

TIME MANAGEMENT AND BARAKAH

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast paced society, many individuals are occupied with daily commitments such as education, employment, and household chores. As a result, without even realising, family members may have been negligent of the importance of quality time together. Although families may share the same living space, the lack of meaningful interaction can lead to family stress which leads to the loss of barakah in family life.

The purpose of this article is to raise awareness on the importance of time management and barakah in family life. Islam places great emphasis on the proper use of time and the preservation of family harmony. The Qur'an and Sunnah highlight time as a an amanah (trust) from Allah, that must be managed wisely, which includes family responsibilities.

This article aims to explore Quranic and prophetic teachings on time management and the current issues faced by society in this matter and practical suggestions for families and communities in light of *Maqasid Shariah*

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islam views time as a divine trust (Amanah) for which each individual is accountable before Allah and will be questioned about it on the Day of Judgment, so we must spend it carefully. The Quran and Hadith warn us that poor time management causes actual family stress, such as disputes, children feeling neglected, or spouses becoming estranged due to fatigue. But the objectives of Shariah, particularly preserving family relationships and upholding our faith, provide us with obvious means of achieving blessings and serenity in our day-to-day existence.

In Surah al-Asr, the Quran emphasizes the significance of time by swearing by the passage of time and cautioning that everyone is in loss unless they have faith, do good actions, support one another toward truth, and remain patient in the face of adversity. Families with hectic schedules can relate to this since we become distracted from what really matters as we rush about. Then there are the prayers at set times, which the Quran commends sincere believers for keeping vigilantly. These five everyday prayers serve as powerful anchors, extending our time with unanticipated blessings, dividing our day into peaceful segments filled with Allah's presence, and assisting us in managing the demands of home life without collapsing

Prophet Muhammad(pbuh) exemplified this harmony by allocating equal portions of his day to worship, community service, family, and rest to recharge. Prophet(pbuh) says that “The best of you is the one who is best to his family” also through his life he demonstrated to us that strong leaders still find time for the people they care about by helping them in household chores before leaving for prayer and serving his ummah. Additionally, he emphasized that maintaining strong family ties fosters trust, love, and support that no amount of effort can match, which leads to greater provision from Allah and even longer and healthier lives and also through this we can protect our faith and lineage by fostering a healthy family and it's one of the important objectives of Shariah.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Time is an invaluable asset that shapes every aspect of human life. Everyone has the same amount of time in a day, which is 24 hours. However, some problems arise due to time management methods that vary according to an individual's or a family's capacity.

The main challenge that we often see today is about ensuring that there is a balance between life and work. According to data from a study conducted by a global human resources services company known as Remote, it revealed that Malaysia is the worst Asian country in the Global Work-Life Balance Index 2024. Based on the analysis of the data collected, Malaysia scored 27.51 points out of 100 and recorded an average weekly work of 40.8 hours with a minimum wage of approximately RM 5.04 per hour.

This data clearly shows that Malaysians do not have a balance between work and life. Most of the time is spent working and they choose to spend time alone during their limited free time, until they do not have enough time to spend with their families. It is not to deny that today's life demands parents to work hard to support their families, but parents need to devise the right strategies to ensure that family time is not sacrificed. If children are not nurtured and given proper attention at the beginning of their lives, it will shape them into individuals with lower self-esteem compared to families who spend a lot of time together. We can observe many situations today where successful children not only come from rich families and have all material necessities but also come from modest families who make the most of their time with family. The similarities between these two types of families are not in terms of wealth but in terms of time management, especially in educating their children.

Furthermore, another challenge that can be seen is how the relationship between generations is disconnected, especially between the Millennial generation and Generation Z. This can be seen in family relationships where parents and children are often seen to be in different lives, especially in terms of time. Parents are busy spending time working to cover the high cost of living, and letting their children immerse themselves in the digital world. This not only increases the communication gap between generations, particularly between parents and children, but also causes these two parties to be emotionally distant. Children will tend to seek attention from the virtual world, where information is not always accurate, and they may be exposed to various potential dangers. Children at a very young age need guidance from trusted adults so that they can distinguish between good and bad things. However, due to poor time management in the family institution, adult tasks that should be carried out by family members are being transferred to outsiders who exist in the virtual world with various purposes, whether good or bad.

In addition, digital distractions and social media overload are also factors that contribute to the lack of time to worship with the family. Life during the day is occupied with worldly responsibilities, whether at school or at work, and night time is used to relax while scrolling and checking social media. Time that should have been devoted to strengthening relationships among family members with congregational prayers and *tazkirah* sessions is filled with each family member living their own lives, and life goes on like this every single day until the children grow up. Children often do not have the opportunity to interact with their parents and share their daily life experiences. Parents may assume that if their children remain quiet, then it means that no problem arises. But, on the other hand, children feel that they do not have the opportunity to interact with their parents because their parents frequently appear tired upon returning home. This is something that needs to be changed promptly if we want future generations to grow well intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a few solutions muslims can apply in their daily lives that could contribute to achieving barakah maintaining their family relationships through time management.

