

Aqaiied- Grade 10

Contents Developed By:

Shia Ithna' Asheri Madressa
Madressa.net

Presented By:

www.IslamicBlessings.com

AQAED - CLASS 10

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOPICS	PAGE
Vocabulary	2
Imamah – Leadership	3
• Shia Perspective vs. Sunni Perspective	4
• Was a Successor Appointed by the Holy Prophet (S)?	6
• Who was the Appointed Successor?	8
• Divine Appointment of a Successor	10
• Basic Criteria for the Appointment of a Successor	11
Qiyamah – Day Of Judgment	12
• Different Names of Qiyamah	13
• Hadith regarding the Day of Judgment	14
• The Sounding of the <i>Soor</i>	15
• Paradise (<i>Jannah</i>)	17
• Anecdote: Shaddad’s Paradise on Earth	19
• Hell-fire (<i>Jahannam</i>)	21
• The Accounting of Deeds	22

AQAED SECTION

Basic Beliefs of Islam (Roots of Religion)

Terminology and Vocabulary

Ambiguous:	Unclear; Uncertain
Continuum:	Range; Variety; Continuation
Envisage:	Foresee; Predict
Imminent:	Forthcoming; Approaching
Kufr:	Blasphemy; Rejecting the apparent Truth
Ousted:	Expelled; Overthrown
Pertinent:	Applicable; Important
Rationally:	Sensibly; Wisely; Reasonably
Revel:	Taking great delight in

Imamah – Leadership

→ What is Imamah?

Imamah is the fourth basic belief of Islam and a component of the Divine Scheme. The word *Imam* is derived from an Arabic word, meaning leader. The plural of *Imam* in Arabic is *Aimmah*.

Thus the term Imamah means **leadership of certain selected people** who were appointed by Allah (SWT) as the successors to the Holy Prophet (S) to continue his mission after his death. There are a total of 12 Aimmah; all appointed by Allah (SWT) and announced by the Holy Prophet (S).

Their names are as follows:

1 st Imam	-	Ali ibn Abi Talib	(A)
2 nd Imam	-	Hasan ibn Ali	(A)
3 rd Imam	-	Husayn ibn Ali	(A)
4 th Imam	-	Ali Zainul Abideen	(A)
5 th Imam	-	Muhammad Baqir	(A)
6 th Imam	-	Ja'far Sadiq	(A)
7 th Imam	-	Musa Kadhim	(A)
8 th Imam	-	Ali Ridha	(A)
9 th Imam	-	Muhammad Taqi	(A)
10 th Imam	-	Ali Naqi	(A)
11 th Imam	-	Hasan Askari	(A)
12 th Imam	-	Muhammad Mahdi al-Muntadhar	(A)

All these Aimmah were appointed by Allah (SWT) and declared by the Holy Prophet (S) as his successors one after the other. Their duty was to lead the Ummah of the Holy Prophet (S) in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah in spiritual, religious, social and political matters.

All the 12 Aimmah were infallible, most knowledgeable and exalted in every sphere of life during their times.

They were fully aware of Holy Qur'an and Hadith and were authorized by the Holy Prophet (S) to interpret it. Thus, the words and actions of all these Aimmah are also regarded as Hadith.

Shia Perspective vs. Sunni Perspective

With regards to the belief in Imamah, we find some differences between the Shia and Sunni perspective. Whenever establishing dialogues on this matter it very important to remember that the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet (S) have taught us how to hold and conduct such useful discussions.

The golden principle that is taught by Allah (SWT) to all His Prophets is:

**Invite [all] to the way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching,
and argue [debate] with them in ways that are best.**

An Nahl (16): 125

Thus, as Muslims, we should always remember the above-mentioned pre-requisite Qur'anic conditions of dialogues that can be summarized as follows.

