

# Hoories for Men, and for Women? The Reality of Paradise

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*The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised!  
Beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein:  
such is the End of the Righteous (Quran 13:35)*

The righteous men and women are promised Paradise (*Jannah*) in the Quran.<sup>1</sup> Very often in any religious sitting, after the Sheikh or the Maulana had just finished talking about all the good and beautiful things the righteous ones will receive in Paradise, a question would come from the ladies section, usually on a sheet of paper, because they are not supposed to raise their voice: "Maulana Saheb! If men will get Hoories, what will women get?" Maulana Saheb would laugh and giggle, wipe his mouth with his large handkerchief hanging on his shoulder and would then give the standard answer: "Ladies will get to keep their husbands." I have always wondered: the way some men treat their wives, would this be a reward or a punishment?

In this article we will first describe the Quranic description of the characteristics of Paradise, analyze it in view of our current understanding of science, and then make an attempt to answer the most often asked question from ladies about Paradise.

## **The Characteristics of Paradise:**

### A Garden:

The very word '*jannah*' implies that it will be a garden and will have groves of cool and thick shades. There will neither be excessive heat or cold.<sup>2</sup>

### The Size of Paradise:

Just the width of Paradise will be the width of the heavens and the earth.<sup>3</sup> In other words it could be bigger than the Universe.

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<sup>1</sup> If any do deeds of righteousness be they male or female and have faith they will enter heaven and not the least injustice will be done to them. (4:124)

<sup>2</sup> But Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day and will shed over them a light of Beauty and a (blissful) Joy. And because they were patient and constant He will reward them with a Garden and (garments of) silk. Reclining in the (Garden) on raised thrones they will see there neither the sun's (excessive heat) nor (the moon's) excessive cold. And the shades of the (Garden) will come low over them and the bunches (of fruit) there will hang low in humility. And amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets of crystal. Crystal-clear made of silver: they will determine the measure thereof (according to their wishes). And they will be given to drink there of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Zanjabil. A fountain there called Salsabil. And round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness): if you see them thou wouldst think them scattered Pearls. And when you look it is there you wilt see a Bliss and a Realm Magnificent. Upon them will be green Garments of fine silk and heavy brocade and they will be adorned with Bracelets of silver; and their Lord will give to them to drink of a Wine Pure and Holy. "Verily this is a Reward for you and your Endeavor is accepted and recognized." (76:12-22); see also 4:57; 13:35; 36:56; 56:30; 77:14

<sup>3</sup> Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth prepared for the righteous. (3:133);  
Be ye foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden (of Bliss) the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth prepared for those who believe in Allah and His apostles: that is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding. (57:21).

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### A Permanent Abode:

One of the common features of Paradise is that its inheritors will live there forever. The phrase uses two words for it '*khaledeena feeha abada*.'<sup>4</sup> Although not always, but on three occasions the same term is used for the dwellers of Hell.<sup>5</sup> This implies that the life in the Hereafter will be of permanent nature and there will not be any death thereafter.<sup>6</sup>

### Flowing River and Springs:

The second most common feature of Paradise is that it is a place where river will be flowing '*jannatin tajri min tahtehal anhaar*'<sup>7</sup> and springs will be gushing forth.<sup>8</sup>

### Silk Garment and Gold Bracelet:

The inheritors of Paradise will be adorned with green garment of fine silk and heavy brocade and will wear bracelet of gold, silver, and pearl.<sup>9</sup>

### Dishes and Goblets of Gold and Silver:

The inheritors of Paradise will be eating and drinking from the dishes and goblets made of gold and silver.<sup>10</sup>

### Reclining on Throne in Lofty Mansions:

The inheritors of Paradise will be reclining on raised thrones with green cushions and lined with rich brocade and encrusted with gold and precious stones in lofty mansions.<sup>11</sup>

### Delicious Drinks:

The inheritors of Paradise will be treated with delicious drinks from crystal clear fountain and rivers of incorruptible water, milk of never changing taste, and pure and clear honey. They will also be served joyous wine mixed with *Tasneem*, *Zanjabeel*, and *Kafoor* and sealed with musk which will neither cause hangover or intoxication.<sup>12</sup>

