

**Advanced 1**  
**Unit 1 Reading**  
**Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur**

**Hurry Sickness**

A

According to statistics, it is becoming increasingly rare in many Western countries for families to eat together. It seems that people no longer have time to enjoy a meal, let alone buy and prepare the ingredients. Meanwhile, fast food outlets are proliferating. Further evidence of the effects of the increasing pace of life can be seen on all sides. Motorists drum their fingers impatiently at stoplights. Tempers flare in supermarket queues. Saddest of all is the success of an American series of books called "One-Minute Bedtime Stories." What, one has to ask, do parents do with the time thus saved?

rapidity = fastness, high speed

let alone = certainly not

**Motorist vs. Driver**

Motorist = any person who drives a car

Driver = a person who earns money through driving a vehicle

B

According to Barton Sparagon, M.D., medical director of the Meyer Friedman Institute in San Francisco, and an expert on stress-related illness, the above are all symptoms of a modern epidemic called "hurry sickness." The term was coined nearly 40 years ago by a prominent cardiologist, who noticed that all of his heart disease patients had common behavioral characteristics, the most obvious being that they were in a chronic rush. Hurry sickness has been an issue in our culture ever since, but the problem is escalating in degree and intensity, leading to rudeness, short-tempered behavior, and even violence, alongside a range of physical ills.

symptom = the sign of a disease

epidemic = a widespread disease

term = word

coin = make a new word

prominent = important and famous; noticeable

cardiologist = heart specialist

chronic = taking a long time to be cured

chronic ≠ acute  
escalate = increase

C

The primary culprit, according to Sparagon, is the increasing prevalence of technology —like e-mail, cell phones, pagers, and laptop computers. We can bring work home, into our bedrooms, and on our vacations. Time has sped up for so many people, and there is increased pressure to do more in the same number of hours, says Sparagon. Jill Stein, a sociologist at the University of California at Los Angeles, agrees that time is being more compressed than ever. "In the past, an overnight letter used to be a big deal. Now if you can't send an e-mail attachment, there's something wrong. Because the technology is available to us, there is an irresistible urge to use it."

culprit = the person or thing behind a problem; the person or thing that is to blame  
prevalence = widespread availability; predominance  
irresistible = unavoidable

D

What about those annoying people who shout into their cell phones, oblivious to those around them? Stein says that self-centered behavior is related to larger social trends as well as technology. "There is a breakdown of the nuclear family, of community, of belonging; and an increased alienation and sense that we're all disconnected from one another. This breakdown came before the technology, but the technology has exacerbated it." Now we connect through this technology, says Stein, and we don't have face-to-face interaction. Ironically, as people pull their cell phones out in the most unlikely venues, our personal lives are available on a public level as never before. People are having work meetings and conversations about their spouses and their therapy sessions with complete impunity. Ordinarily we'd never be exposed to this information, says Stein.

oblivious to = ignoring; not noticing  
alienation = estrangement  
exacerbate = worsen; aggravate  
ironically = paradoxically; unexpectedly  
venue = hub; meeting place

E.

Sparagon claims that there is more a sense of entitlement now than ever ("Why should anyone slow me down?"). But he warns that there is more than civility at

stake. "This chronic impatience is damaging not only to our social environment, but to our physical health. It builds, and then it doesn't take much to explode. And for those who repress it, it's equally damaging." The high-tech revolution and the lifestyle it has spawned have brought with them a rash of serious health problems: including heart attacks, palpitations, depression, anxiety, immune disorders, digestive ills, insomnia, and migraines. Sparagon says that human beings are not designed for prolonged, high-speed activity. "When we look at our heart rates, brain wave patterns, our basic physiology has not evolved to keep pace with the technology; we are hard-wired to be able to handle a "fight-flight" response where the stress ends within five to ten minutes. In our current culture, though, we struggle for hours on end."

entitlement = the right to do or have something

civility = polite behavior

at stake = at risk

build = increase

spawn = create

a rash of = a lot of; lots of

palpitation = fast heartbeat

flight = fleeing; escape; running away

F

Even children are not spared the ills of modern-day overload. There's a hidden epidemic of symptoms like hypertension, migraines, and digestive problems among children as young as ten, disorders never before seen in children, says Sparagon. Whether these problems result from being swept into the maelstrom of their parents' lives, or from full loads of extracurricular activities and unprecedented homework requirements up to five hours a night for some children are experiencing the same sense of overload, time pressure, and demands that their parents experience, says Sparagon, "and they don't have coping mechanisms to deal with it."

extracurricular = beyond the usual curriculum of a school or university

unprecedented = without any precedent; never having happened or existed in the past

*This century has witnessed environmental destruction on an unprecedented scale.*

*She took the unprecedented step of revealing the truth about the situation.*

*Such an event was unprecedented in the 20th century.*

*Unemployment has reached an unprecedented level.*

*This situation is unprecedented in 21st-century life.  
Crime has risen on an unprecedented scale.*

cope = manage; deal with

G

Recovery is possible, but Sparagon emphasizes that there is no quick fix. Many of these stress-related behaviors have become deeply ingrained to the point where people are hardly aware of them. The greatest paradox, he says, is that even when people are ready to change their behavior, they are in a hurry to do so.

