



Paradise: A History of the Idea that Rules the World

Kevin Rushby

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From the Church in the Middle Ages to the people who prepare suicide bombers, there is always someone promising a better tomorrow, if only we do what they say. Although much is made of the clash between Islam and Christianity, here, Kevin Rushby argues that there is no clash — we all want the same thing: paradise, Eden, perfection. Rushby sets out on two journeys: a physical one to the Mountain of the Assassins in Iran, home of the myth that "bright-eyed maidens of Paradise" await those who die serving Allah; and an intellectual one, back through the history of our ideas about Paradise in the Judaeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. Rushby reveals in an accessible mix of history, religion, and philosophy, the reasons why we have come to live in such a divided world by showing how rationalist thought stretches from Pythagoras to Jacobean England and how tales of the gods have brought destruction and terror, from the Book of Revelations to the London Underground bombing of 2005.

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