will stand before Him. And whoever knows that he will stand before Him; then let him know that he will be questioned. And whoever knows he will be questioned then let him prepared answers for those questions."

The man said: "What is the solution?"

Fudail said: "It's easy."

The man replied: "What is it?"

Fudail said: "Rectify what remains of your life and you will be forgiven for has passed and for what remains; but if you do evil for what remains of your life you will be taken to account for what has passed and for what remains."

Ibn Masood رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمُ ابْنِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّهِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ حَمْسٍ : عَنْ عُمْرِهِ فِيْمَ أَفْتَاهُ ، وَعَنْ شَبَابِهِ فِيْمَ أَبْلَاهُ ، وَمَالِهِ مِنْ
أَيِّنْ اكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيْمَ أَنْفَقَهُ ، وَمَاذَا عَمِلَ فِيْمَا عَلِمَ

“The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge.”³

We know for surety that we will be questioned on the Day of Judgment and tested. And we also know the specific questions which the people will be tested with on the Day of Judgment. So how beneficial will it be for the successful person to put these five questions at the forefront of his mind as long as he remains in the abode of actions!

He reflects upon the certainty that Allah the Exalted will ask him about his life, Allah the Exalted will ask him about his youth, Allah the Exalted will ask him about his wealth, and Allah the Exalted will ask him about his knowledge.

Undoubtedly we are going to be questioned, and this is certainly going to occur. We will stand before Allah the Great and Exalted while He is questioning us. Thus how beneficial would it be for us – I swear by Allah – to reflect upon this exam, and ponder over this test and remember our standing before the Compeller, the Lord, and prepare answers for this exam!

❖ **Discarding class material properly**

It is obligatory upon the students of knowledge to respect their books and notes upon which they wrote the Name of Allah, verses from the Quran and narrations from the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Each time the student respects the books of knowledge that will be a reason for their success, and the key to their prosperity. I mention this because some of the students especially during exams believe they no longer need some of their papers or notes thus they throw them on the ground, leave them at the door of the test site, or toss them in the corridors. And this is not at all acceptable for the student of knowledge. Books of knowledge; and papers which have knowledge written upon them must be respected. Therefore if the student feels he no longer needs his notes he should not toss them, rather he should place them in a specific place to honor his notes.

❖ **Avoid cheating on exams**

It's obligatory upon the student of knowledge to beware of letting Shaytan enter upon him thus causing him to embark upon impermissible acts which Allah the Exalted has prohibited. The student's desire to pass the exam should not be a reason he exceeds the limits of Allah the Blessed and Exalted.

³ Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2422; classed as hasan by al-Albani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 1969

Allah has prohibited cheating. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَنْ غَشَّنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا

Whoever is dishonest towards us is not from us.⁴

Dishonesty in knowledge is a greater harm than dishonesty in food and drink, because the status of knowledge is greater and nobler. Thus the student must be cautious of this matter, and fear Allah the Exalted. During the exams his concern should not be the supervisor who roams the classrooms looking at the students; rather his concern should be the All-Watcher the Exalted whom nothing in the heavens or the earth is hidden from Him. Thus let him and her be far away from the violations and disgraceful methods of testing such as cheating, trickery and deceit.

❖ **Maximize your potential after the exams are complete**

These days of preparation for the exam will reveal your amazing ability to acquire knowledge, memorize and study. You find yourself during these days surprisingly active with great enthusiasm and perseverance towards reading and memorizing. Likewise you find that your memory is active during these days in a way you did not expect from yourself. The benefit extracted from this is to know that Allah has favored you with this ability, but many people squander it. They possess the capability and vivacity but they don't benefit from it!! When the exam nears he finds in himself this energy, and if he could maintain the activity he uses during the examination period throughout the entire year he would surely obtain a great abundance of knowledge.

❖ **Parents pray for your children**

From those matters which require attention during these days is truthful supplication and seeking complete refuge with Allah the Exalted such that our sons and daughters can actualize prosperity in this life and in the hereafter. Passing (examinations) lies in the Hand of Allah and success is from Him. How beautiful is it when the boy and girl turn to Allah the Exalted and seeking refuge in Him and sincerely pray to Him to write them amongst the successful and amongst the winners!

❖ **The importance of honesty and fulfilling the trust**

From those matters affairs during these days is the importance of honesty. The people will be questioned on the Day of Judgment concerning honesty in every aspect of their

⁴ Sahih Muslim 101

life; honesty in creed and belief, honesty in worship and action, and honesty in buying and selling. Included in this honesty and fulfillment of trust is when the student takes his examinations.

❖ **Unauthentic supplications said during exams**

From the affairs requiring attention concerning this subject are those papers circulated throughout some schools which contain specific supplications for certain actions. These papers mention supplications said while studying, Dua said when entering the testing room, supplications said when writing the answers, and supplication said upon completion of the exam. They have specific supplications for every situation. This is a burden which has not been authorized by Allah, conjecture with no proof or evidence, and speaking about Allah and His religion without knowledge. The scholars said long ago: "Whoever deems something as good has legislated it". Thus it is obligatory to warn against these papers. The students should be directed to turn to Allah the Exalted, in general with Dua and asking Him for success and to pass (the exams), without specifying affairs without proof and evidence from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

I ask Allah the Exalted by His Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes to write us all down as successful in this life and the hereafter, and that we succeed with His pleasure and that He distances us from His wrath. Verily He is the One who responds to the supplication and He is the One whom hope is placed in and He is the Best Trustee.

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee