

An Analytical Study of the Concept of Time in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Asr: Ibn Kathir's Tafsir

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Abstract

The Qur'an, as the holy book of Muslims, not only contains spiritual and moral guidance but also touches on aspects of human life, including the values of time. Surah Al-Asr is a part of the Qur'an, which specifically discusses the value of time and provides in-depth teaching regarding the importance of valuing time in the journey of human life. In the journey of life, time is a very valuable and significant aspect. In the context of the values of a Muslim's life, the Qur'an, as the main guideline, provides instructions regarding how humans should view and utilize time. One surah that explicitly highlights the value of time is Surah Al-Asr. This study will analyze the time value in the Qur'an, especially in Surah Al-Asr, by considering the views in "Tafsir Ibn Kathir. Tafsir Ibn Kathir is one of the famous tafsir works that provide an in-depth understanding of the verses of the Qur'an. In this Tafsir, Ibnu Kathir investigates the meaning and wisdom contained in Surah Al-Asr, focusing on the value of time revealed.

Keyword: Time, Ibn Kathir's Interpretation

Introduction

Surah Al-Asr is one of the surahs in the Koran that strongly emphasizes the importance of time. This surah gives a profound message about how humans are essentially in a state of loss due to the ever-passing time. However, there are exceptions for those who use their time wisely, namely those who believe, do good deeds, advise each other to the truth, and advise each other to be patient.

Ibn Kathir, a famous commentator, provides an in-depth interpretation of Surah Al-Asr. He says Surah Al-Asr teaches us to understand and use time wisely. Time here can be interpreted as age, life span, or opportunity to do good and achieve our life goals.

This analysis aims to understand more deeply how Islam views time and how to use time well. This interpretation of Ibn Kathir teaches that time is a valuable resource, and Ibn Kathir's interpretation provides a deep understanding of the meaning and importance of time in Surah Al-Asr.

Method

In Ibn Kathir's interpretation of Surah Al-Asr, the method used is the method of Tafsir bi al-ma'tsur, which means interpretation based on the narrations and explanations received from previous generations. Ibn Kathir refers to the interpretations and explanations of the Messenger of Allah, his companions, and previous scholars.

Ibn Kathir uses the bil-ma'tsur interpretation method, namely connecting the verse being interpreted with related verses in the Al-Quran. Thus, he gained a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning and message of Surah Al-Asr. Ibn Kathir also referred to the opinions and explanations of the Prophet's companions and previous scholars. They deeply understand the Koran and make essential contributions to understanding Surah Al-Asr.

Using this method, Ibnu Kathir comprehensively explains the value of time in Surah Al-Asr. He linked the verses of the surah with other verses in the Koran, the hadiths of the Prophet, and the opinions of friends and previous scholars to better understand the message and time values contained in the surah.

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Result and Discussion

Biography

Ibn Kathir is a renowned commentator and historian. His full name is Abu al-Fida, Imaduddin Ismail Ibnu Umar Ibnu Katsir al-Quraisyi al-Basrawi ad-Dimasyqi, famous as Ibnu Katsir. Ibnu Katsir is a fiqh expert, hadith expert, historian, and exegete expert. Hafiz Ibnu Hajar said, "He was an expert on hadith and fuqaha.

Ibn Kathir's writings filled the country while he was still alive and were used after he died. In Damascus, Ibn Kathir was born in 700 AH/1300 AD, east of Bashri. At the age of 3, around 703 AH, his father died. Since then, Ibn Kathir was raised by his older brother in Damascus. It was in this city that he first received his education, namely during the Mamluk Dynasty and the ruler at that time was Sultan an-Nashir Ibn Qalawun, who later surrendered in 1308 AD and was replaced by al-Malik al-Muzhaffar Baybars al-Jazhangir who was based in Cairo. Ibn Kathir died shortly after writing the book *al-Ijtihad fi Talab al-Jihad*. He died in Damascus in 774 AH. He was buried in the Sufi cemetery, right next to the tomb of his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah.

