SELECTIONS FROM RAWDAT AL-MUHIBBIN · 2

Why We Love

Selections from Ibn al-Qayyim's Rawdat al-Muhibbin

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah
d. 751 AH

IBN JĀZĪ · FUSTAT SERIES

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Editor's Preface

Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, known as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (691–751 AH), was a scholar of Damascus and the student of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. Among his many works is *Rawdat al-Muhibbin wa-Nuzhat al-Mushtaqin* (The Garden of the Lovers and the Delight of the Yearning), a book of twenty-nine chapters on love: its names, the gaze, passionate love, lawful union, beauty, the signs of love, jealousy, chastity, and, at the end, the love of Allah and the censure of desire.

This booklet draws on one chapter of that book, Chapter Five, "On the Motives of Love and What It Attaches To". In it the author asks what makes one person love another: what lies in the beloved, what lies in the lover, and what bond joins the two. The reader will find his account of the three things on which love depends, the two kinds of affinity between souls, the love that lasts and the love that passes, the question of why a lover is not always loved in return, the effect of union on love, lawful and unlawful, and the four things in the lover that call love forth.

The text is Ibn al-Qayyim's own, in the English of the full translation, abridged by selection. Cuts are shown by "...". Chains of narrators, most of the poetry and many of the anecdotes have been left out; the full translation gives the complete text.

◆ *Three things on which love depends* ◆

The motive (الداعي) may be meant as the awareness which is followed by will and inclination, and that resides in the lover; and it may be meant as the cause for the sake of which love came to exist and became attached to it, and that resides in the beloved. By the motive we mean the sum of the two matters: what resides in the beloved of attributes that call to love of him, and what resides in the lover of awareness of them, and the agreement between the lover and the beloved, which is the bond between them, and which is called, between one created being and another, affinity and suitability. 103

So here there are three matters: the description of the beloved and his beauty, the lover's awareness of it, and the affinity, which is the attachment and suitability between the lover and the beloved. Whenever the three are strong and complete, love is strong and firm; and the lessening of love and its weakness is according to the weakness or lessening of these three. So whenever the beloved is at the utmost of beauty, and the lover's awareness of his beauty is the fullest awareness, and the affinity between the two spirits is strong, that is persistent, lasting love. And beauty may be deficient in itself, but in the eye of the lover it is perfect, so the strength of his love is according to that beauty in his view; for your love of a thing blinds and deafens, so the lover sees no one better than his beloved. As is related that Azzah entered upon al-Hajjaj, and he said to her: O Azzah! By Allah, you are not as Kuthayyir said of you. She said: O Amir, he did not see me with the eye with which you see me.[1]

And beauty may be abundant, but awareness of it deficient, so his love is weak for that reason; were its reality uncovered for him, it would take his heart captive. 104

For this reason women were commanded to cover their faces from men, for the appearance of the face unveils the perfection of the beauties, so enchantment occurs; and for this reason it was legislated for the suitor to look at the woman he is proposing to, for if he sees her loveliness and beauty, that is more apt to bring about love and harmony between them, as the Prophet ﷺ indicated in his saying:

1 Azzah is the beloved of the poet Kuthayyir Azzah (d. 105 AH); al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi (d. 95 AH) was the Umayyad governor of Iraq.

[2] "When one of you wishes to propose to a woman, let him look at what calls him to marry her, for it is more likely that harmony (يؤدم) be established between them", that is: that they be made suitable, agreeable and right; ... And when all that is found, but the affinity and attachment between them is absent, love is not firmly established; and perhaps it does not occur at all, for the affinity between spirits is among the strongest causes of love.

فكل امرئ يصبو إلى من يناسبه

For every man longs for one who suits him.

For every man longs for one who suits him

2 Abu Dawud (2082), from the hadith of Jabir; the Arabic editor says its chain is hasan. The last part is in the hadith of al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, in al-Tirmidhi (1087), al-Nasa'i (3235) and Ibn Majah (1866).

