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تحلیل اگزستانسیالیستی رابطه زمان-ایمان، با نگاهی به سوره «العصر»

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چکیده

زمان بستر زیست انسان در این جهان است و نه تنها بستر زیست بیولوژیکی اوست بلکه زمینه‌ای برای زیست هوشمندانه او نیز بوده است. انسان درباره زمان می‌اندیشد و از زوایای علوم مختلفی به آن می‌نگرد؛ از فیزیک گرفته تا فلسفه؛ و از کیهان‌شناسی گرفته تا انسان‌شناسی. مفهوم «زمان» در قرآن نیز مورد توجه بوده است و با توجه به اختصاص سوره‌ای مستقل به این مفهوم و سوگند به زمان در قالب مفهوم «العصر» جایگاه ویژه‌ای را به آن اختصاص داده است. ارتباط معرفتی این مفهوم با مفاهیم «انسان»، «خسران»، و «ایمان» از منظر وجودی حائز اهمیت فراوانی است که رویکرد حاضر در این مقاله را سامان می‌دهد. وضعیت وجودی و اگزستانسیالیستی انسان وضعیت این-جهانی است که زمان‌مندی را می‌طلبد. این یک امکان برای انسان است که حاکی از محدودیتی زمانی برای انسان است. این وضعیت با احساس خسران در گذر زمان همراه می‌گردد که مطلق بوده و غیرقابل انفکاک از وضعیت این-جهانی است. این وضعیت انسان است و البته وضعیتی که امکاناتی را پیش روی انسان قرار می‌دهد. زمان بر انسان می‌گذرد و انسان را با مفهوم ابدیت و جاودانگی مواجه می‌سازد. ابدیت به مثابه امکانی فراروی انسان قرار می‌گیرد تا با تضادی وجودی روبرو گردد تا با انتخاب ایمان به مبدا و مقصدی فرازمانی و مکانی به رستگاری به عنوان یک دغدغه وجودی دست یابد.

واژه‌های کلیدی

ایمان، زمان، سوره عصر، رستگاری، ابدیت، خسران.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Existentialistic Analysis of Time-Faith Relation, with a Look at Surah Al-‘Aşr

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ABSTRACT

Time is the basis of human life in this world and it is not only his biological background, but also a background for his intelligent life. Man thinks about time and looks at it from the angles of different sciences; from physics to philosophy; and from cosmology to anthropology. The concept of "Time" has also received attention in the Qur'an, and due to the dedication of an independent surah to this concept and the oath to time has assigned a special place to it in the form of the concept of "al-‘Aşr". The epistemological connection of this concept with the concepts of "Man", "Loss", and "Faith" is very important from an existential point of view, which organizes the current approach in this article. The existential and existentialistic condition of man is the condition of this world that requires timing. This is a possibility for humans, which indicates a time limit for humans. This situation is associated with the feeling of loss in the passage of time, which is absolute and inseparable from the situation of this world. This is the human condition and, of course, it is a condition that presents possibilities to the human being. Time passes on man and confronts man with the concept of eternity and immortality. Eternity is placed in front of man as a possibility to face an existential contradiction in order to achieve salvation as an existential concern by choosing faith in a transcendental and spatial origin and destination.

KEYWORDS

Faith, Time, Surah Al-‘Aşr, Salvation, Eternity, Loss.

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Introduction

Throughout the history of life and the history of human thought, time has been both a subject for living and a subject for thinking. Man has lived with time and in time and has thought in it and for it. Humans have a temporal understanding of themselves and their surroundings and have considered time as a vehicle for representing themselves and their surroundings, especially their fellow humans. Time has meaning for man as life and thinking have meaning for him, and without giving meaning to it, we cannot talk about the meaning of life.

