

## Time Management : An Islamic Approach

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### Abstract

*The summation of time is life. Management is a planned theory. So, the proper utilization of time is the best management of life. The entire creation of the universe is a part of the absolute / minute plan of the Almighty Allah. All are obliged to the structured ordinance of Almighty Allah- the animate and inanimate, the entire galaxy and so on. Only the human being has been blessed with the privilege to act on his own among the animal life. But in this respect, the ideas of best management and utilization have been modeled to the humans through the revelations and the Prophets and Rasuls. All the Ibadats that humans are ordered to perform are somehow related to time. Within this configuration, Almighty Allah has taught us to manage and utilize time properly. The Prophets of Allah has shown us how to get the largest part of benefit from it. This article aims at time management and ensured the importance of it. It also pointed out how to proper utilize the time. Through some realistic examples it has shown that only proper utilization of time is the key to success. It is to be noted here that the article has been prepared following the descriptive method of presentation.*

**Keywords:** Time; management; planning and proper utilization.

### 1. Introduction

Time, which is life, is a blessing from Allah (SWT) towards human being. Islam is the only complete code of life for mankind. Islam has established all the rules, regulations and ways for leading a noble peaceful life. People did not come to the world for no reason. Allah has sent us for a specific mission. The existence of the man living environment is not at fault. Everything is following a uniformed order of law. This binds the innumerable stars, planets of the galaxy too. The huge planets are revolving in its own axis maintaining the law for millions of years. But none is creating problem for the others. None is hitting other also.

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The holy Qur'an states in this regard: "It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit".<sup>1</sup> There stands the life of nations as an ideal example of uniformity towards the intelligent human. It birds the arrival life in the same law as a web. That is why all the organisms, limbs of the scene and unseen push the body light towards the goal to lead a perfect life. Here also we do not see any enmity between the organisms, each performs its own duty properly, giving us a healthy body.

Only the proper utilization and maintenance of time can give the human being a proper, sensible, happy, truthful existence. Proper distribution and management of time can give us the proper and best utility. And this alone can give happiness, prosperity and benefit to human being in this life and life hereafter.

## 2. Meaning of Management

The synonym of managing is management. The word has been derived from the Latin "Maneggiare".<sup>2</sup> Management is to chalk out the planning procedure to reach a desired goal.<sup>3</sup> It encircles all the systems and organizations in the society. It leaves behind a remarkable footprint in the life of all classes of men.

If we break up the alphabets of the word "Management" vertically, we can come up with a positive approach like below:

M= Ministration, motivation, morality, merit and manage.. etc. The main ingredient of management is to serve with moral strength, perseverance and merit.

A= Ability, acquire, abide by, attention and adhere to.. etc. As the people involved in management is given the task of power, supervision. So they have to adhere it with ability, perseverance within the framework of timing.

N= Neutral, nursing, nourish and novelty.. etc. The main target of competition is to supervise and establish the whole procedure being impartial and unbiased.

A= Approach, appraisal, assert and accountability. etc. A true organizer has to have the ability to bring out the best from everyone by impression of accountability and give dignity of their work and evaluate justly.

G= Good governance and gear up.. etc. Good governance can gear up the relation between the manager and his subordinates. And if the management is good, it will boost up the speed of work undoubtedly.<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Al-Qur'an, Surah Yaseen*, 36:40

2 Dr. M.A. Mannan & Dr. Md. Ataur Rahman, *Introduction to Management* (Dhaka, Asian University of Bangladesh, 1996), p 5.

3 Dr. Anwar Hossain & Md. Zakir Hossain, *Rules of Management* (Bangladesh Open University, School of Business, January 1996), p 3.

