

How are judgement, paradise, and hell shown in the Qur'an?

Judgement

One of the characteristics of Allah is omniscience; he is all-knowing (see 1.3). Muslims, therefore, believe Allah is aware of everything a person has done, and so he can judge them fairly:

‘When the Hour arrives, on that Day people will be separated: those who believed and did good deeds will delight in a Garden, while those who disbelieved and denied Our messages and the meeting of the Hereafter will be brought into torment.’
(Qur'an, Surah 30: 14–16)

This verse says that on the Day of Judgement, ‘people will be separated’ – those who did good works and are worthy of jannah will be on one side, and those who disbelieved and are deserving of jahannam will be on the other.

Paradise (Jannah)

Jannah is described in the Qur'an as a beautiful and attractive place:

‘We do not let the reward of anyone who does good go to waste – they will have Gardens of lasting bliss graced with flowing streams. There they will be adorned with bracelets of gold. There they will wear green garments of fine silk and brocade. There they will be comfortably seated on soft chairs. What a blessed reward! What a pleasant resting place!’
(Qur'an, Surah 18: 30–31)

Hell (Jahannam)

Jahannam is shown to be a place of pain and suffering:

‘Those whose good deeds weigh heavy will be successful, but those whose balance is light will have lost their souls for ever and will stay in Hell – the Fire will scorch their faces and their lips will be twisted in pain.’
(Qur'an, Surah 23: 102–104)

The words ‘weight’ and ‘balance’ show that a person's deeds will be weighed up, as if by weighing scales. A person who is ‘light’ or ‘lacking’ in good deeds will go to hell. The descriptions of paradise as a pleasant resting place and of hell as a fiery place of torture are believed by some Muslims to be a literal truth, but not by all. Many Muslims consider much of the Qur'an's language to be symbolic. They would argue that verses like these speak about the beauties and miseries of the afterlife in a way that humans can relate to but not fully understand (see 2.3). The words used for jannah, for instance, are intended to highlight the seriousness of not believing in Allah and to dissuade people from committing sins.

The Hour refers to the time of judgement in the afterlife.

Is there a need for the Qur'an's descriptions of hell to be so graphic? Explain your views and consider another perspective.

Many Muslims believe that jahannam, like jannah, will be forever. Other Muslims argue that hell is only temporary, as Allah is forgiving:

‘[...] do not despair of God's mercy. God forgives all sins. He is truly the Most forgiving, the Most merciful.’
(Qur'an, Surah 39: 53)

‘A time will come in jahannam when not a single man would be left in it. Its doors and windows will rattle to the blowing wind.’
(Hadith – Kanzul Ummal)

Some Muslims use these teachings to argue that all souls will eventually enter paradise once they are pure enough.

How do Muslim teachings about life after death affect the life of a Muslim today?

- Belief in the Day of Judgement is one of the six Beliefs of Sunni Muslims and the five roots of Usul ad-Din of Shia Muslims and is, therefore, highly significant. Muslims pray to be given a good afterlife:

‘Grant us good things in this world and in the life to come.’
(Qur'an, Surah 7: 156)

- Belief in the akhirah affects how Muslims live and treat others, because they know they will be judged.

‘On the Day when We summon each community, along with its leader, those who are given their record in their right hand will read it [with pleasure]. But no one will be wronged in the least: those who were blind in this life will be blind in the Hereafter, and even further off the path.’
(Qur'an, Surah 17: 71–72)

This verse emphasizes that justice will be served in the akhirah, because ‘no one will be wronged in the least’. The blindness spoken of is understood to be spiritual, not physical, which teaches Muslims not to read references about the akhirah too literally.

- A Muslim will strive to follow the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the Hadith to the best of their ability, so that they will be judged favourably.
- The promise of paradise for good deeds offers Muslims hope for a better afterlife.



World Muslims agree with these descriptions of paradise and hell.

