

## Section 5: Disbelievers shall not Enter Paradise

No soul is charged with any responsibility but to the limits of its ability – The fate of disbelievers and the reward the believers will receive.

### Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 40

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ  
الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ

**40. "Verily those who belie Our Signs and, turn away from them with arrogance, the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle and thus do We recompense the guilty."**

It can be understood from this verse that the purpose of the Arabic term / sama<sup>1</sup> / (sky), mentioned in this verse, is the place where Heaven is located in. So, in order to enter Heaven, the people of Heaven must pass through its gates.

The verse says:

**"Verily those who belie Our Signs and, turn away from them with arrogance, the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle and thus do We recompense the guilty."**

The Arabic term /jamal / means 'camel' or 'the thick rope by which ships are kept fastened beside the shore'. This meaning is more fitting than the meaning of 'needle and camel'. But, since the purpose is the statement of impossibility of the arrival of the disbelievers into Paradise, the meaning of 'camel' and passing a camel through the eye of a needle is nearer to the concept of impossibility.

Besides, the Bible, Luke, Chapter 18, No 25 says: "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Thus, despite Allah's gates of the grace of the sky and the earth are open to the virtuous believers, the gates of heaven are shut for the hostile beliers, the infidels.

***"... the gates of the heaven shall not be opened to them...."***

## **Explanations**

1. It is probable that this meaning is understood from the apparent context of the verse that Paradise is in heavens. 1

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has said:

*"The gates of the heaven are open at five times: when the struggle of strivers of Islam begins; when it is raining; when the Qur'an is being recited; at dawn; and at the time of calling to prayer."*2

## **Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 41**

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

**41. "For them shall be a bed of Hell-Fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We recompense the unjust."**

The Qur'anic term /mihad/ is derived from /mahd/ which means 'bed'; and the term /qawas/ is the plural form of /qasiyah/ in the sense of 'cover'. It is also used with the meaning of 'a camp'.

This hostile group, who turn away from the Truth, are referred to in verse 37 of this Surah as 'infidels'. In verse No. 40, they are discussed as 'beliers and sinners.' In this current verse, they are pointed to as 'the unjust.'

The reason why they are called differently is that the one who belies the signs of Allah, is deserving to be entitled with all these words. In **Surah Al -Baqarah. No.2. verse 254**, we recite:

***"... and the infidels -they are the unjust."***

Thus, Hell Fire will encompass the whole entity of the disbelievers: from above and beneath of them. The evidence is also **Surah Al-Ankabut. No.29. verse 55**, where it says:

***"On the day when the chastisement shall cover them from above them and from beneath their***

*feet...."*

However, applying the term / mihad / (bed) for the people of Hell, mentioned in this verse, is a kind of mocking them. It means that their resting place is Hell.<sup>3</sup>

The verse says:

***"For them shall be a bed of Hell-Fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We recompense the unjust."***

## **Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 42**

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ  
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***42. "And those who believe and do righteous deeds -We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability -these are the inhabitants of Paradise wherein shall they abide forever."***

The Qur'an usually brings the concepts of 'glad tidings' and 'warning' beside each other. In the previous verse, the end of the arrogant evildoers was stated. Here, in this verse, the good end of the eligible believers is referred to.

***"And those who believe and do righteous deeds -We do not impose upon anyone a duty but to the extent of his ability -these are the inhabitants of Paradise wherein shall they abide forever."***

Some apparently similar bounties of Heaven, such as: a stream of supplied in this world, with a great number of difference, of course, for a small number of people. But it is impossible to provide eternity of life here for anyone, which is possible in Heaven and the dwellers of Paradise are eternally provided with the Divine bounties.

Paradise is the reward of faith and good action that needs effort and endeavor, not any pretext.

Of course, the fulfillment of all good deeds is the best, yet, in action, every body is responsible as much as he is able to do. There is no exhausting duty upon the believers in Islam. The verse says:

***"... but to the extent of his ability-..."***

Again **Surah Al -Hajj No.22. verse 77** says:

***"... He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion...."***

Then if there is any duty decreed upon us, surely we have been able to do it, although we have not applied our entire abilities.

## Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 43

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

**43. "And we will remove whatever rancor be in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath their abodes and they will say: 'All praise be to Allah who guided us to this; and had Allah not guided us, we would not have been guided. Indeed, our Lord's messengers came with the truth.' And it will be cried out to them that: 'This is the Garden which you inherit for what you used to do.'"**

The Arabic term /qill/ means 'a secretly penetration'. Regarding this, the secret grudge and envy are also called /qill/.

In the former verses, we recited that the dwellers of Hell curse each other. Now, in this verse, the Qur'an says that the dwellers of Heaven have no rancor in their breasts unto each other. Whatever they have is peace and affection. None may envy another's rank. All of them are thankful of the bounties of Allah in Heaven.

### Explanations

1. Prophets are some means of guidance, and their guidance is accompanied with truth. They themselves, their speeches, their actions, heir styles, and their promises are entirely truth.

**"... Indeed, our Lord's messengers came with the truth...."**

2. According to the Islamic literature, every one of the believers and the disbelievers has a place both in Heaven and in Hell. But, believers inherit the places of disbelievers in Heaven and disbelievers inherit the Hellish places of the believers.

**"... 'This is the Garden which you inherit'...."**

3. It is understood from the Islamic traditions that the gates of happiness and wretchedness are open to everybody. No one was created for Heaven nor for Hell from the beginning. It is the person's choice and action that leads the one toward the final abode.

4. Heaven stands instead of good action, not because of bare wishes and imaginations.

"... for what you used to do."

## Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 44

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

**44. "And the inhabitants of Paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire: 'We have found what our Lord promised us true; have you, too, found what your Lord promised true? They will say: 'Yes. 'Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust. "**

It is recorded in the books of Shi'ite narrations and in some books of traditions of Sunnite school (like the book by Hakim Huskani) that the above-mentioned 'crier' will be Hadrat Ali (as).

Similarly, he (as) recited the Surah Al-Bara'ah in Mecca that announced the acquaintance of Muslims from the whole pagans of the world. Therefore, the recitation of resolutions of acquaintance and curse of Allah unto pagans are from the tongue of Ali (as), both in the world and Hereafter.

**"And the inhabitants of Paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) Fire: ' We have found what our Lord promised us true; have you, too, found what your Lord promised true? They will say: ' Yes.' Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust. "**

### Explanations

1. In Hereafter, the dwellers of Heaven and the dwellers of Hell will speak with each other.

**"And the inhabitants of paradise will call to the inhabitants of the (Hell) fire.... "**

2. The believers and the disbelievers will find the promises of Allah in truth and practical.

**"... 'We have found what our Lord promised us true.... "**

3. By means of the inhabitants of Heaven, Allah will make the inhabitants of Hell confession, so that they incur some more shame and pressure<sup>4</sup>.

4. All of the lies, accusations and sarcasms of the disbelievers will have some day a painful and sharp response.

**"... Then a crier will proclaim between them that: 'Allah's curse is on the unjust. "**

The court of Hereafter upon disbelievers will end with the motto saying:

*"Allah's curse is on the unjust"*

## Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 45

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ

**45. "The unjust are those who hinder (people) from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked, and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."**

The way of Allah is the way of Unity, submission, Faith, emigration, and Holy Struggle.

Transgressors hinder people from the way of Allah (S.w.T.) by means of creating doubts, temptations, propaganda, weakening them, and also by producing innovations and superstitions. They also oppose the leaders of truth and create despair through their hindering the affairs. Or, they cause some changes and deviations in the way of Allah (S.w.T.). The holy verse says as follows:

**"The unjust are those who hinder (people) from Allah's way, and seek to make it crooked, and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter."**

Yes, any hindrance from Allah's way, or creating any deviation in it, is transgression, and cultural transgression is the greatest one.

The enemy may also fight manifestly and, if he can, he hinders the way of Allah absolutely. But, if he cannot, by applying different designs, he deviates the way and creates some changes alongside the path.

**"and seek to make it crooked...."**

## Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 46

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ

**46. "And between the two (groups in Paradise and Hell) there shall be a veil. And on A'raf (the heights) there shall be men, recognizing all by their marks', who shall call to the inhabitants of Paradise: 'Peace be upon you!' They shall not have entered it; though they hope."**

The objective meaning of the term 'veil' mentioned in the verse, perhaps, is the same wall which has

been referred to in **Surah Al – Hadid, No. 57 , verse 13**. It says:

*"... Then separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it: (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it, before it there shall be punishment. "5*

The Arabic term /'a'raf/ is the plural form of the word /'urf/ in the sense of 'a high land'. The name of this Surah is taken from this part of the Qur'an as Al-'A'raf. It is only in this occurrence of the Qur'an where 'A'raf and the people of 'A'raf are referred to.

## **Who Are the People of 'A'raf?**

In the Islamic narrations and the statements of the commentators, there are some various attitudes about them. Some of them believe that these people are some saints of Allah who will stand on a high place between Heaven and Hell, and who recognize all people.

They will greet to the inhabitants of Heaven and congratulate them their good end, but they are worried about the fate of the inhabitants of Hell.

Some others introduce these people as some weak persons who have both some sins and worshipping, and they are waiting for the grace of Allah. They are like those about whom **Surah Al- Taubah. No.9 verse 106** says:

*"And others are made to await Allah's command, whether He chastises them or whether He turns to them (mercifully), and Allah is Knowing, Wise."*

That is, some other sinners are those whose affairs depend on Divine Will. He will either punish them by His justice, or He will forgive their sins with His grace. And, Allah knows the interests of people and is cognizant to the wisdom of creation, too.

Yet, perhaps, it can be said that the main pivot is Allah's saints, and the oppressive are in the margin. The good doers enter Paradise and the evildoers go into Hell. The weak people, those who are in the middle, are kept in 'A'raf, waiting for their fate. But, the saints of Allah, who are standing on 'A'raf, will come to help them and will intercede them.

This statement is the consequence of the attitudes found amongst commentators and in Islamic narrations.

## **Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 47**

وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ

## الظَّالِمِينَ

**47. "And when their eyes shall be turned toward the inhabitants of the Fire, they shall say: 'Our Lord! Place us not with the unjust people.'"**

The people of 'A'raf will look at the inhabitants of Heaven and recognize them and greet them, but they will not look at the inhabitants of Hell while their eyes shall be turned down

**"And when their eyes shall be turned toward the inhabitants of the Fire....."**

In their supplications, the people of 'A'raf do not ask Allah not to set them as the inhabitants of Fire, but they ask Him not to place them with the unjust people.

**"... they shall say: 'Our Lord! Place us not with the unjust people.'"**

As if, being companion with an unjust person is worse than being in fire. ('Alusi)

O' Lord! If you do not let us enter Paradise, yet do not muster us amongst the unjust people.

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1. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi; and Al -Mizan
  2. Tafsir-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
  3. Tafsir Fi-Zalal (the explanation under the verse).
  4. Tafsir Al-Mizan
  5. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan

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