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Concupiscent Curiosity of the Gaze in Medieval Islam: Qurʾān 24:30–31*

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They said: ‘He has been stricken by the gaze of a jinni?’
Had they only realized, they would have said: ‘stricken by the eyes of a human’.
(*Wā-qālū bibi min ʿaʿyuni l-ǧinni naẓra * wa-lau ʿaqaḷū qālū bibi ʿaʿyuni l-ʿinsi*)
– Maǧnūn Lailā, Diwān†

The gaze, or the act of seeing the other and the awareness of being seen, has a storied history in the Islamic tradition. In the Qurʾān, the gaze or glance (*naẓar*)¹, along with the “amorous eye” and its attendant curiosity, is associated with the “lust of the eye” or “ocular fornication or adultery” (*ẓinā l-ʿain*)², both “acts” reckoned among the lesser moral lapses or sins (*ṣaġāʾir*) as opposed to the grave ones (*kaḃāʾir*) in Muslim pietistic and jurisprudential literature³.

* I dedicate this paper to Eerik Dickinson, who introduced me to reading the literature of *ḥadīṭ* at Yale University.

† Translation adapted from A. E. Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Maǧnūn Legend* (Beiruter Texte und Studien 25) Beirut–Wiesbaden 1983, 89 [meter: *al-ṭawīl*] (see Figure 2); cf. the madness (*ǧunūn*) of love, M. W. Dols, *Maǧnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, ed. D. E. Immisch, Oxford 1992, 320–339.

¹ On the morphological variants of the Arabic root *n-ẓ-r* in the Qurʾān, see J. Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, London 1873, 148 (note: root misprinted as *n-ẓ*); H. E. Kassir, *A Concordance of the Qurʾān*, Berkeley–London 1983, 884 sqq.; A. H. al-Rahim, *Gaze*, in: J. Pink (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān Online*, Leiden–Boston forthcoming; on the eyes and vision in the Qurʾān more generally, see F. M. Denny, *Eyes*, in: J. D. McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. 2, Leiden–Boston, 153b–143b; A. Buturovic, *Vision*, in: *ibid.*, vol. 5, 443b–445a; S. Kugle, *Vision and Blindness*, in: *ibid.*, vol. 5, 445a–447b; on the furtive gaze in Arabic, see M. Ullmann, *Der verstohlene Blick: Zur Metaphorik des Diebstahls in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur*, Wiesbaden 2017; on the evil eye in Islam, see S. Günther and D. Pielow (eds.), *Die Geheimnisse der oberen und der unteren Welt: Magie im Islam zwischen Glaube und Wissenschaft* (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 158), Leiden–Boston 2019, 29, *passim*; and Z. Szombathy, *Evil Eye*, in: K. Fleet/G. Krämer/D. Matringe e. a.; (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., fasc. 5, Leiden 2020, 30a–35b.

² Cf. Matthew 5:28–29; and Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) on concupiscence and the matrix of sin, T. Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence* (*Vigiliae Christianae*, Supplements 116), Leiden–Boston 2012, 137–192 [I thank J. D. Teubner for the latter citation].

³ See I. Goldziher (d. 1921), who (not mentioning the public gaze) noted the social, normative significance of Q. 24:27–34: “the way virtuous people visit one another, how they should announce themselves, greet the people of the house, how women and children are to behave on such occasions”, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (Modern Classics in Near Eastern Studies), translated by A. and R. Hamori, Princeton 1981, 28sq., nt. 37; id. *Vorlesungen über*

Q(ur'ān). 24⁴:30–31 instructs the believing men (*al-mu'minūn*) and women (*al-mu'mināt*) to avert their gaze from those of the opposite sex in order to preserve their chastity. Here, attention is drawn to the sexual curiosity attendant on glancing, even momentarily (Augenblick)⁵, publicly or mayhap privately, at the other sex⁶. The Islamic tradition generally warns against “concupiscent curiosity”⁷, particularly the insistent “male gaze”⁸, to which the matter of imposing “modest” costume on women⁹, to avert that gaze, is connected¹⁰. The

den Islam (Religionswissenschaftliche Bibliothek 1), Heidelberg 1925, 33 sq., nt. 12.1; J. N. Bell, *Love Theory in Later Ḥanbalite Islam* (Studies in Islamic Philosophy and Science), Albany 1979, 19–31, 125–148; on the Qur'anic categories of immoral acts and transgressions against God's law, see A. J. Wensinck/[L. Gardet], Khaṭī'a, in: B. Lewis/Ch. Pellat/E. J. van Donzel (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, Leiden 1978, 1106b–1109b; M. Q. Zaman, Sin, Major and Minor, in: McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 5, Leiden–Boston 2006, 19a–28a; cf. M. N. Swanson, *A Study of Twentieth-Century Commentary on Sūrat al-Nūr* (24):27–33, in: *The Muslim World* 74 (1984), 187–203; and A. H. al-Rahim, *Translation as Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis: Ahmed Ali and Muslim Modernism in India*, in: M. A. Farooqi (ed.), *The Two-Sided Canvas: Perspectives on Ahmed Ali*, New Delhi–Oxford 2013, 145.

⁴ Chapter 24, Sūrat al-Nūr (“Light”), of the Qur'an is best known for its namesake, the famous “light verse” (*āyat al-nūr*), n° 35, on which exists a rich exegetical history (aspects of which connect the necessary phenomenon of light with the perception of the eye); see G. Böwering, *The Light Verse: Qur'anic Text and Ṣūfi Interpretation*, in: *Oriens* 36 (2001), 113–144; J. J. Elias, *Light*, in: McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 3, Leiden–Boston 2003, 186a–188a; J. Janssens, *Avicenna and the Qur'an: A Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries*, in: *Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales* 25–26 (2004), 180–185; D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, 2nd rev. ed. (Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science: Texts and Studies 89), Leiden 2014, 185 sq.; A. Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Cognition and Its Avicennian Foundations* (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East 27), London 2012, 77 sq.; and T. Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning*, Oxford 2015, 131–168; cf. the role of sight and vision in Graeco-Arabic philosophical conceptions of desire, B. Somma, *Models of Desire in Graeco-Arabic Philosophy: From Plotinus to Ibn Ṭufayl* (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 27), Leiden–Boston 2021, *passim*.

⁵ On the philosophical history of this concept, see M. Theunissen, *Augenblick*, in: J. Ritter/K. Gründer/G. Gabriel (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 1., Basel 1971, 649 sq.

⁶ On sex in medieval Islam, see F. Rosenthal, *Male and Female: Described and Compared*, in: D. Gutas (ed.), *Man versus Society in Medieval Islam* (Brill Classics in Islam 7), Leiden–Boston 2014, 862–891.

⁷ Cf. the reports about Avicenna's “sexual prowess”, J. Lameer, *Avicenna's Concupiscent*, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 23.2 (2013), 277–289.

⁸ On theories of the perception of the male gaze, see C. Korsmeyer, *Feminist Aesthetics*, in: E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, London 1998, 595; cf. J. Derrida, *L'animal que donc je suis* (à suivre), in: M.-L. Mallet (ed.), *L'animal autobiographique* (Collection La philosophie en effet), Paris 1999, 251–301; and id., *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (More to Follow), translated by D. Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28.2 (2002), 372–403.

⁹ On Middle Eastern women's (and men's) costume in Islam, see Y. K. Stillman, *Libās*, pt. 1, in the *Central and Eastern Arab Lands*, in: C. E. Bosworth/Ch. Pellat/E. J. van Donzel (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, Leiden 1986, 732a–747a; and Y. K. Stillman, *Arab Dress from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times: A Short History*, ed. N. A. Stillman (Themes in Islamic Studies 2), Leiden 2000.

¹⁰ A. H. al-Rahim, *Modest, Modesty*, pt. 4, *Islam*, in: C. M. Furey/B. Matz/S. L. McKenzie e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 19, Berlin–Boston 2021, 643 sqq.

indulgence of the gaze is most often presented as the first inauspicious step toward perpetrating (*irtikāb*) the grave sins of fornication or adultery, which may be punishable by lapidation¹¹; of sodomy (*livāṭ*) or the effeminate pathic act (*muḥannaṭ maʿbūn*, the Roman *Lex Scantinia*); or of pederasty, including that of the catamite¹² – all deemed to be Islamically unlawful sexual acts that, depending on the evidence or a *qāḍī*'s discretion, may be subject to judicial punishment¹³. In this thematic study, I examine the exegetical literature (*tafsīr*)¹⁴ on Q. 24:30–31 and the concomitant Muḥammadan traditions, or exegetical *ḥadīṭ*¹⁵, on the gaze as concupiscent curiosity in medieval (Sunnī) Islam.

