

The Eternal Kingdom of Paradise

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The literal meaning of Jannah' is a green garden, whether in the earth or the heavens. According to the religious interpretation, it is a place which Allah has created for the believers (mo'meneen) and His virtuous slaves, in which they shall dwell forever. It is related from Imam Ja'far-as-Sadiq (A.S.) in "Sifatush Shi'ah" that He (A.S.) said, person who does not believe in the following four things is not from our Shi'ahs: (1) Me'raj (ascention) of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.S). (2) Questioning in the grave by Munkir and Nakeer, (3,) Existence of Paradise and hell and (4) Our intercession (shafa'at)".

Verses (ayah) of the Qur'an are an open proof of the existence of Paradise and hell. "It is prepared for those who guard against evil". (Surah al-Aale Imraan: 132) "And the garden shall be brought near for those who guard (against evil)".(Surah-ash-Shu'ara: 90) It is beyond the capacity of the people of this world to have a comprehension of the bliss of Paradise. Only a brief belief in it's existence is sufficient, and one should not go into details as to where it is or how it is. It can be compared to a child in a mother's womb who is not aware of the outside world. "So no soul knows what is hidden from them of that which will refresh the eyes, reward for what they did". (Surah-as-Sajdah: 17) Regarding the blessings of Paradise, it is writing in the Qur'an: "They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet". (Surah-al-Qaf: 35) "And they shall abide in that, which their souls long for". (Surah-al-Ambiya: 102) In short Paradise is a place free of emptiness and sorrow. Handicap, ailment, and ageing does not exist there. No place for boredom and uneasiness. There is absolute peace and contentment. Hence it is also referred to as "Darus Salaam"(the abode of peace).

Kingdom of Paradise.

For the believers there will be a true kingdom on which they will have full control, and whatever they desire will take place, no one will disobey them. "Verily the people of Paradise are true kings". "And when you see there, you shall see blessings and a great kingdom". (Surah-ad-Dahr: 20) It is also related that when the person having the lowest rank in Paradise looks at his kingdom, it's distance will be equal to a period of one thousand years, and even the Angels will not be permitted to enter it without his consent.

Vastness of Paradise.

"The extensiveness (of Paradise) of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth". (Surah-al Hadeed : 21) It is related that one day Jibra'eel decided to calculate the length of Paradise. He flew for a distance equal to thirty thousand years and became weary, then he requested Allah to give him strength. Then again he flew for thirty thousand times and each time equal to thirty thousand years and then lost vigour. He then asked Allah whether he flew more or more was left. One Hourie of Paradise came out of her tent and said, "O Spirit of Allah! Why do you trouble yourself, for you have flown so much that you have not even crossed my courtyard as yet". Jibra'eel asked her as to who she was. She replied that she was a Hourie and had been created for a believer (mo`min). (Tafseere Umdatul Bayaan)

Food of Paradise.

Whatever the dwellers of Paradise will wish, will be made available for them to eat. "And abundant fruit, neither intercepted nor forbidden". (Surah-al-Waqe'ah: 32, 33) "And fruit such as they choose, and the flesh of fowl such as they desire". (Surah-al-Waqe'ah: 20, 21) Abu Sa'eed Khudri relates from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) that He said that in Paradise birds with seventy thousand feathers will be flying in the air. Whenever a believer will desire to eat something, a bird will fly down to his eating-carpet and will flap it's feathers, and from each of their feathers will fall a dish whiter than ice and more delicious than honey, and more fragrant than musk, and no other food will be like it. Then the bird will fly away. "In both are fruits and palms and pomegranates". (Surah-ar-Rahman: 68) "Amid thorneless lote-trees.(and banana trees (with fruits), one above another. And extended shade". (Surah-al Waqe'ah: 28-30) "Gardens and vine-yards". (Surah-an-Naba': 32)

Drinks of Paradise.

