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# Hell (Dozakh)

Hell is a valley whose depth cannot be imagined, and the fire of Allah's wrath is blazing therein. It can also be called the prison of the hereafter. In it lie different types of punishments, which cannot be perceived by a man's intellect. In fact it is opposite to paradise wherein are different types of blessings and pleasures. But in hell there is hardship, restlessness and humiliation.

We guote here some of the verses of the Qur'an which throw light on these punishments.

# Food and Drink of the people of hell

Allah says,

"Then shall you, O you who err and call it a lie! Most surely eat of a tree of Zaqoom." (Surah al Waqe'ah, 56:51–52)

It is tree that grows in the pit of hell; its fruits are ugly and bitter. It is (poisonous) like the fang of a snake, and its touch makes men fear. This is the food of the dwellers of hell.

"And fill (your) bellies with it, then drink over it of boiling water." (Surah al-Waqe'ah, 56:53-54)

It is related that one of the punishments by Allah for the people of hell will be intense thirst. Then after a long time hot boiling water mixed with pus will be given to them, and they will drink it because of extreme thirst.

"And who are made to drink boiling water, so it rend their bowels asunder." (Surah al-Muhammad, 47:15)

It is related that if a drop of that water be put on a mountain (in this world), it will be reduced to dust.

"And drink as drinks the thirsty camels." (Surah al-Waqe'ah, 56:55).

They will drink that water literally like a camel that has been thirsty for many days, and drinks whilst

shivering. *Heem* (the water referred to in this verse) is the plural of 'Aheem', which means a camel suffering from a disease. This disease is equivalent to dropsy, which usually happens to a camel, in which it keeps drinking water but is not satiated until it dies. This will be the state of the dwellers of hell.

"This is their entertainment on the day of requital." (Surah al Waqe'a, 56:56)

This 'Zaqoom' and 'Hameem' will be given to them in Qayamat as an introduction to Allah's wrath. And whatever is destined in hell (for the disbelievers) is far more harsh and beyond description.

"Surely the tree of the Zaqoom, is the food of the sinful, like dregs of oil, it shall boil in (their) bellies, like the boiling of hot water." (Surah ad- Dukhan, 44:43-46)

The intestines and stomach will melt because of this. This same boiling water will be thrown on their heads, as a result of which their whole body will melt.

"Then pour over his head of the torment of boiling water." (Surah ad Dukhan, 44:48)

Even after such state their punishment will not be lessened.

"Their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite." (Surah al- Baqarah, 2: 162)

"So often as their skins are thoroughly burned, we will change them for other skins, that they may taste the chastisement." (Surah an- Nisa, 4:56)

"Surely with Us are heavy fetters and a flaming fire, and food that chokes and a painful punishment." (Surah al Muzzammil, 73: 12, 13)

Among the other foods of the dwellers of hell is 'Ghasaleen' as said in the Qur'an,

"Nor that food except refuse." (Surah al-Haqqah,69 :36)

It is written in 'Maj'ma' ul Bahrayn' that whatever is excreted from the stomach of the people of hell, will be given to them for eating.

"Made to drink from a boiling spring. They shall have no food but of thorns, which will neither fatten nor avail against hunger." (Surah al- Ghashiyah, 88:5-7)

"And he shall be given to drink of festering water" (Surah al-Ibraheem, 14:16)

The festering water referred to in this verse is the blood and wastage which will be oozing out of the private parts of fornicating women, and will be given to the dwellers of hell to drink.

"But boiling and intensely cold water," (Surah an Nab'a, 78: 25).

The interpreters say that 'Ghassaq' (the water referred to in this verse) is a spring in hell, which contains venom of poisonous animals, and this also shall be given to the people of hell to drink.

# Clothes of the people of hell

"For them are cut garments of fire, boiling water shall be poured over their head. With it shall be melted what is in their bellies and (their) skins as well." (Surah al-Hajj, 22:19,20)

"Their shirts made of pitch (Qatran) and fire covering their faces." (Surah al-Ibraheem. 14:50)

'Qatran' is a black and stinking substance. Some interpret it to be tar, but the reality is that nothing of the hereafter can be compared to the things of this world. It is related that if a dress of the people of hell is hung between the earth and the sky, then all the people on the earth will scorch and die due to its heat and evil odor.

# Hand Cuffs and Shackles of the people of Hell

"The guilty shall be recognized by their marks, so they shall be seized by the forelocks and the feet." (Surah ar Rahman, 55:41)

It means that some of the evil doers will be seized by the hair of their forehead and flung into hell, while some will dragged by their legs and thrown into the fire. When the fire of hell will see them, it will roar with rage and will proceed to devour them.