4

- E= Ethics and eagerness.. etc. If the organizer holds morality to the core, then the governing body will in variably carry out the procedures promptly.
- M= Modify and maintenance.. etc. A fruitful management will ensure the proper executions of the valuables and guarantee it's safely.
- E= Excellence and energetic.. etc. An energetic and excellent manager's work ability will be praiseworthy.
- N= Negotiate, neat, nice, normalize and neutrality.. etc. A good manager will employ his manpower in the best possible way; utilize the ability and competency through discussions and meetings.
- T= Tact, truthfulness, trust, trustworthiness, tolerance and transparent.. etc. The ability of truthfulness, tolerance and transparency enhances a manager's quality and working spirit, where there is confusion and lack of confidence arises, doubt fills the mind and spoils the enthusiasm.

### 3. Definition of Management

Different writer have given the definition of management in different ways. Here are some:

- 3.1. Louis A. Allen (1958) said, "Management is what a manager does".<sup>5</sup>
- 3.2. According to L. Aple "Management is essentially an act of getting things done through the efforts of other people".<sup>6</sup>
- 3.3. Henry Fayol (1841-1925), known as the manager of the modern world said: "To manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and control".<sup>7</sup>
- 3.4. George R. Terry said, "Management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources".<sup>8</sup>
- 3.5. Dr. M.A. Mannan and Dr. Md. Aatur Rahman said, "To reach the goal set forth, using the material and immaterial goods, with a plan, organization and regulations is management".<sup>9</sup>

However, management is an ongoing process. Different issues are set for it. Abiding the law, planning, process with it, reaching the goal is called management.

5 Louis A. Allen, *Management and Organization* (Tokyo : McGraw-Hill, 1958), p 4.

6 Training Manual, *Principles of Management* (Ministry of Education: Bangladesh Madrasah Teachers' Training Institute, Board Bazar, Gazipur, June, 2004), P 33.

7 Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*, (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and sons, 1949), Quoted by Dr. Shahid Uddin Ahmed, *Management and Administration*, (Dhaka: Bangla Academe, November, 1917), p- 27-28.

8 G.R Terry, *Principles of Management*, (Richard d. Irwin Inc, Homewood, Illinois, 1975 c. 4

9 Dr. M.A. Mannan & Dr. Md. Aatur Rahman, *Introduction to Management* (Dhaka, Asian University of Bangladesh, 1996), p 6.

#### 4. Definition of Islamic Management

A strong relationship avails within management and Islamic *Shariah*. There are some words mentioned in the holy Qur'an regarding it. Allah, the Almighty says:

إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاصِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ

“... Except when it is a present trade which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no sin on you (if you do not write it down)”.<sup>10</sup>

In the above mentioned ayah the word “*Tudirunaha*” is derived from the word “*idara*”, which means management. In another *ayah* Allah (SWT) says:

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحِمْتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ .

“Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in this world and We raised some of them above others in ranks, so that some may employ others in their work. But the Mercy (Paradise) of your Lord (O Muhammad SAW) is better than the (wealth of this world) which they amass”.<sup>11</sup>

In this *ayah* “Who portion out between them their livelihood in this world”, “We raised some of them above others in ranks” and “some may employ others in their work” - are related with the management.

Some definitions of Islamic management are mentioned below:

- According to Dr. Golam Mohiuddin, “Islamic management is the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the effects of organizational members and of using all other organizational resources depending upon the guidance of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW) with an accountable mentality, integrity and skill to achieve the predetermined objective”.<sup>12</sup>
- Dr. Syed Md. Atahar says, “Islamic management is defined as management that follows the rules and regulations of Islam to achieve the *halal* objectives of organization through group efforts and co-operations of the organizational members”.<sup>13</sup>

10 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Baqarah*, 2:282

11 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Az-Zukhruf*, 43:32

12 Mohiuddin, Dr. Mohammad Golam, *Islamic Management* (Bangladesh University Grants Commission, 2nd Edition, May 2009), p 2.

13 Athar, Dr. Syed Mohammad, *Islamic Management and Business* (Noksha Publications, Chawkbazar, Chittagong, May 2007), p. 7

## 5. Time Management

Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide the time between specific activities. Good time management enables a person to work smarter –not harder – so that he get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. It seems to all that there is never enough time in the day. Though the Almighty Allah gave we all the same 24 hours, but why some among us achieve much more with their time than others? Obviously the answer lies in good time management.