◆ *Two kinds of affinity* ◆

And this affinity is of two kinds: original, from the origin of creation, and incidental, because of neighbourliness or sharing in some matter. For when your aim suits another's aim, agreement arises between your spirit and his spirit, and when the aim differs, the agreement disappears. As for the original affinity, it is agreement of character, likeness of spirits, and the longing of every soul for its like, for the likeness of a thing is drawn to it by nature, so the two spirits are alike in the origin of creation, so each of them is drawn to the other by nature. And attraction and inclination may occur by a special property, and this is not given a cause and its cause is not known, like the attraction of iron to the magnetic stone. 105

And this is what led some people to say: passionate love does not depend on beauty and loveliness, and its absence does not necessarily mean the absence of it; it is only the likeness of souls and their mingling in the natures created in them ... This speaker said: so its reality is that it is a mirror in which the lover sees his own nature and delicacy in the form of his beloved; so in truth he loved only himself, his nature and what resembles him. 106

And this is correct in one respect, for affinity is the cause of joining, by law and by decree, and the witness to this by analogy is that the most beloved foods to an animal are what most resemble the substance of its body and have the most affinity with it; and the stronger the affinity between the nourished and the nourishment, the more the soul inclines to it, and the more the affinity is remote, the more aversion from it arises. And there is no doubt that this is an amount beyond mere beauty and loveliness; for this reason noble, pure, lofty souls love the attributes of perfection for their own sake, so the most beloved thing to them is knowledge, courage, chastity, generosity, kindness, patience and steadfastness, because of the affinity of these qualities with their substance; unlike the base, low souls, who are far from loving these attributes. And many a person is moved to generosity and kindness by the excess of his passionate love and love for it, and the pleasure he finds in giving, as al-Ma'mun said:[3] Pardon has been made so dear to me that I fear I will not be rewarded for it. 107

And it was said to the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal رحمه الله تعالى: Did you learn this knowledge for Allah? He said: As for for Allah, that is rare; but something was made dear to me, and I did it.

And another said: I rejoice in giving and take pleasure in it more than the receiver rejoices in what he takes from me.

3 Al-Ma'mun (d. 218 AH), the Abbasid caliph.

◆ *The passionate lovers of knowledge* ◆

And many of the open-handed love generosity with the greatest passionate love, so they cannot be patient without it despite their need of what they give, and they do not accept in it the rebuke of a rebuker, and the blame of no blamer takes hold of them in it; and as for the passionate lovers of knowledge, they are more infatuated with it and more passionately in love with it than any passionate lover with his beloved, and many of them are not distracted from it by the most beautiful human form. 108

And it was said to the wife of al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar - or another -: Congratulations to you, for you have no co-wife; she said: By Allah, these books harm me more than a number of co-wives![4]

And the brother of our Shaykh, Abd al-Rahman ibn Taymiyyah, narrated to me from his father that he said: The grandfather, when he entered the lavatory, used to say to me: Read in this book, and raise your voice so that I hear.[5] 109

And I know one who was struck by an illness of headache and fever, and the book was at his head; when he found relief he read in it, and when he was overcome he put it down. The physician entered upon him one day while he was so, and said: This is not permitted to you, for you are helping against yourself, and becoming a cause of the loss of what you seek.

And our Shaykh narrated to me, saying: An illness began in me, and the physician said to me: Your reading and your speaking in knowledge increase the illness. I said to him: I cannot be patient without that, and I appeal to your own knowledge: when the soul rejoices and is glad, is not the nature strengthened, so that it repels the illness? He said: Yes! I said to him: Then my soul is glad in knowledge, so the nature is strengthened by it, and I find relief. He said: This is outside our treatment, or as he said.

So passionate love of the attributes of perfection is among the most beneficial passionate love and the highest, and it comes only by the affinity

4 Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkar (d. 256 AH), the Qurashi genealogist and historian of Makkah and Madinah, a scholar absorbed in his books.

