

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## DON'T WE FEEL SHY?

“Ask me for all your needs including the salt for your dough and the fodder for your goats” said Allah to Moosa *alaihi salaam* when he said, “O Allah, I often have a worldly need but I feel shy to ask you.”

Who can deny the lofty status of Nabi Moosa (as)? Was he not one of the greatest *Ambiyaa*? It was, however, his humility that made him regard himself as insignificant and hence, he felt shy to ask Allah. There are a number of different types of *hayaa* (shyness and modesty). The shyness of Moosa (as) in the above narration is just one type. It is termed *hayaa-al-istihqaar* (the *hayaa* which results from consciousness of one’s insignificance and worthlessness).

### ***Hayaa-ul-Hishmah***

When Sayyiduna Ali (ra) wanted to know the ruling of *madhy*<sup>1</sup>, he felt shy to ask Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. He therefore asked Sayyiduna Miqdaad (ra) to ask Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* on his behalf. This type of *hayaa* is called *hayaa-ul-hishmah*.

### ***Hayaa-ul-Karam***

When Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* married his cousin Zainab Bint Jahsh (ra), he invited the Sahaabah (ra) to a

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<sup>1</sup> A sticky, colourless fluid secreted from the private part.

*waleemah*. After eating, some people continued sitting and talking for a long time and thus inconvenienced Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. However, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* did not verbally tell them to leave. His *hayaa* prevented him from doing so. Therefore, he merely stood up and left. Seeing him leave, these people realised their error and left. This type of *hayaa* is called *hayaa-ul-karam* and is the result of one's noble disposition.

### **Another Type of Hayaa**

Some noble-minded people spend tremendous amounts in the path of Allah and then, thinking that they had spent too little, feel shy of themselves. Furthermore, they also feel shy of the beneficiaries of their charities because the latter are also noble-minded and feel shy to accept monetary assistance from others. Referring to this phenomenon, Ibn-ul-Qayyim (ra) says that "it is as if the benefactor is the beneficiary". This type of *hayaa* is called *hayaa-ush-sharaf*.

### **Hayaa-ul-Jinaayah**

The *hayaa* experienced upon transgressing the command of Allah is called *hayaa-ul-jinaayah*. For example, when Aadam (as) ate the forbidden fruit in Jannah, he started running. "Aadam, are you running from me?" Allah asked him. He replied, "No my *Rabb*; I'm just feeling shy." It should be remembered that Aadam (as)'s action was a misunderstanding of Allah's command and not a transgression thereof. However, the point being made is that we ought to feel shy of our sins. When tempted to sin, we should feel shy of Allah and remind ourselves that He is All-Knowing, All-Seeing and All-Hearing. We

benefit from His kindness and mercy all the time, yet we disobey Him. *Don't we feel shy?*

### ***Hayaa-ut-Taqseer***

Despite the fact that the *malaa-ikah* (angels) spend their entire lives in '*ibaadah* (worship) and never transgress a single command of Allah, on the Day of Qiyaamah they will regard all their '*ibaadah* as insufficient and say:

سبحانك ، ما عبدناك حقَّ عبادتك

*Glory is to you! We did not worship you the way you deserve.*

We too have to feel shy of the quality of our '*ibaadaat*. Can any of us claim to have complete humility and concentration in our *salaah*? The condition of our *saum* (fasting) in the month of Ramadaan is none the better. Our stomachs stay hungry but our eyes, ears and tongues do not fast. *Don't we feel shy?*

### **The Importance of *Hayaa***

*Hayaa* has been emphasised in a number of *ahaadith* of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. For example, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* heard a man reprimanding his brother for being too shy. Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* stopped him from doing so and said that *hayaa* is part of *imaan*.<sup>2</sup> He *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* also said:

- "*Imaan* comprises of seventy-something (or sixty-something) branches, the highest of which is to say that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and the lowest of

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<sup>2</sup> All the *ahaadith* in this article have been quoted by Haafidh Al-Mundhiri in his *At-Targheeb Wat-Tarheeb*.

which is to remove an obstacle from the road. And *hayaa* is a branch of *imaan*.”

- “*Hayaa* results in nothing but goodness.”
- “Every religion has a salient characteristic and the salient characteristic of Islaam is *hayaa*.”
- “*Imaan* and *hayaa* are connected. When one of them is lost, the other is also lost.”
- “The person who has no *hayaa* has no *imaan*.”

### **Be Shy of Allah**

In a hadith recorded by Imaam Tirmidhi (ra), Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, exhorted the Sahaabah (ra) to be shy of Allah. In this regard there is a narration attributed to Allah that: “My servant in unfair. I feel shy not to answer his *du’aa*. He, however, disobeys me and never feels shy.” Another narration informs us that Allah feels shy to punish the person who feels shy to disobey Him.

### **A Warning or a Prediction**

On the contrary, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* from the previous *Ambiyaa* (as) their statement that: “if you do not have *hayaa*, then do as you please!” Some scholars interpret this as a warning. *If you want to be shameless, continue and see how far you get! Will you be able to escape the wrath of Allah?* Based on Arab rhetoric, others are of the opinion that this is a prediction. *If you do not have hayaa, you will eventually do whatever you desire, irrespective of what others say and irrespective of whether your behaviour is correct or not.*

## **The Hayaa of Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam***

Sayyiduna Abu Sa'eed (ra) described Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* as more shy than an unmarried girl in her private room. "When he saw something that he disliked, we would recognise it from his face."

### **Development of Hayaa**

Ibn Rajab Al-Hambali writes in his *Jaami-'ul-'Uloom Wal-Hikam* that hayaa is either *ghair muktasab* or *muktasab*. The first type is a natural quality that Allah bestows to whomsoever He chooses. This type cannot be attained through spiritual exercise. Because it constrains man from indecency and drives him to do good actions, it is one of the most splendid traits of man and a branch of *imaan*. Abdullah Al-Hakami (ra) said regarding this type of *hayaa*, "For forty years I avoided sin because of *hayaa*. I only attained the quality of *wara'* (piety and Allah-consciousness) thereafter."

The second type – *hayaa muktasab* – is something that is attained by man when he gains recognition of Allah, His majesty, closeness to man and all-encompassing knowledge of man's actions. When man is deprived of this type of *hayaa*, nothing else can prevent him from evil actions and lowly behaviour. Thus, it is as if he no longer has *imaan*. Thus, Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said "Be shy of Allah just as you would be shy of a man from your family." In order to attain this type of *hayaa* man has to reflect over Allah's bounties and his failure to thank Allah.

Ibn-ul-Qayyim explains in his book *Madaarij-us-Saalikeen* that this type of *hayaa* is developed by means of reverence and love for Allah and reflection over Allah's favours and one's personal shortcomings.

Finally, Fudail bin 'Iyaad (ra) said that "there are five signs of wretchedness: harsh-heartedness, dryness of the eyes (inability to cry to Allah for forgiveness and salvation in the *aakhirah*), shamelessness, desire for the world and high hopes."

May Allah bless us and our offspring with  
the quality of *hayaa*. *Aameen*

و صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ  
بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

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*16 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1431*  
*14 March 2009*  
*Persida, Springs*

