60188 - Description of al-hoor al-‘iyn in the Quran and Sunnah

the question

What is the description of al-hoor al-iyn as stated in the Quran and Sunnah? If a wife is righteous in this world, what will her form or attributes be in Paradise if Allah wills that she should enter Paradise?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Pleasing the most Merciful and entering Paradise are the ultimate aim that believing men and women should wish for. If a person departs this world having won the pleasure of Allah, then he will have the glad tidings of all that is good after that. When he enters Paradise he will have delights and pleasures such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard and it has not entered the mind of any man. He will have all that he wishes for in the best ways. Everything that he asks for will be granted, and everything that he longs for he will get. He will never find anything to upset or disturb him, because he is in the care of the Most Merciful, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask.

32. An entertainment from (Allah), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”

[Fussilat 41:31-32]

One of the best things that people long for in the Hereafter is, for men, the women of Paradise, namely al-hoor al-‘iyn, and for women there is an equivalent delight. By His great wisdom, Allah

has not mentioned what the women will have as the equivalent of al-hoor al-‘iyn for men, and that is due to modesty and shyness. How can He encourage them to seek Paradise by mentioning something that they are too shy and modest to mention or speak about themselves? So He has simply hinted at it, as in the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire

[Fussilat 41:31-32]

The description of al-hoor al-‘iyn is mentioned in more than one place in the Book of Allah, such as the following:

1 – Allah says, describing the reward of the people of Paradise (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (there will be) Hoor (fair females) with wide lovely eyes (as wives for Al-Muttaqoon – the pious).

23. Like unto preserved pearls”

[Al-Waaqi’ah 56:22, 23]

al-Sa’di (may Allah have mercy on him)said:

“And (there will be) Hoor (fair females) with wide lovely eyes”. Al-Hawra’ is a woman in whose eyes are lined with kohl, beautiful and bright. Al-‘iyn refers to beautiful and huge eyes. The beauty of eyes in the female is one of the greatest signs of beauty.

“Like unto preserved pearls” means, as if they are pure, white, shining pearls, which are covered and protected from people’s eyes, the wind and the sun. Their colour is one of the most beautiful of colours and they have no fault or blemish of any kind. This is how al-hoor al-‘iyn are: they have no faults of blemishes of any kind, rather they are beautiful in all ways.

Every time you gaze upon her, you see nothing but that which gladdens the heart. End quote.

Tafseer al-Sa’di, p. 991

2 – Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“(In beauty) they are like rubies and coral”

[Al-Rahmaan 55:58]

al-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn Zayd said concerning the words “they are like rubies and coral” it is as if they are rubies in their purity and like coral in their whiteness. So their purity is that of rubies and their whiteness is that of pearls. End quote.

Tafseer al-Tabari, 27/152

3 – Allah says describing the women of Paradise, in Soorat al-Waaqi’ah (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have created them (maidens) of special creation.

36. And made them virgins.

37. Loving (their husbands only), (and) of equal age”

[Al-Waaqi’ah 56:35-37]

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the word “loving (‘uruban)”, Sa’eed ibn Jubayr said, quoting from Ibn ‘Abbas that it means: they are loving towards their husbands. It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that al-‘urub are those who love their husbands and their husbands love them.

With regard to the word “of equal age (atraaban)”, al-Dahhaak said, quoting from Ibn ‘Abbas, that it means: of the same age, thirty-three years.

Al-Saddi said: “atraaban” means that they are equal in temperament and they do not resent or envy one another, i.e., they are not like hostile co-wives. End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 4/294

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said:

It was narrated that Mujaahid said concerning the verse “Loving (their husbands only), (and) of equal age”: i.e., those who are dear to their husbands.

Fath al-Baari, 8/626

4 – Allah says, describing them (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therein (Gardens) will be Khairaatun-Hisaan [fair (wives) good and beautiful]”

[Al-Rahmaan 55:70]

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

They are described as being fair and beautiful. The word khayraat (fair and good) is derived from the word khayyarah, which refers to the woman who combines all good qualities, both outward and inward, and whose physical appearance and attitude are perfect. So they are good in attitude and fair of face.

