

Youth and Importance of Time

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Name of the Book: **Youth & Importance Of Time**
Compiled & Published by: Association of Imam Mahdi (a.s.),
P.O. Box 19822,
Mumbai – 400 050.
Month & Year of Publishing: October 2010

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيَّكَ الْحُجَّةَ بِنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتِكَ

عَلَيْهِ وَعَلى آباءِهِ فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ، وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ

وَلِيًّا، وَحَافِظًا، وَقَائِدًا، وَنَاصِرًا، وَدَلِيلًا، وَعَيْنًا،

حَتَّى تُسَكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا، وَتُمَتِّعَهُ فِيهَا طَوِيلًا.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج) أَذْرِكُنَا

Youth & Importance Of Time

Time is the most precious treasure in a youth's life. Unfortunately, the way this fortune is squandered no other treasure is wasted. The value of this bounty can be gauged from the fact that every other bounty that has been wasted can be regained after effort and endeavour. But the time that has been wasted can never be regained. Thus if this treasure has been frittered away then there is no way you can reclaim it back. For instance, if the 10th of October 2010 passes away, then it will never come back. The 10th of October will come once again, but it will be in 2011. Hence human life is nothing but a compendium of time.

In earlier times before the advent of machines and gadgets, people had to do all their work manually and their entire day would be utilised in their household chores. Finally, when they would become free they would be so exhausted that they would drop down on their bed and end the day – not having the strength to do anything else. Today, machines have replaced humans due to which man has a lot of spare time. Work is completed faster and the fatigue too is less. Thus when man returns back from work he does not feel the need to end the day immediately. Sleep will come at its

own time. People are averse to visiting their relatives as it involves travelling long distances and negotiating endless traffic. Hence spending time is a big issue in urban life and man is constantly looking for avenues for spending his free time.

A lot of time is spent in front of the T.V and on the internet. Today, the youth waste a lot of their time standing on the roadside involved in vain discussions. And the interesting thing is that if they are told to do some work, they say "I'm busy!!!"

Time is that precious bounty whose suitable use will raise us to the highest levels of paradise while its wrong utilisation will drag us to the worst punishment of hell. When man will be raised on the day of judgement, he will be presented with his scroll of deeds. At that time he will be questioned about the time that he spent in three cases

- (1) The time that he spent in worshipping Allah & His obedience - which will entitle him to Allah's forgiveness and a getting a high status in paradise.
- (2) The time that he spent in Allah's disobedience and committing of sins - which shall be the cause of getting divine punishment.
- (3) The time that he wasted in useless activities. It will be a substantial amount and at that time a person will regret that if only he had used his spare time for worship and Allah's obedience, he would have achieved a high level in Paradise. But the remorse

of that time will be pointless. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) says

*"Be more stingy in spending your time than spending your wealth"*¹

The difference between money and time is that if money is not spent it remains safe and does not decrease. But time is that treasure which is spent continuously and there is no way that you can stop it.

Also, just as Allah will question everyone about their wealth – how they earned and spent it, He will also interrogate every individual about their life, especially their youth. Although youth is part of one's life, yet Allah will question about it separately. This shows that adolescence has a special importance in front of Allah. Ameerul Momeneen (a.s) says,

*"Your life is nothing but the breath that you take. There is a warden on every breath that you take and He will question you about it"*²

Time is of so much importance before Allah that He has not given us absolute freedom concerning it. Rather He has appointed sentries who count every breath that we take and record every second of our life – how, where and why we spent it. We will have to give account for every second. This is about the Hereafter.

In , the world too, wasting time has damaging consequences. Those who waste their time in early

¹ Amaali Toosi; 1/527

² Ghurar-ul-Hikam, Saying 58

childhood and adolescence and don't spend it in learning and acquiring knowledge are repentant and rueful for the remaining part of their lives. After a certain age, it is neither possible to acquire knowledge nor learn a new skill. Till the time a person has not acquired a high level of education and expertise, it is not possible for him to achieve the luxuries of life. Rather most of his life is spent in problems and difficulties and trying to make ends meet. Thus high education and proficiency is absolutely essential for not only getting a good job but also for running a successful business. And all this is only possible if we prudently utilise our time – especially during adolescence. Generally, we fail to realise the importance of time in our youth and waste it on useless and futile activities and by the time we realise our blunders (at a later age) it's too late to make amends.

