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## Chapter 5: Heaven and Hell

### [The human typology from the Holy Qur'an's point of view](#)

The Holy Qur'an divides mankind into two categories: Blissful and Damned.

Then again, in another category, human beings are also divided into three different categories [Al-Waqiah- 7-11],

***“[On that Day,] then, shall you be [divided into] three kinds. Thus, there shall be such as will have attained to what is right: oh, how [happy] will be they who have attained to what is right! And there shall be such as will have lost them-selves in evil: oh, how [unhappy] will be they who have lost themselves in evil! But the foremost shall be [they who in life were] the foremost [in Faith and good works]: they who were [always] drawn close unto God!” – 56:7-11***

#### [Notes](#)

**First:** In this category, the Holy Qur'an has not intended to identify the entire blessed souls as only one group, but instead intends to clarify the fact that different levels of bliss and eternal happiness exist; it then goes on to divide and distinguish them in two different categories, subsequently.

**Second:** The Holy Qur'an introduces in one part a group, known as the companions of the right hand [i.e. *As'habil Yamin*], and then introduces another group as the companions of the left hand [i.e. *As'habil Mash'amah*]. This nomination is not superficial at all and does not intend to be so, whatsoever. It includes in fact, a series of divine Secrets and represents truthful facts about the afterlife.

**Third:** The Holy Qur'an refers to the benevolent and the wrongdoers as “*Ashabil Yamin*” and “*Ashabi Shema*” respectively, which contain subtle and delicate points to consider carefully. The word “*Ashab*” implies a very tight and stretched constancy. Therefore, it can be understood from this interpretation that the fact of being called “*Ashabil Yamin*” and becoming “*Mey'manah* [i.e. becoming blessed in the hereafter] means that the blessed souls have become the happy dwellers of paradise in the hereafter.

It means that they are already where they should be and that they have reached the place they had to reach in the first place. In like manner, the damned or “*Ashabi Shemal*” have already become the unfortunate, unhappy dwellers of hell; it means that they have already reached the place they had to reach in the first place, which is the most inferior place in the terrible region, called Hell...

**Fourth:** The Holy Qur'an has referred to “*As'habil Yamin*” as “*As'habil Mey'manah*”. It had also named “*Ashabe Shemal*” as “*As'habe Mash'ama*”, which in fact, intends to clarify between “good” and “evil” or between “virtue” [i.e. righteousness] and “wickedness” [i.e. Yumn and Sheamat]. It signifies that a soul reaches the highest realm of heaven, according to his/her good, virtuous deeds, and obtains the best of the blessings and favors; and most of all, the best of fates. Then again, in contrast to the Blessed souls, the wicked souls have reached hell in their turn, according to their wicked, sinful, and villainous misdeeds. The Damned souls have fallen in fact, in the deepest, farthest, and inferior region of hell, because of their false and vain thoughts [i.e. heresy]; these damned souls have reached their darkest nightmares, by falling to their sinister, lugubrious misfortune, where no deliverance will ever be possible for them.

In simpler words, these two words point out to the good and the wickedness that can be found in the human being itself. Goodness can be seen as something virtuous in the creed, ethics, and good deeds, while wickedness in the creed, ethics, and misdeeds can be seen and found in all kinds of misbehavior and misconduct; in all forms of sinful and bad characteristics of the human being, and nothing else. [1](#)

## **The standard for being a blessed soul or a damned soul**

In several cases, the Holy Qur'an has spoken about a specific and fundamental standard, which exists in regards to the blessed souls or the damned souls. It also speaks about the characteristics with which, individuals are destined to become Damned, as in the noble surah of "An-Naziat" [37-39],

***“For, unto him who shall have transgressed the bounds of what is right, and preferred the life of this world [to the good of his soul], that blazing fire will truly be the goal!” – 79 : 37-39***

Therefore, the necessary characteristics for becoming the unfortunate inhabitant of hell are:

1. Rebellion and disobedience before Allah's commandments. At the same time, the action of fleeing from His true worship and servitude. And ignoring such vital, essential action.
2. Becoming an individual, who values only his/her physical, earthly life more than anything else, while at the same time, abandoning the hereafter, by ignoring and neglecting utterly its importance.

In contrast, these are the characteristics, which help the human being to become the eternal inhabitant of Heaven:

1. Fearing God's great status and eminent position as the one and unique creator and sovereign lord of

all things.

2. Disobeying the worldly desires and vile passions, as it has been announced in the surah "An- Naziat" [40-41]. It says,

***“But onto him, who shall have stood in fear of his Sustainer’s Presence, and held back his inner self from base desires. Paradise will truly be the goal!” – 79:40-41***

## **Heaven [or Paradise]**

In the Holy Qur'an, the existence of multiple “Heavens” has been mentioned for those, who had sincerely feared God's position as the creator; thus, Heaven has different sorts, categories, and levels within itself. The diversity of heaven is thus, because of the very presence of different grades and ranks among virtuous souls and other believers, subsequently.

