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## Hell

Hell is a place in another world where the sinners would be punished with various kinds of chastisements. The Holy Quran has mentioned is as 'jahannam' and 'jaheem'. Please pay attention to the following verses:

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسَّ الْمِهَادُ

**Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting-place. (3:12)**

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

**...surely Allah will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in hell. (4:140)**

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ

**Allah has promised the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women and the unbelievers the fire of hell to abide therein; it is enough for them; and Allah has cursed them and they shall have lasting punishment. (9:68)**

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُّجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

**Whoever comes to his Lord (being) guilty, for him is surely hell; he shall not die therein, nor shall he live. (20:74)**

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَافِرٍ

**And (as for) those who disbelieve, for them is the fire of hell; it shall not be finished with them entirely so that they should die, nor shall the chastisement thereof be lightened to them: even thus do We retribute every ungrateful one. (35:36)**

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

**And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased. (40:60)**

## Punishments of Hell

Quran has described the punishments of Hell to be severe and painful and has mentioned them in the following terms:

‘Painful chastisement’, ‘degrading chastisement’, ‘great chastisement’, ‘severe chastisement’, ‘evil resort’ and ‘burning chastisement’.

The most important chastisement of Hell is the chastisement of fire; that is why Hell is also mentioned in numerous verses of Quran as Fire; for example:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

**And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject My communications, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (2:39)**

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

**Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide. (2:81)**

All the chastisements of Hell are mentioned as various kinds of blazing and scorching fires.

## Food of the Folks of Hell

The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

***Surely We have prepared for the iniquitous a fire, the curtains of which shall encompass them about; and if they cry for water, they shall be given water like molten brass which will scald their faces; evil the drink... (18:29)***

مِنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ مَاءٍ صَدِيدٍ \* يَتَجَرَّرُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يَكَادُ يَسِيغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَ مَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ

***Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of festering water: He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and death will come to him from every quarter, but he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him. (14: 16–17)***

إِنَّ شَجَرَةَ الزُّقُومِ \* طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ \* كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ \* كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ

***Surely the tree of the Zaqqum is the food of the sinful, like dregs of oil; it shall boil in (their) bellies, like the boiling of hot water. (44:43–46)***

## **Dress of the Folks of Hell**

The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran:

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِنْ نَارٍ يُصَبُّ مِنْ فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ \* يُصْهِرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ \* وَلَهُمْ مَقْمَعٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ

***As to those who disbelieve, for them are cut out garments of fire, boiling water shall be poured over their heads with it shall be melted what is in their bellies and (their) skins as well. And for them are whips of iron (22: 19–21)***

As you can see, Hell is mentioned in the Holy Quran as a place full of blazing and scorching fire and which greets its inmates with dresses and foods of fire. Is the condition really as concluded from the apparent meaning of the verses? Is the fire of Hell same as the fires of this world or of some other kind that it's like is not found in the world? In some verses are mentioned qualities of the fire of Hell, whose like is not present in the world.

And He says:

فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

***...then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for***

**the unbelievers. (Surah Baqarah 2:24)**

And He also says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

**O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...  
(66:6)**

And He further says:

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَرَدُونَ

**Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come.  
(21:98)**

In these verses, the souls of men and their deities, whether it be idols or precious stones are described as fuel and flames of blazing fire of Hell and such a thing is not present in the fire of the world.

In the Holy Quran, the Almighty Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا

**(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire. (4: 10)**

And He says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ \* يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ

**...and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement. On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; this is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded. (9:34-35)**

In the above mentioned verses, swallowing the property of orphan is directly mentioned as swallowing flames of fire and hoarding of gold and silver is mentioned as means of punishment. The hoarder would exclaim: "These were what I had hoarded," and he would taste it.

The Holy Quran says with regard to punishment of the folks of Hell:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا كَلَّمًا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بِدَلْنِهِمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

***(As for) those who disbelieve in Our communications, We shall make them enter fire; so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned, We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the chastisement; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. (4:56)***

It is concluded from this verse that fire of Hell is neither like the fire of the world nor the body of man, which would be punished would be like the body in the world. Fires of the world scorch the body of man and not his soul and mind; but Holy Quran says: Fire of Hell would reach up to the soul of man and scorch his conscience. Quran says:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ \* الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ \* إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَسَّدَةٌ \* فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

***It is the fire kindled by Allah, which rises above the hearts. Surely it shall be closed over upon them in extended columns. (104:6-9)***

From such verses, it can be concluded that fire of Hell is basically different from fire of the world and it is having completely different qualities. Basically if the fire of Hell had been like the fire of the world, it would have been the world and not the hereafter.

## **Statements of Imam Khomeini**

Here we shall mention some statements of Imam Khomeini which describe Hell and the inmates of Hell:

Hell, various chastisements of the ethereal world and Qiyamat are forms of your own deeds and morals. You have with your own hands put yourself into degradation and trouble and still continue to do that; you walk to Hell with your own feet and prepare Hell with your own deeds. Hell is nothing but the essence of your evil deeds; darkness and loneliness of the grave and purgatory is not but the shadow of oppressive invalid morals of man:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ \* وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

***So he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:7-8)***<sup>1</sup>

And he says:

Here you usurped the property of an orphan and enjoyed it. The Almighty Allah knows the form of it that you will see in Hell, and what is that degradation that is in your destiny? Here you bad mouthed people; harassed and tortured them; Allah knows what the punishment of this mental torture of people is. In that world, when you see you would understand what chastisements you have prepared for yourself. When you backbited, its ethereal form was prepared for you. It would be rejected with you. You would be raised with it and you will taste its chastisement.[2](#)