"Therein are rivers of water that does not alter, and rivers of milk the taste whereof does not change, and rivers of drink delicious to those who drink, and rivers of honey clarified". (Surah-a1-Mohamrnad:1 5) "They are made to quaff of a pure drink that is sealed (to others). The sealing of it is (with) musk, and for that let the aspirers aspire. And the admixture of it is a water of Tasneem. A fountain from which drink they who are drawn near (to Allah)". (Surah-al-Mutaffeffeen: 25-28) "And they shall be made to drink therein a cup the admixture of which shall be ginger, (of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil". (Surah-ad-Dahr: 17, 18)

"Surely the righteous shall drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor". (Surah-ad-Dahr: 5)

In Paradise there shall be flowing different types of streams, and the taste and savor of each shall be different from the other, and their names are kept according to their qualities. And in all these streams the fountain of Kausar is exclusive which flows from beneath the heaven. It's earth is softer than ghee, and it's pebbles of topaz (zabro jad), rubies (yaqoot), flows in Paradise, and on the day of Qayamat will be known as u'Hauz'.

Dresses & Ornaments of the people in Paradise.

"Ornaments shall be given to them therein of bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green robes of fine silk, thick silk brocade interwoven with gold". (Surah-al-Kahf: 31)

"They shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk". (Surah-al-Haj: 23) It has been related that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.S.) said, "When a believer (mo'min) enters his palace in Paradise, a crown of magnificence will be placed on his head, and he will be given to wear seventy thousand different types of dresses adorned with various gems and pearls.

If one of these dresses is made apparent to the people of this world, they will not be able to bear it's Imam Ja'far-as-Sadiq (A.S.) says, that on every Friday Allah presents a dress of honour for a believer to an Angel (to keep it for him). The believer (in Paradise) wears one over his waist and puts another on the shoulder, and wherever he goes it's vicinity gets illuminated by it's light.

Palaces of Paradise and their adornment.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "And (Allah) will cause you to enter into gardens, beneath which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetuity, that is the mighty achievement". (Surah-as- Saf: 12)

Regarding the interpretation of the "Goodly dwelling" it is related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) that there is a palace in paradise made of pearls, which has seventy houses of red rubies (Yaqoot). And in every house are seventy rooms of green emeralds (zamarood) . And in each room there are seventy thrones on which are spread seventy carpets, and on each carpet will be seated Hourul Een' And in each room there will be seventy eating carpets, on which there will be seventy types of delicious dishes, and in each room there will be one servant (male and female) Allah will give strength to a believer so much that he will be able to derive pleasure from all houries and digest each types of dishes, this is a great blessing of

the hurrier.

"They shall have high places, above them higher places, built (for them), beneath which flow rivers". (Surah-az Zumar: 20) It is related from Imam Mohammad -al-Baqir (A.S.) that Imam Ali (A.S.) asked the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) regarding the interpretation of the "Higher places" and asked as to what these higher places are made of ? He (S.A.W.S.) replied, "O Ali! It's walls are of pears, rubies, and topaz. It's ceiling is of gold lined with silver. Each "Higher place" has a thousand doors, and on each door are thousand Angels. In it are spread carpets of soft and colourful silk filled with musk, camphor, and amber".

Rooms of paradise and their beautification.

"Reclining therein on raised couches, excellent the recompense". (Surah-al-kahf: 31) "Therein are thrones raised high, and drinking cups ready placed, and cushions set in a row, and carpets spread out". (Surah-al-Ghashiyah: 13-16) "On thrones decorated". (Surah-al-Waqe'ah: 15) The thrones mentioned herein will be three hundred hands high. Whenever a believer will desire to ascend it, it will bend down and they will sit on it leaning on cushions. Reclining on beds, the inner covering of which are silk brocade" (Surah-ar-Rahman: 54) The reality of these blessings are best known to Allah. For verily the magnificence of Istabraq Reclining on beds, the inner covering of which are of silk brocade (Istabraq) Surah-ar Rahman: 54', Rafraf' 0Reclining on green cushions (Ra fraf) Surah-ar-Rahman: 76, 'Numariq' And cushions (Numariq) set in a row - Surah-al-Ghashiyah: 16' can be perceived only by looking at them and cannot be explained.

Cups of Paradise.

"And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass, (transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure". (Surah-ad-Dahr: 15, 16) *Round about them shall go youths never altering in age, with goblets & ewers and a cup of pure drink". (Surah-al Waq'e'ah: 17, 18)

Houries and Women of Paradise.