I. A Spectacle at the Orchard

As regards the 'Sitz im Leben' of Q. 24:30–31, Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān (d. 150/767), in his haggadic commentary on the Qurʾān¹⁶, tells the story of 'Asmā' bint-Muršid¹⁷, a female Companion (*ṣaḥābiyya*) of Muḥammad, who, with her

¹¹ R. Peters, Zinā or Zinā', in: P. J. Bearman/Th. Bianquis/C. E. Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 11, Leiden 2002, 509a–510b, and id., *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-first Century* (Themes in Islamic Law 2), Cambridge 2005, 59–64, *passim*.

¹² Ed., Liwāṭ, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 5 (nt. 9), 776b–779b; E. K. Rowson, Homosexuality, pt. 2, in *Islamic Law*, in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 12, New York 2004, 441b–445b; and Kh. El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800*, Chicago–London 2005, 13–51, *passim*.

¹³ See Bell, *Love* (nt. 3), 30 sq.; Peters, *Crime* (nt. 11), 36 sq., 61, and El-Rouayheb, *Homosexuality* (nt. 12), 138 sq., 118–123, *passim*.

¹⁴ See A. Rippin, *Tafsīr*, in: P. J. Bearman/Th. Bianquis/C. E. Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 10, Leiden 2000, 83b–88a; and W. A. Saleh, *The Place of the Medieval in Qurʾān Commentary: A Survey of Recent Editions*, in: C. Lechtermann/M. Stock (eds.), *Practices of Commentary* (Zeitsprünge: Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit 24/1–2), Frankfurt/Main 2020, 45–54.

¹⁵ See G. H. A. Juynboll, *Ḥadīth and Qurʾān*, in: McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. 2 (nt. 1), 376a–397b; H. Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Routledge Studies in the Qurʾān) London–New York 2000, 65–93, *passim*.

¹⁶ Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān*, ed. 'A. M. Šiḥāta, vol. 3, Cairo 1984, 195–197 [on whom, see J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, vol. 2, Berlin–New York 1992, 516–532; and J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Oxford 1977, 122–148].

¹⁷ On 'Asmā' [bint-Muršid/Muršida] Ibn-al-Ḥārīṭa and her sister Hind, see Muḥammad Ibn-Sa'd (d. 230/845), *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ed. 'I. 'Abbās, vol. 1, Beirut 1405AH/1985, 497; *ibid.*, vol. 2, 376; 'Izzaddīn 'Alī Ibn-al-'Aṭīr (d. 630/1233), *'Uṣd al-ġāba fī ma'rīfat al-ṣaḥāba* vol. 1, 78 sq.; cf. "'Asmā' Ibn-Ḥārīṭa" in 'Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal's (d. 241/855) *Musnad*, see A. J. Wensinck/J. P. Mensing, *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, vol. 8, Leiden 1965, 12a [on this *ḥadīṭ* collection, see C. Melchert, *The Musnad of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: How It was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books*, *Der Islam* 82 (2005), 32–51].

sister Hind¹⁸, appears in the sources as either his (freewoman¹⁹) domestic servant (*ḥādīm*)²⁰ or slave (*mamlūk*)²¹, from among “the Helpers” (*al-ʿanṣār*), of the town of Yaṭrib (Madīna). There, on the estate of her clan, the Banū-Ḥārīṭa, she had an orchard of date palms²², called *al-waʿl* (possibly meaning “the refuge”). One day, we are told, the womenfolk who gathered there arrived without veils (*ḡair mutawārīyāt*), which revealed the cleavage of their bosoms (*mā ʿalā ṣudūribinna*), their legs (*ʿarḡul*), and their hair (*asʿār*)²³. Shocked and horrified by the spectacle of these women, ʿAsmāʾ exclaimed: “Oh, how vulgar is this [sight] (*mā ʿaqbaḥa haḏā*)”. God thereupon revealed to Muḥammad Q. 24:31, translated here with Muqāṭil’s glosses:

“And say to the believing women to lower their gaze and to guard their pudenda (*yaḡduḏna min ʿabsārībinna wa-yahfaẓna furūḡabunna*), and not to reveal their adornments (*wa-lā yubdīna ẓīnatabunna*) save those that normally appear, and to draw their veils over their cleavage (*wa-l-yaḡribna bi-ḥumūribinna ʿalā ḡuyūbibinna*), and not to reveal their adornments (*ẓīna*) save to their husbands²⁴, their fathers, or their husbands’ fathers, or their sons, [etc.] or what their right hands possesses (*mā malakat ʿaimānubunna*, that is, of male and female slaves [*mina l-ʿabīd*]), or their agamous male attendants (*wa-l-tābīʿīna ḡairi ʿulī l-ʿirba mina l-rīḡāl*, that is, men with no sexual desire for women [*man lā ḥāḡa labu fī l-nisāʾ*], e.g., the senile old man [*al-saiḥ al-harīm*] and the eunuch [*al-ḥaṣīʾ*]²⁵), or children who have yet to attain knowledge of women’s pudenda (*ʿaurāt al-nisāʾ*, that is, youthful, prepubescent boys [*al-ḡilmān al-ṣīḡār (infra)*], before whom a woman may lay down her outer wrapping garment [*fa-lā baʿs bi-l-marʾa ʿan taḏaʿ al-ḡilbāb ʿinda hāʿulāʾ*]). And let them (the believing women) not stamp their feet so that

¹⁸ “Hind Bint-Ḥārīṭa”, appears also in ʿAḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal’s Musnad, see Wensinck/Mensing, Concordance (nt. 17), vol. 8, 288b.

¹⁹ See F. Rosenthal, Ḥurriyya, in: B. Lewis/V. L. Ménage/Ch. Pellat e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 3, Leiden 1971, 589; and A. H. al-Rahim, Liberty, pt. 4, Islam, in: C. M. Furey e. a. (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception, vol. 16, Berlin–Boston 2018, 480 sq.

²⁰ Ḥādīm also means a female slave, see R. Brunschvig, ʿAbd, in: H. A. R. Gibb/J. H. Kramers/E. Lévi-Provençal e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Leiden 1960, 24b; and J. H. Hagedorn, Domestic Slavery in Syria and Egypt, 1200–1500 (Mamluk Studies 21), Göttingen 2019, 13–16.

²¹ The Companion ʿAbū-Huraira (*infra*) is quoted to have said that he considered ʿAsmāʾ and Hind to be only slaves of Muḥammad (*mamlūkān*); see the chapter on Muḥammad’s servants and clients (*fī ḥadam rasūl-ʿallāh wa-mawālībī*), Ibn-Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 1, 497.

²² On Madinan date palms, see Sahl ibn-Muḥammad al-Siḡistānī (d. 255/869), Kitāb al-Naḥla, ed. Ḥ. Ṣ. al-Dāmin, Beirut 1422AH/2002, 24 (Yaṭrib), 40, 60, 65, 74 sq. [on whom and for other editions of ʿal-Naḥlaʾ, see R. Weipert, ʿAbū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, in: K. Fleet/G. Krāmer/D. Matringe e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3rd ed., Yearbook 2007, Leiden–Boston 2019, 130b–132a; and F. Viré, Nakhl, in: C. E. Bosworth/E. van Donzel/W. P. Heinrichs e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 7, Leiden 1993, 923a–924b.

²³ See A. H. al-Rahim, Nakedness, pt. 5, Islam, in: C. M. Furey e. a. (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception, vol. 20, Berlin–Boston 2022, 644 sq.

²⁴ On marriage among Muslim freemen and slaves, see A. H. al-Rahim, Marriage, pt. 8, Islam, in: C. M. Furey e. a. (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception, vol. 17, Berlin–Boston 2019, 1023–1026; Hagedorn, Domestic Slavery (nt. 20), 139–153.

