Have You Ever Tasted Jannah?

In Saheeh Muslim, Ibn Masood narrates from RasulAllah sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam the warming story of the last man to escape Hellfire:   
  
His crawl away from Hellfire is filled with his face sliping into the dirt, a tremoring walk, and a fire that licks him until he finally escapes.   
  
When he is past it, he looks back, horrified, and announces with the loudest voice, “All praise is due to Allah Who saved me from you.” Then he says, most proud, “Verily I have been rewarded with something that no one from the beginning to the end of creation has been blessed with.”   
  
At that moment, a tree catches his eye – a tree that was commanded to be raised for him. He quickly raises his hands, “O Allah! Allow me to draw near to that tree so that I can cool off under its shade and drink from its water.”   
  
Then Allah ta’aala calls him, “O son of Adam! I fear that if I grant you what you ask, you shall ask for more.”   
  
“Nay, O Allah!” pleads the man and he testifies that he shall ask no more.   
  
As the man basks in the glory of the tree, another tree is raised, one more bounteous and lush than the first. The man pleads, “O Allah! Allow me to draw near to that tree so that I can cool off under its shade and drink from its water.   
  
Allah then says, “Did you not promise me that you would ask no more? Perhaps if I give it to you, you shall ask for yet even more.”   
  
The man testifies that he will not, and is permitted that tree.   
  
Just then a tree is raised near the doors of Jannah, one bigger and lusher than all the rest and the man’s heart sinks.   
  
“O Allah, that tree, that tree. I’ll ask for nothing else.”   
  
“Did you not promise you would ask for nothing more?”   
  
“After that tree, yaa Allah, nothing more!”   
  
He is permitted to draw nearer to the tree and there, as he nears the doors of Jannah, he hears the sounds of its inhabitants and he leaps, “O Allah! Enter me into Jannah!”   
  
“O son of Adam!” Allah announces, “What shall satisfy you and finish your pleading?”   
  
Then Allah offers, “Will it please you if I give you all the treasures and bounty of the entire world and then double it!”   
  
The man’s smile shuts off and his eyes lock up. “My Lord, You’re the Lord of the universe…Are You mocking me?”   
  
… Ibn Masood started laughing. He said to his students, “Ask me why I’m laughing. I’m laughing because RasulAllah laughed when he told us this. And he also asked us, ‘Do you know what makes me laugh? I’m laughing for Allah’s laughter when the man said, ‘You are the lord of the universe…are you mocking me?’”   
  
Allah then tells him, “I am not mocking you, rather I am capable of doing whatever I so wish.” Allahu Akbar!   
  
Turn to almost every page of the Qur’an and you’ll find mention of Jannah. Jannah…have you ever seen it? Have you ever smelt it? Have you ever touched it? Have you ever tasted it?   
  
RasulAllah sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam taught us that in Jannah there is that “which no eye has witnessed, no ear has heard, and that which has never been imagined by any human.” Recite the verse if you wish:   
  
And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort of the eye (satisfaction) as reward for what they used to do (As-Sajdah 32/17).   
  
Many Muslims tasted the eman of Jannah, and Bilal radi Allahu anhu was one of them. His slave master, Umayyah, would drag Bilal out to the grilling desert at noontime – the fiercest moment of the day. Umayyah would press Bilal to the scalding ground and place a boulder on top of his chest to increase the torture. As his back would melt away Bilal would say nothing but, “Ahad! Ahad! – One! Only One.”   
  
Later in his life, when companions would see Bilal’s scarred back, tears would well in their eyes and they would ask him how he survived the punishment. Listen to his answer:   
  
“The pain of punishment mixed with the sweetness of eman. I tasted both and the sweetness of eman overcame everything until I felt no more pain.”   
  
Today, let us sample Jannah, as offered to us in the Qur’an and Sunnah.   
  
The Gates of Jannah   
  
Imagine yourself present on the day when the gates of Jannah will be opened with all of the splendor that lies beyond it. Allah tells us in the Qur’an about when the muttaqoon are escorted to the gates of Jannah by the most handsome of Angels:   
  
“And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in crowds, until – behold – they arrive there. Its gates will be opened and its keepers will say, “Peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter (Jannah) and live in it eternally.”   
  
RasulAllah sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam spoke to the Sahaabaa about the gates of Jannah. He mentioned the gate of prayers, the gate of jihaad, the gate of siyaam, and the gate of charity.   
  
