

223789 - How can I rid myself of laziness and lethargy, and excel in university?

the question

I am a young man, about to start university, but I am lazy and lethargic, and disorganized, and I do not pay attention to time. But I want to get the highest grade in my group, the reason being that there is a specialty in the second year that only accepts those with the highest grades in each group, and I really want to join this specialty. I hope that you can suggest some steps that will help me to achieve that.

Detailed answer

Laziness is one of the greatest obstacles to attaining success and achievement in this world and the hereafter, and it is one of the most fatal psychological illnesses; it weakens resolve and prevents one from taking steps to do beneficial actions. Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) often used to seek refuge with Allah from it.

It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to say: “*Allahumma inni a’oodhu bika min al-kasali wa’l-harami wa’l-ma’thami wa’l-maghrami, wa min fitnat il-qabri wa ‘adhaab al-qabri, wa min fitnat in-naari wa’adhaab in-naar; wa min sharri fitnat il-ghina, wa a’oodhu bika min fitnat il-faqri wa a’oodhu bika min fitnat il-maseeh id-dajjal* (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from laziness and old age, from sin and debt, from the trial of the grave and the punishment of the grave, from the trial of the Fire and the punishment of the Fire, and from the evil of the trial of wealth; I seek refuge with You from the trial of poverty, and I seek refuge with You from the trial of the Dajjal...) Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6368) and Muslim (589).

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to Abu Talhah: “Look for one of your boys to serve me.” Abu Talhah took me out with him, riding behind him, and I served the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) every time he halted, and I often heard him

say: “*Allahumma inni a‘oodhu bika min al-hammi wa’l-hazani wa’l-‘ajzi wa’l-kasali wa’l-bukhli wa’l-jubni wa dala‘i ad-dayni wa ghalabat ir-rijaal* (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from worry, grief, incapacity, laziness, cowardice and miserliness, being heavily in debt and being overcome by men).” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5425).

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood said: When evening came, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would say: “*Amsayna wa amsaa al-mulku Lillaahi wa’l-hamdu Lillaahi wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wahdahu laa shareeka lah* (We have reached the evening and the Dominion belongs to Allah, and praise be to Allah, there is no god but Allah alone with no partner or associate).” al-Hasan said: az-Zubayd told me that he memorized from Ibraaheem in this du‘aa’: – *lahu’l-mulk wa lahu’l-hamd wa huwa ‘ala kulli shay’in qadeer. Allahumma as’aluka khayra hadhihi’l-laylah aa a‘oodhu bika min sharri hadhihi’l-laylah wa sharri ma ba’daha. Allahumma inni a‘oodhu bika min al-kasal wa soo’ al-kibari. Allahumma inni a‘oodhu bika min ‘adhaabin fi’n-naar wa ‘adhaabin f’l-qabr* (His is the Dominion, to Him be praise and He has power over all things. O Allah, I ask You for the good of this night and I seek refuge in You from the evil of this night and the evil of what follows it. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from laziness and the troubles of old age. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from torment in the Fire and torment in the grave).” Narrated by Muslim (2723).

What we advise you to do is to save yourself from this dangerous problem by taking the following steps:

-1-

You must believe that all things are in the hand of Allah, may He be exalted, so you must turn to Him, offer a great deal of du‘aa’ (supplication) and persist in that, especially at the times when supplications are most likely to be answered. To learn more about these times, please see the answer to question no. [22438](#).

-2-

You must remind yourself often that the period of university study, with its times of hard work and rest, joys and sorrows, is short and quickly comes to an end, after which there is nothing left

but the results and outcomes of working hard. So you should always imagine yourself feeling the joy and satisfaction of one who worked hard, when he leaves at the end of the year, returning home with the results of his efforts, and imagine feeling the regret of the one who was negligent, and how he would go back to his family, brokenhearted and sad.

Imagining consequences is one of the greatest ways of motivating oneself to strive and to work hard, and to give up lethargy and laziness. For this reason we see many texts in the Qur'an and Sunnah which speak of the status and high levels of the righteous in Paradise, and the situation and low status of the sinners in Hell.

-3-

You should not let yourself be too absorbed in the present moment, because it could make you think that you have plenty of time. So do not look at your current situation and think that there is still lots of time, and you will be able to start studying tomorrow, or after tomorrow, or when the exams approach. This thinking that you have plenty of time is the cause of laziness and procrastination with regard to actions that will benefit you in this world and the hereafter.

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

Thinking that one has lots of time results in being too lazy to do acts of worship and obedience, and procrastinating with regard to repentance.

End quote from *Fath al-Baari* (11/237).

Always think that whenever you find a suitable time to study, perhaps you will not often have such a chance again, as you may suddenly become very busy, or you may face obstacles that will prevent you from studying. So you should make the most of every opportunity to study.

-4-

Avoid mixing a great deal and keeping company with those who joke and play a great deal; keep company with righteous students who are serious and hard-working. Keeping company with hard-working people will benefit you, in sha Allah, in several ways, including the following: you

will begin to imitate them in their hard work; you will benefit from them by learning their ways of studying and learning from their experience; you will also benefit from their knowledge.

-5-

Sometimes laziness and lethargy are symptoms of some kinds of illness, so you can have yourself thoroughly medically tested, to make sure about that.

-6-

Maintain physical hygiene, and always take showers and put on perfume, for this is something that energizes the mind.

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

Because good fragrance is nourishment for the soul, and the soul is the driving force of the faculties, hence the faculties are enhanced by pleasant fragrances. Pleasant fragrances benefit the mind and heart, and all the hidden organs; they bring joy to the heart and gladden the soul, and they are the most appropriate thing for the soul. There is a strong connection between pleasant fragrances and the good soul, and perfume was one of the most beloved things of this world to the best of good souls, namely the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

In *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, it is narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would not refuse a gift of perfume.

In *Saheeh Muslim*, it is narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever is offered rayhaan (basil), let him not to refuse it, for it has a good smell and is easy to carry."

End quote from *Zaad al-Ma'aad* (4/256).

-7-

Exercise regularly, for it is beneficial in warding off laziness, by Allah's leave; this is something proven and known from experience.

-8-

We advise you to read books that speak of this topic. Such books [in Arabic] include: *al-Harb ‘ala al-Kasal* by Khaalid Abu Shaadi; *‘Ajz ath-Thiqaat* by Muhammad Musa ash-Shareef; *al-Hawr ba’d al-Kawr* by ad-Duwaysh; *al-Futoor* by Naasir al-‘Umar.

You should also regularly read biographies of the scholars and the righteous, which will remind you of the value of time. In such books, you will find good examples of hard work. For examples of that, read the book *Qeemat az-Zaman ‘inda al-‘Ulamaa’* by ‘Abd al-Fattaah Abu Ghuddah (may Allah have mercy on him).

For more information, please see also the answers to questions no. [85362](#) , [138389](#) , [38594](#) .

And Allah knows best.