

maximize its potential. Indeed, the Prophet (p) has said, “**Verily God has prescribed ihsan (proficiency & excellence) in all things.**” Your time is your life, and your life is your capital; it is the basis of your transactions with God, and the means to attain to everlasting felicity, in the proximity of God.

Lost wealth may be regained by industry and economy, lost knowledge by study, lost health by temperance and medicine, **but lost time is gone forever.** The work of the world never ends, and one’s obligations are greater than the time allotted to fulfil them. We should **not condone anything that waste our time without benefit.** We say we waste time, but that is impossible. **We waste ourselves.**

The Prophet (p) enjoyed life & encouraged others to do so. During festive times, such as holidays & wedding ceremonies, he encouraged entertainment, including singing. He joked but always told the truth. He was not a prude, nor was he a puritan who did not appreciate human weakness. Far from fanaticism, he despised extremism & zealotry, and loved gentleness & compassion, even with his enemies. He took life seriously & warned us not to spend our lives in vain pursuits. He reminded us that while laughter has its place, it should not become such a central part of our lives that we fail to recognize the gravity of life & the misery in which the less fortunate live.

The Prophet’s (p) statements about such things as playing backgammon reflect his seriousness and concern for his community. He reminded us that, “**Most of humanity cheat themselves of two precious things: good health & leisure.**” Leisure in Arabic is *faragh*, which means “emptiness.” It is the time one is free of preoccupation. Most of us fill that time with trivial pursuits (TV, playing useless games, engaging in empty chatter). Advise someone to stay up late (10pm) to pray (valuable) & they yawn. But there they are at 2am, eyes glued to a mobile checking status updates to see what “witty comment” a “friend” has sent them (killing time). What is accomplished? What’s our status update on that digital display on the Throne of God. Look...why are you so crestfallen?

“**By time, surely humanity is in loss...**” These verses reminds us that time is our treasure – each minute is irreplaceable, and either we invest it in the next life or squander it here in an inevitable progression toward spiritual bankruptcy. The Quran reminds us that beyond the horizontal aspect of our existence is a truly vast vertical dimension, an unseen ocean of possibilities & nascent potentials.

Regret for wasted time is more wasted time.

As we consider the idea of time itself, seconds on the clock faithfully pass even as we ponder. All the same, we recognize that time is not just a fleeting thing. Time never moves forward without engraving its mark upon the heart – sometimes a stab, sometimes a tender touch, sometimes a vice grip of spikes, sometimes a mortal wound. But always an imprint. To be sure, the most profound imprints hold in our minds a definite place in history – the birth of a child, the death of a loved one, occasions of exceptional joy or beauty, moments of unusual pain. But isn’t there sometimes a sense that they also hold something more? In such moments, we are touched by the reality of the thing itself, a meaning that is bigger than this very moment. We walk beyond the brush strokes of time to find a glimpse of a canvas that makes our usual view seem like paint-by-number. Some of these moments seem to hold the stirring thought that eternity will be the vantage point from which we see the big picture.

Islam is not a harsh religion, nor a religion that deprives people of enjoyment, but it is a religion that demands a level of seriousness, commitment, and concern with the human condition. We should use our time to better ourselves and improve conditions for others, and this does not exclude utilizing our time for recreation and renewal. We all need “downtime” to relax & restore ourselves for the challenges of life and the preparation for the next life.

Games, recreation, vacations all have their place in our lives. **The tragedy occurs** when those activities become the purpose of our lives & the true purpose of life is missed. Our efforts are directed towards recreation: we work to play, **believing that the week is only an excuse for the weekend.**

The world is filled with people who are “killing time,” completely unaware that time is actually killing them. One day, they will wake up & have to face their lives in its entirety. Everyone will watch their lives from start to finish on the Day of Judgment. No one will be allowed to interrupt, edit or to explain. What we watch will simply be a rerun of our entire lives, yet this time around, **we will be painfully aware of the meaning that eluded us the first time because we were not paying attention.**

If playing chess once concerned the scholars, what would they say to us about our habits of watching TV, playing video games, endless conversations on mobiles, on-line chatting, or the hours that we spend surfing the net? Be concerned with your salvation and well-being. On the Day the Debts fall due & we are

taken to account for every moment of our lives, let not there be the bitter taste of remorse in our mouths. The Prophet (p) said: “A person, unless he is mindless, should have four hours: an hour to invoke his Lord, an hour to count his own deeds, an hour to contemplate about the creation of God & an hour to satisfy his worldly needs.”

