

Hellfire and Its Punishment

Allah the Most High said,

﴿فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ﴾ [البقرة: ٢٤]

“Then guard yourselves against the Fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones.” [Al-Baqarah: 24].

Allah's Messenger said to his Companions, “*The fire which the sons of Adam light up is only one out of seventy parts of the Fire of Hell.*” His Companions said, “*By Allah, even an ordinary fire would have been enough (to burn people).*” Thereupon he said: “*It has been given sixty-nine extra portion, each portion is equal to the heat of (the fire in this life).*” [Sahih Al-Bukhari and Muslim: 3265, 2843]

Hellfire is of seven levels. Each level is more severe in punishment than the other. Each level holds people according to their deeds. The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Hellfire, which is the more severe in punishment. The unbeliever's punishment in the fire will be permanent without interruption. Whenever they get burned, they will be returned to suffer more punishment. Allah, the Most High said,

﴿كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ﴾ [النساء: ٥٦]

As often as their skins are consumed We shall exchange them for fresh skins that they may taste the punishment” [An-Nisa: 56]

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَفُورٍ﴾ [فاطر: ٣٦]

“And for those who disbelieve will be the fire of Hell. [Death] is not decreed for them so they may die, nor will its torment be lightened for them. Thus do we recompense every ungrateful one.” [Fatir: 36]

They would be shackled therein and their necks would be tied with iron collars. Allah said,

﴿وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ * سَرَابِلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطِرَانٍ وَنَجَسَىٰ وُجُوهُهُمْ النَّارُ﴾ [البراهيم: ٤٩-٥٠]

“And you will see the criminals that Day bound together in shackles, their garments of liquid pitch and their faces covered by the Fire.” [Ibrahim: 49-50]

The food of the inmates of Hellfire will be *zaqqum*, about which Allah, the Most High, said,

﴿إِنَّ سَجْرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ * طَعَامُ الْأُنِيَمِ * كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ * كَغَلِيِّ الْحَمِيمِ﴾ [الدخان: ٤٣-٤٨]

Verily, the tree of *zaqqum* will be the food of the sinners. Like boiling oil, it will boil in the bellies, like the boiling of scalding water. (It will be said) ‘Seize him and drag him into the midst of blazing Fire, then pour over his head the torment of boiling water’”. [Ad-Dukhan: 43-48]

To explain the gravity of the punishment of the Hellfire and the greatness of the bliss in Paradise, it was transmitted in Sahih Muslim that the Prophet (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, “*The person who had led the most luxurious life in this world, will be brought up on the Day of Resurrection and dipped into the Hellfire. He will be asked, 'O son of Adam! Did you ever experience any comfort? Did you ever experience any luxury?' He will reply, 'By Allah, no, my Lord.'* Then one of the people of the Paradise who had experienced extreme misery in the life of this world will be dipped into Paradise. Then he will be asked, ‘O son of Adam! Did you ever experience any misery? Did you ever encounter difficulty?’ He will say, “By Allah, no, my Lord, I neither experienced misery nor passed through hardship.” [Transmitted by Muslim: 2807].

The unbeliever will forget all the luxury he enjoyed in this world with just one dip in the Hellfire, and the faithful believer will forget all the hardships, poverty and misery he suffered in this world just with one dip into Paradise.