



# Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions (Themes in Islamic History)

By Christian Lange

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The Muslim afterworld, with its imagery rich in sensual promises, has shaped Western perceptions of Islam for centuries. However, to date, no single study has done justice to the full spectrum of traditions of thinking about the topic in Islamic history. The Muslim hell, in particular, remains a little studied subject. This book, which is based on a wide array of carefully selected Arabic and Persian texts, covers not only the theological and exegetical but also the philosophical, mystical, topographical, architectural and ritual aspects of the Muslim belief in paradise and hell, in both the Sunni and the Shi'i world. By examining a broad range of sources related to the afterlife, Christian Lange shows that Muslim religious literature, against transcendentalist assumptions to the contrary, often pictures the boundary between this world and the otherworld as being remarkably thin, or even permeable.

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#### Review

"Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions is a fascinating trove of new information about Muslim eschatology and will serve as an authoritative basis for both general and scholarly readers. Christian Lange surveys the entirety of the Arabic Muslim tradition and paints a masterly picture of a continuous development concerning the afterlife, including the vital theological and even art historical and architectural ramifications."

David Cook, Rice University

"Muslims have put their imagination to work in various ways to capture both the bliss of paradise and the suffering of hell. Reviewing such ways in a learned and inspiring manner, Christian Lange convincingly alerts us about images and practices that thinned the boundary between the here and the hereafter."

Maribel Fierro, Spanish National Research Council, Madrid

"Christian Lange's overarching argument for the importance of Muslims' imaginative work in developing and living with the interpenetration of heaven and hell both as otherworldly realms and as present realities of earthly life is elegant in its structure and execution and persuasive in its judicious use of the author's extensive reading."

William A. Graham, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University

"Christian Lange's excellent analysis of Islamic perceptions of paradise and hell illuminates - in a highly learned and remarkably reader-friendly way - crucial features of Islamic religious thought. This new book is required reading for everyone interested in a critical analysis of Muslim concepts of the world beyond human sensory perception."

Sebastian Günther, Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Göttingen

"Not only is this the first comprehensive study of the eternal abodes in Islamic thought, but Christian Lange has uttered the final word on the Islamic imagination on paradise and hell - a word well-grounded on an amazing source-based review of Islamic literature and traditions."

Roberto Tottoli, Universit... di Napoli L'Orientale

#### About the Author

Christian Lange is Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Utrecht University. He is the author of *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination* (Cambridge, 2012) and the editor of several scholarly volumes, including *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions* (2015). From 2011 to 2015, he was Principal Investigator of the European Research Council project, 'The Here and the Hereafter in Islamic Traditions'. He is a member of the Young Academy of the Dutch Royal Academy of Sciences.

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