

## PARADISE AND HELL IN THE QUR'ĀN

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The vignettes of Paradise and Hell are amongst the most vivid that occur in the Qur'an, equalled and perhaps even surpassed only by the events that immediately precede peoples' entry into them, those of the Day of Judgement.

If we look for their literary background, there is of course nothing like them in pre-Islamic literature, though the vignette, an impressionistic sketch that stirs the listeners' imagination, is a favourite, and wonderfully effective, device in pre-Islamic poetry. The ability to conjure up such sketches was something required of every poet, and real masters could do so in a handful of words. Just part of the first hemistich of aṣ-Ṣanfarā's *Lāmiyyat al-ʿarab*<sup>1</sup>

*aqīmū ... sudūra matiyyi-kum*

raise up the breasts of your riding camels

is enough to evoke all the activities connected with breaking camp and moving on.

More commonly a picture is fitted into a full line, no doubt due to the practice of treating the majority of lines as separate units, but larger pictures can then be built up by aggregating a number of such lines. This can be seen memorably in virtually all great early Arabic poems. To stay with the same poem, the great 'wolf simile' in the *Lāmiyyat al-ʿarab*<sup>2</sup> consists of a number of pictures put together, not all of them closely connected with the main theme. Thus, tucked inside the description of the wolves we find first a brief but hardly connected sketch<sup>3</sup>, though one that would have meant much to aṣ-Ṣanfarā's contemporaries:

arrow shafts being shaken in the palms of the *maysir* dealer.

This is followed in the very next line by another thematically remote description, this time giving a partial picture of the dangerous practice of gathering honey:

the disturbed bees whose swarm has been stirred up by the sticks

which a climbing honey-gatherer has poked down into the nest.

These are, typically, descriptions that invite the listener to add his own associations.

The range of topics covered in poetic descriptive sketches is very wide. Among them are some that show a relentless drive that is also to be found in Qur'anic descriptive passages. Two examples will have to suffice here. The first again comes

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<sup>1</sup> See the edition and translation in my *Early Arabic Poetry*, I, 139-184.

<sup>2</sup> Lines 26-35 of the poem.

<sup>3</sup> Line 30.

from the *Lāmiyyat al-‘arab*<sup>4</sup>. It depicts the poet struggling with his ‘furies’ and with his anxieties. The first two lines are:

The quarry of the furies that have gambled over his flesh  
 – the victim belonging to whichever of them comes across him first,  
 Whilst he sleeps, they sleep but with their eyes open.  
 They steal swiftly along to bring him to his doom.

A more cumulative, but equally driven, sketch can be seen the closing section of the *Mu‘allaqa* of ‘Abīd b. al-Abraṣ, the final three lines of which depict an eagle killing a fox<sup>5</sup>:

Then she overtook him and flung him down,  
 and her prey was in agony beneath her.  
 She threw him up, then flung him down,  
 and the stony ground scratched his face.  
 He squeals as her talons bite into his flank.  
 There is no escape – his breast is pierced.

Turning to religious comparisons, Judaism has never developed clear pictures of (or needs for) Paradise and Hell. The opposite is the case with Christianity, with the New Testament containing many brief, though vivid passages on both of them. Those about Hell are often quite similar to those in the Qur’ān, those about Paradise less so. See, for example:

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. (Matthew, 7:13)

But for the cowardly, and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation, 20:8)

The Lamb in the centre of the throne shall be their shepherd and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Revelation, 21:4)

Some of the Qur’ānic vocabulary for Paradise and Hell is of foreign origin, the most important borrowing being *Ġahannam*<sup>6</sup>, which appears to have arrived through Ethiopic from a phrase of Hebrew origin; but we should also note ‘*Adn*’ (in the phrase *ġannāt ‘Adn*) has its distant origins in the Greek *hēdonē* ‘pleasure’ (shown in the fully Arabic phrase *ġannāt al-na‘īm*). Paradise *firdaws* probably comes from a

<sup>4</sup> Lines 45-48.