And he also says:

The Almighty Allah informs in the Book revealed by Him in the holy verse:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ \* الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ \* إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ \* فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

***It is the fire kindled by Allah, which rises above the hearts. (104:6-9)***

...about the quality of fire – which is the fire of Allah – it will inundate the hearts and scorch them; no fire scorches the hearts, except the fire of Allah. All the fire of Hell and chastisement of grave and Qiyamat and others which you mistakenly compared to be the fire of the world and the chastisement of the world; you made a wrong conclusion and the fire in this world is supposedly cool matter, the punishment of this world is very easy, your understanding is defective and short in this world; even if all the fires of the world collective try, they cannot burn the soul of man, there is another fire, which can scorch the body, scorch the soul and melts and scorch the hearts.[3](#)

## **Threatened with Chastisement of Hell**

In Quran some people are threatened with chastisement of Hell:

### **First group, Infidels**

Those who did not have faith in Allah, resurrection and prophethood. Quran says:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject My communications, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (2:39)***

### **Second group, Polytheists**

Those who associated someone or something in the worship of Almighty Allah. The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ

***Surely those who disbelieve from among the followers of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of hell, abiding therein; they are the worst of men. (98:6)***

### **Third group, Hypocrites**

Those who had no sincerity in faith; they only made a verbal claim and lived among believers. With regard to them the Quran says:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ

***Allah has promised the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women and the unbelievers the fire of hell to abide therein; it is enough for them; and Allah has cursed them and they shall have lasting punishment. (9:68)***

In these verses, these three groups are promised Hell and it is also declared that their stay in Hell would be forever. The terms of perpetuity are especially used in this regard. But we should know that perpetuity only applies to something that would continue forever and there is no other meaning of this term.

Raghib writes: “Perpetual” is something that is going to endure for a long time and that why when a person has grey hair it is said that he is a perpetual man. After that the term is used figuratively for someone who is going to live forever.[4](#)

Ibne Athir has also commented on the tradition of Imam Ali (as) in which he said: ‘One who relies on the world and becomes inseparable from it’, and explained the word of living forever in the sense of perpetuity.[5](#)

Therefore there is no doubt that infidels, polytheists and hypocrites would be chastised in Hell for a long time, since the Holy Quran has explained it in this way; although their remaining thus forever is a matter of doubt, especially with reference to two important points: one is that punishment of Hell is not a reprisal of enmity and taking revenge, on the contrary it is aimed to clean darkness and satanic filth and to gain eligibility of divine grace. The second point is that we must not forget the vastness of divine mercy and the fact that it precedes divine anger.

Therefore, if due to the effect of prolonged punishment of folks of Hell on their monotheistic nature, which was concealed in their beings, is exposed, and the aspect of their humanity overcomes the animal and satanic aspect, it is possible that he would be included in grace and mercy of Allah who is the most merciful of all mercifuls and did not cease to exist. But we, along with our defective intellect and narrow

mindedness do not have the right to adjudicate this important matter.

### **Fourth group, Oppressors**

The Quran says:

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

***Then it shall be said to those who were unjust: Taste abiding chastisement; you are not required except for what you earned. (10:52)***

### **Fifth group, those who have killed a human being without any justification**

The Holy Quran says:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

***And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it, and Allah will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement. (4:93)***

There is no doubt that these groups, since they have committed very serious sins, should be punished for a long time in Hell due to their evil deeds; but as for their remaining in Hell forever, there is doubt about it as concluded from the apparent meaning of the verses; especially keeping in mind the two points mentioned before.

### **Sixth group, Sinners and Criminals**

In the Holy Quran, the Almighty Allah says:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَاطِبَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide. (2:81)***

And He also says:

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ خَالِدُونَ

***Surely the guilty shall abide in the chastisement of hell. (43:74)***

As you can see, criminals and sinners are threatened that they would be thrown into Hell and into an everlasting chastisement. But with reference to a large number of verses and traditions, entry into Hell is conditional to firstly that he has died without repenting for his sins and secondly their chastisement of Hell and hardships of Qiyamat were not to the limit to enable them to become eligible for intercession, otherwise they would not have been in Hell.

In these verses, it is mentioned that those who have been put into Hell and who were also threatened with everlasting punishment, but with regard to the points we mentioned before, their stay in Hell would be only according to the seriousness of their sins, and after being purified and becoming eligible for intercession through intercessors and unlimited grace and mercy of Almighty Allah would be freed from chastisement of Hell.

### **Seventh group, Unaware Infidels**

Some had no faith in Allah, the Prophet and resurrection; but it was not due to innate hostility, on the contrary it was due to ignorance and unawareness. Like wild animals or half wild animals in wilderness or isolation; who lived like beasts and didn't know anything except eating, drinking and satisfying lust. Or that they had faith in their ancestral faith, without giving a thought to investigate it.

Although such people are not eligible for Paradise, they would also not be punished in Hell, since the punishment of such unaware persons is not compatible with justice of Allah. The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا

***Nor do We chastise until We raise an apostle. (17: 15)***

- [1.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 301.
- [2.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 305.
- [3.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 315.
- [4.](#) Al-Mufradat, Pg. 154, under the word of 'KH-L-D'.
- [5.](#) Al-Nihaya, Vol. 2, Pg. 61, under the word of 'KH-L-D'.

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