Time is valuable. Author Scott Peck said, “Until you value yourself, you won’t value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.”

In What to Do Between Birth & Death, Charles Spezzano says that people don’t pay for things with money; **they pay for them with time.** If you say to yourself: In five years, I’ll have put enough away to buy that vacation house, then what you are really saying is that the house will cost you five years – one-twelfth of your adult life. “The phrase spending your time is **not** a metaphor” said Spezzano. “It’s how life works.” Instead of thinking about what you do & what you buy in terms of money, think about them in terms of time. What is worth spending your life on? Seeing your work in that light will change the way you manage your time.

Shakespeare’s truth: Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear, Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste; The vacant leaves thy mind’s imprint will bear, And of this book this learning may thou taste. The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show Of mouthed graves will give thee memory; Thou by thy dial’s shady stealth may know; Time’s thievish progress to eternity.

Punctuality is a virtue. People do not think well of a person’s intellectual or moral character, if they are habitually unfaithful to their appointments. Better late than never, **but never late is better. When you die you don’t want to be labeled...the late, late whatever-your-name-is.** Not keeping a prompt appointment is an act of clear dishonesty. You may as well steal a person’s money as their time. The great rule of moral conduct is, next to God, **to respect time.**

There is a time to be born, and a time to die, says Solomon, and it is the memento of a truly wise person; but there is an **interval** between these two times of **infinite importance.** How will we fare under God’s cross-examination of that **critical interval**: And God will ask, “How many years did you remain on earth?” They will say: “We stayed a day or part of a day. Ask of those who keep account.” He will say, “You stayed **not** but a little – **if only you had known.**” (Quran 23:112-114)

Each of your breaths is a priceless jewel, and when it passes away it never returns. Time cannot be recycled. Take a vow right now to end your time famine and to savour the bounties of sacred time.



Do not curse time, for verily, time is God

“They say: ‘There is **nothing** but our life in this world: We die & we live & **nothing** destroys us except **time.**’ They have **no** knowledge of it.

They only conjecture.” (Quran 45:24)

The Conjecturing: What is the nature of temporal passage – the movement of events or moments of time? Is the future & the past as real as the present, or is the present – or perhaps the present & the past – **all that exists?** One debate concerns the reality of tense, that is, our division of time into past, present and future. Is time really divided in this way? Does what is present slip further and further into the past? Or does this picture merely reflect our perspective on a reality in which there is no uniquely privileged moment, the present, but simply an ordered series of moments? What role, if any, does language play in giving us an insight into temporal reality? Is it possible to travel through time into distant regions of the future or the past? What accounts for the direction of time, the sense we have that we are moving toward the future & not back into the past? What is the relation between the physics of time & the philosophy of time? These are the kind of **dizzying questions** that have been addressed by metaphysicians since antiquity. There are deep contradictions in tech-driven society. Who would have expected apparently time-saving tech, from email & IM to the mobile phone, to result in time being scarcer than ever? Since we are “online” 24 hours a day, we must fight for the right to be **unavailable** – the right to think & live more slowly, more fully. **Life has disintegrated into disjointed & incoherent fragments. It has shrunk!!!**

A stunning prediction by the Prophet (p): “The Hour will not take place before time shrinks. One year will be like a month, one month will be like a week, a week will be like a day, and a day will be like an hour ; an hour will be like a burning flame.”

