SELECTIONS FROM RAWDAT AL-MUHIBBIN · 5

Love and Marriage

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 foremost student of 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 and causes, the gaze, passionate love and its dangers, lawful union, beauty, chastity, and finally the love of Allah.

This booklet draws on three of its chapters: Chapter Seventeen, "On the Desirability of Choosing the Beautiful Form for the Union That Allah and His Messenger Love"; Chapter Eighteen, "On the Fact That the Cure of the Lovers Is in the Completeness of the Union That the Lord of the Worlds Has Made Lawful"; and Chapter Nineteen, "On the Mention of the Excellence of Beauty and the Inclination of Souls Toward It in Every Case".

The reader will find here the verses and hadith on which he builds, the Prophet's marriages, the counsel of the Salaf on marrying early, a discussion of the rights of the wife, his guidance for the young, his account of inward and outward beauty, and the description of the wives of Paradise that closes the third chapter.

The text is Ibn al-Qayyim's own, in the English of the full translation, abridged by selection. Cuts are shown by "...". The full translation gives the complete text, with all the reports, the poetry and the notes.

◆ *Mankind was created weak* ◆

Allah تعالى said, after mentioning what He made lawful to His servants of wives and slave women, and what He forbade to them: ﴿يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ وَٱللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلشَّهَوَٰتِ أَن تَمِيلُوا۟ مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُخَفِّفَ عَنكُمْ وَخُلِقَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ ضَعِيفًا﴾ "Allāh wants to make clear to you [the lawful from the unlawful] and guide you to the [good] practices of those before you and to accept your repentance. And Allāh is Knowing and Wise. Allāh wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow [their] passions want you to digress [into] a great deviation. And Allāh wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak." [al-Nisa' 4:26–28] i.e.: he cannot be patient without women, as al-Thawri mentioned from Ibn Tawus, from his father: ﴿وَخُلِقَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ ضَعِيفًا﴾ "and mankind was created weak" [al-Nisa' 4:28]. He said: When he looks at women, he is not patient. And more than one of the Salaf said likewise. [299]

And since appetite in this matter is dominant, and it must necessarily bring about what calls for repentance, He سبحانه وتعالى repeated the mention of repentance twice, and informed that those who follow appetites want His servants to incline a great inclination, and He سبحانه وتعالى informed that He wants to lighten for us because of our weakness; so He made lawful for us to marry what is good for us of the good among women, four, and to take concubines from the slave women as many as we wish.

And since the servant has three states in this matter: a state of ignorance of what is lawful and forbidden to him, a state of shortcoming and neglect, and a state of weakness and little patience, He سبحانه met his servant's ignorance with explanation and guidance, his shortcoming and neglect with repentance, and his weakness and little patience with lightening.

Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The delight of my eye was placed in prayer, and women and perfume were made beloved to me; the hungry is satisfied, and the thirsty is quenched, and I am not sated with love of prayer and women" ... [1] 300

1 The Arabic editor did not find it in Ahmad's *al-Zuhd*. The first half is in Ahmad (3/128) and al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Hajar calls it good (*hasan*) in *al-Talkhis* (3/116).

◆ *The marriages of Juwayriyah and Safiyyah* ◆

Aishah رضي الله عنها, who said: When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the captives of Banu al-Mustaliq, Juwayriyah bint al-Harith ibn Abi Dirar fell to the lot of Thabit ibn Qays ibn al-Shammas - or to a cousin of his - and she made a contract of manumission for herself. She was a beautiful, sweet woman, no one saw her without being taken in his soul. So she came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seeking his help with her contract. She said: By Allah, no sooner had I seen her at the door of the room than I disliked her, and I knew that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would see in her what I had seen. She said: O Messenger of Allah! I am Juwayriyah bint al-Harith ibn Abi Dirar, the chief of his people, and there has befallen me of affliction what is not hidden from you; I fell to the lot of Thabit ibn Qays ibn al-Shammas - or to a cousin of his - and I have come to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seeking his help. He said: "Would you like something other than that?" She said: And what is it? He said: "I will settle your contract and marry you." She said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah! I have done so. And the report went out to the people: that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had married Juwayriyah bint al-Harith. The people said: The in-laws of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ! So they released what was in their hands. She said: By his marrying her, he set free a hundred households of Banu al-Mustaliq, and I do not know of a woman who was a greater blessing to her people than she.[2]

And in the two Sahih collections, from the hadith of Anas رضي الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to Khaybar, and when Allah opened the fortress for him, the beauty of Safiyyah bint Huyayy was mentioned to him; her husband had been killed, and she was a bride. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose her for himself, and went out with her until they reached Sadd al-Rawha', and he consummated the marriage with her; then he made hays on a small leather mat then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Give word to those around you." So that was the wedding feast of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for Safiyyah. Then we left for Medina, and I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrapping a cloak behind him for her, then sitting by his camel and putting down his knee, and Safiyyah