"Surely it sends up sparks like palaces, as if they were tawny camels." (Surah al-Mursalat, 77:32-33)

"Then thrust him into a chain the length of which is seventy cubits." (Surah al-Haqqah, 69:32)

"When the fetters and the chains shall be on their necks, they shall be dragged." (Surah al-Mo'min, 40:71)

"And on the day of resurrection you shall see- those who lied against Allah, their faces shall be blackened." (Surah az-Zumar, 39:60)

"The faces shall scorch their faces, and they therein shall be in severe affliction." (Surah al-Mo'menoon, 23: 104)

#### Beds of the people of hell

"They shall have a bed of hell-fire and from above them coverings (of it), and thus do we reward the unjust." (Surah al-A'raf, 7:41)

The people of hell will be sifting on planks of fire, and will cover themselves with it.

#### **Keepers of hell**

"Over it are appointed Angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them." (Surah at-Tahreem, 66:6)

"And for them are whips of iron." (Surah al-Hajj, 22:21)

The keepers of hell will have with them clubs of iron, with which they will be striking the heads of evil-doers. The dwellers of paradise will call out to the dwellers of hell and say, "Whatever Allah has promised for us, He has surely fulfilled, and we have tasted the reward of our good deeds. Have you also seen whatever chastisement Allah had promised for the evil-doers"?

They will reply in the affirmative. Then a caller will call out by the command of Allah: Allah's wrath be on the oppressors.

"So today those who believe shall laugh at the unbelievers." (Surah al-Mutaffefeen, 83:34),

as they used to laugh and make fun of (in the world) of those who believed.

Shaitaan will be the companion of the dwellers of hell, while the dwellers of paradise will meet one another and rejoice. The dwellers of hell will bear animosity and hate one another.

"And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint for him a shaitaan, so he becomes his associate. And most surely they turn them away from the path, while they think that they are guided rightly, until when he comes to Us, he says: O I wish there there were between me and you the distance of the east and the west – so evil is this associate." (Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:36-38).

It is related that both of them (the evil-doer and his comrade shaitaan will be bound together in a single chain and thrown into the fire.

"When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder. And those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a return, then we would renounce them as they renounced us." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:166-167)

Regarding the animosity between the people of the hell, it is said in the Qur'an:

"Then on the day of Qayamat some of you shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others." (Surah al-Ankaboot, 29: 25)

"The friends shall on that day be enemies of one another, except those who guard (against evil)." (Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:67)

It is related that the friendship, which has been established against the will of Allah in this world, shall turn into enmity in the hereafter. When the evil-doers will get exhausted by the punishment and loose all hope, they will call out to the keepers of hell, as said in the Qur'an,

"And they shall call out: O Malik (name of the keeper of hell)! let your Lord make an end of us. He shall reply: Surely you shall tarry, certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth." (Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:77-78)

#### **Gates of hell**

"It has seven gates, for each of those is a (Special) class (of sinners assigned)." (Surah al-Hijr, 15:44)

It is related in 'Anware No'maniyah' and 'Biharul Anwaar' that when Hazrat Jibra'eel descended with the above verse of the Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (s) requested him to explain to him about the qualities of hell.

Jibra'eel replied, "O Prophet of Allah (S)! verily there are seven gates in hell. The distance between each of these gates is equal to the length of seventy years, and each one of them is hotter than the other. The names of the gates are: (1) *Hawiyah* (meaning a pit) – And this gate is for the hypocrites (*munafeqeen*) and disbelievers (*kuffar*), (2) *Jaheem* – It is for the polytheists (those who associate someone or something with Allah), (3) It is for the Sabians (Star worshippers), (4) *Lazza* – It is for shaitaan and his followers and the Magians (fire worshippers), (5) *Hutamah* (meaning that which crushes to pieces) – It is for the Jews, (6) *Sa'eer* (meaning a blazing fire) – It is for the Christians." When Jibra'eel came to describe the seventh gate he became silent.

The Holy Prophet (s) told him to describe the seventh gate, to which Jibra'eel replied, "It is for the proud people of your ummat, who died without repenting for their sins." The Prophet (s) lifted his head and was so much grieved that he became unconscious. When He regained consciousness. He said, "O Jibra'eel verily you have made my trouble two-fold. Will my people also go to hell"? Then he started weeping.

