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CAT. 1. THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND THE ARCHANGEL
GABRIEL AT THE GATES OF PARADISE

IRAN, HERAT; C. 1465

The miniature from a text about Muhammad's mystical ascension to heaven (miraj), shows the Prophet and Gabriel at the pond of al-Kawthar before one of Paradise's richly ornamented gates. Beside the pond are countless vessels from which the believer can quench his thirst after the tribulations of the Day of Judgment.

Water plays a decisive role in both the heavenly and the earthly garden, and the four rivers of Paradise that flow from the foot of the gigantic Tuba Tree are often copied as channels in the Persian four-part garden (charbagh).

The Garden of Paradise itself and its many delights are not depicted here. No artist could describe it to the believer as intensely as accounts in the Koran and later writings.