Thus it is imperative for the today's youth to spend their precious time wisely and the responsibilities of the parents in this regard too are immense. They should keep an account of the time spend by their children and inquire about the activities in which they spend their time. They should ask their children where they are going; what are they doing and with whom they are spending their time. Those parents who are negligent in this responsibility have to regret it later in life.

The progress of science has made life easy and comfortable for man. But like a double edge sword, it has also opened up newer avenues of wasting time and

corrupting the youth thereby making them immoral and irreligious. No one can deny the benefit and usefulness of the computer. It has become indispensable for us. The internet too has become an integral part of our lives. Yet, where the internet has made the world small and eliminated distances, it also brought its share of harm and evils. Earlier there was only the desktop computer. But now we have laptops, netbooks and palmtops. Today everything is available on the mobile. No doubt the youth of today is using the internet for research purposes, but it is also squandering its precious time on the internet. Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, blogging, chatting ... Not to forget gaming. Earlier schools, colleges and offices were the places where people fell in love. Now the internet has opened up the entire world for having affairs and relationships. No one knows who is interacting with whom on the internet.

Facebook has made shamelessness common and widespread. Previously, marriage relations were initiated through family contacts. Now they are fixed via Facebook. Both the parties are ignorant about the "real" individual. They only know that which has been revealed by the opposite party. So when marriages takes place through these avenues and the couple start living together as man and wife, they realise that they are incompatible and unsuited for each other. They realise that they have been deceived and made a blunder. Today's generation is spending a huge amount of their time on the internet. It has become an addiction for the

youth and they are hooked to it. Entire nights are devoted to the internet. On one hand this addiction is spoiling the eyes of the youth and on the other hand it is also affecting their overall health. Like everything else, an excessive use of the internet is destroying our youngsters. Thus it is the responsibility of every parent that after they have provided a computer to their children, they should keep an eye on their internet usage. They should install special softwares available in the market to keep a tab on the sites visited by them on the internet and the amount of time spent on them. It is important to reiterate that computer and internet are not un-Islamic per se. It is only its excessive and irresponsible use which is a threat to religion and faith. Parents should be alert of this menace.

Islam has laid a great amount of emphasis on "time". The new moon heralds the beginning of a month. Not only has Islam prescribed namaz to be recited five times a day, but also it has fixed the time for their performance – stressing the time of its merit and performance. Islam has also suggested appropriate timings for the performance of recommended prayers (nawafil). Fasting is prescribed in a special month – that too with a time for its commencement and its end. Haj and its rituals have to be performed at a particular time of the year. Khums & zakat too have a fixed time when they have to be disbursed. There are times suggested for sleeping and waking up. Islam has prescribed a comprehensive schedule for each and every activity of

life and religion which cannot be found in other religions. The world has learnt the art of time management from Islam. But unfortunately, today Muslims are the biggest squanderers of time.

Our seventh Imam, Imam Musa Kazim (a.s) says,

"Divide your time into 4 parts –

- 1) For worshipping Allah and asking your needs*
- 2) For fulfilling your routine commitments and responsibilities*
- 3) Spending time with honest and trustworthy people; those who draw your attention to your shortcomings (but in a friendly manner) & who are your sincere friends (those who wish good for you and have no malice in their heart)*
- 4) Spending time in recreation – but within the limits of Islam. Enjoying the 'halal' things of life. In fact the time spent for this activity helps to accomplish the above three responsibilities in a better way."*¹

If you pay attention to this tradition, you will realise that all the needs of man have been attended. Worshipping Allah and asking our needs before Him is the aim of creation. There are obligations of the worldly life as well as the Hereafter and those too need to be fulfilled. Eating, drinking, clothing, house, travelling, welcoming guests, education, treatment of illnesses, marriage, sil-e-

¹ Tohful Uqool; pg 302 (Beirut edition)

rahm, Haj, Ziarat etc are all responsibilities of worldly life and we have to fulfil them. Thus we have to earn a livelihood to fulfil these obligations and hence there should be a time assigned for this in our daily schedule.

Man is a social animal and cannot spend his life in seclusion. Thus he needs sincere and honest friends with whom he can spend time. At the same time no one is perfect – all of us have some shortcomings. So if we want to reach to the peak of perfection, we need true friends who will draw our attention to our faults and advise us sincerely. Thus spending time with such a group of people every day is also necessary.