ingrained = rooted

H

Sparagon works with people to become aware of their stress and the impact it's having on their lives. They examine their belief systems (What is really important? What can they let go of?) and they learn to challenge their behaviors. One popular exercise is to assign a chronically impatient person to stand in the longest line in the grocery store. The only answer is to take it one day at a time. The irony is that all the techniques and technology designed to streamline our lives may ultimately be counterproductive. As Sparagon says, "People are finding that all of this multi-tasking, rushing, and worrying is not only making life intolerable, but actually making them less efficient than they could otherwise be."

streamline = improve; make something more effective  
counterproductive = having the opposite effect

**Full Text:**

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lifestyle it has spawned have brought with them a rash of serious health problems: including heart attacks, palpitations, depression, anxiety, immune disorders, digestive ills, insomnia, and migraines. Sparagon says that human beings are not designed for prolonged, high-speed activity. "When we look at our heart rates, brain wave patterns, our basic physiology has not evolved to keep pace with the technology; we are hard-wired to be able to handle a "fight-flight" response where the stress ends within five to ten minutes. In our current culture, though, we struggle for hours on end."

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### **Sample Summary**

The article "Hurry Sickness" explores the growing epidemic of chronic impatience and stress in modern society, especially in Western countries, where fast-paced

lifestyles have disrupted traditional routines like family meals. Experts like Dr. Barton Sparagon identify "hurry sickness" as a condition driven by technology, which compresses time and blurs the boundaries between work and personal life. Sociologist Jill Stein notes that this shift also reflects deeper social disconnection, worsened by constant digital communication. The consequences include not only social rudeness and emotional strain but also serious health issues such as heart disease, insomnia, and anxiety—even among children. Though recovery is possible through mindful behavioral changes and slowing down, ironically, many seek quick fixes, further highlighting how deeply this rush mentality is ingrained.

### **The Text in Simple English:**

#### **A**

In many Western countries, families are eating together less often. People seem too busy to sit down for a meal or even to buy and cook food. Fast food places are everywhere. You can see the effects of this busy lifestyle all around. Drivers tap their fingers impatiently at stoplights. People get angry in supermarket lines. The saddest part is the popularity of a book series called "One-Minute Bedtime Stories." It makes you wonder what parents do with the time they save.

#### **B**

Dr. Barton Sparagon, a stress expert, says that "hurry sickness" is a modern problem. This term was created about 40 years ago by a heart doctor who saw that his heart disease patients were always in a rush. This issue has been growing in our society, causing people to be rude, short-tempered, and even violent, along with various health problems.

#### **C**

Sparagon says that technology like email, cell phones, and laptops is the main reason. We can now work from home, even in our bedrooms or on vacations. Time feels faster, and there's more pressure to get more done in the same amount of time. Jill Stein, a sociologist at UCLA, agrees that time is more compressed now. She says that in the past, sending an overnight letter was a big deal. Now, if you can't send an email attachment, it's seen as a problem. Because we have this technology, we feel we must use it.

#### **D**

What about those people who loudly talk on their cell phones, not caring about others around them? Stein says this selfish behavior is linked to bigger social changes and technology. "Families and communities are breaking down, and people feel more

isolated and disconnected. This started before technology, but technology made it worse.” Now, we use technology to connect, but we don’t interact face-to-face. Ironically, as people use their cell phones in unexpected places, our private lives become public. People have work meetings and personal conversations in public without any concern. Normally, we wouldn’t hear this information, says Stein.

## **E**

Sparagon says people feel more entitled now, thinking “Why should anyone slow me down?” He warns that this impatience is harmful not just to our social interactions but also to our health. It builds up and can lead to sudden outbursts. Even those who hold it in suffer. The fast-paced, high-tech lifestyle has caused many health issues like heart attacks, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Sparagon explains that humans aren’t built for constant high-speed activity. Our bodies are designed for short bursts of stress, not the prolonged stress we face today.

## **F**

Even kids are feeling the stress of today’s busy life. Many children, even as young as ten, are having health issues like high blood pressure, headaches, and stomach problems, which weren’t common before. Sparagon says these problems might be because kids are caught up in their parents’ hectic lives or have too many activities and homework, sometimes up to five hours a night. Kids are feeling the same stress and pressure as their parents, but they don’t know how to handle it.

## **G**

Recovery is possible, but Sparagon says it takes time. Many stress-related habits are so deep that people don’t even notice them. The biggest irony, he says, is that even when people want to change, they want to do it quickly.

## **H**

Sparagon helps people notice their stress and how it affects their lives. They look at what really matters to them and what they can let go of, and they learn to change their habits. One common exercise is to make an impatient person stand in the longest line at the grocery store. The key is to take things one day at a time. The irony is that all the tools and technology meant to make our lives easier might actually make things worse. Sparagon says, “People are realizing that all this multi-tasking, rushing, and worrying is not only making life unbearable but also making them less efficient.”

### **Source:**

[Advanced 1 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://anglophone.ir)