For deriving physical pleasures in Paradise, Allah has created the 'Hourul Een' for the believers. They have been given this name because 'Hoor'means 'bright colour and 'Een means 'expanse and dark-eyed, for the darkness of their eyes will be quite dark, and their skin pure white. "And pure, beautiful ones, the like of hidden pears". (Surah-al-Waq'e'ah: 22, 23)

"In them shall be those who restrained their eyes, before them neither man nor jinni shall have touched them". (Surah-ar-Rahman: 56) "As though they were rubies and corals". (Surah-ar-Rahman: 58)

"And with them shall be those who restrain their eyes, having beautiful eyes. As if they were eggs carefully protected". (Surah-as-Saffat: 48,49) It is related that a hourie' will be wearing seventy dresses, even then the whiteness of their calfs will be visible. Their bodies will be glowing like the gentle brightness of rubies. Abdullah ibne Mas'ood says, that he heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) as saying, that a light will shine forth in paradise and people will wonder as to what it is. It will be said unto them that the light has emitted from the teeth of a hourie' who is laughing seated in front of her husband.

"Surely we have made them to grow into a (new) growth, then We have made them virgins, loving, equals in age". (Surah- al-Waqe'ah: 35-37) All of these houries' will be aged sixteen years, while the age of the believers (in Paradise) will be thirty three years. The hair of the houries' will be curled, their bodies bright and clean of unwanted hair.

"And they shall have Pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide (forever)" (Surah -al-Baqarah: 25) These houries' will be free from pride and arrogance and will not envy each other. It is related that on the right side of the hourie' it will be written: "praise be to Allah who has fulfilled what He promised", and on the left side : "praise be to Allah who has relieved us of grief.

In a lengthy tradition the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) says, that when Allah created the hourie', on her right hand was written "Mohammadun Rasoolullah", and on her left hand "Aliyyun Waliyullah". On her forehead was written "Al Hasan" and on her chin "Al Husain", and on both of her lips "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, Merciful". Ibne Mas'ood asked, O' Prophet ! who will have this blessing"? The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) replied, "The one who recites "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, Merciful" with due respect".

Those Women who die in faith, their beauty in paradise will be more than that of the houries' "In them are goodly things, beautiful ones". (Surah-ar- Rahman: 70)

The women referred to here are the faithful ones who will enter paradise. In reference to the above verse, Allamah Majlisi quotes Imam Ja'far-as-sadiq (A.S.) as saying, that the "goodly things" referred to in the verse are those women who are believers, the Shi'ahs, and the Wise ones.

They will enter paradise and will be given in wed-lock to the believing men It is related that those women who did not marry in this world, or those women whose husbands had not entered paradise, will be given the freedom to choose the believer whom she desires, and they

shall be married to them. But if a women's husband is present in paradise, she will be permitted to marry him with her consent. If in the world she married more than once, the man who has the greatest status (in paradise) and has committed more good deeds will be chosen for her.

Perfumes of paradise.

In Surah-ar-Rahman Allah refers to that person who fears standing in front of his Lord for accounting (for his deeds), and thus refrains from sinning.

"And for him who fears to stand before his lord are two gardens". Allamah Majlisi narrates from the Holy prophet (S.A.W.S.) that He said "If one of the hoories' of paradise descends on the first heaven on a dark night and looks down towards the earth, the entire universe will be filled with her fragrance".

It is related from Imam Ja'far-as-sadiq (A.S.) that the fragrance of the perfume paradise will reach up to the distance equal to a thousand years. The sand of paradise is of musk. It is related in many traditions that the walls, doors, and the floor of paradise is covered with grass of it's fragrance will be such that an old man proceeding towards paradise will reach such a place which is far from paradise at a distance of a thousand years, yet he will turn young by just the fragrance.

Lamps of paradise.

"They shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor intense cold". (Surah-ad-Dahr: 13)

In paradise there will not be heat of the sun nor the coldness of the winter season, there the season will be moderate. The people of paradise will be in no need of the sun or the moon, for in paradise people's good deeds and faith (Eeman) will be glowing. It is related that the light of the hoories' will be more than the light of the sun, they will be like walking lanterns. Palaces of paradise adorned with pearls, corals, rubies, topaz and emeralds will emit a colourful light and make a pleasant environment.