### **The spiritual and physical heaven**

Indeed, the Holy Qur'an has mentioned the existence of two heavens for those human beings, who had truly and verily feared God's Eminent Position. Let us study that in the noble surah "Ar- Rah'man" [verse 46],

***“But for him, who fears the standing before his Lord, there will be two gardens [i.e. in Paradise].” – 55:46***

About the nature of these two “Heavens”, religious scholars have given different possible interpretations. Perhaps the best explanation might be the fact that by stating two different “Heavens”, the Holy Qur'an intended to announce that there are is “physical” heaven and one “spiritual” heaven in the other realm. That is, just as there is a "physical" pain and/or pleasure in the earthly plane, and then again a "spiritual" pain and/or pleasure in the world, such notion exists also in the afterlife. Therefore, in the noble surah of "Ar-Rah'man" [Verse 46], the Holy Qur'an has subsequently spoken about both kinds of “heaven”.

### **The heaven of “Riz'wan”**

After mentioning the physical Rewards and Bounties, the Holy Qur'an speaks then of the Heaven, known as “Riz'wan” and announces,

***“Allah has promised the believers-men and women,- Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of Adn [i.e. Eden- Paradise]. But the greatest Bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme Success!”<sup>2</sup> – 9:72***

Indeed, God's satisfaction and contentment towards mankind is the greatest truth of all, and even the smallest amount or the faintest particle of this divine satisfaction and approval is far beyond all the

physical delights, found in the "Physical" Heaven![3](#)

## The pure and heavenly drink

Among the heavenly bounties and blessings of paradise, there is the purest and most spiritual heavenly drink. Concerning the [Physical] heaven, where the blessed dwell, Allah announces,

***“Their garments will be of fine green silk and gold embroidery. They will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their lord will give them a pure drink.” – 76:21***

The word “*Tahūr*” means a purifier; that is, in addition to the purity and the spiritual cleanness of the blessed souls, this particular drink will purify and clean them even more from all the earthly imperfections. Here, Allah becomes the "Cup Bearer" par excellence, as Imam Sadiq [as] has stated in this regard, "*The Purifier is no one but Allah Himself!*"

Therefore, those, who will only drink a sip from the purifying cup of Allah will soon find out that all the physical pleasures that they are faced with will have a completely different significance; and that they would ultimately see only Allah, in all those Divine pleasures.[4](#)

## The heavenly gates

It is stated in all the religious sources that heaven has indeed eight doors or gates [i.e. portals]. These eight Gates are surely not ceremonial and/or superfluous and neither are they installed there, to control and restrict people from entering heaven, because the hereafter is not a World of limitations and restrictions. Indeed, there is no obstacle whatsoever, as to the way the human beings would want to enter inside paradise; they can all enter through the gates of heaven in an instant, and from one heavenly gate only. These Gates are not intended either to make a distinction between the poor and the rich, by letting them enter through different portals. Therefore, what truth lies exactly, behind the existence of these heavenly Gates...?

Truth is, in the hereafter, what matters is the grade [i.e. level–degree] of the souls' spiritual evolution and virtues, and not the ranks and positions that they had enjoyed having during their lifetime on earth. Faith, good deeds, and virtue have various levels and ranks. Each person and each group of people have their own unique level of faith and piety. Each group has moved up differently in the ladder of spiritual evolution and piety; therefore, according to their specific and proportional level of spiritual evolution and progress, a certain Gate of heaven will be opened to them respectively.

For instance, the gate through which, illustrious martyrs and those, who have fought in the Path of Allah [i.e. the *Mudjahidoun*] enter is the same gate that the "elite" and those, who are Allah's "Friends" enter into heaven, to be near Allah and enjoy such infinite privilege.[5](#)

## The characteristics of paradise

Paradise is the center of divine blessings, bounties, and all the most beautiful characteristics and descriptions of all the most pleasant things that only exist in heaven. However, before we start mentioning the details of the divine bounties, it is necessary to review a number of basic and general properties of this heavenly place, such as:

### Purity and pureness

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned the heavenly abode, called "Tooba", which is the ultimate dwelling-place of the believers:

***"[And so it is that] they who attain to Faith and do righteous deeds are destined for happiness [in this world] and the most beautiful of all goals [in the life to come]!" – 13:19***

"Tooba" is derived from the word "Tayyib", which means purity, pureness, and cleanness. It has been reported that "Tooba" is a special tree in paradise; its trunk is located inside the house of the lord of the believers: Ali Ibn-e Abi Talib [as] and its branches have penetrated inside the houses of all the believers, in all over the world, until the day of resurrection. The branches of this heavenly tree are in fact, the very true beliefs of the believers, along with the best of their characteristics and temperaments.[6](#)

The human spirit is basically, similar and identical to a tree, consisting of infinite roots, branches, and delicious, juicy fruits. As long as mankind exists and lives in this world, and by performing righteous deed, he/she "grafts" and "unites" himself/herself to the heavenly Tree of "Tooba"; on the contrary, by committing wrongful deeds and demonstrating bad behaviors, and showing cruelty to other people, he/she will instead "graft" his/her existence to the hellish Tree of "Zaqqum". Just as it is depicted in the noble surah of "Ad-Dukhan" [verse 43-44],

***"Verily, [in the life to come], the tree of deadly fruit will be the food of the sinful." [7](#) – 43:44***

### The divine safety and security

Heaven is the safest and most secure of all places. A number of verses in the Holy Qur'an have emphasized this fact; for instance, it has been reported that, "Good deeds bring on a security and safety..."