<sup>5</sup> See my *Early Arabic Poetry*, II, 46-51.

<sup>6</sup> See Jeffery 1938:105-106.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-213.

Syriac source, from Greek and originally from Old Persian<sup>8</sup>. Most of the other vocabulary is straightforward Arabic: *ġanna* and *anḥār* being the key words in descriptions of Paradise, and *an-nār* and *al-ġahīm* taking their places alongside *Ġabannam* in the descriptions of Hell.

Underlying all the descriptions of Paradise and Hell is the contrast between the garden/s that await the saved and the fire that awaits the damned. The gardens are to be aimed for; the fire is to be avoided. The descriptions are intended to illustrate these basic points. As they are illustrative, it is of very little importance if there are discrepancies in detail. Moving the believer in the right direction is what matters. There has been discussion and dispute from the earliest years of the Muslim era whether the descriptions are allegorical or not, with entrenched views being expressed on either side. These disputes are unlikely ever to be resolved, but their very existence bears witness to the success of the descriptions.

One can draw up a composite sketch of the heavenly gardens quite easily: they are places of peace and tranquillity (Q. 15:46; 51:34), containing fountains and rivers (Q. 2:25, *etc.*), some of water, some of wine and some of honey (Q. 47:15); beautiful women (Q. 38:52; 52:20, *etc.*); couches covered with brocade<sup>9</sup>; flowing cups served by immortal youths (Q. 56:17, *etc.*) and plentiful, luscious fruits (Q. 36:57; 37:42; 38:51, *etc.*) and other food<sup>10</sup>. To protect them they will have gates and guards (Q. 39:73). Further details can be elicited not only from the longer descriptions but also from the descriptions of the earthly Paradise<sup>11</sup> and of other earthly gardens.

The descriptions of Hell show more variation in detail, though the Fire is always the central theme. When it comes to other details, they stress one point and then another. Hell, for instance, has walls<sup>12</sup> and gates (Q. 15:44). On the other hand, it has a crumbling rim over which wrong-doers can fall (Q. 9:109). Hell can be spoken to and can answer (Q. 50:30). In one of the most graphic descriptions, 'it almost bursts asunder with rage' (Q. 67:8). It has a lowest layer (Q. 4:145), implying that there are other layers, with the tree of *az-Zaqqūm* (Q. 37:62; 44:43; 56:52) growing from its floor.

The torments of Hell are equally vividly described, the chief of them being the various kinds of fire that burn the skins (Q. 4:46; 22:20), heads (Q. 22:19; 44:48) and

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 223-224.

<sup>9</sup> Q. 55:54. Other coverings are mentioned.

<sup>10</sup> *E.g.* meat (52:22), fowl (56:21).

<sup>11</sup> It is not really clear whether earthly Paradise (*i.e.* the garden of Adam and Eve - see Q. 2:35-39 and 7:19-25) is a separate entity. There are a good number of sketches of gardens on earth, *e.g.* 2:265-266, 18:32 *ff.*, 68:17 *ff.*

<sup>12</sup> Or, rather, a wall. Q. 57:13.

faces (Q. 14:50; 18:29; 21:39; 33:66) of those who are cast into it. Other torments include scalding water to drink and pus (or other filth or thorn shrubs) to eat (Q. 37:57; 78:25), molten metal boiling in the belly (Q. 44:45), and hooked iron rods (Q. 22:21). It is normally stated that those who go to Hell will stay there for ever<sup>13</sup>, neither dying nor living (Q. 87:13). However, surprisingly, there are a couple of passages that are not quite so firm. First, we find in Q. 78:23 the vague:

In which they will linger for ages,  
whilst in Q. 11:106-107 we find:

As for those who are wretched,  
they will be in the Fire,  
in which there will be sighing and sobbing for them,  
Remaining there as long as the heavens and the earth last,  
except as your Lord wishes;