²⁵ See Ch. Pellat, Khaṣī, in: Lewis e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam., vol. 4 (nt. 3), 1087a–1092a.

their hidden adornments may be known. O believers, all of you turn in repentance [to God] so that you may achieve salvation”²⁶.

Why and with respect to whom the antecedent verse, Q. 24:30 – “Say to the believing men to lower their gaze and to guard their pudenda; that is (morally) purer (*ʿaṣkā*) for them. God knows what they do” – was revealed, Muqātil does not say; and the menfolk in question (whose presumable ogling of, or leering with concupiscent curiosity at, the women that day led God to reveal this verse) withal fail to make an appearance in the story of ʿAsmā’s orchard (to say nothing of Muḥammad’s whereabouts). As for the various parts of a woman’s anatomy “that normally appear”, that is, that do not have to be veiled, Muqātil says, these are the face (*waǧḥ*), the two palms of the hand (*kaḥḥān*), and that part of the body where the two bracelets are worn (*mauḍīʿ al-siwārain*), that is, the wrists. The believing freewomen may then reveal their adornments only to the familial categories and social classes of people arrayed in Q. 24:31, before whom they may remove their “outer wrapping garments” (*ǧalābīb*, a *ḥapax legomenon* in the Qurʾān, 33:59, where Muḥammad warns his “wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer wrapping garments close to them; this being a more befitting way for them to be recognized [publicly as freewomen], and not to fall victim to [sexual] impropriety [*ʿan yuʿrafna falā yuʿdaina*]”²⁷; elsewhere the “outer wrapping garments” often serve as a gloss for “veils” [*ḥumūr*, also a *ḥapax legomenon* in the Qurʾān, 24:31]²⁸). To illustrate the relationship between the master and her slave concerning modesty, costume, and privacy, the Šāfiʿī traditionalist Ǧalāladdīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) quotes, on the authority of one of the last Companions, ʿAnas ibn-Mālik (d. 93/711)²⁹, a parabolic *ḥadīṭ* in which Muḥammad presents his daughter Fāṭima (d. ca. 11/32) (*wahaba lahā*) with a slave, while she (in the presence of her father and the male slave) is wearing a tunic (*ṭaub*) such that when she veils her head with it, the tunic does not cover her legs (*ʿidā qannaʿat bibi raʿsabā lam yablūǧ riǧlaibā*) and when she covers her legs with it, it does not veil her head. When Muḥammad saw this sight, at the threshold of her house, he said to her: “Do not worry [about covering] yourself, for it is only your father and your (new) slave servant (*ǧulām*)”³⁰. As regards women stamping their feet to reveal their hidden adorn-

²⁶ Cf. the translations by A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, London–New York 1955, 49 sq.; R. Paret, *Der Koran*, Stuttgart 1979, 246; id., *Der Koran: Kommentar und Konkordanz*, Stuttgart 1980, 359; and A. Jones, *The Qurʾān*, Exeter 2007, 323 sq.

²⁷ Cf. Arberry, *Koran* (nt. 26), vol. 2, 128; and A. Geissinger, *Gender and Muslim Constructions of Exegetical Authority: A Rereading of the Classical Genre of Qurʾān Commentary* (Islamic History and Civilization 117), Leiden 2015, 207–247.

²⁸ On *ǧilbāb* and *ḥimār* in Q. 33:59 and 24:31, respectively, see Stillman, *Dress* (nt. 9), 140–141; and on *ḥimār* in the *ḥadīṭ*, G. H. A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Leiden–Boston 2007, 165b.

²⁹ See *ibid.*, 131a–134b.

³⁰ Ǧalāladdīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Durr al-manṭūr fī l-tafsīr bi-l-maʿtūr*, vol. 18, Beirut 1432–33AH/2011, 183 [E. Geoffroy, al-Suyūṭī, in: C. E. Bosworth/E. van Donzel/W. P. Heinrichs e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 9, Leiden 1997, 913a–916a]; and on household relations between master and slave in later Islam, see Hagedorn, *Domestic Slavery* (nt. 20), 15–20.

ments, Muqātil describes the adornments as anklets (*ḥalāḥil*) which when worn and deliberately jiggled cause a jingling sound (*ṣawt al-ḡalāḡil*). In closing his interpretation of Q. 24:31, Muqātil reminds his audience that the latter ostentatious behavior of the womenfolk at 'Asmā's orchard appears to have been intended to attract not only the ocular concupiscent curiosity of the believing men but also the aural – both acts are enumerated among the misdeeds (*dunūb*) of the believing women who visited the orchard on that fateful day in Yaṭrib.

Not many commentaries on Q. 24:31 tell the story of 'Asmā's orchard, and Muqātil nowhere cites an authority for the narrative of this occasion of revelation (*ṣabab al-nuẓūl*). 'Asmā's orchard does, however, appear again in slightly reworded and reordered form mainly in the Ṣāfi'ī tradition of Qur'ānic exegesis, specifically, in the philologist 'Alī ibn-'Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī's (d. 468/1076) long Qur'ānic commentary, 'al-Basīṭ'³¹. Here, the story is reproduced on the authority of Muqātil³² and his namesake, the *ḥadīṭ* transmitter Muqātil ibn-Ḥayyān (d. 135/753)³³, who was active in Balḥ. Al-Wāḥidī, using the dual form, refers to both as the two Muqātils (al-Muqātilān)³⁴. This version further appears in the Ṣāfi'ī traditionalist 'Ismā'īl Ibn-Kaṭīr's (d. 774/1373) 'Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm', where Muqātil ibn-Ḥayyān also serves as the authority for the story; but in this narration he heard it from someone or possibly read it somewhere (*balāḡanā*³⁵) on the authority of the Companion Ḡābir ibn-'Abdallāh al-Ḥazraḡī (d. ca. 78/697)³⁶, who, like 'Asmā', was of the Helpers³⁷; Ḡābir reports or transmits (*ḥad-*

³¹ al-Wāḥidī, al-Tafsīr al-Basīṭ (Silsila al-rasā'il al-ḡāmi'a 100/111), edd. 'A. 'A. M. al-Mudaimīḡ/S. 'I. M. al-Ḥuṣṣain, vol. 16, Riyadh 1430AH; on which, see W. A. Saleh, The Introduction to Wāḥidī's *al-Basīṭ*: An Edition, Translation, and Commentary, in: K. Bauer (ed.), Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qur'ānic Exegesis (2nd/8th–9th/15th c.) (Qur'anic Studies Series), London 2013, 67–100.

³² On whom, with respect to *ḥadīṭ* criticism, see Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 431a–434a.

³³ On whom, see van Ess, Theologie (nt. 16), vol. 2, 510–516.

³⁴ al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, vol. 16 (nt. 31), 199.

³⁵ On *balāḡanā/nā* as a source of written transmission (*kitāb*), see E. Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunnite *Ḥadīth* Criticism: The *Taqdīm* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854–327/938) (Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts 38), Leiden 2001, 109 sq.

³⁶ On whom, see Muḥammad ibn-Ḥayyān al-Basīṭ (d. 354/965), al-Tiḡāt, ed. M. 'A.-M. Ḥān, vol. 3, Hyderabad Deccan 1393AH/1973, 51 = Ta'rif al-Tiḡāt, ed. Ḥ. M. Ṣiḥā, Beirut 1428AH/2007, 297 (no. 2303); Muḥammad ibn-'Aḥmad al-Ḍahabī (d. 748/1348), Siyar 'a'lām al-nubalā', edd. Ṣ. al-'Arnā'ūt/Ḥ. 'As'ad/M. Ṣāḡarḡī e. a., vol. 4, Beirut 1405AH/1984, 336 = Wafāyāt Siyar 'a'lām al-nubalā', ed. Ḥ. M. Ṣiḥā, Beirut 1428AH/2007, 423 (no. 3511); and Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 262b.

