



## Core Curriculum

### 6 Measuring Good and Bad in Islam

#### 6.3 Heaven and Hell in Islam

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel!

A common theme in Abrahamic religions, and in almost every other religion in this world is belief in heaven and hell. On many grounds they are similar, but they are also different. A common similarity is that heaven is usually a place of bliss filled with gardens. Hell on the other hand is a place of fire and pain where evil-doers are punished for the evil they committed while they lived on earth.

In this lesson, we’re going to look at the effects that belief in heaven and hell have in the lives of Muslims. We will then expand on “how” people will dwell in heaven and hell. We will then address the questions that are usually raised concerning eternal damnation.

##### BODY OF TEXT

"Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring. Angels shall enter from every gate (with the salutation): 'Peace be with you, that you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final home!'" (Chapter 13, verses 23-24 of the Holy Qur’an)

“They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin. But only the saying of: 'Peace! Peace!'" (Chapter 56, verses 25-26 of the Holy Qur'an)

According to Islam, as taught to us by the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), heaven and hell exist right now. The words for heaven and hell are Jannah and Jahannam respectively. According to the kind of life people live, they are, in a sense, already partaking in heaven or hell. However, this only becomes fully apparent in the Hereafter when the “curtain” will be lifted. Sometimes, for people who are more spiritually advanced, they may be able to have spiritual visions of heaven and hell which gives them a glimpse of the unseen (al-ghayb).

In terms of this world, there is a general understanding that knowledge of heaven and hell's existence is supposed to alter our behavior in this world. Human beings are primarily driven by two factors, the want for happiness and pleasure, and the fear of loss and pain. Much of what we do in this world, whether in school or work is driven by these two things.

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that those who hold fast unto God and are conscious of Him, and lead the good moral life will attain heaven.

Heaven is a place where everything in life has purpose. It is a place of complete comfort, joy and happiness where all human and divine relationships reach perfection. The Qur'an often describes heaven as a place that is mostly immersed in nature, with rivers, trees and all kinds of fruits. It also describes it as a place where one's marital relations are in complete harmony.

Allah's description of heaven in the Qur'an, which by no means exhausts the full reality of it, is meant to entice human beings to be better. If pleasures in this world must be sacrificed for the sake of Islam, that kind of sacrifice will be compensated for with something even greater in the next life. The point, however, is that in the meantime, one must cultivate oneself spiritually and abstain from sin in order to find salvation.

A question here may arise: if heaven is eternal as Islam teaches us,

won't people get bored after a while, say, after a few thousand years?

Remember that in heaven, one is in direct communion with Allah. As Allah is eternal and infinite, in heaven one is totally immersed into the infinite beauty and bliss of Allah. One only gets bored with finite realities whereas the reality of God is infinite. As such, boredom in heaven is impossible no matter how long one dwells in it.

Now let's look at the subject of hell in Islam. Hell is a terrible place to be. It is dark, full of fire and horrors. In the Qur'anic narrative, it is meant to be a warning to people who want to commit evil in this world instead of choosing the proper moral life. The fire in hell is not the same fire of this world, but it is real. It not only puts bodies in pain, but it also burns the souls.

The effect of belief in hell is to make one desist from committing bad deeds in this world. Sometimes people commit evil when they think no one can see them and they think they can get away with whatever they do. However, when a person knows that God looks over everything people do, and that hell exists ... then real and genuine belief in hell will often restrain a person from committing those immoral acts.

People must not make the mistake and think that hell is not a punishment. Hell is a punishment for the evil people committed in this world. However, hell is also a hospital of some sorts, it is meant to purify people of the pollution that has taken over their souls.

The Qur'an teaches us that some people who are facing damnation will ask for forgiveness, but God will not let them exit their hells as their pleas are not genuine and sincere ... that is, if they were allowed to come back into the world, they would just go back to the way they were and commit evil all over again.

Yet this point is quite suggestive. Perhaps the greatest objection against the "moral status" of hell is that people will be punished forever in the hell fire for a finite amount of deeds. Isn't this injustice? According to Islam, the people who remain in hell forever stay there out of their own

choice.

In other words, they are people who genuinely do not want to repent and do not want God's friendship. If they do ask for forgiveness, it is only for the pain to cease. They don't really regret anything they did. However, when a person seeks true and genuine forgiveness then God may forgive them and take them out of hell.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh