



JIHĀT-UL-ISLĀM
Vol: 17, Issue: 01, Jul – Dec 2023

OPEN ACCESS
JIHĀT-UL-ISLĀM
pISSN: 1998-4472
eISSN: 2521-425X
www.jihat-ul-islam.com.pk

Chronicles of the Divine Clock: A Comprehensive Analysis of Time Travel in the Quran

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ABSTRACT

The Quran is the book of knowledge on various subjects including cosmological phenomena. The theory of relativity proposed by Albert Einstein changed the traditional physics concept of space and time travel and introduced a new dimension to the concept of time and space concerning the relative motion and gravitational field. The study uses a qualitative approach i.e. descriptive and analytical technique is used. The purpose of the research is to delve into the Quranic concept of time travel and analyse the narratives of prophet Uzair and Hazrat Solomon concerning the theory of relativity proposed by Albert Einstein. The primary data is collected from the Quran and e-books, articles, and scientific official websites are consulted to collect secondary data. The findings of the study showed that Quran provides a higher level of knowledge, related to scientific concepts that are far beyond human perception. The concept of time travel is discussed in the Quranic verse in the form of the story of Hazrat Uzair (A.S) and Hazrat Soloman (A.S) and Queen Sheba, which provides a concept of time travel that is beyond human intellect and is unable to achieve by the physicists.

Keywords: Quran, Time Travel, Theory of Relativity, Albert Einstein

Introduction

Quran is the greatest miracle of the prophet (S.A.W) that guides humankind. It contains several verses that are relevant to science. Modern studies of science become able to comprehend the scientific information mentioned in the Quranic text. It contains knowledge related to astronomy, embryology, physics, geology, etc. The scientific statements in the Quran do not negate that it is a religious book and not a book of science.

Time is a fundamental concept of science, that plays a pivotal role in understanding the physical world around us. Typically, it is defined as “a



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progression of events from the past to the present and into the future"¹. It is the quantity through which the scientist defines the physical world and various phenomena. Time is significant in human life. Time is a valuable and finite resource that determines how human life grows. It affects our capacity to fulfill our ambitions, uphold our relationships, maintain our health, and have a significant effect on the world. In scientific terms, Time is a fundamental measurement dimension, a tool for creating temporal order, and a crucial characteristic for comprehending the behavior of physical, chemical, biological, and astronomical systems. Time is a fundamental notion in science. Its importance to science cannot be emphasized because it supports our ability to investigate and understand the natural world. People have thought about the nature of time, its linearity, and whether it can be altered or transcended throughout history.

The narratives in the Quran are told in a manner that suggests temporal changes or remarkable events that involve changing the passage of time. These accounts, which can be found in the account of the story of Hazrat Uzair and the story of Hazrat Solomon, provide a window into the Quran's concept of time travel. Allah Almighty says in the Quran:

“But a day with your Lord is indeed like a thousand years by your counting.”²

This verse provides the difference between the perception of time by humans and Allah. The day measured by the human intellect is 24 hours and in sight of Allah, it is one day equal to a thousand years. This can be seen as an allusion to time dilation mentioned in the Quran.³

Lewis defines time travel as “*It is a discrepancy between time and time, in simple words the concept of time travel is the hypothetical activity of traveling from the future to the past.*”⁴ Time travel is not just an empirical quest rather it is a matter of human interest that has a global fascination both from scientific and spiritual perspectives. Modern physics provided a theory of relativity devised by Albert Einstein that under certain conditions allowed travel between time. These unusual scenarios couldn't be attained till now by physicists. Physicists have a very big influence on human life because their research has succeeded in producing a theory and Physics is one of the pillars of science that are expected to impact the times.

Literature Review

Time travel is a recognized idea in philosophy and physics, but its scope is highly debated, leading to several paradoxes in both fields. Since ancient times, the idea of time travel whether to the future or the past has appealed to the imagination of human beings. In the earlier studies on time travel, the famous incidents of *Miraj*

and the story of *Ashab-e-Kahf* are discussed with specific reference to the theory of special relativity. These incidents are beyond the understanding of time travel provided but the limited mind of human beings. However, the present study explains the story of Hazrat Uzair (A.S) and the throne of Queen Sheba in the context of the Theory of special and general relativity of time.

