

Levels of Hell in the Sunnah

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Abstract

This research is allocated to studying what is stated in Sunnah about the levels of Hell, to derive benefits from it and prove the facts. Its importance comes from the absence of an independent study on this topic. After the introduction, I divided the research, into an introduction and two sections: The first section: The partitions of the levels of Hell, and the second section: The lowest level of Hell. Then I concluded the research with a conclusion in which I showed the most important results, then a list of sources and references. It has been proven that Hell has seven gates and that each gate represents a level of the levels of Hell. As for the names of these levels and who will be punished in them, this has not been proven by any authentic Hadith. It has also been proven that the people of Hell vary in the degrees of their punishment, and that the lowest level of Hell is its bottom, and its depth is enormous, estimated at seventy years for the sake of increasing, where the hypocrites, the oppressors, and the arrogant reside.

Keywords: *In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, who has honored His pious servants with the bliss of Paradise and the highest ranks, and has humiliated the disobedient with the humiliation of the lowest levels of Hell, the terror of calamities, and the loneliness of darkness. And prayers and peace be upon the chosen beloved, our master Muhammad, the best of those who set foot on the earth, and upon his family and companions, the protectors of the faith and the lamps of darkness, prayers and peace that will remain until the Day of Judgment.

Now Then

The Sunnah has been full of clarifying many religious facts, both secular and eschatological, and has detailed what the Holy Quran has summarized. Some concepts may spread among people that people think are absolute truths, including: the levels of Hell, and the names and attributes related to them, while another group stands against this and denies what Muslim scholars have deduced from the entirety of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, under the pretext that this is not proven by an explicit text. There is no doubt that there are many fabricated and weak reports about the nature of Hell, but this is not a justification for denying all of them.

This research entitled: (Levels of Hell in the Sunnah) I dedicated to studying what came in the Sunnah about this part: the levels of Hell, to derive benefits from it, and prove the facts.

Importance of the topic: It is no secret that clarifying the truths of the afterworld is a requirement of belief in the unseen, and general prophetic signs have been reported about the levels of Hell, which requires studying them in narration and knowledge (Mansoor et al., 2020). This research came to clarify what was reported in Hadiths, study them, and derive benefits from them.

Reasons for Selecting the Topic:

The most important reasons that prompted me to choose this topic are as follows:

The lack of an independent study on this topic.

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Explaining the hadiths mentioned in the Sunnah of the Prophet about the levels of Hell.

Research Problem

Some scholars have mentioned several divisions of the levels of Hell, and this research seeks to study these divisions in light of the Sunnah, and to show the extent of their credibility.

Research Limits: The research included all the Hadiths mentioned about the levels of Hell in all printed and available text books.

Research Methodology

In this research, I adopted the analytical inductive approach to study the honorable prophetic Hadiths.

Research Plan

After this introduction, I divided the research into an introduction in which I defined the levels and two sections:

Section One: The divisions of the levels of Hell.

Section Two: The lowest level of Hell.

Then I concluded the research with a conclusion in which I showed the most important results, then a list of sources and references.

Previous studies: There were very few references to the levels of Hell in the books of the Sunnah, as there were brief references to them in the books of interpretation, and I came across an electronic book called (The Levels of Hell from the Quran and the True News), written by Abu Abdul Malik Hatim bin Al-Sharbini bin Muhammad bin Ashour Al-Athari. However, the book has no relation to the levels of Hell, neither closely nor remotely, neither in definition nor presentation, as it included mention of some major sins or innovations according to the writer's understanding.

Method of implementing the method:

I collected the scientific material from its various sources and references.

I took care to reference the Hadiths from the books approved for referencing, mentioning information about the book, part, page, and Hadith number.

If the Hadith is not in Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, I documented it from the three oldest sources for referencing the Hadith from the approved books.

I clarified the words that need clarification by relying on books of strange Hadiths or books of language, in the strange Hadith section.

I referred to the books of explanations to clarify the meanings of the Hadiths.

I ignored mentioning fabricated Hadiths, extremely weak Hadiths, or statements that have no basis.

Our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

May God's prayers and peace be upon our Master Muhammad, his family, and his companions.