5 The grandfather is Majd al-Din Abd al-Salam ibn Taymiyyah (d. 652 AH), the Hanbali jurist; the narrator's father is Shihab al-Din Abd al-Halim ibn Taymiyyah (d. 682 AH). "Our Shaykh" is the author's teacher Ibn Taymiyyah.

between the spirit and those attributes; for this reason the highest and noblest of spirits is the one whose beloved is highest and noblest, as it was said:

أنت القتيل بكل من أحببته ◆ فاختر لنفسك في الهوى من تصطفي

You're slain by everyone you love; then choose and take
in love the one you'd select for your own sake.

You are slain by everyone you have loved
so choose for yourself, in passion, the one you select

◆ *The love that lasts, and the likeness of souls* ◆

So when love is by likeness and affinity, it is firmly established and takes hold, and nothing removes it but an obstacle stronger than the cause; and when it is not by likeness, it is only love for some purpose among purposes, which disappears when it ends and fades away. So whoever loves you for a matter leaves when it ends; so the motive of love and its impulse, if it is a purpose of the lover, his love has no lasting; and if it is a matter residing in the beloved that quickly passes and moves away, his love goes with its going; and if it is an attribute inseparable from him, his love remains by the remaining of its motive, unless an opposing factor opposes it that requires its removal, which is either a change of state in the lover or harm from the beloved, for harm either weakens love or removes it. 110

And this is a point on which lovers divided into two parties. One group said: it is not sound love that harm removes; rather the sign of sound love is that it is not lessened by harshness and not taken away by harm. They said: rather the lover takes pleasure in his beloved's harming him ... This is love in truth, for it includes the utmost agreement, so that his will and the will of his beloved have become one from himself, so he humiliated himself in agreement with his beloved's humiliating him, and loved his enemies because his beloved resembled them in harming him. And even though natures refuse this, it is what perfect love requires and necessitates. 111

And a group said: rather harm removes love, for natures are disposed to dislike the one who harms them, as hearts are disposed to love the one who does good to them. And what those mentioned is a claim of theirs. 112

The fair view is to say: in the heart there come together hatred and dislike of the beloved's harm, and love of him in another respect, so he loves him and hates his harm; and this is what happens, and the prevailing of the two balances the overcome, and the ruling remains with it. The poet has uncovered this meaning in his saying:

وإن ساءني أن نلتني بمساءة ◆ فقد سرني أني خطرت ببالك

And if it grieves me that harm from you I find,
it pleases me that I crossed your mind.

And if it grieves me that you have touched me with harm
it has pleased me that I crossed your mind

This one was fair when he informed that it grieves him that his beloved touch him with harm, and pleases him that he cross his mind, unlike one who claimed that he takes pleasure in his beloved's harming him; for this is outside natures, unless that harm is a means to the beloved's pleasure and nearness, for then he takes pleasure in it when he considers its end and its outcome; this does happen. And one of the physicians informed me, saying: I take pleasure in the disagreeable medicine when I know the healing it brings about, and I put it on my tongue and sip it out of love for it. 113

And from this is the pleasure of lovers in the hardships that bring them to union with their beloved and nearness to him; whenever they remember the ease of union, and that what they are in is a road that leads to them, enduring it is sweet to them and bearing it is good to them ... The point is that love calls for likeness and affinity.

The Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal - رحمه الله تعالى - mentioned in his *Musnad*, from the hadith of Aishah رضي الله عنها: that a woman used to enter upon the Quraysh and make them laugh; she came to Medina and stayed with a woman who made people laugh. The Prophet ﷺ said: "With whom did so-and-so stay?" She said: With so-and-so, the one who makes people laugh. He said: "Souls are conscripted troops; those that knew one another are in harmony, and those that did not know one another are at variance." And the origin of the hadith is in the *Sahih*.[6] 114

One of the physicians said: passionate love is the mingling of spirit with spirit, because of the affinity and likeness between them; for when water mingles with water, it is impossible to separate part of it from part, and

6 The story was not found in the *Musnad*. With this wording the Arabic editor gives it from al-Khara'iti's *I'tilal al-Qulub*, through Ali ibn Abi Ali al-Lahabi, whom Abu Hatim and al-Nasa'i call *matruk*; these references could not be confirmed. The hadith without the story: Muslim (2638); al-Bukhari (3336) without a chain.

likewise love between two persons reaches the point that one of them is pained by the other's pain, and falls sick with his sickness without being aware. 115

And when you reflect on existence, you will hardly find two who love each other but that there is a likeness between them, or an agreement in an action, a state or an aim; and when aims, attributes, actions and ways differ, there is nothing there but aversion and distance between hearts. And enough in this is the sound hadith from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, their mutual mercy and their mutual compassion is as the one body: when a limb of it complains, the rest of the body responds to it with fever and sleeplessness."[7] 117

7 Al-Bukhari (6011) and Muslim (2586), from the hadith of al-Nu'man ibn Bashir.

◆ *Why the lover is not always loved* ◆

If it is said: What you have mentioned requires that when one person loves another, the other loves him, so they share in love; yet reality bears witness to the contrary, for how many a lover is not loved, but is struck with the sword of hatred.

It is said: People have differed in the answer to this question. As for Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm, he said:[8] What I hold is that passionate love is a connection between the parts of souls that were divided in this creation, in the origin of their lofty element; ... And we have come to know that the secret of mingling and difference among created things is only connection and separation; so the like always calls for its like, and the equal is at rest with its equal. ... And Allah تعالى says: ﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا﴾ "It is He who created you from one soul and created from it its mate that he might dwell in security with her." [al-A'raf 7:189] So He made the cause of dwelling in security that she is from him; and if the cause of love were the beauty of the bodily form, it would be necessary that the less beautiful of forms not be found good, and yet we find many who prefer the lower while knowing the excellence of another, and find no way for his heart to turn from it; and if it were for agreement in character, no man would love one who does not help him or agree with him; so we knew that it is something in the essence of the soul; and love may be for one of the causes, and that perishes with the perishing of its cause.

He said: And among what confirms this view is that we have come to know that love is of kinds. The best is the love of those who love each other for the sake of Allah, whether for diligence in action, for agreement in the root of the school, or for an excellence of knowledge that a person is granted. And love of kinship, and love of familiarity and sharing in aims, and love of companionship and acquaintance, and love for a kindness that a man places with his brother, and love for greed for the rank of the beloved, and the love of two who love each other for a secret on which they have joined and which they must conceal, and love for reaching pleasure and fulfilling a need, and the love of passionate love for which there is

8 Ibn Hazm (Ali ibn Ahmad, d. 456 AH), the Andalusian scholar. The quotation from his *Tawq al-Hamamah* runs to "like the fire in the stone".

no cause but what we have mentioned of the connection of souls. All these kinds end with the ending of their causes, increase with their increase, decrease with their decrease, are strengthened by their nearness, and are languid with their distance, except the love of sound passionate love established in the soul. [119]

◆ *Two answers, and the correct one* ◆

Then he raised this question,[9] and said: The answer: that the soul of the one who does not love the one who loves him is surrounded on every side by some veiling accidents and the veils that encompass it from earthly natures, so it does not sense the part that was connected to it before its descent to where it is; and had it been freed, the two would have been equal in connection and love. And the soul of the lover is freed, aware of the place of what used to share with it in neighbourhood, seeking it, making for it, searching for it, longing to meet it, drawing it if it could, like the magnet and the iron, and like the fire in the stone.