Both of these are Meccan passages; Medinan references have no such exception as that found in 11:107 – see, for example, 33:64-65:

God has cursed the unbelievers and prepared a Blaze for them.  
They will remain in it for ever;

One remarkable feature that occurs several times is the ability of those in Paradise to converse with those in Hell and to talk with others, including God (Q. 23:106-8; 25:65; 38:61; 40:49; 43:77-78). The most elaborate passage is in *Surat al-a'raf*:

42. But those who believe and do righteous deeds  
– We do not charge any soul beyond its capacity.  
These are the companions of the Garden,  
in which they will remain for ever.

43. We shall remove whatever rancour is in their breasts,  
and the rivers will flow beneath them,  
and they will say, 'Praise belongs to God,  
who has guided us to this.

Had God not guided us,  
we would [never] have been guided aright.  
The messengers of our Lord did indeed bring the truth.'  
And it will be proclaimed to them,  
'This is the Garden for you.

You have been given it as inheritance  
for what you used to do.'

44. And the companions of the Garden will call out to the companions of the  
Fire,  
'We have found what our Lord promised us to be true.

<sup>13</sup> Q. 2:82 and frequently elsewhere.

- Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?'  
 They will say, 'Yes'.  
 And a crier amongst them will proclaim,  
 'God's curse is on the wrong-doers,  
 45. Who bar [men] from God's path  
 and seek to make it crooked  
 and who do not believe in the next world.'  
 46. Between the two groups is a barrier;  
 and on the heights  
 are men who recognize each [of them] by their marks;  
 and they call out to the companions of the Garden,  
 'Peace be on you! They have not entered it,  
 though they yearn to do so.'  
 47. And when their eyes are turned towards the companions of the Fire,  
 they say, 'Our Lord, do not place us with the people who do wrong.'  
 48. And the companions of the heights  
 call out to men whom they recognize by their marks,  
 saying, 'Your gathering [of wealth] has not availed you,  
 nor the pride you have displayed.'  
 49. Are these the ones you swore God would not reach with mercy?'  
 [To those given mercy it will be said,]  
 'Enter the Garden.  
 There will be no fear on you, nor will you grieve.'  
 50. And the companions of the Fire call out to the companions of Paradise,  
 'Pour some water on us  
 or some of that God has provided for you.'  
 They reply, 'God has forbidden both of them  
 to those who do not believe,  
 51. Who took their religion as diversion and sport  
 and who were deluded by the life of this world.'

This is one of the few passages that indicate that Hell can be seen from Paradise and *vice versa* and that their denizens can speak to one another. Their relative siting is shown most clearly in *Sūrat al-sāffāt* (S. 37), where verses 54-55 run:

[Another] says, 'Will you look down?'

He looks down and sees him in the midst of Hell.

Otherwise the sites of Paradise and Hell are not clearly defined, and this is hardly surprising, in view of the notion in *Sūrat al-šū'ara'* that both can be brought near:

And the garden will be brought near for those who are god-fearing;  
And the fire will be brought forward for those who have gone astray<sup>14</sup>.

The passages about Paradise and Hell are spread throughout all four periods of the Qur'ān's revelation: in the 48 *sūras* traditionally ascribed to the early Meccan period there are no less than 25 significant passages on Hell, in the 21 *sūras* of the middle Meccan period no less than 22 such passages, in the 21 *sūras* of the late Meccan period no less 15 such passages, whilst in the 24 *sūras* of the Medinan period there are at least 30 – there are 9 in *Sūrat al-baqara* alone. This spread of passages is just as important as their number. These were topics to which the Qur'ān returned regularly through its revelation. The passages referring to Hell in *Sūrat al-tawba* (S. 9, very late) are no less urgent than the piece on Saqar<sup>15</sup> in *Sūrat al-muddattir* (S. 74, thought to be very early, apart from verse 31). The passages on Paradise are somewhat fewer, but their number is still quite high: 14, 14, 12 and 22 for the four periods. Again we should note that the passages spread over all four periods and show no tailing off. However, some changes are to be noted in the Medinan period. It is not so much that the Houris become transmuted to pure spouses (Q. 2:25; 3:15; 4:57) – that seems to have started in late Meccan material (Q. 36:56; 43:70). However, it is Medinan material that specifically mentions righteous, believing women as entering Paradise (Q. 4:124; 9:72). One verse that is almost Mormonesque in opening up the ranks of the saved is either late Meccan or Medinan (Q. 13:23):