History of Time Travel

The idea of time travel and the idea of time machines is not just a topic found in the world of pure science; for many years, it has also been a major issue in science fiction books, as well as innumerable films and television programs. Some of the brightest minds in the world, scientists and writers alike have explored how time travel might finally become a reality using both facts and imagination.⁵ Early in the field of fiction one of the most notable books, 'The Time Machine' by British Author G.H Well (1895) was written on time travel and cultivated in the minds of the readers the imaginary concept of time travel. In movies, time travel was also picturized admirably. Many distinct models of the universe and a wide range of explanations and ideas surrounding the natural laws governing our Universe suggest numerous possibilities for time travel in the academic fields of science, physics, and astronomy. As a result, time travel theories and scenarios have evolved over the years.⁶

In purely scientific terms, it is accepted that on September 26, 1905, in Bern, Switzerland, Albert Einstein published his 'Special Theory of Relativity,' bringing time travel from the realm of science fiction to the world of actual possibility.⁷ According to this, time and space are one that opened the door to the possibility of time travel in the actual sense.

Einstein's Theory of Relativity

The theory of relativity, or simply relativity, generally refers specifically to two theories of Albert Einstein: Special Relativity and General Relativity. Special relativity is a theory about the structure of space-time. Special relativity is based on two postulates which are contradictory in classical mechanics:

- The laws of physics are the same for all observers in uniform motion relative to one another,
- The speed of light in a vacuum is the same for all observers, regardless of their relative motion or the motion of the source of the light. ⁸

According to Einstein's theory of relativity, space serves as a medium to alter or manipulate time. If someone travels at a fast speed that is equal to the speed of light then the rate of time changes for it. This theory suggests that it is possible to travel over great distances for a very long time while being alive. Few days for the traveler would be comparable to a few years on Earth if they were traveling at a speed that was very close to the speed of light. This leads to

the possibility of time travel. For instance, a person who left Earth in a spacecraft moving at around 99.5% of the speed of light was 15 years old and he only had five birthdays the entire time he was in space. He discovers that all of his classmates are 65 years old, retired, and content to spend time with their grandchildren when he comes home at the age of 20. And it's because, while moving at the speed of light, time moved very slowly for that person, who only lived for five years during his journey and his classmates lived for a whole fifty years. This means that if his journey began in the year 2000. It would take only 5 years to travel to the year 2025, whereas his all friends take 50 years to travel. This is time travel.⁹

The Theory of General relativity¹⁰

This is a theory of Gravitation developed by Einstein in the years 1907–1915. Einstein's Theory of General Relativity claims that the speed of time changes depending on the speed of the object and its distance from the center of gravity. As speed increases, time is shortened, compressed, and slows down until it approaches the point of stopping entirely.

This theory postulates that since there are numerous space and time distortions near black holes, which are regions of space where gravity can be extremely strong and no matter or radiation can escape, perhaps those distortions in space-time could be the very possible settings where time travel could occur. Thus, the theory of relativity concluded that time travel is possible through time dilation which occurs as a result of special relativity of time, and secondly by Black holes in the galaxy. These are just possibilities of time travel discussed by various physicists.

Quranic notion of Time and Time Travel

Quran comprehends numerous scientific assertions that have been verified via experimentation. The Quran also emphasizes and exhorts its followers to contemplate and look for signs of Allah. The Quran mentions time as a divine creation that is delicately intertwined into the structure of the cosmos. It emphasizes that God is in charge of time and has the power to change time movement or trigger unusual occurrences at will. It is suggested by this idea that there might be temporal fluctuations, such as the idea of time dilation which is relative variation over time between two observers in various frames of reference. It occurs, specifically, when subjected to varied gravitational pulls or fast velocities. While Quran does not explicitly address these scientific aspects, it offers narratives and descriptions that can be metaphorically interpreted to align with the concept of time dilation.

The time notion of the Quran can be signified by the following verses explained below;

“Yet they ask thee to hasten on the Punishment! But Allah will not fail in His Promise. Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning.”¹¹

This verse highlights an interesting connection with the concept of time dilation emphasized by the Theory of relativity. In human perception, a day is equal to 24 hours but the time calculation in the perception of God is different and is equal to 1 day that is one thousand years.¹²

This shows a significant difference in the perception of time by humans and Allah. The passage of time described in the verses could be compared to the time dilation phenomenon when time is seen differently depending on the frame of reference.

