

How Many Gates of Heaven Are There, and Who Are Allowed to Enter Through Each?

The Gates of Heaven: Paths to Entering Heaven

How many gates of Heaven are there? Have you ever wondered why Heaven has eight gates? Eight gates for a Heaven that is infinitely larger than this world are not insignificant or questionable. What are these eight gates, and who are they meant for?

In Islamic teachings, Heaven (or *Jannah*) is a sacred, magnificent, and eternal place that God has prepared as a reward for believers and righteous people. The Quran refers to Heaven by various names such as "Jannat al-Firdaus" ¹, "Jannat al-Adn" ², and "Dar al-Salam" ³ each reflecting different aspects of its grandeur and beauty. The description of Heaven in the Quran depicts lush, everlasting gardens with rivers of pure water, milk, honey, and wine, where the faithful will dwell in peace and happiness forever. Besides material pleasures, the inhabitants will enjoy companionship with the righteous, martyrs, and prophets, free from sorrow, jealousy, or any other negative feelings.

One notable feature of Heaven is its eight gates, each with a specific name and characteristic mentioned in Islamic narrations. These gates are categorized based on good deeds and moral qualities, and those who excel in particular acts of virtue

¹. Quran, 18:107

². Quran, 20:76

³. 6:127

enter through the gate associated with that act—for example, "Bab al-Salat" (Gate of Prayer) for those who pray, and "Bab al-Jihad" (Gate of *Jihad*) for those who strive in the way of God. These gates highlight the importance of worship and righteous actions, symbolizing God's mercy and justice in accepting His servants, and illustrating the diverse paths of devotion. Entering through each gate reflects our deeds in this world. This article explores the names of the gates of Heaven, their features, and the people who will enter through each, helping us align our lives with the qualities that lead to Heaven.

Why Is It Said That Heaven Has Eight Gates?

The word "gate" signifies a means of entry, so the gates of Heaven are the ways to attain Heaven. All the inputs of the soul that can lead us to Heaven are considered as gates. God has established different levels and ranks of entry into Heaven, depending on the quality and consistency of righteous deeds. Each gate represents a specific status and level of human deeds and the blessings associated with it. Although the exact number of gates of Heaven is not specified in the Quran, authentic narrations from both Shia and Sunni sources state that there are eight gates of Heaven ⁴. There is a narration by Imam Ali (Peace be upon him), which mentions seventy-two gates. This could symbolize the many gates of Heaven. It can be concluded that the main gates of Heaven are eight, with additional secondary gates beyond that ⁵.

⁴. Yasin T. Al-Jibouri, *Fast of The Month Of Ramadhan: Philosophy and Ahkam*. Qom: Ansariyan Publications. 2000, p. 45.

⁵. *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 8, p. 39.

The infallible Imams (Peace be upon them) have identified eight gates of Heaven: one for prophets and the truthful, one for martyrs and the righteous, five for the Shia and lovers of the Imams, and the eighth for other Muslims who believe in the oneness of God and harbor no hatred or grudges against the infallible Imams (Peace be upon them).

Furthermore, in the *Hadith* of the Mi'raj (the Prophet Muhammad's Night Ascension), the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family), responding to Gabriel's request, recited what was written on the gates of Heaven. This account mentions eight gates of Heaven. According to Mulla Sadra, the shared gates of Heaven and Hell include the five senses plus the faculties of imagination and estimation; Heaven has an additional gate which is in the heart. This gate is open only for entry into Heaven and will always remain closed to those who are disbelievers or polytheists ⁶. That is to say, one cannot be condemned to Hellfire by using the supra-rational faculty or the heart unless one has opened this path for the misuse of other faculties, and burned one's heart—the seat of love for the infinite and unlimited—with the fire of sensate, imaginal, and estimative desires and inclinations, thus becoming subject to the fire of Hell through the misuse of these faculties.

What Are the Names of the Eight Gates of Heaven?

