SELECTIONS FROM RAWDAT AL-MUHIBBIN · 3

Lowering the Gaze

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

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah
d. 751 AH

IBN JĀZĪ · FUSTAT SERIES

Lowering the Gaze

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

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah
d. 751 AH

IBN JĀZĪ · FUSTAT SERIES

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, the lawful and the unlawful in it, and the love of Allah.

This booklet draws on four of its chapters: Chapter Six, "On the Rulings of Looking, Its Ill Consequence, and What It Brings Upon the One Who Looks"; Chapter Seven, "On Mentioning a Debate between the Heart and the Eye, the Reproach of Each for the Other, and the Judgment between Them"; Chapter Eight, "On Mentioning the Doubtful Arguments by Which Those Argued Who Permitted Looking at One with Whom Enjoyment Is Not Lawful, and Permitted Passionate Love for Such a One"; and Chapter Nine, "On the Answer to What This Group Argued, and What Is for Them and What Is against Them in This Argument".

The reader will find the verses and hadith on lowering the gaze, the ruling on the first and the second glance, ten benefits of lowering the gaze, a debate in which the heart and the eye each blame the other, and then the arguments of those who permitted looking, each followed by the author's answer.

The text is Ibn al-Qayyim's own, abridged by selection. Cuts are shown by "...". The full translation gives the complete text.

◆ *The command to lower the gaze* ◆

Allah تعالى said: ﴿قُل لِّلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ يَغُضُّواْ مِنۡ أَبۡصَٰرِهِمۡ وَيَحۡفَظُواْ فُرُوجَهُمۡ ذَٰلِكَ أَزۡكَىٰ لَهُمۡ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرُۢ بِمَا يَصۡنَعُونَ وَقُل لِّلۡمُؤۡمِنَٰتِ يَغۡضُضۡنَ مِنۡ أَبۡصَٰرِهِنَّ وَيَحۡفَظۡنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ﴾ "Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allāh is [fully] Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts" [al-Nur 24:30–31] ... the verse. Since lowering the gaze is the root of guarding the private part, He began by mentioning it; and since its prohibition is the prohibition of means, so that it is permitted for a preponderant benefit and forbidden when corruption is feared from it and no benefit outweighing that corruption opposes it, He سبحانه did not command lowering it absolutely, but commanded reducing some of it. As for guarding the private part, it is obligatory in every case, not permitted except by its right, and so the command to guard it is general. 146

Allah سبحانه made the eye the mirror of the heart, so when the servant lowers his gaze, the heart lowers its appetite and its desire, and when he lets his gaze run free, the heart lets its appetite run free.

And in the *Sahih*: that al-Fadl ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما was riding behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the Day of Sacrifice from Muzdalifah to Mina, and some women travelling in howdahs passed by running, and al-Fadl began to look at them, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned his head to the other side. This was prevention and rebuke by deed. Had looking been permitted, he would have approved him in it.[1]

And in the *Sahih*, from him ﷺ, that he said: "Allah عز وجل has decreed for the son of Adam his share of fornication, which he will inevitably reach. The eye fornicates, and its fornication is looking; the tongue fornicates, and its fornication is speech; the foot fornicates, and its fornication is the step; the hand fornicates, and its fornication is the grasp; the heart desires and wishes, and the private part confirms that or denies it."[2] He began with the fornication of the eye because it is the root of the fornication of the hand, the foot, the heart and the private part; and by the

1 Muslim (1218), from the long hadith of Jabir on the Hajj of the Prophet ﷺ.

2 Al-Bukhari (6243) and Muslim (2657), from Abu Hurayrah.

fornication of the tongue, which is speech, he drew attention to the fornication of the mouth, which is kissing; and he made the private part the one that confirms that if it realises the act, or denies it if it does not realise it. 147

This hadith is among the clearest of things that the eye disobeys by looking, and that this is its fornication; so in it is a refutation of whoever permitted looking absolutely.

And it is established from him ﷺ that he said: "O Ali, do not follow a glance with a glance, for the first is for you, and the second is not for you."[3]

3 Abu Dawud (2149) and al-Tirmidhi (2777), from Buraydah; called a *hasan* hadith by the Arabic editor.

◆ *Is a second look a cure?* ◆

And a question arose: What do the masters, the scholars, say about a man who looked at a woman once, and love for her clung to his heart, and the matter became severe for him, and his soul said to him: All of this is from the first look; if you were to look at her again you would see her to be less than what is in your soul, and so you would forget her. Is it permissible for him to deliberately look a second time for this purpose?

The answer was: Praise be to Allah, this is not permissible, for ten reasons: 148

The first: that Allah سبحانه commanded lowering the gaze, and did not place the healing of the heart in what He has forbidden to the servant.

The second: that the Prophet ﷺ was asked about the sudden glance, and he knew that it affects the heart, so he commanded that it be treated by turning the gaze away, not by repeating the look.[4]

The third: that he stated clearly that the first is for him and the second is not for him; and it is impossible that his disease be from what is for him, and his remedy from what is not for him.