The first man who wrote in the time management is James T. Mc Cay. His book ‘The Management of Time’ was published in 1959. And then several books and articles published in this field.<sup>14</sup> Ray G. Helmer defined time management: Time management that includes determining and prioritizing our objectives enables to devote more time to important tasks and less to urgent or trivial tasks.<sup>15</sup> In this regard *Suhail Fahad Salamah* says:

هُوَ اسْتِثْمَارُ الْوَقْتِ بِشَكْلِ فَعَالٍ لِتَحْقِيقِ الْأَهْدَافِ الْمُحَدَدَةِ فِي الْفَتْرَةِ الزَّمَنِيَّةِ الْمُعَيَّنَةِ لِذَلِكَ .

Time management is to invest the time in proper way to establish the definite objectives between fixed periods of time.<sup>16</sup>

In the view point of Islam, the motive for which Allah (SWT) has sent us to this world and the best way to put it in effectiveness is called Time Management. Those people who become successful in utilizing time properly, tactfully, come out in flying colors. That’s why time management includes- (a) Effective planning, (b) Setting goals and objectives, (c) Setting deadlines, (d) Delegation of responsibilities, (e) Prioritizing activities as per their importance and (f) Spending the right time on the right activity.

Allah (SWT) has fixed a particular time span for every human being. Uncountable prophets and messengers along with the aid of the Holy *Qur’an* have taught us how we can get the most out of time by punctuality, sincerity and dedication. From the time of adulthood till the end, whatever he earns will be rewarded in the life hereafter accordingly. And that would be immortal life. And it is the summary of all discussion of the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*.

Time management plays a very important role not only in organizations but also in our personal lives. To get the real flavor of time management, we have to know first what time is, what is its importance? And what are the methods of utilizing time properly?

14 James T. Mac Cay, *The Management of Time* (N.J.: Prentice Hall INC, 1995).

15 Ray G. Helmer, *Time Management for Engineers and Constructors* (Restor: American Society of Civil Engineers, Second Edition, 1998), p 3.

16 Salamah, Suhail Fahad, *Idaratul Waktu Manhajun Mutatawarun Li An-Najah* (Amman: Al-Munazzamatul `Arabiyah lil `Ulumil Idariyah, 1988 AD.), p 17.

### 5.1 What is time?

The literal meaning of word time is moment, instance, instant, period, hour, era .. etc. In Arabic it's synonym is (الْوَقْتُ) and (الزَّمَنُ), which plural is (الْأَوْقَاتُ) and (الزَّمَنَةُ). And the terminological meaning of time is:

“Time is a measure in which events can be ordered from the past through the present into the future, and also the measure of durations of events and the intervals between them”<sup>17</sup>.

الْوَقْتُ أَوْ الزَّمَنُ مُصْطَلَحٌ قَدِيمٌ . وَهُوَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى مُرُورِ الْأَحْدَاثِ فِي فِتْرَاتٍ مُعَيَّنَةٍ . وَلِدَلِّكَ الَّذِي يَمُرُّ مِنْ هَذَا الزَّمَنِ لَا يُمَكِّنُ أَنْ يَعُودَ .

“Time or era is an old term. It means the continuation of events in the fixed period. That's why the thing which is passed from this period will never return”<sup>18</sup>.

الْوَقْتُ هُوَ رَأْسُ مَالِ الْإِنْسَانِ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا الْقَصِيرَةِ . وَهُوَ مُلَخَّصُ عَمْرِهِ وَمَسْئُولِيَّةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ عَلَى عَاتِقِهِ ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ يَسْتَفِيدَ مِنْهَا فَيَرْبِحَ أَجْرَ اسْتِفَادَتِهِ ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ هَذِهِ الْأَمَانَةَ وَالْمَسْئُولِيَّةَ الَّتِي عَلَى عَاتِقِهِ فَيَخْسِرَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ .

“Time is the capital of humans' temporary worldly life; it is the gist of his life. It is *amanat* (the trust or moral responsibilities and duties) to him and he has a lot of responsibilities to do in it. So if he uses his time properly then he will be benefitted and if he misuses it his responsibilities will not be done and he will have to suffer both in this world and in the world after death”<sup>19</sup>.

So, the life of human being or the summary of it is called time. And he will be benefitted or sufferer according to the proper utilization of his time. Also he will be questioned about it in the life hereafter.

The realistic people say “Time is money”. They see time as a means of earning money. And from the Islamic point of view time is the lifetime that is “*Al-Hayat*” (الْحَيَاةُ). This *hayat* is of two kinds. One is the worldly life and the other is life hereafter. The worldly life is a means to achieve success for the life hereafter. And the life hereafter is a reward or punishment of what has been done in the worldly life.

### 5.2 Time in the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*

In the holy *Qur'an* Allah, the Almighty mentioned various synonyms of time like- (الدَّهْرُ، الْحَيْنُ، الْآنَ، الْأَجَلُ، الْيَوْمَ، الْأَمَدُ، السَّرْمَدُ، الْأَبَدُ، الْخُلْدُ، النَّهَارُ، اللَّيْلُ، الشَّفَقُ، الْعَصْرُ، وَالصُّبْحُ) etc. He told:

17 <http://www.timemanagement.com/personal/top-7-mistakes>

18 [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/الوقت\\_في\\_الإسلام](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/الوقت_في_الإسلام)

19 <http://ar.islamway.net/article/12481>. صفاء بنت محمد الخالدي ، أهمية الوقت

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ فَمَحْوُنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا .

“And We have appointed the night and the day as two *Ayat* (signs etc.). Then, We have made dark the sign of the night while We have made the sign of day illuminating, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything (in detail) with full explanation”<sup>20</sup>.

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا .

“Has there not been over man a period of time, when he was nothing to be mentioned?”<sup>21</sup>

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُم بِضِيَاءٍ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ . قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُم بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ .

“Say (O Muhammad SAW): ‘Tell me, if Allah made night continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is an *Ilah* (a god) besides Allah who could bring you light? Will you not then hear? Say (O Muhammad SAW): ‘Tell me, if Allah made day continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is an *Ilah* (a god) besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest? Will you not then see?’<sup>22</sup>

Our holy Prophet (SAW) mentioned the importance of time in his various sayings. Such as:

عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يَزُولُ قَدَمٌ بِنِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّهِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ خَمْسٍ عَنْ عُمْرِهِ فِيمَا أَفْتَاهُ وَشَبَابِهِ فِيمَا أَبْلَاهُ وَمَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ كَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَا أَنْفَقَهُ وَمَادَا عَمِلَ فِيمَا عَلِمَ .

Narrated by *Ibn Mas'ud* ® that the Prophet (SAW) said: In the Day of Judgment none can move from among his Lord before he asked about five things- (1) about his age, how it has spent; (2) about his youth, how it has used up; (3) about his wealth, how he earn it; (4) and where he spent it; And (5) about his knowledge, either his action was according to it or not.<sup>23</sup>

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِرَجُلٍ وَهُوَ يَعِطُّهُ: اِغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ وَعِنَاءَكَ قَبْلَ فُقْرِكَ وَفِرَاعَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ .

20 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Isra*, 17:12

21 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Insan*, 76:1

22 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Qasas*, 28:71-72

23 Abul Qasim, Sulaiman Ibn Ahmad, *Al-Mu'jamul Kabir*, (Cairo: *Maktaba Ibn Taimiyah*), Part, 10, p 8, No, 9772; Abu `Isa, Muhammad Ibn `Isa At-Tirmidhi, *Sunanut Tirmidhi*, (Egypt: Mustafa Al-babi Al-Halabi Printing Co. 1395 AH./ 1975 AD.), Part, 4, p 612, No. 2416

Narrated *Ibn `Abbas* ® that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) recommended a man saying: you should prefer five things before another five- (1) your youth before your old age; (2) your healthiness before your sickness; (3) your solvency before your poverty; (4) your free time before your business and (5) your life before your death.<sup>24</sup>

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُوتُونَ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ .

Narrated *Ibn `Abbas* ® that the Prophet (SAW) said: Most of the people get confused and deceived in using two blessings of Allah- one is his health and the other is leisure time.<sup>25</sup>

All these *Ayat* and *Hadith* proved the importance of time in human life, especially in the life of the believers. The most important pillars of Islam (i.e. *Salat*, *Zakat*, *Sawm* and *Hajj*) and other *Ibadats* are related with the time. It is mentioned in a tradition that the most beloved work to the Almighty Allah is to perform *Salah* in its fixed time.<sup>26</sup>

At different place of *Al-Qur'an* and *As-Sunnah*, time has been divided into two phases, worldly and life hereafter. One part is time to perform the deeds and the other is the time of achieving the result. As an example, it has been mentioned in two *Ayats* of *Surah Ibrahim*, the aspect of time and life in the positive and negative way. It has been declared:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ .

“Those who prefer the life of this world instead of the Hereafter, and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah (i.e. Islam) and seek crookedness therein- They are far astray”<sup>27</sup>

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ .

“Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are *Zalimun* (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.), and Allah does what He wills”<sup>28</sup>

24 Al-Hakim, Abu `Abdillah, *Al-Mustadrak `Ala As-Sahihain*, (Bairut: *Darul Kutubil `Ilmiyah*, 1411H./ 1990 AD.), Part, 4, p 341, No. 7845

25 Al-Bukhari, Mohammad Ibn Islamil, *Al-Jami` As-Sahih*, (باب ما جاء في الصحة والفرغ وأن لا عيش إلا عيش الآخرة), (*Dar Tugin Najat*, 1422 AH.), Part, 5, p 2357, No. 6049 and Part, 8, p 88, No. 6412

26 Al-Bukhari, Mohammad Ibn Islamil, *Al-Jami` As-Sahih*, (باب فضل الصلاة لوقتها), (*Dar Tugin Najat*, 1422 AH.), Part, 1, p 112, No. 527

27 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Ibrahim*, 14:3

28 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Ibrahim*, 14:27



Besides this, in lots of other *Ayats*, discussion had been done as worldly life and life hereafter. It is specifically mentioned that human life is divided in two parts- the worldly life and the life hereafter. It is also said,

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ  
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ .

“And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were, upon the very edge (i.e. in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face (i.e. reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss”.<sup>29</sup>

In the same way in different books of *Hadith*, it has been mentioned. According to description of *Bukhari*, *Ayshah* ® said, “I have heard *Rasulallah* (SAW) say- whenever any *Nabi* gets sick; he is ordered to choose any one life, worldly or life hereafter. Before his death, when he had high fever, I have heard him quoting this ayat of the holy Qur'an- I want to be in the company of *Nabi*, *Siddique*, *Shahid* and *Salih*- on whom Allah has showered bliss”. Then I understood that he was choosing (informed).<sup>30</sup>

So, human has got two lives- one certain, the worldly life and the other uncertain, the life hereafter. The worldly life is to achieve anger or bliss. And the afterlife is to gain reward or punishment.

### 5.3 Importance of time

It is rightly said “Time and Tide wait for none”. Every individual should understand the value of time for him to succeed in all aspects of life. Person who waste time are the ones who fail to create an identity of their own.

A person, who aims at being a doctor, engineer or some other profession, has to do planning and should know the means to accomplish it. Likewise, a person without planning of life and expecting success from life will end up gaining nothing. That’s why Allah has warned on time and warned us about the success and failure of life. Allah (SWT) has declared:

وَالْعَصْرِ. إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ. إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ.