Man gets tired if he works continuously. Also, earning a large amount of money is pointless if a person does not get the opportunity to spend that money. Thus it is necessary to fulfil all legitimate wishes and desires within the boundaries of the shariat. By doing this a person feels invigorated and it helps in discharging the previous three responsibilities.

There are many people who complain about the lack of time due to their disorganised routines. They say that *"neither can we increase the days of the week nor can we enhance the hours of the day"*. For such people it is pertinent to quote the renowned marja'a Late Ayatullah Syed Mohammed Kazim Yazdi, who said,

"Dividing the time gives it vastness and spending it aimlessly causes its destruction"

No doubt today's generation is completely exhausted by the time they return back from their college & offices

and it is necessary that they spend their time among friends. But just as you cannot repay a loan by taking another loan, in the same way, one tiredness cannot be dissipated with another tiredness. It is only our assumption that if we spend our time on the internet or sit with friends till late in night after returning back from college or office, we will feel refreshed. It is certainly not like that. If we don't get sound and sufficient sleep then we will report to office the next day in a state of fatigue. Our body will be aching and we will not feel energetic. As a result we will be stressful throughout the day and finally fall ill after a few days. We are all witness to the frequency at which the new generation is falling sick and succumbing to new kinds of diseases. It is only because of wasting of time.

If we learn to distribute and utilise our time judiciously, then not only will we be able to pursue higher studies but also be able to spend time in research and be able to serve our brothers in faith. Spending the time wisely is the secret behind the success of those individuals who have achieved honour and distinction in their lives.

If we account for the small amounts of time that are wasted here and there it will add up to a substantial quantity. For example, for people of Mumbai, a lot of their time is wasted in commuting. If we ponder, we may be able to utilise our travelling time in a constructive manner. For instance, if we leave our house 10 min earlier than our regular time, we may get a place to sit in the bus or train and then we can utilise the

travelling time in reading some book etc. But if we leave 10 – 15 min late, we may get crowded trains and buses. Not only will we get tired by standing all the way, we will also waste our travelling time completely. In this way, if we analyse minutely, we will be able to find quite a few instances in our daily life where we can use our time productively. Also when we discuss a topic, we generally tend to talk excessively and beside the point. If we stick to the point of discussion, then we will be able to convey our view accurately and that too within a small amount of time. This way we can arrive to a conclusion quickly and save our precious time. There are many tasks that can be achieved via phone, SMS and email and it is not necessary to meet the person personally. This mode of communication not only saves us the trouble of travelling but also saves time & money. For this we will have to change our old habits.

If an agenda is prepared before every meeting and the participants have done their homework in that regard; pondered over the points and come with suggestions, then the meeting can be fruitful & can be completed in a small amount of time. Unfortunately, most meetings are conducted without an agenda. Thus the members arrive at the meeting without analysing the problems. They sit in the meeting and ponder over the issues. Consequently, not only does the meeting go on for long, but also it remains inconclusive and unfruitful.

A lot of time is wasted in nikah and marriages. The time printed on the invitation card is 8.00pm but the bride

and bridegroom reach the venue at 10.00pm. Even for majlis we find a similar thing. The announcement for the majlis is for 1.00pm but it starts only after two hours. There are many such instances where we can save a lot of time by being punctual and use it for other useful works.

If we keep one point in our mind concerning time, we will be able to utilise it more fruitfully. If we have spare time and there are a number of things that we can do, then we should prioritise our work and use the time accordingly. Reading every report in the newspaper is a waste of time. We can easily use that time for reading a book.

At times it happens that we need two hours for doing some work (like writing some article) and we find that we don't have that much time. We have only 10 – 15 minutes. So we postpone writing that article and in this way the article is never completed. But if we utilise those 15 minutes, then at one time we will be able to finish that article. Otherwise we will keep wasting those 15 minutes every time and finally realise that it adds up to more than the 2 hours needed for writing the article.

How to spend one's time?

1. Recitation of Quran
2. Reciting duas / supplications
3. Reading books on religions and morals

4. Reading literature concerning the present day scenario
5. Meeting relatives (Sil-e-Rahm)
6. Meeting sincere friends
7. Helping the needy
8. Browsing the internet for research on a topic
9. Spending time with family