Gardens of Eden, which they will enter,  
together with those of their forefathers and spouses and offspring who are  
righteous.

There are two final points to be made. The first is that Qur'ānic passages on Paradise and Hell are only the beginning. We need look only at *hadīth* for additional material – and grow continued from there. The second is that the descriptions have all the vividness that is bound to be lacking in any analysis, and it is to the descriptions that you should really pay attention. The following selections will tell you more than I ever could.

### Select descriptions of Hell

*Sūra* 4:55-56

Ġahannam is a sufficient blaze.

Those who do not believe in Our signs

<sup>14</sup> Q. 26:90-91; on Hell see also Q. 89:23.

<sup>15</sup> Saqar, apparently a proper name for Hell, is mentioned in Q. 54:48 and in Q. 74: 26, 27 and 42.

- We shall roast them in a fire:  
 every time their skins are consumed  
 We shall give them [new] skins in exchange,  
 that they may taste the torment.

*Sūra* 9:34-35

Those who hoard gold and silver  
 and do not spend it in God's way  
 - give them the tidings of a painful torment,  
 On the day when [the gold and silver] will be heated up in the fire of Ġahannam  
 and their foreheads, sides and backs will be branded with them:  
 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves.  
 Taste what you have been hoarding.'

*Sūra* 18:29

We have prepared for the wrong-doers a fire,  
 whose pavilion encloses them.  
 If they ask for showers of rain,  
 they will receive showers of water like molten copper  
 which will roast their faces.  
 How evil a drink; how evil a resting-place.

*Sūra* 22:19-22

Those who disbelieve  
 - garments of fire are cut for them,  
 and boiling water will be poured over their heads,  
 By which their skins and what is in their bellies will be melted;  
 And for them are hooked iron rods.  
 Whenever, in their anguish, they want to come out of it,  
 they are returned to it:  
 'And taste the torment of the burning.'

*Sūra* 23:103-108

And those whose balances are light  
 - those are the ones who lose their souls,  
 remaining for ever in Ġahannam.  
 The Fire scorches their faces, and they are grim in it.  
 'Were not My revelations recited to you?  
 And did you not deny their truth?'  
 They will say, 'Our Lord, our wretchedness prevailed over us,  
 and we were a people who strayed.'

Our Lord, bring us out of it.  
 If we [then] revert, we shall be wrong-doers.'  
 He will say, 'Go away into it, and do not speak to me.'

*Sūra* 33:64-68

God has cursed the unbelievers and prepared a Blaze for them.  
 They will remain in it for ever;  
 and they will find no protector or helper.  
 On the day when their faces are turned over in the Fire,  
 they will say, 'Would that we had obeyed God  
 and obeyed His messenger!  
 And they will say, 'Our Lord,  
 we obeyed chiefs and our great men,  
 and they led us astray from the way.  
 Our Lord, give them double torment and curse them with a great curse.'

*Sūra* 35:36-37

Those who are ungrateful will have the fire of *Gahannam*.  
 They will not be done with and die,  
 and there will be no alleviation for them of its punishment.  
 Thus We recompense every ungrateful one.  
 There they shout, 'Our Lord, take us out.  
 We shall do right, not what we used to do.'  
 'Did We not give you life long enough  
 for those who would receive a reminder to be reminded,  
 when a warner had come to you?  
 So taste.  
 The wrong-doers will have no helper.'