The fourth: that the apparent likelihood is that the force of the matter grows with the second glance, not lessens, and experience bears witness to it; and the apparent likelihood is that the matter is as he saw it the first time, so it is not good to take the risk of repeating.

The fifth: that he may see what is above what is in his soul, and so his torment grows. The sixth: that Iblis, when he sets out on the second glance, stands up in his stirrups and makes beautiful to him what is not beautiful, so that the affliction may be complete.

The seventh: that he is not helped against his affliction if he turns away from complying with the commands of the Sharia and treats himself with what He has forbidden him; rather he deserves that help be withheld from him.

The eighth: that the first glance is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Iblis, and it is known that the second is more poisonous in its venom; so how can one treat poison with poison?

The ninth: that the one in this station is in the station of dealing with

4 Muslim (2159), from Jarir ibn Abd Allah al-Bajali: "I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the sudden glance, and he commanded me to turn my sight away."

the Real - عز وجل - by leaving a beloved, as he claims, and by the second glance he wants to make clear the state of the one looked at; so if he is not pleasing, he leaves him. Then his leaving is because he does not suit his aim, not for Allah تعالى; so where is dealing with Allah - سبحانه - by leaving the beloved for His sake? 149

The tenth: it becomes clear by giving an example that fits the case. It is that when you ride a spirited horse, and it turns with you towards a narrow lane with no way through, in which it cannot turn round to get out, then when it intends to enter it, rein it in so that it does not enter; and if it has entered a step or two, shout at it and turn it back quickly before its entry is established. If you turn it back, the matter is easy; but if you delay until it has gone in, and you drive it inside, and then stand pulling it by its tail, it is difficult for you, or its getting out becomes impossible. Would any man of sense say that the way to free it is to drive it further inside? So it is with the glance when it has had an effect on the heart: if the resolute man hastens and cuts off the source from the start, its treatment is easy; but if he repeats the look and searches out the beauties of the form, and carries them to an empty heart and engraves them in it, love is established; and every time the glances follow one another, they are like water that waters a tree, which keeps growing until the heart is corrupted and turns away from thinking on what it was commanded, and it brings its owner out into trials, makes him commit what is forbidden, and casts the heart into ruin.

The reason for this is that the eye of the one who looks took pleasure in the first look, so it sought to return, like eating delicious food once one has taken a morsel of it; had he lowered his gaze at first, his heart would have rested and been safe. 150

And consider the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "The glance is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Iblis"[5]; for it is the nature of an arrow to run into the heart and do in it the work of the poison that the poisoned man is given to drink; if he hastens and expels it, well, and if not, it kills him without fail.

Al-Marwadhi said: I said to Ahmad

5 Al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak* (4/314), from Hudhayfah. Al-Hakim called it sahih, and al-Dhahabi disagreed: a narrator in its chain is very weak, and another was graded weak.

[6]: What of a man who looks at a slave woman? He said: I fear temptation for him; how many a glance has cast turmoil into the heart of its owner!

6 Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Marwadhi (d. 275 AH), the closest student of Imam Ahmad.

◆ *A means to the forbidden, and the pain of regret* ◆

Since looking is among the nearest of means to the forbidden, the Sharia required that it be forbidden, and it permitted it in a place of need. 151

This is the case with everything that is forbidden as a prohibition of means: it is permitted for a preponderant benefit. For example, prayer was forbidden at the times of prohibition, lest it be a means to resembling the disbelievers in their prostration to the sun, and it was permitted for a preponderant benefit, such as making up missed prayers, the funeral prayer, and performing prayers that have a cause, according to the sound view.

The sudden glance is the first glance, which occurs without intention on the part of the one who looks; so long as the heart does not aim at it, he is not punished for it, but if he looks a second time deliberately, he is sinful. So the Prophet ﷺ commanded him at the sudden glance to turn his sight away and not to prolong the look, for prolonging it is like repeating it. And he guided the one who is afflicted with the sudden glance to treat it by going to his wife, and he said: "For she has with her the like of what the other has,"[7] for in that is consolation for what is sought by its like. 152

So the temptation of looking is the root of every temptation, as is established in the *Sahih*, from the hadith of Usamah ibn Zayd رضي الله عنهما: that the Prophet ﷺ said: "I have left behind me no temptation more harmful to men than women."[8]

In lowering the gaze are several benefits: 153

The first: freeing the heart from the pain of regret; for whoever lets his gaze loose, his regret lasts. The most harmful thing for the heart is sending the sight out, for it shows him what he intensely seeks, with no patience for it, and no reaching it, and that is the utmost of his pain and torment.

The glance does to the heart what the arrow does to the target; if it does not kill it, it wounds it. It is like a spark of fire thrown into dry grass; if it does not burn all of it, it burns part of it, as was said: 154

7 Muslim (1403), from Jabir ibn Abd Allah.

8 Al-Bukhari (5096) and Muslim (2740).

كل الحوادث مبداها من النظر ◆ ومعظم النار من مستصغر الشرر

All misfortunes begin in the sight,
and most of the fire in a spark, small and slight.

