

The Value of Our Free-time

Dr. Gholamreza Afrooz

Free-time can be the best ground for fruitful activities and at the same time if not used properly and wisely, it can cause many deviations and harms. So, careful attention must be paid to this issue, especially by parents and instructors who are responsible for the proper upbringing of children and youngsters.

As a matter of fact, free-time or leisure should not be considered as a time for idleness and having nothing to do. Rather it should be regarded as an asset and a valuable capital to be used most profitably. So, proper planning for the free-time in summers and also in other times of the year is quite necessary. Obviously, no forced or hard-to-fulfil program should be included in our plannings for the free-time of our young ones and other family members. We can divide our free-time into several parts, using each for a useful activity, such as swimming, learning a foreign language and so on. It is to be mentioned here that if we take our children and youngsters to numerous classes (during their free-time), giving them no time to think for themselves and use their talents in creative ways, they will not probably sense the value of their own abilities and so will not become able to present creativity. A glance at the accounts about famous scientists and inventors is sufficient to give us a very significant understanding in this regard, namely that they experienced the first sparks of their creativity and talents in their free-time.

Besides, using free-time in suitable, fruitful ways can be a good remedy for psychological problems. As we know routine work and being too busy with studies and/or jobs may cause spiritual, mental fatigue, making one feel imprisoned in this world. Therefore, one needs to give

him or herself some free-time for getting rid of undesirable feelings such as depression and find ways towards both physical, emotional well-being and spiritual elevation.

Contemporary Developments' Impact on Free-time

Dr. Muhammadreza Sharqi

Various developments in our times have apparently left their impact on individual members of the society as well as on the society as a whole. As a negative impact in this regard we can mention the so-called 'globalization' which is in fact a threat to personal and national identities in certain ways. People who are targeted by the deviating messages through the modern mass media (as part of the globalization) are likely to experience loss of beliefs or a weakened faith and identity. Here, we are referring to that (needed) identity whereby a person knows his/her true being, through knowing the reasons for his or her having been created and the Divine goal behind his/her creation. Imam Ali (AS) has said in this regard "Allah bless the one who knows from where he or she is, where he or she is and where he or she will eventually go." Truly, these key questions deserve lots of thought and discussion and proper answers to them will result in one's getting to know his or her true, God-given identity. Certainly this Divine life-giving guidance nullifies the globalization propositions which can seriously endanger individual, as well as national identities, among other harmful things.

Another problem in this respect is the negative effects of the globalization phenomenon upon families. Unfortunately, due to the influence of the modern mass media, the warm and pleasant family environments are losing their attraction for family members in various ways, so much so that in some families children and young boys and

girls are becoming deprived of the much needed communication with their parents. So parents are advised to take advantage of every opportunity, especially vacations to fill this undesirable emotional and spiritual vacuum or gap, since during that free-time they will be able to communicate with their offsprings more effectively than at other times when the children and the youngsters are busy with their lessons and also the elders may not have much free-time and energy left for this duty.

Some thinkers believe that youngsters are attracted to computer and internet not just because they can find entertainment through them, but also because they do not receive enough attention from parents and do not experience pleasant communication with them.

Moreover, it is advisable to give the students and young people a chance to share their own opinions on using their free-time with the parents and instructors, since they may have already learnt some managerial abilities while dealing with their studies in so far as the value of time is concerned.

Free-time and Needs

Dr. Mohsen Imani

Free-time should ideally be spent in ways leading to the fulfillment of certain undeniable human needs.

- The need for rest

Fatigue has been found to be the cause of many abnormal and aggressive conducts. So, children and youngsters should be taught to

consider the time for rest and recreation as fruitful and not unnecessary. This way they will become able to use their free-time for, among other things and, taking a rest and getting rid of tiredness and fatigue.

- The need for recreation

Everybody needs some recreation in order to become physically, mentally and emotionally fit for the fulfillment of his or her duties and job. It has been narrated that Imam Ali (AS) would (when possible) go outside Medina for recreation, this narration teaches us the lesson that we need to give part of our free-time to healthy recreations. Taking trips has also been recommended by the Infallible (AS) as being good for health. In a Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we read: “Take trips to remain healthy.” Obviously, even short trips on holidays can be very good for your family’s well-being.

- The need for useful pastime and relief

Having nothing to do often causes the siblings to quarrel with each other or with the elders at home. To prevent such an undesirable condition, we need to teach them to spend their free-time in various useful entertainments and pastime, thus getting them more interested in life at home.

- The flourishing of talents

Useful activities done in free-time can certainly bring about the flourishing of the children’s talents. Through watching the children's behavior and show of interest, parents can also get to know their particular talents and abilities.

- The need for cultural growth

Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist dealing with education has presented certain views on the effects of cultural matters on education and has regarded cultural richness of the family to be a contributor to children's progress in studies; taking the children to cultural centers such as theaters, museums and art galleries can be useful in enriching their cultural knowledge.

- Individual and social progress

Free-time is for you to be spent on what you think is best for your health and mood, and also what is best for the flourishing of one's particular talents. This way, one can also develop his/her abilities as an individual and as a member of a social group when taking part in matches and other social activities. No doubt, young people can learn many life skills through using their free-time in healthy competitions and other such activities.