*Sūra* 37:62-63

Is this better as hospitality or the tree of *az-Zaqqum*?  
 We have appointed it as a trial for the wrong-doers.  
 It is a tree that comes out of the root of Hell.  
 Its spathes are like the heads of devils.  
 They eat of it and fill their bellies from it.  
 Then on top of it they will have a brew of scalding water.  
 Then their return will be to Hell.

*Sūra* 38:55-64

But for the transgressors there will be an evil resort:  
*Gahannam*, in which they will roast.

How evil a resting-place.

This

- so let them taste it -

and scalding water and pus,

And other things of the same kind, in pairs.

'This is a troop rushing in with you.

There is no welcome for them.

They will roast in the Fire.'

They say, 'No. It is you for whom there is no welcome.

You prepared this for us.

How evil is the abode.'

They say, 'Our Lord, give a double torment in the Fire

to those who prepared this for us.'

And they say, 'How is it that we do not see

men whom we counted amongst the wicked?

Did we take them as a laughing-stock?

Or have our eyes missed them?'

That is true

- the wrangling of the people of the Fire.

*Sūra* 50:30

- The day when We shall say to Ġahannam,

'Have you been filled?'

and it will say, 'Are there still more?'

*Sūra* 56

(a) 41-44

And the companions of the left

(what are the companions of the left?)

Among searing wind and scalding water,

And shadow of black smoke,

Not cold nor kind.

(b) 49-56

Say, 'The ancients and the later ones

Will be gathered together to the appointed time of a known day.

Then, O you who go astray and deny,

You will eat of trees of *Zaqqum*,

Filling your bellies from them,

And drinking scalding water on top of that,

Drinking as does a camel desperate with thirst.'

That will be their hospitality on the Day of Judgement.

(c) 92-94

But if he is one of those who deny the truth and go astray,  
 [His] hospitality will be of scalding water  
 And the roasting of Hell.

*Sūra* 67:5-11

We have prepared for them the torment of the Blaze.  
 For those who do not believe in the Lord  
 there is the torment of Ġahannam,  
 and evil is the journeying.  
 When they are flung into it,  
 they hear a roaring from it as it boils,  
 It almost bursts asunder with rage.  
 Whenever a troop is cast into it,  
 its keepers ask them, 'Did no warner come to you?'  
 They say, 'Yes, a warner came to us,  
 but we thought him a liar and said,  
 "God has revealed nothing.  
 You are merely in great error".'  
 And they say, 'Had we listened or understood,  
 we would not have been among the companions of the Blaze.'  
 So they acknowledge their sin.  
 Away with the companions of the Blaze.

*Sūra* 69:25-37

But as for him who is given his record in his left hand,  
 he will say, 'Would that I had not been given my record,  
 And did not know my reckoning,  
 Would that it had been the end.  
 My wealth has been of no avail to me.  
 My authority has gone from me.'  
 'Take him, and fetter him.  
 Then roast him in Hell-fire  
 Then insert him into a chain whose length is seventy cubits.  
 He used not to believe in God, the Mighty,  
 Nor did he urge the feeding of the destitute.  
 To-day he has no friend here,  
 Nor any food except filth,  
 Which none but the sinners eat.'

*Sūra* 78:21-30

Hell is truly an ambush,  
 A resort for the insolent,  
 In which they will linger for ages,  
 In which they will taste neither cool nor drink,  
 Except scalding water and pus:  
 A recompense fit for them.  
 They were not expecting a reckoning  
 And they denied the truth of Our signs.  
 Everything we have numbered in a document.  
 So taste.  
 The only increase We shall give you will be in punishment.

*Sūra* 87:12-13

The one who will roast in the great fire,  
 In which he will neither die nor live.

*Sūra* 88:4-7

They will roast in a burning fire,  
 They will be given a drink from a scalding spring.  
 The only food they will have is of thorn shrub,  
 Which does not nourish and is of no avail against hunger.