Indeed, good and benevolent deeds, along with truth will bring on security. And the kind of security and safety that the believers enjoy in the hereafter is due to their efforts, for having previously accomplished good actions in this world of ours.

## Health and well-being

Health and well-being is among the special characteristics of paradise and there exist no physical, mental, and spiritual harm and injury to its inhabitants, whatsoever. The Holy Qur'an describes the pure and clean drinks of heaven, by announcing,

***“By which, their minds will not be clouded and which will not make them drunk.” – 56:19***

## Constancy and eternity

Heaven is indeed the place of eternity, constancy, and immortality. In paradise, no one will ever think of leaving such divine place nor will anyone ever be expelled from it or die in that heavenly abode,

***“And neither shall they taste Death there after having passed through their erstwhile Death. Thus will He have preserved them from all suffering through the blazing Fire.” – 44:56***

## The inexistence of prohibitions and limitations

Heaven is no place for the execution of any task and duty; because the order of that other world is very different from the order, which exists in this world of ours; in fact, its order is not comparable to the earthly plane; thus, there are no limitations and prohibitions in heaven. Whosoever desires anything sees his/her wish fulfilled and can enjoy from any

Bounty that exists there, as much as he/she desires. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an points out to the inexistence of any kind of prohibition and limitations and states,

***“Never failing and never out of reach...” – 56:19***

## The divine mercy, favor, and grace

Heaven and its infinite bounties are solely made of God's favors and infinite Grace:

***“An act of thy Sustainer's Favor; and that that will be the Triumph supreme!” – 44:57***

For those blessed souls, who will be the fortunate inhabitants of heaven and who shall possess spiritual knowledge of the divine, the heavenly bounties shall not only be enjoyable, due to their divine nature, but also most pleasing and agreeable, because they shall come directly from their beloved and merciful God as their well-deserved rewards. And indeed, this latter reason is the most delightful of all Bounties and goes beyond every other heavenly delight, by far...!8

On the other hand, any human being, in any position and rank that he/she might be, is always prone to committing sinful deeds and errors, and always in the need of divine mercy and forgiveness. He/she will always be in need of a purification from the sinful deeds he/she had committed in the past; therefore, the

Holy Qur'an announces,

***"[As against this,] behold for those, who stand in awe of God although He is beyond the reach of their perception, there is forgiveness in store and a great reward." – 67: 12***

According to this noble verse in the Holy Qur'an, two rewards have been given to the human souls: the divine forgiveness and great, innumerable rewards. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) had stated in this regard, "If there were a conflict between divine reckoning and mankind's deeds to be calculated precisely by Allah, no one would have ever become a creditor towards God, whatsoever!" This is because whatever mankind possesses, is bestowed on him by only God; and even if someone claims that all of his/her prayers is a form of gratitude and rendering of grace to God Almighty for only a single one of God's Rewards, this statement is utterly vain and meaningless. Therefore, human beings need to purify themselves from their sins, misdeeds, and crimes, by asking for God's Forgiveness before asking for the bestowal and conferment of Allah's Bounties and Delights.

### **Spiritual bounties**

Indeed, one should insist that spiritual heaven is far better and far more superior than material, physical heaven. However, in opposition to physical and material Heaven, which is describable, spiritual heaven cannot be described as one would expect it to be. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an has announced,

***"And [as for all such believers,] no human being can imagine what blissful delights, as yet hidden, await them [in the life to come] as a reward for all that they did." – 32:17***

### **Physical and material bounties**

In order to describe the physical and material heaven, the Holy Qur'an sometimes mentions "special bounties" and in some other times, calls them "All kinds of delights"; especially in the description of two particular Divine Gardens,

***"[Two Gardens] of many wondrous hues." – 55:48***

Those two gardens possess "All kinds of delights". Here, the matter has been intentionally stated with ambiguity, in order for the minds of those, who read this sentence, to wander wherever they please.

Here, God Almighty wants the human beings to understand that if each of the "heavenly bounties" were to be named and accounted for, then the entire notion of "limiting" heaven's Realm would be entirely vain and false as a result; when this subject is indeed, far beyond our understanding, and therefore, it cannot be fully explained and understood thoroughly.