Man's approach to time can take a regular form and organize a systematic knowledge and establish a scientific problem. Perhaps at first, it seems that time is a physical problem, and it is considered certain by referring to the vast volume that this problem occupies in the science of physics. But this reason includes both physics and philosophy, because the issues related to the time and movement have also occupied an important part of philosophy. Therefore, "Time" has been considered as one of the central common topics between physics and metaphysics or philosophy (Abedi-Shahroodi, *Space and Time in Physics and Metaphysics*; Abayi Kopa'i: 153-201). Of course, the question about motion has been a primary question that was raised in ancient Greek philosophy and finds a special place in Aristotle's natural philosophy. According to Aristotle, time is related to movement and change, although it is not the same. Time is considered as the measure of movement (Copleston, 1: 368-369), and therefore it finds its way to the center of Aristotle's philosophy. After the separation of science from philosophy in its general sense, and the separation of scientific realms from philosophy, the problem of movement and time also becomes a physical

problem. And it is common between philosophy and physics.

As stated, contrary to the common idea, time is not just a physical problem and it goes beyond it and is included in other branches of knowledge, where basic and general considerations find a special place in this field. The Encyclopedia of Time considers its subtitle as science, philosophy, theology and culture (Birx: 2009), which shows that the entries of this encyclopedia, which is about seven hundred entries, are not limited to physics and even its main branch, i.e. science, in the sense of experimental and observational science. It includes intellectual sciences, religious sciences and even culture. This problem can be seen as the variety of approaches to the problem of time, which Qur'anic studies have been done in this field (for example, see: Kurd Zafaronlou Kambozia, and..., "Investigation of real tense and grammatical tense in the Holy Qur'an based on a Linguistic Approach"; Sojoudi, Farzan, "The Semiotics of Time and the Passage of Time, Comparative Study of Verbal and Visual Works", Daneshmand, Morteza, "Qur'an and Knowledge: The Relativity of Time in the Qur'an")

The author's approach to time is an existential approach that is made by the epistemological analysis of the relationship between time and faith. This relationship forms a cognitive field in this surah that includes other concepts such as human, loss, eternity and choice. This epistemological field is an existential field that is independent of the scientific problem of time and is related to the dimensions of human existence, the dimensions that form the basic questions of man. These questions have been raised for every human being in every situation and history and cannot be removed from his existence. Man lives with

them with all his being and according to Mawlawī; this is the thought of human days and nights:

This is my thought during the day and my speech every night

Why am I oblivious to the state of my heart?

Where did I come from? What was the purpose of my coming?

Where am I going at last, why didn't you show me my homeland?

(Mawlawī, Vol. 2, Ghazal, 1068: 1368)

These questions organize the basic and existential issues of man, and from this point of view, time is related to other concepts such as man himself, loss, choice, and possibilities for him such as faith. These concepts form a cognitive domain in Surah "Al-ʿAṣr", which is important from an existential point of view and is the subject of this study.

The concept of time in the interpretation of Surah "Al-ʿAṣr" of the Qur'an

The holy Surah "Al-ʿAṣr" is the 103rd Surah of the Qur'an, and many things have been said about its importance. Some commentators have considered it as a summary of Qur'anic teachings that includes various Qur'anic purposes in a brief statement (Tabataba'i, 355: 20). These teachings are in line with the salvation of man, therefore, this surah can be considered as a compact expression of the plan of human life and his personal and social happiness, which is beautifully expressed in a four-point instruction, i.e., faith, righteous action, exhortation to the truth, and exhortation to patience. (Makarem Shirazi, 27: 299-303; Tabataba'i, 20: 356)

The word "Al-ʿAṣr" belongs to the oath that is mentioned at the beginning of the Surah and tells about its importance. The lexical root of "al-ʿAṣr" is "ʿA-Ṣ-R" which means "Squeezing" and was used to squeeze the fruit