“By the time, verily man is in loss. Except those who believe (in Islamic monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (*Al-Ma`ruf*) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all

29 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Hajj*, 22:11

30 *Al-Bukhari*, Mohammad Ibn Islamil, *Al-Jami` As-Sahih*, (*Dar Tukin Najat*, 1422 AH.), Part, 4, p 1675, No. 4310

kinds of sins and evil deeds (*Al-Munkar*) which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience”.<sup>31</sup>

Plenty of people are not of any worried about the worldly life. They are not aware of the starting and destination of it. They just lead the life; do not know the motive and depth of it. He wants a lot from this world. He wants to achieve security, rights, peace, pleasure, success and many more. A few among them know about the identity and limits of these demands.

#### 5.4 How to utilize time properly?

Life of this earth for everyman is a summation of time fixed up by Allah (SWT). Time and life are inseparable. It is evident that one has to leave this world forever at a prescribed time. So, we should be aware of the unavoidable.

In the holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* the life of this world is compared with a few hours or a morning or an evening of the life hereafter. Such as:

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ .

“And they ask you to hasten on the torment! And Allah fails not His Promise. And verily, a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you reckon”.<sup>32</sup>

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ .

“He arranges (every) affair from the heavens to the earth, then it (affair) will go up to Him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning (i.e. reckoning of our present world's time)”.<sup>33</sup>

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يَدْخُلُ فُقَرَاءُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْجَنَّةَ قَبْلَ أَغْنِيَائِهِمْ بِخَمْسِ مِائَةِ عَامٍ وَهُوَ مِقْدَارُ نِصْفِ يَوْمٍ .

Narrated *Abu Hurairah* ® that the Prophet (SAW) said: the poor believers will enter the paradise earlier than the riches of them five hundred years ago. And that is like half day of the life hereafter.<sup>34</sup>

That's why to achieve bliss in the next life, we have to know the technique of the proper utilization of time and conduct all our works within the appropriate time. And some of those techniques are:

31 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-`Asr*, 103:1-3

32 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Hajj*, 22:47

33 *Al-Qur'an: Surah As-Sajdah*, 32:5

34 An-Nasai, Ahmad Ibn Shu'aib, *Sunan An-Nasai Al-Kubra* (Bairut: *Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah*, 1991/1411), part 6, p 412.

#### 5.4.1 Privilege and aim to be set regarding work

Time is predestined for every man, whereas no one knows it. That's why proper utilization and budgeting of time is needed. So, which work needs priority, how much time to spend on each work, all these are needed to verify. Along with it proper evaluation and the next planning of work is also needed. Instead of regret for wastage of time, it is better to plan ahead and take decision for not wasting time any more. In *Surah "Wadduha"* Allah has informed us specifically that life hereafter is more important than the worldly life and get priority. He said:

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى .

“And indeed the Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world)”.<sup>35</sup> Allah (SWT) also said:

انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَلَلْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا .

“See how We prefer one above another (in this world) and verily, the Hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preference”.<sup>36</sup>

For this reason, we have to decorate our worldly life nicely with good deeds for the betterment of our life after death; but not avoiding the necessities of this life. Allah (SWT) said:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ .

“And seek with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do well (to Allah's creatures) as Allah has been good to you”.<sup>37</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Awareness about the conspiracy of *Shaitan*

People who succeed differ in their use of time from those who fail. *Shaitan* the permanent opponent of mankind prevails through time. He wants us to spend time leisurely. He wants us to forget our duties. He stays busy getting us involved in wrong doing, cheating. *Shaitan* can make us forgetful about our work planning. And at the last age people are in a dilemma, becoming a product of *Shaitan* himself. So, we have to guard our time against *Shaitan*. The conscious people so maintain appointment diary.

There are thousands minor events which do not contribute to our success or fulfillment as persons. Regret for time wasted can become a power for good in the time that remains. And

35 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Wad-Dhuha*, 93:4

36 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Isra*, 17:21

37 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Qasas*, 28:77

we should believe that the time remains is enough to success if we will only stop the waste and the idle, useless regretting.