³⁷ Ḡābir and 'Asmā' also appear together, the former again as the informant, in a well-known *ḥadīṭ* on menstruation and the ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*), wherein 'Asmā' bint-Murṣida (nt. *tā' al-marbūṭa*) asks Muḥammad if she can perform her ritual prayers after the menstrual ablu­tion (*ḡusul al-ḥayḡ*) while still experiencing intermenstrual bleeding, or metrorrhagia, that is, a discharge that exceeds the legal duration set for the menses (*istiḥāḍa*); see Ibn-Kaṭīr, Ḡāmi' al-masānīd wa-l-sunan al-hādī li-'qwan sunan, ed. 'A.-M. A. Qal'aḡī, vol. 15, Beirut 1994, 265–266 (no. 2379); G. H. Bousquet, Ḥayḡḡ, in: Lewis e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (nt. 19), 315b; and M. H. Katz, Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice (Themes in Islamic History), Cambridge 2013, 177 sqq.

*data*³⁸) the events of this story that hastened God to reveal Q. 24:31³⁹. Notwithstanding this Companion's authority, Ibn-Kaṭīr's audience is seemingly left in some doubt about the story's soundness and truth (*ṣiḥḥa*) on account of his interjection, *wa-llāhu 'a'lam*, that is, "God knows best [of its veracity]"⁴⁰, before he reports it – a hesitation not found in al-Wāḥidī's presentation of the story.

As for the text of the story, Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān's version appears to be the earliest. While quoting the two Muqātils, al-Wāḥidī provides an apparently redacted version of the latter's text and/or the narrative text ascribed to Ġābir ibn-'Abdallāh. Al-Wāḥidī's text of the orchard story is principally the same as that which Ibn-Kaṭīr⁴¹ and Ġalāladdīn al-Suyūfī quote, on the authority, also, of Muqātil ibn-Ḥayyān⁴². The textual variance between Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān's orchard story and that of al-Wāḥidī is that in the latter's the womenfolk arrive not having donned "a long loin cloth" or "waist cloth" (*ġair muta' zẓirāt*), that is, an 'izār⁴³, and with their tresses (*dawā'ib*), their legs and the anklets around them exposed, while in the former's the women are simply "unveiled (*ġair mutawāriyat*)", etc.; and Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān reports what appears to be the name of the orchard, *al-wa'l* – a literary detail apparently lost in the transmission of al-Wāḥidī's text. The corresponding orchard texts read as follows:

Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān's Orchard

*Naḥalat ḥādībi l-'āya wa-latti ba'dahā fi
'Asmā' bint-Murṣid kāna labā fi Banī-Ḥārīṭa
naḥl yusammā l-wa'l fa-ġa'alat al-nisā'
yadhūlnahu ġair mutawāriyat yuzḥirna mā 'alā
ṣudūribinna wa-'arḡulibinna wa-'s'āribinna fa-
qālat 'Asmā' mā 'aqbaḥa ḥadā.*

Muqātil ibn-Ḥayyān's Orchard

*Haddaṭ Ḡābir ibn-'Abdallāh 'anna 'Asmā'
bint-Murṣida kānat fi naḥl labā fi Banī-Ḥārīṭa
fa-ġa'alat al-nisā' yadhūlnahu 'alaibā ġair
muta' zẓirāt fa-yubdi mā fi 'arḡulibinna mina
l-ḥalāḥil wa-tubdi ṣudūrahunna wa-
dawā'ibahunna fa-qālat 'Asmā' mā 'aqbaḥa
ḥadā.*

³⁸ On the use of *ḥaddaṭani/nā* in *ḥadīṭ* criticism, see Dickinson, *Criticism* (nt. 35), 67, 107 sqq.; and on Ġābir ibn-'Abdallāh as a link in a broken, or *mudallis*, chain of transmission, see J. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Ḥadīth Canon* (Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts 69), Leiden–Boston 2007, 285.

³⁹ 'Imādaddīn 'Ismā'īl ibn-'Umar Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm*, vol. 4, Beirut 1986, 239.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Cf. al-Wāḥidī's *naḥl* ("date palm orchard") and Ibn-Kaṭīr's *maḥall* ("abode"); the latter is likely a misreading of *naḥl*, since the two words share a similar consonantal skeleton, respectively in al-Basīṭ (nt. 31), vol. 16, 199 and *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 239.

⁴² al-Suyūfī, al-Durr (nt. 30), vol. 18, 179.

⁴³ On the 'izār and early Islamic law on costume, see Stillman, *Libās*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 5 (nt. 9), 735a; Stillman, *Dress* (nt. 9), 13 sq., 22 sqq., *passim*; and, in the *ḥadīṭ*, Juynboll, *Canonical* (nt. 28), 115, 193, *passim*.

II. Concupiscent Curiosity and the Second Glance

In his paraphrastic glosses on Muḥammad cautioning the believing men and women, in Q. 24:30–31, “to lower their gaze (*yaḡduddū min ‘abṣārihim/yaḡduḏna min ‘abṣāribinna*)”, Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān states that the believers should “avert their gaze entirely from that upon which it is impermissible to gaze (*yahfaḏū ‘abṣārabum kullabā ‘ammā lā yuḡillu l-naẓar ‘ilaibi*)”⁴⁴. Relatedly, al-Wāḥidī quotes the formative qur’ānic authority ‘Abdallāh Ibn-‘Abbās (d. ca. 68/687)⁴⁵, Muḥammad’s first cousin, who says that the believers are urged “not to gaze upon that which is not permitted to them (*lā yanẓurū ‘ilā mā lā yuḡillu labum*)”. The latter reading (*qaul*) of “to lower their gaze”, al-Wāḥidī writes, is the one agreed upon by nearly all exegetes of the Qur’ān (*‘amma al-mufasssirin*)⁴⁶. In his ‘Kitāb Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān’, the theologian Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) quotes Ibn-‘Abbās who also says that the visually represented (passive) object – authorially intended – whence the believers ought to avert their gaze, is nothing but from their own carnal desires (*ṣabawātubum*)⁴⁷.

In contrast to Muqātil’s and al-Wāḥidī’s laconic glosses on “to lower their gaze”, Ibn-Kaṭīr provides, citing a catalogue of Muḥammadan *ḥadīṡ*, a disquisition on the hermeneutics of averting the concupiscent gaze⁴⁸. Lowering their gaze, he writes, is a divine injunction (*‘amr*) either to avert the gaze from or to shut the eyes in the face of that which is proscribed (*al-maḥārim*). Ibn-Kaṭīr describes glancing or steadily gazing as an intentional act that embodies the observer’s sexual objectification of the (passive) object (*infra*). Another type of glance, described by Ibn-Kaṭīr, is the unexpected one (*naẓar al-faḡ‘a/al-fuḡ‘a*), when something impermissible catches one’s eye unintentionally (*waqa‘a l-baṣar ‘alā muḥarram min ḡair qaṣd*) and causes an involuntary sexual arousal. In a *ḥadīṡ*, Muḥammad is asked: “[What say ye] of the unexpected glance?” The questioner, the early Baṣran orator Ḡaṣīr ibn-‘Abdallāh al-Baḡalī (d. after 55/675)⁴⁹, who

⁴⁴ Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān, *Tafsīr* (nt. 16), vol. 3, 195.

⁴⁵ On Ibn-‘Abbās, see Juynboll, *Canonical* (nt. 28), 1a–2b; Cl. Gilliot, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās, in: K. Fleet/G. Krämer/D. Matringe e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., fasc. 1, Leiden 2012, 30–43; and Berg, *Exegesis* (nt. 15), 129–137, *passim*.

⁴⁶ al-Wāḥidī, *al-Baṣīṡ* (nt. 34), vol. 16, 197; cf. the Ḥanbalī traditionalist ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān ibn-‘Alī Ibn-al-Ġauzī (d. 597/1200), who also considers this reading to be that of the majority (*al-ḡumbūr*) of exegetes, *Zād al-maṣīr fī ‘ilm al-tafsīr*, Beirut 1423AH/2002, 994.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad ibn-Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Ta’wīlāt ‘ahl al-sunna*, ed. M. Bāsallūm, vol. 7, Beirut 1426AH/2005, 543 [on whom and which, see U. Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand (Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts 100)*, translated by R. Adem, Leiden 2015, 125–132, 183–189, respectively]; cf. al-Suyūṡī, *al-Durr* (nt. 30), vol. 18, 177.

⁴⁸ Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237–243.

