

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Surah Aal-e-'Imran

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

133. Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth prepared for the righteous.

The Fire (3:131) is, as always, contrasted with the Garden -in other words, Hell contrasted with Heaven. We are told that its width alone is that of the whole of the heavens and the earth - all the creation we can imagine. In other words our spiritual felicity covers not merely this or that part of our being, but all life and all existence. Who can measure its width, or length, or depth? (R).

The Noble Quran/Yusuf Ali

Allah encourages His servants to perform righteous deeds and to rush to accomplish the acts of obedience. ... It was reported that the meaning of Allah's statement draws the attention to the spaciousness of Paradise. For instance, Allah said in another Ayah, while describing the couches of Paradise, *بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ* (lined with silk brocade) (55:54), so what about their outer covering It was also said that Paradise is as wide as its length, because it is a dome under the Throne. The width and length of a dome or a circle are the same in distance.

This Ayah (3:133 above) is similar to Allah's statement in Surat Al-Hadid, *سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ* (Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord (Allah), and Paradise the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the Earth) (57:21).

Al-Bazzar recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that a man came to the Messenger of Allah صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and asked him, about Allah's statement, *وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ* (Paradise as wide as the heavens and the Earth) (3:133); "Where is the Fire then" The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said, *أَرَأَيْتَ اللَّيْلَ إِذَا جَاءَ لَيْسَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ، فَأَيْنَ النَّهَارُ؟* (When the night comes, it overtakes everything, so where is the day) The man said, "Where Allah wants it to be." The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said, *وَكَذَلِكَ النَّارُ تَكُونُ حَيْثُ شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ* (Similarly, the Fire is where Allah wants it to be.) This Hadith has two possible meanings. First, when we do not see the night during the day, this does not mean that the day is not somewhere else, even though we cannot see it. Such is the case with Hell-fire, for it is where Allah wants it to be. The second meaning is that when the day overcomes this part of the world, the night overtakes the other part. Such is the case with Paradise, for it

is in the utmost heights above the heavens and under the Throne. The width of Paradise is, as Allah stated, كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ (whereof is as the width of the heaven and the Earth) (57:21).

The Fire, on the other hand, is in the lowest of lows. Therefore, Paradise being as wide as the heavens and Earth does not contradict the fact that the Fire exists wherever Allah wills it to be.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir

...We find in a hadith reported by Abū Dharr from the Prophet ﷺ: 'The seven heavens and seven earths in comparison to the Footstool are only like some dirhams cast into a desert, and the Footstool in comparison to the Throne is only like a ring cast into a desert.' These things are much greater than the heavens and the earth, and the power of Allah is greater than all that."... People also say that this is simply a metaphorical usage in Arabic. Since the Garden has the greatest possible dimensions in respect of space and breadth, it is good to refer to it as 'the breadth of the heavens and the earth.' It like referring to a man by saying, 'This one is an ocean' and to a large animal by saying, 'This one is a mountain.' The āyah does not intend to define its breadth, but it means that it is the widest thing you could possibly imagine.

Tafsir Qurtubi

...the Paradise is as wide as whole of the heavens and the earth. Since human mind cannot conceive any greater vastness than that of the heavens and the earth within the confines of his experience, the Paradise has been likened to them. [It] is based on the assumption that the Arabic word (عرض ard) means 'width'. However, there is another possible interpretation adopted by some commentators. According to them the word 'ard' is also used in the meaning of 'price'. If the word is taken here in this sense, the verse would mean that Paradise is not an ordinary commodity; the entire heavens and the earth are its price....Al-Razi in his 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir' explains this point as follows:

قال ابو مسلم : ان العرض هنا ما يعرض من الثمن في مقابلة المبيع اي ثمنها لو بيعت كثمن السماوات والارض والمراد بذلك عظم مقدارها و
جلالة خطرها و انه لا يساويها شئ وان عظم- Abu Muslim says that `al-ard' in this verse means that which is offered against the object of sale as its price. In other words, if a price were to be put on Paradise, the heavens and the earth together with whatever is in them will be its price. The purpose is to demonstrate the most exalted status of the Paradise which remains unmatched by anything in its greatness.

Mariful Quran

...Man may spend a life-time doing good and abstaining from the evils. Still the aggregate of his good deeds cannot pay the price of Paradise. What will take him to Paradise is only Forgiveness of His Lord, and His grace. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: سَدُّوْا وَقَارِبُوْا وَاَبَشِّرُوْا فَاِنَّهٗ لَا يُدْخِلُ اَحَدًا الْجَنَّةَ عَمَلُهُ قَالُوْا وَاَلَا اَنْتَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ قَالِ وَلَا اَنَا اِلَّا اَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللّٰهُ
Strive to be straight and true, take the middle course and seek glad tidings (of Allah's grace), for one's deeds shall not take anyone into the Paradise'. People said: 'Not even yours, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ?' He ﷺ said: 'Not even mine, unless it is that Allah covers me up with His mercy.' (al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, with reference to al-Bukhari and Muslim).

In short, our deeds are not the price of Paradise. But, as is the customary practice of Allah, He does bestow His grace upon a servant who does what is good. In fact, one who is given the very ability to do good deeds is really given the signal that Allah is pleased with him. So, let none of us be tardy in the performance of what is good. Since Divine forgiveness is the primary factor in one's entry into the Paradise, the text takes this importance into consideration and does not present forgiveness in the absolute sense. It has, rather, elected to say: **مَغْفِرَةً مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ** Forgiveness from your Lord. By doing so, the text highlights Allah's attribute as the Lord, showing thereby His added grace and mercy for His servants.

Mariful Quran

Compilers' notes:

- قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَقُولُ " الْجَنَّةُ مِائَةٌ دَرَجَةٍ كُلُّ دَرَجَةٍ مِنْهَا مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ أَعْلَاهَا الْفِرْدَوْسُ وَإِنْ أَوْسَطُهَا الْفِرْدَوْسُ وَإِنَّ الْعَرْشَ عَلَى الْفِرْدَوْسِ مِنْهَا تُفَجَّرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَسَلُّوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Paradise has one hundred grades, each of which is as big as the distance between heaven and earth. The highest of them is Firdaws and the best of them is Firdaws. The Throne is above Firdaws and from it spring forth the rivers of Paradise. If you ask of Allah, ask Him for Firdaws.'" [Ibn Majah]