and extract its juice (Ibn Manẓūr, 4: 577; Mustafawi, 8: 145-146; Makarem Shirazi, 27: 293). This word refers to "Dahr" in the meaning of "Time", but in addition to the absolute concept of "Time", it refers to "Evening Time" as well as a part of "Time" and other things (Khalīl ibn Ahmad, 1: 292; Ibn Manẓūr, 4: 575; Mustafawi, 8: 145-147), and based on this, in the interpretation of "Al-ʿAṣr", the commentators have given these possibilities: 1- The time of "ʿAṣr" corresponds to swearing at other times of the day, such as "Wa al-Ḍuḥā" (Al-Ḍuḥā (93), 1), "Wa al-Ṣubḥ" (Al-Takwīr (81): 18); 2- throughout the time and history of humanity; 3- a certain period of time, such as the era of the Prophet (PBUH) or the era of the rise of the Mahdi (AS); 4- All kinds of pressures and problems that humans face during life; 5- Perfect humans who are the essence of creation; and 6- ʿAṣr prayer, because of its special importance (Makarem Shirazi, 293-294: 27). But among all these things, the meaning of "Time" has been considered more appropriate (ibid, 294). Based on this, we can talk about using the concept of "Time" in this holy surah and analyze it.

Man _ Time

The most important component of every thinker's thought about human is to express his place in this world. Trigg considers the first problem in scientific anthropology to be "The place of man in this world" and begins the opinions of ten great thinkers about man with the question, "What place does man have among the creatures of the world?" (Trigg: 18) Human knowledge depends on the knowledge of the situation in which he is located. Man has been placed in this world and it has become worldly. In the words of the Qur'an, the placement of man in this world is interpreted as "Descent". This descent has occurred from the

first moments by the order of the creator of man; as it is stated in the holy verse of the Qur'an: "Get ye down all from here..." (Baqarah: 38) This placement on the ground and in other words in "This world" has become associated with man and is involved in his existence; therefore, the order of this descent is called the "Developmental matter". (Sabzewari, 182: 1) And although God's order was for Adam and Eve, but due to its developmental nature, it belongs to all the children of Adam, i.e. Adam's descendants, and it includes all human life (Tabataba'i, 132: 1). In other words, this characteristic can be considered as an inherent human trait. The meaning of man in this expression is not the human being who was created in the "Best form" (Al-Tin: 4), but rather the human being who has been fell down to "The lowest of the low" (Al-Tin: 5). In fact, this descent is "The descent of human's humanity from the upper world to the ecstasy of nature" (Jawādi Āmulī, 1998, 407: 3). Here, it should be noted that the commentators have used the Qur'anic verses and that distinction is between "Innate nature" and "Nature" of man. Man is praised in the Qur'an because he has a divine inner nature, but he is condemned because of his nature (Ibid, 1999: 21), "Criticisms are related to the nature of man, and praises return to his soul and inner nature" (Ibid, 23). Human inner nature precedes human nature in terms of existence degree (Ibid, 2005: 187). The characteristic of this-worldliness should be considered related to human inner nature and not human nature considering the descent of man and the separation between inner nature and nature. And in fact, according to Mullā Ṣadrā (980-1050 AH), this characteristic that has been realized for him as a result of the fall of man is the same as the fall and elimination of human form his inner nature (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2: 281).

In any case, man is in this world and carries with himself the characteristic of this-worldliness. Perhaps this-worldliness can be explained by Plato's (347-427 BC) contrast between this sensible world and the other sensible world in the allegory of the cave (Plato, 2: 1129-1130; Trigg, 35-37). But its usage should not be considered limited to the epistemological aspect and we should not be oblivious to its other aspects, especially the ontological aspect in its existentialist sense. In other words, in this discourse, we talk about man in the position of existing and not in the position of knowing agent (Macquarrie: 7) and according to Heidegger (1976-1889) "Man before being a subject (knowing agent), tool maker, citizen, speaker, and the like, he exists in the world" (Mosleh: 260). Man is defined by this characteristic, but this is a characteristic that, like other definitions of man, such as "Tool-making animal" or "Civil animal", does not require a specific substantive framework for man, but, as will be explained, it presents possibilities to man that are related to his existence.

