

310063 - Explanation of the verse “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do”

the question

The people of Paradise will take the dwellings of the disbelievers in Paradise as an inheritance, so how will this inheritance be distributed among the Muslims in Paradise? Will the inheritance from the disbelievers be distributed among them equally, with each person receiving the same as others? Or will it be based on their deeds and hasanaat, meaning that the one who has more good deeds and hasanaat to his credit will receive a greater share of the inheritance? Is this distribution connected to the verse “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do”?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.

For you therein is much fruit from which you will eat”

[az-Zukhruf 43:72-73].

What the verse means is that it will be said to the people of Paradise, by way of reminding them of Allah’s favours and blessings: That is Paradise which was described to you in the former world; it has been made like an inheritance for you.

“for what you used to do” that is, because of what you used to do of righteous deeds. What they deserve because of their righteous deeds, namely Paradise and its eternal blessings, is likened to what a person leaves behind for his heirs of property and provision.

Whatever the case, admission to Paradise because of good deeds cannot be attained except by the grace and mercy of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

What is meant by the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), “None of you will enter Paradise by virtue of his deeds” is that admittance to Paradise cannot be granted on the basis of the means [deeds] alone, so there is no contradiction.

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: Allah created for every soul a paradise and a fire, so the disbeliever will inherit the fire of the Muslim, and the Muslim will inherit the paradise of the disbeliever. This is what is meant in the verse “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit...”

End quote from at-Tafseer al-Waseet (9/831).

Ibn Katheer said in at-Tafseer (7/239): Then it will be said to them, by way of reminding them of Allah’s favours and blessings: “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do”; that is, your righteous deeds were the cause of Allah’s mercy encompassing you, for no one’s deeds will admit him to Paradise; rather that is by the grace and mercy of Allah.

Rather people’s status will vary according to their righteous deeds.

Concerning the meaning of this verse, it was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Each of the people of Hell will see his place in Paradise, and they will feel sorrow and will say: ‘If only Allah had guided me, I would have been among the righteous’ [az-Zumar 39:57]. And each of the people of Paradise will be shown his place in Hell, and will say: ‘and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us’ [al-A’raaf 7:43].”

He said: And the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no one who does not have an abode in Paradise and an abode in Hell. The disbeliever will inherit the believer’s abode in Hell, and the believer will inherit the disbeliever’s abode in Paradise.” That is referred to in the verse in which Allah, may He be

exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do” [az-Zukhruf 43:72].

Shaykh ‘Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The people of Paradise will inherit the share of Paradise of the people of Hell.

Allah has allocated to each of the children of Adam two abodes: an abode in Paradise and an abode in Hell. Then those who are doomed to be wretched, the disbelievers and polytheists, will inherit the abodes in Hell that had been allocated to the people of Paradise, and those who are destined to be blessed, the people of Paradise, will inherit the abodes in Paradise that had been allocated to the people of Hell. Allah, may He be exalted, says concerning the victorious believers, after mentioning their good deeds that earned them admittance to Paradise: “Those are the inheritors, who will inherit al-Firdaus. They will abide therein eternally” [al-Mu’minoos 23:10-11].

Ibn Katheer said in his commentary on this verse: Ibn Abi Haatim said – and he quoted the isnaad [chain of narration] going back to Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no one among you who does not have two abodes: an abode in Paradise and an abode in Hell. As for the believer, he is building his house that is in Paradise and demolishing his house that is in Hell.”

A similar report was narrated from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr. So the believers will inherit the abodes of the disbelievers, because they were created to worship Allah alone, with no partner or associate. So because the believers did what was enjoined upon them of worshipping Allah, whereas the disbelievers failed to do what they were enjoined to do of that for which they were created, the believers will attain the share that the disbelievers would have taken if they had obeyed their Lord, may He be glorified and exalted. In fact they will attain even more than that, which is what is proven in Saheeh Muslim from Abu Burdah, from Abu Moosa, that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

“Some of the Muslims will come on the Day of Resurrection with sins like mountains, but Allah will forgive them and will place those sins on the Jews and Christians.”

According to another version, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will give to each Muslim a Jew or a Christian, and it will be said: This is your ransom from the Fire.” This hadith is like the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “That is Paradise, which We give as inheritance to those of Our servants who were fearing of Allah” [Maryam 19:63] and “And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do” [az-Zukhruf 43:72]. So they will inherit the share of Paradise that had been allocated to the disbelievers.

End quote from al-Jannah wa’n-Naar (192-193).

For more information, please see answers no. [128128](#) and [198745](#).

Secondly:

The people of Paradise – may Allah make us among them – will vary in status and degree according to their deeds. It was narrated from ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Verily know the last of the people of Hell to be brought forth, and the last of the people of Paradise to enter therein. It will be a man who will emerge crawling from Hell, and Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, will say to him: ‘Go and enter Paradise.’ He will come to it and it will appear to him to be full. He will go back and say, ‘O Lord, I found it full.’ Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, will say to him: ‘Go and enter Paradise.’ He will go to it and it will appear to him to be full. He will go back and say, ‘O Lord, I found it full.’ Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, will say to him: ‘Go and enter Paradise, and you will have the equivalent of the whole world and ten times as much.’ He will say, ‘Are You mocking me – or laughing at me – when You are the Sovereign?’” He said: And I saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) smile so broadly that his molars appeared. And he used to say: “That man will be the lowest of the people of Paradise in status.” End quote.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6571) and Muslim (186).

With regard to what is mentioned in the question about how this inheritance will be attained and on what basis the inheritance will be shared out, it seems that the questioner is thinking of what happens with regard to people's share of inherited wealth in this world. But that has nothing whatsoever to do with the people of Paradise inheriting the abodes of Paradise, and its levels and degrees.

We could not find anything in any of the religious texts that speaks of how the believer will inherit the disbeliever's abode in Paradise, which is prohibited to the latter because of his disbelief. Enquiring into the details of that is something in which there is no great benefit and there are no righteous deeds to be based on that. It is sufficient for the believer to know that the people of faith are the heirs, the ones who will inherit al-Firdaws, by the blessings and mercy of Allah, based on what we have noted and explained above.

And Allah knows best.