

# Concerning The Garden (al-janna) And The Fire (an-nar)

## Concerning The Garden (al-janna)<sup>1</sup> And The Fire (an-nar)<sup>2</sup>

Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief concerning Paradise is that it is a permanent abode (*daru'l-baqa'*)<sup>3</sup> and an abode of safety. There is in it neither death, nor old age, nor disease, nor calamity, nor decline, nor palsy, nor care, nor sorrow, nor need, nor poverty. It is an abode of plenty, of happiness, of quiet and of nobility. Affliction shall not touch its inmates, nor weariness.

In it there will be things for which the souls of men yearn and which give delight to their eyes, and they shall reside therein forever. It is an abode the inmates whereof are the neighbors of Allah, and His friends (*awliya'*) and loved ones and the recipients of His generosity. And they are of different kinds and ranks. Among them will be some who like angels<sup>4</sup> will receive their favors by sanctifying and glorifying Allah and declaring His greatness.

And there will be others who will find pleasure in different kinds of food and drink and fruit and comfortable couches,<sup>5</sup> and fair women with beautiful, big, black eyes,<sup>6</sup> and in being served by young pages endowed with perpetual youth, and in sitting on cushions and rich carpets and in dresses of silk brocade. All of them will be able to enjoy what they like and desire, in accordance with their own aspirations, which shall be granted to them by Allah.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq has said: Verily mankind worship Allah in three different ways. One group among them worships Him out of desire for His Paradise and in the hope of His reward – and this is the worship of servants. Another group worships Him for fear of His Fire – and this is the worship of slaves. Yet another group worships Him out of love for Him – and this is the worship of the noble ones; these, indeed, are the trusted ones (*amin*, plural *umana'*)<sup>7</sup>. And this (follows from) the saying of Allah the Glorious and Mighty:

**“And such are safe from that day” (Qur'an 27:89).**

And our belief concerning Hell is that it is a place of degradation or that of revenge on unbelievers and

sinner. None but the polytheists will reside therein permanently. As for those monotheists (*ahlu't-tawhid*) who are sinners, they will be taken out of it by the mercy of Allah and the intercession which they obtain.<sup>8</sup>

It is related that no pain shall afflict a single one among the monotheists in Hell when they enter it: but they will only be afflicted with pain at the time of their exit from it; and these ills will be the requital of their own actions, and Allah is not

***“unjust towards the slaves” (Qur'an 41:46).***

And the residents of Hell will be miserable indeed: it is not decreed for them that they shall die, nor shall the torment of Hell abate for them.

***“Therein taste they neither coolness nor (any) drink, save boiling water and pus (ghassaq): reward proportioned (to their evil deeds)”<sup>9</sup> (Qur'an 78:24-26).***

If they ask for food, they will be fed on *zaqqum*.<sup>10</sup>

***“And if they ask for showers, they will be showered with water like unto molten lead which burneth the faces. Calamitous the drink and ill the resting-place!” (Qur'an 18:29).***

And from a distant place shall they cry out and say:

***“O our Lord, remove us from here. If we return (to evil) then indeed we shall be wrong-doers” (Qur'an 23: 107).***

For a time no reply shall be given to them; then they will be told:

***“Go ye away unto it, and speak not (unto Me)” (Qur'an 23: 108). “And they cry: O Master<sup>11</sup>, let thy Lord make an end of us. He saith: Here must ye remain” (Qur'an 43:77).***

It is related according to authentic sources that Allah will command certain persons to be put into Hell, and then he will tell the Master (*malik*): Order the Fire not to burn their feet for they used to walk towards mosques; nor their hands, for they used to raise them towards Me in supplication; nor their tongues, for they used frequently to recite the Qur'an; nor their faces, for they used to perform the ablutions completely, without deficiency.

And the Master (of Hell) will say: O you miserable ones, what used to be your plight? And they will reply: We used to act (according to the commands) of beings other than Allah. Then they will be told: Take your reward from him for whom you acted.

And our belief concerning Heaven and Hell is that they are both created things.<sup>12</sup> Verily the Prophet entered Paradise, and saw the Fire, at the time of his ascension. We believe that no one goes forth from this world, until he sees his own place, either in Heaven or in Hell.<sup>13</sup>

And verily no true believer (*mu'min*) goes forth from this world without being shown the best place that he has seen in this world, and he sees also his place in the next world. Then he is asked to choose between the two, and he chooses the next world (*al-akhirah* as dis. from *ad-dunya*), and at this moment he dies.

In common parlance (when someone dies) people say: So and so has made a gift of his spirit. Now no one gives away anything, save by his own free will, unless he is compelled or constrained.<sup>14</sup>

As regards the Garden (*janna*) of Adam, it was one of the gardens of this world, in which the sun rose and set; it was by no means the Garden of Eternity (*jannatu'l-khuld*). If it were the Eternal Paradise he would never have gone forth from it.<sup>15</sup>

We believe that the people of Paradise reside therein eternally as a reward (for their good actions); and the inhabitants of Hell remain there forever as a punishment (for their sins).<sup>16</sup> Not a single person enters Paradise except that he is shown his place in Hell and told: This was your place.

Had you disobeyed Allah, you would surely have been in it. And no one enters Hell-fire, but is previously shown his place in Paradise and told: This was your place, if only you had obeyed Allah, you would surely have been in it. And these (the righteous ones) inherit (the houses in Paradise) in the place of those (i.e. the unrighteous ones and the unbelievers).

And this is in accordance with the saying of Allah:

***“These are the heirs who will inherit Paradise. There they will abide (Qur'an 23: 10-11).***

And the least of believers in point of rank in Paradise shall have ten times of what he had in this world.

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1. For the word *janna*, see Jeffery, 103. Paradise, according to Was. Abi Hanifa, art. 20 (MC, 129), is a reality; it is created and everlasting; its inhabitants will not vanish (art. 27). See also MC, 166. Orthodox Muslim theology knows only of a heavenly Paradise, while some like the Hishimites, Dirirites, Jahmites and a section of Qadarites believed in a worldly Paradise, *ibid.*, 166. Some persons will enter Paradise even without interrogation, *ibid.*, 177. The delights of Paradise are graphically described in the Qur'an as well as in the creeds; for example, the black-eyed ones (*hur*), free from impurity, untouched by man or jinn, etc., *ibid.*, 234. Later creeds like *Fiqh Akbar II*, art. 25, assert that after a period of punishment every believer, provided he has not committed a grave sin, will be admitted to Paradise, *ibid.*, 268. Cf. also Wensinck, *Handbook*, 180, s.v. Paradise; and Dianna, *El*, I. 1014. It is not correct, according to the late Prof. A. A. Bevan, to think that Paradise was a purely sensual concept, Nicholson, *Lit. History of the Arabs*, 168 citing "The Beliefs of early Mohammedans respecting a Future Existence" (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Oct. 1904, p.20 sqq.). BHA, nos. 226 –236; FC, 7, 15, and arts. 81 – 85; KP, 71, 96, graphically described 105 sqq. It is a common belief that Hasan b. Sabbah made an earthly Paradise for Assassins; W. Ivanow however explains this as a misunderstanding of the declaration of *qiyamatu'l-qiyama* by al-Qahir bi-ahkimi'l-lah Hasan in *Alamut* on 17 Ram. 559 = 8 Aug. 1164 (*El*, Sup., S.V. *Ismi'iliya*, p.99 sqq.). Ibnu'l-'Arabi's notions are derived entirely from subjective states, Affifi, 166; and his Heaven is gnosis coupled with belief, *ibid.*, 168.

2. The word *jahannam* is explained by Jeffery, 105 – 106. The Mu'tazilites taught that those who entered Hell never came out of it, MC, 62; but generally speaking intercession will take place, 184. According to Jahm, like Paradise, it will disappear, 121, but this is specifically denied. Hell is created but everlasting, 129, 165, 185, 195, 212, 273. This again is opposed to the

view of at-Tahawi that both Heaven and Hell are everlasting, 165 (n.5) . Infidels will remain there everlastingly, 129, 131 (arts. 20 and 27), but believers will be saved by intercession, 130 (art. 25), 184, especially 274. On general aspects, see Djahannam, EI, i. 998. Macdonald, 306; BHA, nos. 230 – 236. Among the Eastern Esmi'ilis, not knowing the Imam leads to Hell, KP, 48, 61, and Hell is the state of a man who drives men away from God, *ibid.*, 92 (see also *duzakh* in the index); described 108. For Ibnu'l-'Arabi's ideas, Affifi, 164 sqq. Hell is ignorance, 168; this is derived from *Ikhwanus'-Safa'*, where it is laid down that Heaven and Hell are happiness and unhappiness of the soul respectively, 187.