2 Ibn Ishaq narrates it, as in Ibn Hisham's *Sirah* (2/294–295), and from his route Abu Dawud (3931).

would place her foot on his knee until she mounted.[3] 301

3 Al-Bukhari (371, 4211) and Muslim (1365).

◆ *How long a wife can bear her husband's absence* ◆

Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, when evening came, would take his whip, then go round Medina, and if he saw something he disapproved of, he would disapprove of it. One night, while he was on patrol, he passed a woman on a roof, and she was saying: ... [307]

مخافة ربي والحياء يكفني ◆ وأكرم بعلي أن تنال مراكبه

From fear of my Lord, and modesty, I am restrained,
and my husband's too dear for his mounts to be attained.

From fear of my Lord, and modesty restrains me
and I honour my husband {too much for} his mounts to be reached

Then she drew a deep sigh and said: What I have met tonight is light for Umar ibn al-Khattab! He knocked on the door of the house. She said: Who is this who comes to a woman whose husband is away, at this hour? He said: Open! She refused. When he insisted on her, she said: By Allah, if the Commander of the Believers heard, he would punish you. When he saw her chastity, he said: Open, I am the Commander of the Believers. She said: You lie, you are not the Commander of the Believers! So he raised his voice at her and spoke out to her, and she knew that it was he, and she opened for him. He said: Hih! How did you say? So she repeated to him what she had said. He said: Where is your husband? She said: On such and such a campaign. So he sent to the commander of that army: Release so-and-so son of so-and-so. When he came to him, he said: Go to your family. Then he entered upon Hafsah his daughter, and said: O daughter! How long can a woman be patient away from her husband? She said: A month, two, three, and in the fourth patience is exhausted, so he made that the term of the campaign.[4]

And this agrees with Allah سبحانه وتعالى setting the period of the oath of abstention (ila') at four months, for He سبحانه وتعالى knew that the patience of a woman weakens after the four, and the strength of her patience cannot bear more than this period; so He made it the term for the one who has taken the oath, and gave her the choice after the four: if she wishes, she stays with him, and if she wishes, she annuls his marriage.

4 Al-Khara'iti, *I'tilal al-Qulub* (pp. 183–184). The woman is unnamed.

So when the four months have passed, her patience is exhausted. 308

◆ *The cure that Allah has made lawful* ◆

Allah سبحانه وتعالى has made for every disease a cure, and has made reaching that cure easy, by law and by decree. So whoever wishes to seek cure by what Allah has legislated for him, and seeks help in it by decree, and comes to the matter from its door, meets healing; and whoever seeks the cure by what He has forbidden him by law - even if He has tried him with it by decree - has erred the way of treatment, and is like one treating a disease with a disease greater than it. And the hadith of Tawus from Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما has preceded, from the Prophet ﷺ, that he said: "Nothing like marriage has been seen for two who love each other."[5] 309

And the opinion of the wise among the physicians and others has agreed, in the setting down of remedies, that the cure of this sickness is in the meeting of the two spouses and the joining of the two bodies.

And Muslim narrated in his Sahih, from the hadith of Abu al-Zubayr, from Jabir رضي الله عنه, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw a woman, so he came to Zaynab and fulfilled his need with her, and said: "The woman comes forward in the form of a devil and goes away in the form of a devil; so when one of you sees a woman and she pleases him, let him go to his wife, for that returns what is in his soul."[6]

Abu Muslim al-Khawlani رحمه الله, that he used to say: O company of Khawlan! Marry your young men and your unmarried women, for lust is a violent matter, so prepare for it its preparation ... [7] 310

And al-Marwadhi said: Abu Abd Allah said:[8] Celibacy has nothing to do with the matter of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ married fourteen, and died leaving nine; and if Bishr ibn al-Harith had married, his affair would have been complete; and if people abandoned marriage, there would be no raiding, no Hajj, no this and no that. And the Prophet ﷺ would wake in the morning and they had nothing, and he died leaving nine; he chose marriage, and urged it, and forbade renunciation (tabattul);

5 Ibn Majah (1847), al-Tabarani and others; graded sahih by al-Albani in *al-Silsilah al-Sahihah* (624).

6 Muslim (1403).

7 Al-Khara'iti, *I'tilal al-Qulub* (p. 119).

8 Abu Abd Allah is Ahmad ibn Hanbal; al-Marwadhi (d. 275 AH) was his closest pupil, who recorded his sayings.

[9] so whoever turns away from the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ is not upon the truth. And Ya'qub, in his grief, had married, and had children born to him; and the Prophet ﷺ said: "Women were made beloved to me." I said to him: But it is related of Ibrahim ibn Adham that he said: The alarm of the head of a family...[10] and I could not complete the report before he cried out at me, and said: You have fallen into the side-paths! Look at what Muhammad ﷺ and his Companions were upon. Then he said: The crying of a child before his father, asking him for bread, is better than this and that. Where will the celibate devotee catch up? End of quote. 313