### Abundance of Fruits:

There will be an abundance of fruits of every kind in every season for enjoyment in Paradise.<sup>13</sup> It will include dates, pomegranates, and grapevine. There will also be flesh of fowl, but only for the foremost (*Al-Muqarraboon*).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 4:57, 122; 5:119; 9:22, 100; 18:23; 64:9; 65:11; 98:8;

<sup>5</sup> 4:169; 33:65; 72:23

<sup>6</sup> Nor will they there taste Death except the first Death; (44:56)

<sup>7</sup> 2:25; 3:15, 136, 195, 198; 4:13, 57, 122; 5:12, 85, 119; 7:43; 9:72, 89, 100; 10:9, 13:35; 14:23; 16:31; 18:31; 20:76; 22:14, 23; 25:10; 29:58; 39:20; 47:12; 48:5, 17; 57:12; 58:22; 61:12; 64:9; 65:11; 66:8; 85:11; 98:8.

<sup>8</sup> 15:45; 44:52; 51:15; 55:50, 66; 77:41; 83:28; 88:12.

<sup>9</sup> 18:31; 22:23; 44:53; 76:12, 21.

<sup>10</sup> To them will be passed round dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire all that the eyes could delight in: and ye shall abide therein (for aye). (43:71);

And amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets of crystal; Crystal-clear made of silver: they will determine the measure thereof (according to their wishes). (76:15-16)

<sup>11</sup> 36:56; 37:44; 56:34; 76:13; 83:23; 29:58; 39:20; 55:54, 76

<sup>12</sup> (Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible: rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits and Grace from their Lord. (47:15);

And they will be given to drink there of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Zanjabil. A fountain there called Salsabil. (56:17-18);

As to the Righteous they shall drink of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Kafur; A Fountain where the Devotees of Allah do drink making it flow in unstinted abundance. --- And they will be given to drink there of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Zanjabil (76:5-6, 17); see also 37: 45-47; 38:51; 83:26-27.

<sup>13</sup> There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; (44:55);

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### Beautiful Companions (Hoor):

Beautiful chaste women (*Hoor-un-‘een*), untouched, looking like rubies and coral, of equal age will be the companions of the inheritors of Paradise. They will have big beautiful lustrous eyes (like closely guarded pearl or delicate eggs) and restrained glances.<sup>15</sup>

### Handsome Youths (Ghilman):

Handsome youth of perpetual freshness like pearl will be at the service of the inheritors of Paradise.<sup>16</sup>

### Environment:

Paradise will be a place of peace and security.<sup>17</sup> The inheritors of Paradise will not hear any word of vanity.<sup>18</sup> The whole place will be reverberating with the greeting of Peace (*Salam*).<sup>19</sup> They will be cleansed of all the evils they had accumulated in their past life.<sup>20</sup> They will not have any ill feeling against each other.<sup>21</sup> If there was any ill feeling among them, it will be removed.

Paradise will be a place where all the desires of the inhabitants will be fulfilled<sup>22</sup> and they will have a feeling of extreme satisfaction.<sup>23</sup> They will enjoy everything they will do. In this life even when we indulge in an enjoyable activity, we get physically or mentally tired after a while. In Paradise, they will be able to do indulge in the activities of their choice without ever getting tired.<sup>24</sup> They will be well pleased with Allah<sup>ST</sup> and Allah<sup>ST</sup> will be well pleased with them (*radhi allaho ‘anho wa radho ‘anho*).<sup>25</sup> In fact the most precious gift the inhabitants of Paradise will receive will be the pleasure of Allah<sup>ST</sup> (*ridhwanum*

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Therein will they recline (at ease); therein can they call (at pleasure) for fruit in abundance and (delicious) drink; (38:51). See also 2:25; 36:57; 37:42; 47:15; 52:22; 55:52, 56:20, 29; 68; 56:32; 69:23; 76:14; 77:42; 78:32.

<sup>14</sup> And the flesh of fowls any that they may desire. (56:21) also 52:22.

<sup>15</sup> We shall join them to Companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes. (52:20);

And (there will be) Companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes-- Like unto Pearls well-guarded (56:22-23); see also 2:25; 3:15; 4:57; 37:48; 38:52; 44:54; 55:56, 58, 70, 72; 35, 36; 78:33

<sup>16</sup> Round about them will serve (devoted) to them youths (handsome) as Pearls well-guarded. (52:24);

Round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness). (56:17);

And round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness): if you see them you would think them scattered Pearls. (76:19).

