

The Virtue of Modesty and Its Legal Objectives: Embodiment and Protection

فضيلة الحياء وأهدافها الشرعية: تجسيدها وحمايتها

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Abstract:

This article aims to highlight the significance of the virtue of modesty and its impact on preserving the purpose of the mission of Prophet Mohamed peace be upon him in perfecting noble morals. It addresses the following question: What are the objectives behind adopting the virtue of modesty? The research will be conducted using the inductive, descriptive, analytical, and deductive methodology, and it is structured into two main sections. The first section explains the meaning and status of modesty in Islamic law, while the second section discusses the objectives of modesty.

The research concludes that modesty is one of the most important components of human behavior that elevates a Muslim individual and achieves three essential objectives: a faith-based objective, a legislative objective, and an educational objective. Faith and modesty are intertwined; if one is removed, the other is also removed. The legislative objective is achieved by the individual's awareness of God's presence and surveillance, leading to modesty before Him. The educational objective is achieved by maintaining a sound nature through self-control, avoiding immoral acts, and staying away from vices and prohibitions, as approaching them is not befitting of a person of integrity.

Keywords: Ethics, Objectives, Virtue of Modesty.

الملخص

يهدف هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على أهمية فضيلة الحياء وأثرها في الحفاظ على هدف رسالة النبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم في إتقان الأخلاق الفاضلة. ويعالج السؤال التالي: ما هي الأهداف وراء تبني فضيلة الحياء؟ سيتم إجراء البحث باستخدام المنهج الاستقرائي والوصف التحليلي والاستنتاجي، ويُقسم إلى قسمين رئيسيين، يشرح القسم الأول معنى الحياء ومكانته في الشريعة الإسلامية، بينما يناقش القسم الثاني أهداف الحياء.

ويخلص البحث إلى أن الحياء يعد من أهم مكونات السلوك البشري التي ترتقي بالفرد المسلم وتحقق ثلاثة أهداف أساسية: هدف إيماني، هدف تشريعي، وهدف تربوي. فالإيمان والحياء مرتبطان ارتباطاً وثيقاً، فإذا زال أحدهما زال الآخر. ويُحقق الهدف التشريعي من خلال وعي الفرد بوجود الله ورقابته، مما يؤدي إلى التحلي بالحياء أمامه، أما الهدف التربوي فيتحقق بالحفاظ على الفطرة السليمة من خلال ضبط النفس، وتجنب الأفعال غير الأخلاقية، والابتعاد عن الرذائل والمحرمات، إذ إن الاقتراب منها لا يليق بمن يتحلى بالزاهة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأخلاق، الأهداف، فضيلة الحياء.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the one whom Allah sent to all people, to legislate for them and to perfect their morals. May Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, and may Allah be pleased with his companions, his family, and those who follow them with goodness until the Day of Resurrection

And after:

Morals are attributes that a person possesses, whether good or bad. The good ones are praiseworthy, while the bad ones are blameworthy. Our Sharia has called for good morals, as the Prophet Mouhammed (peace be upon him) said: "I was only sent to perfect noble morals." Allah also praised His Prophet (peace be upon him) by saying (And indeed, you are of a great moral character.) Al-Kalem 4, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'His character was the Qur'an.' And Al-Shatibi said: 'The entire Sharia is essentially about embodying noble morals.

Al-Juwayni said: "The essence of Sharia is to encourage noble morals and to forbid immoral and destructive acts."

All these texts collectively highlight the importance of good morals in our Sharia, indicating that they are intended in its legislations. Their intended nature is evident as they are firm and unchanging. Among the commendable morals is the virtue of modesty, which has been praised and described in various texts. The Prophet Mohamed (p b up him) said: "Modesty brings nothing but good," and he also said: "If you feel no shame, then do as you wish." The story of Al-Qa'nabi with the latter hadith illustrates the importance of this virtue in restraining human behavior. This highlights the reason for choosing this topic, which is to explain the value, importance, and objectives of this virtue. The aim is to explore the role of modesty in upholding the Prophet's mission to perfect noble morals and highlight how this virtue distinguishes his Sharia. The central question is: What are the underlying objectives of embodying the virtue of modesty?

The following questions arise from this issue: What is meant by the virtue of modesty? What is its position in Sharia? What are the objectives achieved by embodying or not embodying it?