9 Al-Bukhari (5073) and Muslim (1402), from the hadith of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas.

10 The Arabic editor completes the sentence: "is better than all that I am engaged in."

◆ *The wife's right in marriage* ◆

And the jurists have differed: Is it obligatory upon the husband to have intercourse with his wife? One group said: It is not obligatory upon him, for it is a right of his, so if he wishes he takes it in full, and if he wishes he leaves it, like one who rents a house: if he wishes he lives in it, and if he wishes he leaves it. 314

And this is among the weakest of the views, and the Qur'an, the Sunnah, custom, and analogy refute it. As for the Qur'an, Allah سبحانه وتعالى said: ﴿وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ﴾ "And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable." [al-Baqarah 2:228] So He informed that the woman has of right the like of what is upon her; so if intercourse is a right of the husband upon her, it is a right of hers upon the husband by the text of the Qur'an. And also, He سبحانه وتعالى commanded husbands to live with their wives in kindness, and part of the opposite of kindness is that he has a young woman whose desire equals the desire of a man, or exceeds it many times over, and he does not let her taste the pleasure of intercourse even once; and whoever claims that this is part of kindness, his own nature is enough as a refutation of him. And Allah سبحانه وتعالى permitted husbands to keep their wives only on this basis, and not on any other, for He تعالى said: ﴿فَإِمْسَاكٌۢ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌۢ بِإِحْسَـٰنٍ﴾ "either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment." [al-Baqarah 2:229].

And another group said: It is obligatory upon him to have intercourse with her once in a lifetime, so that the dowry is confirmed for her thereby. And this is of the same kind as the first view, and it is false from another aspect, for what is intended is only living together in kindness, and the dowry entered the contract to honour its sanctity and as a distinction between it and fornication; so the obligation of what is intended by marriage is stronger than the obligation of the dowry.

And a third group said: It is obligatory upon him to have intercourse with her once every four months. And they argued for that by the fact that Allah سبحانه وتعالى permitted the one who has taken the oath of abstention to wait four months, and gave the woman the choice after that, if she wishes to remain with him, and if she wishes to part from him. So if she had a right in intercourse greater than that, He would not have given

the husband leave to leave it during that period. 315

And this view, although closer than the two views before it, is also not sound, for it is other than the kindness which is hers and upon her. And as for setting the period of the oath of abstention at four months, that was His regard سبحانه for husbands, for a man may need to leave intercourse with his wife for a period because of something that has arisen, such as travel, or discipline, or rest of the soul, or occupation with something important; so Allah سبحانه وتعالى gave him a term of four months; and it does not follow from that that intercourse be fixed at once in every four months.

And another group said: Rather, it is obligatory upon him to have intercourse with her in kindness, as he spends on her and clothes her and lives with her in kindness; indeed this is the pillar of living together and its purpose; and Allah سبحانه وتعالى has commanded that he live with her in kindness, so intercourse is necessarily included in this living together. They said: And it is upon him to satisfy her in intercourse if he is able, as it is upon him to satisfy her in food. And our Shaykh - رحمه الله تعالى - used to favour this view and choose it.[11]

11 Our Shaykh is Ibn Taymiyyah.

◆ *The reward of the union, and Satan's enmity to it* ◆

And the Prophet ﷺ urged the use of this medicine, encouraged it, and attached reward to it, and made it a charity for the one who does it, saying: "And in the intercourse of one of you is a charity."[12] ... In this is completeness of pleasure, completeness of kindness to the beloved, attainment of reward and the reward of charity, joy of the soul, departure from it of its bad thoughts, lightness of the spirit, departure of its density and coarseness, lightness of the body, balance of temperament, bringing of health, and driving off of bad humours. And if it meets with a beautiful face, a gentle character, ample passionate love, complete desire, and seeking of reward, that is the pleasure which nothing equals, especially if it agrees with its completeness; for it is not complete until every part of the body takes its share of pleasure ... If any of that is missing, the soul does not cease to look up to it and demand it, so it does not find complete rest.