- A. The sole intention of arguments must be to invite the people to the way of the Lord.
- B. The approach should always be rational, i.e. arguments should be based on the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith, and established historical facts, unanimously accepted by the concerned groups.
- C. The decision should be carried out in a beautiful manner. There shouldn't be any argument for the sake of arguing or to show any superiority or struggle of winning the battle. The main aim behind the dialogue should be to remove differences and to invite to the way of Allah (SWT).
- D. All participants should come with full determination that they will accept the truth.

→ Major Difference

There is a serious difference of opinion between Sunni and Shia Muslims on the issue of Imamah.

1. Sunnis do not believe in Imamah and do not recognize the 12 Aimmah as their leaders whereas the Shia consider Imamah as one of the fundamental beliefs of Islam and recognize all the 12 Aimmah as the legitimate successors of the Holy Prophet (S).
2. Sunnis believe in Khilafah as a substitute of Imamah. According to Sunni beliefs, the Holy Prophet (S) neither said anything about his succession nor appointed anyone in his lifetime to be his successor. Shias believe that the Holy Prophet (S) nominated Imam Ali (A) as his immediate successor **and this decision was explicitly expressed at several occasions.**

There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an, ahadith of the Holy Prophet (S), and historical events, in the authentic books of both, the Sunni and Shia, which are more than enough to enlighten the Muslim Ummah regarding this controversy.

The issue of Imamah and Khilafah will be discussed in two parts:

- ◆ **Did the Holy Prophet (S) appoint anyone as his successor to continue his mission after him or not?**
- ◆ **If he did appoint someone, then whom did he appoint, and what was the primary criteria of this appointment?**

Was a Successor Appointed by the Holy Prophet (S)?

→ Sunni Standpoint

All Sunni scholars, without any difference of opinion, say that the Holy Prophet (S) did not appoint anyone as his successor nor did he leave any guidelines regarding his succession.

- The Sunnis are also unanimous in believing that the Holy Prophet (S) never made any nomination in favor Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman or anyone else, nor is there any indication of their Khilafah in the Holy Qur'an or Hadith.

If this is acceptable by all Sunni scholars then it solves most of the dispute. Because, if the Prophet (S) did not mentioned anyone as his successor then there should not be any resistance from their side to accept anyone as the first Khalifa, whether he be Imam Ali (A), or anybody else.

In fact, if the Holy Qur'an and Prophet (S) are totally silent on this matter, as the Sunni believe, then the whole belief of Khilafah should not be considered as a religious issue. Thus, the Khilafah of Abu Bakr will simply become a historical event, which has no concern with religious faith.

If this is the case, then the Sunni should not accuse the Shia, when they do not accept the Khilafah of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, as they are not rejecting any divine injunction or religious order.

Thus, from Sunni point of view, even if Imam Ali (A) was not appointed by the Prophet (S) as his successor, Shias have right to accept him as Khalifa in the same way as Sunnis accept Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman as their Khalifa.

Hence, from Sunni standpoint, one can arrive at a conclusion that the issue of Khilafah **is not** a religious matter, and as it is not a fundamental article of the Islamic faith. The acceptance or rejection of any Khalifa equally makes no difference to the person concerned.

Hence, the Sunni, according to their own belief, have no right to criticize the Shia for not recognizing the Khalifas, who were solely nominated or elected by the people, and not appointed by Allah (SWT) or His Messenger.

→ Shia Standpoint

All Shia scholars strongly believe that the Holy Prophet (S) had clearly mentioned about his successor in major public meetings. There is a long list of recorded events in history, which reveal that the Prophet (S) **did** declare the name of his successor.

Thus, from Shia standpoint, if anyone rejects or doesn't recognize the legitimate successor of the Holy Prophet (S), then this is an open challenge to the authority of the Prophet (S) and **a clear defiance of Divine law**. This is definitely a serious sin. If someone does it knowingly and deliberately, then he will be ousted from the Muslim community on account of committing **Kufr**.