⁴⁹ On whom, see al-Baṣīṡ, *al-Tiqāt*, vol. 6, 143 = Ta’rīf, 304 (no. 2407); al-Dahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 4, 141 = *Wafāyāt* (nt. 36), 428 (no. 3561); and T. Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration: Art and Function (Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 131)*, Leiden 2019, 179, 556.

converted to Islam shortly before Muḥammad died, relays Muḥammad's response: "He instructed me [when the unexpected glance befalls me] to avert my gaze (*'amaranī 'an 'aṣruḥa baṣarī*)"⁵⁰. In other words, by this, Ibn-Kaṭīr explains, Muḥammad commands Ġarīr, "Cast your eyes down to the ground! (*'unẓur 'ilā l-'arḍ*)", and so by extension the believers.

Yet another type of gaze that Ibn-Kaṭīr enumerates is the second glance⁵¹. In a commonly cited *ḥadīṭ*, Muḥammad says to 'Alī ibn-'Abī-Ṭālib, his cousin and son-in-law, who became the fourth caliph (r. 35–40/656–661) and first Šī'ī 'Imām: "O 'Alī, do not glance twice (*lā tatba' al-naẓra al-naẓra*) [upon what is forbidden to you], for the (pleasure of) the first glance is [solely⁵²] your own, whilst the second is not"⁵³. In the same vein, on the authority of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728)⁵⁴, Muḥammad heralds: "O Son of Adam, the first glance is yours, whilst the second is [held] against you (*wa-'alaika l-tānīya*)", that is, the former (the unexpected glance), though possibly relished, does not involve intent, thus is not sinful, while the latter involves intent, rendering it sinful. On the matter of the intent of the second glance, the Šāfi'ī *qāḍī* and political theorist 'Alī ibn-Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) writes that what is forbidden is not necessarily the second glance but the intent behind it (*yahrumu mina l-naẓar mā quṣīda*)⁵⁵, that is, the gaze becomes total intentionality, or the constitutive presence of the observer of the observed⁵⁶.

The *ḥadīṭ* of the first and second glance are most frequently quoted to curb the male gaze and feature in nearly all commentaries on Q. 24:30. On the warning against the second glance (*fa-'iyyāka l-tānīya*⁵⁷), al-Māturīdī says that the second glance is as though the observer did nothing but repeat the first glance

⁵⁰ For this *ḥadīṭ*, see Wensinck/Mensing, Concordance (nt. 17), vol. 5, 71b; al-Māturīdī, Ta'wīlāt (nt. 47), vol. 7, 543; Faḥraddīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), Tafsīr al-kabīr 'au-Mafātīḥ al-ḡaib, edd. M. M. 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd/'A. 'I. al-Sāwī, vol. 24, Beirut 1401AH/1981, 203; and al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr (nt. 30), vol. 18, 177.

⁵¹ Cf. Bell, Love (nt. 3), 133 sqq.

⁵² The restrictive particle *'innamā* appears in al-Māturīdī's version of the *ḥadīṭ*, Ta'wīlāt (nt. 47), vol. 7, 545.

⁵³ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237; and Wensinck/Mensing, Concordance (nt. 17), vol. 6, 482b.

⁵⁴ On whom, see S. A. Mourad, Early Islam between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science: Texts and Studies 62), Leiden–Boston 2006, 19–58; and Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 176–177b.

⁵⁵ al-Māwardī, al-Nukat wa-l-'uyūn, tafsīr al-Māwardī, ed. 'A.-M. Ibn-'Abd-al-Raḥīm, vol. 4, Beirut s. a., 89.

⁵⁶ Cf. J. Lacan, Du regard comme objet petit a, Séminaire 6, La schize de l'œil et du regard, in: Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, vol. 11, Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse 1964, ed. J.-A. Miller, Paris 1973, 69; and id., Of the Gaze as Objet Petit a, pt. 6, The Split between the Eye and the Gaze, in: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, ed. J.-A. Miller, translated by A. Sheridan, New York–London 1977, 71.

⁵⁷ This reading, instead of *'alaika l-tānīya*, of the aforesaid *ḥadīṭ* is the one printed in al-Māturīdī, Ta'wīlāt (nt. 47), vol. 7, 543.

over and over again (*li-'annabu ka-'annabu 'innamā karrara l-naẓar fī l-tānīya*), to wit, gazing lecherously – the act of which ignites carnal desire and lust (*ṣabwa*) in the heart⁵⁸; or that the passive object of the antinomic gaze, which may not be attainable, sets that desire into motion⁵⁹. On this theme, the Ḥanafī juriconsult 'Abū-l-Laiṭ al-Samarqandī (d. ca. 373/983) quotes a saying attributed to Jesus: “Beware of the gaze for it[s object] will be sewn in the heart (*tuzra'u fī l-qalb*)”⁶⁰. Withal the metaphorical, literary motif of the gaze being a poisoned arrow that pierces the heart is a common one in the commentaries on Q. 24:30⁶¹. In interpreting the dictum, “The gaze is an arrow that poisons the heart (*al-naẓar sabm samm 'ilā l-qalb*)”⁶², ascribed to an anonymous pious forefather of Islam (*ba'd as-salaf*), Ibn-Kaṭīr says that God, because the concupiscent gaze corrupts the heart, enjoins the believers to guard their pudenda and to avert their gaze (in this order), that is, the only guarantee against the heart not being entirely corrupted by the gaze is to hold fast to the divine dictate to guard the pudenda (*infra*)⁶³. In a related tradition, “Gazing at the charms of a woman (*maḥāsīn al-mar'a*)”, Muḥammad reputedly said, “is a poisoned arrow of 'Iblīs (*sabm min nibāl 'Iblīs masmūm*)”⁶⁴. In an apparent *ḥadīṭ qudsī*, a category of extra-qur'ānic sayings attributed to God, most often, on the authority of Muḥammad, God spoke: “The gaze is a poisoned arrow from 'Iblīs[’ quiver], whosoever refrains from [gazing] out of fear of me, I will exchange [that averted gaze] with him (*'abdaltubu*) for a faith whose sweetness he shall discover in his heart (*'imān yağīdu ḥalāvatabu fī qalbihi*)”⁶⁵. On the same theme of the sweetness of faith⁶⁶, Muḥammad reportedly said: “Should any Muslim glance upon a woman’s charms, but thereupon avert his gaze, God will reward him with devotional service (*ibāda*), whose sweetness he shall discover”⁶⁷.

Concerning the coda of Q. 24:30, “God knows what they do”, al-Wāḥidī writes, God’s omniscience encompasses his knowledge of what particular acts

⁵⁸ Ibid., 545.

⁵⁹ Cf. Lacan, *Regard* (nt. 56), 65–74; and id., *Gaze* (nt. 56), 67–78.

⁶⁰ al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al-Samarqandī*, al-musammā Baḥr al-'ulūm, edd. 'A. M. Mu'auwad/'Ā. 'A. 'Abd-al-Mauḡūd/Z. 'A.-M. al-Nauwaṭī, vol. 2, Beirut 1413AH/1993, 437.

⁶¹ On the playful motif of Eros’ bow and arrow in classical Greek literature, see G. M. A. Hanfmann/J. R. T. Pollard/K. W. Arafāt, *Eros*, in: S. Hornblower/A. Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., Oxford 2012, 536; on bows and arrows in the Qur’ān and *ḥadīṭ*, see A. Boudot-Lamotte, *Ḳaws*, in: Lewis e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 4 (nt. 3), 795b–803a; on the arrow motif in Ṣūfism, see A. Schimmel, *Eros, Heavenly and Not So Heavenly*, in: *Sufi Literature and Life*, in: A. L. al-Sayyid-Marsot (ed.), *Society and the Sexes in Medieval Islam* (Giorgio Levi Della Vida Conferences), Malibu, California 1979, 134–141.

⁶² Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237 sq.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 238; on 'Iblīs, likely a corruption of the Greek *diabolos*, the devil (*ṣaiṭān*), see A. Rippin, *Devil*, in: McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, vol. 1, Leiden–Boston 2001, 524–527.

⁶⁵ Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 238.

⁶⁶ On the literary motif of sweetness in medieval Arabic literature, see F. Rosenthal, “Sweeter than Hope”: *Complaint and Hope in Medieval Islam*, Leiden 1983, 119–129.