And for that reason a woman is called a sakan (a source of rest), because of the soul's finding rest in her. Allah تعالى said: ﴿وَمِنْ ءَايَـٰتِهِۦٓ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَٰجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوٓاْ إِلَيْهَا﴾ "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them" [al-Rum 30:21]. ... And the completion of the blessing in that is the lover's joy in the pleasure of his Lord تعالى in that, and his reckoning of this pleasure as a reward-seeking act, and his hope of making his scale heavy by it. 316

And for that reason the most beloved thing to Satan is to separate between the man and his beloved, so as to reach the compensating of each of them for the other by the unlawful, as in the Sunan from him ﷺ: "The most hated of the lawful things to Allah is divorce."[13] 317

And in Sahih Muslim, from the hadith of Jabir, from the Prophet ﷺ: "Iblis sets up his throne on the water, then sends out his detachments among the people; the nearest of them to him in rank is the greatest of them in fitnah. One of them says: I did not leave him until he committed fornication. He says: He will repent. And another says: I did not leave him

12 Muslim (1006), from the hadith of Abu Dharr.

13 Abu Dawud (2178) and Ibn Majah (2018), from the hadith of Ibn Umar. Abu Hatim preferred the mursal report from Muharib. The Arabic editor calls the hadith weak and refers to al-Albani's *Irwa' al-Ghalil* (2040).

until I separated him from his wife. So he draws him near and embraces him, and says: Excellent are you! Excellent are you!"[14]

So this union, since it is the most beloved thing to Allah and His Messenger, is the most hated thing to the enemy of Allah; so he strives to separate those who love one another in Allah, with the love that Allah loves, and to unite the two in the love that Allah hates and is wroth at.

14 Muslim (2813).

◆ *Counsel to the young* ◆

And the Prophet ﷺ guided the youths, who are the likely place of passionate love, to the most beneficial of their medicines. In the two Sahih collections, from the hadith of Ibn Mas'ud, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "O company of youths! Whoever of you is capable of al-ba'ah (الباءة), let him marry, for it lowers the gaze more and protects the private part more."[15] 318

Then he said: "And whoever is not able, let him fast, for it is a *wija'* for him."[16] So he guided them to the healing medicine that was set for this matter. 319

Then he moved them from it, in the case of inability, to the substitute, which is fasting; for it breaks the appetite of the self, and narrows for it the channels of appetite. For this appetite grows strong with the abundance of food and its quality, so the quantity of food and its quality increase its generation, and fasting narrows that for it, so it becomes like the *wija'* of the stallion. And few persist in fasting but their appetite dies, or weakens greatly; and the legislated fasting balances it, and its balance is a good between two evils, a middle between two blameworthy extremes, namely impotence and intense, excessive lust; and both depart from balance:

كلا طرفي قصد الأمور ذميم

Both extremes that flank the middle course of things are blamed

Both extremes {flanking} the middle course of affairs are blameworthy

and "the best of affairs are their middles"; and the virtuous characters, all of them, are a middle between two extremes of excess and neglect; and likewise the upright religion is a middle between two deviations; and likewise the Sunnah is a middle between two innovations; and likewise the correct view in disputed questions, if you wish to attain it, is the middle saying between the two distant extremes. And this is not the place for detailing this sum, for we did not intend it. And with Allah is success.

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15 Al-Bukhari (5065) and Muslim (1400).

16 *Wija'* is the crushing of a stallion's testicles to lessen his desire; fasting is thus a curb on lust.

◆ *Inward beauty and outward beauty* ◆

Know that beauty divides into two kinds: outward and inward. And beauty is the beloved for its own sake, and it is the beauty of knowledge, reason, generosity, chastity, and courage; and this inward beauty is the place of Allah's looking at His servant and the object of His love, as in the sound hadith: "Allah does not look at your forms or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds."[17] 320

And this inward beauty adorns the outward form, even if it is not beautiful, so it clothes its owner with beauty, awe, and sweetness according to what his spirit has acquired of those attributes; for the believer is given awe and sweetness according to his faith, so whoever sees him reveres him, and whoever mixes with him loves him. And this is a matter witnessed by sight, for you see the righteous, good man of fine character as among the sweetest of people in form, even if he is black or not handsome, especially if he is given a share of night prayer, for it illuminates the face and makes it beautiful.

And some women used to pray much at night, and it was said to her about that, and she said: It makes the face beautiful, and I love my face to be beautiful. And among what shows that inward beauty is better than the outward: hearts do not cease from reverence for its owner, from loving him, and from inclining to him.

And as for outward beauty, it is an adornment with which Allah singled out some forms over others, and it is of the increase in creation about which Allah تعالى said: ﴿يَزِيدُ فِي ٱلْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ﴾ "He increases in creation what He wills." [Fatir 35:1] They said: It is the beautiful voice and the beautiful form. And hearts are as if stamped upon loving it, as they are naturally disposed to find it good. 321

And it is established in the Sahih from him ﷺ that he said: "No one will enter Paradise who has in his heart the weight of an atom of pride."[18] They said: O Messenger of Allah! A man likes his sandals to be good and his garment good; is that pride? He said: "No. Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride is the rejection of the truth (بطر الحق) and the despising of

17 Muslim (2564), from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah.

18 Muslim (91), from the hadith of Ibn Mas'ud.

people (غمط الناس).” So the rejection of the truth (بطر الحق): denying it and repelling it after knowing it; and the despising of people (غمط الناس): looking at them with the eye of contempt, disdain, and belittling; and there is no harm in this if it is for Allah, and its sign is that he is more contemptuous and belittling toward himself than toward them. But if he despises them because of the greatness of himself in his own eyes, this is the one that does not admit its owner to Paradise.