Preface

*Definition of Levels of Hell**First: Definition of Levels of Hell*

Levels of Hell (Daraka) in language: Ibn Faris said: "Dal, Ra, and Kaf are one root, and it is the catching up of something with something and its arrival to it. It is said: I caught up with the thing, I catch up with it. It is also said: A horse caught up with the prey, if it was not missed by the prey. It is also said: The boy and the girl caught up, if they reached maturity. Also, the people caught up: the last of them caught up with the first of them. The two Pleiades caught up, when the second rain overtakes the first. As for the Almighty's saying: {Rather, their knowledge is arrested concerning the Hereafter} , it is from this; because their knowledge overtook them in the Hereafter ,when it did not benefit them. Ad-Darak: is the piece of rope that is tied at the end of the rope to the bucket's handle; so that the water does not eat the rope. And even if it is for this purpose, it is by it that the bucket is reached. And from that is the level (Ad-Darak), which are the dwellings of the people of Hell. That is because Paradise has levels, and Hell has levels. Allah the Almighty said: { The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire} , and these are their dwellings that they will reach and join. We seek refuge in Allah from it . "The level (Ad-Darak) is like the stairs; But the stair is said to be in reference to ascending, and the level is in reference to descending. That is why it is said: the degrees of Paradise, and the levels of Hell. And to imagine the descent in Hell, it is called the abyss. Allah the Almighty said: {Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire}, as the level is the farthest depth of the sea .

The term level (Ad-Darak) in terminology: The terminological meaning does not depart from the linguistic meaning, as "the lower station is the opposite of the degree, which is the higher station. Levels are stations, some of which are below others, and degrees are stations, some of which are above others. Virtue is degrees, and vice is levels" .

Regarding the difference between degrees and levels, Ad-Dahhak said: "A level is when some of them are lower than others, and a staircase is when some of them are above others" .

Abdur-Rahman bin Zaid said: "The levels of Paradise go up and the levels of Hell go down" .

*Section One**The Divisions of the Levels of Hell*

It is worth noting that neither the Holy Quran nor the Noble Sunnah mentions the names or attributes of the levels of Hell except for the lowest level, which the second section was devoted to discussing. What has been mentioned of the names of these levels is the result of some scholars' independent opinion.

First: The gates of Hell are the Hell levels:

The Sunnah of the Prophet indicates that the gates of Hell are its levels or divisions, and what this has been narrated, that is, that the gates are the entrance to each level, as narrated by Ibn Al-Mubarak on the chain of narration of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: ((Do you know how the gates of Hell are? He said: We said: They are like our gates. He said: No, they are like this, some of them above others)) .

In a narration from him (may God be pleased with him): ((The gates of Hell are like this, and he placed one of them on the other, and separated his fingers, seven gates, so the first will be filled, then the second, then the third, then the fourth, then the seventh)) .

From Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), he said: "Paradise is spread out like this, and Hell has levels, some of them lower than others." .

From Yazid ibn Abi Malik Al-Hamdani , he said: "Hell has seven blazing fires, and there is no fire among them that does not look at the one beneath it, fearing that it will consume it." .

From Ikrimah , he said regarding the words of Allah the Almighty: {It has seven gates} , he said: (It has seven levels) .

That is, the levels of Hell are lower than each other, and this agrees with the description of the gates narrated by Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

Second: The names of the levels of Hell:

Al-Bayhaqi said: “We narrated in a hurried hadith that they are seven gates: Hell, Ladha, Al-Hutama, Al-Sa’eer, Saqar, Al-Jaheem, and Al-Haawiya. Some scholars said: Hell is the name for all the levels, and its levels are seven, so he mentioned these and mentioned the fire with them.” .

Ad-Dahhak said: “For each of their gates there is a portion that is divided. He said: Hell has seven gates, which are seven levels, one above the other. The first: The people of monotheism are tormented according to their deeds and their ages in this world, then they are brought out. The second: In it are the Jews, the third: In it are the Christians, the fourth: In it are the Sabians, the fifth: In it are the Magians, the sixth: In it are the polytheists of the Arabs, and the seventh: In it are the hypocrites. This is what His statement means: {Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire} the verse .

In a narration from Ad-Dahhak: “And in the seventh are the hypocrites, the people of Pharaoh, and those who disbelieved from the people of the table” .