All misfortunes begin with the glance ◆ and most of the fire is from the smallest spark

كم نظرة فتكت في قلب صاحبها ◆ فتك السهام بلا قوس ولا وتر

How many a glance has struck its owner's heart; its blow
is that of arrows, with no string and with no bow.

How many a glance has struck down the heart of its owner
with the striking of arrows, with no bow and no string

The one who looks shoots from his look arrows whose target is his own heart, and he does not feel it; so he only shoots his own heart.

◆ *Light, insight and knowledge* ◆

The second benefit: that it bequeaths to the heart light and radiance that shows in the eye, in the face and in the limbs, just as letting the gaze run free bequeaths it darkness that shows in his face and his limbs. For this - and Allah knows best - Allah سبحانه mentioned that He is the Light in His saying تعالى: ﴿ٱللَّهُ نُورُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ﴾ "Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth" [al-Nur 24:35] immediately after His saying: ﴿قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا۟ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِمْ﴾ "Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision" [al-Nur 24:30]. And the hadith came in agreement with this, so that it is as though it were derived from it, namely his saying: "The glance is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Iblis; whoever lowers his gaze from the beauties of a woman, Allah will bequeath to his heart light"[9] - the hadith. 160

The third benefit: that it bequeaths soundness of discernment, for it is of the light and its fruits, and when the heart is lit, discernment is sound, because it becomes like a mirror in which things known appear as they are, and looking is like breathing upon it; so when the servant lets a glance loose, his soul breathes a sigh upon the mirror of his heart, and blots out its light ...

Shuja al-Kirmani said:[10] Whoever builds up his outward by following the Sunnah, and his inward by constant watchfulness, lowers his gaze from the forbidden things, restrains himself from appetites, and eats of the lawful, his discernment does not err. And Shuja's discernment never erred. And Allah سبحانه repays the servant for his deed with what is of its kind: whoever lowers his gaze from the forbidden things, Allah سبحانه gives him in exchange the release of the light of his insight; since he restrained his sight for Allah, Allah released his insight for him; and whoever lets his gaze loose on the forbidden things, Allah withholds his insight from him. 161

The fourth benefit: that the paths of knowledge and its doors are opened for him, and its means are made easy for him, and that is by reason of the light of the heart; for when it is lit, the realities of things known

9 The same weak hadith as in note 5.

10 The Arabic editor corrects the name: the saying is by Shah ibn Shuja' al-Kirmani, a Sufi of the third century AH. It is in Ibn Taymiyyah's *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (21/257).

appear in it and are unveiled to him quickly, and he passes through from some of them to others. But whoever sends out his sight, his heart is clouded for him and grows dark, and the door of knowledge and its paths are closed to him.

◆ *Strength, joy and freedom* ◆

The fifth benefit: that it bequeaths strength of heart, steadfastness and courage, for Allah سبحانه gives him the authority of insight together with the authority of proof. And in the report: Whoever opposes his desire, Satan fears his shadow; and for this there is found in the one who follows his desire the abasement of heart and weakness, the lowness and contemptibility of soul, that Allah has made for the one who prefers his desire to His pleasure. Al-Hasan said: Even if the mules amble with them and the pack-horses clatter beneath them, the abasement of disobedience is in their hearts; Allah insists on abasing whoever disobeys Him. And one of the shaykhs said: People seek honour at the doors of kings, and they find it only in obedience to Allah; whoever obeys Allah has taken Him as a friend in that in which he obeys Him, and whoever disobeys Him has made Him an enemy in that in which he disobeys Him; and in it is a share and portion of the deed of whoever makes himself His enemy by his acts of disobedience. And in the supplication of qunut: "He is not abased whom You take as friend, and he is not honoured whom You take as enemy."[11]

The sixth benefit: that it bequeaths to the heart joy, gladness and expansion greater than the pleasure and joy produced by looking, and that is by reason of his overpowering his enemy by opposing him, and opposing his own soul and desire; and also because, since he restrained his pleasure and held back his appetite for Allah, and in it is the delight of his soul that commands to evil, Allah سبحانه gave him in exchange a delight and pleasure more complete than it, as one of them said: By Allah, the pleasure of chastity is greater than the pleasure of sin! And there is no doubt that when the soul opposes its desire, that is followed by a joy, a gladness and a pleasure more complete than the pleasure of following desire, with no comparison between them. And here reason is distinguished from desire. 162

The seventh benefit: that it frees the heart from the captivity of appetite, for the captive is the captive of his appetite and desire ... 163

And whenever appetite and desire take the heart captive, its enemy

11 Abu Dawud (1425), al-Tirmidhi (464), al-Nasa'i (1745) and Ibn Majah (1178), from al-Hasan ibn Ali; called a sahih hadith by the Arabic editor.

gains power over it and makes it taste evil torment, and it becomes:

كعصفورة في كف طفل يسومها ◆ حياض الردى والطفل يلهو ويلعب

Like a sparrow in a child's hand, which he sends on its way
to the pools of destruction, while the child would sport and play.

