

Anas ibn Mālik narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

Paradise is surrounded by displeasures

2

and the Fire is surrounded by tempting pleasures.<sup>(1)</sup>

### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do you reckon that you will enter paradise while you have not suffered like those [believers] who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them, and so terribly shaken were they that the messenger and the believers with him would exclaim, 'When will God's help come?' Surely, God's help is close at hand.﴾ (2: 214)
- ﴿Do you reckon that you can enter paradise unless God has identified those among you who strive hard [in His cause], and who are patient in adversity. (142) Surely, you used to wish for death before you came face to face with it. Now you have seen it with your own eyes.﴾ (3: 142-143)
- ﴿Do you think that you will be left alone, unless God takes cognizance of those of you who strive hard for His cause and establish close association with none other than God, His Messenger and the believers. God is well aware of what you do.﴾ (9: 16)
- ﴿Do people think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone and not put to a test? (2) We certainly tested those who lived before them; and so most certainly God knows those who speak the truth and most certainly He knows those who are liars.﴾ (29: 2-3)
- ﴿Then, he who transgressed the bounds of what is right, (37) and chose this present life (38) will have hell for his dwelling place. (39) But he who feared that he will stand before his Lord and forbade his soul its base desire (40) will dwell in paradise.﴾ (79: 37-41)

### The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was God's Messenger's servant. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he joined the Prophet on several military expeditions, including Badr. However, historians do not include him as having attended the Battle of Badr because he was too young to fight at the time. He only joined the expedition in the capacity of serving the Prophet. He was in the expedition to serve the Prophet. He took part in the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He had rich knowledge and insight in Islamic Shariah, gave numerous fatwas and narrated many hadiths. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God has surrounded Heaven with duties and similar things which a human being normally dislikes. He has surrounded Hell with pleasures and temptations that a human being loves to have. All this adds to man's trial on earth.



1 Related by Muslim, 2822.

# Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God, Mighty and Exalted, has surrounded Heaven with things that constitute a burden to man. Thus, man can only see the way to Heaven as involving a burden, such as duties which are obligatory to perform and the prohibitions that sound heavy and demanding because they are contrary to human desires.





By contrast, Hell is surrounded by tempting pleasures. Thus, man can only see the way to Hell as involving pleasure. Such pleasure may relate to thoughts and views, or feelings like anger and strength, or sexual temptations between men and women, or the temptation of gaining money and wealth, etc. Had it not been for such temptations and pleasures, the whisperings of Satan and personal desires to experience such pleasures, no one would have taken the road to Hell.

What is meant by tempting pleasures are those that God has forbidden. What He has permitted to have, such as lawful food and drink, intercourse with one's legitimate spouse, playing with one's children, etc. is not included.



# Implementation

1

We should always remember this picture the Prophet (peace be upon him) places before our eyes so that we find it easier to take the road to Heaven and move away from the road to Hell. Things will be much easier if we remember that a burden associated with a good deed or with refraining from a forbidden pleasure actually draws us a step closer to Heaven. We should also remember that indulging in forbidden pleasure puts us on the way to Hell.

2

We should be aware that admittance into Heaven has a price, namely, the fulfilling of duties and obligations, even though they may be hard, and refraining from what is prohibited, even though such may have strong appeal. The person who decides to devote time to attending to every obligatory prayer, including waking up before sunrise to pray Fajr, even at times when it is either very cold or very hot is the one who is wise. In reference to prayer and attending regularly to them, God says: 'It is a demanding task, except for the devout'. (2: 45) The person who willingly pays a portion of his money to the poor and needy, performs other obligations, such as fasting during Ramadan, performing the hajj, and being dutiful towards his parents, and who also does not neglect other duties is also one who is wise. Similarly, the one who refrains from all that God has forbidden, such as ill-treatment of other people, taking their money unlawfully, fornication and foreplay, drinking intoxicants, etc is wise.

Also included under the notion of 'displeasures' are diligence in worship, regular voluntary worship, perseverance in good deeds despite feeling their burden, restraining one's anger, pardoning other people's offences, forbearance, voluntary charity, i.e. *ṣadaqah*, kindness to those who have done wrong, resisting tempting pleasures and all other types of good deeds.

3

Whoever patiently endures some adversity in obedience to God, God will compensate him on the Day of Judgement with something better of the same type. God will protect him from the Fire and give him whatever he desires in Heaven.

4

The person who sells the luxuries and pleasures of this world for those of the life to come is successful. Conversely, the person who sells his fortunes in the life to come for the luxuries and pleasures of this world is nothing but a loser.

5

The good things of this life and the life to come cannot be secured without going through what is unpleasant. Great pleasures cannot be obtained by the mere enjoyment of luxuries. The hadith makes clear that a believer needs to strive hard during this life. He should strive against his own desires. A person who aspires to high status and is ready to exert good effort will not be happy to commit sin, because sin is treachery, and no honourable person can condone treachery.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Ibn Rajab, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, Vol. 1, p. 203.

6

Ibn al-Qayyim said: 'Invite yourself to what God has prepared for His devout and obedient servants of permanent comforts and luxuries, everlasting happiness and supreme success. Invite yourself to what He has prepared of shame, punishment and permanent sorrow for those who are careless and wasteful. Then choose which of the two suits you best. Everyone acts according to his own disposition, and everyone aspires to what is more suited for him. Do not think this remedy takes a long time. It is urgently needed by both doctor and patient. Hence, it is prescribed'.<sup>(1)</sup>



7

When the war was about to break out at Badr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged his companions to fight and said to them: 'Rise to win a Paradise that is as vast as the heavens and earth'. 'Umayr ibn al-Ḥumām al-Anṣārī said: 'Well, well'. The Prophet asked him why he said well, well. He said: 'By God, for no reason other than my cherished hope to be one of its dwellers'. The Prophet said to him: 'You are certainly one of its dwellers'. 'Umayr took out a few dates and started to eat. He then said: 'Were I to live until I have finished eating these dates, then I would have lived too long'. He threw the dates away, and engaged in the fighting until he was killed. We learn from his example that he actually bought heaven by fighting for God's cause. God describes fighting saying: 'Fighting is ordained for you, even though it is hateful to you'. (2: 216) 'Umayr preferred the everlasting happiness in Heaven to all that this life can offer of comfort and pleasure.

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād fī Hady Khayr al-'Ibād*, Vol. 4, pp. 180-179.