- ❖ Is it rational to believe that the Prophet (S) did not mention anything about his succession?
- ❖ Did the Holy Prophet (S), who had given the Muslim world a written constitution of an ideal government, a perfect curriculum of education, a comprehensive program of dynamic life, ignore the most significant issue – **the issue of succession**?
- ❖ Did the Holy Prophet (S) not envisage the inevitable crisis of leaving a newly established Muslim community, composed of different tribes (Bani Hashim, Bani Umayyah, Aws, Khazraj, etc.) without a leader?

A man of rational thinking cannot digest the Sunni's viewpoint that the Prophet (S) who was preparing his Ummah to deal with all the major and minor problems which they might face in future after his death until the day of Qiyamah, will leave the most important and immediate question of succession unaddressed.

It is absolutely impossible and beyond imagination that the Prophet (S) who was telling his people all about the events that will happen after his death, did not realize himself what would happen after his death if he did not appoint any person as his rightful successor.

History reveals that Abu Bakr, who was chosen by his people as the 1st Khalifa, did not leave the Muslims without clearly mentioning his successor.

Umar, who was appointed by Abu Bakr as the 2nd Khalifa, did the same thing before his death. When a person fatally stabbed Umar, and he realized that he couldn't survive, he quickly made a committee of 6 members and gave them full guidelines about the issue of succession in order to select a successor of his choice.

Considering these two well-recorded cases of history which historians have no dispute, then how could one imagine the Holy Prophet (S), who was the most responsible person, to have left a **suffocating vacuum** after him by not appointing anyone as his successor.

Thus, it would be impossible to give any acceptable explanation by Sunni scholars to justify their standpoint rationally. It is the Shia belief that, the Holy Prophet (S), upon Divine Commandment, clearly informed the Ummah about his successor on many occasions, leaving no room for any kind of confusion, or misinterpretation.

Who was the Appointed Successor?

It has been resolved by reasonable arguments that the Holy Prophet (S) clearly did mention about his successor.

There are numerous ahadith in which the Prophet (S) has clearly announced the name of his successor who was Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A).

One of the undisputed Hadith, which is unanimously accepted by *all* Muslims, is as follows:

*Ali holds the same position with me as Haroon did with Musa,
except that prophethood would not continue after me.*

→ Official Announcement of the Successor

The Holy Prophet (S) made a public announcement about his successor in a fully official manner while he was returning from his last Hajj (just few months before his death) to a gathering of 120, 000 Muslims.

This announcement was made in response to the Divine Order revealed to him at the place called Ghadir Khumm. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) addresses His Messenger:

**O Messenger of Allah (SWT)!
Convey to mankind the command that Allah has sent to you.
If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed the Prophetic message.
Allah will protect you from the harm men might cause you.**

Al Maidah (5): 67

Just after the revelation of the Divine Command, the Holy Prophet (S) asked all the Muslims to stop and make appropriate arrangements to make this announcement publicly. After performing the Dhuhr prayers, the Holy Prophet (S) stepped towards the pulpit, which was placed for him amidst the Muslim crowd.

After a short speech the Holy Prophet (S) then called Imam Ali (A) and proclaimed:

*Of whomsoever I am the guardian, Ali is also his guardian.
O Allah, love whomsoever who loves Ali,
and be the enemy of whosoever is Ali's enemy.*

After completing his speech, the Holy Prophet (S) requested the audience to convey this message regarding the status of Imam Ali (A) to all those who were not present there.

This was a very clear indication that Imam Ali (A) is his successor and he will be responsible for every thing in this capacity. This declaration of the Holy Prophet (S) has been recorded in most of the Shia and Sunni authentic books of history and ahadith.

It is also mentioned in history books that, soon after this explicit, official declaration of his successorship in favor of Imam Ali (A), Umar was among the first to come and meet Imam Ali (A) and offered his congratulations.

Just after the compliance of Divine Command, the last verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S):

**Today I have perfected for you your religion,
completed for you my bounty,
and chosen Islam for you as religion.**

Al Maidah (5): 3

While all Sunnis accept Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Imam Ali (A) as their Khulafa, that is, the successors of the Holy Prophet (S), they also agree without any difference that all these Khulafa were appointed by the public, and not by the Holy Prophet (S).