“By time, surely humanity is in loss except those who Believe & do Good works, & enjoin each other to the Truth & to Patience.” (QURAN 103)

Have you ever noticed **how often** we are surprised by the passing of time? Do you catch yourself with the familiar maxim on your mind, “Time flies!” or perhaps another version of the same: “I can’t believe half the year is gone already.” Or maybe you recall the last time you noticed a child’s height or age or maturity with some genuine sense of disbelief. **Isn’t it odd to be so poorly reconciled to something so familiar, to be shocked at a universal experience?**

St. Augustine wrote, “What, then, is time? If no one asks me, **I know**. But if I want to explain it to someone, **I do not know**.” Time...Mysterious... Valuable...Perishable. Since time is the one immaterial object which we cannot influence – neither speed up nor slow down, add to nor diminish – it is an imponderably valuable gift. To get all there is out of living, we must employ our time wisely, never being in too much of a hurry to stop and sip life, but never losing our sense of the enormous value of a minute, an hour. **An unhurried sense of time is in itself a form of wealth.** Those in a rush do not accomplish much.

Another View of Time: The Quran opens our minds to a time dimension wherein angels traveling at a certain velocity, appear to experience slower time than humans. This agrees with Einstein’s theory of special relativity, which says that a faster moving object appears to experience slower time. Muslims use Einstein’s theory of special relativity with the following verse in the Quran to assert that angels indeed accelerate up to the speed of light: [Quran 70:4] **The angels & the Spirit ascend to Him in a DAY, the measure of which is fifty thousand years.** This time dilation (time difference) shows that angels indeed accelerate to relativistic speeds.

Humanity is wrapped tight in ticking time. But time ticks on towards the unknown. In physics, space is represented as three dimensions. Time is represented as the fourth dimension. To describe time,

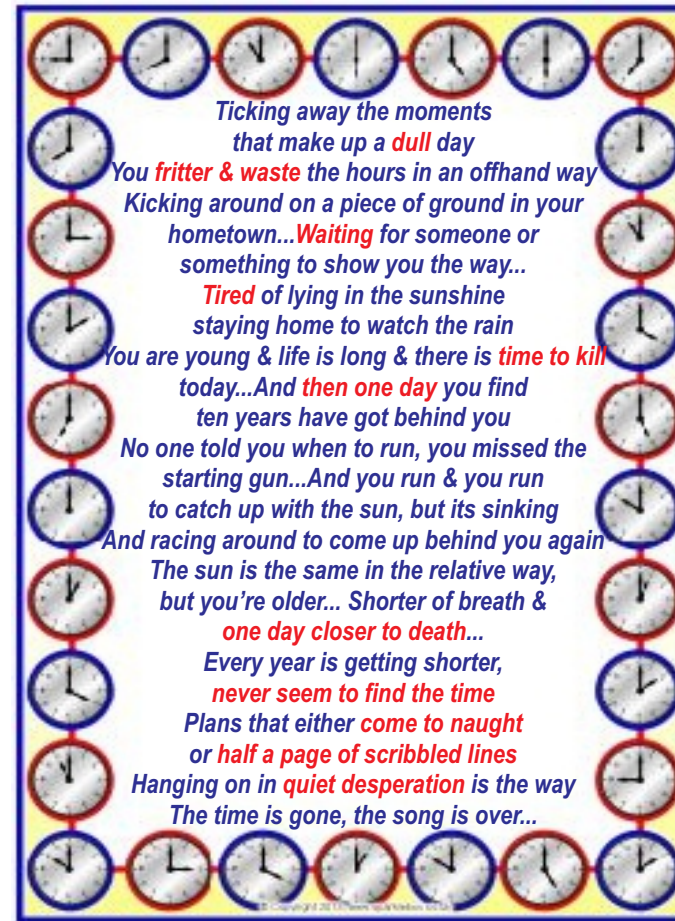
we are often asked to think of objects in motion. For instance, time has been compared to the cable that drives the quaint cable cars of San Francisco. The cable car attaches itself to something that’s hidden, something that’s to an extent, mysterious. It is moved by a mechanism you don’t know & cannot see. It just moves you along – takes you on a ride. At birth, we are clamped to a buried cable, time. And at death, cast loose from its passage. **Or are we?** The answer lies somewhere in time, yet an understanding of time remains as elusive & mysterious as life itself. Time = Life, Therefore, waste your time and waste your life, or master your time and master your life.

Time is a cultural construction. Our contemporary perception of it was formed in the 18th century with the invention of the pendulum clock. It is an exact time, dictatorial & inexorable, and growing even more so. For departing trains: Doors will close half a minute before the designated time. At crossroads, the green lights for crossing the street flash numbers menacingly: 10 more seconds, nine, eight. In all countries, people are walking (and cars are driving) faster & faster. Time constructed like this becomes a trap. This is time-sickness, responsible for numerous pathologies, primarily hypertension.

But there is another time...that of agricultural societies, which is cyclic, approximate & calmer: the time of day & night, the moon, the seasons, the cycles of the stars, which seem to move on the celestial vault. When we construct our time this way, we feel more at peace, are open to what is truly important & beautiful, because we are not running after anything.

It is only when we are in this time-frame, natural & tranquil, that we can glimpse eternity. While we are living in artificial time, dominated by the ticking of the clock, **life is rougher & more constricted.** Nature’s time is closer than contemporary time to transcendence & eternity. Eternity is the suspension of time. The **eternal NOW** gives us the **deeply regenerating & marvelous feeling of freedom.** It is the closest thing there is to **perceiving immortality.**

Pink Floyd, that psychedelic rock band of the 70s, had us mesmerized with the following lyrics, in the song titled Time. A song that shows that Western culture is gravely faulty. A culture of emptiness.



Time is the justice that **examines all offenders** eloquently, stated Shakespeare. Cherish the time you have and make the most of it. Time is **not** money or gold; it’s divinely valuable. It is life & it is limited. Begin to appreciate every moment of life & strive to make the best of it. There’s a supplication of the Prophet (p) that gives life its heartbeat: **“Make today better than yesterday.”** Compare this Islamic dynamism to the aimless life in the song. Let us not be of those whose today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday.

Philosophers have explained space. They have **not** explained time. It is the inexplicable raw material of everything. With it, all is possible; without it, nothing. The supply of time is truly a daily miracle, an affair genuinely astonishing when one examines it. You wake up in the morning, and lo! your purse is magically filled

Time is the coin of life.

with twenty-four hours of the un-manufactured tissue of the universe of your life! It is yours. It is the most precious of possessions. A highly singular commodity, showered upon you in a manner as singular as the commodity itself! No one can take it from you. It is unstealable. No one receives either more or less than you receive. An ideal democracy!

In the realm of time there is no aristocracy of wealth, and no aristocracy of intellect. Genius is never rewarded by even an extra hour a day. And there is no punishment. Waste your infinitely precious commodity as much as you will, and the supply will never be withheld from you. No mysterious power will say: “This person is a fool. They do not deserve time; they shall be cut off.” You cannot draw on the future. Impossible to get into debt! You can only waste the passing moment. You cannot waste tomorrow; it is kept for you. You cannot waste the next hour; it is kept for you. You have to live on this twenty-four hours of daily time. Out of it you have to spin health, pleasure, money, content, respect, and the evolution of your immortal soul. Its right use, its most effective use, is a matter of the highest urgency & of the most thrilling actuality. All depends on that. Your happiness – the elusive prize that you are all clutching for – depends on that. It has been said that time is money. That proverb understates the case. Time is a great deal more than money. Strange that the blogs, so enterprising & up-to-date as they are, are not full of “How to live on a given income of time,” instead of “How to live on a given income of money”!

The better route towards self development is to integrate all your efforts into a structured daily life. Imam Al-Ghazali in his work, Revival of Islamic Sciences, gives the following advice: You should structure your time, arrange your regular devotions and assign to each function a set period of time during which it is given first priority **but which it does not overstep.** For if you abandon yourself to neglect and purposelessness, and just do anything that may occur to you at any time it happens to you, most of your time will be wasted.

With all the demands on your time, you will yet need to find some for self development &

LOST ...YESTERDAY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SUNRISE & SUNSET, **2** GOLDEN HOURS, EACH SET WITH **60** DIAMOND MINUTES. **NO REWARD IS OFFERED, FOR THEY ARE GONE FOREVER.**

Zamals Software Co.; 6 Dowding St. Kitty
shamalz2007@yahoo.com; Brochures on zamalsgy.com
Please Donate: Call Shamal 225-9031