Rawdat al-Muhibbeen, p. 243.

5 – Allah describes them as pure, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and they shall have therein Azwaajun Mutahharatun(purified mates or wives), and they will abide therein forever”

[Al-Baqarah 2:25]

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

Allah describes them as pure: “and they shall have therein Azwaajun Mutahharatun(purified mates or wives)”, pure from menses, urine and the like (stools) and all off-putting features that may exist in the women of this world. And their hearts are pure from envy, annoyance of their husbands, meanness or wishing for husbands other than them.

Rawdat al-Muhibbeen, p. 243, 244

6 – Allah describes them as refraining from looking at anyone except their husbands (interpretation of the meaning):

“Wherein both will be Qaasiraat-ut-Tarf [chaste females (wives) restraining their glances, desiring none except their husbands]”

[Al-Rahmaan 55:56]

“Hoor (beautiful, fair females) guarded in pavilions”

[Al-Rahmaan 55:72]

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

Allah describes them as being “guarded in pavilions”, i.e., they are prevented from making a display of themselves before anyone except their husbands. They are guarded for their husbands and they do not go out of their houses, and they restrain themselves for them and do not desire anyone else. And Allah describes them as “Qaasiraat-ut-Tarf [chaste females (wives) restraining their glances”. This description is more complete than the first, for one of them restrains her gaze and focuses her love upon her husband, she is content with him and does not look beyond him at anyone else.

Rawdat al-Muhibbeen, p. 244

This is a brief look at what has been said about them in the Quran. In the Sunnah there are descriptions of their beauty and fairness which defy the imagination, such as the following:

1 – It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The first group will enter Paradise looking like the moon on the night when it is full, and those who follow them will be like the brightest shining star in the sky. Their hearts will be as one, and there will be no hatred or jealousy among them. Each man will have two wives from among al-hoor al-‘iyn, the marrow of whose calves can be seen from beneath the bone and flesh.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 3014; Muslim, 2843.

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The stunning beauty of the hoori is such that the marrow of her calves can be seen from beneath her clothes, and a man will be able to see his face in the liver of one of them, like a mirror because of the fineness of her skin and the purity of her colour.

Fath al-Baari, 8/570

2 – It was narrated that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If a woman from among the people of Paradise were to look out over the earth, she would illuminate everything that is in between them, and would fill everything that is in between them with fragrance. And the scarf on her head is better than this world and everything in it.”

If she were to show her face, it would shine between heaven and earth; how beautiful is the light of her face and how beautiful the scent that is filling the space between heaven and earth. As for her garments, the scarf that she places on her head is better than the beauty of this world and all that is in it of delights and pleasure and natural beauty and splendid palaces and other kinds of luxuries. Glory be to their Creator, how great He is, and congratulations to the one for whom she is and he is for her.

Secondly:

The situation of the believing woman in Paradise will be better than the situation of the hoor al-‘iyn; she will be higher in status and more beautiful. Several ahadith and reports have been

narrated concerning that, but none of them can be proven to be sound. But if a righteous woman from among the people of this world enters Paradise, then she will do so as a reward for her righteous deeds and as a honour from Allah to her for her religious commitment and righteousness. As for the hoori who is one of the delights of Paradise, she has only been created in Paradise for the sake of someone else, and has been made the reward for the believing man for his righteous deeds. There is a great difference between one who enters Paradise as a reward for her righteous deeds and the one who was created as a reward for one who did righteous deeds. The former is a queen and a princess, and the latter, no matter how beautiful she is, is undoubtedly lower in status than a queen, and she is subject to the command of her believing master for whom Allah created her as a reward.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Does the description of the hoor al-‘iyn include the women of this world?

He replied:

It seems to me that the women of this world will be better than the hoor al-‘iyn, even in outward appearance, and Allah knows best.

Fatawa Noor ‘ala al-Darb.

We ask Allah the Almighty to give us the best of that which He gives to His believing slaves.

And Allah knows best.