

But it's high-voltage spiritual electricity. It brings life, not death.

A supplication to God by the male author of this brochure is to meet Maryam in Paradise for dialogue. If God wills, and this event takes place...there I would stand, gazing upon the perfection of womanhood, and she, demurely, glancing my way. And even before words are spoken, a smile, **made of pure awe**, would break out upon my face. And she, radiant and resplendent soul that she is, a smile eternally etched upon her gracious face...would say "Speak!" The word like golden honey flowing from a tongue that **never** spoke ill would leave me **breathlessly speechless**...and God smiles. **"They will have there all that their hearts desire and in which their eyes find delight. They will remain in it timelessly."** (43:71) Nothing prepared me for the meeting with the perfection of manhood. Such beauty, such simplicity. His smile sweetened my soul. My Prophet (p). A handshake, a hug...eternity never felt so infinitely blissful. So comforting. Eternal "time" stood still!!! Then his "Salaam" sent my soul into rapture.

Back to a sobering reality where time marches relentlessly on, where time knows no rest: Muslim men (some) are **not** exempt...their faces are like hungry dobermans. The face is the gateway to the soul. Imagine your soul having the ferocious look of a doberman? **Even God would run.** BTW, you won't lose your virginity either!!! Smile! Don't wage war against your soul. We give benevolent feelings the Prophet (p) said from a smile. He did **not** gender qualify this charity.

True Beauty: William Yeats in his poem "Prayer for a Daughter" prays that his infant daughter will be protected from life's storms. His mind pictures his daughter in the future as a young woman embodying the values that he cherishes. He wants her to rise as a civilized creature. He wants her **to have beauty, but not so much as to make others obsessed with her or create vanity within herself.** We should understand what Socrates meant in the 'Banquet' when he spoke of the **beauty of thought** which exercises a deeper enchantment than the beauty of form. To think is the best aphrodisiac. As a rule, the prettiest girls lack ambition, for they depend largely upon their good looks to carry them along. We all have heard such remarks as: "She would be a very pretty girl if she only knew something," and "She is really a beautiful girl to look at, but when she opens her mouth – my, my! Beauty coupled with

dullness/arrogance is repulsive. Beauty without grace is a violet without fragrance. A plain face is made charming when a kind disposition lights it up.

Extremely silly girls walk the catwalks (their silliness not necessarily being one of an academic nature but more of the spiritual). Extremely silly men ogle the form (their silliness manifests as lust). Jesus is on record as stating that one commits adultery with the eyes. Which man in the audience is 'clean' in thought? Which husband is true to his wife in the evening? A wife is your field which you sow with love & reap with thanksgiving. Why the degradation on the stage where she becomes the playtoy for many men & a recipient of false words (*Miss Universe*). Words which are like dead flies putrefying the perfumer's ointment, are put upon her head. Curls and cosmetics, paints and powders, enamels and ointments, are all in demand to increase the beauty of the human face, but if women would take half the pain to beautify their souls – what a glorious transfiguration would occur in their essential natures and lives! The woman of greatest beauty is the one who is modestly clothed...in body & in good thoughts. **Catwalks should be for cats.**

"My feeling is that for years now, photo manipulation, has taken a much too big part in how women are being visually defined today," Lindbergh, New York Times, glam photographer and "image-maker," wrote. "Heartless retouching should **not** be the chosen tool to represent women..." Over the years millions of women and men have been duped by Photoshop. **It's not harmless fantasy.** Fashion magazines (Cosmopolitan, Elle, Redbook, Glamour, Vogue, Marie Claire) **thrive as an escape from reality**, a window to something that exists outside the ravages of time. These magazines are promoting an unattainable standard of beauty. Digital photography have made it easy to manipulate pictures that cover models often resemble weirdly synthesized creatures or, as the photographer Lindbergh described them, "as objects from Mars." To avoid this, Smile and say "No Photoshop!" Yes, Cheese! *Halal!*

Fostering the idea that there are actually some women with flawless skin, perfect facial features, sculpted bodies & wafer-thin waistlines is in great part responsible for the proliferation of eating disorders & depression among millions. We must speak out against images that are manipulated to push an idealized standard of beauty. When beauty images change, bodies are expected to change with them. Women spend massive amounts of time/money to live up to these ever-changing ideals. Women's bodies now require a

multiplicity of looks they are expected to attain **effortlessly**: a multi-functional body responsive to the whims of fashion & the postmodern aesthetic.