<sup>17</sup> As to the Righteous (they will be) in a position of Security (44:51);

There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; (44:55).

<sup>18</sup> In a Garden on high. Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity ( 88:11).

<sup>19</sup> (This will be) their cry therein: "Glory to Thee O Allah!" and "Peace" will be their greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: "Praise be to Allah the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!" (10:10); also 13:24; 14:23; 15:46; 19:62; 25:75; 36:58; 50:34; 56:26.

<sup>20</sup> That He may admit the men and women who believe to Gardens beneath which rivers flow to dwell therein for aye and remove their ills from them; and that is in the sight of Allah the highest achievement (For man) (48:5)

<sup>21</sup> And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury: (they will be) brothers (joyfully) facing each other on thrones (of dignity). (15:47)

<sup>22</sup> "For them there will be therein all that they wish for: they will dwell (there) for aye: a promise to be prayed for from thy Lord." (25:16);

(Every) fruit (enjoyment) will be there for them; they shall have whatever they call for; (36:57).

<sup>23</sup> (To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul in (complete) rest and satisfaction!" Come back thou to thy Lord well pleased (thyself) and well-pleasing unto Him! "Enter thou then among my Devotees! "Yea enter thou my Heaven!" (89:27-30)

<sup>24</sup> Verily the Companions of the Garden shall that Day have joy in all that they do; (36:55);

There no sense of fatigue shall touch them nor shall they (ever) be asked to leave (15:48)

<sup>25</sup> Allah well pleased with them and they with Him (3:15; 5:119, 9:100, 58:22, 72; 98:8).

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*minallahi akbar*).<sup>26</sup> Because of our imperfections in this life, we do many things which are contrary to the will of Allah<sup>ST</sup>. When the inhabitants of Paradise will enter there, all of their imperfections will be removed<sup>27</sup> and their desires will be in full alignment with the will of Allah<sup>ST</sup>. Whatever they will do, will not only be enjoyable to them, it will also be in full harmony with the will of Allah<sup>ST</sup>.

### Analysis:

Humans have both good and bad desires. Some desires are good within certain constraints and bad outside those constraints. For example, loving a member of opposite sex is good within the bounds of marriage and bad outside the bound. Religion is a behavior modulator. It promotes and gives incentive for adopting good behavior and discourages and warns of the consequences of bad behavior. Its ultimate objective is to promote peaceful coexistence of humans in this life. In Islam and other monotheistic religions, Paradise is offered as the incentive for adopting good behavior and avoiding bad behavior. The objective of describing the characteristics of Paradise in the Quran is thus to create an urge for its adherents to seek Paradise, which sometimes requires giving up certain things humans like and enjoy in this life. These characteristics should thus be compatible with the desires of the person seeking Paradise; otherwise it will not provide any incentive.

Paradise with gardens, rivers, and springs sounds very enticing for someone living in the desert, but for someone living in Europe, Canada, or the USA, ski resorts and beaches will be more appealing. Dates, grapevines, and pomegranates are also enticing for the inhabitants of the desert, but people living in the South Asia will be motivated more by mangoes. Fruits and flesh of fowls are also enticing for some, but for those living in Europe, Canada, or the USA steak will be more appealing. There is no mention of seafood either. Paradise will be more appealing for the inhabitants of the Far East if there will be seafood. Caveat, one of the delicacies is not mentioned either.

The Hoories may be a good incentive for men, but they do not have any appeal for women. Even when it comes to Hoories, men in western hemisphere will probably prefer women with blond hair and blue eyes, we all know the famous movie "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes." The Quranic description of Hoories does not talk about the color of the hair or the eyes. Silk garments, brocade, gold and silver bracelet, and dishes and goblets of gold will probably be more appealing to women, but we all know diamonds are a girl's best friend. The Quran mentions gold, silver, and pearl, but does not mention diamond.

The wine lovers will be enticed with wines of different flavors, but it is of no interest to those who have never tasted wine nor have any appreciation of it. People living in the South Asia may prefer mango juice or yogurt shake (*luss*).