◆ *Beauty and gratitude* ◆

And just as inward beauty is among the greatest blessings of Allah upon His servant, outward beauty is also a blessing from Him upon His servant, requiring gratitude. So if he thanks Him for it by being God-fearing and guarding it, he increases in beauty upon his beauty; and if he uses his beauty in disobeying Him سبحانه, He turns it for him into an outward disfigurement in this world before the next, so those fair features return as dreariness, ugliness, and disfigurement, and whoever sees him shuns him. So everyone who does not fear Allah in his loveliness and beauty is turned into ugliness and disfigurement that disfigures him among the people; for the loveliness of the inward overcomes the ugliness of the outward and covers it, and the ugliness of the inward overcomes the beauty of the outward and covers it. 322

And the Prophet ﷺ used to call people to inward beauty by outward beauty, as Jarir ibn Abd Allah said - and Umar ibn al-Khattab used to call him the Yusuf of this nation - he said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to me: "You are a man whom Allah has made good in your creation, so make good your character."[19]

And some of the sages said: It behoves the servant to look in the mirror every day; if he sees his form beautiful, let him not disfigure it with ugly deeds, and if he sees it ugly, let him not combine ugliness of form and ugliness of deed.

And since beauty, in itself, is beloved to souls and honoured in hearts, Allah did not send a prophet except beautiful of face, noble of lineage, beautiful of voice; thus said Ali ibn Abi Talib.

And the Prophet ﷺ was the most beautiful of Allah's creation and the best of them in face, as al-Bara' ibn Azib said when he was asked: Was the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ like a sword? He said: No, rather like the moon.[20] 323

And in his description ﷺ: as if the sun ran in his face; his describer says: I have not seen before him or after him his like.[21]

And in the Sahih from him ﷺ: that he saw Yusuf on the night of the

19 Reported by al-Khara'iti in *I'tilal al-Qulub* (p. 160).

20 Al-Bukhari (3552).

21 Al-Tirmidhi (3648) and others.

Isra', and he had been given half of beauty.[22]

Abu Hazim went out to stone the jamarat, and with him were a group of devout worshippers, and he was speaking to them, narrating to them, and telling them stories. While he was walking and they were with him, he looked at a girl veiled with her khimar, casting her glance at the people right and left, having occupied the people, who were looking at her stunned, and some of them stumbled into one another on the road. Abu Hazim saw her and said: O you! Fear Allah, for you are in one of the great sacred rites of Allah, and you have tempted the people, so draw your khimar over your bosom, for Allah عز وجل says: ﴿وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾ "and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests" [al-Nur 24:31]. She turned laughing at his words ... [23] Abu Hazim turned to his companions and said: Come, let us pray to Allah not to punish this beautiful form with the Fire. So he began to pray, and his companions said Amin. 326

22 Muslim (162), from the hadith of Anas.

23 Reported by al-Khara'iti. Abu Hazim is presumably Salamah ibn Dinar al-A'raj (d. c. 140 AH), the ascetic and preacher of Madinah.

◆ *What loveliness is* ◆

And this is a section on the mention of the reality of loveliness and beauty: what are they? This is a matter that cannot be grasped except by description. It has been said: it is the proportion of the build, its balance and its evenness; and many a form is proportionate in build and is not in loveliness there. And it has been said: loveliness is in the face, and charm (الملاحة) in the eyes. And it was said: loveliness is a matter composed of things: radiance (وضاءة), comeliness (صباحة), good shaping and outlining, and softness (دموثة) in the skin. And it was said: loveliness is a meaning that expression does not reach and description does not encompass; people have only descriptions of it that can be expressed. 334

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at the highest summit of it ... And in the description of him ﷺ by Hind ibn Abi Halah:[24] He was not the tall, gangling, nor the short, stunted; he was of medium height among men; he was not tightly curled in hair, nor lank; he was not fat-cheeked, nor puffy-faced; and in the face there was roundness; white tinged with red, wide-dark-eyed, long-lashed, large of joint and shoulder, thick of palm and foot, with a fine line of hair down the chest; when he walked he lifted his feet as if descending a slope, and when he turned he turned entirely; as if the sun ran in his face.