Al-Qurtubi objected by saying: “And in the books of ascetics and spirituality, the names of these classes and the names of their people from the people of religions are mentioned in an order that is not mentioned in any authentic hadith”.

Ibn Kathir supported him by saying: “These ranks and stations and their specificity to these people is something that requires proof of a sound chain of transmission to the infallible one who does not speak from desire, or a Quran that speaks of that, but it is known that all of these people will enter Hell, and that they will be in this state and according to this description and this order, then Allah knows best about that. As for the hypocrites, they will inevitably be in the lowest level of Hell according to the text of the Quran. Al-Qurtubi said: Among these names are those that are a symbol for the entire Hellfire as a whole, such as Jahannam, Sa’eer, and Ladha. These symbols are not for one gate without another, and he was truthful, may God have mercy on him, in what he said.”

In another division of the levels, Ibn Jurayj said: “The Fire has seven levels, the first of which is Jahannam, Ladha, Al-Hutama, Al-Sa’eer, Saqar, Al-Jaheem then Al-Hawiyah. For each of their gates there is a portion allocated, meaning: for each level there are people who inhabit it.”

Al-Qurtubi said: “What most scholars agree on is that Hell is the highest level, and it is reserved for the sinners from the nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and it is the one that is emptied of its people, and the winds slam its doors, then Ladha, Al-Hutama, Sa’eer, Saqar, Jaheem and Al-Hawiyah” .

Ibn Abi Zamanin said: “The highest gate is Hell, then Saqar, then Laza, then Al-Hutama, then Sa’eer, then Jaheem, then Al-Hawiyah” .

“The first is more correct because of the reports that have been transmitted about it” .

Regarding the meanings of the names of these gates or levels, Al-Qurtubi said :

Jahanam (Hell): Because it scowls at the faces of men and women, and eats their flesh, and it is a lighter punishment than others.

Ladha: Allah Almighty said: {No! Indeed, it is the Flame [of Hell] (15) A remover of exteriors (16) It invites he who turned his back [on truth] and went away [from obedience] (17) And collected [wealth] and

hoarded} , it is said: The eating of the hands and feet calls out whoever turned away from monotheism and turned away from what the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) brought.

Saqar: Allah Almighty said: “[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" (42) They will say, “We were not of those who prayed (43) Nor did we used to feed the poor (44) And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it] (45) And we used to deny the Day of Recompense.” (46) . It was called Saqar because it eats the flesh of men and women, leaving no flesh on the bones.

Al-Hutmah: Allah the Almighty said: { And what can make you know what is the Crusher? (5) It is the fire of Allah, [eternally] fueled} . It crushes bones and burns hearts. Allah the Almighty said: { Which mounts directed at}

Jaheem: It is called Jaheem because it is a huge ember, one of which is greater than the world.

Al-Sa'eer: It is called Al-Sa'eer because it has been blazing and has not been extinguished since it was created.

Al-Haweyah: Whoever falls into it will never come out of it.

Third: The people of Hell will differ in their punishment:

The people of the levels of Hell will differ in their punishment, as indicated by the Almighty’s saying: { So is one who pursues the pleasure of Allah like one who brings upon himself the anger of Allah and whose refuge is Hell? And wretched is the destination. (162)They are [varying] degrees in the sight of Allah, and Allah is Seeing of whatever they do}

The ranks of the people of Paradise vary, and the ranks of those who will be punished also vary according to the variation in the deeds of creation, because Allah Almighty said:{ So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, (7) and And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it} . Since the ranks of creation differ in acts of disobedience and obedience, their ranks must differ in degrees of punishment and reward”

From Qatada (May Allah Almighty have mercy on him):{ for every gate is of them a portion designated} , he said: “By God, they are stations according to their deeds” .

Third: The slamming of the gates of Hell:

The meaning of the gates of Hell being slammed is that it will be empty of its inhabitants. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A day will come upon Hell when its gates will be slammed shut , and there will be none of the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in it.”

It was narrated by of Abdullah ibn Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) that it was narrated by a Companion: “A day will come upon Hell when its gates will be slammed shut, and there will be none in it, and that will be after they have remained in it for ages.”

Imam Ahmad said: “If there is a basis for it, then there are times when there is no one in Hell, but it is the place of the people of monotheism.”