⁶⁷ Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 238.

the believing men commit with their pudenda and to what objects they direct their gaze⁶⁸. In a Qurʾān *qua* Qurʾān interpretation, Ibn-Kaṭīr writes that the meaning of this coda is found in Q. 40:19, “God knows the treachery of the eyes (*ḥaʾina al-ʿayʾun*) and what the breasts conceal (*tubḥī l-ṣudūr*)”⁶⁹. In the commentary literature on Q. 40:19, Ibn-ʿAbbās is quoted to have said that the treachery of the eyes consists of the second glance; that is, its corruption of the heart is concealed by the bosom. Expanding on the latter point and on the nature of God’s omniscience, Ibn-Kaṭīr recalls an illustrative story, involving stolen glances, reported also on the authority of Ibn-ʿAbbās, telling of a man who visits a family (*ʿabl al-bait*) with whom a beautiful woman (*ḥasnā*) who catches his eye lives. Whenever the family, amid his visit, was unmindful (*ḡafalū*) of him, the man would observe the woman (*laḥaḥa ʿilaibā*); and when they noticed, he would avert his gaze or furtive glance from her (*ḡaḍḍa baṣarahu ʿanbā*)⁷⁰. God then became cognizant of this man’s heart’s desire (*ḡad ʾiṭṭalaʿa ʿallāb min ḡalbihi*) to behold her pudendum (*wadda lau ʾiṭṭalaʿa ʿalā farḡibā*)⁷¹, that is, the concupiscent curiosity that the man conceals from his hosts is in full view of God. Mentioned there also among the treacheries of the eyes, of which God is cognizant, is the wink (*al-ḡamḡ*), which, elaborated on in the *ḥadīṭ* literature⁷², appears only once in the Qurʾān, 83:30⁷³, where Muḥammad scorns the nonbelievers for mocking the believers by “winking at each other (*yataḡāmazūn*)” as they passed them⁷⁴. And the recusant Ṣāfiʿī exegete ʿAbū-ʾIshāq al-Taʿlabī (d. 427/1035), on the authority of the ailurophile Companion ʿAbū-Ḥuraira al-Zahrānī (d. ca. 57/677)⁷⁵, reports a story about a man who is praying when a woman saunters by him, drawing his gaze, whereupon he follows her with his eyes (*ʿatbaʿabā baṣaruhu*) whilst continuing to pray; as the story goes, he, because of this act, lost his eyesight⁷⁶. In considering the gaze, Ibn-Kaṭīr, in the company of the other

⁶⁸ al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ (nt. 34), vol. 16, 199; and on Muḥammad gesturing God’s all-seeing (*al-baṣīr*) and all-hearing (*al-samīʿ*), omniscience, see L. Holtzman, *Gestures in the Process of Ḥadīth Transmission: The Case of Divine Hearing and Seeing*, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 46 (2019), 291–301.

⁶⁹ Arberry, *Koran* (nt. 26), vol. 2, 177.

⁷⁰ Cf. Ullmann, *Blick* (nt. 1), 47–80.

⁷¹ Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 5, 189 (nt. the use of the verbal root, form VIII, of *t-l-ʿ* to express, by antanacsis, God’s omniscience and the man’s carnal desire).

⁷² Wensinck/Mensing, *Concordance* (nt. 17), vol. 5, 1.

⁷³ Cf. Proverbs 6:13, 10:10, 16:30; Psalms 35:19.

⁷⁴ See H. Ethé, *Das Schlafgemach der Phantasie*, Leipzig 1868, 113; Ullmann, *Blick* (nt. 1), 160–163; A. H. al-Rahim, *The Wink in Medieval Islam: Qurʾān 83:30*, forthcoming; and on other less subtle gestures in Islam, see I. Goldziher, *Über Gebärden- und Zeichensprache bei den Arabern*, *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* 16 (1886), 369–386; Ed., *Ishāra*, in: Lewis e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (nt. 3), 113b–114a; and Holtzman, *Gestures* (nt. 68), *passim*.

⁷⁵ See Juynboll, *Canonical* (nt. 28), 45b–47a; and id., *Abū Hurayra*, in: Fleet e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., *Yearbook 2007* (nt. 22), 133b–136a.

⁷⁶ ʿAbū-ʾIshāq ʿAḥmad ibn-Muḥammad al-Taʿlabī, *al-Kaṣf wa-l-baiān*, al-maʿrūf *Tafsīr al-Taʿlabī*, edd. ʿA.-M. Ibn-ʿĀṣūr/N. al-Sāʿidī, vol. 7, Beirut 1422AH/2002, 87 [on whom and which, see W. A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qurʾān Commentary of al-*

exegetes of Q. 24:30–31, employs language that is etiological, wherein those acts of failing to abide by God’s commandments, that is, to preclude the gaze from being concupiscently curious and to guard the pudenda against committing adultery and fornication, are (sufficient) causes (*bamā’iṭ*) and reasons for the depravity and corruption of the heart (*al-naẓar dā’iya ’ilā fasād al-qalb*)⁷⁷. More generally, Ibn-Kaṭīr’s typology and hermeneutics of the concupiscent gaze also reflects an Islamic hamartiology and indicates by extension some of the vices and virtues of the believers who belong to an Islamic polity (*’umma*)⁷⁸.

III. The Objects of the Concupiscent Gaze

In a *ḥadīṭ* regarding the gaze and the pastime of people-watching⁷⁹, Ibn-Kaṭīr cites Muḥammad warning his Companions: “Beware of street loitering (*al-ḡulūs ‘alā l-turuqāt*)”⁸⁰, to which they responded: “O Apostle of God, but it is inescapable that our gathering (*maḡālis*) take place there where we may converse with each other”. Muḥammad replied: “If you insist on gathering in the street, then give the street its due”, to which they said: “And what right is due to the street (*ḥaqq al-tariq*), O Apostle of God?” He therewith announced unto them the following public obligations: “Averting the gaze, avoiding trouble (*kaff al-’adā*), replying to the salutation of ‘peace be with you (*radd al-salām*)’⁸¹, and commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-’amr bi-l-ma’rūf wa-l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*)”⁸². What this *ḥadīṭ* attempts to do, *inter alia*, is to regulate the ‘public gaze’, particularly that of the male, between the sexes.

In the exegetical *ḥadīṭ* on the gaze, the public gaze is differentiated from the permissible, private, even concupiscent, gaze that is described as necessary in the context of the “demand in marriage (*ḥiṭba*)”⁸³, or betrothal, among Muslim

Ta’labī (d. 427/1035) (Texts and Studies on the Qur’ān 1), Leiden–Boston, 25–52. 67–76, respectively]; and Kugle, Vision, in: McAuliffe (ed.), Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān, vol. 5 (nt. 3), 445a–447b.

⁷⁷ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237.

⁷⁸ On this theme, see A. El Shamsy, Shame, Sin, and Virtue: Islamic Notions of Privacy, in: J. Rüpke/Ch. Uehlinger (eds.), Public and Private in Ancient Mediterranean Law and Religion (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 65), Berlin–Boston 2015, *passim*.

⁷⁹ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237.

⁸⁰ For related *ḥadīṭ* on disorderly conduct (*adab*), including loitering and voyeurism (*taḥrīm al-naẓar fī bait al-ḡair*), see Muslim ibn-al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ (d. 261/875), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, ed. N. M. al-Fāryābī, Riyadh 1427AH/2006, 1034, 1032–1033.

⁸¹ On the public forms of salutation in Islam, including among Muslims, between a horseman (*rākiḥ*) and a pedestrian (*māsī*), on whether responding to a child’s greeting is necessary, and on salutations from Muslims to Jews and Christians, see *ibid.*, 1034–1037.

⁸² On this duty to stop others from doing wrong, specifically, on the street, see M. A. Cook, Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought, Cambridge 2001, 94, 444.