And with this loveliness, the Prophet ﷺ had love and awe cast upon him, so whoever's eyes fell upon him loved him and revered him; and Allah سبحانه perfected for him the levels of beauty, outwardly and inwardly. He was the best of Allah's creation in form and in character, and the most beautiful of them in appearance and in meaning. And so was Yusuf al-Siddiq ﷺ; and for this the wife of al-Aziz said to the women, when she showed him to them so that they might excuse her in her love for him: ﴿فَذَٰلِكُنَّ ٱلَّذِى لُمْتُنَّنِى فِيهِ﴾ ""That is the one about whom you blamed me." [Yusuf 12:32] i.e.: this is the one by whom I was tempted, and with whose love I am infatuated, so who blames me for loving him, and this is the beauty of his appearance. Then she said: ﴿وَلَقَدْ رَٰوَدتُّهُۥ عَن نَّفْسِهِۦ فَٱسْتَعْصَمَ﴾ "And I certainly sought to seduce him, but he firmly

24 Hind ibn Abi Halah al-Tamimi was a son of Khadijah by her earlier husband, and so a stepson of the Prophet ﷺ. The Arabic editor cites Ahmad (1/9, 11) and al-Tirmidhi's *al-Shama'il* (11).

refused" [Yusuf 12:32] i.e.: and with this beauty, his inward is more beautiful than his outward, for he is at the utmost of chastity, purity, and distance from lewdness; and the lover, even if his beloved is faulted, his tongue runs only with his fine qualities and praise of him. 336

◆ *The adornment of the outward and of the inward* ◆

And related to this is His saying تعالى in the description of the people of Paradise: ﴿وَلَقَّىٰهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا﴾ "and give them radiance and happiness" [al-Insan 76:11]. So He adorned their outsides with radiance (النضرة) and their insides with happiness (السرور); and like it is His saying: ﴿وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾ "[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant, Looking at their Lord." [al-Qiyamah 75:22–23] For nothing is more desirable to them, more cooling to their eyes, or more delightful to their insides than looking at Him; so He made their faces radiant with beauty, and made their hearts delight in looking at Him.

And close to it is His saying تعالى: ﴿وَحُلُّوٓاْ أَسَاوِرَ مِن فِضَّةٍ﴾ "And they will be adorned with bracelets of silver" and this is the adornment of the outside; then He said: ﴿وَسَقَىٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا﴾ "and their Lord will give them a purifying drink." [al-Insan 76:21] i.e.: purifying their insides of every harm. And this is the adornment of the inside ... And looking toward it from a hidden side is His saying تعالى: ﴿وَزَيَّنَّا ٱلسَّمَآءَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِمَصَٰبِيحَ وَحِفْظًا﴾ "And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps [i.e., stars, for beauty] and as protection." [Fussilat 41:12] so He adorned its outside with lamps and its inside with its protection from Satan. And close to it is His saying تعالى: ﴿وَتَزَوَّدُواْ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ ٱلزَّادِ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ﴾ "And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allāh." [al-Baqarah 2:197] so He mentioned the outward provision and the inward provision; and this is of the inward adornment of the Qur'an added to the adornment of its words, its eloquence, and its outward rhetorical excellence.

And from it is His saying تعالى to Adam: ﴿إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَؤُاْ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَىٰ﴾ "Indeed, it is [promised] for you not to be hungry therein or be unclothed. And indeed, you will not be thirsty therein or be hot from the sun.'" [Ta Ha 20:118–119] So He set hunger against nakedness, rather than hunger against thirst, and thirst against the heat of the sun, rather than thirst against hunger; for hunger is the nakedness of the inside, and its abasement, and nakedness is the hunger of the outside, and its abasement. So He set against each other the abasement of his inside and his outside, and the hunger of his inside and his outside; and thirst is the heat of the inside, and the heat of the sun is the heat of the outside, so He set them against each other. [337]

◆ *Yearning for the women of Paradise* ◆

So, O passionate lover through his hearing before his glance, for the ear falls in passionate love before the eye at times, and the army of love may enter the city by the gate of hearing as it enters by the gate of sight; and the believers yearn for Paradise though they have not seen it, and if they saw it, they would yearn for it more; and the one who has never made the pilgrimage has a heart that almost melts in yearning to see the Sacred House. So if these attributes stir your yearning, and these beauties take your heart:[25] 344

فاسم بعينيك إلى نسوة ◆ مهورهن العمل الصالح

Then raise your eyes to women, indeed,
whose dowries are righteous deeds.