This means that there will come a day in Hell when the first level will be empty; But the others will remain in the remaining six levels, meaning that everyone who says: There is no god but Allah will be taken out of Hell, and this is supported by his (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: ((He who says: There is no god but Allah and has in his heart a grain of goodness will be taken out of the Fire - and Shu`bah said: Take out of the Fire - take out of the Fire whoever says: There is no god but Allah and has in his heart goodness equal to the weight of a grain of wheat. Take out of the Fire whoever says: There is no god but Allah and has in his heart goodness equal to the weight of a grain of wheat. Take out of the Fire whoever

says: There is no god but Allah and had in his heart a grain of goodness. His heart is full of goodness equal to the weight of an atom)).

It was narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The people of Paradise will enter Paradise, and the people of Hell will enter Hell,” then Allah the Most High will say: “Take out of the Fire whoever has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of faith...” Hadith .

Which indicates that what is meant by faith here is the testimony of monotheism ,

Fourth: Some levels of Hell allocation:

The Sunnah mentions that some levels of Hell are designated for certain sins or transgressions, including: On the authority of Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Hell has seven gates, one of which is for those who draw the sword against my nation” or he said: “against the nation of Muhammad” .

This hadith indicates that one of the levels of Hell is designated for those who fight the nation of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), even though this gate is not named.

We conclude from this that Hell has seven gates, as Allah Almighty said: {And indeed, Hell is the promised place for them all (43) It has seven gates; for every gate is of them a portion designated.} , and that each gate represents a level of Hellfire. As for the names of these levels and who will be punished in them, this has not been proven by an authentic hadith. However, this does not mean that these levels do not exist or that they do not have specific names. It has also been proven that the people of Hellfire vary in their degrees of torment, which confirms that the torment of each level varies from one to the next, and that the lowest levels of Hellfire are the most severe in torment.

Section Two

The Lowest Level of Hell

First: The description of the lowest level of Hell:

Hadiths have been reported that indicate the enormous depth of Hell in which the lowest level is located. On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may God be pleased with him), he said: We were with the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace), when he heard a noise (Wajbah), so the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) said: “Do you know what this is?” He said: We said: Allah and His Messenger know best. He said: “This is a stone that was thrown into the Fire seventy years ago, and it is falling into the Fire now until it has reached its bottom.”

In a narration from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he said: “If a stone were thrown from the edge of Hell, it would not reach its bottom for seventy years.” .

Utbah ibn Ghazwan (may Allah be pleased with him) said, on the authority of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), who said: “A huge rock is thrown from the edge of Hell and falls into it for seventy years without reaching its bottom.” He said: Umar used to say: “Mention Hell often, for its heat is intense, its bottom is far, and its hammers are iron.”

In this hadith, “there is evidence that when they heard the noise, Allah departs from the norm, so they heard what others were prevented from hearing, otherwise custom requires others to participate in hearing this great matter” .

The time limit of seventy autumns requires the situation to be taken literally, and it is possible that it is a metaphor for the multitude above and below , and it indicates the enormous depth of the fire of Hell,

“which is a reasonable depth if we compare it to the light years between the heavenly bodies, and in speaking about this there is an expression in the past about the future to realize the occurrence” .

Some hadiths have estimated the depth at forty. On the authority of Abu Saeed (may God be pleased with him), on the authority of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace), he said: “Woe is a valley in Hell into which the unbeliever falls for forty years before reaching its bottom.”

It was narrated with the wording: “Woe: a valley in Hell, into which the disbeliever falls for forty years before reaching its bottom, and As-Sa’ud: a mountain of fire, into which he climbs for seventy years, then he falls into it likewise forever.” .

The correct view is that it is seventy years due to the authenticity of what was reported in it. It is possible to reconcile the two hadiths, that the seventy and forty are only for estimation, a metaphor for abundance, and “the intention behind it is to exaggerate the horror of Hell, its horror, and the distance of its bottom.”

Second: The inhabitants of the lowest depths:

The Hypocrites

It was mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah that the lowest level of Hell is for the hypocrites. On the authority of Al-Aswad , he said: ((We were in the group of Abdullah when Huthayfah came and stood and greeted us, then he said: Hypocrisy has been sent down upon a people better than you.)) Al-Aswad said: Glory be to Allah, Allah says: { Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire} , so Abdullah smiled, and Huthayfah sat in the direction of the mosque, so Abdullah stood up and his companions dispersed, then he threw pebbles at me, so I came to him, and Huthayfah said: I was amazed at his laughter, and he knew what I said. Hypocrisy was sent down upon a people who were better than you, then they repented, so Allah accepted their repentance)) .