After this incident he did not communicate with anyone for some days, and whenever he recited namaz, he wept bitterly. All his companions also wept due to his intense weeping. They asked Him the reason for his grief, but he did not reply. Imam Ali (a.s.) was away on some mission, and so the companions went to the presence of the Lady of Light Hazrat Fatima (a.s.). They went to her house at the time when She was grinding the millstone. She was reciting the following verse of the Qur'an:

"While the hereafter is better and more lasting." (Surah al-A'la, 87:17).

The companions related to her the state of Her Father. When she heard it, she got up and wore her cloak (chader) which had twelve patches sewed with the leaves of the date – tree. Salman –al– Farsi was present among those people who were moved by looking at the worn out cloak of Hazrat Sayyedah and said, "Alas! The daughters of *Qaiser* (Caesars, the rulers of ancient Rome) and *Khusra* (rulers of ancient Persia) sit on golden thrones, but the daughter of the Prophet of Allah has no proper clothes to wear."

When Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) reached the presence of her Father, she saw his bad state and the state of his companions and started weeping. She then said, "O Father! Salman is astonished after looking at my worn–out cloak. I swear by the Lord Who has chosen You as the Prophet, since the past five years we have got only one sheet of cloth in our house, during the day we feed the camels on it, and during the night rest on it. And our children have got a mattress of a skin with dried leaves of the date trees." The Holy Prophet (s) turned towards Salman and said, "Do you pay heed and take lesson"?

Hazrat Zahra (a.s.) saw that due to excessive weeping the face of the holy Prophet (s) had turned pale, and his cheeks had sunk in, and as related by Kashfi, the ground where He was sitting had turned wet with tears. She (a.s.) told Her Father, "May my life be your ransom, why do you weep"? The Prophet (s) replied, "O Fatema Why should I not weep? For verily Jibra'eel has revealed to me a verse (Ayah) describing the qualities of hell, that it contains seven gates, which in turn have seventy thousand fissures of fire. And in each fissure there are seventy thousand coffins of fire, and each coffin contains seventy thousand types of punishment."

When Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) heard this, she cried out, "Verily the one who is fed to this fire is doomed." Saying this she fainted. When she regained consciousness, she said, "O the best of creatures! Who is worthy for such a punishment"? The Prophet (s) replied, "Those from my ummat who follow the passions of their self and neglect namaz, and this punishment is quite less when compared to the other punishments."

After hearing these words each companion of the Prophet came out weeping and lamenting thus: "O sorrow! The journey (to the hereafter) is quite far, while the equipment quite less." While some were crying, "O I wish my mother had never given birth to me, so I would not have heard about this punishment." Ammar Yasir said, "I wish I were a bird, so I would not be stopped (in Qayamat) for accounting."

Bilal who was not there came and asked Salman the reason for the grief, to which he replied, "Woe be upon you and me! For verily we will have a dress of fire instead of this dress of cotton, and we will be fed with the 'Zaqoom' (a poisonous tree in hell)." (*Khazeenatul Jawahir*)

# Related to the severity of the punishment in hell

Abu Baseer says that I told Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), "O son of the Prophet! Please admonish me

from the wrath of Allah, for my heart has turned hard." Imam (a.s.) replied, "O Abu Muhammad! Get ready for the lengthy life, the life of the hereafter, which is eternal. So worry about it and get ready for it.

One day Jibraeel came to the presence of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) in a sad serious mood. At other times, whenever he had come to the Prophet, he had come with a smiling face. The Holy Prophet (s) looked at him and said, "O Jibraeel! what has happened to you, for you look sad and angry." To this Jibra'eel replied, "The blower which was used to incite the flames of the fire of hell has been stopped."

The Prophet asked him as to what the blower was? Jibra'eel replied, "O Prophet! According to the orders of Allah, the fire of hell was given air with blower for a thousand years till it turned white. Then again it was given air for a thousand years till it turned red. While again it was given air for a thousand years and ultimately it turned dark and black. If one drop of the *zaree* (liquid which is the admixture of the sweat of the people of hell, and the wastage which will be oozing from the private parts of the fornicating women, which will be boiled in large vessels by the heat of the fire of hell, and the evil doers will be given to drink it) be poured in the seas in this world, the entire world would be ruined because of it's filthiness. If one ring of the seventy feet chain would be bound around the necks of the people of hell be placed on the earth, it would melt because of intense heat. And if one shirt of the shirts of the people of hell be hung between the sky and the earth, the entire world would perish because of the bad odor emitting form it." After saying this Jibra'eel and the Holy Prophet (s) both wept. When Allah saw this, He sent one of His Angels to Him. The Angel said, "O Prophet! Allah sends salutations to you, and says that surely He has kept this punishment far away from you"

After this whenever Jibra'eel came to the Prophet, he was in a good mood." Imam Sadiq (a.s.) continued, "on that day the dwellers of hell will become aware of Allah's great chastisement, likewise the dwellers of paradise will also become aware of Allah's Mercy and Blessings. Then the evildoers will be thrown into the fire of hell, they will try hard for seventy years and finally come to the mouth of hell. Then the Angels standing there will strike their heads with iron clubs, and they will again fall into the bottom of the pit. They will then be given new skins so as to repeat and prolong this punishment." Then Imam (a.s.) asked Abu Baseer, Is this enough for you"? He replied, "Verily it is enough."

