340807 - How will the bliss of al-Firdaws al-A`la differ from that of the other levels of Paradise?

the question

What is the bliss that the people of al-Firdaws will enjoy, to the exclusion of the people in the other levels of Paradise? I do not mean what kind of people will enter it; rather I mean bliss in terms of rivers, palaces, al-hur al-iyn and so on, and their seeing the blessed Countenance of Allah. How does this type of bliss differ from that of the other levels?

Summary of answer

1.. In the Quran, Allah, may He be exalted, has mentioned different types of people in several places, and has described in detail the bliss of those who go ahead of others. Those places include what is mentioned in Surat ar-Rahman, Surat al-Waqi`ah and other surahs of the Holy Quran. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told us about the variations in the level and status of the people of Paradise .
2.. We have not come across any details of what Allah has prepared for the people of al-Firdaws of eternal bliss therein, other than what we already know, which is that it is the highest level of the people of Paradise, and above it is the Throne of the Most Gracious, may He be glorified and exalted.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Al-Firdaws is one of the names of Paradise

One of the names of Paradise is al-Firdaws. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Those are the inheritors

Who will inherit al-Firdaws. They will abide therein eternally} [al-Mu’minun 23:10-11]

{Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - they will have the Gardens of Paradise [jannat al-firdaws] as a lodging as a dwelling place} [al-Kahf 18:107].

Al-Firdaws is a name given to all of Paradise, and it was said that it is a name given to the best and loftiest part of it, as if that part is more deserving of this name than the rest of Paradise. (End quote from *Hadi al-Arwah*, 99)

Secondly:

Al-Firdaws is the highest of the levels of Paradise

At-Tirmidhi, 2450, narrated, and classed the report as sound, that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The one who is worried about reaching his destination on time will set out at night, and the one who sets out at night will reach his destination. Indeed what Allah is offering is precious; indeed what Allah is offering is Paradise.” Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi* and elsewhere.

Paradise is a precious thing, and al-Firdaws is the loftiest and best part of it. No one will reach it except those on whom Allah chooses to bestow additional blessing and grace.

At-Tirmidhi, 2450, narrated, and classed the report as authentic, from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Al-Firdaws is the elevated part of Paradise, the middle of it and the best part of it.” Al-Albani classed it as authentic.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Paradise is surrounded with hardships and Hell is surrounded with desires.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

If Paradise is surrounded with hardships and all kinds of difficulties, then how about the highest and most sublime part of it?

This indicates that reaching it is no easy matter.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The most sublime thing in existence, the purest, most luminous, noblest, highest in elevation and in esteem, and the vastest is the Throne of the Most Gracious, may He be glorified and exalted. Hence it was fit for Him to rise above it, and the closer anything is to the Throne, the more luminous, sublime and noble it is than that which is further away from it. Hence Jannat al-Firdaws is the highest part of Paradise, the noblest, most luminous and greatest part of it, because of its proximity to the Throne, for the Throne is its roof.

The further away a thing is from the Throne, the darker and more constricted it is. Hence the lowest level of Hell is the worst of places, the most constricted and the furthest away from all that is good. (End quote from al-Fawa'id, p. 27)

The people of al-Firdaws al-A`la will be the forerunners, those who hasten to do good deeds as they are commanded. Allah, may He be exalted, says:

{And the foremost are the foremost;

it is they who will be brought near to Allah,

in gardens of delight } [al-Waqi`ah 56:10-12].

As-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Those who are brought near to Allah are the elite of creation. (End quote from *Tafsir as-Sa`di*, p. 833).

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Those who are foremost in doing good in this world will, in the hereafter, be foremost in honour, for the reward will match the deed, and a person will reap what he sows. (End quote from *Tafsir*

Ibn Kathir, 7/517)

Al-Firdaws is the highest of the levels of Paradise; we ask Allah of His grace and bounty.

See also the answers to questions no. 135085 and 27075.

Thirdly:

The people of Paradise will vary in status and level

In the Quran, Allah, may He be exalted, has mentioned different types of people in several places, and has described in detail the bliss of those who go ahead of others. Those places include what is mentioned in Surat ar-Rahman, Surat al-Waqi`ah and other surahs of the Holy Quran.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told us about the variations in the level and status of the people of Paradise. It was narrated from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The people of Paradise will see the people of the chambers above them as you see a brilliant star far away on the horizon in the east or the west, because of the difference in status between them.” They said: O Messenger of Allah, is that the status of the prophets that no one else will attain? He said: “No, by the One in Whose hand is my soul. They are men who believed in Allah and believed in the Messengers.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3256, and Muslim, 2831)

It was narrated that al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah told the people from the minbar –attributing it to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – “Moosa asked his Lord: ‘Who will be the lowest of the people of Paradise in status?’ He said: ‘He will be a man who will come after the people of Paradise have been admitted to Paradise and it will be said to him: “Enter Paradise.” He will say: “O Lord, how, when the people have taken their places and have received that with which they have been honoured?” It will be said to him: “Would it please you if you had the like of what one of the kings of the world had?” He will say: “I would be pleased, O Lord.” He will say, “You will have that, and as much again, and as much again, and as much again, and as much again.” The fifth time, he will say, “I am pleased, O Lord.” He will say: “You will have that and ten times as

much, and you will have what your heart desires and what will delight your eyes." He will say: "I am pleased, O Lord."' (Moosa) said: 'My Lord, who will be the highest of them in status?' He said, 'They will be the ones whom I have chosen; I have guaranteed their honour and reward Myself and set a seal over it, and no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it entered the heart of man.'" He said: And the confirmation thereof is in the Book of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted: {No soul knows what is kept hidden in store for them of delight} [al-Sajdah 32:17].

(Narrated by Muslim, 189)

The people of the highest level will enjoy bliss that is more sublime than that of those below them. Allah has stated that He has prepared for those who fear Him two gardens: {For him who fears standing before his Lord there will be two gardens} [ar-Rahman 55:46]. He describes them, then He says: {And below them both are two [other] gardens} [ar-Rahman 55:62 –that is, they will be lower than the first two gardens in status. The one who reflects on the characteristics of the second pair of gardens that Allah mentions will realize that they are lower than the first two in status, so the first two are for those who are close to Allah, and the others are for the people of the right (as-hab al-yamin).

See: *al-Jannah wa'n-Nar* by `Umar al-Ashqar, 158.

We have not come across any details of what Allah has prepared for the people of al-Firdaws of eternal bliss therein, other than what we already know, which is that it is the highest level of the people of Paradise, and above it is the Throne of the Most Gracious, may He be glorified and exalted.

It is soundly narrated in the hadith from `Ubadah ibn as-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "In Paradise there are one hundred levels. The distance between each two levels is like the distance between heaven and earth. Al-Fidaws is the highest of these levels; from it spring the four rivers of Paradise and above it is the Throne. So when you ask of Allah, ask Him for al-Firdaws." (Narrated by Ahmad, 22738, and at-Tirmidhi, 2531. Al-Albani classed it as authentic)

And Allah knows best.