As mentioned, Heaven is accessible through eight gates, each associated with specific deeds and qualities. Depending on our actions and behavior in this world,

⁶. "Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and their sight is covered. They will suffer a tremendous punishment." (Quran, 2:7)

we will enter through one of these gates. Here are the names of the gates of Heaven and a brief explanation of each:

Bab al-Mujahideen (Gate of those Engaged in *Jihad*)

The Gate of the Mujahideen" is one of the gates of Heaven, designated for those who strive in the way of God (*Jihad*). *Jihad* in Islam is broadly divided into the struggle against one's own self (*Jihad al-Nafs*) and the struggle in the path of God. As we learned in the article on the types of love, one of the three greatest beloveds and a sign of our sincerity in love for God and the Infallibles (Peace be upon them) is the love of *Jihad*. Love for Jihad means striving to become similar to Allah and fighting against all the obstacles that stand in the way of our similarity to God; therefore, only worthy Mujahideen deserve to enter Heaven through this gate.

Bab al-Musallin (Gate of the Prayers)

The Gate of the Prayers is specifically for those who have been sincere and consistent in their prayers, and have not prioritized any other act over prayer. This gate of Heaven opens to those who not only diligently perform their obligatory prayers with mindfulness and presence of heart, but also regularly offer recommended prayers. Prayer in Islam is considered the pillar of religion and one of the most important forms of worship, establishing a direct connection between the servant and God.

Bab al-Sa'imin (Gate of the Fasters)

The Gate of the Fasters is one of the gates of Heaven for those who fast. These fasters obey God's command by abstaining from food and drink, and controlling their desires. Their fasting is not limited to Ramadan; they also fast on recommended days. It should be noted that fasting is not limited to outward abstinence, but also includes self-purification, patience, and perseverance against worldly desires. This gate reflects the importance of fasting as an opportunity to purify the soul and strengthen faith.

Bab al-Sabirin (Gate of the Patient)

The Gate of the Patient opens to those who have practiced patience and perseverance in this world. Those who have endured God's trials in life and trusted His mercy and justice. Patience holds high value in Islam, and God repeatedly promises great reward to the patient in the Quran, including immeasurable recompense for those who are patient in the face of hardship⁷. Patience is not only a moral attribute but also a sign of faith and submission to God's will.

Bab al-Shakirin (Gate of the Thankful)

The Gate of the Thankful is for those who are grateful, those who have always been thankful for God's blessings and favors in life. The thankful do not forget God's blessings in times of both joy and hardship. They consider God's blessings as a means to draw closer to Him and use them in the right way. Gratitude in Islam is

⁷. Quran, 2:157

not limited to simply saying "Thank god," but includes the proper use of blessings, avoiding ingratitude, and striving to please God.

Bab al-Dhakirin (Gate of Those Who Remember God)

This gate is for those who remember God with their hearts, tongues, and actions, and who maintain a constant connection with Him. In the Quran and Islamic narrations, the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) is presented as one of the greatest acts of worship⁸.

Bab al-Hajjin (Gate of Those Who Perform the Hajj)

This gate is for those who perform the Hajj properly and sincerely. This gate of Heaven highlights the special status of the Hajj in Islam, a religious duty that is not only a religious obligation but also a symbol of complete submission to God's command and a reaffirmation of sincere servitude. Entry through the Gate of the Hajjin is a reward for the efforts, patience, and sincerity of those who have undertaken this great spiritual journey with love and faith.

Bab Ahl al-Ma'ruf (The Gate of the Doers of Good)

The Gate of the Doers of Good is one of the gates of Heaven that opens for those known for their good deeds. These individuals dedicate their lives to charitable works such as helping the poor, supporting the oppressed, assisting the needy, and

⁸. Quran, 29:45

spreading good morals, thereby positively influencing the lives of others. The word "ma'ruf" (known as good) in Islamic teachings refers to any commendable act that is approved by reason and religious law and benefits people and society. Entry through this gate signifies God's appreciation for the good deeds and pure intentions of those who have based their lives on helping others and performing good works.

The gates of Heaven symbolize God's endless mercy and His provision of multiple opportunities for His servants to attain the eternal bliss of Heaven. These gates emphasize the crucial point that God has opened a special path to eternal bliss for every servant with every positive attribute. This earthly life is an opportunity to prepare ourselves for passing through these gates by performing good deeds and following the path of similarity to God. Ultimately, Heaven is the abode of those who have truly embodied the meaning of servitude in word and deed.