Like a sparrow in a child's hand, who drives it
to the pools of destruction, while the child plays and sports

The eighth benefit: that it shuts for him a door among the doors of Jahannam; for looking is the door of the appetite that moves one to commit the act, and the prohibition of the Lord تعالى and His law is a veil that prevents reaching; so whenever the veil is torn, he becomes addicted to the forbidden and his soul stops at no limit in it, for the soul in this matter is not content with a limit at which to stop, since its pleasure is in the new thing; the owner of the newly gained is not satisfied with the long possessed, even if it is better than it in appearance and sweeter in reality. So lowering the gaze shuts this door against him, the door in which kings have been unable to complete their aims.

◆ *Reason and sobriety* ◆

The ninth benefit: that it strengthens his reason, increases it and makes it firm, for letting the gaze loose and sending it out arises only from lightness of reason, its giddiness, and the lack of attention to consequences, for it is the characteristic of reason to attend to consequences. And the one who sends out his look, if he knew what the consequences of his look bring upon him, would not let his sight loose. 164

The tenth benefit: that it frees the heart from the intoxication of appetite and the slumber of heedlessness, for letting the gaze loose brings firm heedlessness of Allah and the Hereafter, and throws one into the intoxication of passionate love, as Allah تعالى said of the passionate lovers of forms: ﴿لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ﴾ "By your life, [O Muḥammad], indeed they were, in their intoxication, wandering blindly." [al-Hijr 15:72] So the glance is a cup of wine, and passionate love is the intoxication of that drink.

And the intoxication of passionate love is greater than the intoxication of wine, for the drunkard of wine recovers, and the drunkard of passionate love seldom recovers except when he is in the host of the dead ...

The benefits of lowering the gaze and the afflictions of sending it out are many times what we have mentioned, and we have only drawn attention to them, especially looking at one to whom Allah has made no way, by the Sharia, to fulfil one's need, such as handsome beardless youths; for letting the gaze loose on them is a deadly poison and an incurable disease. 165

And Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib said:[12] If you see a man fixing his gaze on a beardless boy, suspect him.

Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, Sufyan al-Thawri and others of the Salaf used to forbid sitting with beardless youths.[13] 166

Al-Nakha'i said: Sitting with them is a temptation, and they are only in the position of women.

12 Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94 AH), the Madinan Successor and jurist.

13 Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 96 AH), a Kufan jurist of the Successors; Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH), the Kufan imam and hadith scholar.

◆ *The heart blames the eye* ◆

Since the eye is the scout,[14] and the heart the one who desires and seeks, and this one has the pleasure of seeing and that one the pleasure of gaining, they were partners in passion, sharing the rein. And when they fell into hardship and shared in the affliction, each turned to blame his companion and reproach him. 167

The heart said to the eye: It is you who drove me to the watering-places of ruin, and cast me into regrets by your following of glances; you let your sight stroll in those gardens, and sought healing from sick pupils, and opposed the saying of the wisest of judges:

﴿قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ "Tell the believing men" [al-Nur 24:30] and the saying of His Messenger ﷺ: "Looking at a woman is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Iblis; whoever leaves it for fear of Allah عز وجل, Allah rewards him with faith whose sweetness he finds in his heart."[15]

So who is to be blamed but the one who shot his companion with the poisoned arrow? 168

Or did you not know that nothing is more harmful to man than the eye and the tongue? Most who were ruined were ruined only through them, and most who perished perished only because of them. How many a watering-place of destruction have they brought him to, and how many a source of ruin have they sent him away from! Whoever wishes to live happy and live praised, let him lower the reins of his eye and his tongue, that he may be safe from harm, for it lies hidden in excess of speech and excess of looking.

And the truthful one, the one believed, has stated clearly that the two eyes fornicate, and they are the root of the fornication of the private part, for they are its two scouts and its two callers.

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about the sudden glance, and he commanded the questioner to turn his sight away, guiding him to what benefits him and keeps harm from him, and he said to his cousin Ali رضي الله عنه, warning him of what brings about temptation and bequeaths regret: "Do not follow a glance with a glance."

---

14 The *ra'id* is the scout sent ahead to find pasture and water for his people. The eye goes out first and the heart follows.

15 The weak hadith of note 5; it was not found in Ahmad's *Musnad*.

Or have you not heard the saying of the people of reason: Whoever lets his gaze roam wearies his mind, and whoever's glances are many, his regrets last and his time is lost to him. 169

◆ *The eye answers the heart* ◆

The eye said: You wronged me first and last, and you bear my sin, inwardly and outwardly, and I am only your messenger who calls to you, and your scout who points to you:

وإذا بعثت برائد نحو الذي ◆ تهوى وتعتبه ظلمت الرائدا

When you send a scout to the one for whom you long
and then blame him, you do the scout a wrong.

