

# UNIT

# D

## CHAPTER

## ONE

# Hayaa': Modesty, Shyness and Honor Together

### CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- 1 Learn what Hayaa' is.
- 2 Appreciate and Understand the place of Hayaa' in Islam.
- 3 Learn the relation between Iman and Hayaa'.
- 4 Learn the virtues and the benefits of Hayaa'.
- 5 Recognize the levels of Hayaa'.
- 6 Realize how the society will be without Hayaa'.
- 7 Learn and memorize the three Ahadeeth about Hayaa' in this chapter.
- 8 Become inspired to adopt Hayaa' as virtue throughout your life.

### VOCABULARY

Al-Hayaa' الحياء

Lena went on a field trip to a national park with her class. It was hot in the afternoon as the group finished lunch by the lake. Some boys and girls wanted to swim so they changed and plunged into the water. Lena sat aside and started to read a book she brought with her. Lena's friend Kim invited her to swim with the rest of the group. Lena politely declined the invitation. When Kim asked if Islam prohibits swimming, Lena explained that Islam allows girls to swim when only girls are around and proper swimming suit is worn. Lena added that she has a feeling deep

inside that makes her uncomfortable undressed in front of boys. Kim became eager to understand Lena's feelings. "What is that feeling," Kim asked.

"I know how to describe it in Arabic in one word, but not in English.

It is kind of modesty, shyness and honor put together."

Kim became more intrigued, "What do you call that in Arabic, Lena?"

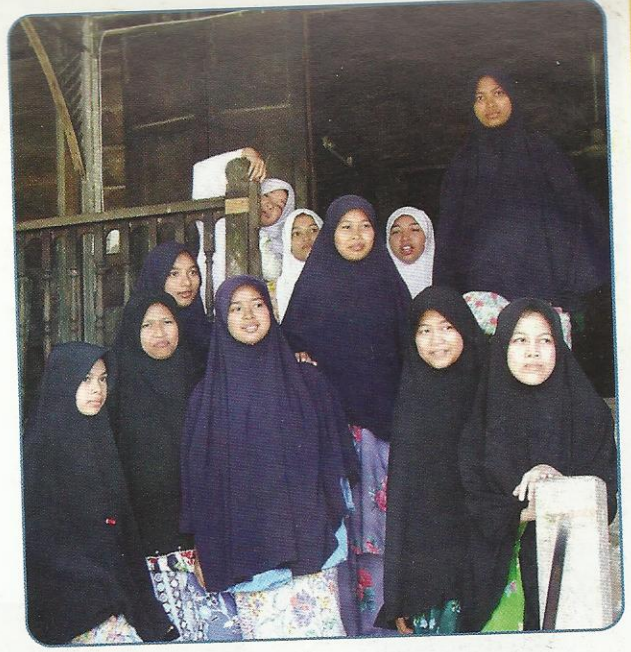
"It is called Hayaa," Lena answered.

## What is Hayaa?

Hayaa' comes from the Arabic word hayah which means life. This term covers a large number of concepts. In English, it may be translated as modesty, shyness, self-respect, bashfulness, shame, honor, etc.

According to Islam, Hayaa' is an innate urge that causes the believer to avoid anything that is indecent, shameful, or terrible. It keeps the Muslim from behaving in a bad, evil, or shameful manner.

Recognizing bad actions as evil acts, and feeling ashamed of the community, and being fearful of Allah to fall in them these bad actions, and feeling ashamed of the community, are all ways of acquiring Hayaa'. Iman and Hayaa' are linked. When there is Iman, there is Hayaa', and vice versa. All of us are born with natural Hayaa'. However, it is subject to being spoiled and lost due to environment and dominating culture. Bad TV shows and internet sites also have their negative and destructive impact on Hayaa'. Muslims need



to be aware of such challenges and exert their efforts to overcome them and protect the natural Hayaa' in their characters.



### Hadeeth Shareef

عن يعلی بن أمیة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسولُ الله ﷺ :  
" إن الله تعالى حبي سترٌ يحب الحياءَ ويُحب السَّترَ "  
رواه أبو داود والترمذي والنسائي

Ya'la Ibn Umayyah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:  
"Allah, Most High, in Heaven, is Haiyy (Bashful), Sitter (Shielder). He loves Hayaa' (Bashfulness) and Sitr (Shielding; Covering)."

*Reported by Abu Dawood, At-Tirmithi and An-Nasa'ee*

## Hayaa' is Part of Faith

Al-Hayaa plays a huge role in the lives of Muslims because it is a very essential part of Iman, or faith. Ibn Omar narrated that once the Prophet ﷺ came upon a man who was criticizing his brother for having Hayaa', saying: "You are so modest (or so shy)," as if he meant to say that this has harmed his personality. The Prophet ﷺ said to him: "Leave him, for Hayaa' is from faith."

[Reported by Al-Bukhari]

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "Al-Hayaa' is a part of Iman" [Reported by Muslim]. "Al-Hayaa' and Iman are two companions that go together. If one is missing, the other is also lacking too," the Prophet ﷺ said in another Hadeeth. [Reported by al-Hakim].

In essence, the Prophet ﷺ does not mean that if a person lacks Hayaa, he or she becomes a disbeliever. He means that he who lacks Hayaa is missing a very important part of Iman, thus, his Iman is incomplete.



### Hadeeth Shareef

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :  
"الايمانُ بضعٌ وسبعون شعبةً، أعلاها لا إله إلا الله وأدناها إماطةُ  
الأذى من الطريق، والحياءُ شعبةٌ من الايمان"  
رواه البخاري ومسلم

"Iman has seventy some branches. The highest [in importance] is la ilaha illAllah, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah', and the lowest of them [in importance] is to remove something harmful from the road. And Al-Hayaa' is a branch of Iman".

Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

## Other Virtues of Hayaa'

### 1. Allah loves Hayaa':

The Prophet said: "Surely Allah has Hayaa' and is the Protector. He loves Hayaa and people who cover each others faults." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

### 2. Hayaa is one of the Great virtues of Islam:

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every faith has a [special] character. The character of Islam is Al-hayaa', or Modesty." [Reported by Abu Dawood]

### 3. Hayaa only brings good and nothing else:

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Hayaa does not bring anything except good." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

### 4. Hayaa leads us to Jannah:

As the Prophet ﷺ said: "Hayaa comes from Iman, and Iman leads to Paradise. Obscenity comes from antipathy and antipathy leads to the fire." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

## There are two ways to acquire Hayaa :

1. Natural *Hayaa'*
2. Acquired *Hayaa'*.

**Natural *Hayaa'*** is something that you are born with. You feel it in you without much effort. For example, you don't like others to see parts of your body, or you feel shy to take money from a relative on Eid or other occasions, or you hate to speak loudly in a quiet gathering.

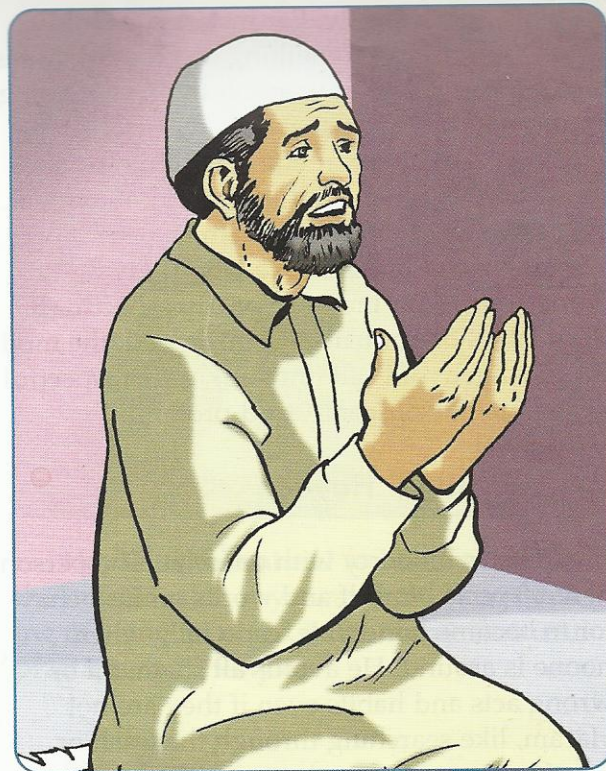
**Acquired *Hayaa'*** is attained as a result of learning about this virtue and observing others practicing it. Realizing the Glory of Allah and His attributes helps us to acquire *Hayaa'* and avoid shameful behavior. For example, many new Muslim brothers and sisters refuse to go to the beach with swimsuits or wear revealing clothes, although they used to do that before they became Muslims.

## Levels of Hayaa':

### 1. Spiritual Hayaa'

This is modesty before Allah. This is when one experiences an urge or an inclination to do something disliked by Allah. The person here instead obeys Allah's orders and avoids all actions that displease Him. This reflects how the Muslim believes in Allah and respects his orders. He or she feels embarrassment in the heart that he is embarrassed, when showing a shortcoming before the Great Lord.

Through spiritual Hayaa', a Muslim reaches the peak of behavior. What this means is that if they do, or say, or see, anything wrong or even commit the tiniest sin,



they start to feel extremely bad and embarrassed or they feel extreme guilt in their heart. This builds a high degree of God-consciousness and that is what strengthens the believers' commitment to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ once said: "Be modest before Allah as is befitting Him." They said: "We are modest before Allah, Al-hamdu-lillah." The Prophet ﷺ said: "That's not what I mean. The one, who is modest before Allah as he should, let him be mindful of his head and what it thinks about. And be mindful of his stomach and what it takes in. Let him remember death and destruction. And whoever desires the hereafter leaves the ornaments of this life. Whoever does all that has become modest before Allah as is befitting Him." *Reported by At-Tirmithi.*

### 2. Social Hayaa'

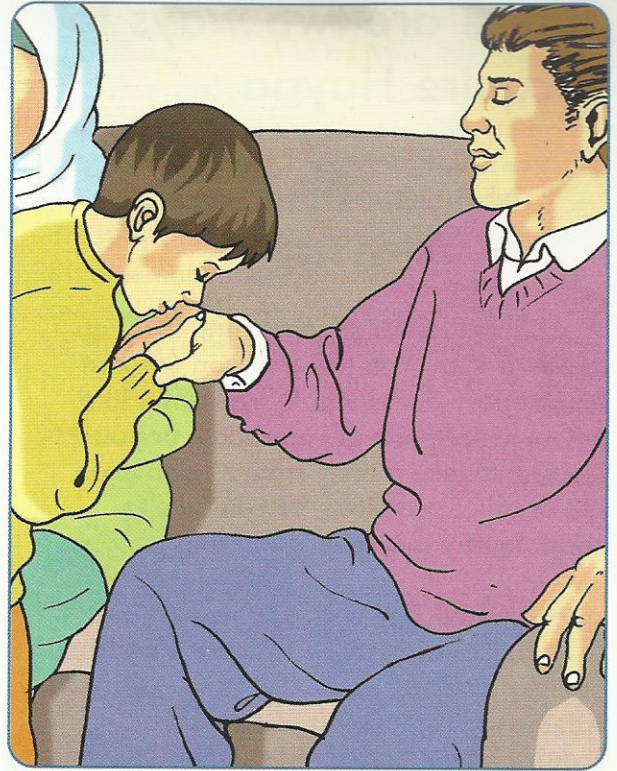
This is modesty before people. It consists of treating them fairly, withholding one's harm from them, and not showing them any ugly side. This starts with one's relationship

with his or her family. For instance, a child who avoids doing something displeasing to his mother, or a wife not wanting to do something displeasing to her husband.

The person here interacts with others and the society in an honorable and moral manner. He or she will treat others with respect. For example a student is careful about saying or doing something incorrect or disrespectful in front of his or her teacher. In general, the modest Muslim avoids all immoral or disrespectful behaviors like obscenity and profanity.

### 3. Personal Hayaa'

This is modesty with oneself. The person here respects himself and works on his behavior to become honorable, especially when noone is around. He avoids all shameful or wrong acts and habits even if they are not Haram, like searching through the trash or wasting time.



## A High Level of Hayaa'

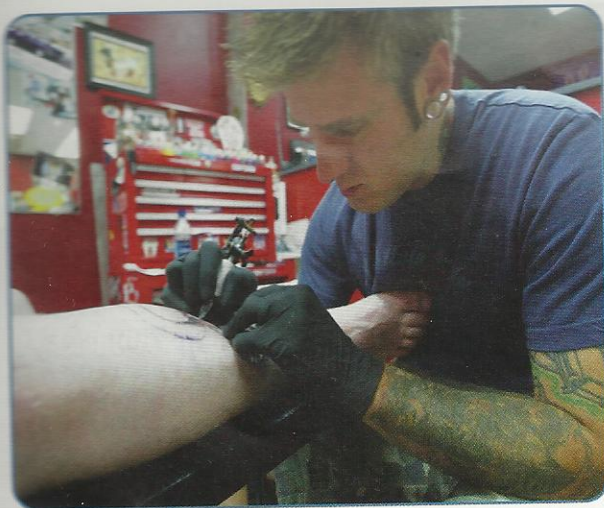
A'ishah رضي الله عنها once said "I used to enter my house where Rasoolullah and my father were buried and take off my garment. I was telling myself that only my husband and my father were buried there; but when Omar رضي الله عنه was buried along with them, I swear by Allah that I did not enter it without having my clothes wrapped around me owing to modesty regarding Omar." [Reported in At-Tirmithi and Ahmad]