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may God be pleased with him), “The hypocrites are in the lowest level of Hellfire. He said: The lowest level is houses with doors that close on them, and Hellfire is kindled from beneath them and from above them.” .

On the authority of Abdullah bin Masoud (may God be pleased with him), regarding Allah statement: {Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire} , he said: “Coffins of iron will close over them” .

In another narration: “Ibn Mas`ud said: Which of the people of Hell will be most severely punished? A man said: The hypocrites. He said: You have spoken the truth. Do you know how they will be punished? He said: No. He said: They will be placed in iron coffins that will be locked up on them, then they will be placed in the lowest level of Hell in ovens narrower than an arrowhead , called the well of Sorrow, which will close over people, by their deeds forever” .

In another narration: “When there remain in the Fire those who will remain there forever, they will be placed in iron coffins with iron nails in them. Then those coffins will be placed in iron coffins with iron nails in them. Then those coffins will be placed in iron coffins with iron nails in them. None of them will see that he is being tormented in the Fire except him.” Then Abdullah recited: For them: {For them therein is heavy sighing, and they therein will not hear } .

The Tyrants

There are hadiths that indicate that the tyrants are in the lowest level of Hell. On the authority of Abu Umamah Al-Bahili (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “The oppressor will come on the Day of Resurrection, and when he is on the bridge of Hell between darkness and rough terrain, the oppressed will meet him and recognize him and recognize what he oppressed him with. Then those who were oppressed will not cease to judge those who

were oppressed until they remove what is in their hands are from good deeds, but if they have no good deeds, He will punish them with their evil deeds equal to what they did wrong, until they are brought to the lowest level of Hellfire.” .

The Arrogant

On the authority of Abdullah bin Masoud (may Allah be pleased with him), he said: ((The arrogant on the Day of Judgment will be placed in coffins of fire that will close around them, then they will be placed in the lowest level of Hellfire)) .

Exception From the Lowest Level

It was narrated in the Sunnah that which indicates the exception of some of those who are being punished from the punishment of the lowest level of Hell. Al-Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace): What did you do for your uncle, for he used to protect you and get angry on your behalf? He said: “He is in the shallows of Hell, and if it were not for me, he would have been in the lowest level of Hell.” .

In another narration: “Perhaps my intercession will benefit him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will be placed in a shallow area of fire that will reach his ankles, and his brain will boil from it.” In another narration, he said: “His brain mother’s will boil from it.”

In a narration on the authority of Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them both), on the authority of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace): On the authority of Ibn Abbas, that the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) said: “The one who will be least punished in Hell will be Abu Talib, and he will be wearing two shoes from which his brain will boil.”

The meaning of the hadith is: (It surrounds you); that is, it protects you, preserves you, and defends you. (Dhahdhah) is that which reaches the heel, and the mother of the brain, that is, the base of the brain. It clearly states the difference in the torment of the people of Hell and the deeds of the disbelievers, even if they are scattered dust and have no benefit. However, this benefit is only from the blessing of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his characteristics .

The summary of what was mentioned above is that the lowest level of Hell is its bottom, and its depth is enormous, estimated at seventy autumns for the sake of exaggeration, and the hypocrites, oppressors, and the arrogant will reside in it.

Conclusion

The following are the most important results of the research:

The level of Hell (Daraka) means the lowest position, and it is descending, unlike the degree, which is ascending.

The gates of Hell are seven, and they are the levels of Hell (Daraka) themselves.

The levels of Hell were named with specific names, but these names were not proven, and it was not proven who will be in them other than the lowest level.

The people of the levels of Hell differ in torment, according to the differences in these levels.

The gates of Hell close after one of the levels is empty, which is the first level of Hell.

It was mentioned that one of the levels of Hell is designated for those who fought the nation of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The lowest level of Hell is its bottom, and its depth is enormous, estimated at seventy years for the sake of multiplication.

The hypocrites, oppressors, and the arrogant will reside in the lowest level of Hell.

Allah is the guide to the right path.

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