When you send a scout towards the one
you desire and then blame him {the scout}, you wrong the scout

You are the king who is obeyed, and we are the soldiers and followers. You mounted me, for your need, on the horses of the post,[16] then turned upon me with threats and menace. Had you commanded me to shut my door upon myself and let down my veil, I would have heard and obeyed, and I would not have grazed in the preserve and pastured.[17] You sent me out after game for which snares had been set for you, its nooses and traps, and its nets and meshes circled around you, so you became a captive after being a prince, and you became owned after being a king. 170

And this, though the master of mankind and the most just of judges - عليه الصلاة والسلام - has judged for me against you, where he says: "In the body there is a morsel of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound through it, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt through it. Truly, it is the heart."[18] And Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said: The heart is a king and the limbs are its soldiers; if the king is good, his soldiers are good, and if the king is foul, his soldiers are foul.

Had you looked closely, you would have known that the corruption of your subjects is through your corruption, and their survival, soundness and right guidance are through your right guidance; but you perished and caused your subjects to perish, and laid your sin upon the weak eye; and the root of your affliction is that there has gone from you the love of Allah, and the love of His remembrance, His speech, His names and His

16 The *barid* was the relay-post of the caliphate: mounts kept at stations along the roads to carry urgent messages quickly.

17 A *hima* is a pasture closed to common use. To graze in it is to enter what is forbidden.

18 Al-Bukhari (52, 2051) and Muslim (1599), from al-Nu'man ibn Bashir.

attributes, and you turned to other than Him, and turned away from Him, and took in exchange love of others and desire for them from Him.

And you have heard what has been related to you of His سبحانه rebuke of the Children of Israel for their exchanging one food for a lesser food; He censured them for that and reproached them with it, and said: ﴿أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِٱلَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ﴾ "Would you exchange what is better for what is less?" [al-Baqarah 2:61] So how is it with one who exchanged the love of his Creator, his Originator, his Guardian and the Master of his affair - he who has no soundness, no success, no bliss, no joy, no gladness and no deliverance except by singling Him out in love, and that He be dearer to him than all else - so look, by Allah, for whom you exchanged, and love of whom you took in exchange! You were content for yourself with confinement in the privy,[19] while the hearts of those who love Him circle around the Throne. Had you turned to Him and turned away from all else, you would have seen wonders, and been safe from ruin and perils. Or did you not know that He singled out for triumph and bliss the one who comes to Him with a sound heart, that is, sound from all besides Him, with nothing in it but love of Him and following His pleasure? She said: And between my sin and your sin in the sight of people is as between my blindness and your blindness in analogy. And He in whose hand are the reins of affairs has said: ﴿فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى ٱلْأَبْصَـٰرُ وَلَـٰكِن تَعْمَى ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلَّتِى فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ﴾ "For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." [al-Hajj 22:46] 171

19 The *hashsh* is a garden of palms, and so the lavatory that used to be built in such gardens. The image is of a heart shut up in a foul place.

◆ *The judgment between them* ◆

When the liver heard their exchange of words and their taking up of the dispute, it said: You two have helped one another to my ruin, and cooperated in my killing. ... Then she said: I will take the judgment between you. You are, in the affliction, partners sharing the rein, just as in pleasure and joy you are two horses in a wager. The eye takes pleasure, and the heart wishes and desires ...

And unless the care of the Turner of hearts and eyes reaches you both, then you have no comfort and the heart no rest. 174

She said: When you gave the heart the water of love to drink from your cups, you kindled upon it the fire of yearning, and vapour rose from it to you and dripped from you, so you choked on drinking it first and choked on being deprived of it second.

She said: The judge between you is the One who judges between the soul and the body when they dispute before Him, for in the well-known report:[20] "The dispute among creatures will not cease on the Day of Resurrection until the soul and the body dispute, and the body says to the soul: You are the one who moved me, commanded me and directed me; otherwise I would not have moved, and I do not act without you. The soul says to it: And you are the one who ate, drank, touched and enjoyed ease, so you are the one who deserves the punishment. So Allah سبحانه sends to them an angel who judges between them, and he says: Your likeness is that of a sighted cripple and a blind man walking, who entered a garden. The cripple said to the blind man: I see the fruits in it, but I cannot stand. And the blind man said: I can stand, but I see nothing. The cripple said to him: Come and carry me, you will walk and I will pick. So on whom is the punishment? He says: On both. He said: So it is with you two." And with Allah is success. 175

20 Ibn Mandah narrates it from Ibn Abbas as his own saying (*mawquf*), as quoted in al-Suyuti's *Sharh al-Sudur* (p. 327).

◆ *The arguments of those who permitted looking* ◆

This group said: Between us and you are the Book, the Sunnah, the sayings of the Imams of Islam, and sound reason. 176

As for the Book, it is His saying تعالى: ﴿أَوَلَمْ يَنظُرُواْ فِي مَلَكُوتِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ﴾ "Do they not look into the realm of the heavens and the earth and everything that Allāh has created" [al-A'raf 7:185]. This includes everything that Allah created, so what has taken the handsome face out of its generality, when it is among the finest of what He created? The place for drawing proof and lesson from it is stronger, and for that reason the Creator سبحانه is glorified at the sight of it ... And the sight of rare beauty makes the tongues of the onlookers speak their saying: Glory be to Allah, Lord of the worlds! And blessed is Allah, the best of creators! And Allah تعالى did not create these beauties in vain, but made them appear so that the one who looks at them may take them as proof of His power and oneness and the wonder of His making, so they should not be left idle of what they were created for.

