

Para 8.5 to 9.75.

Surah al-A'raf (Chapter 7: The Heights). Makkan. 206 Verses. Over 2 Paras.

Begin and finish Surah al-A'raf.

A'raf (verses 46-49)

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَانِهِمْ

And there is a dividing wall between them two (i.e.: between Paradise and Hell). And upon the Heights there will be people who will recognise all (of Paradise and of Hell) by their signs. [Qur'an 7:46]

There is a dividing wall between Paradise and Hell. The uppermost part of that wall is called A'raf (the heights), upon which some people will be standing. Those standing here, their good deeds and bad deeds will be equal, they will be able to see Paradise and Hell and they will be hopeful of entering Paradise.

These people will recognise the people of Paradise and Hell. The people of Paradise will have bright, glowing faces whereas the faces of the people of Hell will be darkened. When the people of the heights look towards the people of Paradise, they will give them *salam* and when they look towards the people of Hell, they will seek refuge from their torment and punishment.

The people of the heights will recognise the arrogant ones like Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab. They will remind them about what they used to say, the arrogance they showed, the fact they had wealth and manpower, but the Muslims did not, where is that wealth and manpower today? Pride and arrogance will be of no use in the hereafter.

When the people concerned with the worldly life looked towards poor Muslims like Bilal al-Habashi [*ra*] and Salman al-Farisi [*ra*] they would say: "If Allah was pleased with these destitute, needy people, they would not be suffering in poverty today. In actual fact, because we have wealth and we are successful in this world, this means Allah is well pleased with us. That is why we are living in luxury and tomorrow Paradise will also be for us." Whereas all their claims will prove to be false. Those same poor and needy people will be in Paradise and these arrogant ones will be burning in the fire of Hell. Allah is only pleased with those who are obedient to Him, whether they are wealthy or not.

In the end, through the divine mercy of Allah, the people of the heights will be granted permission to enter Paradise.

Consoling of the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ is comforted and consoled throughout. The stories of previous communities are mentioned so we can learn from them. O Messenger! If they do not believe then do not grieve, for previous communities also rejected their Prophets and were ungrateful.

Arrogance and Humility

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن

طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

Allah said: “What prevented you from prostrating when I ordered you to?” Iblis said: “I am better than him. You created me from fire, whereas You created him from clay.”

قَالَ فَأَهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

Allah said: “Go down from this Paradise, for it is not befitting for you to remain here being arrogant, so get out! You are indeed from amongst the disgraced ones.” [Qur’an 7:12-13]

Shaytan thought he was better than Prophet Adam so did not obey Allah and he was cursed forever. We learn that the one who is arrogant follows the way of Shaytan and the one who humbles himself follows the way of the angels.

Humbling yourself for the sake of Allah in front others may seem to others like you are debasing yourself. However, the Prophet ﷺ says: “The one who humbles himself for Allah by one measure, Allah raises him by one measure until Allah grants him a high rank in Paradise. As for the one who is arrogant before Allah by one measure, Allah lowers him by one measure until Allah places him in the lowest layer in Hell.” [Musnad Ahmad]

Universality of the Prophet’s prophethood

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا

“Say: O people! Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.” [Qur’an 7:158]

Previous Prophets were sent to specific places and for specific times, but it is from the particularities (*khasa’is*) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that he was sent to all places until the end of time. This is also proof that he is the last and final Prophet.

Verse of *sajdah*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “When a person performs *sajdah* after hearing a verse of *sajdah*, Shaytan cries, leaves that place and says: ‘How sad!’ The son of Adam is ordered to perform *sajdah* and prostrates, so for him is Paradise. I was ordered to prostrate, and I refused to do so, so for me is the fire of Hell.” [Sahih Muslim]

Lessons from previous Prophets: Prophet Nuh, Prophet Hud, Prophet Salih, Prophet Lut, Prophet Shu’ayb, Prophet Musa and Prophet Harun.

Other topics in this Surah: Prostration of respect, Prophet Adam and Hawwa eating from the tree, ruling on clothing and adornment, etiquettes of supplicating, respect towards the Prophet ﷺ, knowledge of the unseen of the Prophet ﷺ.

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