Thus, this kind of Khilafah can not be considered as **Khilafah Ilahiyya**, which is the Vicegerency of God and is bestowed by Allah (SWT) Himself, and can never be dependent on the choice of the people.

- A Khalifa appointed by the people can only be a political leader, ruler or a king, but not a Divine Leader, i.e. an Imam.

Divine Appointment of a Successor

→ Appointed of an Imam by Allah (SWT) vs. by the Public

As discussed earlier, there are two different beliefs among Muslims about the successor of the Holy Prophet (S)

- The Sunni believe that Abu Bakr is the successor of the Holy Prophet (S), and he was given this position by a few people. Abu Bakr then nominated Umar as his successor and Umar formed a strategic committee that would elect Uthman as his successor. Finally, after the assassination of Uthman, a large number of people selected Imam Ali (A) as their leader.
- Shias strongly believe that Imam Ali (A), is the successor of the Holy Prophet (S) and that he was given this position by Allah (SWT). Imam Ali (A) is the 1st Imam and the true successor of the Prophet (S). And each preceding Imam then nominated the next Imam in accordance with the Divine Will.

Examine these two beliefs of Muslims in a rational way.

- A. We know that all the Prophets were *appointed by Allah (SWT)* and **not** by public. Just as Allah (SWT) appointed special individuals to convey His Message, and gave them unique powers and talents, the individuals who were given the task of continuing the Prophet's mission must therefore also be appointed by Allah (SWT) and not by people's election or selection.
- B. All Prophets are *infallible* and therefore their successors should also possess this quality. If the successor is not the most capable person after the Prophet, than he would not be able to interpret the Divine Message correctly.

Thus, Allah (SWT) knows best of who is capable to undertake His Mission after the Prophet (S). The people can never elect the right people to guide themselves. For instance, in all universities, colleges and schools, teachers are always appointed by the Higher Board and **not** by the students.

Similarly, the Imam or the successor of the Prophet must be appointed by Allah (SWT). If people chose their own spiritual teacher while they are themselves spiritually imperfect and inferior, they will definitely commit mistakes in their selection, and as a result of this wrong selection, the Divine Law will be misinterpreted.

Hence, it is only Allah (SWT), the most perfect entity of all, who appoints the successor(s) of the Prophet (S). History reveals without any doubt that Imam Ali (A) was the only person in the entire Muslim Ummah who was the most suitable person to carry out the duties as the immediate **Divine Successor** of the Holy Prophet (S).

Basic Criteria for the Appointment of a Successor

The Prophet did not appoint Imam Ali (A) as his successor because he was his cousin brother or son-in-law. The Holy Qur'an has confirmed that Prophets never do anything by their choice but always obey Allah's (SWT) Command.

Thus, the appointment of Imam Ali (A) as the successor of the Holy Prophet (S) and the 1st Imam of the entire mankind, was made by Allah (SWT), the Lord of the Universe.

It is not complicated to understand why Allah (SWT) appointed Imam Ali (A), because Allah's (SWT) work is always based on Wisdom and Justice.

The basic criteria of Divine Khilafah are clearly derived from the verses of the Holy Qur'an. These include:

1. Aimmah and Khulafa are always appointed by Allah (SWT), and not by the public.
2. Imamah and Khilafah Ilahiyya are such high ranks that even angels are not qualified for that position.
3. Pure knowledge and a powerful mental and physical state are the most essential requirements for holding these high-ranking positions.
4. In no circumstances, can the Khalifa or Imam be someone who had ever been a polytheist.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned conditions for Imamah or Khilafah, one can easily conclude that no one except Imam Ali (A) was the legitimate candidate for the position of the successor of the Holy Prophet (S), the Khilafah Ilahiyya.

All historians and scholars, both Shia and Sunni, say without any difference of opinion that:

- Imam Ali (A) was the most knowledgeable person after the Holy Prophet (S). All sources have recorded the hadith of the Holy Prophet (S):

I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate.