As for the Sunnah, it is the well-known hadith: "Looking at a handsome face is worship."[21] 177

And in another hadith: "Seek good from the fair of face."[22] In this is guidance to scanning faces and reflecting on them. And a man asked a woman in marriage, and consulted the Prophet ﷺ about marrying her, and he said: "Have you looked at her?" He said: No. He said: "Go and look at her."[23] Had looking been forbidden, he would not have been given leave to look, for he is not safe from temptation.

As for the sayings of the Imams: al-Sam'ani related that a man wrote to al-Shafi'i on a slip of paper: 178

21 Judged false (*batil*) by the Arabic editor. The author answers it in Chapter Nine.

22 Abu Ya'la, *Musnad* (4759), from Aisha; the chain is very weak, and all its routes are weak. Al-Albani judges it fabricated.

23 Muslim (1424), from Abu Hurayrah.

سل المفتي المكي هل في تزاور ◆ ونظرة مشتاق الفؤاد جناح؟

Ask the Meccan mufti: is there any wrong
in visits, and in the glance of one whose heart does long?

Ask the Meccan mufti: Is there in visiting one another
and the glance of one whose heart yearns any sin?

So al-Shafi'i answered him:

معاذ إله العرش أن يذهب التقى ◆ تلاصق أكباد بهن جراح

The Lord of the Throne forbid that piety be undone
by wounded livers pressed together as one.

The God of the Throne forbid that piety be lost
by the pressing together of livers that are wounded

And al-Khatib said in *Tarikh Baghdad* (The History of Baghdad):[24] ... Abu Abd Allah Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Arafah Niftawayh narrated to us, saying: I entered upon Muhammad ibn Dawud al-Isfahani in the illness in which he died, and I said to him: How do you find yourself? He said: The love of the one you know has bequeathed me what you see! I said to him: What prevented you from enjoying him, when you were able to? He said: Enjoyment is of two kinds: one, permitted looking, and the other, forbidden pleasure; as for permitted looking, it bequeathed me what you see. 185

The point is that he did not consider looking at his beloved, nor passionate love for him, to be forbidden. Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm followed this school in his book *Tawq al-Hamamah* (The Ring of the Dove).[25] They said: And we bring you to judgment before one who is counted as thousands upon thousands, namely Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, for he was asked:[26] 186

What do the masters, the jurists رضي الله عنهم, say about a man who is a passionate lover of a form, and she is insisting on abandoning him for a

24 *Tarikh Baghdad* (5/262), in the biography of Muhammad ibn Dawud al-Isfahani (d. 297 AH), the Zahiri jurist, son of Dawud al-Zahiri, and author of *Kitab al-Zahrah*.

25 Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Ahmad Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH), the Andalusian Zahiri scholar; *Tawq al-Hamamah* is a treatise on love and lovers.

26 Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH), the author's teacher. The author later argues that this fatwa cannot be his.

long time, which only increases his distance, and he only increases in love for her; and his passionate love for this form is without wickedness or obscenity, nor is he one who stains his passionate love with fornication; and his state has brought him inevitably to ruin if he remains with his beloved in this state. Is it lawful for one in this state that he be abandoned? And is union obligatory upon the said beloved?

He answered in his own hand with a long answer, saying in the course of it: ... So passionate lovers are divided into two classes: a class who were content with glance after glance, and among them are those who die while so, and his secret does not appear to anyone, until his beloved does not know of it.

And the second class: they permitted the kiss at the time to one who reached a limit at which he fears for himself. They said: Because leaving it may lead to the ruin of the soul, and the kiss is a minor sin while the ruin of a soul is a major one. ... End of quote of what we mentioned of his answer. 187

And there is no doubt that the Sharia came with the obligation to enter into the lesser of two corruptions to ward off the greater, and to forgo the lesser of two benefits to obtain the greater; so where is the corruption of looking, kissing and embracing compared with the corruption of sickness, madness or utter ruin?! This is what this group argued, and we will mention what is for them and what is against them in that, by the power and strength of Allah. 189

◆ *Three kinds of argument, and the answer on the verse* ◆

Their doubtful arguments that they mentioned revolve among three kinds: 190

The first: sound reports in which they have no proof.

The second: false reports from those to whom they are attributed, forged by the wicked and the dissolute, as we will make clear.

The third: general reports, bearing a meaning other than what they held.

