

THE LAST PERSON TO ENTER PARADISE (PART 1 OF 2): AND A TREE WILL BE RAISED UP

Rating: 5.0

Description: When the last person crawls out of Hell and is admitted to Paradise the gates of Hell will be closed forever.

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Published on: 23 Sep 2013

Last modified on: 14 Sep 2020

Paradise is the incredible reward that God has prepared for the believers; for those who obey Him. It is a place of complete joy and serenity and there is nothing in existence that can disturb this. It will go on forever and we hope that it will be our eternal home. What God and His Prophet Muhammad have told us about Paradise makes our heads spin and our minds whirl. In one of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, God says, **“I have prepared for My righteous slaves**



that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and has never crossed the mind of any human being”.^[1] This is what we, humble human beings have been waiting for, and if we are wise and work for it, then this is the reward for the struggle of this transient life. We ponder and ask ourselves questions concerning our eternal abode, we think about Paradise with hope and Hell with fear, but as much as our hearts tremble the thought of Paradise is a joy.

The descriptions of Paradise and Hell in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad include narrations about who will be the first person to enter Paradise. On the great Day of Reckoning Prophet Muhammad will be that man. He told his companions that he would “be the first one to knock at the gates of Paradise”.^[2] Prophet Muhammad also said: “I will come to the gates of Paradise and ask for them to be opened. The gatekeeper will ask, “Who are you?” I will say, “Muhammad”. The gatekeeper will say “I was ordered not to open the gate for anyone else before you”.^[3]

Prophet Muhammad enters first, that is a well-deserved blessing. Our minds find it easy to comprehend the reasons for this great honour, but after some time we might begin to wonder who would be the last person to enter Paradise. Because there will be a last person and then the gates will be shut. The companions of Prophet Muhammad also wondered about Paradise in exactly the same way that we do. They however had the wonderful privilege of being able to ask their beloved Prophet just who would be the last person to enter Paradise?

As we know the traditions of Prophet Muhammad come to us in various forms and one of these is the hadith qudsi or sacred hadith. These traditions are particularly important because while the wording is that of Prophet Muhammad, the meaning is entirely from God. It is a type of revelation. These traditions form yet another dimension of God's message to humankind and usually deal with spiritual or ethical subjects. The answer to the question posed by the companions is contained in a hadith qudsi and it is one of the most beautiful and comprehensive of all traditions. Following is a translation of this tradition.

The last person to enter paradise will be a man who will walk once, stumble once and be burned by the Fire once. Once he gets past it, he will turn around and face it saying, 'Blessed be the One Who has saved me from you. God has given me something that He has not given to the first and the last.'

Then a tree will be raised up for him, and he will say, 'O my Lord, bring me closer to this tree so that I may shelter in its shade and drink of its water.' God, may He be glorified and exalted, will say, 'O son of Adam perhaps if I grant you this, you will ask Me for something else?' He will say, 'No, O Lord', and he will promise that he will not ask Him for anything else, and his Lord will excuse him because he has seen something that he has no patience to resist. So he will be brought near to it and he will shelter in its shade and drink of its water.

Then another tree will be raised up for him that is more beautiful than the first, and he will say, 'O my Lord, bring me closer to this tree so that I may drink of its water and shelter in its shade, and I will not ask you for anything else.' He will say, 'O son of Adam did you not promise Me that you would not ask me for anything else?' He will say, 'Perhaps if I bring you near to it, you will ask Me for something else.' He will promise that he will not ask Him for anything else, and his Lord will excuse him because he has seen something that he has no patience to resist. So he will be brought near to it and he will shelter in its shade and drink of its water.

Then another tree will be raised up for him at the gate of Paradise that is more beautiful than the first two, and he will say, 'O My Lord, bring me closer to this tree so that I may shelter in its shade and drink of its water, and I will not ask You for anything else.' He will say, 'O son of Adam, did you not promise Me that you would not ask Me for anything else?' He will say, 'Yes, O Lord, I will not ask you for anything else.' His Lord will excuse him because he has seen something which he has no patience to resist. He will be brought close to it, and when he draws close to it, he will hear the voices of the people of Paradise and will say, 'O Lord, admit me therein.' He will say: 'O son of Adam, what will make you stop asking? Will it please you if I give you the world and as much again?' He will say, 'O Lord, are You making fun of me when You are the Lord of the Worlds?'

Ibn Mas'ood (the companion narrating this beautiful narration) smiled and said: Why don't you ask me why I am smiling? They said: Why are you smiling? He said: This is how the Messenger of God, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, smiled and they (the companions around the Prophet) asked: Why are you smiling, O

Messenger of God? He said: "Because the Lord of the Worlds will smile when he says, 'are You making fun of me when You are the Lord of the Worlds?' and (God) will say: 'I am not making fun of you, but I am Able to do whatever I will.'"^[4]

In part two we will discuss how the kindness and mercy of God is demonstrated in this hadith and look at how well the Lord of all the worlds knows and understands His creation.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*

[3] *Ibid*

[4] *Saheeh Muslim*

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