### **Heavenly food and drinks**

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned various kinds of heavenly drinks and food such as the delicious meat of

different Heavenly birds<sup>9</sup>, different kinds of fruits<sup>10</sup> [two<sup>11</sup> for each kind] and various pure and delicious Drinks<sup>12</sup>, of which the blessed souls can retrieve all the best possible benefits without having to face any negative effects upon themselves, whatsoever.

## Heavenly spouses

The Holy Qur'an has referred to spouses in paradise as "those endowed with beautiful eyes" [i.e. Hurul Ain]<sup>13</sup> and in a number of occasions has described them as well. These Heavenly spouses have always been described in a most delightful manner:

From moral and spiritual points of view: The Holy Qur'an describes them as being virtuous, pure, chaste<sup>14</sup>, innocent, and endowed with the best of temperaments. It says,

***"In these [Gardens] will be mates of modest gaze, whom neither man nor invisible being will have touched ere then."* – 55:56**

From an emotional point of view:

***"For, behold, We shall have brought them into being in a life renewed, having resurrected them as virgins, full of love, well-matched."* – 56: 35-37**

From a physical point of view: some of the physical characteristics of these heavenly spouses have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an; such as a "chaste, restraining glances"<sup>15</sup> or a perfection in the qualities, which adorn them; then again, goodness, great beauty<sup>16</sup>, virginity<sup>17</sup>, a pearl well-guarded<sup>18</sup>, eloquence, and identical age with their companions.

## Spectacular sights and wonders

### **Spectacular sights and wonders<sup>19</sup>**

Heaven is a place full of beautiful sights with magnificent, picturesque, and delightful sceneries and panoramas...! Among these wonderful sceneries, one can speak of the trees, of the darkest green in color<sup>20</sup>, with sources pouring forth water in continuous abundance<sup>21</sup>, and ever-flowing rivers, and springs flowing free<sup>22</sup>, and fountains with translucent, crystal-like water...

A number of verses in the Holy Qur'an have described perfectly and beautifully the characteristics of the different springs, which exist in Paradise. In one noble verse, four different kinds of Heavenly Rivers have been mentioned.

For instance: the rivers, the water of which never putrefies or alters its color [i.e. incorruptible]; the rivers of pure milk that are never corrupted or change taste; the holy rivers, made from delicious and Heavenly wine for those, who wish to drink; and rivers that are made from pure honey and which flow free, devoid of any other thing.<sup>23</sup>

## Heavenly garments and ornaments

The blessed dwellers of paradise wear beautiful garments,

***“Wearing [garments] of silk and brocade, facing one another [in love].” – 44:53***

***“Allah will admit those, who attain to faith and do righteous deeds into gardens through which, running waters flow, wherein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls, and where silk will be their raiment.” – 22:33***

And,

**“Gardens of Eternity will they enter: therein will they be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls; and their garments there will be of silk...” – 35:33**

## Affectionate and sweet relationships

One of the characteristics of heaven is the existence of affectionate, sweet relationships and enthusiastic, friendly conversations and dialogues, based on mutual respect and admiration, devoid of any exaggerations, lies, gossips, unworthy thoughts, and grudge<sup>24</sup>,

***“[They will be seated] on gold-encrusted thrones of happiness, reclining upon them, facing one another [in love].” – 56: 15–16***

***“No empty talk will they hear there-nothing but [tidings of] inner soundness and peace; and there will they have their sustenance by day and by night.” – 19:62***

Allah has also promised the righteous parents and their virtuous offspring to join each other, as well as uniting the close and intimate relatives, in the light of His inexorable Promise.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, the Holy Qur'an refers also to other bounties such as couches, thrones, shades, pure dwellings, cups, etc, etc... which, due to the limited space of the present work, we shall have to refrain from explaining thoroughly.<sup>26</sup>

## Hell

Hell is the vilest, most atrocious, and most oppressive place in the whole universe, where the divine torment and punishment are executed for those, who will have sinned.

The Holy Qur'an has warned Hell in many instances and described it as "*Ba'as UI-Mossir*" [i.e. a bad place, where the individual is arrested and kept in custody], "*Ba'as UI-Mahad*" [i.e. a very bad dwelling-place], "*Ba'as UI-Gharar*" [i.e. a very bad abode], "*Ba'as UI-Mas'wa*" [i.e. a very bad residence], etc, etc...

## The various names of Hell

The Holy Qur'an has quoted and named Hell with many different names; such as Hell [or *Jahhannam*][27](#), *Nar*[28](#) [i.e. Fire], *Jahim*[29](#), *Sa'ir*[30](#), *Saghar*[31](#), *Hatmah*[32](#), and *Hawiyyah*[33](#).

Each one of these names describes a kind of reality about this horrible, terrible place and talks about its particular characteristics, concerning that specific, particular name.

To give you an example, *Hawiyyah* means a place where you shall fall down; and that hell is a place where whosoever enters it, he/she will fall down. The Holy Qur'an has called the place of the downfall and the tumbling of the human soul [or *Mah'wiyyah*] as "*Hawiyyah*". As though the miserable soul, who falls down and tumbles has become one with that dwelling-place, so that the soul and the dwelling-place become one and the same; that means the soul itself is transformed into hell and the painful flames...[34](#)

## Hell's doors

The Holy Qur'an has announced that Hell has seven Doors or Portals:

***"And surely, Hell is the promised place for them all. It [Hell] has seven gates, for each of those gates is a [special] class [of sinners] assigned."* – 15:43-44**

Allamah Tabatabayi [God rest his soul] had explained that it is probable that hell's doors are not in fact, the entrance doors, such as one sees in all places, which open and lead to a house or a garden or some other interior places...

It is in fact, referring to the different places in hell such as the pits and the valleys, where all kinds of eternal torment and suffering are inflicted upon the damned... The reason for the variety of the torments comes from the variety, which exists for all the devious ways of sin and wrongdoing, committed by man during his lifetime on earth. That is why hell chooses the torment, which suits best the sin that had been committed by the damned.[35](#)

## Hell is on the lookout...

The Holy Qur'an announces,

***"Truly, Hell is a place of ambush..."* – 78:21**

This interpretation is truly a very extraordinary and astonishing one, to put it mildly... For, to be on watch is usually used for those, who hid themselves and stand guardedly in some place, in some mountainous pass for something or someone to arrive, to then come out of the hiding place and to show themselves in full view. They wait then, in order to ambush... They also benefit from the element of surprise from the person in particular; it seems as though the person on the lookout wishes to take over the individual

before him and keep him as his unfortunate captive...

From the verses in the Holy Qur'an, one understands that every human being has to pass by hell and cross it inevitably. It says,

***“There is not one of you but will pass over it [Hell]: this is with your Lord; a Decree which must be accomplished.” – 19:71***

In fact, nobody can be exempted from this terrible, frightening task. Everyone should pass that horrible, fearful place: from the noble prophets to the most common of the people! Every soul is forced to take that path and pass through, in order to go across this way. It is even possible that the crossing could last as long as thousands and thousands of years. Concerning the interpretation of that particular verse, some disciples asked questions from the illustrious Imams [as]. They would usually ask them, "*Will you cross Hell as well...?*"

And they would all give the one and same answer, which was, "*Yes indeed, but we shall pass through it while it shall be extinct...*"[36](#)

This reply has a very deep and precise meaning. In fact, the root of hell fire comes from the human being. It signifies that it comes in fact, from his vile passions, his vices, his sins, and his deviations...

All those sinful crimes ignite, inflame, and set fire to the human being to make him become as those hellish flames that envelop his sinful being. And he, who succeeds in extinguishing those sinful, horrible flames in his inner self is certain to have no such thing as painful flames, made by his own vilest passions; that is why he can pass through hell, while hell fire shall be extinct, only for him.

The concept, which announces that whosoever wishes to enter paradise [i.e. Heaven] should first pass through hell, is indeed a parable. This means that whosoever wishes to reach happiness and beatitude should first be tested by all kinds of spiritual tests and trials. And this is accomplished by passing through all kinds of sins, without becoming stained, by any of those sins, whatsoever. Therefore, the measure of a human being, becoming stained and corrupted by sins shows the measure of his affliction in that atrocious place; for, in that moment, hell shall be awaiting him and it shall be on the "lookout" for him.[37](#)

### **The uniqueness of man, his deeds and his punishment**

Some of the verses in the Holy Qur'an show a kind of unity, identicalness, and sameness between man and his misdeeds, and hell fire and the divine torment...

In the noble surah "*Al-Baqarah*", Allah announces,

***“But if you do it not, and you can never do it, and then fear the Fire [Hell] whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.” – 2:24***

In like manner, in the noble surah "At-Tah'rim", Allah the Sublime announces,

***"O you, who have attained to Faith! Ward off from yourselves and those who are close to you that fire [of the Hereafter] whose fuel is human beings and stones: [lording] over it are angelic powers awesome [and] severers, who do not disobey God in whatever He has commanded them, but [always] do what they are bidden to do." – 66:6***

We can thus learn many points from these two noble verses:

1. There is a unity, similarity, and likeness between man and the divine; this means that someone has already prepared a big pile of wood to be kindled with the arrival of the damned, where the soul is pushed harshly and brutally into it, to be burned for all eternity.

The truth is that the fire, which awaits the damned and the damned himself are one and the same; this is because that fire comes from his own misdeeds and the material, which is thrown in that pile, is the damned himself, with the heavy, atrocious burden of his wrongdoings and his wicked sins. Nothing else exists then, except the damned and his misdeeds. And the meaning of the "stone" is the heart of the sinner and wrongdoer, which has become hard and cruel, just like a lifeless stone

2. There is a moral responsibility for man to take into consideration in his confrontation with his folks and kin.

3. There is also a relation between one's preservation from the divine torment and the will to preserve others from any harm. This verse shows that man should not only be responsible for himself but also take responsibility for others as well.

