



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مفتی محمد یوسف ڈانکا
Mufti Muhammad Yusuf Danka

الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، وهادياً للناس أجمعين. صلاةً وسلاماً دائمين إلى يوم الدين، وآله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان، وسلم تسليماً كثيراً، أما بعد:

Every Religion Has A Special Characteristic, And the Special Characteristic of Islam is Ḥayā

﴿إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا، وَخُلُقُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ﴾

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur'an: And those who, when they have committed *Fahishah indecency* (illegal sexual intercourse etc.) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; - and none can forgive sins but Allah - And do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know. (*Surah Aal-Imran, v135*)

Ḥayā is a natural intrinsic quality within a person. The level of Ḥayā within a person is a means of indentifying their standing amongst people. When a Mumin has īmān in his heart, he is all the times mindful of Allah and as a result he is continuously trying in all circumstances to refrain from sinning. He will take care, to a greater extent, about safeguarding his connection with his Creator with respect to his actions and moral conduct.

Ḥayā is an Arabic word that cannot be satisfactorily translated into any other language. Commonly we find Ḥayā interpreted simply as modesty, an outward characteristic generally confined to certain shameless actions, for example, the code of dress an individual adopts. This deficient interpretation fails to do justice to the profound concept of Ḥayā. In reality, Ḥayā is a character trait that causes one to abandon all that is shameless and repugnant and prevents one from neglecting the rights of every rightful owner.

Every individual has a level of Ḥayā and modesty. For example: in society, it is not considered appropriate to be shameless. People will dress appropriately when leaving their homes. In Islam the quality of Ḥayā also makes the believers aware of the fact that their actions are always in the knowledge and sight of their Creator, who is all knowing and seeing.

Ḥayā holds a central and pivotal role in Islām and is one of its salient features. Rasulullah ﷺ stated:

﴿إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا، وَخُلُقُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ﴾

“Every religion has a special characteristic, and the special characteristic of Islam is Ḥayā.” (*Sunan Ibn Mājah VI.2 Pg.1399*)

Ḥayā is the cornerstone of a Muslim's character and regulates how he conducts himself in private and public, in his dealings with Allāh Ta'ālā and with the creation. It creates a realisation that Allāh Ta'ālā is fully aware of all that one does, says, or thinks, and deters one from engaging in acts that are displeasing and vulgar. A society in which Ḥayā is entrenched will flourish with values of chastity, mutual respect, compassion, accountability, a general sense of social responsibility, a high sense of morality and importance for family values and justice.

It is for this reason Rasulullah ﷺ stated:

الحياء لا يأتي الا بخير

Ḥayā only brings goodness. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī VI.8 Pg.29*)

الحياء خير كله

Ḥayā encompasses all that is considered goodness. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim VI.1 Pg.64*)

الْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

Ḥayā is a very significant branch of īmān. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī Vl.1 Pg.11*)

Ḥāfīz Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī رحمه الله explains how Ḥayā is a very significant branch of īmān:

أَنَّهُ كَالدَّاعِي إِلَى بَاقِي الشُّعْبِ إِذِ الْحَيُّ يَخَافُ فَضِيحَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ فَيَأْتِمُرُ وَيَنْزَجِرُ

Ḥayā is like a catalyst to the other branches of Dīn, because the one with Ḥayā fears the humiliation of both this world and the Hereafter, and so obeys all of Allāh Ta‘ālā’s commands and refrains from all that displeases Him. (*Faṭḥ Al-Bārī Vl.1 Pg.73*)

The real significance of Ḥayā can be understood by the consequences of its absence. An individual lacking in Ḥayā loses the sense of awareness of Allāh Ta‘ālā, becoming heedless of the All-Knowing and Ever-Watchful qualities of Allāh Ta‘ālā. This leads to carelessness and neglect of the commandments of Islām, and eventually disobedience and total disregard for any sense of accountability in this world and the Hereafter. Ultimately, the outcome is not seeing things the way they truly are and a person lives a life oblivious to even the most obvious of Divine signs. The natural consequence of this is the inability to discern right from wrong, with the definitive criteria being one’s base desires.

On a collective level, a society devoid of Ḥayā will fall prey to immorality and oppression. With no inner restraint to curb one’s actions, there will be no limit to one’s behaviour, irrespective of how unacceptable it may be. The result will be a society ruled by carnal desires and animal instincts. The social diseases devastating society today are a direct result of the disappearance of Ḥayā. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has warned:

إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحْيِ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ

“...If you do not have Ḥayā, you will do whatever you desire.” (*Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*)

The loss of Ḥayā from our society has led to the wholesale proliferation of indecent images imposed upon us in every facet of daily life. The impact of this is an imbalance in the nature of man, such that the fulfilment of carnal desires has become the primary objective and overriding deity to be followed.