Waking Up Early

The Prophet (pbuh) was a morning person and would always send his commands for his ummah in the early morning. As mentioned in a hadith by him, he said: “Bless my nation in its early hours.”

As most working adults and children get up in the morning to go to school or work, it is important to practice setting the intention of getting up in the morning for the sake of Allah and by following the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). This way, we will be able to receive blessings and barakah by waking up early for the sake of following the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) and set clear intentions to do whatever we set to do in the day for Allah s.w.t.

Increase Taqwa in Allah s.w.t

Another practical way to increase our *barakah* is by increasing our *taqwa* and fear for Allah s.w.t. By doing this, we will be more aware of how we perform our deeds and how good or bad of an example we are setting for our families. This ensures that practicing *taqwa* encourages not only trying to be a good servant to Allah s.w.t, but also that we provide a beneficial and God-conscious environment for the younger children who are the future generation of Muslim leaders. At the same time, we can encourage our family members to be more aware of doing good deeds and avoiding sins for Allah s.w.t

Being Productive and Doing Good Deeds

Being productive and normalising doing good deeds can earn *barakah* for a Muslim and their families. It is beneficial for the soul and mind to constantly make themselves busy in being productive, especially in helping their families, such as helping out with the house chores and easing parents' affairs who may be too tired to take care of the house after a long day of work.

Parents may also help their children by helping them in their education and teaching them not only academically, but also through encouraging good deeds such as giving charity to those in need, speaking kind words and helping others in need.

Muslims can also use acts of worship as an opportunity to get closer to their family members and receive *barakah* while doing so. Such practical examples include, praying salah jama'ah at home with their family members, reading the Qur'an together, reciting du'a out loud before eating together, as well as attending educational Islamic-related events as a family

In light of *Maqasid Syariah*, this ensures *Hifz' Din* (Preservation of Religion) by treating ibadah as a way to not just obey Allah's commands, but also a way to build stronger love and care for one's family. This way, muslims are able to receive the *barakah* for not only performing *ibadah* but also spending time with their families.

It is also important to learn how to keep time balanced between work and family time. Balanced time prevents burnout, emotional neglect and family conflict between family members. Islam discourages excessive busyness that harms personal and family well-being. Hence, it is important to know how to balance one's time to work and to spend with their family to prevent emotional neglect. Some ways to do this are by scheduling rest and family meals and avoiding overworking at the expense of family rights.

This ensures *Hifz Al-Nafs* (Preservation of Life) and *Hifz 'Aql* so one avoids tiring themselves and burning out due to work and having less time to rest, leading to little to no time spent with their families.

Practice Gratitude

One can increase *barakah* in their lives by always expressing gratitude and constantly learning to be thankful for whatever one has in their lives in terms of *rizq*. It is important to normalise this mindset among family members so as to always be happy and satisfied with what Allah has blessed them with. The simplest practice muslims can apply to express gratitude to Allah s.w.t. is by normalising saying "Alhamdulillah". This encourages family members to always be thankful to Allah s.w.t., no matter what their circumstances are and what they have, whether they are rich or poor. This leads to the understanding that Allah s.w.t. will always be there to help them, so long as they are always thankful for their *rizq* and that they use it for good.

Being Patient with Complex and Difficult Family Members

Disagreements and conflicts are inevitable in every family relationship. It may be due to someone being difficult or that everyone is simply going through a difficult and complex time together. This may cause a family member to distance themselves from the rest due to these disagreements. Hence, it is still important to practice *sabr* (patience) when dealing with them as Islam awards those who maintain ties with family members even when they face hardships

As mentioned in a hadith by the Prophet (pbuh), he said: “*The one who maintains ties is not the one who merely reciprocates, but the one who maintains them even when they are cut.*” (Bukhari). This hadith shows that those who maintain their relationship ties with someone who has distanced themselves from them and cut their ties with them will receive rewards for being

patient with them. Therefore, practicing patience with family members for the sake of Allah can earn barakah and rewards.

CONCLUSION

Time is a great Amanah and blessing from Allah S.W.T, as clearly emphasized in the Quran. However, the pressures of working life, along with digital and social media distractions, have contributed to weaker family relationships due to poor time management. Therefore, practical solutions that are aligned with Islamic values and *Maqasid Shariah* can be implemented to enhance *barakah*, strengthen family bonds, and promote harmony within the family institutions.

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