Intrinsic beauty is that of the circle, or waving line, the rainbow's arch, the bending river, the curving stems of plants, or windings of vines, and other objects of constantly varying outline. The serpentine or gentle curve is the line of grace and beauty. There is also a degree and sometimes a high degree of beauty in angular and triangular and pyramidal forms, and fine architecture has so employed even the square as to excite the emotion of pleasure. Agreeable sounds as well as sights produce emotions of beauty. Certain colours as well as certain sounds possess original or intrinsic beauty. Is there not real beauty in the delicate blue of the robin's egg? That exquisite pink tint on the ripe peach, that deep red of the cherry, that purple lustre of the grape, that "maiden blush" of the apple, make them, as we sometimes feel, too beautiful to eat. The Creator has so ordered many things in nature, as the flowers, precious stones, the colour of blue, the arched ending of leaves, as to be in themselves a perpetual source of pleasure to the human soul.

In the original constitution of things God seems to have fashioned some objects or qualities of beauty on purpose to excite in us pleasure or delight at the very sight of them. The lovely shapes & colours as well as fragrance of flowers and fruits make them delightful. There are certain graceful movements that give pleasure and an impression of beauty, as the waving grain, flowing river, curling smoke and flames, rolling waves, falling cascades, moving ships and floating fleecy clouds. The real beauty of all objects depends on certain fixed laws of form and expression. The principles of form, colour and beauty are eternal. The saying of Keats is now trite but true – "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Lie at night & gaze into the star-studded sky. It's pure divine **not** digital artistry. God relates about this timeless beauty: "Indeed, We have put the stars in the heaven & We **beautified it for the beholders.**" (15:16) Take a visual ascent to the Stairway to Heaven. Soul therapy. Beauty is that which attracts your soul and that which loves to give & **not** to receive. It is a magnificence **combined** of sorrow & joy. It is the unseen which you see. It is the vague which you understand. It is the mute which you hear. It is the Holy of Holies that begins in yourself and ends beyond your earthly imagination. The Ultimate Joy: To come face-to-face with the One who fashioned us with Love. **Allah, Allah...I'm lost in Your Beauty.**

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Beauty

Today's standard of physical beauty is more elusive than ever. Why? Because it's **FAKE**. World culture has come to value the physically unattainable.

Digital software (Photoshop) has created this monster. Photo retouching has become so ubiquitous that lawmakers are proposing legislation that would require **health warnings** on images that have been digitally altered. Young girls spend more money and time on beauty maintenance than any other generation in history. **Yet, they feel worse about themselves.**

Consider this lunacy:

Cosmetic surgery procedures performed on those 18 and younger have nearly doubled over the past decade. In a very sick sense, women are trying to look more and more like the airbrushed versions. An unattainable "Photoshop" beauty is really then very ugly. Five years from now no-one will even mention the names of those cover-girls on the fashion magazines. **A kaleidoscope of illusions.** But **billions** will remember the God-enhanced beauty of Maryam.

She didn't enter the digital world of make-belief. She entered the spiritual world of true belief, the House of God. She had amazing inner beauty which the ravages of time could **not** destroy.