⁸³ See J. Schacht, Nikāḥ, in: C. E. Bosworth/E. van Donzel/W. P. Heinrichs e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 8, Leiden 1995, 26b–29a; and al-Rahim, Marriage (nt. 24), 1023–1026.

freemen or slaves, and when purchasing a slave but especially a concubine (*ġārīya*)⁸⁴. Apart from the male to female gaze, Ibn-Kaṭīr addresses the matter of the male gaze directed toward handsome, beardless youths, or prepubescent boys, as regards the public duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong⁸⁵. He says emphatically (indicating that this pedophilic practice was familiar to the earliest Muslims⁸⁶) that the pious forefathers of Islam would stop men from fixing their gaze upon the beardless youths (*kaṅnū yanbūna 'an yaḥudda l-raġul naẓarahu 'ilā l'amrad*) – an obligation that is not, Ibn-Kaṭīr observes, followed by all masters of Sūfism (*'a'imma al-ṣūfiyya*)⁸⁷. Ibn-Kaṭīr is here referring to the mystical, pedophilic practice and theory of Šāhid-Bāzī, or “Playing the Witness”⁸⁸. As for the practice, this involves the Šūfī “spiritual oratorio (*samā'*)”⁸⁹ accompanied by the ejaculatory litany (*dīker*)⁹⁰. This then is followed by the contemplation of divine beauty in the earthly form of a handsome, beardless youth, who has been especially adorned for this occasion as a witness (*šāhid*), whose beauty in their eyes represents that of God (see Figure/Tafel 4). As for the theory of Šāhid-Bāzī, some Šūfī masters postulated that, based on the theosophical thesis that the deity manifests itself in humanity (*ḥulūl al-lābūt fī l-nās-ūt*)⁹¹, God caused himself to be reincarnated in the form of the boy witness;

⁸⁴ M. H. Katz, Concubinage, in *Islamic Law*, in: K. Fleet/G. Krämer/D. Matringe e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., fasc. 4, Leiden 2014, 42–47; and Hagedorn, *Domestic Slavery* (nt. 20), 64–68.

⁸⁵ Cf. the proscription against the pursuit of beardless youths in Twelver-Šī'ism, Cook, *Commanding* (nt. 82), 300 sq.

⁸⁶ On the Qur'anic “immortal boys” of paradise (*wildān muḥalladūn*, Q. 56:17, 76:19), see E. K. Rowson, *Homosexuality*, in: McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 2 (nt. 1), 444a–445b; on (mortal) prepubescent boys as objects of the homoerotic gaze in Islam, Ed., *Homosexuality*, pt. 3, in: Persian Literature, in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 12 (nt. 12), 445b–453b; also, on women as objects of the male gaze, El-Rouayheb, *Homosexuality* (nt. 12), 111–151; on love poems to young craftsmen, J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Shahrangīz*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9 (nt. 30), 212; and on apologetic youthful facial hair epigrams, etc., Th. Bauer, *Male-Male Love in Classical Arabic Poetry*, in: E. L. McCallum/M. Tuhkanen (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, Cambridge–New York 2014, 107–124.

⁸⁷ Ibn-Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* (nt. 39), vol. 4, 238; cf. Bell, *Love* (nt. 3), 139–144.

⁸⁸ See H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele: Mensch, Welt und Gott in den Geschichten des Farīduddīn 'Aṭṭār*, Leiden 1978, 470–506; id., *The Ocean of the Soul: Men, the World and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār* (Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten 69), translated by J. O'Kane/ed. B. Radtke, Leiden 2003, 484–519; and L. Ridgeon, *Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī and the Controversy of the Sufi Gaze* (Routledge Sufi Series 21), Oxford–New York 2018.

⁸⁹ J. During, *Samā'*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 8 (nt. 83), 1018a–1019b.

⁹⁰ L. Gardet, *Dhīkr*, in: B. Lewis/Ch. Pellat/J. Schacht (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, Leiden 1965, 223b–227a.

⁹¹ R. Arnaldez, *Lāhūt and Nāsūt*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 5 (nt. 9), 611b–614b.

the worldly love of, or infatuation with, beardless youths is then for the postulant (*murīd*) a prerequisite to realizing the eternal, true love of God. The ambiguity here between Platonic and carnal love is left for the reader to consider.

IV. Guarding against the Gaze

As for the second injunction that the believers “guard their pudenda (*yahfaẓū furūġabum/yahfaẓna furūġabunna*)” in Q. 24:30–31⁹², Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān writes that to acquit oneself of this obligation as well as the former – that is, to lower or avert one’s gaze from the objects of concupiscent curiosity – is more virtuous (*ḥairun min*) than not doing so, because, if the concupiscent gaze is not averted, it may lead to the male and female pudenda being unprotected against the enormity of the sin of adultery or fornication⁹³. This, Muqātil writes, is what is meant by “that is (morally) purer for them”⁹⁴, namely, the believing men addressed in Q. 24:30. Consonant with Muqātil, al-Wāḥidī glosses “guarding the pudenda” with “against acts of fornication (*‘an al-fawāḥiṣ*)”⁹⁵, which he writes is the interpretation of the majority of Qur’ān exegetes⁹⁵. In juxtaposition with the latter interpretation, al-Wāḥidī provides an exegetical narration (*riwāya*) ascribed to ‘Abū-l-‘Āliya Rufai’ ibn-Mihrān [al-Riyāḥī] (d. ca. 90/709)⁹⁶, a client (*maulā*) and a first generation Successor (*tābi’*) of the Companions, on the authority of al-Rabi’ ibn-’Anas [al-Bakrī] (d. 139/756)⁹⁷, which states: “Every Qur’ānic verse that addresses the guarding of the pudenda intends them to be guarded ‘against acts of fornication or adulterous acts’ (*mina l-ẓinā*) save this verse, which means that the pudenda should be covered ‘lest anyone see them (*‘allā yarāhā ‘aḥad*)’”, that is, as objects of the concupiscent gaze⁹⁸. Al-Wāḥidī says that ‘Abū-l-‘Āliya’s explanation (*ta’wīl*), of the elided prepositional phrase in

⁹² Cf. the Qur’ānic use of the verbal root, form IV, of *ḥ-f-ḥ-n* (“to guard, preserve”, whence is derived the active participle *muḥṣina*, that is, “chaste”) with the direct object *farġ* (“vulva, pudendum”) in reference to Mary, the mother of Jesus: once directly, in Q. 66:12, and the other by antonomasia, *‘allatī ‘aḥṣanat farġabā* (“the one who guarded her pudendum”), in Q. 21:91; and on the Islamic Mary, the only woman directly named in the Qur’ān, see B. F. Stowasser, Mary, in: Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān, vol. 3 (nt. 4), 288b–295b.

⁹³ Muqātil ibn-Sulaimān, Tafsīr (nt. 16), vol. 3, 196.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ (nt. 34), vol. 16, 199.

⁹⁶ See al-Ḍahabī, Siyar, vol. 5, 207 = Wafāyāt (nt. 36), 306–307 (no. 2389); R. Blachère, Abū-l-‘Āliya Rufay’ b. Mihrān al-Riyāḥī, in: Gibb e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (nt. 20), 104b–105a; and Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 41b–42b.

⁹⁷ See al-Ḍahabī, Siyar, vol. 6, 379 = Wafāyāt (nt. 36), 513 (no. 4348); and Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 191b–192a.

⁹⁸ The concern with concealing the pudenda from the human gaze extends to that of the jinn, as in a solicitation of a legal ruling (*fatwā*), dated 16 Ġumada I 1423AH/25 July 2002, asking: “How should men and women conceal their pudenda, or nakedness, from the gaze of the jinn? (*kaifa yasturu l-rġāl wa-l-nisā’ ‘aurātahum ‘an ‘a’yun al-ġinn*)”; for the ruling, see <www.islam web.net/ar/fatwa/20031/> (last access on 30 March 2021).

the Qurʾānic verse, is the soundest⁹⁹. On the empyrean and seraphic recompense awaiting the believer who guards his pudendum, Ibn-Kaṭīr quotes the following two traditions: The first is a Muḥammadan intercessory *ḥadīṭ*, from ‘Saḥīḥ al-Buḥārī’¹⁰⁰: “Whosoever guards that which is between his beard and between his legs, out of respect for me, I will guarantee him [entry] into heaven”¹⁰¹, which is to say, salvation is offered to those who neither speak lies nor commit adultery or fornication. The second tradition is given on the authority of the prominent Companion ‘Abdallāh ibn-Mas‘ūd [al-Hudalī] (d. ca. 32/652)¹⁰², who reports that Muḥammad declared:

“Every eye on Judgment Day shall weep save the eye averted from [gazing upon] what God forbids, the eye that passed the night awake for the sake of God (*sabarat fī sabīl ʾallāh*, doubtless preforming the supererogatory nightly prayers or recitation of the Qurʾān [*tabaḡḡud*]¹⁰³), and the eye that secretes [even] something as insignificant [in size] as the head of a fly, for fear of God (*miṭl raʾs al-ḡubāb min ḥaṣyat ʾallāh*)”¹⁰⁴.

