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And hasten to forgiveness from your Rabb and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. (Surah Aal 'Imraan v. 133)

In this verse, Allah Ta'ala encourages us to hasten towards forgiveness. The commentators have given different explanations as to what forgiveness refers to in this verse. Some have mentioned that it refers to taubah, others have mentioned fulfilling all the fardh obligations, while others have mentioned that it refers to Islam. Nevertheless, all these explanations can be summarised as referring to righteous actions, as righteous actions are the means through which one will acquire the forgiveness and mercy of Allah Ta'ala.

Allah Ta'ala then mentions Jannah and describes it by mentioning that its 'ardh (width) alone can accommodate the heavens and the earth combined. When this is the vastness of its width, then how much vaster its length must be!

However, according to some commentators, the word 'ardh in this verse is not in the meaning of "width". Rather, it refers to the price that is paid as an exchange in a sale. According to this explanation, the meaning of the verse will be that the price of Jannah is the heavens and earth. In other words, Jannah is not cheap – it is extremely valuable and one must be prepared to pay any price and make any sacrifice to acquire Jannah.

Finally, Allah Ta'ala mentions that Jannah has been prepared for the righteous (the people of taqwa). In the verses to follow, Allah Ta'ala enumerates certain salient qualities of His righteous and pious servants so that one may strive to imbibe these qualities. Insha-Allah these qualities will be discussed in the parts to come.