Then raise your eyes to women ◆ whose dowries are righteous deeds

And Allah سبحانه described the women of Paradise with the best attributes, and adorned them with the best adornments, and made speech yearn for them, as though they saw them with the eye. 345

Umm Salamah, who said: I said: O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about the saying of Allah عز وجل: ﴿وَحُورٌ عِينٌ﴾ "And [for them are] fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes," [al-Waqi'ah 56:22] He said: "Hur (حور): white; ayn (عين): large-eyed. The hair of the hawra' is like the wing of an eagle."[26]

I said: Tell me about His saying عز وجل: ﴿كَأَمْثَٰلِ ٱللُّؤْلُؤِ ٱلْمَكْنُونِ﴾ "The likenesses of pearls well-protected," [al-Waqi'ah 56:23] He said: "Their clarity is the clarity of the pearl that is in the shells, which hands have not touched." I said: O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about His saying: ﴿فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَٰتٌ حِسَانٌ﴾ "In them are good and beautiful women -" [al-Rahman 55:70] He said: "Good in character, beautiful in face."

I said: O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about His saying عز وجل: ﴿عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا﴾ "Devoted [to their husbands] and of equal age," [al-Waqi'ah 56:37]

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25 The verse is by Abu Nuwas, in his *Diwan* (p. 618). The "women" whose dowries are righteous deeds are the *hur al-ayn* of Paradise.

26 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir* (23/368) and *al-Awsat* (3165). Its chain includes Sulayman ibn Abi Karimah, whom Abu Hatim and Ibn Adi graded weak, as al-Haythami records in *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (7/118, 119).

He said: "They are those who died in the abode of this world as old women, with rheumy eyes, grey-haired; Allah created them anew after old age, and made them virgins; ʻurub (عربا): passionately loving, endearing; atrab (أترابا): of one birth." 346

I said: O Messenger of Allah! Are the women of this world better, or the hur al-ayn? He said: "Rather the women of this world are better than the hur al-ayn, as the outer face of a cloth is better than the lining."

I said: O Messenger of Allah! And by what is that? He said: "By their prayer, their fasting, and their worship of Allah. Allah has clothed their faces with light and their bodies with silk, white in complexion, green in garments, yellow in jewellery; their censers are pearls and their combs are gold; they say: We are the immortal, so we do not die; and we are the delicate, so we are never miserable; we are the abiding, so we never depart; and we are the content, so we never become angry; blessed is the one for whom we are and who is for us."

I said: O Messenger of Allah! One of us women marries two husbands, three, four, then she dies, and enters Paradise, and they enter with her; who will be her husband?

He said: "O Umm Salamah! She is given the choice, and she chooses the best of them in character, and says: My Lord, this one was the best of them with me in character in the abode of this world, so marry me to him. O Umm Salamah! Good character has carried off the good of this world and the next."

◆ *The wives of Paradise as the Qur'an describes them* ◆

And He described them as good and beautiful (خيرات حسان), ... and she is the one who has combined beauties outward and inward, so that her build and her character are perfect; so they are good in character, beautiful in face. And He described them with purity, saying: ﴿وَلَهُمْ فِيهَآ أَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ﴾ "And they will have therein purified spouses" [al-Baqarah 2:25] purified from ... every harm found in the women of this world, and their insides purified from jealousy, harm to husbands, wronging them, and desiring others. [348]

And He described them as confined in tents (مقصورات في الخيام), i.e.: prevented from displaying themselves and from going about in neglect of manner for others than their husbands, but confined to their husbands; they do not leave their dwellings, and are restricted to them, so they desire no one besides them.

And He سبحانه described them as restricting their glance (قاصرات الطرف), and this attribute is more complete than the first; for that reason they are for the people of the first two gardens; the woman of them has restricted her glance to her husband out of her love for him and her contentment with him, so her glance does not pass from him to another ... And the same is the state of those who are confined (المقصورات) also, but those are confined, and these are restricting.

◆ *Their hearts as one heart* ◆

So listen now to their description by the report of the Truthful, the Believed; if the soul inclines and speaks to you of proposing, good; and if not, then faith is flawed. 350

And in the two *Sahih*s, from the hadith of Hammam ibn Munabbih, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The first group to enter Paradise will have forms like the form of the moon on the night of the full moon. They will not spit in it, nor blow their noses in it, nor relieve themselves in it. Their vessels and their combs will be of gold and silver, their censers of aloes-wood, and their sweat musk, and each one of them will have two wives; the marrow of their shins will be seen from behind the flesh because of the beauty. There will be no disagreement among them and no mutual hatred; their hearts will be as one heart, glorifying Allah morning and evening."[27] 352

And in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, from the hadith of Anas, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A morning or an evening journey in the way of Allah is better than the world and all that is in it; and the place of the bow of one of you, or the place of his tether - meaning: his whip - is better than the world and all that is in it. And if a woman of the women of Paradise were to look down upon the earth, she would fill what is between the two with fragrance and light up what is between the two; and her veil upon her head is better than the world and all that is in it."[28] 353

If you wish to hear their singing, then hear its report now. In the *Mu'jam* of al-Tabarani, from the hadith of Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The wives of the people of Paradise will sing to their husbands with the most beautiful voices, which no one has ever heard. Among what they sing is: We are the good and beautiful ones, wives of a noble people, who look with the coolness of eyes. And among what they sing is: We are the immortal ones, so we never die; we are the secure ones, so we never fear; we are the abiding ones, so we never depart."[29] 354

27 Al-Bukhari (3245) and Muslim (2834).

28 Al-Bukhari (2792, 2796, 6568); also Muslim (1880).

29 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir* (734) and *al-Awsat* (4914). Al-Haythami says in *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (10/419) that its men are the men of the *Sahih*.

