

Summary and Conclusion

From all that has been said in this section about the good and bad deeds of Muslims and non-Muslims, the following conclusions can be reached:

1. Both salvation and perdition have degrees and levels; neither the people of salvation are all at the same level, nor are those of perdition. These levels and differences are called *darajāt* “levels of ascent” with regard to the people of Heaven and *darakāt* “levels of descent” with regard to the inhabitants of Hell.
2. It is not the case that all of the dwellers of Heaven will go to Heaven from the beginning, just as all of the people of Hell will not be in Hell for eternity. Many dwellers of Heaven will only go to Heaven after suffering very difficult periods of punishment in barzakh or the hereafter. A Muslim and a Shī‘a should know that, assuming he or she dies with sound faith, if God forbid he or she has committed sins, injustices, and crimes, he or she has very difficult stages ahead, and some sins have yet greater danger and may cause one to remain eternally in Hell.
3. Individuals who don’t believe in God and the hereafter naturally don’t perform any actions with the intention of ascending towards God, and since they don’t perform good deeds with this intent, by necessity they do not embark on a journey towards God and the hereafter. Thus, they naturally don’t ascend towards God and the higher realm and don’t reach Heaven. That is, because they were not moving towards it, they don’t reach that destination.
4. If individuals believe in God and the hereafter, perform actions with the intention of seeking nearness to God, and are sincere in their actions, their actions are acceptable to God and they deserve their reward and Heaven, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.
5. Non-Muslims who believe in God and the hereafter and do good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, on account of being without the blessing of Islām, are naturally deprived of benefiting from this Divine program. That proportion of their good deeds is accepted which is in accordance with the Divine program, such as forms of favours and services to God’s creation. But invented acts of worship that without base are naturally unacceptable, and a series of deprivations resulting from

unavailability of the complete program apply to and include them.

6. Accepted good deeds, whether of Muslims or otherwise, have certain afflictions which may come about afterwards and corrupt them. At the head of all of these afflictions is rejection, obstinacy, and deliberate unbelief. Thus, if non-Muslim individuals perform a great amount of good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, but when the truths of Islām are presented to them show bias and obstinacy and set aside fairness and truth-seeking, all of those good deeds are null and void, “like ashes caught in a strong wind on a stormy day.”

7. Muslims and all other true monotheists, if they commit indecencies and transgressions and betray the practical aspect of the Divine program, are deserving of long punishments in barzakh and the Day of Judgement, and occasionally because of some sins, like intentionally murdering an innocent believer, may remain in eternal punishment.

8. The good deeds of individuals who don't believe in God and the Day of Judgement and perhaps may ascribe partners to God will cause their punishment to be lessened and, occasionally, be lifted.

9. Felicity and perdition are in accordance with actual and creational conditions, not conventional and man-made conditions.

10. The verses and traditions that indicate that God accepts good deeds do not look solely to the action-related goodness of actions; in Islām's view, an action becomes good and worthy when it possesses goodness from two aspects: action-related, and actor-related.

11. The verses and traditions that indicate that the actions of those who deny Prophethood or Imāmate are not acceptable are with a view to denial out of obstinacy and bias; however, denial that is merely a lack of confession out of incapacity (quḍūr) – rather than out of culpability (taqḍūr) – is not what the verses and traditions are about. In the view of the Qur'ān, such deniers are considered musta'af (powerless) and murjawn li'amr illah (those whose affair is referred to God's command).

12. In the view of the Islāmic sages such as Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and Mullāh Ḥadrā, the majority of people who haven't confessed to the truth are incapable and excusable rather than culpable; if such people do not know God they will not be punished – though they will also not go to Heaven – and if they believe in God and the Resurrection and perform pure good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, they will receive the recompense for their good deeds. Only those will face perdition who are culpable, not those who are incapable.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اخْتِمْ لَنَا بِالْخَيْرِ وَ السَّعَادَةِ وَ تَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ، وَ اَلْحِقْنَا بِالصَّالِحِيْنَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ

O God! Seal (our fate) for us with goodness and felicity, and cause us to die as Muslims, and join us with the righteous, Muhammad and his noble Progeny (may Peace be upon all of them).

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