Secondly, the best way to preserve and protect others from that atrocious torment is to begin and initiate from oneself and commit no wrongdoing and no sin, in order to be far and away from hell fire. One should be on the lookout, so as not to sin, while trying to purify his soul as best as he can, to be able to protect and defend not only himself but his kindred as well.[38](#)

### **There is no excuse!**

The Holy Qur'an has insisted that on resurrection day, the disbelievers cannot be excused for any reason whatsoever, for all the sins and wrongdoings that they had committed shamelessly during their lifetime on earth. It says,

***"O you, who are bent on denying the truth, make no [empty] excuses today; [in the life to come] you shall be but recompensed for what you were doing [in this world]." – 66:7***

In some instances, it also speaks about the impossibility of reducing and diminishing their torments. Indeed, it announces,

***“In this state shall they abide; [and] neither will their suffering, be lightened, nor will they be granted respite.” – 2: 162***

Now, one is faced with a very important question, which is: why God Almighty, Who is the Most Merciful and whose generosity and grace are infinite, cannot accept the repentance of the damned...?

The answer to this question has already been given in that same verse, mentioned above. According to the Holy Qur'an, there is a direct relation between the divine torment inflicted upon the damned on resurrection day and the characteristics, temperament, and deeds of the human being itself; and therefore, there can never be any excuse, offered by the Damned; and it cannot be accepted by God Almighty either. Indeed, the negation of any Torment means that God has not been acting as Himself.[39](#)

### **Different kinds of Torments**

Just as the human beings have all kinds of pleasures, physical, mental, and spiritual, the Damned too, have to bear all kinds of physical, mental, and spiritual Torments in the Hereafter...

#### **The mental Torments**

The Holy Qur'an has spoken in several places about the numerous spiritual and mental torments in hell; to give you an example one can name the torment of vileness[40](#) and humiliation[41](#) or the torment of blame[42](#) and reprobation[43](#) or that of the curse[44](#) or even envy[45](#) or utter despair.[46](#)

#### **The spiritual Torments**

In the noble surah "*Al-Homazah*", after Allah has refuted categorically the erroneous thought of those, who love this earthly plane and think of nothing else but to amass riches and fortunes as something vain and false, and because those individuals think by mistake that to possess riches and gold means to be always immortal, He announces,

***“Nay, but [in the life to come such as] he shall indeed be abandoned to crushing torment! And what could make thee conceive what that crushing torment will be? A fire kindled, by God, which will rise over the [guilty] heart”. – 104:4-7***

Here, the Holy Qur'an corrects their faulty thought and replies that that kind of fire is not like the other earthly fires, which tend to burn only the physical body and leave nothing but ashes. This fire, here, is a fire, which takes form in the hearts of the damned and burns them thoroughly and excruciatingly.[47](#)

#### **Loneliness and utter solitude**

One of the most painful and terrible torments in the hereafter and which is of the spiritual kind is the feeling of utter loneliness and absolute solitude; that is, when the soul comes to understand that it has no friends or companions anymore. This matter has been discussed in various verses of the Holy

Qur'an.[48](#)

In the surah “*Al-Haqqah*”, the Holy Qur'an speaks about the individual, who is devoid of any faith and belief; he, who had never wanted to help and assist God's creatures; it announces,

***"For behold, he did not believe in God, the Tremendous, and did not feel any urge to feed the needy: and so, no friend has here today."*** – 69:33–35

### The physical torments

The Holy Qur'an has announced the existence of various physical torments in hell. Some of them are listed below:

#### To be chained and bound together in fetters

The Holy Qur'an has announced several times that the damned, who dwell in hell shall be bound in fetters; for example, in the surah "*Ibrahim*", one reads,

***"And thou wilt see the sinners that day, bound together in fetters..."*** – 14:49[49](#)

#### To be thrown in hell fire

One of the torments that the damned are facing is that they shall actually be "thrown" in Hell Fire,

***"For the Rejecters, We have prepared Chains..."*** – 76:4

and,

***"Those, who reject the Book and the [Revelations] with which, We sent our Messengers: but soon, shall they know! When the yokes [shall be] round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged along in the boiling fetid fluid, then in the Fire shall they be burned!"*** – 40-70-72[50](#)

#### A chain with a length of seventy cubits

In the surah “*Al-Haqqah*”, there is a description of the destiny and the outcome of the cruel people, who had been too attached to their goods and possessions, along with deep feelings of power and force. And then we see them, destroyed very easily,

***"Further, make him march in a chain, whereof the length is seventy cubits..."*** – 69:32

The seventy cubits, which is named here, is not really about its actual length, which is seventy cubits; for, every one of the damned has a different chain, with a different length to it. In fact, about the Day of Judgment, all the rings in all the chains that one can read about are dominated by the fact that the damned, while on earth had used all kinds of chains, related to all sorts of sins, perversity, and vices. Thus, to know with how many rings those chains had been formed.[51](#)