3. MC, 129, 130 (art. 27), 165, 185, 195, 211, 268. This is the usual view, as opposed to that of Jahm that Paradise and Hell will vanish, *ibid.*, 121.

4. This belief is severely criticized by the Urdu translator. Instead of following the Shaykh in his somewhat idealistic creed, the translator on the authority of Shaykh Mufid says as follows: Shaykh Mufid states that it is incorrect to hold the belief that some, like angels, will find bliss in the worship and glorification of Allah. First, it is contrary to the Qur'in. Allah says: "Its food is everlasting" [13,35]. And He says: "And We shall wed them unto fair ones, with lovely, wide eyes" [44, 54; 52, 201]. And He says: "Lo! those who merit Paradise thi, day are happily employed, –they and their wives,– in pleasant shade, on thrones reclining" [36,55–56]. And He says: ". . . There for them are pure spouses" [2, 25] . In spite of these weighty proofs, how could the Shaykh as-Sadiq formulate such an article of faith?

Secondly, this article is contrary to that which is held by consensus among the Shi'a. In reality this is the belief of the Christians, and such a belief is contrary to certain Qur'anic verses. The real reason for the fury of the learned translator, following Shaykh Mufid, appears from the last sentence.

Wensinck has fully discussed the position of angels, MC, 198 sqq., and he points out that 'Ali al-Qari, on the authority of Jawahiru l-'Usul, asserts that angels have no share in the delights of Paradise or in the visio beatifica, *ibid.*, 200. In Isma'ili thought the angels are Platonic ideas, or abstractions of natural phenomena, FC, 68n., citing arts. 23 and 85 of the *Taju'l-Aqa'id*. Hence no question would arise whether they can share the delights of Paradise. In fact a perusal of *Taju'l-Aqa'id*, arts. 81–85, shows the entirely spiritual quality of reward and retribution in Isma'ilism; although belief in Paradise and Hell is a necessary article of faith, Fyze, *Ismaili Law of Wills*, 71 –74.

5. For *anrika*, pl. *ara'ik*, see Jeffery, 52.

6. MC, 234.

7. This may be compared with the famous answer of Rabi'a al-Basri to Sufyan ath-Thawri, M. Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic* (Cambridge, 1928), 102.

8. This is the usual view, but compare p.142, note 216. MC,184. BHA, no. 231 declares how after the sinners have washed their faces with the Spring of Life, their faces will appear like full moon. Regarding intercession, see *ibid.*, no. 234.

9. *غَسَّاق* or *غَسَّاق* has been variously rendered as "running sores" (Rodwell), "pus" (Palmer) and "a paralysing cold" (Pickthall). Lane gives the following meanings: (1) the ichar, or watery matter, that will flow and drip from the skins of the inmates of Hell, (2) or their washings, (3) or tears. Also (4) intense cold, that by reason of its intensity, burns like a hot wind, and (5) stinking. Lane, s. v. *غَسَّق* Pt. vi. 2258. Jeffery shows that it is an Arabic and not a Turkish word, p.29.

10. This fruit is referred to in the Qur'an three times, 37, 62; 44, 43; 56, 52. MB explains that *zaqqum* is a fruit of bad taste and foul smell. The Qur'an describes it graphically in 37, 63–64. Its tree is in the lowest stage of Hell, EI, s.v. *Djahannam*.

11. This refers to the custodian of Hell.

12. MC, 129 (art. 20) and other places. Contra at-Tahawi, *ibid.*, 166, n.5.

13. This probably is an echo of the view of tradition that the faithful also shall have to enter Hell, MC, 233.

14. *طَيِّبَةً نَفْسًا* here means "freely, of his own accord".

15. This is a very important belief, Cp. MC, 166 (lines 4 – 5) .

16. The translator here adds a footnote, on the authority of Sh. Mufid, that although some will remain permanently in Hell, still there will be others, who will, after a time, be saved by the intercession of the Sinless Ones (Imams), and enter and thereafter reside eternally in Heaven. But the unbelievers, as is to be expected, will forever remain in Hell. Cp. p. 80, n. 1 .

Reminiscent of the

Mu'tazilite doctrine, MC, 62, BHA, no.232.

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