107615 - How should she get rid of those who are wasting her life

the question

My friends are unfortunately useless, they do not consider time with care, and Allah is the One whose help I seek.
They talk on the phone for hours and they call more than once a day. I feel I have to be nice with them till they end the call but it does not happen; it is me who always ends the call! The problem is that I am very confused between two matters; to deal politely with them, or to use my time well, time, which is my life! I think of being frank with them or ignoring them or insisting on ending their calls, but I fear this will be tasteless, not being polite and morale will spoil my good deeds if I do so, but on the other hand if I just adjust to their way, I remain afraid about what I shall tell Allah about the hours I wasted without benefit. Bear in mind that I tried many times to tell them what I feel frankly, I a nice way and in a tasteless way as well; but nothing worked. I cannot just cut these relationships as some of then remain for more than 7 years. Please advise me, I am suffering!
Around the same point please advise me how to deal with my family or relatives who do not realize the value of time; they visit us a lot and stay with us for long hours or maybe days and ask me to sit with them without doing anything of benefit. May Allah bless you and guide you to which please Him!.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Our advice to you will cover three things:

1 – We appreciate your keenness to make good use of your time, and you are completely right, because a man’s life is the days that are passing and the hours that he spends. The wise man is the one who protects his capital from loss and the loser is the one who squanders the most precious thing that he possesses and does not appreciate its sanctity or acknowledge its value.

It says in Tafseer al-Raazi Mafaateeh al-Ghayb (22/83):

Allaah swears by al-‘asr – which is time – because of the amazing things in it. In it both ease and hardship, good health and sickness, wealth and poverty occur, and the value of time cannot be compared to even the most precious and valuable of things. If you wasted one thousand years on something that does not matter, then you made the most of the last moment of your life to repent, you would abide in Paradise for eternity. Therefore you should realize that the noblest thing in your life is the moment you are in, and time is one of the foundations of blessings. Hence Allaah swore by it, and He drew attention to the fact that night and day are opportunities that man wastes, for time is nobler than place, so He swore by it, because time is a pure blessing in which there is no defect, rather the defective loser is man. End quote.

Secondly: Then we advise you not to go to extremes in refraining from talking to people and friends, and to allow a certain amount of time to sit with them and speak kindly to them, especially relatives. It was the practice of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to visit his companions and enjoy their company and talk with them. What is forbidden is to go to extremes in that so that long hours pass or it leads to neglect of other obligatory duties that are waiting to be done, such as worship, learning, work and so on. The best of things are those that are moderate and the one who intends to do good, Allaah will enable him to do it.

When speaking to your friends and relatives, you should try to discuss serious topics with them, and things that will benefit both your religious and worldly interests, so that you will be rewarded for teaching them and your sitting with them will count in your favour on the Day of Resurrection, and not count against you.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“No people sit in a gathering in which they do not remember Allaah or send blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but it will be a source of regret for them on the Day of Resurrection, even if they enter Paradise as a reward.”

Narrated by Ahmad (2/463) and classed as saheeh by the commentators according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim), and by Shaykh al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (no. 76).

Thirdly: Make proper excuses to those who steal your time, and think of means of achieving that. You know your situation. For example:

You could apologize by saying that you are busy preparing for a university or school exam, or a course of study, if you have anything to do with these things, or say that you are busy preparing a certain project for some organization. People usually accept these things, and they will encourage you to make the most of your time for those purposes. If you really do have to make some commitment to an academic body in order to convince people, if you do not actually have any exam to prepare for or work to do, then make that your intention when you speak of it, because preparation always takes precedence, thus you will be telling the truth and finding an excuse to give to them.

You could use this excuse with the guests who are present, and you can also use this excuse with friends who call you up, but getting rid of people on the phone is easier, because the one who is calling you cannot see what you are really doing at home. So you can apologize by saying that you want to go and pray before the time for prayer ends, and your intention may be to offer a naafil prayer if you have already offered the obligatory prayer; or you could ask your mother to call you whilst you are speaking on the phone and ask you to help her with something. If your friend hears your mother calling, she will end her call. In these ways you can find ways to rid yourself of the time-wasters whom many people have to deal with.

We will quote here the complaint of one of the scholars about those who waste one’s time, and how he dealt with this problem, and some beautiful words about the importance of time, and the necessity of making good use of it.

Ibn al-Jawzi said in Sayd al-Khaatir (p. 240-241):

I seek refuge with Allaah from the company of idle folk! I have seen many people who tried with

me what is customary among many people of visiting a great deal and they call these frequent visits a kind of service; they want to sit with me and chat as people chat about what people are talking about, and what does not concern anyone, and what may be gheebah (backbiting).

This is what many people do nowadays, and the one who is visited may ask for that, or long for it, and feel lonely when no one visits him, especially when there is a celebration or on Eid. So you see them going to visit one another, and they don't limit it to offering greetings and saying salaam, rather they add to that a great deal of what I call wasting time.

When I realized that time is the noblest thing, and that it should be spent in doing good, I hated that, and I had two choices with regard to them: if I tell them off, it will cause problems, and if I accept it from them I will be wasting time! So I began to avoid meeting people as much as I could, then if I did meet them I would try to keep the conversation brief so that I could leave quickly.

Then I prepared things that I could do to prevent talking to them when they met me, lest time be wasted. Some of the preparations that I made for meeting them were cutting paper for writing, sharpening pens and putting papers together to make notebooks, because these things are essential, but they do not need any thought or focus. So I kept them for the times of their visits so that none of my time would be wasted.

We ask Allaah to make us realize the preciousness of time and help us to make the most of it.

I have met many people who do not know the meaning of life. Allaah has made some of them independent of means because they have a great deal of wealth, so they sit in the marketplace for most of the day, watching people, and they may see a great deal of evil deeds and objectionable things. Some of them focus on playing chess and some waste their time in talking about the rulers, or how expensive or cheap things are, and so on. I realized that Allaah does not guide anyone to understanding the preciousness of life and the value of time and health, except the one whom He inspires to make the most of it. "and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e., Paradise and of a high moral character)" [Fussilat 41:35]. End quote.

We ask Allaah to guide us and you and grant happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

And Allaah knows best.