As for their arguing by the saying of Allah تعالى: ﴿أَوَلَمْ يَنظُرُواْ فِي مَلَكُوتِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ﴾ "Do they not look into the realm of the heavens and the earth and everything that Allāh has created" [al-A'raf 7:185], it is like their arguing, by the very same method, for the permissibility of satanic, wicked listening to music by His saying تعالى: ﴿فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ ٱلْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُۥ﴾ "So give good tidings to My servants Who listen to speech and follow the best of it." [al-Zumar 39:17–18] They said: The word is general, and so they loaded its wording and its meaning with what it is innocent of.

And the looking that He سبحانه commanded us to do is the looking that leads to knowing Him, believing in Him, loving Him, and drawing proof for the truthfulness of His messengers in what they reported from Him of His names, His attributes, His acts, His reward and His punishment, not the looking that makes the one who looks cling to a form with which enjoyment, by looking and by touching, is forbidden to him. This is the looking for which Allah سبحانه commanded its owner to lower his gaze. And that is although those people were not afflicted with beardless youths, and they were nobler in soul and purer in heart than that; so if He commanded them to lower their gaze from the form that is permitted to them in some states, for fear of being tempted, how is it with looking at a form that is not permitted in any state? Then it is said to this group: The looking to which Allah called is a looking for which the one who looks is rewarded, a looking that accords with His command, by which he intends knowledge of his Lord and love of Him, not the satanic looking. 191

This group only screened themselves for their desire and appetites, and gave the impression that they were looking for lesson and proof, until the matter led some of them to think that their looking is worship, because

they look at the manifestations of divine beauty, and claim that Allah - سبحانه وتعالى above the saying of the brothers of the Christians - appears in that beautiful form, and they make this a path to Allah, as many groups of those who claim knowledge and the wayfaring have fallen into it.

Our Shaykh رحمه الله تعالى said: The disbelief of these is worse than the disbelief of the people of Lut, and worse than the disbelief of the worshippers of idols, for those did not say that Allah سبحانه manifests Himself in those forms, and the utmost that the idol-worshippers said was: ﴿مَا نَعۡبُدُهُمۡ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلۡفَىٰٓ﴾ "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position." [al-Zumar 39:3] while these said: We worship them because Allah has appeared in their forms. 192

◆ *The answer on the hadiths* ◆

And among these heretics are those who restrict that to certain forms. These are of the kind of the Christians, indeed they are their brothers; for looking at forbidden forms is, with these, worship. It may be that this hadith is of the forging of some of these heretics, or of the dissolute libertines; otherwise the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is free of it. [193]

Our Shaykh was asked about one who says: Looking at a beautiful face is worship, and reports that from the Prophet ﷺ; is that sound or not? He answered, saying: This is a false lie, and whoever reports that from the Prophet ﷺ, or the like of it, has lied against him ﷺ; for none of the people of hadith reported this, neither with a sound chain nor a weak one; rather it is of the fabricated reports, and it is contrary to the consensus of the Muslims, for no one has said that looking at a woman not related to one and at a beardless boy is worship.

And whoever claims that is asked to repent; if he repents, well, and if not, he is killed; for looking is of what is forbidden, of what is disliked, and of what is permitted. And Allah knows best.

As for the other hadith, which is: "Seek good from the fair of face," although it has been reported with a chain, it is false; it is not authentic from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

And had it been authentic, there would be no proof in it for this group, for he only commanded seeking good from them, not seeking union with them and getting what is forbidden from them; for a beautiful face is a likely sign of a beautiful deed, since characters are for the most part in keeping with the created form, with a close kinship between them. [194]

As for the command of the Prophet ﷺ to the one who proposes that he look at the woman he proposes to, that is looking out of need, and it is commanded as a recommended command according to the majority, and as an obligatory command according to some of the Zahiris; and it is among the looking permitted for a preponderant benefit, which is that the husband enters upon knowledge, and is further from regret and aversion towards the woman. Permitted looking is of kinds, and this is one of them, unlike looking at a forbidden form.

◆ *The answer on the reports from the Imams* ◆

As for what al-Sam'ani mentioned from al-Shafi'i رحمه الله تعالى, it is a distortion by the transmitter, and the questioner did not mention al-Shafi'i's wording ... So this questioner is the one who mentioned the question and the answer, and he is unknown, not recognised; is he trustworthy or not? Then the answer does not indicate the aim of this party in any way; rather it is a proof against it, for he forbade that piety be lost through the pressing together of these livers, as though he said: Do not let these livers press together, lest their pressing together make piety go; so the pressing together mentioned is the agent, and piety the object, as though he said: Do not do it, lest the pressing together make piety go. And another answer: that this pressing together only fails to take piety away if it is in a permitted passionate love, indeed it is recommended, like the passionate love for a wife and a slave woman.