## The World without Hayaa'

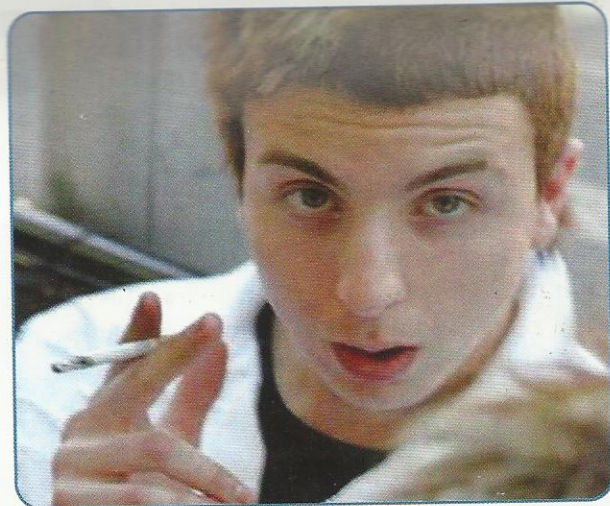
Although there are many people around the world who experience Hayaa', there are many others who do not. We can see many people who demonstrate bad manners and shameful life styles. They lie, cheat, and deceive others. They speak vulgar language, wear revealing clothes, and drink or do drugs. Others act rude with their parents, teachers, and elders.

When walking the streets or going to the malls, you may see teens smoking, despite their parents wishes, and they may even





drink, drive, and cause fatal accidents. Many others go to the extreme and commit dangerous crimes like mugging, robbery, and murder.



Hayaa' is the natural feeling that causes the individual to shy away from even thinking of being involved in the above shameful practices and lifestyles.



### Hadeeth Shareef

عن مسعود بن عقبة الأنصاري قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ :  
 "إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُولَى إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحْ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ."  
 رواه البخاري

Abu Mas'ood 'Uqbah bin 'Amr al-Ansari al-Badri رضي الله عنه reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ said:

"Among the things that people have found from the words of the previous prophets was: 'If you feel no shame, then do as you wish.'"

[Al-Bukhari]

## Main Lesson of the Hadeeth

Imam Ibn Rajab said that the meaning of the Hadeeth is: "If you have no modesty, then do whatever you wish and Allah will punish you for what you do." This mode of expression is well known in the Arabic language, and it is used for threatening some-

one. Imam Ibn-ul-Qayyim who is a scholar from the eighth Hijrah century believes that the meaning is: "If a person does not have any modesty, then there is nothing to prevent him or her from doing anything."

Hayaa' is one of the most important factor that keep a person from committing a sinful act. If a person has no Hayaa', he or she will do almost anything.

## Hayaa' in Our Modern Society

It is unfortunate that today, and because of technology misuse, the great concept of Hayaa' is threatened. For example, many people are taking advantage of TV, Internet, MP3's, etc. in a negative manner. Muslims should learn to master and use Information Technology (IT) positively to promote what is good and beneficial.

The same thing can be said about the media, where it is entertainment oriented. Entertainment is taking new destructive directions which negatively affect the concept of Hayaa' a great deal. If Hayaa' is distorted, Iman (faith) can be distorted too. The chances of committing sins and evil will be higher, and the chances of delaying or neglecting religious obligations will be higher as well.

Even chances of committing crimes will be higher due to these new directions of entertainment, where crime, drug addiction, distrustful acts, and adultery are all looked at as means of entertainment. Semi-naked bodies, songs that promote evil, etc. are aspects of new the entertainment industry. Unfortunately, Muslims tend to borrow media material from the West without any kind of evaluation, filtering or classification. More instructions and guidelines are needed from media organizers regarding the nature of movies and TV programs.



### FAITH IN ACTION

- ★ Always have high levels of Spiritual, social, and personal Hayaa'.
- ★ Always avoid watching, hearing, saying and participating in anything that is Haram or even questionable in Islam.

## Misunderstanding of Hayaa'

Hayaa' can sometimes be misunderstood and taken as a justification for not doing something or giving up an obligatory act. For example, being silent or passive in the presence of falsehood or oppression for no reason except claiming Hayaa'. Another example is using Hayaa' as an excuse for not encouraging good or discouraging evil. Unless, for both of the above mentioned cases, there is another good reason for not doing these acts, such as considering the most likely expected harmful consequences.

Another example is using Hayaa' as an excuse for not doing what is correct and allowed. You know that something should be done and it is good and allowed or is even a recommended or obligatory act. However, you simply give up and do not do it because of a claimed Hayaa'. Not giving Sadaqah (charity) to a needy person in front of others, not taking away a harmful material from the street, or not helping or giving a hand to a disabled or an elderly person to cross the street are good examples of this phenomenon.

*Source: www.Fortyhadith.com (With some modification)*