Ibn Kathir's Interpretation Method

Ibn Kasir, in interpreting the Qur'an, can be categorized as *manhaj tahlili* (analytical method). Interpreters use the *tahlili* method to discuss the Qur'an verse by verse according to the sequence arranged in the Qur'an. In writing the interpretation, Ibn Katsir formulated his method.

He interpreted verses from the Koran with other verses. If not found, then refer to the hadith. If there is none, then refer to the opinions of friends. If the third step also encounters obstacles, *tabiin's* opinion is a stepping stone.

The Style of Ibn Kathir's Interpretation

Tafsir Ibnu Katsir is a famous tafsir written in *ma'tsur* or *tafsir bi al-riwayah*. Because the author always pays attention to the history of Salaf exegetes, he narrates the hadith and *atsar* based on the person who said it. Still, he also talks about the craftsmanship of the hadith and *atsar* and rejects incorrect or inauthentic hadith. That is why this interpretation is classified as a reasonable *ma'tsur* interpretation. Ibn Kathir's interpretation of the Qur'an begins with one verse. Interpret it with an easy and light editorial, accompany it with arguments from other verses, and compare the verses to clarify the meaning.

Characteristics

The scholars of Tafsir who interpret the Qur'an according to the majority of the Salaf, who came after the narrations were collected and received the wealth of narrations left behind by the Companions and *Tabi'in* are divided into two, namely those pioneered by Ibn Jarir At Thabary and by Ibn Kathir. (Fathonah, 2015)

Ibn Kathir belonged to a group that seriously paid attention to history and studied its sanads. Ibn Kathir rejected all of Ibn Jarir's narrations regarding the story of Zaid and Zainab, because he was cautious in paying attention to the sanad. Meanwhile, Ibn Jarir At Thabary belongs to the group that chooses *Atsar* from these collections, which one is considered more *munasabah* for the Qur'an, which one is closer to *lughah*, and which one is following the *Ma'tsur* of the Prophet and is easily known from religion.

Ibn Kathir's interpretation specialty is that he often explains the evils of *Israiliyat* with the hadith *ma'tsur*. He also mentioned the words of Ulama in laws relating to *fikhi*. Besides that, several things cause weaknesses in *Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur*, namely:

1. The many stories prepared by the enemies of Islam, such as heretics, both Jewish and Christian.
2. There is a mixture of authentic narrations, there are also many sayings passed on to friends and *tabi'in* without selection, so that the truth and the false are mixed up.
3. There are Islamic narrations that contain fairy tales, and this cannot be justified.

The word *Israiliyat* is the plural form of the phrase *israiliyah*. According to researchers, *israiliyah* means a story or event quoted from an *israiliy* source. *Israiliy* is everything related to Israel, and Israel itself is the nickname for the Prophet Ya'qub. What is meant by *Bani Israel* are the Jews who are the descendants of Jacob. Thus, the pronunciation *israiliyat* denotes the stories and tales quoted and taken from Jewish sources. The word *Israiliyat* has a broader meaning, which, in terms of commentators, is also used to denote every saga and fictional story adapted from Jewish and Christian religious sources or any previous sources.

Thus, the use of the word *israiliyat* for things that have a Jewish color is the majority usage (*taghlib*) because most of the false and *khurafat* things that are spread in society (Islam) are called *israiliyat*, originating from sources such as Jewish sources, while the Jews, according to the confirmation of the Koran, are the people who are most hostile to the believers. As the hadith says:

وَلَدُ الزَّانَا لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا سَبْعَةَ أَبْنَاءٍ

"The child of adultery will not enter heaven until seven generations."

This hadith contradicts the verse:

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى

"And no one is guilty of bearing the faults of others" (QS. Al An'am: 164)

Time

Time is one dimension of human life, by seeing how important the value of time is and how great the blessings that Allah has given. The Qur'an has given great attention to time. The Al Ashr surah emphasizes and gives special attention to the value of time as a warning. Allah warns humans who make all their activities only a race to accumulate wealth and spend that time only on worldly affairs, to the point of forgetting the purpose of life in this world, which is to get closer to Allah and worship. Many people think that life in this world is only for worldly interests, there is no life in the afterlife.