Avoid the false beauty of white American barbie-fication. Let your role-model be the one that **through her piety** God was moved to bestow eternal divine cosmetics: "We made her, Maryam, grow in **health and beauty.**" (Quran 3:37)

What is true beauty? Shakespeare says: “**In nature there’s no blemish but the mind; None can be called deformed but the unkind; Virtue is beauty.**” What is the role of beauty in intelligence, health, creativity, social action and spiritual awakening? We cherish beauty at a surface level. Some have lost their appreciation for the aesthetic of natural spiritual beauty in all things. **God is beautiful & loves beauty.** His beauty is eternal. All other beauties cannot defy the assault of time. So begins God’s intriguing journey into the aesthetics of beauty for our deep comprehension: “The love of desires, of women & sons & hoarded treasures of gold & silver & well bred horses and cattle & tilth, **is made to seem** beautiful to men; this is the provision of the life of this world. Allah is He with Whom is **the best goal of life.**” (3:14)

Why is society turning its back on natural beauty and the beauty of higher artistic creation in favour of ugly & boring technology & the mundane? A lot of “music” is frighteningly ugly. Is there a relationship between modern society’s growing insecurities/fears and the lack of appreciation of beauty? Do we feel we don’t deserve the unconditional joy that natural beauty can give us...*it’s just too easy* – there must be some trap in there. Beauty is **not** used to describe the physical & material things alone; it is also used to describe qualities like beautiful perseverance & forgiveness.

Why are we suspicious of anything that has to do with beauty? Many of us believe that beauty requires culture. One should have read many books & have studied in order to understand & enjoy music or a beautiful painting. And that is absolutely **not** true. Reading helps us deepen our appreciation of beauty, but beauty is for everyone. It’s true that through reading that we have a possibility of increasing our gamut of beauty, increasing our aesthetic intelligence, our ability to appreciate beauty so that we don’t appreciate it only in great works of art or only in nature or only in music, but we appreciate it also in everyday life.

Some people appreciate beauty even in things that are very banal and obvious. They have a greater aesthetic intelligence. And of course there is

an enormous world of inner beauty. We must learn to appreciate not only outer beauty, but the inner beauty of people. The beauty of honesty, the beauty of kindness, the beauty of intelligence. On the contrary, lies, harshness, insults, deception, reveal a grotesque ugliness even in the most beautiful of bodies.

Beauty is something to be observed coolly & rationally or it becomes dangerously involving. Something related to our own amorous profanities & thefts. A theft of our soul’s integrity. For if our first thought of beauty is that of the female form then our understanding is extremely superficial. And our conception of beauty is laced with the venom of erotic intent only. **Lust:** a deadly sin; the worst perversion of beauty. Lust: This applies to women also. The story of Prophet Yusuf (p) is played out continuously in all times & climes. Women also fall for the trap of physical handsomeness. As well as “what’s the latest model car/jeep you’re rolling in, baby!”

Physical Beauty is a deceptive tool. Promising depth but bringing illusion & insignificance in its place. Like a veil on the face of a plain woman, hiding blemishes/defects, softening all hardness of outline, soothing with the suggestion of a flaming beauty. It is a law of nature, as it is of art, that **half-revelation is more attractive than nakedness.** **Unhappily** there is another law which **forbids a man to rest content** until he has stripped his “ideal” woman and beheld her naked. Fatal Attraction. Then, yes then, the end of most men’s erotic dreams is disappointment. And this disappointment is proportionate to what the world calls success. (wicked laugh, hahaha) Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll...Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.

The bad traits of many a beautiful woman **reduces dramatically the aesthetic appeal she offers.** Traits such as deception, lies, complaining, dissatisfaction, laziness, ignorance. Add to the list of faults from your own experiences. Oh my, the list is growing like Pinocchio’s nose. The “Digital Double Life” MSN article explores the theme of deception as women hide their “online romances” from their husbands. Schoolgirls hiding their “digital lovemaking” from their parents. Manipulating the lines between illusion & reality. **The beginning of mental torment/illness is the development of a dual personality. You are the cause of your own depression & lack of natural pleasure.** Your face looks superuglyfatalisticexpivervicious.