The characteristic of this-worldliness leads to another characteristic for humans, which is human temporality. Temporality or timing establishes the relationship between man and time, a relationship that is formed in this world and is matched with his inherent characteristic. This world is in space and time, and accordingly we also live in space and time (Macquarrie: 93). Time is one of the limitations of human's this-worldliness, a limitation that although has first an existential aspect for him, it also finds an epistemological aspect. Eternity is a perfection, and temporality and flow in time is a defect, which is called (existential) poverty in the Ṣadrā vocabulary (Mullā Ṣadrā, 3: 250). This limitation expresses the way of human existence, which is a fluid existence (Ibid, 3: 104-105) and

it is the beginning of understanding another characteristic of human being, which is itself an important category. In any case, temporality is the original property of humans, and any genuine understanding of human existence and special existence is possible with the understanding of temporality (Mosleh: 260).

We can have two ideas about time, time as known by man in his lived experience and time measured by a clock (Macquarrie: 96), the latter time is "Clock time" and "Horizontal" and it is interrupted. But the first time is "Personal" and it is continuous and can be seen in the vocabulary of thinkers such as Augustine (354-430 AD), Bergson, and even Mullā Ṣadrā (ibid; Monfared: 274-282) Of course, the divisibility of time is accepted by almost all Islamic philosophers (Abedi Shahroodi: 76), but according to Mullā Ṣadrā, it has a middle entity of pure power and pure actuality, which is an analytical combination of antecedence, posteriori, and present (ibid., 83-84). In this point of view, time is an analytical and rational thing, and the mode of existence is physical substance (fluid substance) (Mullā Ṣadrā, 108: 3). But man, in addition to being in time and passing through it, connects the past and the future with the present and this understanding of the tension between dimensions brings temporality to man (Macquarrie: 96). It is important to understand this tension, and it is the one that allows a person to understand the passage of time; an understanding that is worrying and thought-provoking. In this understanding, man also understands a concept like loss, the same concept that is mentioned immediately after the expression of time and man in the holy verses of Surah Al-‘Aṣr.

Concern about the passage of time and loss

Man is limited in time and finds his will directed to perfection barren. A will that

transcends time; it is beyond the present moment and touches on the lost past and the un-arrived future. Heidegger defines human temporality with past, present and future. Being temporal does not only mean that he is inside time, but it also means that man is an existence that is so consistent with the past, present and future that at every moment not only the present but also two other moments, the past and the future, are revealed to him and become real (Macquarrie: 151).

In his existence, man exists only in a moment called the present, and he has neither the past nor the future, but without the past and the future and the sum between them, he cannot organize his existential understanding, therefore he wants both the past and the future. Man considers them continuous and has an understanding of his temporal situation that is not suitable for his human existence because he feels that being in time is harmful. He thinks that he has lost what he had gained and he has nothing from the future, and the present is not very stable for him. This understanding can be combined with the Qur’anic expression "Loss". In the holy verse "Verily Man is in loss." (Al-‘Aṣr: 2) This loss is in the inner and existential capitals of man (Makarem Shirazi, 295-296: 27). The commentators have stated that this answer is the same as that stated in the first verse (Ṭabrasī, 815: 10) and in fact, they have considered these loss in the capital of human life, which decreases every day with the passage of time (ibid.; Tabataba’i, 20: 356). In this way, this concept is very closely related to the concept of time, which is expressed in the interpretation of "Al-‘Aṣr" in the first verse.

In addition, another point can be mentioned in this connection. According to the commentators, what is meant by human here is the human species, so this loss is an absolute

loss (Tabataba'i, 20: 355-356; Tabrasi, 10: 815). This inclusion is due to the fact that the characteristic of time that was stated in the previous paragraph is absolute and inclusive towards humans. Man is in time with his identity and existence, and that is why he lives in loss with his existence and identity. In the interpretations, as it was said, the reason for human loss is the passage of time, and this includes all human beings. On the one hand, the passage of time is associated with loss, with the loss of what has passed, and on the other hand, with longing to gain what has not come and is likely to happen in the future. Life is going on in the present moment, but at this very moment, man considers both the past and the future, so he always lives with these two relationships, the life and living that is passing and does not remain, this type of life is a harmful life and this is the same loss that is always with man. Everything that a person has is in danger of being lost, and no one knows whether he will have what he has now or not in the next moment. This is the secret of human existence in time; this is an existential concern for humans, one of the existentialist concerns that every human being understands and cannot escape from. He knows that he is in a moment, that he has passed a moment behind and lives with the expiration of its time, and he understands that this moment is also subject to the same expiration of time and this course is repeated. This concern is with him and he cannot get rid of it as long as he is in this-worldliness and temporal situation.