### [To wander \[round\]](#)

The Holy Qur'an announces,

***"In its midst and in the midst of boiling hot water will they wander round! Then which of the Favors of Your Lord will ye deny?!" – 55:44-45***

It is indeed extraordinary that after recounting the terrible things that shall befall the damned in Hell Fire and the fact that they will be burned and wandered round, the Holy Qur'an demands, *"Then, which of the Favors of Your Lord will ye deny?!"*

In fact, the Holy Qur'an wishes to say that this harsh Torment is a necessary action, which has to be accomplished, whether one approves of it or not. That it is considered as one of the necessary things that "should" exist in the universe, without which, there shall be no laws or order; and the fact that without these punishments, all the Divine blessings and favors will be devoid of any perfection and significance.

In other words: God's general favor to all the human beings makes it so that every human being and every simple thing has to have "exactly" and "precisely" that which "he/she" or "it" deserves to receive from Him as his/her/its rightful retribution. Therefore, because all these things have been made, and exist, according to a very exact and rigid wisdom and justice, and a very exact reckoning, they are thus considered as the inseparable parts of the Divine blessings and favors.[52](#)

### [The Garment of Fire](#)

The Holy Qur'an announces,

***"These two antagonists dispute with each other about their Lord: but those who deny [their Lord], for them will be cut out a Garment of Fire: over their heads will be poured out boiling water!" – 57: 19***

In another noble verse, the Holy Qur'an names the garment, donned by the damned. This garment is called "*Ghat'ran*", and described in this fashion,

***"Their garments of liquid pitch and their faces, covered with dire!" – 14:50***

*Ghat'ran* is in fact, a pitch black, fetid substance, which is also horribly sticky; the Arabs, in bygone days, used to pour it over their camels and massage them with it. The Holy Qur'an wishes to make this comparison, so that one may come to imagine and visualize what sort of garment is, that which is donned by the damned. This garment covers their whole person.[53](#)

### [The food of the Damned](#)

The Holy Qur'an announces that there is a special food for the sinners. It says,

***“Verily the Tree of Zaqqum will be the Food of the sinful, like molten brass! It will boil in their insides, like the boiling of scalding water...!” – 44:43–46***

It also says in another verse,

***“For, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell Fire: the shoots of its fruit–stalks are like the heads of devils. Truly, they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith...” – 37:64***

In the surah "An-Naba" there is another verse, which also speaks of the food of the damned,

***“Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink, save a boiling fluid and a fluid, dark, murky, intensely cold, a fitting recompense for them...” – 78:25***

After that, the Holy Qur'an insists upon the fact that these are truly a hundred per cent "fitting" retribution [i.e. Punishment–Penalty] for them. This "fitting" quality shows us that this torment is exactly similar and identical to the misdeed perpetrated by the sinner, while on earth. Therefore, if the misdeed were heavy [very sinful] or light [not very sinful, but sinful however], the retribution would exactly fit that particular deed, whatever it may be. Therefore, it all returns in fact, to the misdeed itself.[54](#)

There is also one last thing, known as the boiling water; the Holy Qur'an says that the angels are ordered to do, that which is commanded by Allah Almighty,

***“A voice will cry, “Seize ye him and drag him into the midst of the Blazing Fire! Then pour over his head the Penalty of Boiling Water!”***

Here, we are faced with two kinds of torments: one is the torment, which is endured by the damned from his/her inner parts and organs, and then, there is the second torment, which is poured over him. This is once again, a metaphorical comparison of the sin, committed by the sinner, while on earth: that is, the suffering that he/she is about to endure, along with all the pain and hardship that he/she has to bear as his/her "fitting" Punishment. They are accompanied by the reactions of his/her sinful misdeeds, "returned" to him/her, by "the others" from his/her past sins, against "the others"[55](#)

### **The duration of the torment**

Those, whose human nature has not been stained and tainted, by all kinds of sinful actions, and who can see clearly the principle of Truth within their hearts. Those, whose utter submission and obedience to Allah have still remained untouched and intact; those, who have not yet turned into monsters, for their enmity and hostility towards Universal Truth and God Almighty: those souls, then, have to bear their Torments with dignity. This is because of the sins they had committed while on earth; these Torments have a purifying effect on them; when they are purified and free from any sin, then they are saved.[56](#)

[1.](#) “Understanding the Holy Qur'an”, volume 6, page 112

[2.](#) "And his gladness towards men is the supreme Success."

