

A casual stroll through the

gardens of Jannat

By

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Our All-Compassionate Lord fashioned three things with His own Hand, not through a process of cause and effect, like everything else. These are His eternal masterpieces which mankind will never cease to admire. They are Prophet Adam, Paradise, and the Taurat (Old Testament).

Paradise is a place beyond thought or imagination. Brief descriptions of it have reached us via the Qur'an and Sunnah, but just like listening to the commentary of soccer giants Manchester and Liverpool over the radio cannot capture the spirit of the game, likewise experiencing the delights of paradise cannot be felt without being physically there. My aim of this article is to get the mouth of all my readers watering for this reality to come, and to realise that making an effort towards paradise is a worthwhile effort beyond any other effort. So, put on your 3D goggles and enjoy.

You have just passed over the bridge over hell, a 1 500 year journey which has drained you mentally and physically, and have joined the excited crowd of people queuing to enter paradise. Impatiently, you wait your turn. There are eight doors of paradise, each as wide as a 40-year journey, and named as follows: "Salat (prayers), Jihad (Striving in God's way), Sadaqah (Charity), Rayyan (Fasting), Hajj (Pilgrimage), Kazimin al-Ghaiz wal Aafeen (Those who drank their Anger and Forgave), Al-Ayman (Those of the Right-Hand, who will be saved from Reckoning due to their Reliance), and Dhikr (Remembrance of their Lord)." Upon which

door do you think your name will be inscribed?

As you envy Sayyadina Abu Bakr for being called by all eight doors of paradise, your name is finally called from one door. You present yourself, like a small child waiting for candy floss from his teacher, and meet Ridwan, the most handsome and adorable angel, tasked with admitting people in to paradise. With a huge smile, he gives you the following certificate: "Peace be upon you and congratulations. Enter herein forever and ever." In this world, even the best-paid jobs and the best of mansions come with a time-limit. Here we have been assured of entering a place of eternal bliss, with no time limit, no feelings of insecurity and anxiety, and no fear of ever being expelled.

As you enter, guided by another angel, you are given your first meal before being shown your place. This is a meal of fish-liver and bread. The food and drink of paradise only resemble the food and drink of this world in name, but in shape, form and taste, they are different. Each bite from the dates, olives, grapes, figs, bananas and pomegranates of paradise will taste differently, and from each a different aroma will be emitted. A bunch of grapes will be equal to 12 arms, having a thornless stem of pure gold and silver. These fruits, as well as all foods, will be available at any time. Their availability will not depend on seasons or production. There will also be no pits or peels to disturb you, and no garbage cans around. In fact, there is no hunger in paradise and you will never worry about punishing yourself by dieting or weight-loss again! Rather, people will eat out of enjoyment, and every meal will last up to 40 years! The food of paradise does not have to be prepared or cooked, so our wives will not spend half their lives in the kitchen! The food does not rot, nor does it cause food-poisoning, and nor is it transformed in to waste in our bodies. Rather, the food will be expelled by fragrant burps, and the drinks by means of sweet perspiration.

As you enjoy your first meal, you somehow notice that your hands are different. You then realise that you have been given a flawless body, with no disabilities or sickness. You will not be visiting Dr George any time soon who gave his patient six months to live. After six months, his patient didn't pay him, so he gave him another six months! You will also find yourself to be as tall Prophet Adam at 90 feet, as handsome as Prophet Yusuf – but with no facial or body hair except a fine crop of hair on your head, having the melodious voice of Prophet Dawud, the same age of Prophet Isa at 33, and the noble character of the Best of Creation, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

After a brief enquiry, you learn that paradise has 100 stages, the lowest of which is Jannat ul-Mawa, the middle of which is Jannatul Adan and the highest Jannatul Firdauws. Every stage can accommodate the entire mankind, and the distance between each is the distance between

the earth and the sky. The garden of lowest ranking inmate will be ten times the size of this world. Having satisfied yourself with your initial meal, you are now taken - on a winged pearly-coated horse, - to your final abode. You will not worry of visas, airports, long queues and the exorbitant price of tickets anymore. You will then notice flashes of gentle lightning in the clear sky, and will ask in wonder: "What are those lights?" "Don't you know?" your usher will answer: "They are the anticipative smiles of your houris."

