

HADITH

★★★

Subject Hayaa (Modesty)

Level : Advanced

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ وَهُوَ يَعْظُ أَخَاهُ فِي الْحَيَاءِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "دَعَهُ فَإِنَّ الْحَيَاءَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ" ((مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ)).

Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) passed by a man of the Ansar who was admonishing his brother regarding shyness. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Leave him alone, for modesty is a part of Iman." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

The Narrator:

He is Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Al-Khattab Al-Qurashi Al-Adawiy, brother of the Mother of the Believers, Hafsah - may Allah be pleased with her. He was born in Mecca a year before the Prophethood, and he died in the year 73 or 74 AH and was buried near Mecca. He converted to Islam when he was young and immigrated to Medina before his father. The first battle he attended was the Battle of the Trench. He participated in the battle of Mu'atah, Yarmouk, the conquest of Egypt and Africa, and in the wars of apostasy. He was one of the six companions who narrated the most hadiths. He was famous for his strict following of the sunnah of the Messenger - peace be upon him - and for his great caution and devotion to his religion in fatwas, and in every matter. He abandoned the dispute over the caliphate despite the inclination of the people of the Levant towards him, and he did not participate in any of the strife that occurred between the Muslims.

Vocabulary

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • مَرَّ : passed | • أَخَاهُ : his brother |
| • رَجُلٌ : man | • الْحَيَاءُ : modesty |
| • الْأَنْصَارُ : the Helpers
(The people of Medina) | • دَعَهُ : leave him |
| • يَعْظُ : admonish | • إِيْمَانٌ : faith |

The Explanation:

Islamic Sharia has placed great importance on noble morals. The success of a Muslim in this world and the Hereafter is attributed to good morals. The Prophet confined the purpose of his mission to one thing, which is to complete noble morals. He said: "I was only sent to perfect noble morals." He also informed us that the most beloved among people to him and the closest to him on the Day of Judgment are those with the best morals.

Once, the Prophet ﷺ passed by a man from the Ansar (supporters of the Prophet from Medina) who was speaking to another man, perhaps his brother by lineage or his brother in Islam. The man was admonishing and blaming him for his excessive modesty and reluctance to claim his rights, alleging that this modesty harms him and causes him to lose his wealth and interests. This man heavily criticized and reproached his brother, warning him that this would cause him many troubles and that he should become bolder and not be shy around people.

The Prophet ﷺ heard all that was said between the two men. So, he ﷺ said to the blamer: Leave him with his good nature, for indeed, modesty is a good characteristic and it is part of the branches of faith. Do not forbid him from a good character, and do not blame him for a trait that Allah has ingrained in him, for Allah does not grant modesty to anyone except for good.

What is Modesty?

In the Arabic language, "modesty" (hayaa) is derived from "life" (hayat). It's as if the Arabs, when they coined this term, intended to convey that one who lacks modesty lacks true life; thus, whoever loses modesty is like the dead.

As for modesty in the terminology of Sharia (Islamic law), it is defined as: "A characteristic that urges its possessor to avoid what is shameful and prevents them from falling in short comings."

Modesty is the cornerstone of virtues. When a person feels ashamed to be cowardly, one become courageous; when one feels ashamed to be stingy, one become generous; and feel ashamed to lie, it leads them to be among the truthful. That's why the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: Indeed, from the early divine teachings that people have gained is that if you don't feel shame, then do as you please.

The Origin of Modesty:

Modesty, in its essence, can be classified into two types:

- **Innate Modesty (Fitri):** This is a disposition bestowed upon the servant by Allah, innate within them, which prevents them from committing shameful or disgraceful acts and encourages them to do good.
- **Acquired Modesty (Muktasab):** This is when a person learns about Allah, His greatness, and His power, acknowledges their own shortcomings, weaknesses, and sins, and realizes that Allah Almighty sees and hears everything they do. Thus, they feel ashamed before Allah.