As for the story of Muhammad ibn Dawud al-Isfahani, the most it can be is of his striving that is forgiven, not of his work that is thanked, and people were given power over his honour by it; and Allah forgives us and him; for he exposed himself to looking, to the sickness by which he became bedridden, and this, had it been of one for whom it is permitted, would have been a deficiency and a fault; so how with a boy not related to him? And Satan satisfied him with loving him and looking at him in place of union with him, since he did not hope for that from him, so he got from him what he knew his plot would not go beyond, and made him a model for whoever would follow him after him, such as Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm al-Zahiri and others; and the plot of Satan is subtler than this. [202]

As for the one to whom they brought us for judgment, namely Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, we are content with his judgment; so where did he permit you forbidden looking, and passionate love for beardless youths and women not related to one? Is this anything but an evident lie against him? These are his works and his fatwas, all of them speaking against what you related from him. As for the fatwa you related, it is a lie against him, not in keeping with his words in any way, and were it not for the length, we would have mentioned all of it, so that whoever stands on it would know that it does not come from anyone lesser than he, let alone from

him; and I said to the one who showed it to me: This is a lie against him, it does not resemble his words. One of the amirs had shown it to me long ago, and it is in the handwriting of a man suspected of lying, and he said to me: I did not think the Shaykh had such tenderness in this marginal note; then I considered it, and it was a lie against him; and were it not for the length, we would have mentioned of his fatwas what makes clear that this is a lie. 203

◆ *The lesser of two harms* ◆

As for what you mentioned of the question of taking on the lesser of two corruptions to ward off the greater, we do not deny this principle; indeed it is among the soundest principles of the Sharia; but the matter is in bringing this case under it, and we bring you to judgment by this very principle. For bearing the corruption of the pain of love, with lowering the gaze and not kissing and embracing the beloved and the like, is less than the corruption of looking and kissing, for this corruption leads to the ruin of the heart and the corruption of religion, and the utmost that can be estimated of the corruption of refraining from that is sickness of the body, or death, in avoiding exposure to the forbidden, so where is one of the two corruptions beside the other? Moreover looking, kissing and embracing do not prevent the sickness and death that arise from love, for passionate love increases by that, and does not go away. 204

If it is said: Allah سبحانه has permitted to the one in dire necessity carrion, blood and the flesh of swine, and partaking of them in this state is obligatory for him. Masruq and Imam Ahmad[27] رحمهما الله تعالى said: Whoever is driven by necessity to eat carrion and does not eat, and dies, enters the Fire. So the utmost that the glance, the kiss and the embrace can be is forbidden; so if the passionate lover is driven by necessity to them, then if they are not obligatory, they are at the least permitted. This is a sound analogy and consideration; and where is the corruption of the passionate lover's death compared with the corruption of embracing and kissing him?

The answer: that this becomes clear by mentioning a principle, and it is: that Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - has not placed in the servant a necessity for intercourse, such that if he does not do it he dies, unlike his necessity for eating, drinking and clothing, for these are of the sustenance of the body, which, if he does not engage in them, he perishes. 205

For this reason He did not permit of unlawful intercourse what He permitted of taking forbidden food and drink; for this is of the kind of appetite and pleasure, which is a completion and an extra; for this reason a person can live all his life without marrying and without taking a

27 Masruq ibn al-Ajda' (d. 63 AH), the Kufan Successor and companion of Ibn Mas'ud.

concubine, but he cannot live without food and drink; and for this reason the Prophet ﷺ commanded the young men to treat this appetite with fasting;[28] and Allah تعالى said of the passionate lovers of beardless youths: ﴿إِنَّكُمۡ لَتَأۡتُونَ ٱلرِّجَالَ شَهۡوَةٗ مِّن دُونِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ﴾ "Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women." [al-A'raf 7:81]

So He informed us that what moves them to that is mere appetite, not need, let alone necessity; and mere appetite is not joined to necessities nor to needs, and abstaining from it, for fear that it lead to an illness harder than it, runs in the same course as abstaining from taking what harms of foods and drinks, which necessity does not call one to take, even if the soul may desire it. So the kiss, the glance, the embrace and the like run in the same course as taking harmful fruit, and *zafar* (الزفر) that harms one with fever,[29] and for one who has an illness with which taking that harms him. If the sick man says: If I do not take that, I fear death, he is not truthful in his saying; what moves him to it is only mere appetite, and perhaps taking it increases his illness; so the sincere physician does not give him leave in it; so how would the wise Lawgiver, whose Sharia is the utmost of the medicine of hearts and religions, by which their health is preserved and their corrupt matters are driven out, give leave in taking what increases the disease and strengthens it and feeds it? This is impossible; rather the Sharia commands abstinence from the causes of this disease, for fear of its becoming firmly rooted and of another disease, harder than it, being born.

28 Al-Bukhari (1905) and Muslim (1400), from Ibn Mas'ud.

29 *Zafar* is a rare word; the context shows that some food or drink harmful to one in a fever is meant.

Glossary

Iblis: the proper name of Satan.

Jahannam: Hell.

mawquf: a report that stops at a Companion, given as his own saying.

qunut: a supplication made standing in the prayer.

sahih / hasan: grades of hadith, sound / good.

Salaf: the early Muslims, the Companions and those who followed them.

Sharia: the revealed law.

Sunnah: the way of the Prophet ﷺ, his sayings and deeds.

Zahiris: the school that holds to the outward wording of the texts.



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.

IBN JĀZĪ · FUSTAT SERIES