#### 5.4.3 Enlisting and proper distribution of time

The first and most important element of time management is proper planning of it. Some people are in the habit of making daily, weekly, monthly work schedule. They chalk out and start doing work prior basis. So they succeed in reaching their goal. Allah has taught us this system. He ordained upon us five times *Salat*. It has been declared:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا .

"It is written and documented that the believers will perform *Salat* at the fixed time".<sup>38</sup>

This *Salat* is to be established in a congregation under the guidance of a leader, not as any one feels like. Allah, the Almighty says:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ .

"You perform *Salat*, give *Zakat* and bow down before Allah with the ones who worship Him".<sup>39</sup>

So the order is to perform *Salat* in a *jamat*. If for some reason it is not possible to pray in *jamat* in mosque, at least in a group of 2/3 members, it has to be performed with the leadership of one among them. In the *Hadith* it is said:

"When you are in *safar* and three in numbers, appoint one Imam. And the one, who is expert in *Qira'at*, should be the Imam".<sup>40</sup>

#### 5.4.4 Discarding the elements of wastage of time

First of all, we have to be careful while talking. The one who will not speak will be safe-remembering this *Hadith*, we can save a lot of our times by not indulging in gossips. Television, mobile is the most cause of it. Saving one hour each day piles up 365 hours that can be utilized properly to perform a big work. Within this time we can recite Qur'an, memorize some *surah*, and learn an international language. As *Zaid Bin Sabit* ® one of the *Sahabies* of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) learnt an international language in 17 days.<sup>41</sup> We can use it also for a diploma course.

38 Al-Qur'an: Surah An-Nisa, 4:103

39 Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:43

40 Mohammad, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih Ibn Hibban*, (Bairut, Muassasatur Risalah, 1993/1414), part 5, p 504, No. 2132

41 Al-Hakim, Abu `Abdillah, *Al-Mustadrak `Ala As-Sahihain*, (Bairut: Darul Kutubil `Ilmiyah, 1411H./ 1990 AD.), Part, 3, p 477, No. 5781.

Islam has given immense importance to utilization of time. Prophet (SAW) is an epic model who used time properly. His successful and fruitful 63 years of life gives a proof of it. There is not a single day when an angel comes and declares that I am a new day has come and whatever you do, I will be a witness of it. So, utilize me properly. Once gone, I will not return again.

Time and tide wait for none. Time passes like the flow of water. Allah (SWT) has sworn on time that people will be at loss. People who waste time have been compared to the ice setter, whose ice liquidizes before it is all sold out. In this regard Prophet (SAW) has said, a person whose two days pass out in the same way, has been badly affected. So to make a better today than yesterday, we have to use time properly in a planned way.

#### **5.4.5 To benefit the best from the upcoming time**

Time is predestined. No one knows when it will end. Time is the longest because it is the measured eternity; it is the shortest because none of us have time to finish life's work; it is the swiftest to those that are happy and slowest to those who suffer. Nothing can be done without it because it is the only theater in which we live.

That's why acceptance and dissatisfaction is necessary to gain more in the life here and hereafter. No one can say that he has lived a short life in this world. And being repentant he will say if he had used the time properly may beneficially.

Plenty of time is wasted in way, hospital, station, where he only sits around. At that time he can do some light works, which will be helpful for his other works. Even he can chalk out a planning for next work.

#### **5.4.6 Sorting out proper time for every work**

All the blessings that Allah has showered upon us time is the best of it. It is the stair of success and failure. Those who failed in it could not stand upright in the run. Those who distributed time properly and used it wisely came out in flying colors. It is better to do every work in its due time. It doesn't easy later on. As the proverb goes "Stitch in time saves nine". Thinking of the overall procedure and estimation, Allah told us to allot time for every work. He has divided time in days, weeks, months, years, day and night. Basing on the physical demands, Allah (SWT) has endowed upon us the various seasons. If we do not go along it, we don't stay well. Sleeping the whole day cannot compensate the loss of previous night's sleep. It is mentioned in the holy Qur'an:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا .

“And it is He Who makes the night a covering for you, and the sleep (as) repose, and makes the day *Nushur* (i.e. getting up and going about here and there for daily work, etc. after one's

sleep at night or like resurrection after one's sleep at night or like resurrection after one's death)".<sup>42</sup>

In another *ayat* Allah (SWT) said: *وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِيَاسًا* .

"And We have made the night as a covering (through its darkness)".<sup>43</sup>

A wise person will obviously do all his work in the allotted time that Allah has chalked out for us. We might don't be benefitted if we use it otherwise. And it will invidiously affect other works.

## 6. Proper utilization of time is the only key to success

Utilization of time and success is inseparable. Success and failure depends on how we will use the time. And the proper utilization of time depends on the knowledge of it. Getting a long longevity also sometimes people remain unsuccessful. On the other hand, some other's succeeding (during his living in a very short period) for using time properly. No matter his success is in this world or the next.

People who are in the topmost position in the society have shortage of time. The problem is creates in the mass communication of the leaders and the contract management of the managers. Islam has given example of it when ordered the holy Prophet (SAW) according to (*Faiza faragta fansab*) "when you get free time, get indulged in prayer".<sup>44</sup>

Finishing a part start the next immediately. Without prior planning it is not possible. In the holy Qur'an the word "*Farag*" is mentioned to notify leisure. And those who do not have prior planning cannot use the time in future and not succeed ultimately. In this regard, Prophet Mohammad (SAW) said: People get confused and deceived in using two blessings of Allah-one is his health and the other is leisure time.<sup>45</sup>

## 7. Some Hints for Proper Management of Time

We may follow the following suggestions for proper management of our time:

- a. To plan for everyday each morning or in previous night by writing down the things to do and check them off as they are done.
- b. Not to visit any friend without informing him and not to allow him also.
- c. To have a pencil and small note book to write down plans and ideas during spare time.

42 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Furqan, 25:47*

43 *Al-Qur'an: Surah An-Naba, 78:10*

44 *Al-Qur'an: Surah Al-Inshirah, 94:7*

45 Al-Bukhari, Mohammad Ibn Islamil, *Al-Jami` As-Sahih*, *باب ما جاء في الصحة والفراغ وأن لا يعيش إلا يعيش* (باب ما جاء في الصحة والفراغ وأن لا يعيش إلا يعيش) (Dar Tukin Najat, 1422 AH.), Part 5, p 2357, No. 6049

- d. To utilize spare time by reading, memorizing or doing something constructive and relating with your profession.
- e. To plan the rest times matching them with the prayer times.
- f. To adjust the traveling time to the distance involved, making reasonable allowance for the unexpected so that may will arrive at the appointed time.
- g. To have all items on hand before starting any job, whether it is cooking, writing an article or preparing a speech etc.
- h. To avoid people who are thoughtless and selfish enough to steal your time.
- i. To fill your car with gas when you are passing your favorite filling station.
- j. Not to trip in person if it can accomplish the same through a letter or telephone call.
- k. Try to fix up the actual amount of time you need for your work, not too less or too more.
- l. Determine who will do the work; is it your own or it will done by any other?
- m. If you have more than one job, determine which one will be the first.

## **8. Conclusion**

Time management is one of the basic features of Islamic way of life. It encircles within the five times prayer performed timely under a qualified leader. Those who can establish it will come out glorious.

Daily five time's prayer, yearly one month *siam*, giving *zakat*- these are the heritages of the Muslims. And it all uses times as a sign board. All these *Ibadats* are maintained with the movements of sun and moon. Sun the ultimate source of time which Allah has created for us. It reminds us that time once gone will never return. It would be useless if we do not maintain time wisely and regret later.

May Allah (SWT) bless us with the strength that we can use time properly and get the best benefit out of it.