



Ramadan Daily Quran Study, by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2023

Adapted and edited from *The Religion of Islam* by Maulana Muhammad Ali
Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore (UK)

Fast 30: Life after death — Paradise and hell

- **Paradise according to the Quran:** The word *garden (jannah)* or its plural (*jannāt*) is generally used to indicate the abiding place of the righteous in the hereafter. This word indicates something which is concealed or covered so that it cannot be perceived by the senses (an ordinary garden is called *jannah* because it is covered by trees). For paradise this meaning may refer to the fact that it cannot be perceived by our human senses.

Fast 30

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- The description of Paradise usually given in the Quran is: *gardens in which rivers flow*. Compare this with the description of the righteous in the Quran, which generally is: *those who believe and do good*. In this life, *faith* is the water of a person's spiritual life. In the next world, that faith appears to him as rivers. In this life, *good deeds* spring from faith. In the next world, these good deeds appear as trees, bearing fruit.
- Paradise as described in the Quran is called a *parable* or a *likeness*:
مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ — “A parable of the Garden which is promised to those who keep their duty” (13:35, 47:15).
This means that it is not a garden of this world, but it bears a likeness to it.

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- The blessings of Paradise cannot be imagined by our minds in this life, as these are not things of this world. The Quran says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“So no soul knows what joy of the eyes is hidden for them: a reward for what they did.” — 32:17

- An explanation of this verse was given by the Holy Prophet himself when he said:
 - “Allah says: I have prepared for My righteous servants things which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and which the mind of the mortal human has not conceived.” (Bukhari, hadith 3244)



- Those in Paradise are mentioned as being given *sustenance (rizq)*. But it cannot mean what sustains the body here. It is the sustenance that is needed for the inner self of a person. In this life, prayer is that sustenance. The regular five times daily prayer is mentioned in 20:130 and in 20:132. The verse in between these two says: “And the *sustenance* of your Lord is better and more lasting” (20:131).
- All blessings of paradise, whether fruit, shade, rivers of water, milk and honey, thrones, cushions and carpets, etc. — all these are not things of this life, but are mentioned simply to show that whatever may serve to perfect the picture of the happiness of human beings, will be there. As for the exact form they will take, that cannot be made known because human senses are incapable of perceiving it.



- **Women in paradise:** Men and women are both equal in the sight of God, and both will enjoy the higher life if they do good in this life. It is made clear in the Quran in many places that women shall have access to Paradise, like men. It says:
 - “Allah has promised to *the believers, men and women*, Gardens, in which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in Gardens of perpetual abode. And greatest of all is Allah’s goodly pleasure. That is the mighty achievement.”
— 9:72
- Those in paradise will find delight in the praise of God and will see only peace in it. The Quran says:

دَعْوُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَأَجْرُهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

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“Their cry therein will be, Glory be to You, O Allah! and their greeting, Peace! And the last of their cry will be: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!” — 10:10

- **Hell according to the Quran:** Some of the names of hell in the Quran reveal that hell really begins in this world. Two of its names, *Jahannam* and *Hawiyah*, mean a deep abyss. A person who follows his low desires and baser passions in this life makes himself fall into the lowest depths in this world. Thus he finds himself at the lowest depth in the life after death. Hell is often called *nar* or fire. The burning in a person’s heart caused by envy and greed in this world is felt as a *flaming fire* after death.
- The real purpose of hell is *purification*. Hell is called the “friend” or *maulā* of the sinners (57:15), and their “mother” or *umm* (101:9).

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Hell is called a “friend” of sinners, because through suffering it will make them fit for spiritual progress, and it is called their “mother”, because in its bosom they will be brought up, so that they may be able to tread the path of a new higher life in the next world.

- The Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet show that all those who are in Hell shall ultimately, when they are fit for a new life, be released from it to progress further on in the next life. Regarding those in hell and those in paradise, the Quran says that they will both remain in it “except as your Lord please”, meaning that He can take them out of it. Then for those in paradise it adds that paradise is “a gift never to be cut off”. But for those in hell it adds: “Surely your Lord is the mighty Doer of what He intends” (see 11:107-108).

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This means that those in paradise shall always remain in it, but as to those in hell God intends to take them out of it ultimately. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet, and another of Hazrat Umar, that a day will come when no one will remain in hell.

- Paradise is a place for further advancement. The Quran says that those in paradise will pray as follows: رَبَّنَا آتِنَا نُورَنَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا

“Our Lord, make perfect for us our light and grant us protection.” — 66:8

It also says: لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَّبْنِيَّةٌ

“But those who keep their duty to their Lord, for them are high places, above which are yet higher places, built (for them) ...” — 39:20

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- The new life granted to the righteous in Paradise is thus the starting-point for a new advancement, in which they shall continue to rise to higher and higher places. The joys of Paradise are really the true joys of advancement.

Lastly, Eid Mubarak to all readers of these Quran Studies.

Wishing all of you a very happy and blessed Eid of April 2023!