

# Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:  
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## 111122 - Which angels take the soul of the Muslim, the angels of mercy or the angels of wrath?

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### the question

If a Muslim who sins dies, is his soul taken by the angels of mercy or the angels of wrath? Please note that he prays, but he commits some sins such as looking at haraam things or listening to music.

May Allah reward you with good.

### Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The majority of texts that speak of this matter divide people into two categories:

1. Believers. The angels of mercy take their souls and lift them up to heaven with great care, coming with glad tidings, calling them by the most loved of their names, so they feel joy, blessing and happiness which makes them steadfast.
2. Disbelievers and hypocrites. The angels of wrath take their souls, coming with harshness and warnings, and the gates of heaven are closed in their faces, so they are thrown in the earth to face woe and punishments as recompense for what they did in this world of wrongdoing, disbelief and enmity.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, mentioned that in the Holy Qur'aan, where He says (interpretation of the meaning):

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“By those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the disbelievers and the wicked) with great violence.

2. By those (angels) who gently take out (the souls of the believers).

3. And by those that swim along (i.e. angels or planets in their orbits)”

[al-Naazi’aat 79:1-3].

Al-Haafiz ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn Mas’ood, Ibn ‘Abbaas, Masrooq, Sa’eed ibn Jubayr, Abu Saalih, Abu’l-Duha and al-Suddi said:

“By those who pull out” refers to the angels, i.e., when they pull out the souls of the sons of Adam.

There are some whose soul is taken forcefully and they suffer when it is taken out, and there are

some whose soul is taken gently, which is referred to in the verse, “and those who gently take

out.” This was stated by Ibn ‘Abbaas.

It was also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas that al-naazi’aat refers to the souls of the disbelievers, which are taken out, then plunged into the Fire. This was narrated by Ibn Abi Haatim. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-Kareem, 8/312

Secondly:

There is fear for the Muslim who commits sin or is an evildoer -- and what is meant is the one who persists in committing major sins or transgresses against people and dies in that state. To which of the two groups mentioned above does he belong? Is his soul taken by the angels of mercy and treated in the same manner as the believers, or is it taken by the angels of wrath and treated in the same manner as the disbelievers?

This is a matter of the unseen and we have not found any text that clearly and definitively states the situation of the one who commits major sins.

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But there are some references that may indicate that the angels of wrath take the souls of those who commit major sins. For example:

1.

The hadeeth about the man who killed one hundred people, then he repented to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. When he died, the angels of mercy and the angels of wrath disputed as to which of them would take his soul and take it up to heaven. The story was narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him):

The angels of mercy and the angels of torment disputed over him. The angels of mercy said: he came repenting and turning wholeheartedly towards Allaah. The angels of torment said: He never did anything good. Then an angel in the form of a man came to them and they appointed him (to decide) between them. He said: Measure the distance between the two lands, and whichever is closer, that is where he belongs. So they measured it and they found that he was closer to the land that he was heading for, so the angels of mercy took him.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3740) and Muslim (2766).

Think about how the angels of wrath wanted to take the soul of this sinner who had killed one hundred people. Were it not for the sincerity of his repentance, his soul would have fallen to the share of the angels of wrath. So there is the fear for all of those who commit major sins that the angels of wrath may take their souls if they do not repent to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

2.

There are many hadeeths which describe how the angels come to take the soul of the one who is dying and take it up to the highest heavens; these hadeeths compare and contrast the situation of the believers and that of the disbelievers. In some of these hadeeths it says al-faajir (evildoer)

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instead of al-kaafir (disbeliever). And in some of them it describes him as al-rajul al-su' (the bad man). This may also indicate that the one who commits major sins is in great danger in this regard.

It was narrated from al-Bara' ibn 'Aazib (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said -- in a lengthy hadeeth in which he described the situation of the believer and the evildoer when their souls are taken --:

"... as for the evildoer, when he is about to enter the Hereafter and depart from this world, the Angel of Death comes to him and sits by his head. There come down to him angels from heaven with black faces, bringing with them sackcloth. They sit with him as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death and says, 'O evil soul, come out to the wrath and anger of Allaah...'

This was narrated by al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (1/93) and classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz (no. 108). The hadeeth is also narrated in al-Sunan. Ibn Tooloon compiled in his book al-Tahreer al-Mursakh fi Ahwaal al-Barzakh (p. 75-112) the hadeeths and reports which speak of this matter.

But if we say that what is meant by the evildoer or the bad man in these reports is the disbeliever who is mentioned in the other reports, then all the versions of the hadeeth are in accordance, as seems to be the case. So that means that there is nothing definite about Muslims who commit wrong actions and major sins. And Allah knows best.

Shaykh al-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Those whose lives the angels take while they are in a pious state (i.e. pure from all evil, and worshipping none but Allaah Alone) saying (to them): Salaamun 'Alaikum (peace be on you) enter you Paradise, because of that (the good) which you used to do (in the world)"

[al-Nahl 16:32 -interpretation of the meaning].

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In this verse Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, stated that the pious who obeyed the commands of their Lord and avoided that which He forbade will have their souls taken by the angels when they are in a good state, i.e., pure and free of shirk and sin -- according to the soundest commentaries -- and they will give them the glad tidings of Paradise and greet them with salaam..

This meaning is also stated elsewhere, as in the verses in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allaah (Alone),” and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): “Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!”

[Fussilat 41:30]

“and its keepers will say: Salaamun ‘Alaykum (peace be upon you)! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein”

[al-Zumar 39:74]

“And angels shall enter unto them from every gate (saying):

24. “Salâmun ‘Alaikum (peace be upon you) for you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home!”

[al-Ra’d 13:23-24]

The glad tidings are given at the time of death, and when they entered Paradise from one gate, because they are glad tidings of good after moving to the Hereafter.

From the description of those whose souls are taken when they are in a good state and to whom it

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is said ' peace be upon you, enter Paradise,' it may be understood that those who are not described as pious will not be taken by the angels in that noble state or be greeted or given glad tidings.

Allah has stated this meaning elsewhere, such as in the verses where He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those whose lives the angels take while they are doing wrong to themselves (by disbelief and by associating partners in worship with Allaah and by committing all kinds of crimes and evil deeds).”  
Then, they will make (false) submission”

[al-Nahl 16:28]

“Verily, as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatory for them), they (angels) say (to them): ‘In what (condition) were you?’ They reply: ‘We were weak and oppressed on the earth.’ They (angels) say: ‘Was not the earth of Allaah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?’ Such men will find their abode in Hell — what an evil destination!”

[al-Nisa' 4:97]

“And if you could see when the angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve (at death); they smite their faces and their backs, (saying): “Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire”

[al-Anfaal 8:50].

And there are other similar verses. End quote from Adwa' al-Bayaan, 3/3

Perhaps it may be said here -- and Allah knows best -- that the situation of those who commit acts of disobedience and major sins, at the time of death, varies according to their level of disobedience and obedience. For the person who is one of those who affirm Tawheed and are good

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and righteous, they will have the glad tidings and good situation that Allah has promised here, and that the one who mixed good deeds with bad deeds will find himself in a mixed situation, so he will be deprived of the glad tidings and good situation and merciful treatment by the angels, according to his situation and deeds.

See also the answer to question number [52887](#).

And Allah knows best.