*Sūra* 104:5-9

What can give you knowledge of what the insatiable is?  
 - The fire of God, kindled,  
 Which rises over the hearts [of men].  
 It is closed over them  
 In outstretched columns.

## Select descriptions of Paradise

*Sūra* 3:15

Say, 'Shall I tell you of something better than that?'  
 For those who fear God,  
 there are gardens with their Lord,  
 through which rivers flow,  
 in which they will remain for ever;  
 and there are pure spouses and God's pleasure.

*Sūra* 4:

(a) 57

Those who believe and do righteous deeds  
 – We shall admit them to the gardens,  
 through which rivers flow,  
 in which they will remain for ever  
 and in which they will have pure spouses,  
 and We shall admit them to dense shade.

(b) 124

Those who do good works, whether male or female,  
 and are believers  
 – they will enter the Garden  
 and will not be wronged one speck.

*Sūra* 9:72

God has promised the believers, male and female,  
 gardens through which rivers flow,  
 in which they will remain for ever,  
 and good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden;  
 and God's approval is greater.

*Sūra* 10:9-10

Those who believe and do righteous works,  
 their Lord guides them by their faith.  
 Rivers will flow beneath them in the gardens of bliss.  
 Their call there will be, 'Glory be to You, O God';  
 and their greeting there, 'Peace';  
 and the conclusion of their call will be,  
 'Praise belongs to God, Lord of created beings.'

*Sūra* 13:20-24

– Those who fulfil God's covenant  
 and do not violate the agreement,  
 And who join what God has commanded to be joined  
 and fear their Lord and are afraid of the evil reckoning,  
 And who are patient in seeking the face of their Lord  
 and perform prayer  
 and spend from that which We have provided for them,  
 secretly [or] in public,  
 and avert evil with good,  
 – those will have the sequel of the abode:

Gardens of Eden, which they will enter,  
together with those of their forefathers and spouses and offspring who are  
righteous.

The angels will go in through every gate to see them, [saying]:

'Peace be upon you because you were patient.

Excellent is the sequel of the abode.'

*Sūra* 18:31

Those will have the gardens of Eden,  
through which rivers flow.

There they will be adorned with bracelets of gold,  
and will wear green garments made of silk and brocade,  
reclining there on couches.

How good a reward; how fine a resting-place.

*Sūra* 29:58

Those who believe and do righteous deeds  
- We shall lodge them in lofty rooms in the garden,  
through which rivers flow.

They will remain there for ever.

Excellent is the reward of those who labour.

*Sūra* 37:40-61

This will not be the case with the sincere servants of God

- They will have a known provision:

Fruits; and they will be honoured

In the gardens of bliss,

On couches, facing one another.

And a cup from a spring will be passed round among them,

Clear and sparkling,

a delight to those who drink,

In which there is no headache,

nor do they become intoxicated from it.

And with them are women of modest glances,

with lustrous eyes,

As if they were hidden eggs.

They will draw near to one another, asking each other questions.

One of them says, 'I had a comrade,

Who would say,

"Are you one of those who believe [the message]?"

When we are dead and become dust and bones,

shall we be judged?'

[Another] says, 'Will you look down?'

He looks down and sees him in the midst of Hell.

He says, 'By God, you almost destroyed me.

But for the blessing of my Lord

I would have been one of those brought [into Hell].

Do we really not die,

Except for our first death,

and shall we not be punished?

This is truly the mighty triumph.

For the like of this let the workers work.'

*Sūra* 43:68-73

'My servants, today there is no fear on you  
nor will you grieve,

[You] who believed in Our signs

and were people who surrendered,

Enter the Garden, you and your wives.

You will be treated with honour.

Trays of gold and goblets will be brought round to them,

and in it there is what their souls desire

and their eyes find pleasant.

You will remain in it for ever.