The floor, vessels, and dresses will be scattering light, and these glowing lanterns will turn paradise into an illuminated place. Abdullah ibne Abbas relates that one day the dwellers of paradise will see a light shining more than usual. They will wonder and say " O , Lord ! you had promised that in paradise there will not be sun light and intense cold, what has happened today ? Has the sun risen"? A voice will come, "This is not sunlight, but the Commander of the faithful Ali (A.S.) and the Lady of light Hazrat zahra (A.S.) are having a graceful talk and are laughing,

and this light has emerged from their teeth which has overpowered the light of paradise".

Songs of paradise.

The different types of pleasures of this world are nothing when compared to the bliss and pleasures of the hereafter. There it will be in its true and pure form. Songs in sweet and pleasant voice will be heard in paradise. If the voice of these songs are heard by the people of this world, they would perish. Prophet Dawood (A.S.) had been blessed with a pleasant voice in the world. Its effect was such that when He sat to recite the Zaboor, animals and beasts gathered around Him and entered into a trance.

When people heard it, they fell unconscious while some even died. Imam Ali (A.S.) in one of His sermons in Nahjul Balagha' says while describing the state of Prophets in paradise that : In paradise prophet Dawood will entertain its inhabitants with His pleasant voice, and will be a recitor of paradise.

It is clear that Prophet Dawood will entertain the dwellers of paradise with good songs, and the prophet therein will have the strength to bear it. In "Majma'ul Bayaan" it is related from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) that the best song from amongst the songs of Paradise will be the one which the houries' will sing for their husbands (the believers), it will be such that no man or jinni will ever have heard it.

But these songs will be free of music. It is also related that the birds of Paradise will sing songs.

Imam Ja'far-as-Sadiq (A.S.) was once asked as to whether there would be music and melody in Paradise, to which He replied, "In Paradise there is a tree, by the command of Allah when the breeze will shake it a sound will emanate from it, such that no man has ever heard such a pleasant and melodious tune. This blessings will be for the one who in the world kept away from (vain) music and songs because of fear of Allah".

Blessings and Pleasures of Paradise.

There will be various types of blessing in Paradise which our intellect cannot perceive. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And if you would count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them". (Surah-an-Nahl: 18)

In 'Tafseere Saafi' it is written regarding the interpretation of the following verse of the Qu'ran: "Then shall some of them advance to others, questioning each other". (Surah-as-Saff'at: 50).) that the dwellers of Paradise will discuss with one another regarding the Wisdom and Knowledge of Allah. Also the people of Paradise whose parents, children, and friends who died

believing and have the capacity to enter Paradise will intercede for them, their intercession will be accepted because of their great honour and respect.

"The gardens of perpetual abode which they will enter along with those who do good from among their parents and their spouses and their offsprings". (Surah-ar-Ra'ad:23)

So when the believer enters Paradise, a thousand Angels will be sent by Allah to visit and congratulate theme. Each Angel will enter the palace having a thousand doors and offer salutations to the believer and wish him. "And the Angels will enter in upon them from every gate, Peace be on you". (Surah-ar-Ra'ad: 23, 24)

The greatest blessing in Paradise for a believer will be that Allah Himself will communicate with them. There are many narrations regarding this, but I quote only one verse of the Qur' an:

"Peace! A word from a Merciful Lord". (Surah-al-Yaseen: 58)

In 'Tafseere Minhaj' Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari relates from the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.S.) that He said, that when the dwellers of Paradise will be busy in the pleasures of Paradise, a light will shine forth and a voice will be heard: Peace be on you, O' dwellers of Paradise. Here it can be stated that as the Prophets (in this world) had the honour of communicating with Allah, the believers will get this honour in Paradise. Apart from this, neighbourhood of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) and his Progeny (A.S.) is no less a blessing. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) said, "O Ali! Your Shi'ahs will be seated on illuminated pulpits in Paradise. Their faces will be glowing like a full moon, and they will reside in our neighbourhood"

In Paradise there will be eternity and perpetuity (as discussed earlier) which will in itself be a blessing. In Paradise believers will be seated on thrones facing each other like brothers.

"On thrones facing each other". (Surah-as-Saffat: 44)

They will be guest of each other as stated in traditions. It is also related that daily in Paradise, one Ulul Azm Prophet (The five great Prophets) will come to visit the believer and will be a host to everyone. On Thursdays the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.S.) will be the host, and on Fridays Allah the Almighty Himself will invite all for food. (Ma'ad)

Source: Manazileh Akhrirah, By: Shaykh Abbas Qummi