◆ *Driven to Paradise in groups* ◆

Ali - رضي الله عنه - who said: ﴿وَسِيقَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا۟ رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى ٱلْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا﴾ "But those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups" [al-Zumar 39:73] until, when they reach one of its gates, they find a tree at it, from beneath whose trunk two springs flow. They make for one of them, as though they had been commanded to it, and they drink from it, and Allah removes what is in their bellies of impurity, or harm, or distress. Then they make for the other and purify themselves in it, and the radiance of bliss flows over them, and their hair never changes after it, and their heads are never dishevelled, as though they had been anointed with oils. Then they come to the keepers of Paradise, and they say: ﴿سَلَـٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَٱدْخُلُوهَا خَـٰلِدِينَ﴾ "Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein," [al-Zumar 39:73] Then the youths meet them and go around them, as the youths of the people of this world go around a close friend who comes back to them after an absence, and they say to him: Rejoice at what Allah تعالى has prepared for you of honour. Then one of those youths goes to one of his wives among the wide-eyed houris and says: So-and-so has come - by his name by which he was called in the world. She says: Did you see him? He says: I saw him, and he is following me. Then joy so moves one of them that she stands on the threshold of her door. And when he reaches his dwelling, he looks at the foundation of its structure, and it is of pearl stones, above which is a palace of green, red and yellow, of every colour. Then he raises his head and looks at its ceiling, and it is like lightning, and had Allah - عز وجل - not decreed it, it would have pained him and taken his sight away, then he lowers his head, and there are his wives, and cups set in place, and cushions in rows, and carpets spread out. Then they recline and say: ﴿ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى هَدَىٰنَا لِهَـٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِىَ لَوْلَآ أَنْ هَدَىٰنَا ٱللَّهُ﴾ "Praise to Allāh, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allāh had not guided us." [al-A'raf 7:43] Then a caller calls out: You will live and never die, you will abide and never depart, and you will be healthy and never fall ill.[30] 355

And in the *Sunan* of Ibn Majah, from the hadith of Usamah ibn Zayd,

30 The report is in the *Musnad* of Ali ibn al-Ja'd (2569).

who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Is there not one who will gird himself for Paradise! For Paradise has no match; it is, by the Lord of the Ka'bah, a light that sparkles, a sweet-scented plant that sways, a lofty palace, a flowing river, a ripe fruit, a beautiful and lovely wife, many robes, an eternal abode in a safe home, fruit and greenery, delight and bliss, in a high and radiant dwelling.” They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah! We are the ones who will gird ourselves for it. He said: “Say: If Allah wills.” And the people said: If Allah wills.[31] 356

31 The Arabic editor gives Ibn Majah (4332); the reference could not be confirmed there. The wording is in Ibn Abi Dawud, *al-Ba'th*.

◆ *From the author's own poem: what remains and what perishes* ◆

فاجمع قواك لما هناك وغض منك ◆ الطرف واصبر ساعة لزمان

So gather strength for there, and lower your glance;
be patient an hour, for time's long expanse.

So gather your strength for what is there, and lower
your gaze, and be patient an hour for a {long} time

يا عاشقا هانت عليه نفسه ◆ إذ باعها غبنا بكل هوان

O lover, to whom his own soul cheap became,
when he sold it at a loss, for every shame.

O lover to whom his own soul became cheap
when he sold it at a loss for every humiliation

أترى يليق بعاقل بيع الذي ◆ يبقى - وهذا وصفه - بالفاني؟!

Is it fitting for a man of reason to trade
what lasts — such is its description — for what must fade?!

Do you think it fitting for a man of reason to sell what
remains - and this is its description - for what perishes?!

Glossary

fitnah: trial, temptation; discord.

hur al-ayn: the wide-eyed maidens of Paradise.

ila': the oath of abstention, by which a husband swears not to approach his wife; the Qur'an sets its term at four months.

jamarat: the pillars at Mina stoned by the pilgrims.

khimar: a woman's headcover.

sakan: a source of rest; what the soul finds rest in.

Salaf: the early generations of Muslims.

Sunnah: the way of the Prophet ﷺ.

tabattul: renouncing marriage for devotion.

wija': crushing a stallion's testicles to curb his desire; used in the hadith of fasting as a curb on lust.



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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