Temporality is a human limitation and a worldly condition of man, which was raised with a secret in the holy book of the Qur'an, and an oath, was taken on it, a secret that can only be shown with a concept like "Loss" that speaks to the whole human being. Loss is for all moments and living in the moment surrenders

the present to the slope of nothingness. He says to himself that the pleasure of this moment is the same as the last moment because it is the only one that remains and it is not in that moment or the other moment. Who can keep this moment to themselves? A moment surrounded by two borders; the margin of the past and the margin of the future; the margin and side that was and is not now and the margin and side that is not and probably will be. It is even better to say a concern about the loss of the present moment in an imminent future. Who has kept the past and will keep the present, and who will see the future? These questions are existential, vital and necessary. It is associated with an existence that has experienced this fluctuation many times in this passage of time. But this is not only a lived experience; it is an existential experience that only existence can understand, and in the light of this existential understanding, it is freed from time, reaches eternity, and finds authenticity.

Man _ (possibility of) Faith

In addition to the understanding of loss in the passage of time, man also reaches another understanding, the understanding of the possibilities before him, which is associated with the original human characteristic of free will. It is true that man has been descended by the developmental order of God and is limited in the temporal world, but he has been empowered by the same creation, which puts possibilities in front of him that are drawn in the two extremes of gratitude and disbelief in religious vocabulary. God refers to this matter in the holy verse: "We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)." (Insān: 3) This guidance is God's legislative guidance (Tabataba'i, 7: 346-347) which requires free will. This legislative guidance is associated with God's

developmental order on man's descent and establishment in time, and it is intrinsic and existential like it. Free will can be considered as the distinguishing characteristic of man. Some commentators have considered the themes of this surah to include the origin and end of man's discretion (Sabzewari, 7: 376) and in this way they have pointed to man's free will in understanding this surah.

Humans free will and freedom are considered one of the foundations even for existentialists who are famous for denying the nature of man (Macquarrie: 64-66) (Jamalpour: 73), even closer to the heart of their existential philosophy than any concept (Macquarrie: 178). Man takes advantage of this possibility of choosing, and even his limitation in time does not deprive him of this possibility, but with his fluidity and transformation, he makes this possibility possible for man. By putting the next moment in front of man, time provides him with the possibility to choose in every moment. The future moment is a possible moment in time that can be achieved. Man understands this possibility of existence in the future and achieves his understanding of possibility. The future presents not one possibility but many possibilities in front of us and this is where the decision emerges. We have to make a decision, but this decision deprives us of other possibilities, so we keep postponing them. The decision is a person's confrontation with himself, so we are afraid of big decisions and postpone them (ibid, 184).

The biggest decision in life is related to the principle of life and living itself, which draws the path of life, and of course, a path that, contrary to the existentialist view, has an end other than death. Existentialists consider man to be finite in this world and consider death as the last possibility (Macquarrie: 199). In fact, they do not deal with the origin and destination of man and

do not reach the understanding of his eternal destination. Despite acknowledging that the concept of time is restored in eternity, Heidegger leaves it to theology and avoids it in his philosophy (Heidegger, 41). But in the religious concept, eternity and eternal destination have a special place and man has a destination beyond death, a destination that is formed in eternity. Life is human capital, and its business is in the hands of man himself, and its result is determined in the afterlife (Tabataba'i, 356: 20).

The afterlife is the religious interpretation of the eternal life of man. Man understands eternity, but this eternity belongs to God, and man is not guided to understand it except by His guidance. Eternity is among the attributes and characteristics of God, as stated in the Qur'an: "He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things." (Ḥadīd: 3) God's infinity is both at the beginning and at the end, and if it is possible to consider before and after in this way, it should be said that He was before all beings and will be after the destruction of all beings (Ṭabṛasī, 346: 9; Tabataba'i, 19: 145-146).