True beauty radiates from those amiable women who knead bread with energy, mend rents with cheerfulness, nurse the sick child with smiles, put happiness into washing and genius into a stew, teach with unending love. Do whatever they do with spontaneous joy. And love & lust for you ONLY.

In America, and in Europe, more money is spent on cosmetics than on education. That is a sign that in some desperate and intense way we are looking for beauty, but it’s a too limited conception of beauty. For skin beauty fades rapidly. Inner beauty grows as you age. It’s a kind of radiance. People who possess a true inner beauty, their eyes are a little brighter, their skin a little more dewy. They vibrate at a different frequency. The loveliness of a pure spirit imparts its charm to everything connected with it.

“Things are beautiful if you love them.” And because we are a society that is now based more on fear and **obsessive gluttony of possessions**, of wealth, of power, of celebrity & also of ugly distractions, like watching people on television; becoming a spectator we have lost all sense of subtle expression. We have a whole generation of people under the age of 30 who have lost the beauty in literature. If you ask them about the soft and subtle, it is gone, missing. What is there, however, is working to the bone to get a rock hard body, to buy a new car, to have the latest wardrobe, to have the latest things. Artificial physical attributes are now considered the new stage of “beauty.” We’ve lost our appreciation for true beauty at all levels in all areas of life.

On the other hand, we also live in a digital world that is colder than the one that used to be. A world that’s more impersonal, more efficient, faster, but that doesn’t take into consideration the heart. So in the midst of all of this, where are our deeper feelings? We have lost them, and getting in touch with nature’s beauty is the way to get in touch again with the deeper fount of our more pure and authentic feelings.

We have made the mistake of commodifying beauty in our society, as if the average person would not be able to discern for themselves what is beautiful, and as a result we have lost the connection with beauty around ourselves, within ourselves & with others. Beauty teaches us about living more spontaneously, and studies show a relationship between beauty and our innate healing process. When we take what is beautiful and we commodify it there’s no natural beauty left in it.

Our societies have developed away from beauty. We have political ugliness which uses fear as its main weapon. **God likes that when you do anything, you do it excellently. Sacralize our political domain. Do the same for our educational, religious spheres.**

The best reality is where you feel good being around beauty & participating in it & taking it in, whether it’s a poem, watching a little baby laugh, watching a rabbit, looking at a natural sunset. That’s the innate beauty that we are given as gifts. We admire beauty. We seems to have been created with an aesthetic faculty, an original sensibility to the beautiful – in colours, in forms, in sounds, in movement. Tastes may differ as to what constitutes the beautiful, yet no one can be found to whom some things are not pleasing or agreeable. There are certain circumstances of colour and design which are universally admired by the eye. Is there a human being that would not be delighted with seeing the blossoming plants and trees, or to whom the rainbow would not be an object of beauty as it is thrown like a lovely scarf over the shoulder of the storm-cloud?

The opposite reality is how we feel when we’re around ugliness. The ugliness of war, the ugliness of contempt, the ugliness of racism & sexism, of bias and of exclusion.

“A smile is charity” says the Prophet (p), one who was blessed with immense Beauty. In the mosque finding that “charity” is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. **The one who smiles wins your heart. The one who smiles wins your heart. The one who smiles wins...** My, my...So much repetition.

This does not need to be spelt out...but here goes. Muslim women (some) believe that they should truly be “cultural terrorists.” Their eyes look at males as if they are “firing” AK-47s. The Islamic equivalent of “friendly fire” eh? Their lips’ snarl would give pleasure to a bulldog, pitbull. Hey, seriously, you won’t lose your virginity if you smile. Or commit zina. Are you better than the lovely Maryam, **the most chaste woman** to ever grace this planet? These words might have shocked as if hit by a jolt of electricity.

Say, who is there to

forbid the beauty

which God has brought forth for his servants