Another tradition has been narrated from Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (a.s.), which says that the Holy Prophet (s) said, "on the night of my ascension (*Me'raj*) when I reached the first heaven I saw all the Angels rejoicing, but one of them was quite different from the others. His face was fearful and showed signs of anger. He saluted me but unlike others did not smile at me. I asked Jibra'eel as to who he was. Jibra'eel replied, "verily you should fear him, for we all fear him. This Angel is the keeper of hell. From the day Allah appointed him as the keeper of hell his anger and wrath increases for Allah's enemies. And when Allah shall order him to take revenge upon His enemies, he shall do so with harshness and severity. If he had ever met anyone joyously, he would also have smiled at you." I saluted that Angel and he answered me and gave me good news of paradise. Then I told Jibra'eel, "O Jibra'eel! tell him to let me have a glimpse of hell." Jibra'eel requested him and he lifted the veil off and opened one of the doors of

hell. Suddenly flames of fire erupted from it, which reached the sky and covered it entirely, and started roaring a raging and creating terror. I told Jibra'eel to request him to put back the veil. The keeper of hell ordered the flames which had reached the sky to go down."

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said that, "Allah has not created any man but with two places, one in paradise and another in hell for the evil-doers. A caller will call out to the dwellers of paradise and say, "Look towards hell." They shall do so, and they will be shown their place in hell, which would have theirs if they had sinned. When they see it they will be so much excited, that had there been death in paradise, they would have died of happiness. Their happiness will have no bounds for "Praise be to Allah, and thank Allah that He has saved us from this punishment."

In the same manner it will be said to the dwellers of hell, "lift your heads up and see, this would have been your place (in paradise) if you had believed." They will become so much depressed, that had there been death in hell, they would have died of grief. Then the places of the people of hell (in paradise) will be given to the people of Paradise and vise versa. This is the interpretation of the verse of the Qur'an,

"These are they who are the heirs, who shall inherit the Paradise, they shall abide therein." (Surah al-Mo'meneen, 23:10-11)

The Holy Prophet (s) has said, that when the good-doers will be put into paradise and evil-doers into hell, a caller will call out, "O the people of Paradise! And O the people of hell! Will you recognize death if we show it to you giving it a form"? They will reply, "No we will not be able to recognize it."

Then death will be given the form of cattle and made to stand between paradise and hell, and it will be said to them, "look, this is death." Then the cattle (death) will be sacrificed by the orders of Allah, and it will be said to the people of Paradise: "Now you shall always remain in paradise and death will not harm you", and it will be said to the people of hell: "You too shall stay in hell forever and death will not relieve you."

"And warn them of the day of intense regret, when the matter shall have been decided, and they are (now) in negligence and they do not believe." (Surah al-Maryam, 19:39).

Then the people of hell will regret and loose hope of mercy.

Imam Ali–al–Murtaza (a.s.) has said, that for the evildoers there has been created a borough in between the fire (of hell). There will be chains bound to their feet, and their hands will be tied to their necks. Their shirts will be of copper, and dresses of fire. They will be chastised with intense heat. The doors of hell will be closed for them (so there will be no escape), and will never be opened. Cool breeze will not enter therein, and they will not find immunity from sorrow and grief. Their punishment will be of different types and increase occasionally. There will no change in their state, nor their age would increase. They will plead with Allah for death, but He will say, "You will ever remain in this state and taste chastisement."

According to trustworthy authorities, Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (a.s.) has said that, that in hell there is a well in which some of the people will be imprisoned. This place is for the arrogant and proud people, the stubborn evildoers. It will also be reserved for the enemies of Ahlulbait (a.s.). The least punishment here is that the person (having the least punishment) will be floating in the sea of fire, his shoes will be of fire and strings of the shoes will also be made of fire. And because of intense heat his brain will be boiling inside his skull. He will think that his punishment is quite severe, but in fact his punishment will be the least when compared to the others.

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