Man has a desire for survival and immortality, and this love is an instinctive love (Tabataba'i, 359: 20; Makarem Shirazi, 314: 27). Man has this understanding of himself and the possibility of his future, and although he is limited in the state of this world, he wants unlimited state. He is limited to birth and death, which is the result of his worldliness and temporality, but at the same time, he is aware of the possibility of becoming eternal and passing away. It is in becoming that he chooses about his life, and this is a decision about his eternal destination, which includes salvation and non-salvation. The eternal salvation of man is a choice that is related to the two concepts of time and loss. In the context of time, man came to understand loss, but in the same context, he also comes to understand the

possibilities ahead of him, the possibilities that are possible through choice and his biggest choice and decision in his lived experience is the decision about destiny. Fate, contrary to the general idea that is deterministic, is achieved by human free will. Man chooses his eternal destiny and this is provided by faith. Faith is the most important possibility for man. It is true that man is in loss, but faith provides man's escape from this loss resulting from time and gives him eternal and true happiness and salvation. Therefore, God says in the holy verse: "Verily Man is in loss. Except those who believe and do good deed, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience." (Al-ʿAṣr: 2-3) After God mentions absolute loss for man, in the form of exception, He considers the only way to save from it is faith and righteous deeds. According to Allameh Tabataba'i, the main root of faith is "Security; to be safe" (Ibn Manẓūr, 21: 13; Tabataba'i, 1: 45), and he called the excepted people "Safe from loss" or those who are safe from loss (Tabataba'i, 356: 20), which is a good expression of freedom from the foretold loss and the achievement to salvation and eternal happiness.

It is in this faith that man finds authenticity and understands eternity. In fact, there is a fundamental question facing human existence, and that is how to understand the authentic self. The issue of authenticity is an existential issue for man, and it is in the face and presence of man that he finds appointment in his authenticity. If we are going to explain this "Moment" with two streams of divine and non-divine existentialism, it is better to go to their two representatives: Kierkegaard and Heidegger. According to Kierkegaard, this moment is the moment of self-knowledge that is achieved by being in the presence of God (Macquarrie: 221). But according to Heidegger, this moment of presence is the moment of presence against death. We are

placed on the border with death and this gives us a unity that provides us with originality, originality in finding ourselves and of course the unity of our existence (Ibid). In both, time is mixed with eternity. Kierkegaard's eternity is beyond time, and Heidegger's eternity is within time. Let's go back to the field of faith, which is the moment of encountering God. At this moment eternity meets time. Faith does not get rid of time and its conflicts, but this conflict is existential and necessary; the believer's life finds a dimension of eternity with faith (Macquarrie: 221). The basis of this compilation is time and eternity, becoming and becoming; the person is constantly engaged with this compilation. With eternity, you can combine the past, present, and future moments (Macquarrie, 221), and of course, it is only man who gave the possibility to unite his past, present, and future (Macquarrie: 151).

Conclusion

By reflecting on "Time", this research addressed the concepts that are included in the meaning of Surah Al-ʿAṣr. In this realm, the relationship between time-human, human-loss, and human-faith was investigated. Considering the polygonal relationships of these concepts with each other and the order of each one on the other, this study made an existential reflection about the condition of man in this world and the possibility of his future in eternity. By being placed in this world, man enjoys the status of this-worldliness, which becomes temporal as a result, and is understood in Qur'anic terms by the descent of man into this world. This situation puts a person in a limitation that has no result except loss. This loss is the result of understanding time, but this understanding is also accompanied by understanding the possibilities that time presents to him. One of these possibilities is to choose salvation, which is related to eternity. Eternity is provided by an

existential understanding of time. A person reaches eternity with the moment of being in front of God and death, which is the end of time of this-worldly situation, and this understanding, is accompanied by an existentialist choice. Eternity has a destination beyond time, and man

can make this choice with the help of man's guidance, and he has the possibility of faith, that is, to choose salvation. Faith is freedom from loss and choosing it is the biggest choice that a person makes and faces.

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