3. ["Understanding the Holy Qur'an"](#), volume 6, pages 70–73
4. ["Understanding the Holy Qur'an"](#) volume 11 pages 62–70
5. Please refer to the book, entitled: The "Rise" of Mahdi [May Allah hastens his Apparition and his Manifestation] from the historical point of view [along with an article, written by the Martyr Professor Murtadha Mutahhari himself] page 74
6. Refer to the noble surah Ibrahim, verses 24–24
7. The Infernal Tree that exists in Hell and is the food of the sinners
8. ["Understanding the Holy Qur'an"](#) – volume 5, page 152
9. Refer to the noble surah Al-Waqiah, verse 21
10. Refer to the noble surah Ad-Dukhan, verse 55, Ar-Rah'man, verses 52 and 68, Al- Waqiah, verse 20
11. Refer to the noble surah Al-Waqiah, verse 213
12. Refer to the noble surah Al-Waqiah, verses 18–19
13. Ad-Dukhan– 54, "The ones with beautiful eyes" [i.e. Hurul-Ain] can also be the same spouses, who had shared their husbands lives on earth, and who shall live together in heaven for all eternity.
14. Al-Baqarah, 25, Ali-Imran, 15, An-Nissa, 57
15. Al-Waqiah, 35–37
16. Ar-Rah'man,56
17. Al-Waqiah, 36
18. Al-Waqiah, 22–23
19. It does not mean that Heavenly sights are created without any purpose, but that they have other uses as well.
20. Ar-Rah'man, 64
21. Ar-Rah'man, 66
22. Ar-Rah'man, 50
23. Muhammad, 15, "Here is a Parable of the Garden, which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible: rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear..."
24. "And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury: [they will be] brothers [joyfully] facing each other on thrones [of dignity]." – 15:47
25. "And those, who believe and whose families follow them in Faith– to them shall We join their families: nor shall We deprive them [of the fruit] of aught of their works: [yet] is each individual in pledge for his deeds..." – 15:21
26. For more information, please refer to the work of Mohammad Mohammadian, entitled "Ayatul-Ma'ad", pages 159–184
27. This name has been mentioned seventy-seven times in the Holy Quran, including in the surah Al-Baqarah, 206
28. This name has been mentioned one hundred and twenty-one times in the Holy Quran, including in the holy surah: [Al-Baqarah, 24]
29. This name has been mentioned twenty-five times in the Holy Quran, including in the holy surah: [Al-Ma'idah, 10]
30. This name has been mentioned sixteen times in the Holy Quran, including in the holy surah: [Ash-Shura, 7]
31. This name has been mentioned four times in the Holy Quran, including in the holy surah: [Al-Muddaththir, 26–27]
32. This name has been mentioned two times in the Holy Quran, including in the holy surah: [Al-Humazah, 9]
33. [Al-Qari'ah, 9]
34. ["The interpretation of the Holy Quran"](#) page 301
35. For more information, please refer to "Al-Mizan fi Taf'sir Al-Qur'an", volume 12, page 170
36. Mulla Hadi Sabzevari, from his book entitled "Sharhul-Asma Ul-Husna", volume 1, page 30
37. ["Understanding the Holy Qur'an"](#), volume 11, page 179
38. ["Understanding the Holy Qur'an"](#), volume 8, pages 93–103
39. For further information, please, do study once again the sixth Chapter, where there is question of the opposition and the contrast, which exist between Divine Mercy and Divine Torment.
40. [At-Tawbah, 63]

- [41.](#) [Yunus, 27]
- [42.](#) [Al-Baqarah, 90]
- [43.](#) [Al-Isra, 39]
- [44.](#) [Al-A'raf, 44]
- [45.](#) [Al-Baqarah, 167]
- [46.](#) [Fussilat, 48]
- [47.](#) "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 8, page 97
- [48.](#) Please, refer to: [Ale-Imran, verses 91 and 192]; [An-Nissa, 145]; [Al-Ma'idah, 72]; [Yunus, 27]; [Al-Anbiya, 39]; [Ash-Shuara, verses 101 and 102]; [Al-Ankabūt, 25]; [Al-Ahzab, verses 64 and 65]; [Fussilat, 16]; [Ash-Shura, verses 45 and 46]; [Al-Djassiyah, 34]; [Al-Haqqah, 35]; [Nooh, 25]; [Al-Muddathir, 48]
- [49.](#) [Ibrahim, 49]; also refer to: [Ar-Rad, 5]; [Saba, 33]; [Ya-Sin, 8]; [Qafir, 71]; [Al-Haqqah, verses 30-32]; [Al-Insan, 4]
- [50.](#) Also refer to: [Al-Haqqah, 30-32]; [Maryam, 86]; [Al-Momenin, 104]; [Al-Kahf, 29]; [At-Tawbah, 35]; [Az-Zumar, 16]
- [51.](#) For more information, please refer to the book "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 11, pages 34-38
- [52.](#) "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 6, page 63
- [53.](#) Please, refer to the book, written by Seyyed Ali-Akbar Ghorashi: "Ghamous-e- Qur'an", volume 6, page 19
- [54.](#) "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 11, pages 180-181
- [55.](#) "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 5, page 146
- [56.](#) "Understanding the Holy Qur'an", volume 5, pages 54-55

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