Types of Modesty:

- **Modesty towards Allah:** Modesty towards God entails obeying His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. This is the lowest level of modesty towards God. The highest level is for a servant to feel ashamed that anyone but God is aware of their innermost thoughts and feelings.
- **Modesty towards People:** Modesty towards people involves refraining from harming them and avoiding doing anything disgraceful in their presence. For example, it is forbidden for someone to break their fast during Ramadan without a valid excuse. If they do so, they carry the sin of breaking their fast, and if they do not feel ashamed before people, they also carry the sin of openly committing the sin. Likewise, it is forbidden for a woman to expose her hair in front of non-mahram men, and failing to maintain her modesty in front of them adds another sin on top of not covering her hair.
- **Modesty towards oneself:** This relates to chastity and safeguarding one's privacy. It involves feeling ashamed to exhibit any deficiency or anything that compromises one's honor or dignity. This is the type of modesty about which the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "Modesty is a branch of faith." Other forms of modesty that are not in line with what Sharia seeks or encourages are not considered true modesty.

Examples of Modesty from the Early Muslims:

- Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was described as having more modesty than a virgin in her private chamber.
- Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say, "Be shy before Allah. I go to relieve myself while covering face, out of modesty before my Lord, the Almighty."
- Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said to Moses, peace be upon him, "I am shy of my Lord!"
- Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, described Moses as a man of modesty and dignity, to the extent that nothing could be seen from his skin out of modesty.
- Uthman ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, used to close the door when he was in the bathroom and would not remove his garment even to pour water over himself during bathing, out of modesty.
- Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, may Allah be pleased with him, used to avoid standing erect when bathing, out of modesty before Allah.
- Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that when Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was buried, she refrained from entering the room where he was buried without her clothes tightened, out of modesty before Umar.
- When Fatimah became ill with the illness from which she died, Asmaa bint Umayy entered to visit her. Fatimah said to Asma, "By Allah, I feel shy that my body will be exposed to the men in my funeral through this bier!" At that time, biers were just flat boards on which the deceased was placed, and then a cloth was laid over the body. However, this cloth outlined the body's shape. Asmaa then said to her, "Shall I not prepare for you something I saw in Abyssinia?" She made for her a covered bier that was box-like on the sides with wet palm leaves bent over it, and then she spread a wide, loose cloth over the bier, which did not outline the shape! When Fatimah saw it, she said to Asmaa, "May Allah cover you (with His Mercy) as you have covered me!!" Ibn Abd al-Bar said about Fatimah: She was the first woman whose bier was covered in Islam in that manner!

- Zayd ibn Thabit went to the mosque but found that people finished praying and they were going out. So, he entered a house to hide from people. He was asked, ‘ Why did you do that?’ “he replied: the one who is not shy of people is not shy of Allah.”
- Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, would enter the bathroom alone, wearing a thick garment, saying, "I feel shy before Allah to be seen naked in the bathroom."
- It is narrated that Amr ibn 'Utbah ibn Farqad was praying one night when they heard the roar of a lion. Everyone fled except him, as he continued praying, people said to him, “Were you not afraid of the lion?” He replied, "I feel shy before Allah to fear anything other than Him."
- Allah said about the daughter of Prophet Shu'ayb: “Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness.” Quran: 28/25. Umar explained this verse saying: "She came walking modestly, with her face covered with a part of her outer garment, unlike those immodest women, who go about wherever they like, and enter wherever they like without any hesitation." in another explanation she covered her forehead and eyes with her hand out of shyness and modesty.

The Hadith implies the following:

- It elucidates the importance of modesty in religion, indicating that faith is incomplete without it. Modesty holds a significant position in faith.
- It encourages the expression of truth and prompt response to any errors related to religious matters, as rectifying religious affairs is paramount.
- It emphasizes submission to the truth, surrendering to it, and accepting it without hesitation, dispute, or emotional reactions when it becomes clear.
- It directs attention to the caretaker's responsibility towards their flock, monitoring their conditions, and guiding them towards righteous behavior.
- It is advisable for those who command or prohibit something to clarify the reason behind it, as it aids understanding and facilitates acceptance and compliance.