This will be researched, God willing, according to the inductive, descriptive, analytical, and deductive methodology within the following plan:

First Topic: The Meaning of Modesty and Its Position in Sharia

- **First Section:** The meaning of modesty in language and terminology
- **Second Section:** Its position and status in Sharia

Second Topic: The Objectives of Modesty

- **First Section:** The type of objective sought from modesty
- **Second Section:** The objectives of modesty

Conclusion and Recommendations

First Topic: The Meaning of Modesty and Its Position in Sharia

First Section: The Concept of Modesty in Language and Terminology

Firstly, Modesty in Language:

Ibn Manzur mentioned modesty, saying: “Modesty is repentance and decency. One may feel modesty towards someone, expressed as ‘istahya’ or ‘istahyaak’. The final ‘ya’ is sometimes omitted to avoid the meeting of two ‘ya’s. Both forms can be used with or without a preposition, such as ‘istahya minka’ (he was shy of you) or ‘istahyak’ (he was shy of you)¹.

Modesty is derived from the root word ‘ḥayī’, which signifies a change and humility that overtakes a person due to the fear of being blamed or criticized². Ibn Faris pointed out that the root (ḥ-y) has two meanings: one is the opposite of death, and the other, which is intended here, is modesty, which is the opposite of shamelessness³.

As for Al-Asfahani, he said: modesty is the restraint of the soul from indecencies and abandoning them. It is said: ‘ḥay’ meaning he is modest, and ‘istḥayā’ meaning he is feeling modest. It is also said: ‘istḥayā’ meaning he is modest⁴.

It can indicate restraint and withdrawal, Al-Akhfash said: it can be used with or without a preposition, as in ‘istḥayītu minhu’ and ‘istḥayītuhu’. There are two dialects: one is the Hijazi dialect, which appears in the Quran with two ‘yā’s, and the other is the Tamimi dialect with one ‘yā’⁵.

Considering the meanings of the word ‘ḥayī’, we find that they revolve around a single meaning, which is modesty with restraint and withdrawal.

Secondly - Modesty in terminology:

Many definitions revolve around the meaning of modesty, including what Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar mentioned when he said: “A trait that prompts its possessor to avoid indecency and prevents neglecting the rights of those who have rights”⁶.

Ibn Hibban defined modesty as a quality that involves avoiding undesirable traits. He mentioned that there are two types of modesty: the first is the servant’s modesty before Allah Almighty when contemplating actions that might go against

¹ Ibn Mandhur, Lisan al-Arab al-Muheed, Dar al-Jil, Beirut, Dar Lisan al-Arab, Beirut, (n,d), 1408 AH - 1988 CE, entry for “Haya” (modesty), p. 775.

² Murtada Al-Zabidi, Taj Al-Arous Min Jawahir Al-Qamous, A Group of Editors, Dar Al-Hidaya, (n.p, n.e, n.d), Vol. 37, p. 512.

³ Ibn Faris, Maqayis al-Lughah, edited by Abd al-Salam Harun, Dar al-Fikr, (n.d., n.p.), 1399 AH - 1979 CE, vol. 2, p. 122.

⁴ Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn ibn Muhammad, Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an, edited by Safwan Adnan Dawudi, Dar al-Qalam, Damascus, 1st ed., 1412 AH, p. 270.

⁵ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Fayoumi al-Muqri, Al-Misbah al-Munir, edited by Yusuf al-Shaykh Muhammad, Al-Maktabah al-Asriyyah, (n.d., n.p., n.d.), entry "Hayya," vol. 1, p. 86.

⁶ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, (n.d.), 1379 AH, vol. 1, p. 52; Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, Dar al-Safwah Press, Egypt, 1st ed., 1404 AH, vol. 18, p. 259.

His commands, and the second is the servant's modesty before people when engaging in actions they dislike"¹.

Al-Jurjani defined modesty as the act of restraining oneself from something and avoiding it out of fear of being blamed. He mentioned that there are two types of modesty: the first is natural modesty, which Allah has instilled in all souls, such as modesty from exposing one's private parts and engaging in sexual intercourse in public. The second type is faith-based modesty, which prevents a believer from committing sins out of fear of Allah Almighty².

Section Two: Its Status and Position in Sharia

Modesty occupies a crucial place in Islamic Sharia. It is an attribute of Allah Almighty and a component of faith. Modesty is also a trait of the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them. The significance of modesty is emphasized in the Quran and elucidated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his Sunnah.

