174803 - Feeling Sad and Distressed Over Past

the question

I am a born Muslim, alhamdulillah. I started practising from last year until now. I have a full beard, I don’t smoke, I have no girlfriend and I don’t watch films. I am always trying to spend more time gaining knowledge, but recently I feel depressed; my past memories are killing me. I always feel scared when talking to people, I am getting ill so often and that is hurting me. Even when I pray I feel that my prayer, my dua (supplication) is not going to be accepted. I am in hardship and difficulties as well. But I don’t speak about this problem to anyone, because I believe that only Allah can help me out from this problem. I feel like I am doing something seriously wrong. I notice that sometimes I don’t pray fajar (morning prayer) on time. Is it the main reason?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly, we congratulate you for having repented to Allah; He has blessed you by enabling you to give up sin and disobedience and a life of idle pursuits. This great blessing requires you to protect it by turning to Allah, calling upon Him, beseeching Him and always remembering Him, may He be glorified and exalted. All of that will strengthen the heart and make you steadfast in adhering to the path of obedience, and it will ward off the doubts and hesitations that have come to you recently.

Secondly, with regard to what has befallen you recently, there are several reasons for that:

·Part of it is because you have become very withdrawn after you were guided, but being guided has nothing to do with this withdrawal. You could have chosen good people to mix with and make friends with; in fact even if you mixed with people who were not like that, you could have focused on showing them the way to repent and turn back to Allah. Being religiously committed does not

mean at all that you should stay away from people. Even when seeking knowledge, a person can always look for friends to sit with in the class and who can help you to revise. This is how the social nature of human beings always is, but their aims and behaviour may vary. Undoubtedly keeping away from the friends you had in the past is a beneficial kind of withdrawal, and it may be obligatory in some cases. But it will be helpful to you to replace the friends of the past with other friends who are righteous and can help you to adhere to the path of guidance, console you and strengthen your resolve. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And keep yourself (O Muhammad-sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e. your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost”

[18:28].

·Part of it may be your thinking of some memories of the past. This will inevitably happen, because you are at the beginning of the path and the Shaytan (devil) will never leave you alone; he will put in your mind images and scenes and thoughts that you used to be part of, not so long ago. But be of good cheer, for this difficulty and these thoughts will soon disappear, in sha Allah, so long as you remain steadfast on the path of guidance and adhere to righteous conduct.

·The doubts that arise in your own mind and the thoughts that come to you from everywhere are the whispers of the Shaytan that you must ward off forcefully, seek refuge with Allah from them, and constantly call upon Allah (in du‘aa/supplication’) and ask Him to make you strong and to save you from the Shaytan and his whispers. Remember that Allah, may He be exalted, has no need of us and our deeds, and that Allah accepts our imperfect worship by His kindness and grace, and He will reward for it and multiply the reward, out of His grace, kindness and generosity. For Allah is Appreciative and Forbearing, may He be glorified; He accepts a little and gives much. He is as His slave thinks He is, may He be glorified and exalted, so do not think negatively of your Lord, for

Allah is Most Kind and Most Generous.

·As for your negligence with regard to Fajr prayer, it is undoubtedly a major shortcoming on your part and is something that you should hasten to set straight. A good start is indicative of good progress on the path, so how about if your day begins with disobedience towards Allah and heedlessness concerning one of His greatest commands, and one of His greatest rights over His slaves, which is prayer offered on time? The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever prays Fajr is under the protection of Allah, but anyone who falls short with regard to the rights of Allah, then Allah will seize him and will throw him into the Fire of Hell.” Narrated by Muslim . So do not deprive yourself and do not exclude yourself from the protection of your Lord and His shielding of His slave against his enemy. Do not deprive yourself of all of that by being careless with regard to praying Fajr at the beginning of its time with the congregation in the mosque, lest your enemy gain power over you when you are the one who is bringing that upon yourself if you do that (neglect Fajr).

May Allah make things easy for you, relieve your worry and distress, and make you steadfast in adhering to the straight path.

And Allah knows best.