- Imam Ali (A) was the bravest person in the Prophet's army. History of Islam is full of his great achievements in the battlefields. The victory in the battles of Uhad, Khandaq and Khaybar is accredited solely to Imam Ali (A).
- Imam Ali (A) was the only person who, like the Holy Prophet (S), had never committed Shirk, worshipped idols, or prostrated before anyone else other than Allah (SWT).

Qiyamah – The Day Of Judgment

Qiyamah or the *Day of Judgment* is the fifth fundamental belief in Islam. It is also referred to as the *Day of Resurrection* or *Doomsday*. The doctrine of Tawheed and Qiyamah are the most essential concepts of Islam.

The Holy Qur'an and ahadith are clear in that the exact timings of Doomsday are an absolute Divine secret. No one except Allah (SWT) knows the time of Qiyamah.

But the *length* of the day has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

**Unto Him ascend the angels and the spirit in a day,
the measure of which is fifty thousand years.**

Al Ma'arij (70): 4

On the Day of Judgment, Allah (SWT) will raise the dead from their graves, and their bodies will be reformed. They will all gather for a reckoning of their actions and account for all that they have done.

Every person will account for his/her own actions in this world. He/She will be judged fairly and be rewarded for his/her good deeds and punished for his/her sins.

Man will be his own witness, and his limbs will bear witness to his deeds. Everything he ever did will be replayed in front of him, without any detail missing. People will be terrified, awaiting their ultimate fate.

The Holy Qur'an describes the scene as follows:

**And when the books (of the deeds of mankind) are spread,
And when the heavens are stripped,
And when Hell is set ablaze,
And when the Garden is brought forward,
(Then) every soul will know what it had sent forward.**

Al Takweer (81): 10 -14

Our whole life in this world is a preparation for the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) has clearly shown us the path that leads to salvation; none of us can say that we were confused about what He wanted us to do. If we choose to obey His Commands then eternal bliss awaits us. If we disobey, then eternal torment awaits us.

The choice is yours.

Different Names of Qiyamah

Qiyamah is referred to with many other names, which throw considerable light on what will happen on this day, are as follows

- Yawm al-Akhira:** The final and the last day after which no other event will occur.
- Yawm al-Ba'th:** The day when all dead people will be given a new life.
- Yawm ad-Deen:** The day when the final judgment of all affairs with absolute justice will be declared.
- Yawm al-Fasl:** The day when a clear separation between the evil-doers and virtuous will take place *or* the day when all relationships among humans will be cut off.
- Yawm al-Haqq:** The day when only truth will prevail.
- Yawm al-Hashr:** The day when all human beings will gather to know their ultimate fate.
- Yawm al-Hisab:** The day when the final and total accountability of all human deeds will take place.
- Yawm al-Jam':** The day when everything that existed will be brought into account.
- Yawm an-Nashr:** The day when all that was born in this world will rise.
- Yawm as-Saa'ah:** The definite time when all of us will be resurrected for the final Judgment.
- Yawm at-Talaq:** The day when all belongings will be detached from their owners.

Yawma laa yanfa'u maalun walaa banun:

The day when all material belongings and family relationships will be of no use.

A reflection upon these descriptive names of Qiyamah which have been used in the Holy Qur'an may enable us to partially comprehend the nature of the Day of Judgment.

Hadith regarding the Day of Judgment

The Day of Qiyamah will truly be a trying time. Everyone will rise and stand in front of the Almighty for the accountability of their deeds. Our Holy Prophet (S) is **a Mercy to the Universe** and he did not wish for any soul to be punished in the Hereafter. He constantly reminded us of the reality that we will have to face.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

Human beings will be questioned about four things on the Day of Judgment:

- **How a person spent his life?**
- **How he utilized his physical strength for the sake of Allah (SWT)?**
- **How he attained his wealth and the manner he spent it?**
- **Whether he loved the Holy Prophet (S) and his pure family?**

Our Holy Prophet (S) then warned the believers to give utmost importance to:

- (a) Salat (Prayers)
- (b) Akhlaq (Moral Excellence)

Since we know that each individual is held accountable for his own actions, we must realize that many times our opinions are incorrect and we must therefore refrain from judging *others*. We should concentrate on *our own* actions. Allah (SWT) is the judge for others just as He is for us.