“He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning.”¹³

This verse emphasizes that the day of creation of the universe and reckoning in the perception of Allah is not equal to the days on the earth. They are far then the human measurement of a day on the frame of earth.¹⁴

“The angels and the spirit ascend unto him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years.”¹⁵

Sayyid Quṭb commented that the phrase ‘*a Day*’ in this verse probably referred to the day of resurrection when the angels and the spirits descend by the Will of God. The expression ‘*that is fifty thousand years*’ suggests a long duration of the day which is not equal to an earthly day. A day on Earth is represented by the time Earth takes to revolve around the sun. Certain stars in the Galaxy take thousands of days to complete one rotation.¹⁶

“They will say: We stayed a day or part of a day: but ask those who keep account. He will say: Ye stayed not but a little- if ye had only known!”¹⁷

In this verse, the triviality of life on earth and its short duration and temporary status is highlighted. People will discuss their perception of the time they spent, but they may not have an exact idea of that specific period.¹⁸

The mentioned verse explores the relativity of time, shedding light on the perception of time by God and its relationship with Earth. The Quran provides a perspective on time intricately linked to the divine nature of the universe. It includes verses and narratives that can symbolically align with the concept of time dilation, albeit without explicit reference to scientific concepts such as the Theory

of Relativity. The Quran consistently underscores that God holds ultimate authority over time, and His comprehension of time vastly differs from ours.

Quran and Wormhole

Thousands of years before Western scientists proposed the hypothesis of the existence of wormholes; however, 14 hundred years ago Quran referred to the existence of wormholes. Wormholes are hypothetical space-time tunnels or shortcuts in theoretical physics, connecting two places and enabling faster-than-light travel or short-cuts across huge cosmic distances. Wormholes, however, are theoretical in the scientific realm and have not been seen or shown to exist. One day in a wormhole is equivalent to 50,000 years on Earth, according to physicists who use the wormhole concept as part of relativity theory.¹⁹

In the Quran, there are certain verses containing information about the cosmic world. It explicitly discusses the wormholes in space about which Albert Einstein talked in his theory of general relativity.²⁰

Allah Almighty says:

“And indeed, We created above you seven levels of heaven. We are never unmindful of “Our” creation”²¹

The Arabic word *tara'iq* in this above verse has various meanings. It could refer to seven layers that are stacked on top of or next to one another. It might also imply seven celestial systems, such as our solar system, seven nebulae, or seven-star clusters. We adopted it as meaning seven orbits. However, the phrase refers to seven celestial beings that are above us and are hence higher than the earth in the cosmos. They were all made by God by His plans and for His purposes.²²

“(a penalty) from Allah (who owns) wormholes, through which the angels and the ‘holy’ spirit 1 will ascend to Him on a Day fifty thousand years in length.”²³

‘*Ma’arij*’ in this verse refers to the wormhole. According to the theory of Time Relativity, time travel is possible through it. The angle will descend from the sky by the Will of Allah.²⁴

The existence of wormholes that might permit time dilation and faster-than-light travel, has not yet been proved by science. Surprisingly, certain Quranic verses contain metaphorical analogies to cosmic structures that predate Western scientific concepts, such as the seven layers of heaven, and one phrase from Surah Al-Ma’arij (70:3–4) is seen by some as figuratively alluding to the idea of wormholes.

Time Travel narratives in the Quran

This study explains the story of Hazrat Uzair (A.S) and the throne of Queen Sheba in the context of the Theory of Special and General Relativity of Time.

1- Story of Hazrat Uzair (A.S)

Allah Almighty says;

“Or (take) the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet, all in ruins to its roofs. He said: "Oh! how shall Allah bring it (ever) to life, after (this) its death?" but Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him (again). He said: "How long didst thou tarry (thus)?" He said: (Perhaps) a day or part of a day." He said: "Nay, thou hast tarried thus a hundred years; but look at thy food and thy drink; they show no signs of age; and look at thy donkey: And that We may make of thee a sign unto the people, Look further at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh." When this was shown clearly to him, he said: "I know that Allah hath power over all things." ²⁵

This verse refers to a story where a man passed by a ruined town and wondered how Allah could bring it back to life after its destruction. Allah then causes the man to die for a hundred years and then revives him. The individual naturally lost all sense of time while he was unconscious and was unable to determine how long he had been in that state. This makes sense because people can make mistakes even when they are in control of their senses. Our five physical senses are neither the only nor the most precise way to see the world. But God replied to him: “*You slept for a hundred years.*” He would have realized right away and wouldn't have believed that he was simply in that state for a few hours or a day. Therefore, we are inclined to support the idea that the bones of the ass are what are being discussed here. The man's own eyes witnessed the ass bones coming together and being covered with flesh, which was a powerful demonstration of God's might. Another indication of that unlimited, boundless, and unrestricted divine power is the fact that the man, the ass, and the provisions were all affected in distinct ways despite the same physical and environmental circumstances. Thus, the man was able to comprehend how God could revive that lifeless town.²⁶