Although this will be your first trip in paradise, the road will seem familiar to you. As you travel, wondering which garden is yours, you will notice that the sand is not made up of dirt. It is pure saffron. The gravel is made of pearls and rubies, and the buildings of transparent gold and silver. Even the richest man on earth could not have purchased a single brick of paradise with all the money in the world! Those who think that paradise is an Alice in Wonderland fairy-tale have not even felt ½ % of the Grace of the Almighty. If you deny His paradise, then the only place for you in the hereafter is Hellfire.

As you start developing an emotional connection to the ultimate source of true pleasure, you pass mountains made of pure musk. You notice rivers of pure milk whose source is not a dairy cow, rivers of pure honey whose source is not a bee, rivers of unintoxicating wine whose source is not fruit, and rivers of sparkling water. All these emanate directly from beneath the throne of the Almighty, Most Magnanimous. You may request a stop and drink from these refreshing springs, but you will be told: "Have patience, for you also own a few of these."

When you finally reach your garden, you will see a most charming woman – a woman whose essence is of saffron - washing from a pure stream. She will have 70 sets of clothing upon her, but all will be delicate and weightless to the degree of transparency. She will be so beautiful that you will see the blood throbbing through her veins right through her ivory-like complexion. Further, you will see within her heart, and witness the waves of love throbbing in it for you. They will never lose their virginity, will never experience monthlies, nor their timeless beauty. As you stand there stunned, she will be joined by many more - a minimum of 72. Each one of them will have separate grand pavilions alongside your rivers.

Then the most gorgeous woman will arrive, the likes of which you will have never seen, and you will forget all those 72 houris and turn to her. She will be your earthly wife, surpassing the beauty of a million houris, returning to your arms. And why shouldn't she be more beautiful for didn't she engage herself in devotions in this world, and she patiently tolerated her husband's moods in this world? There, a single man will be granted the strength of a 100 men. He will adorn himself with lavish jewellery like crowns and bracelets. Women, on their part, will not be given a currency called dollars or pounds, nor a credit card with a measly R100 000- limit, but

an unlimited currency called “Desire.” Whatever they desire, they will get ... beautiful handbags, manicures, pedicures, fluffy kittens and even obedient husbands who will become just as she likes him to be in appearance and character. There will be no *hijab* in paradise, and also no lust. No one will fear extra-marital affairs or even contemplate evil.

An ordinary palace will be a huge pearl 60 meters tall, carved out from within, having 70 000 rooms, and built in such a way that every room will be completely private. The silken couches will be elevated – the ultimate lazy boy, - and hundreds of young lads will be there to serve you with thousands of glasses in their hand, each holding a different liquid, and bringing whatever you desire at a mere thought. No such remote control has ever been created in the world! All traces of jealousy, malice, envy and pride will be removed from everyone in these huge social gatherings. There will be no problems, anxiety, back-stabbing, break-ups, divorces or any kind of relational tension in this “Pearl of Peace.” The best part is that there is no waking up in the morning to rush to work in order to clock in on time, to meet your monthly commitments or to stomach the nonsense of your boss. In fact, in paradise, there is neither fatigue, sleep, nor night. Paradise will not be lit by a sun giving off nuclear rays, but by the shimmering light of the ‘Arsh (Grand Throne) itself. It will be as gentle as the rays just before dawn.

The best part of paradise is that you will be with everyone you love, past and present, have anything you want with no fear of death for anyone, nor scarcity of pleasures. Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, the Almighty Himself will ask you: “Do you want anything more?” and everyone will express their gratitude at the bounties beyond their expectation. Then the Almighty will grant every inmate the ULTIMATE glory - a bounty that not even a zillion years of prostration can buy: He will reveal Himself to everyone. This grand sight will cause everyone to fall in prostration and will only increase them in beauty. There is no moment better than this moment and no pleasure that can ever surpass this privilege in one's entire existence.

Paradise is a pure place, reserved only for the pure. It is reserved for those who do not seek loftiness or power in this world, who have *iman* (faith), piety and good character, and who realise that the ticket to paradise is undergoing the temporary hardships of this world. Thus advised the Best of Creation, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): “

If you need to ask for anything, ask for Jannat ul-Firdaus

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To all my readers, tea time - by the will of the Almighty - is anytime at my palace. Please pop in.