The Holy Prophet (S) told us:

Take account of yourselves before you judge and take account of others.

The Holy Qur'an advises:

**O Dawood! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land;
So judge between man with justice and do not follow desire,
lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah.
Those who go astray from the path of Allah,
they shall surely have a severe punishment
because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.**

Su'ad (38): 26

The Sounding of the *Soor*

→ **When the Doomsday Will Occur?**

The exact timings of Qiyamah are absolutely unknown to anyone except Allah (SWT), as related in the following verse:

**They question you [Muhammad] about the hour of Doom: when shall it be?
(Say) you have no knowledge to say anything about it.
Allah alone knows when it will come.
You are but a Warner for those who fear.**

An Naaziat (79): 42 - 44

→ **How will Doomsday begin?**

The Day of Resurrection shall commence all of a sudden with a catastrophic loud bang. It has been referred in the Holy Qur'an as *Soor*. The *Soor* will be a tremendous bang, which will spread a wave of terror throughout the universe.

**And the day when the *Soor* will be blown,
and all who are in the heavens and the earth will stare in terror,
save whom Allah Wills.**

An Naml (27): 87

→ **The 1st *Soor*: Destruction**

This shall be Divine Announcement - the start of the Universal Doomsday. It will be a terrifying event. The Holy Qur'an refers to it as a *heavy day*.

A heavy day in the Heavens and the Earth.

Al A'raaf (7): 187

An unprecedented condition of sweeping chaos at a cosmological scale will grip the entire universe. The Earth will experience tremendous turbulence; a quake, which has never occurred before in the history of mankind.

Then a chain of disastrous events will occur, one after the other destroying the whole universe. Every living creature including the Angel of Death and the Angel who will blow the *Soor*, will finally die.

**Everything that exists will perish, except the Face of your Lord,
full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor.**

Ar Rahmaan (55): 26 - 27

→ **The 2nd Soor: Resurrection**

Allah (SWT) will then command the blowing of the second *Soor* by His Will for the resurrection of the dead souls. The second *Soor* will bring the new order of creation. Allah (SWT) will create a new universe much larger than the present one and the most beautiful one. This will be the fulfillment of the promise of Allah (SWT), made in the Holy Qur'an:

He will surely repeat the creation of the universe again.

Anbiya (21): 104

The new world will be unimaginably different (bearing only some resemblance) in all respects – shape, size, climate, laws and living conditions.

**On that Day when the Earth will be changed into another earth,
and the Heavens (they will also be changed).**

Ibrahim (14): 48

Paradise (*Jannah*)

Paradise is the most attractive place for the God-conscious, the obedient, the pure and the good-doers. It is the abode of Prophets and their followers; especially created by their Lord, as a reward and source of pleasure for His servants.

Its wonders are awesome and beyond the capability of the human mind to imagine. The Holy Qur'an often mentions paradise referring it as *Jannah*, an Arabic word, meaning green or implying an exotic, luscious garden.

In various verses and traditions, Jannah has been described as a garden full of beautiful trees, giving cool shade to the heavenly dwellers. Under these trees flow cool springs, rivers and streams of pure, sweet and sparkling water.

Fruits of all kind – known in this world and unknown – of different shapes, colors and tastes will hang ever-ripe, in abundance from the branches of the trees. A fragrant breeze will gently drift through the boughs providing freshness to the Believers.

There will be no such thing as pain, hurt, sorrow or restlessness in Jannah. Even the food and fruit will be ever fresh and never rot. The good doers will enjoy the infinite blessings; their every wish shall be granted and Jannah will serve them in everyway.

