32627 - The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not know when the Hour would begin

the question

Did the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) know when the Hour would begin?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Knowledge of the hour is a matter of the unseen which belongs to Allaah and which He has kept to Himself. He has not told any of His creation of that, including the Prophets, Messengers and the angels who are close to Him. Even the best of the Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), did not know when the hour will begin.

The texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah clearly indicate that the knowledge of the Hour is something unseen which no created being knows.

The evidence from the Qur'aan includes the following:

1 – Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection): 'When will be its appointed time?' Say: 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (Alone). None can reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden.' They ask you as if you have a good knowledge of it. Say: 'The knowledge thereof is with Allaah (Alone), but most of mankind know not.'"

[al-'Araaf 7:187]

2 – Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“People ask you concerning the Hour, say: ‘The knowledge of it is with Allaah only. What do you know? It may be that the Hour is near!’”

[al-Ahzaab 33:63]

The people used to ask the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about the time that the hour would begin, so Allaah commanded him to refer the matter to Him: “The knowledge of it is with Allaah only”.

Ibn Katheer (3/527) said:

Allaah tells His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that he has no knowledge of the Hour and that when the people ask him about that, he should refer the matter to Allaah.

Al-Shanqeeti said (6/604):

It is known that the word innama (translated here as “only”) has the effect of limiting or restricting the meaning, so what the verse means is: No one knows when the Hour will come except Allaah alone.

3 – Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They ask you (O Muhammad) about the Hour — when will be its appointed time?

You have no knowledge to say anything about it.

To your Lord belongs (the knowledge of) the term thereof?

You (O Muhammad) are only a warner for those who fear it”

[al-Naaz’iaat 79:42-45]

al-Sa’di said:

Because knowing the time of the Hour serves no spiritual or worldly purpose for people, rather

their interests lie in it being concealed from them, the knowledge of that has been kept from all of creation and Allaah has kept it to Himself. “To your Lord belongs (the knowledge of) the term thereof.”

4 – Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, Allaah, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs”

[Luqmaan 31:34]

It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The keys of the unknown are five: Allaah has knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down rain, and He knows what is in the wombs, and no person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allaah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things).”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4627.

And it was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: These five things are known to no one except Allaah; no angel who is close to Allaah and no Messenger who was sent has any knowledge of them. Whoever claims that he has any knowledge of them has disbelieved in the Qur’aan, because he has gone against it. Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 14/82.

Ibn Katheer said (3/462):

These are the keys of the unseen, knowledge of which Allaah has kept to Himself. So no one knows them until after Allaah has informed him of them. And no angel who is close to Allaah and no Messenger who was sent has any knowledge of the Hour.

End quote.

The ahaadeeth which indicate that no one knows when the Hour will begin except Allaah include the following:

1 – The famous hadeeth of Jibreel, in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to Jibreel, when he asked him when the Hour would begin: “The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one who is asking.” Narrated by Muslim, 8.

2 – It was narrated that Jaabir ibn ‘Abd-Allaah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say, one month before he died: “You ask me about the Hour, but the knowledge thereof is only with Allaah. I swear by Allaah that there is no soul on earth that will live for more than one hundred years.”

Narrated by Muslim, 2538.

What this hadeeth means is: every soul that was on the face of the earth when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said these words would not live for more than one hundred years. The hadeeth does not means that the Resurrection would happen within one hundred years.

And Muslim narrated (2537) that Ibn ‘Umar said: What he meant was that that generation would come to an end.

This hadeeth shows that there is no possibility that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) could have come to know it after Jibreel asked about it, because that was one month before he died.

Whoever claims after this that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) knew when the Hour would begin is ignorant, because the verses of the Qur’aan and the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) quoted above clearly refute that.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in al-Manaar al-Muneef:

One of those in our own time who claim to have knowledge clearly told lies when he said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) knew when the Hour would begin. It was said to him that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in the hadeeth of Jibreel: “The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one who is

asking," but he misinterpreted that and said that it means, you and I know it. This is one of the worst kinds of ignorance and distortion. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) could not have said to one whom he thought was a Bedouin, you and I know when the Hour will be. But this ignorant man may say that he knew that this was Jibreel, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, he never came to me in any form but I recognized him, except in this case." Narrated by Ahmad, 374. Ahmad Shaakir said: Its isnaad is saheeh. Rather the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) realized that this was Jibreel after a while, as Umar said: A short while passed, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" Narrated by Muslim, 8. This liar says that he knew at the time of questioning that this was Jibreel but he did not tell his companions about that until a while afterwards. Moreover the words "The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one who is asking" are general and include both the one who asked and the one who was asked, regardless of who they may be, so every one who asks and everyone who is asked about the Hour are all the same.

And Allaah knows best.