

# Ramadhan And the Tree of Zaqqum

**Tree of Zaqqum Grows at the Bottom of Hell:** The disbelievers used to laugh and say that the Quran says that the tree of Zaqqum grows at the bottom of Hell (i.e., in the fire). The Quran clarified their misconception in the following verses: We have made this tree a trial for the wrong doers. It is a tree that grows from bottom of Hell. Its spathes are like the heads of devils. The people of Hell will surely eat of it, filling their bellies with it. Then on top of it they will have a brew of boiling water (drinking it as thirsty camels do). **Then their return will be to the same blazing Hell (37:63-68).** These verses indicate that the tree of Zaqqum will grow at the bottom of Hell but not in the fire of Hell. They will grow at the bottom of Hell that will serve as a food court for the Hell dwellers. The people of hell will chew the fruit of the Zaqqum tree and eat their fill and drink boiling water from it (perhaps like we drink boiling tea). After eating their fill, the people of hell will be returned to Hellfire (torment area).

Further when considering the verses: **The people of Hell will surely eat of it** (will not be forced to eat), **filling their bellies with it. Then on top of it they will have a brew of boiling water.** A scenario comes to mind, the Hell-dwellers will be escorted to the food court to feed. Even if the temperature is 50 degrees Celsius, it will be an air-conditioned room for them. Those who refuse to eat will have to return to the Blazing Fire. Therefore, to prolong their stay in the air-conditioned area, they would probably keep munching and eating the Zaqqum tree until their bellies are full and can eat no more. They would most probably drink the boiling water like we drink hot tea. Similarly, this area will be a warm room for those who are enduring the torment of extreme cold.

Further the Quran says: **The tree of Zaqqum shall be the food of the sinful. Like dregs of oil, it will boil in their bellies like**

**boiling water** (44:43-46). When contemplating on these verses and comparing them to the effects of overeating during Ramadan, the outcome is identical: i.e., stomach discomfort, bloating, and acidity. The difference being: the inhabitants of Hellfire overeat just to extend their stay in the dining area, while we overeat disregarding the teachings of the Prophet(SAW), and are in a hurry to enter the Blazing Fire.

**Reasons: i)** Month of Ramadhan was meant to heal our body both spiritually and physically, but due to overeating we get sick and at the same time lose the spirituality. **ii)** Especially in Ramadhan we were instructed to take care of the needy and try to ease their hardship. During Ramadhan we were supposed to skip lunch (i.e., consume less food) to make us spiritually and bodily healthy. By the law of supply and demand the food prices would have come down, which would have been beneficial for the destitutes. Instead, we made it the month of feasting, doubled our intake of food causing price hikes for which we will be held accountable for the following reasons: **a)** Due to overeating and food wasted during Ramadan, prices of food items skyrocket, causing hardship to the destitute and the needy. **b)** Proper fasting (eating less than fill) cures internal diseases and makes you healthy, whereas overeating makes you sick. During Ramadhan most of us get sick and spend the precious money that was supposed to be spent on the needy, is spent on paying doctor's fees. **c)** In Ramadan we were supposed to take care of the needy, we created difficulties for them. From this we can conclude that the people of hell eat more to spend more time outside the fire, while we eat more in our haste to enter it. Inalillah!