Abu Bakr asked with the desire that took him to where he reached in eman, “Will anyone be called from all gates?”   
  
RasulAllah sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam said, “Yes, and I hope that you will be one of them.”   
  
The Shade in Jannah   
  
Imagine yourself in Jannah’s cooling shade – water springs surrounding you, and fruits dipping in hands reach. Allah tells us:   
  
Indeed, the muttaqoon will be amid shades and springs / And fruits from whatever they desire / Eat and drink to your hearts content for what you used to do (in the dunya) / Such we certainly reward the doers of good (Al-Mursalaat 77/41-44).   
  
The Ambience in Jannah   
  
Imagine yourself in Jannah. Jannah doesn’t have any gossip; no, “Did you hear about brother so and so,” or “Did see what sister so and so is wearing.” Your face is shining with joy and you’re so glad that you woke up for Fajr all those days, glad you paid your zakah, glad you wore hijab all those summer days. This is what the atmosphere is like in Jannah:   
  
Faces that day will be joyful (radiant) / Satisfied with the effort they put (in the dunya) / In an elevated garden / Where they shall hear no unsuitable speech (Al-Ghaashiyah 88/8-11).   
  
Jannah: The Greatest Gift   
  
In Masjid An-Nabawee I had been reciting the Qur’an to Shaykh Muhammad Ahmad Ma’bad for over a year. Finally when the time of the Khatm Al-Quran came, I brought a recorder to the halaqah and told him that I wanted to record the Khatm and the du’a for my mother who was in Canada.   
  
When he made du’a he prayed for my parents saying, “O Allah! Bless Muhammad’s parents with crowns of noor (light) on the Day of Repayment!”   
  
A month later in Canada, when I was handing out gifts, I pulled out this tape for my mother. She took it and listened to the entire thing. When my mother heard this du’a, she sat crying. She told me, “This is the greatest gift I could have gotten.”   
  
Truly, Jannah is the greatest gift one can get. As Allah subhaanahu wa ta 'aala says:   
  
“Indeed Jannah is the greatest attainment!”   
  
PART II   
  
Regarding the inhabitants of Jannah:   
  
“You can tell in their faces the radiance of the blessing.”   
  
The inhabitants of Jannah shall be in:   
  
“Gardens and rivers.”   
  
The inhabitants of Jannah are:   
  
“Most pleased with what Allah gave them from His bounty.”   
  
Dear brothers , Jannah is the fruit of a seed planted in this dunya; it is the retirement package that you save up in all your years of work.   
  
There once lived a pious man who was enslaved to a wicked master. The righteous slave wanted to teach his master a lesson that he would not forget; a lesson that would make him change his ways.   
  
The master told him one day to plant wheat. The slave took the opportunity and went and collected seeds of barley and planted them instead. As the season drew near, the master was enraged to see that after all this work and time, the slave had planted the wrong seed. In his thrashing rage, he scolded the slave saying, “Why did you do this?”   
  
The righteous slave said, “I had hoped that the barley seeds would come out as wheat.”   
  
The master said, “How can you plant barley seeds and expect it to come out as wheat?”   
  
The slave stopped and said quietly, “How can you disobey Allah and expect for His bounteous mercy? How can you openly challenge his deen and hope for Jannah.”   
  
The master was stunned and silent. He understood. “You have taught me something today that I had never realized. You are free for the sake of Allah.”   
  
A poet once wrote:   
  
There is no home for a man after death   
  
Except that which he used to build before he died.   
  
If he built it with bricks of good deeds,   
  
Then the architecture shall come out beautiful.   
  
And if he built it with evil,   
  
Its architect will fall into ruin.   
  
Dear brothers , do you know what the greatest blessing for the inhabitants of Jannah is? Don’t let any laziness in Salah block you from being here. Don’t let anything anything stand between you and this blessing. RasulAllah sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam told us:   
  
“When the inhabitants of Jannah enter Jannah, Allah will ask them all, ‘Is there anything more that I can give you?’ They will say, ‘Have you not illuminated our faces? Have you not entered us into Jannah? Have you not saved us from Hellfire?’   
  
“Then Allah will uncover the veil (and all shall see Allah). After that moment there would be nothing more beloved to them than seeing their Lord" (Bukhari and Muslim). 