Additionally, Ibn-Kaṭīr, on the authority of ‘Abū-Huraira, quotes a Muḥammadan tradition on the fatalism of human beings committing, *inter alia*, the transgression of adultery or fornication:

“The destiny of a human being (ibn-ādam) to commit [the sins of] adultery or fornication (*ḥaḏḏu min al-ḏinā*), which doubtless he will, has been preordained – for adultery or fornication of the eye is [the act of] the gaze¹⁰⁵, of the tongue [the act of] speech (*nuṭq*), of the ears eavesdropping (*ʾistimāʿ*), of the hands committing violence (*baḏḏ*), of the feet trespassing (*ḥaṭā*), and of the soul desiring and coveting – whereby the pudenda will confirm that or deny it (*yuṣaddiqu ḏālika ʾan-yukaddibubu*)”¹⁰⁶,

that is, if one acted on the curiosity of the concupiscent gaze. In this *ḥadīṭ*, the pudenda not only serve as the (external genital) organs with which the pro-

⁹⁹ al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ (nt. 34), vol. 16, 198.

¹⁰⁰ On this, the earliest of the “Six Books” of canonical Sunnī *ḥadīṭ*, see Brown, Canonization (nt. 38), *passim*; and on intercession in Islam, see A. J. Wensinck/[D. Gimaret]/A. Schimmel, *Shafāʿa*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 9 (nt. 30), 177b–179b.

¹⁰¹ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 237; cf. Wensinck/Mensing, Concordance (nt. 17), vol. 2, 226a.

¹⁰² On whom, see Juynboll, Canonical (nt. 28), 7b–8a.

¹⁰³ See A. J. Wensinck, Tahadjud, in: Bearman e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 10 (nt. 14), 97b–98a.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 238; for another *ḥadīṭ* wherein tears (*dumūʿ*) resemble the head of a fly, see Muḥammad Ibn-Māḡa (d. 273/887), al-Sunan, edd. Š. al-Arnāʾūt/M. K. Qura-Balīlī, vol. 5, Beirut 2009, 287 (no. 4197); in explicating the meaning of this *ḥadīṭ*, Sulaimān ibn-ʿAlī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1292/1875) says that the head of the fly rhetorically is a metonymy for something that is insignificant and slight (*kināya ʾan al-ḥaḡīr al-qalīl*), *Risāla fī l-Qahwa*: Abhandlung über den Cafe, Paris 1860, 12 [Ch. Pellat, *Kināya*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. 5 (nt. 9), 116b–118a]; and Th. P. Hughes, Khauf, in: A Dictionary of Islam: Being a Cyclopaedia of the Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs, Together with the Technical and Theological Terms, of the Muhammadan Religion, London 1885, 270.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. al-Rāzī, Tafsīr (nt. 50), vol. 24, 203.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn-Kaṭīr, Tafsīr (nt. 39), vol. 4, 238.

scribed sexual intercourse is performed – the means through which the concupiscent wish behind the gaze is realized – but also bear witnesses to that act, and thus against its perpetrator, on the Day of Judgment¹⁰⁷.

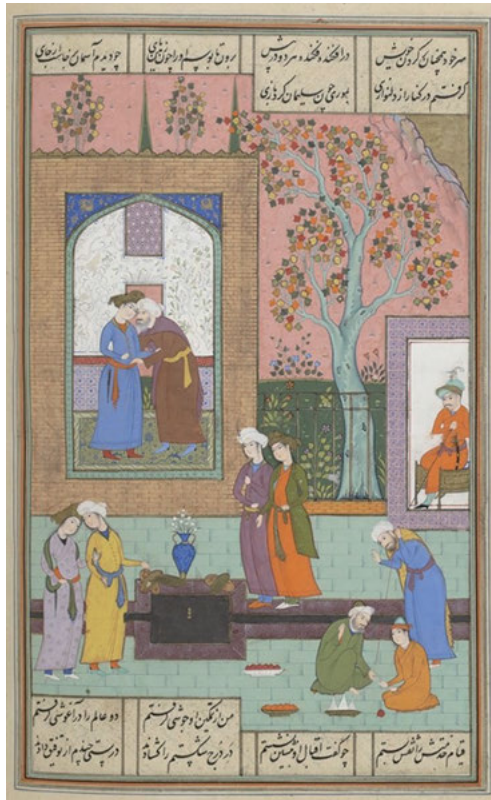
V. Conclusion

In medieval Islamic culture, the preoccupation with the gaze largely centers on its role in concupiscent curiosity and romantic love. Much of the discourse on the gaze has been generated by the hermeneutics around Q. 24:30–31, with respect to averting the public gaze of men and the veiling of freewomen's bodies as a technique for achieving the latter. The gaze and the bodies of slaves, concubines, and eunuchs are not as strictly regulated as that of freemen; this differentiation, or alterity within the private and public realms, served to identify and mark the social, legal, and economic status of freemen and slaves. As for the female gaze, the commentators on Q. 24:31 generally address it with reference to the public modesty and morality as well as the sexual dignity of freewomen. The primary exegetical themes associated with Q. 24:30–31 include (1) the impertinent gaze of the concupiscent eye and its carnal corruption of the heart; (2) the virtues of averting the gaze, the vices of gazing, and their soteriology; (3) the objects of the antinomic or furtive gaze; and (4) love-madness (*'iṣq*) and the motif of “the romantic fool”, the unassuageable bondservant of the amorous gaze¹⁰⁸ (see Figure/Tafel 5). Lastly, there is little if any discussion, in the exegetical literature on Q. 24:30–31, of the gaze as a mental event that is of a morally discrete order and that is distinct from that of a physical act; athwart Islamic theology (*'ilm al-kalām*), for instance, wherein acts of the heart (*'af'āl al-qulūb*), like volition (*'irāda*) and ratiocination (also *naẓar*), are categorically distinct from those of the limbs (*'af'āl al-jawāriḥ*), such as motion¹⁰⁹. The taxonomy and nomenclature with which medieval qur'ānic exegetes examine the concupiscent curiosity of the gaze is, then, mainly that of Islamic hamartiology and law, inasmuch as the interiority of the gaze is made indistinguishable from corporeal action.

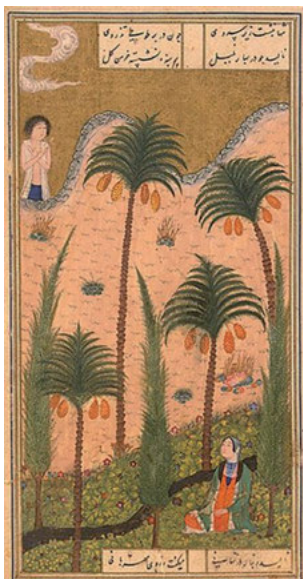
¹⁰⁷ Cf. Q. 24:24; 41:20; and 36:65, wherein the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, and skin bear true witness against the miscreant of whom they are member parts.

¹⁰⁸ On the theme of the romantic fool, see Dols, *Majnūn* (nt. †), 313–348; and Khairallah, *Love* (nt. †), *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. A. Shihadeh, *Theories of Ethical Value in Kalām: A New Interpretation*, in: S. Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, Oxford 2016, 392 sqq.; and Tj. de Boer/[H. Daiber], *Nazar*, in: Bosworth e. a. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (nt. 22), 1050a–1052a.



ʿIlyās ibn-Yūsuf Niẓāmī Gaṅḡawī (d. ca. 613/1217),
 Ḥamsa (“Quintet”),
 Bibliothèque nationale de France,
 Paris MS Supplément persan 1029, fol. 120b,
 dated from the seventeenth century AD.



Laila in the date palm orchard under the gaze of Mağnūn (Qais ibn-al-Mulauwah), Nizāmī Ganğawī, Ḥamsa (“Quintet”), Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, MS VR–1000, fol. 181a, dated from 1431 AD.