

Time — the thing you are asked about

A surah opens by swearing an oath by time and then declares man at a loss. What the texts add is the audit: a life, and what it was spent on.



★ The oath

وَالْعَصْرِ

“By time — indeed man is in loss, except those who believe, do righteous deeds, and counsel one another to truth and patience.”

Qur'an 103:1 • 103:2-3

★ A day, or part of one

قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ

Asked how long they stayed on earth: “We stayed a day, or part of a day — ask those who keep count.” A whole life, remembered that way.

Qur'an 23:112-113

★ Long enough to notice

أَوَلَمْ نَعْمَرْكُمْ مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ

“Did We not give you life long enough for anyone who would take heed to take heed — and the warner came to you?”

Qur'an 35:37

★ Before it closes

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِن مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِي أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ

“Spend from what We have provided you before death comes to one of you” — and he says: my Lord, if only You would delay me a little.

Qur'an 63:10

★ When you are free, work

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ

“So when you have finished, labour on.” One task done is the start of the next, not the end of the day.

Qur'an 94:7

★ Race for it

سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Race one another to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden whose breadth is like the breadth of the heaven and the earth.”

Qur'an 57:21

★ Two blessings

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ، الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

“Two blessings in which many people are cheated: health, and free time.” Not lost by theft — lost by not noticing.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6412

★ A stranger passing through

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ، أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

He took Ibn 'Umar by the shoulder: “Be in this world like a stranger, or a passer-by.” Ibn 'Umar then lived as though each evening were the last.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6416

★ The questions at the end

لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عَمَلِهِ فِيمَا أَفَاهُ

“A servant's feet will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life and how he spent it” — then his knowledge, wealth and body.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 2417 • sahih