They consider a person's life and death to be just a passage of time. Death is the end of the journey of human existence and there is no resurrection day after it. Islam itself views time as one of Allah's greatest blessings. In the hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari, Rasulullah SAW said:

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُوتُونَ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

"There are two blessings that humans often forget, namely, the blessings of health and free time."

For Allah SWT, time is human life in the sense that humans live in the world, which is always accompanied by time, and their life journey is always passed by time. In this regard, they consider it to be a blessing for blessings and are involved in the act of tearing up time (time) if a day has passed, whereas they do not seek benefits for themselves and the life around them, so they do not seek to increase their pious deeds.

It should be noted that the rights of every person to the present should be filled with useful knowledge and good deeds. Do not postpone until tomorrow because the present that is being lived will disappear into the past and cannot be returned. A person should be able to plant today with useful things so that he can harvest them tomorrow.

Sub Discussion

The word "time" in Arabic is "الوقت" (al-waqtu). In addition, there is also the word "الزمن" (az-zaman), which also refers to time or period. In Surah Al-Asr, there is a difference in translation between "by the time" and "by the time," but both refer to Allah's oath on the importance of time, and the main message of this surah remains the same, namely emphasizing the importance of using time well and seeking the truth and advising each other for goodness and patience.

This letter consists of three verses and is a Makkiyah letter. Some of the virtues and meanings of Surah Al-Ashr include:

1. The importance of utilizing time: This letter shows the urgency of utilizing the time given by Allah.
2. Mankind is truly at a loss: This letter explains that all mankind will be at a loss except those who believe and always do good deeds and advise each other against suffering and hardship.
3. Righteous deeds and admonition: This letter expects people to believe, do righteous deeds, and admonish one another to the truth.

Interpretation of Surah Al Ashr verses 1-3

وَالْعَصْرِ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ (٢) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (٣)

"For the sake of time, humans are truly at a loss, except for those who believe and do good deeds and advise each other to truth and patience. (QS Al-Ashr)"

Al-Ashr is a time in which various activities of Adam's children take place, both in the form of good and bad. Imam Malik narrated from Zaid bin Aslam: "The word Al-Ashr means Asr prayer and the popular one is the first opinion. Thus, Allah has sworn by that time that mankind is at a loss, that is, truly at a loss and destroyed.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds. With this, Allah provides an exception from that loss for those who believe with their hearts and do righteous deeds through their limbs.

وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ

And advise to obey the truth. That is, to realize all forms of obedience and leave something that is forbidden.

وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

And advise each other to be patient. Namely, being patient with all kinds of trials, fate, and disturbances that are thrown at people who uphold the commandments of good and evil.

Conclusion

Time is one dimension of human life, by seeing how important the value of time is and how great the blessings that Allah gives. The Qur'an has given great attention to time. The Al Ashr surah emphasizes and gives special attention to the value of time as a warning. For Allah SWT, time is human life in the sense that humans live in the world, which is always accompanied by time, and their life journey is always passed through by time.

In relation to this, they consider it to be a blessing for blessings and are involved in the act of tearing up time (time) if a day has passed, whereas they do not seek benefits for themselves and the life around them, so they do not seek to increase their pious deeds. The virtues and meaning of Surah Al-Ashr include:

1. The importance of utilizing time: This letter shows the urgency of utilizing the time given by Allah.
2. Mankind is truly at a loss: This letter explains that all mankind will be at a loss except those who believe and always do good deeds and advise each other against suffering and hardship.
3. Righteous deeds and admonition: This letter expects people to believe, do righteous deeds, and admonish one another to the truth.

In this study, the author analyzes the value of time contained in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ashr Tafsir Ibn Kathir. The author advises readers to use their time well and appreciate the value of time according to Surah Al-Ashr as well as the Qur'an and hadith so that our lives are more focused and avoid the group of people who are at a loss. Hopefully it can provide benefits for readers, this writing is far from perfect, therefore the author expects criticism and suggestions from various parties who read it for future improvements.

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