And another group answered: that spirits were created in the form of a sphere, then divided; so whichever two spirits met there and were neighbours, they are familiar in this world and love each other; and if they were averse to each other there, they are averse here; and if they were familiar from one respect and averse from another, they are so here. 120

And this answer is built on the corrupt principle which these people established: that spirits exist before bodies, and that they were acquainted and neighbouring there, meeting and getting to know one another. And this is an error; rather the sound view, to which the law and reason point, is that spirits are created with bodies, and that the angel entrusted with breathing the spirit into the body breathes the spirit into it when four months have passed over the drop and the fifth has begun, and that is the first coming into being of the spirit in it.[10]

And whoever says that they were created before that has erred; and uglier than it is the saying of one who says: it is eternal, or who withholds judgement on that. Rather the correct answer is to say: love, as has preceded, is of two kinds: 121

An accidental, purposive love; sharing in this is not necessary, rather it is often accompanied by the beloved's loathing and hatred of the lover, unless he has with him a purpose like his purpose, for then he loves him for his purpose from him, as between a man and a woman each of whom has a purpose with his companion.

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9 That is, Ibn Hazm; the quotation from his *Tawq al-Hamamah* continues.

10 The author follows the hadith of Ibn Mas'ud (al-Bukhari, 3208, and Muslim, 2643).

And the second kind: spiritual love, whose cause is likeness and agreement between the two spirits; this occurs only from both sides, necessarily; so if the lover of true love were to search the heart of the beloved, he would find in it a love for him like what is in his own, or less, or more.

And when love is from both sides, each of the two lovers is at rest by it, and it calms some of what is in him, and he counts it a kind of union.

◆ *How the bodies follow the spirits* ◆

So when souls are alike, spirits mingle and act upon one another, the bodies act upon one another from them, and seek the like of the mingling and nearness that is between the spirits; for the body is the instrument of the spirit and its mount, and for this Allah سبحانه placed the appetite of intercourse between male and female, seeking the mingling and mixing between the two bodies as it is between the two spirits; and for this it is called intercourse (جماع), mixing (خلاط), marriage (نكاح) and union (إفضاء), because each of the two reaches (يفضي) the other, so the space between them disappears. 124

If it is said: This requires that love be confirmed by intercourse and strengthened by it, yet reality is contrary, for intercourse puts out the fire of love, cools its heat and calms the lover's soul.

It is said: People differ in this. Among them is one whose love after intercourse is stronger, firmer and more established than before it, and he is in the position of one to whom a suitable thing was described, and he loved it, and when he tasted it his love for it was stronger and his yearning for it greater.

And it is established in the *Sahih* from the Prophet ﷺ, in the hadith of the ascent of the angels to their Lord, that He سبحانه asks them about His servants - and He knows them best - and they say: "They glorify You, extol You and sanctify You. He says: Have they seen Me? They say: No. He says: How would it be if they saw Me? The angels say: If they saw You they would be more intense in glorifying, sanctifying and extolling. Then they say: And they ask You for Paradise. He says: Have they seen it? They say: No. He says: How would it be if they saw it? The angels say: If they saw it they would be more intense in seeking it", and he mentioned the hadith.[11]

And it is known that the love of one who has tasted the suitable thing and has no patience without it is stronger than the love of one who has not tasted it, whose soul is weaned from it; and the affection between spouses and the love after intercourse is greater than what was before it. 125

And the natural cause is that the appetite of the heart is mingled with the pleasure of the eye, so when the eye sees, the heart desires; and when

11 Al-Bukhari (6408) and Muslim (2689), from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah.

body touches body, the appetite of the heart, the pleasure of the eye and the pleasure of touch are joined; so when he leaves this state, his soul's striving toward it is more intense and his yearning for it greater ... And for this the pain and regret are doubled for one who saw his beloved or was in contact with him, and then was prevented from him, so his pain and regret are doubled in proportion to the doubling of the pleasure of one who returns to it; and this is stronger on the side of the woman, for when she has tasted the sweetness of the man[12] - above all the first sweetness - she can hardly be patient without him afterward. 126