The Believers will be clothed in the most beautiful garments covered with emeralds, pearls and other glittering gems. They will spend their time exploring and admiring the wonders of Paradise and when they wish to rest, they will relax on soft couches in the company of the Masoomeen (A), Prophets, Martyrs and other dwellers of Jannah.

The Holy Prophet (S) narrated:

“I saw in Paradise, angels constructing beautiful palaces, whose bricks were made up of beautiful emeralds, gold and pearls! Sometimes they would build very swiftly, and at other times rather slowly. Many times the angels would stop constructing the mansions all together.

So I asked the pure dedicated angels,

‘Why do you stop working on several occasions?’

They said,

‘We begin by building a palace for one of the believers and then we stop because we do not have the building materials for us to continue.’

I then asked them,

‘What are the building materials that you do not have in order to continue with the constructions?’

And the angels answered,

‘Through the Dhikr of Allah (SWT), a believer sends us the materials to start building with, but when he forgets, we lack the materials needed, and thus we have no choice but to stop our work.’

From this beautiful account we see the unlimited favors and blessings of paradise are made up of our own good deeds that we sow in this world. Some of those favors are so beautiful that no human eye has ever seen and no human ear has ever heard of them before!

Heaven and its favors are indeed wonders, beyond our understanding. Allah (SWT) mentions them in the Holy Qur’an, saying:

Allah has promised the believing men and the believing women, gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to reside in, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is Allah’s goodly pleasure – that is the grand achievement.

Al Tawba (9): 72

- ❖ The dwellers of Jannah are not all in the same level. They shall differ according to their individual purity of actions and piety in deeds.

Anecdote: Shaddad's Paradise on Earth

Aad was a descendent of Prophet Nuh. Thousands of years ago, his people had lived in the deserts of **Al Ahqaf** around Oman, and **Hadharamut** in South Arabia. They were strongly built and very tall. They worshipped idols.

Prophet Hud was sent by Allah (SWT) to preach and guide them on the right path. He advised them to worship one God as taught by Islam but they paid no heed. Drought overtook them for many years. Then some people went to Prophet Hud begging him to pray to Allah (SWT) for rainfall.

The Prophet prayed and instructed them to return to their villages. Thereafter it rained and people prospered. But never did they amend their conduct nor abandon their faith in idol-worship. At last they were destroyed by the punishment from Allah (SWT).

When Aad died, he left behind two sons *Shaddad* and *Shadeed*. After sometime Shadeed also died and Shaddad became the ruler of his kingdom. He had appointed several governors in areas over which he ruled. He grew so arrogant that he even claimed to be God and compelled his people to worship him.

Allah (SWT) sent Prophet Hud to Shaddad to advise him to correct his wrong thinking and conduct. In response, he once asked the Prophet what reward he would receive worshipped One God. He was told that he would have a place in Paradise. Shaddad inquired what sort of place Paradise was.

The Prophet described it as a blissful place where the righteous and true believers in Allah (SWT) would enjoy the best of everything. Shaddad responded saying it was nothing since he could also build similar place, or even a better one, on Earth.

He then resolved to build a huge and beautiful paradise of his own. He sent someone to **Zohak Tazi** – who ruled Iran, with a request to purchase all available quantity of gold and silver. He also sent people to other places and acquired large quantities of valuable items and treasures. He then gathered all his experts and architects and gave them instructions to construct a magnificent “Paradise on Earth”.

The construction began. Palaces with walls inlaid with gold and silver were built. Beautiful pearls and emerald were spread on floors instead of sand. The trees were made of gold. All valuable metals and materials were supplied and it took some 300 years to complete it.

During those days, people used to live long. Prophet Nuh lived for 2500 years. Similarly Shaddad was told that he would live that long. So he was extremely anxious to enter and live in his lavish man-made paradise before his death.

He gave orders to all people to proceed to the walls of this dazzling city. Then he himself proceeded with his large army for the opening ceremony. As he neared the paradise of his imagination, suddenly he saw a deer with a body and legs of gold and silver.