The outcome of this over sensualisation has led to the rise in, rather, the pervasive crises of indecent assault, rape, teenage pregnancy, STDs and infidelity in marriage; to such an extent that even at a government level the authorities are perplexed as to how to solve these issues. Furthermore, any individual with an iota of insight acknowledges the endemic nature of these vices and how they are shredding the very fabric of society. These are only the direct consequences of the loss of Ḥayā and each issue in itself leads to further auxiliary issues.

For example, the loss of Ḥayā has led to infidelity in marriage. This leads to divorce and the break-up of the family unit, resulting in children being raised in an imbalanced environment. A bi-product of this is a wave of depression, an isolating feeling of gross discontentment and, in some instances suicide, in society.

Ḥāfīz Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī رحمه الله writes:

قَالَ الرَّاعِبُ الْحَيَاءُ انْقِبَاضُ النَّفْسِ عَنِ الْقَبِيحِ وَهُوَ مِنْ خَصَائِصِ الْإِنْسَانِ لِيَرْتَدِعَ عَنِ ارْتِكَابِ كُلِّ مَا يَشْتَهِي فَلَا يَكُونُ كَالْبَهِيمَةِ

“Imām Rāghib رحمه الله stated: Ḥayā is the restraining of the nafs from deplorable actions – a distinguishing feature of humans – so that it abstains from fulfilling all that it desires, and does not become like an animal.” (*Faṭḥ Al-Bārī Vl.1 Pg.102*)

Subsequently, we see the corrosion of human values leading to the plague of violence, crime and other anti social behaviour ensuing in a society.

The Prophet ﷺ came into the world at a time when the absence of Ḥayā and heedlessness had exceeded all limits. In the brief span of twenty-three years the Prophet ﷺ successfully revived the lost spirit of Ḥayā in the individual and society. He taught how every limb has its share of Ḥayā and how it is best preserved. Frequent remembrance of death, the reality of the grave, the horrors of the day of judgement and the bliss or torment of the final abode, coupled with his blessed company and teachings of compassion, mercy and other noble traits.

Effort was made to control the tongues from lying, backbiting, slander, giving false testimony, safeguarded oneself from quarrels and dispute, safeguarding the gaze, to view all people as equals, to not hold prejudice, to prevent utilisation of natural physical urges in an unlawful manner, not to make fun of others in jest, not to be two faced in dealings, safeguarding oneself from hypocrisy, safeguarding oneself from alcohol, gambling and fornication and to be aware of your deficiencies and sins at all times... all of these qualities and teachings transformed a hedonistic society into a shining example of civilization upholding the commands of Allāh Ta‘ālā. If we too desire the same success, we also need to strive and bring Ḥayā back into our lives.

The greatest quality that needs to be adopted is that worship, reliance and devotion should only be to the Creator without associating partners to Him.

Imām Mālik bin Anas رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said:

كَانَ وَهْبُ بْنُ كَيْسَانَ يَقْعُدُ إِلَيْنَا، ثُمَّ لَا يَقُومُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى يَقُولَ لَنَا إِنَّهُ لَا يُصْلِحُ آخِرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا مَا أَصْلَحَ أَوَّلَهَا

“[Imām] Wahab bin Kaysān رَحِمَهُ اللهُ would sit with us and would never conclude [the gathering] without reminding us that only that which rectified the former part of this Ummah will rectify the latter.” (Musnad Al-Muwattā VI.1 Pg.584)

In the previous generations of this Ummah, the greatest distinct quality they held was that of sincerity, Ḥayā and truthfulness in every deed and action. But in the present day, we have left this path completely.

The unfortunate state of the majority of the Ummah as a whole, the youth and the elders, is that it has become very easy through technology, mobile phones and social media to lead one towards immoral and illicit actions. A person can be exposed to material that will lead to their moral and spiritual degradation and destruction, without being aware of it. This can be a means of utilising their time in a manner that is not beneficial and also directly affects them in Duniya and Akhirah.

Parents should be wary of what their children are occupied with, both within the house and outside. As if the correct religious and moral nurturing is not inculcated, this void will be filled with vice instead of virtuous qualities.

We all need to be wary of the fact that, there should be no deed performed by us that would lead to Allāh Ta‘ālā being displeased with us. We need to be aware of the favours that we are blessed with and utilise them in the correct manner. Being grateful for these blessings is called Ḥayā, which is an honourable and unique quality of the believers. May Allāh Ta‘ālā bless us with the true quality of Ḥayā and bless us through it to attain His pleasure. آمين Ameen.

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبل الخير والسلام .

مفتى محمد يوسف دُنْكَا (عفا الله عنه)

Mufti Muhammad Yusuf bin Yaqoob Danka
Croydon Masjid & Islamic Centre

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