For instance, Salman Al-Farsi narrated that the Prophet Mouhammed (peace be upon him) said: "Indeed, Allah is modest and generous. He feels shy when a man raises his hands to Him (in supplication) to return them empty and disappointed."³

Narrated by Ali: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw a man washing himself from his feces in an open area without a lower garment. He ascended the pulpit, praised Allah, and then said: "Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, is modest and concealing. He loves modesty and concealment. So, when one of you bathes, let him conceal himself."⁴

Therefore, Modesty is regarded as one of the most essential elements of human behavior and, consequently, one of the most important components of a dignified and free life that humanity seeks. It prevents the escalation of conflicts and thus enmity between the individual and his brothers and fellow citizens. It also prevents the call to evil, deepens division, and exacerbates relationships among human beings.⁵

Modesty is sufficient in virtue and honor as it is an attribute of Allah, the Exalted, in a manner befitting Him. Some wise men have mentioned the virtue of

¹ Ibn Hibban, Abu Hatim Muhammad ibn Hibban al-Busti, *Rawdat al-'Uqala' wa Nuzhat al-Fudala'*, edited by Muhammad Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1977 CE, vol. 1, p. 57.

² Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani, *Al-Ta'rifat*, edited by a group of scholars, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1403 AH - 1983 CE, p. 94.

³ Al-Tirmidhi, *Al-Jami' al-Kabir Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, edited by Bashir Awwad Ma'ruf, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Beirut, 1998 CE, *Kitab al-Da'awat*, chapter on the virtue of repentance and seeking forgiveness and what has been mentioned about God's mercy towards His servants, Hadith no. 3556, vol. 5, p. 448.

⁴ Abu Dawood al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abi Dawood*, edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and Muhammad Kamil Qara Bully, Dar al-Risalah al-'Alamiyyah, 1st ed., 1430 AH - 2009 CE, *Kitab al-Hammam*, chapter on the prohibition of nudity, Hadith no. 4012, vol. 6, p. 130.

⁵ Ahmad Rajeeb al-Asmar, *Makarim al-Akhlaq fi al-Islam: Nazariyyah wa Tatbiqan*, Dar al-Furqan, Amman, Jordan, (n.d.), 2008 CE, p. 335.

modesty, saying: “He who is clothed with modesty will not have his faults exposed to people.” Another eloquent person said: “The life of the face is in its modesty, just as the life of a plant is in its water. One who is deprived of modesty has no deterrent from doing evil or refraining from the forbidden. He does whatever he wishes and follows his desires¹,” as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “One of the sayings of the early Prophets that the people have got is: If you do not feel ashamed, then do whatever you like.”²

Moreover, modesty brings nothing but good; it is the key to all good, as the beloved Prophet Mouhammed (peace be upon him) said: “Modesty brings nothing but good.”³

Thus, modesty is a trait that drives a person to do good deeds and keeps him away from evil. It is also a trait associated with faith, as it is the characteristic of Islam, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): “Every religion has a distinct characteristic, and the characteristic of Islam is modesty.”⁴

Section Two: Objectives of Modesty

One of the primary objectives emphasized by Islamic law is the attention to noble morals. God did not reveal a book or send a messenger without emphasizing the significance of good character because of its virtue and its influence on the perfection of the one who possesses it. The Prophet Mouhammed (peace be upon him) said: “I was sent to perfect good character.”⁵

At the forefront of these noble morals is the virtue of modesty, regarded as one of the attributes of God Almighty. It has been previously mentioned that modesty is a commendable and desirable trait, attributed to the Lord of the Worlds. It is also a characteristic of His noble Prophet and all the prophets and righteous people. The esteemed companions of the Prophet and those who follow their path until the Day of Judgment adorned themselves with it. It is the most honorable garment a servant can wear and an adornment for the believer.

This esteemed position of modesty and its association with it shows that it is one of the intended objectives in our Sharia. This section is dedicated to explaining this objective and its manifestations in the following branches:

¹ Abdullah ibn Jar Allah, *Al-Haya' wa Atharuhu fi Hayat al-Muslim*, Dar al-Sumai'i for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., 1900 CE, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, p. 4.

² Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, edited by Muhammad Zuhair ibn Nasir al-Nasir, Dar Tawk al-Najat, 1st ed., 1422 AH, Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya' (Book of the Prophets), chapter on the Hadith of the Cave, Hadith no. 3484, vol. 4, p. 177.

³ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, edited by Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, (n.d., n.p.), Kitab al-Iman (Book of Faith), chapter on the branches of faith, Hadith no. 37, vol. 1, p. 64.

