

Your Time and Money

A. Time Management

Islam is a systematic religion; it puts great emphasis on managing our life, time and finances so that we may have a happy and prosperous life. The timing of daily prayers itself reflects the daily management of lives. It does not say that pray all the time or at any time– it says that there is a time for prayer, and there is a time for business, and there is a time for the social and family aspects of our lives. Program yourself into a disciplined and balanced life–style.

In Chapter al–Jum 'ah of the Qur'an, after the order for the Friday prayer, Allah says:

“When the salat is done, then

(1) spread out on the earth,

(2) Seek the blessings of Allah

(3) And remember Allah a lot”. (62: 10)

This verse says that you should keep your priorities in the right order: at the time of prayer, say the prayer, and at the time of business, do your businesses diligently–however, be conscious of God's existence at all times.

In the verse after it, Allah condemns those who have mixed up their priorities:

“And when they see merchandise or entertainment, they go towards it and leave you alone [in prayers]. Say to them: ‘What is with Allah is better than entertainment and merchandise. And Allah is the best of providers.’”(62: 11)

(This verse refers to an event when a trade caravan entered the city of Medina at the time of Friday prayers. It was customary for them to announce their arrival by beating the drums. Many companions of the Prophet left the mosque while the Prophet was still saying his sermon before the prayers.)

Praising those who do things in their appropriate time, Allah says,

“Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of charity”. (24:37)

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s), quoting from the words of wisdom revealed to past prophets, says;

“An intelligent Muslim should not be seen passing away [his time] except in three things:

1. Improving his livelihood:
2. Or preparing for the hereafter:
3. Or enjoying [himself] but not in haram ways...”[1](#)

In another hadith, Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s) says;

“Try that your [daily] time is divided into four segments:

1. A time for meditation to God.
2. A time for earning livelihood.
3. A time for socializing with brethren and trustworthy [friends] who would point out your [moral] weaknesses and be sincere [in their friendship for you].
4. A time exclusively devoted for non-haram pleasure [with the family]. It is with this [fourth] time segment that you will be able to maintain (or master) the other three times...”[2](#)

The last segment of time is very important. Even according to a new analysis by Richard Esterlin, an economist at the University of Southern California, "We should apply our time and energy to health and family life, rather than to material goods, if we really want to be happy."[3](#)

B. Financial Management

You might be surprised that Islam has talked about financial management. It has done so because it is a comprehensive way of life. Islam expects its followers to plan their lives in such a way that they can live within their means and resources.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s) says;

“From the signs of a believer are three things:

1. Good management of livelihood;
2. Patience in face of calamity;
3. Study of religion. [4](#)

The story of Prophet Yusuf (a.s), in the twelfth chapter of the Qur'an, clearly portrays that one has to plan and manage the resources wisely. The King of Egypt saw a dream in which seven fat cattle were

devouring seven lean ones, and he saw seven green ears and seven dry ones. Prophet Yusuf interpreted the King's dream, informing him that there would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of severe drought, and that he should conserve the first seven years harvest for the next seven years' drought. Prophet Yusuf was given the charge of the treasury of the land and he wisely managed the distribution as well as the storing of the grains during the first seven years and, consequently, the country did not suffer hunger during the seven years or drought.

The Problem of Extravagance and Waste

One of the biggest problems in financial management is extravagance and waste. Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s) said to 'Ubayd bin Zurarah: "O 'Ubayd, extravagance (and waste) brings about poverty whereas planning brings about affluence." [5](#)

There are two concepts in Islam: *israf* and *tabdhir*. "*Israf*" means extravagance without being wasteful; overspending and living beyond one's means. Whereas "*tabdhir*" means wasting the blessings of God.

Israf has been condemned in both religious as well as secular aspects of life.

"O children of Adam! Attend to your embellishments at every rime of prayer, and eat and drink but don't be extravagant; Surely He (Allah) does not love the extravagant people." (7:31)

Those who waste the blessings that Allah has given to them are described as

"the brothers of the satans." (17:26–27)[6](#)

Muslims should manage their lives within their resources and this cannot be done unless they control their greed. Controlling greed becomes more challenging in this era of consumerism where advertising and marketing tactics incite potential customers to buy an item as "new and improved" even if the older model still fulfills their needs.

Moderation is the key in all spheres of life. Even in the case of charity, Almighty Allah urges moderation:

"...And do not make your hand shackled to your neck nor stretch it out completely lest you sit down blamed, stripped off." (17:29)

Once the Prophet saw Sa'd using excessive water for wudu (ritual ablution) for prayers. He said, 'Why are you wasting the water?' Sa'd was surprised and asked, 'There is israf even in water of wudu?' The Prophet replied, 'Yes; even if you are by a flowing river!'

The Prophet (s.a.w) said,

Verily there are some people from my community (ummah) whose prayers will not be answered:

1. A person who prays against his parents.

2. A person who prays against a debtor who has taken his money/property and the creditor neither wrote down the loan agreement nor had it witnessed.

4. A person who prays against his wife while Allah has given him the right to divorce her by himself.

5. A person who sits at home and prays 'O my Lord, give me sustenance' but does not go out to seek the sustenance. Allah will say, *"O My servant, did I not provide the means for you to seek and exploit the earth with healthy limbs? [If you had done this then] you would have had the excuse between Me and you for your sustenance because you followed my command. And so that you may not be a burden on your family."*...

7. A person who was blessed by Allah with plentiful wealth which he gave away [in charity] and now he prays, "O my Lord, give me sustenance". Allah will say, *"Did I not give you ample wealth? Then why did you not manage it as I had ordered you? And why did you practice extravagance while I have forbidden you from extravagance?"*[7](#)

[1.](#) Al-Furu '. vol. 5. p. 87.

[2.](#) Tuhafu 'l-'Uqul, p. 409-410.

[3.](#) Jay Ingram, "Why happiness is elusive in material world." Toronto Sun, September 14, 2003.

[4.](#) Tahdhibu '1-Ahkam. vol. 7. p.236.

[5.](#) Al-Furu, vol.4, p.53

[6.](#) According 10 June 2006 report of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), UK households throw away 378 pounds of food per person each year and 20 percent of USA's food goes to waste, representing an annual value of about \$31 billion in lost resources. While food is being squandered in rich countries, 800 million people around the world often do not know where their next meal is coming from, 166 million children are undernourished, and 1.2 million people live on less than a dollar a day.

[7.](#) Ibid. vol. 5. p. 84.

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