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<sup>26</sup> Their Lord dos give them Glad tidings of a Mercy from Himself of His good pleasure and of gardens for them wherein are delights that endure. They will dwell therein forever. Verily in Allah's presence is a reward the greatest (of all). (9:21-22)

Allah has promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss in the Good Pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme felicity. (9:72).

<sup>27</sup> That He may admit the men and women who believe to Gardens beneath which rivers flow to dwell therein for aye and remove their ills from them; and that is in the sight of Allah the highest achievement (For man) (48:5)

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The analysis suggests that the characteristics of Paradise described in the Quran were for the consumption of its immediate audience who lived in the hot desert climate of Arabia. It was based on their social surroundings and social habits. They liked wine, dates, pomegranates, and grapevine. Men liked beautiful wide eyed virgin women and women liked silk clothing and everything made of gold and silver. The examples chosen were to whet their appetite for Paradise.

Hereafter lies far beyond the distant future. It is beyond everyday realities of this worldly life. It could be a different world with a different order. Its realities cannot be described exactly because we do not have any feel for those realities. It can only be described symbolically in terms of our experiences of this life. No one actually knows what delight of the eyes is waiting for him or her in Paradise.<sup>28</sup> The bottom line is that its dwellers will be awarded everything they will desire and it will be to their satisfaction.<sup>29</sup> They will have no desire to trade those blessings for anything else.<sup>30</sup> But those desires could be very different from the desires of this life.

### Basic Human Desires:

The Quran tells us that when Adam<sup>AS</sup> and Hawwa<sup>AS</sup> were placed in Jannah, their basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) were all taken care of. Satan was able to deceive them by promising them that by eating from the forbidden tree, they will become angels, they will live a life of eternity, and they will have an everlasting kingdom.<sup>31</sup> The story of Adam<sup>AS</sup> and Hawwa<sup>AS</sup> tells us that when basic human needs (food, clothing, and shelter) are satisfied, he is left with three basic desires:

Become an angel;  
Live a life of eternity; and  
Have an everlasting kingdom.

### State of Humans in Paradise:

Assuming that the laws of nature will still hold true in the Hereafter, the law of physics suggests that the bodily mass the humans possess in this life is not suitable for eternal life. In order to have an eternal life, the body must become free of any mass. This is the state of light (it is composed of mass-less photons). This is also the state the angels live in the present state of the Universe (see "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan and Jinns –

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<sup>28</sup> Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them as a reward for their (good) Deeds. (32:17).

Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Allah said: "I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, not has it occurred to human heart." Hadeeth Qudsi, On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.

<sup>29</sup> Not the slightest sound will they hear of Hell: what their souls desired in that will they dwell. (21:102).

<sup>30</sup> As to those who believe and work righteous deeds they have for their entertainment the Gardens of Paradise. Wherein they shall dwell (for aye): no change will they wish for from them. (18:108).

<sup>31</sup> Then We said: "O Adam! Verily this (Satan) is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden so that thou art landed in misery. "There is therein (enough provision) for thee, not to go hungry, nor to go naked" "Nor to suffer from thirst nor from the sun's heat." But Satan whispered evil to him: he said "O Adam! Shall I lead thee to Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?" (20:117-120) O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and enjoy (its good things) as ye wish: but approach not this tree or ye run into harm and transgression." Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said "Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever." And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser. (7:19-21)

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Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science by the author for detail).<sup>32</sup> In this state the speed reaches the speed of light, time stands still, and life becomes perpetual.<sup>33</sup> That is why angles will continue to live until the end of the Universe.<sup>34</sup> Only in light form (i.e. at photonic level) can someone live forever, as long as Allah<sup>ST</sup> wills. It is very much possible that the inheritors of Paradise will be living in light form (the photonic state), the same state the angles live now.