And al-Tabarani said in his *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* (The Middle Lexicon): ... Ibn Abbas - رضي الله عنهما -: that a man said: O Messenger of Allah! We have an orphan girl whom two men have asked in marriage: one well-off and one poor. She loves the poor one, and we love the well-off one. He said: "Nothing like marriage has been seen for two who love one another."[13] 131

12 An allusion to the hadith «حتى تذوقي عسيلته ويذوق عسيلتك» (al-Bukhari, 5260, and Muslim, 1433, from Aishah).

13 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* (3177); also Ibn Majah (1847). Graded sahih by al-Albani in *al-Silsilah al-Sahihah* (624).

◆ *Whether union spoils love* ◆

A group held that intercourse spoils passionate love and nullifies it or weakens it, and they argued by several points: 134

Among them: that intercourse is the goal that is sought through passionate love. So as long as the passionate lover is still seeking, his passionate love stands firm; but when he reaches the goal, he has fulfilled his need, the heat of his seeking has cooled, and the fire of his passionate love has gone out.

They said: This is the case of everyone who seeks something once he obtains it, like the thirsty man when he has drunk his fill, and the hungry man when he has eaten his fill; there is no meaning to seeking after success.

Among them: that the cause of passionate love is thought, and the stronger the thought, the greater the passionate love; and after attainment, thought does not remain. 135

Among them: that before success it is forbidden, and the soul is passionately fond of loving what it is denied, as he said:

وزادني كلفا في الحب أن منعت ◆ أحب شيء إلى الإنسان ما منعا

My fervour in love grew, since she was barred;
the dearest thing to man is what is debarred.
And it increased my fervour in love that she was denied
the dearest thing to a man is what is denied

They said: In the ignorant Jahiliyyah, in their disbelief, they neither hoped for reward nor feared punishment, and yet they kept passionate love free from intercourse.

These people said: True love requires reverence for the beloved, honouring him, and shame before him; so he does not let himself cast off the cloak of shame before his beloved, nor cast it off from him, for in that is the utmost humiliation and subjugation of him ... And some of them claimed that it used to be stipulated between the beloved and the lover that he would have of her upper half down to her navel ... while the lower half was forbidden to him. 138

This was part of the religion of the Jahiliyyah, and the Sharia nullified it and made both halves belong to the husband. The poets, all of them, see

no harm in conversing with and looking at women who are not related to one, which is contrary to the Sharia and to reason, for in it is exposing the natural inclination to that to which it is naturally disposed to incline, and the natural inclination steals and prevails, and how many a man has been tried by this in his religion and his worldly life. 139

And Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm held that passionate love for a woman not related to one is permissible without suspicion, and he erred in that with an evident error, for the means to passionate love is greater than the means to the gaze; and if the Sharia has forbidden the gaze because of the corruptions it leads to, as its explanation will come - if Allah تعالى wills - how can it be permissible for a man to engage in passionate love for one who is not lawful for him?! 140

The point is that this group held that intercourse spoils passionate love, so they were jealous for it against what spoils it, even though they did not leave it as a matter of religion.

The decisive word between the two parties is that unlawful intercourse spoils love, and the love between them must end in enmity, mutual hatred and loathing, as is seen with the eye. Every love for other than Allah ends in loathing and hatred; how then when it is joined by one of the greatest of the major sins? And this is an enmity before the greater enmity of which Allah تعالى said: ﴿ٱلْأَخِلَّآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍۭ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ "Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous" [al-Zukhruf 43:67]. And we will mention, if Allah تعالى wills, in the promised chapter, the one who gained his beloved and left off fulfilling his need from him out of desire for the survival of his love and fear that it would turn to loathing and hatred; for that is more fitting for him. 142

As for lawful intercourse, it increases love when it meets the lover's desire, for when he tastes its pleasure and flavour, it brings about in him another desire that was not present before the tasting; and for this reason two who are newly wed can hardly bear to be apart from one another. This holds so long as nothing befalls the love that spoils it and causes it to be shifted to someone other than the beloved.