⁴ Ibn Majah al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and others, Dar al-Risalah al-'Alamiyyah, 1st ed., 1430 AH - 2009 CE, Kitab al-Zuhd (Book of Asceticism), chapter on modesty, vol. 5, p. 278.

⁵ The reference will be provided on the following page.

Branch One: The Nature of the Intended Objective of Modesty

Modesty is a virtue that is sought both for its own sake and for other purposes. In other words, it has both primary and secondary objectives.

Primary Objectives: These indicate that modesty is sought for its own sake because it is an attribute of the Lord of the Worlds, His Messenger (peace be upon him), His companions (may Allah be pleased with them), and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment. Ibn al-Qayyim considered it one of the stages of the seekers towards the Lord of the Worlds. Thus, it appears that modesty is an intrinsic virtue sought for its own sake.

Secondary Objectives: These are the benefits gained by those who possess this virtue, which are secondary to the primary objective. Therefore, modesty is sought both for itself and for its benefits.

The next section will detail the nature of each objective:

Branch Two: Objectives of Modesty

We all know that our Sharia has clear and evident legislative objectives in most of its rulings, as well as hidden ones that scholars have spent their lives and time deducing. It is also evident that our Sharia has moral objectives in its legislations. How could it not, when morals are fundamental and important in our religion? “I was sent to perfect good character.”¹ Since this research is related to one of these morals, which is modesty, I have dedicated this research to elucidate its objectives and explain the purpose of adopting it.

First: Faith-Based Objectives

The concept of faith is defined as: “The Muslim’s commitment to adhere to the commands of Allah Almighty and avoid His prohibitions, both inwardly and outwardly.”²

The faith-based goal here is clear, as embracing the virtue of modesty is one of the most significant outcomes of believing in the attributes of Allah—the Almighty. Modesty is closely linked with faith, as the Prophet Mouhammed (peace

¹ Reported by Malik in Al-Muwatta, Kitab al-Jami', chapter on good character, Hadith no. 1609, vol. 2, p. 904; Ahmad in Al-Musnad, Musnad al-Mukthirin min al-Sahabah (The Musnad of the Frequent Narrators Among the Companions), Musnad Abu Huraira, Hadith no. 8952; al-Bukhari in Al-Tarikh al-Kabir, in the biography of Qaqa' ibn Hakim, Hadith no. 835, vol. 7, p. 188; and in Al-Adab al-Mufrad, chapter on good character, Hadith no. 273, p. 67.

Al-Shatibi explained the meaning of the completion of morals by saying: "The virtues of character are of two types: those that are familiar and close to the acceptable and reasonable. These were initially addressed to them at the beginning of Islam. Then, once they had firmly established these virtues, what remained was completed for them.

And the second type was that which was not immediately comprehensible in meaning, and so it was delayed until the later revelations, such as the prohibition of usury and similar matters. All of this ultimately relates to the virtues of character.

² Qutb Mustafa Sanu, Dictionary of Usul al-Fiqh Terms, Beirut, Dar al-Fikr, 3rd ed., 2006 CE, p. 287.

be upon him) said: "Modesty and faith are companions; when one is lifted, the other is lifted as well."¹

From the hadith of Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both): "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) passed by a man who was admonishing his brother regarding modesty. The Prophet said, 'Leave him, for modesty is part of faith.'"²

From the hadith of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Faith has over seventy branches, or over sixty branches, the best of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the least of which is removing a harmful object from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith."³

Among the requirements of faith in the attributes of Allah, is to embody what He has desired and loved for His servants to embody. Allah has names and attributes that He has named and described Himself with, some of which we must believe in and accept as they came in His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Others He has encouraged us to embody; He loves for His servants to embody them, such as knowledge, strength in truth, mercy, forbearance, generosity, and forgiveness, among others. He is All-Knowing and loves the knowledgeable, Strong and loves the strong believer more than the weak believer, Generous and loves the generous, Merciful and loves the merciful, Forgiving and loves forgiveness, and so on."⁴

And there is encouragement to worship Allah by His name 'Al-Hayyi' (The Modest), so one should not do anything shameful, nor should one expose what is between him and his Lord, nor should he expose the faults of others, but rather cover them. Allah loves modesty from His servants and loves to cover them; this attribute increases the believers' hope and supplication to Allah, the Glorious. Therefore, the supplicant can present this before his supplication, saying: 'O Modest, O Concealer, cover me,' and the like.⁵

¹ Reported by al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn*, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "When a servant commits adultery, faith leaves him," Hadith no. 66, vol. 1, p. 176. This hadith is authentic according to their criteria, as they cited the narrators but did not include this wording. Also reported by Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "Indeed, modesty and faith are linked together; if one is removed, the other is removed," Hadith no. 21, p. 21.

