

## Aesthetic Aspects of the Iranian-Islamic Garden from the Perspective of Quranic Verses Describing Paradise

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### Introduction

Following the advent of Islam in Iran, architecture and urban planning, including garden design, underwent significant transformations. Since then, the fusion of Quranic themes with Islamic art has taken on a sacred dimension, and the embodiment of beauty and attention to the aesthetics of Quranic verses has become a prominent tool and a selected source for artists and architects of Islamic gardens across different eras. Numerous artists, aiming for the betterment of society, have used the celestial paradise as their ideal and ultimate model in creating artistic works, reflecting the elements of this sacred space.

The purpose of this research is to examine the manifestations of Quranic verses describing paradise in the patterns of Islamic garden design and architecture, with an aesthetic approach to discover the relationships between the two. This study seeks to analyze and reinterpret Quranic paradise by referencing Quranic verses, interpretations, and the sayings of the Imams (peace be upon them). This issue is significant in understanding the garden design of the Islamic era and the concept of the Quranic garden.

### Materials and Methods

This qualitative research attempts to explore the physical and spiritual parallels between otherworldly and worldly gardens and the impact of Islamic beliefs and Quranic teachings on the formation of these similarities. The information in this research has been collected through library sources, and the analysis has been conducted using descriptive-comparative methods by the authors. Since the verses describing paradise in the Quran provide the best architectural descriptions of gardens, this study aims to portray the alignment between the celestial garden verses and the architecture of earthly gardens and to examine how these abstract concepts are reflected in tangible forms.

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Thus, the study first reviews a selection of Quranic verses related to paradise's description, and then, it aesthetically and comparatively analyzes the symbolic elements of these verses that have become the architectural and spatial models for Islamic gardens. This research seeks to answer the following questions: What are the characteristics of paradise and its elements from the Quran's perspective? What is the relationship between the elements of Quranic paradise and Islamic garden design? To what extent and in what manner do the aesthetic systems and symbolic representations of these concepts function in Islamic gardens?

Given that the Quran's descriptive verses of paradise provide the most precise descriptions of space and elements in the Quranic garden, they can be used as a reference for the aesthetic interpretation of these verses in the geometry and design of Islamic gardens. Moreover, by employing the elements of Quranic gardens, one can analyze the form and type of elements featured in Islamic gardens, followed by an analysis of their components and relationships, ultimately uncovering their meaning and significance.

### Results and Findings

In Islamic lands, the garden represents a symbol of life's vitality, an embodiment of material and spiritual beauty, and a metaphor for paradise on earth. The manifestation of Quranic paradise's elements in various forms of Islamic arts, particularly in Islamic architecture, with the profound religious devotion and adherence to Quranic teachings among the artists of this region, could not have occurred without inspiration from these descriptions. For Iranian-Islamic art, the ultimate goal is to return to one's true self and understand the reality of monotheism. The simultaneous application of both material and spiritual models of heavenly gardens, as understood from the Quran's themes, the sayings of the Imams (peace be upon them), and the great scholars, has been beautifully and meticulously depicted in the form of Islamic gardens. Consequently, the Islamic garden is a manifestation of the Quranic garden and a sublime reflection of that higher truth.

Understanding the connection between the Quranic image of paradise and the concepts inherent in Islamic gardens requires knowledge of religious practices and the aesthetic view of nature and the characteristics of ideal paradise, as well as an interpretation of both the content and functional elements. From the perspective of the Quranic verses, the principles and values governing the physical and spiritual environment of the garden can be summarized in the following table.

Functional Principles	Structural Principles
Space and location	Order and proportion
Building and architecture	Balance and symmetry
Trees and plants	Centrality and focus
Water and springs	Rhythm and repetition
Light and shade	Unity in diversity
Color	Harmony

The aesthetic recognition of the Quranic paradise's elements in Islamic gardens is associated with the following factors: establishing a suitable relationship between natural elements and the man-made environment, addressing the spiritual and physical needs of humans, ensuring diversity and balance in the placement of environmental elements and their proximity, defining boundaries to respect individual and collective values, utilizing both natural elements and the principles and values governing Islamic spaces, maintaining proportion and scale in the dimensions of man-made spaces, and achieving harmony and balance between form and function to demonstrate unity in diversity and attain the ultimate goal of divine reunion.

In accordance with religious teachings and Quranic principles, which repeatedly emphasize that creation is not without purpose, it is often reiterated that the construction of the world is based on a purposeful foundation. Humanity, as God's representative on earth, in its design, construction, and interaction with nature, avoids creating anything without benefit. Therefore, in the design and content of Islamic gardens, life-giving elements and living nature take precedence over human-made creations. The design and identity of these spaces are, in fact, shaped by the use of these elements.

### Conclusion

Since gardens in Iran are considered symbols of ideal paradise, they are constructed and adorned in a heavenly manner. As a result, the heavenly garden is regarded by Iranian artists as a model of beauty and immortality. The believing and reflective Iranian artist and architect, through the re-presentation of these elements, strives to evoke an ideal space reminiscent of paradise. What can be understood from the Quran's verses, the sayings of the Imams (peace be upon them), and the great scholars regarding the elements of paradise is the simultaneous application of both material and spiritual models of heavenly gardens, which are beautifully and meticulously depicted in the form of Islamic gardens. From this perspective, the Quran's metaphors of the heavenly garden, as a divine model, have inspired Muslim artists to create and design such elements in Islamic landscapes and gardens. Consequently, the Islamic garden is a manifestation of the Quranic garden and a sublime reflection of that higher truth.

**Keywords:** Quranic paradise, Islamic garden, aesthetics, structural elements, functional elements.

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