This is the Garden which you have been given as an inheritance  
in return for what you used to do.

In it there is abundant fruit, of which you may eat.

*Sūra* 47:15

The likeness of the Garden which the god-fearing have been promised:

in it there are rivers of water whose taste remains pure;

and rivers of milk whose taste does not go sour;

and rivers of wine, a pleasure for those who drink;

and rivers of purest honey;

in it they will have some of every kind of fruit

and forgiveness from their Lord.

*Sūra* 52:17-28

But the god-fearing will be in gardens and bliss,

Rejoicing in what their Lord has given them

- their Lord has protected them from the punishment of Hell.

'Eat and drink what is wholesome,

as a recompense for what you used to do;  
 Reclining on couches placed in rows.  
 And We shall pair them with maidens with dark, lustrous eyes.  
 Those who believe and whose seed follows them in belief,  
 We shall join their seed with them,  
 and We shall not deprive them of any of their work.  
 Every man will be pledged for what he has earned.  
 We shall provide for them fruit and meat,  
 as much as they desire.  
 There they will pass to one another a cup.  
 There there is no idle chatter nor any imputation.  
 And youths circle them, waiting on them,  
 as if they were hidden pearls.  
 And they go round to one another,  
 asking each other questions,  
 They say, 'Before [this] we always used to be fearful concerning our family,  
 But God has been gracious to us  
 and protected us against the punishment of the burning heat.  
 Before [this] we used to pray to Him.  
 He is the Kind, the Compassionate.'

*Sūra* 56:11-40

They are those brought near,  
 In gardens of bliss,  
 A throng of the ancients  
 And a few from the later ones,  
 On woven couches,  
 Reclining on them, facing one another;  
 Immortal youths go round amongst them,  
 With goblets and ewers and a cup from a spring,  
 From which they do not suffer headaches nor are they intoxicated,  
 And with whatever fruit they choose,  
 And with whatever fowl they desire,  
 And maidens with dark, lustrous eyes,  
 Like hidden pearls,  
 A recompense for what they have done.  
 They hear neither idle chatter there nor imputations,  
 But only the saying, 'Peace, Peace.'  
 The companions of the right  
 (what are the companions of the right?)  
 Among the thornless *sidr*-trees,

And acacias set in rows,  
 And extended shade,  
 And outpoured water,  
 And abundant fruit,  
 Not cut off nor forbidden,  
 And raised couches.  
 We have produced them  
 And made them virgins,  
 Loving, well-matched,  
 For the companions of the right,  
 A throng of the ancients,  
 And a throng of the later ones.

*Sūra* 76:12-22

He has recompensed them for their patience with a garden and silk;  
 They recline there on couches  
 and see neither sun nor cold.  
 Close over them are its shades,  
 and its fruit-clusters are lowered.  
 Cups of silver are brought round to them in turn,  
 vessels of glass,  
 Glass [set in] silver, which they have measured;  
 There they are given a drink in a cup,  
 whose mixture is Zangabil,  
 A spring there, named Salsabil.  
 Immortal youths circle amongst them,  
 – when you see them, you will consider them to be scattered pearls.  
 When you see them, then you see bliss and a great kingdom.  
 The clothes they wear will be of green silk and brocade,  
 and they are adorned with bracelets of silver;  
 and their Lord gives them a pure draught to drink.  
 ‘This is a reward for you, and your striving is thanked.’

*Sūra* 78:31-36

For the god-fearing there will be a refuge:  
 Gardens and vineyards,  
 And maidens as companions,  
 And an overflowing cup,  
 Where they will not hear idle chatter nor claims of falsehood  
 – A recompense from your Lord, a gift, a reckoning.

Sūra 88:10-16

In a high garden,  
 Where they hear no idle chatter,  
 Where there is a flowing spring,  
 Where there are raised couches,  
 And goblets set ready,  
 And cushions placed in rows,  
 And carpets spread out.

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