The Paradise, as mentioned earlier, will be larger than the Universe. According to the latest count, the Universe contains at least seventy sextillion stars (seven followed by twenty two zeros, or seventy billion trillion).<sup>35</sup> According to one estimate humans have been on this earth for about one and a half million years (see "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where – In the Light of Quran, Bible and Science - Study of Human Origin" by the author for detail).<sup>36</sup> According to the Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>, his<sup>SAW</sup> appearance and the occurrence of Qiyamah is like two adjacent fingers<sup>37</sup> i.e. compared to the duration between appearance of Adam<sup>AS</sup> and the Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>, the duration between Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> and Qiyamah will be very short. Assuming that the total number of humans in the Hereafter could be around fifteen trillion<sup>38</sup>, even if all the humans go to Paradise, every person can have dominion over five billion stars. It will be like having kingdom over five billion suns.

Thus assuming that the structure of Paradise will be similar to the present day Universe and all the laws of nature of the Universe will hold true in the Hereafter, the inhabitants of Paradise will be living in a state similar to the state the angels live in the present life, their life will be perpetual and they could each have dominion over five billion stars, a ginormous kingdom.

### What will Women Get?

Assuming that the natural laws of the Universe will still hold in Paradise, humans will exist in a form similar to the angels. The angels do not procreate and do not have any gender (they are asexual).<sup>39</sup> Since humans will not have any gender, they will not exist as male and female. As such both male and female of this life will enjoy the same benefit in the Hereafter. As has already been mentioned, the example of Hoories is symbolic and should only be seen in the cultural context of the immediate audience of the Quran.

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<sup>32</sup> Jawaid, Mahmood, "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," InstantPublisher.com, 2006, pp. 127-131.

<sup>33</sup> Greene, B., "The Elegant Universe," Vintage Books, New York, 2000, p.51.

<sup>34</sup> Jawaid, Mahmood, "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," InstantPublisher.com, 2006, Chapters 17-21.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2003/TECH/space/07/22/stars.survey/> (accessed December 18, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Jawaid, Mahmood, "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where – In the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (Study of Human Origin)," InstantPublisher.com, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Allah's Apostle, holding out his middle and index fingers, said, "My advent and the Hour's are like this (or like these)," namely, the period between his era and the Hour is like the distance between those two fingers, i.e., very short. Bukhari 7.221; see also Bukhari 6.458, 8.510, 8.511, and 8.512.

<sup>38</sup> The world population in 1000, 1650, 1800, 1900, 1950, 1970 A.D. was 340, 545, 907, 1610, 2509, and 3650 thousand, respectively (Encyclopaedia Britannica Macropaedia, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1977, Volume 14, p. 816). The present population is about six billion. Assuming a population of 340,000 from Adam<sup>AS</sup> up to 1000 A.D., which is very conservative gives a total population of about 500 billion. Assuming that the human will exist for another 150,000 years (about ten percent of 1.5 million years) yields a total population of 1.5 trillion. We will use a conservative population of 15 trillion.

<sup>39</sup> Jawaid, Mahmood, "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where – In the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (Study of Human Origin)," InstantPublisher.com, 2007, p. 133.

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Even if the natural laws of Paradise will be different, the question posed will not be an issue. The gender differences and sexual desires humans have in this life are for the purpose of procreation. The Hereafter will not require any procreation. All the humans Allah<sup>ST</sup> plans to create would already have been created in this life. Thus the gender difference and sexual desires humans have in this live will vanish in the Hereafter. All the males and females of this life will have the same gender in the Hereafter. Thus the question: 'if men get Hoories, what will women get' does not arise. According to Seyyed Nasr, although physically, emotionally, and psychologically we are male and female, at a deeper level we all possess androgynous reality that transcends the male-female dichotomy.<sup>40</sup> It is very much possible that when we will be resurrected, we will all exist in androgynous state.

*The ideas described here are merely speculations. Only Allah<sup>ST</sup> knows the true reality of everything.*

About the Writer:

The writer has authored "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan, and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," and "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where in the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (A Study of Human Origin)," both published by InstantPublishers.com (<http://instantpublisher.com/>) and "Lessons from the Qur'an," published by Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>). These books are available from Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>), respectively. He has also published many essays on religious issues in the Charleston Gazette, West Virginia and written quite a few Islamic satires. He is a Chemical Engineer and possesses Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and Chemistry and has Professional Engineers license from the State of Texas. His e-mail address is [mnajawaid@yahoo.com](mailto:mnajawaid@yahoo.com).

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<sup>40</sup> Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, "The Garden of Truth – The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition," Harper One, 2007, p.8.