He chased it in order to capture it, but in so doing he got separated from his army. Now alone, he was unexpectedly faced with a frightful horseman who said:

‘Oh Shaddad! You imagined that you will be saved from death and live forever after entering this man-made paradise on earth?’

Upon hearing this, Shaddad trembled and inquired who the horseman was.

I am the Angel of Death and I have come to take your soul.

Shaddad pleaded to be given some time just to be able to enter his paradise, but the Angel of Death refused. He then fell from his horseback and his soul instantly departed from his body.

His army heard a deafening and frightening sound from the sky and they also perished on the spot. None of them could fulfill their ardent desire of entering the fictitious paradise. The whole decorated structure crumbled and got buried under the Arabian sand.

- ◆ What a splendid example of the consequence of one who thought he could challenge the Might of Allah (SWT), who had become arrogant as a result of this enormous wealth. What a tragedy that he could not even step into his own man-made paradise.

Hell-fire (*Jahannam*)

Jahannam is the place for the Mushrikeen, Hypocrites, and the evildoers. Life in Hell would be extremely painful and frightening. Its dwellers will undergo excruciating chastisement through various forms of punishment. They will live in misery and never-ending agony. One can simply not imagine the severity of chastisement in Hell.

The Holy Qur'an describes the blazing fire of Hell and its inhabitants in various chapters:

**Surely we have prepared for the disbelievers a fire,
the curtains of which shall encompass them,
and if they cry for water, they shall be given water like molten brass,
which will scald their faces;
Evil the drink and ill the resting place.**

Al Kahf (18): 29

**On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of Hell,
then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it;
this is what you hoarded up for yourselves,
therefore taste what you hoarded.**

At Tawba (9): 35

Such will be the abode for those who lived in this world without caution. The reality of the next world is permanent and those who take Islam lightly will have to bear the dreadful consequences in Hell.

The Holy Prophet (S) has warned us of the painful abode in Hell, saying:

*Surely hell-fire is surrounded by carnal desires, lusts, and worldly temptations,
and one has to follow these to reach the miserable state in the fire of hell.*

*Whosoever obeys and bonds himself to worldly temptations and lusty desires, and
runs after it with unlimited passion will indeed reach the doomed place – Hell.*

❖ A reminder:

**They shall have chastisement in this world's life,
but the chastisement of the Hereafter is certainly more grievous,
and they shall have no protector against Allah.**

Ar Ra'ad (13): 35

The Accounting of Deeds

The Holy Qur'an teaches that all human beings will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for their actions. All of one's deeds will be inquired into, and Allah (SWT) Himself will evaluate the events of one's life.

The Qur'an describes the accounting in the following verse:

**We have made every person's actions cling to his neck.
On the Day of Judgment, we will bring forth the record of his actions
in the form of a wide-open book.
We will tell him, *Read it and judge yourself.***

**One who follows guidance does for himself,
and one who goes astray does so against his soul.**

**No one will suffer for the sins of others.
We have never punished anyone without sending them Our Messenger first.**

Bani Israail (17): 13 - 15

Those who have earned the favor of the Lord will surely enter Paradise. Those who have not will enter Hell. This message is often stated in the Holy Qur'an, emphasizing its extraordinary importance:

**There is no doubt that that evil doers who are engulfed in sins
are the companions of Hell-fire wherein they will live forever.
As for the righteously striving believers,
they will be among the people of Paradise wherein they will live forever.**

Al Baqarah (2): 81 - 82

Not all human beings will fall into these two groups. Some people will be delivered to Hell for a period of agonizing purification; others, with better records in their books, will be transported to a place called referred to as *the Heights*, until they are ready to enter Paradise.

The Holy Qur'an tells us that some people will earn punishment of hell-fire eternally. For instance, atheists will belong to this category:

**Those who deny His Existence and die with such attitude
will be subject to the condemnation of Allah, the angels and the people.

They will live condemned forever, and will have no relief from the torment,
and no attention will be paid on them.**

Al Baqarah (2): 161 - 162