The theory of relativity, which contends that time, is relative and that an observer's experience of it will vary based on their motion and gravitational field can be connected to this characteristic. The traveler's subjective perception of time is distorted in this situation because he believes that only "*a day or part of a day*" has passed while a century has passed for the rest of the globe. Allah offers Physical proof of the traveler's experience with time dilation. His ass, the food and the water he brought with him show a different condition. This is in line with the theory of relativity, which states that time dilation can impact how quickly things and people age when they are traveling at various speeds or under certain gravitational pulls.

2- Throne of Sheba

Allah says;

“He said (to his men):Ye chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission? Said an 'Ifrit, of the Jinns: I will bring it to thee before thou rise from thy council: Indeed I have full strength for the purpose and may be trusted.”²⁷

Solomon announces that he was blessed with the power to communicate with all creatures including humans, animals, and jinn. This news spread in the kingdom as well as outside the kingdom. The hoopoe of Hazrat Solomon gave him the news that there was a queen in Yemen who ruled the kingdom with justice and fairness. Hazrat Solomon sends a letter to her stating that:²⁸

“It is from Solomon, and it reads, ‘In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Beneficent: Do not exalt yourselves against me, but come to me in submission [to God].”²⁹

She understands the power of gifts in winning hearts and fostering friendship, potentially averting war. The Queen's approach is to test Solomon's intentions by offering him a gift. If he accepts, it would indicate his focus on worldly possessions, but if he refuses, it would demonstrate his unwavering faith. Upon receiving the Queen's gift, Solomon criticizes the idea of buying his peace with material wealth and redirects the conversation toward belief in God.³⁰

According to the Quran, the Queen of Sheba was a wise and powerful ruler who governed her kingdom with justice and righteousness. Surah An-Naml recounts that the news of Solomon's wisdom and kingdom reached the Queen, and she decided to visit him to test his knowledge and discern the truth. He assures the Queen's emissaries that his forces will overpower them and drive them out of the land in disgrace. Meanwhile, Solomon discusses with his commanders the plan to retrieve the Queen's throne, which she left guarded in her palace. The *I'freet* (a powerful jinn) offers to bring the throne before Solomon even rises from his position, emphasizing his strength and trustworthiness.³¹ According to Einstein's theory of relativity, time is relative and an observer's velocity or gravitational field can affect how time appears to them. From the jinn's point of view, bringing the throne in the blink of an eye might be interpreted as a type of time dilation in which time appears to move more slowly for some viewers than for others.

The Interaction of Sheba illustrates the connection between the natural and supernatural worlds, where jinn and other supernatural beings may not be subject to the same laws of nature and reality as humans. The theory of relativity challenged the traditional notion of time and space and provided a new dimension to the nature of the universe. It demonstrated that our understanding of reality

depends on the relative motion and the gravitational field that can lead to changes in the Perception of our physical world.

Conclusion

The story of Hazrat Uzair (A.S) and the throne of Sheba are aligned and related to the concept of the theory of Special and General Relativity. The limited knowledge of physicists does not comprehend the in-depth insight of God's miracles. The theory of relativity of time is to some extent the exception incident of time travel mentioned in the Quran.

The Quran presents a perspective on time that is intertwined with the cosmos' divine nature. Although it doesn't directly address scientific issues like wormholes or time dilation, it offers stories and descriptions that can be figuratively compared to these concepts. The Quran emphasizes numerous times that God is the ultimate arbiter of time. The article's discussion of Quranic verses demonstrated the relationship of Time Travel with Einstein's theory of relativity, demonstrating how the pursuit of knowledge and understanding may be achieved via both scientific inquiry and spiritual reflection. In the end, these Quranic teachings invite believers to ponder the deep mysteries of the cosmos and the divine wisdom that underlies them.

Quran challenges believers to ponder the secrets of life, enjoining us to learn more, consider the evidence of creation, and develop our comprehension of the divine wisdom woven into the very fabric of time. The idea of time travel in Quran ultimately serves as a reminder of the size and complexity of God's creation. It enlivens a sense of surprise and awe for the incomprehensible truths that lie beyond our awareness while encouraging us to humbly realize the boundaries of human knowledge.



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