

205107 - He is asking about time: is it created? Will it exist in Paradise? Will time cease to exist?

the question

What is meant by time (zamaan) in Islamic teaching? Is time something created? Is there any place in which there is no time? Will time exist in Paradise? Will time cease to exist? These questions have been in my mind for a long time, since I read the commentary (tafseer) on Soorat al-Asr.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“By Al-‘Asr (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‘roof) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allah’s Cause during preaching His religion of Islamic Monotheism or Jihad)”

[al-‘Asr 103:1-3].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

‘Asr means time (zamaan) in which the deeds of the sons of Adam, good and bad, take place. Maalik said, narrating from Zayd ibn Aslam, that ‘Asr means the afternoon, but the first view is more well-known.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (8/457).

Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“By Al-‘Asr (the time)”. It was said that what is meant is the end of the day, because the end of the day is the best of it, and ‘Asr (afternoon) prayer is called as-salaah al-wusta, i.e., the best prayer, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) called it.

And it was said that al-‘Asr is time (zamaan), which is the more correct view. Allah swore by it because of what happens in it of changes in situations and alterations of matters, and the changing fortunes of people, and other things that are seen when present and spoken of when absent. Al-‘asr is the time (zamaan) in which people live, with the vicissitudes of hardship and ease, war and peace, health and sickness, good deeds and bad deeds, and other things that are well-known to all people. Allah swears by it that “Verily, man is in loss.”

End quote from Tafseer al-‘Uthaymeen (p. 307)

What is meant by time (zamaan) is the arena in which people’s deeds and actions take place. In general, it is the duration of their life in this world.

Secondly:

This time (zamaan) is something that Allah has created, because Allah, may He be exalted, is the Creator of all things. He is the Creator of time and the Creator of place.

Al-Bukhaari (4826) and Muslim (2246) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Allah has said: “The son of Adam offends Me. He inveighs against ad-dahr, but I am ad-dahr, in My hand is control, I alternate the night and day.”

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words in the hadith, “in My hand is control, I alternate the night and day” confirm that what is meant is not time (zamaan), because Allah tells us that He alternates the night and

day, and time (zamaan) is night and day. The same hadith indicates that it is He who alternates and controls time, as is indicated by the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“See you not that Allah drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them. And He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, (or there are in the heaven mountains of hail from where He sends down hail), and strike therewith whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.

Allah causes the night and the day to succeed each other (i.e. if the day is gone, the night comes, and if the night is gone, the day comes, and so on). Truly, in these things is indeed a lesson for those who have insight”

[an-Noor 24:43-44].

Allah, may He be exalted, states in more than one place in the Quran that He created time, such as the verses in which He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and originated the darkness and the light”

[al-An'aam 6:1]

“And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating”

[al-Anbiya' 21:33].

And there are other texts which clearly state that He is the creator of time (zamaan).

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (2/491-500)

See also the answers to questions no. [97739](#) and [131066](#)

Thirdly:

There is no place in this world in which there is no time; rather that cannot be imagined, for time and place are bound together. Time is the duration of the existence of this universe, and place is the space that is occupied by created entities when they exist. If they stop occupying space, then this means that they have ceased to exist and no longer exist. Similarly, if no time passes for them, then they never existed in the first place.

Shaykh al-Islam said:

No rational man should ever think that Allah is time (zamaan), for time refers to the measurement of movement, and the measurement of movement is a kind of description that is connected to something else, such as movement and stillness, black and white. No rational man can say that the Creator of the universe is a kind of description that is connected to some essence or item, for descriptions cannot be independent; rather they need something to be connected to.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (2/492)

Events that happen must have a time and place in which to occur, and no event can be imagined without a time and place. These three are bound together.

Fourthly:

Time (zamaan) will exist in paradise, but it cannot be compared to time in this world, as Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Nothing in Paradise resembles anything in this world except in name. According to another version: Nothing in this world will exist in Paradise except the names of things.

End quote from Tafseer at-Tabari (1/392)

The same applies to time (zamaan) and everything having to do with it in the hereafter: it will be different from what it is in this world.

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What exists in the hereafter is not the same as what exists in this world, even though they may be similar in some ways and the same names may refer to them.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (5/207).

Shaykh al-Islam also said:

It is well-known that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, created the heavens and the earth, and He originated darkness and light, then those who disbelieved held others as equal with their Lord. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding”

[Aal 'Imraan 3:190].

And there are other, similar verses in the Quran. It is well-known that the day is connected to the sun. As for the night, whether that refers to when there is no light, or it refers to a transient condition as some people say, or it refers to dark entities as others say, Allah has created all of that and He, may He be glorified and exalted, is as 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood said: There is no night or day with your Lord; the light of the heavens is from the light of His Countenance. In the verse (interpretation of the meaning), “And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and afternoon” [Maryam 19:62], there is an indication that the people of Paradise will know when it is morning and afternoon by means of lights that will appear from the direction of the Throne. At some times there will be more light than at other times, for there will be no darkness there, and these lights are all created by Allah, may He be exalted.

End quote from Bayaan Talbees al-Jahamiyyah (2/284-286).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on the verse “And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and afternoon” [Maryam 19:62]:

That is similar to our time of morning and afternoon. It does not mean that there will be night and day there, but they will have times that come and go, and they will recognise it by certain types of lights.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (5/218).

The people of Paradise will not need to calculate time as people in this world do. Allah, may He be exalted, created night and day, sun and moon, and He created time calculations so that people may know when to perform acts of worship and to keep track of interactions. But in paradise, they will not need any of that.

Fifthly:

Time (zamaan) in this world will cease to exist, because what is connected to it will come to an end. The movement of the sun and moon will also cease. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.

And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever”

[ar-Rahmaan 55:26-27].

But time in the hereafter will never cease to exist. Allah, may He be exalted, says of the people of Paradise (interpretation of the meaning):

“But those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism) and do deeds of righteousness, We shall admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), abiding therein forever”

[an-Nisa’ 4:57].

And Allah, may He be exalted, says concerning the people of Hell (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, those who disbelieve and did wrong [by concealing the truth about Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his message of true Islamic Monotheism written in the Tauraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) with them], Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to any way, –

Except the way of Hell, to dwell therein forever”

[an-Nisa’ 4:168-169].

Al-Bukhaari (4730) and Muslim (2849) narrated that Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Death will be brought in the form of a black and white ram, then a caller will call out: O people of Paradise! And they will crane their necks and look. He will say: Do you recognise this? They will say: Yes; this is death – and all of them will have seen it. Then he will call out: O people of Hell! And they will crane their necks and look. He will say: Do you recognise this? They will say: Yes; this is death – and all of them will have seen it. Then it will be slaughtered, then he will say: O people of Paradise, it is eternal and there will be no death. O people of Hell, it is eternal and there will be no death.”

Sixthly:

We advise the questioner not to occupy himself with such questions that may lead to confusion and frustration, and in which there is no great benefit. He should focus on that which is more useful and more beneficial, such as asking about Islamic rulings that he needs to know, and issues having to do with sound belief that he is enjoined to believe in, and virtuous deeds that will bring him closer to his Lord, and so on.

And Allah knows best.