As for what the others argued, the answer to it is: that the fire of appetite and desire is not extinguished entirely, but the appetite of that moment

slackens, then its like returns, and only this appears when one of them is absent from his beloved; otherwise, so long as he is in sight of him and able to reach him whenever he wishes, the soul is stilled by that and is at rest with it. This is the state of everyone who has before him what he needs of food, drink and clothing and is able to have it: his soul is at rest with him; but when it is cut off from him, his seeking of it grows intense and his soul strains towards it. Moreover, whoever loves a thing, when he is excessive in taking his beloved, his soul recoils from it, and perhaps his love turns to aversion.

◆ *What calls love forth in the lover* ◆

What calls forth love from the beloved is his beauty, whether outward or inward or both; so when he is beautiful in form, beautiful in character, disposition and qualities, what calls forth love from him is stronger. What calls forth love from the lover is four things: 143

The first: looking, either with the eye, or with the heart when he is described to him; for many a person loves another and is annihilated in love for him, though he never saw him, but he was described to him.

For this reason the Prophet ﷺ forbade a woman to describe a woman to her husband, so that it is as though he were looking at her. And the hadith is in the *Sahih*.[14]

The second: finding beautiful; for if his looking does not give rise to finding beautiful, love does not occur. The third: thinking about what is seen, and the soul's speaking of it; for if he is occupied from it by something else that matters more to him than it, his love does not cling to his heart, though he does not lack passing thoughts and stirrings. For this it was said: Passionate love is the movement of an empty heart. And when this looking, finding beautiful and thinking meet an empty heart, it takes hold of it, as was said: 144

أتاني هواها قبل أن أعرف الهوى ◆ فصادف قلبا خاليا فتمكنا

Her passion came before I knew of passion's ways;
it met an empty heart, and there it stays.

Her passion came to me before I knew passion ◆ and it met an empty heart, and took hold

If it is said: Does it depend on hope of reaching the beloved or not? It is said: People in this are of several kinds:

Among them is one who loves absolute beauty, so his heart is attached to it wherever his riding-camels set out and wherever his tents are pitched, and his passionate love does not depend on hope. And among them is one who loves bounded beauty, whether or not his soul hopes for union with it.

And among them is one who loves only one whose union his soul hopes for; if he despairs of it, his love does not cling to his heart. 145

14 Al-Bukhari (5240, 5241), from the hadith of Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud.

The three kinds occur among people. When looking, finding beautiful, thinking and hope are all found, his turmoil (البلابل) is stirred, he gives his beloved the places where he can be killed, his malady becomes firmly rooted, and its remedy is beyond the physicians.

تالله ما أسر الهوى من عاشق ◆ إلا وعز على النفوس فكاكه

By Allah, passion has taken no lover in its chain,
but his release was hard for souls to gain.

By Allah, passion has not taken captive a passionate lover
but his release was hard for souls

And since looking is the beginning of passionate love, it is fitting for one who is free not to expose himself to lasting captivity by means of his eye.

Glossary

hadith: a report of the words or deeds of the Prophet ﷺ.

Jahiliyyah: the age of ignorance before Islam.

matruk: "abandoned", a narrator whose reports are not accepted.

Musnad: the hadith collection of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Sahih: the authentic hadith collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

sahih, **hasan**: grades of hadith, "authentic" and "good".

Sharia: the revealed law of Islam.

Shaykh: teacher; "our Shaykh" is the author's teacher Ibn Taymiyyah.



This booklet is a selection, in Ibn al-Qayyim's own words, from the complete English translation of *Rawdat al-Muhibbin wa-Nuzhat al-Mushtaqin*. Omissions within a passage are shown by "…". The small numbers after the paragraphs give the page of the complete translation, where the full text, its sources and its notes may be found.

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