² "Agreed upon," reported by al-Bukhari in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "Modesty is part of faith," Hadith no. 24, vol. 1, p. 94; and by Muslim in *Sahih Muslim*, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "The number of branches of faith and their best and least," Hadith no. 36, vol. 1, p. 63.

³ "Agreed upon," reported by al-Bukhari in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "Matters of Faith," Hadith no. 9, vol. 1, p. 11; and by Muslim in *Sahih Muslim*, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Faith), chapter on "The number of branches of faith and their best and least," Hadith no. 35, vol. 1, p. 63.

⁴ Collected Fatwas and Various Articles by Sheikh Ibn Baz, vol. 1, p. 133. The ruling on the statement: "Adopting the names and attributes of Allah" is a letter I sent in response to an inquiry when I was a deputy at the Islamic University of Madinah in 1386 AH.

⁵ Same reference.

The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) said: ‘Indeed, Allah, the Almighty, is Forbearing, Modest, and Concealing; He loves modesty and concealment. So, when one of you bathes, let him conceal himself.’¹

Allah is Modest and loves the modest servant. When one embodies this attribute, they achieve the purposes of this embodiment, starting with Allah’s love for them, as He loves those who are modest. Additionally, it leads to elevation and distancing from shameful acts, so one does not expose their sins and shameful deeds between themselves and their Lord, which would undermine their faith and incur Allah’s wrath. Thus, they improve their vigilance of Him and cover what is between them and their brothers, as well as cover what they see of their faults and sins, hoping and desiring Allah’s favor in covering them. Who among us does not need Allah to cover their faults and hide their sins from the eyes of the creatures on the Day when secrets are tested and revealed? Allah says (The Day when secrets will be put on trial(10) Then he [i.e., man] will have no power or any helper) Al-Tarik 9.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “...Whoever resonates with Allah in one of His attributes will find that attribute guiding them to Allah, drawing them closer to their Lord, bringing them nearer to His mercy, and making them cherished by Him. Indeed, Allah is Merciful and loves those who show mercy, Generous and appreciates the generous, Knowledgeable and values the knowledgeable, Strong and favors the strong believer, loving the strong believer more than the weak one. He also loves those who are modest and beautiful, and He appreciates those who embody beauty.”²

Ibn al-Qayyim also said: “And since He, the Exalted, is indeed the Appreciative, those who embody the attribute of gratitude are the most beloved of His creation to Him, just as the most detested to Him are those who neglect it or embody its opposite. This reflects the essence of His beautiful names; the most beloved of His creation to Him are those who embody their meanings, while the most detested are those who manifest their opposites. Thus, He loathes the disbeliever, the unjust, the ignorant, the hard-hearted, the stingy, the cowardly, the contemptible, and the vile. He, the Exalted, is Beautiful and loves beauty, Knowledgeable and loves the knowledgeable, Merciful and loves the merciful, Benevolent and loves the benevolent, Concealing and loves those who conceal, Capable and reproaches incapacity, and the strong believer is more beloved to Him than the weak believer. He is Forgiving and loves forgiveness; He is Singular and appreciates odd numbers. Everything He loves reflects His names and attributes

¹ Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, Book of Musnad al-Shamiyyin, 4/224; and by Abu Dawud in his Sunan, Book of Baths, Chapter on the Prohibition of Nudity, Hadith no. 4012; authenticated by al-Albani in Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud; and by al-Nasa'i in his Sunan, Book of Ghusl and Tayammum, Chapter on Covering Oneself When Bathing, Hadith no. 406, 407, and he said: Authentic.

² Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, The Sufficient Answer for Those Who Asked About the Healing Remedy (The Disease and the Cure), Dar al-Ma'arifah, Morocco, 1st edition, 1997, p. 67.

and their meanings, while everything He detests is contrary to and conflicts with them.”¹

However, the creature’s attribution of some of the Creator’s attributes is limited by not exceeding the proper bounds. It is sufficient for the creature to have a share of the meanings of these attributes in a manner that befits and suits him within the legal limits without exceeding them. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said: “As for the modesty of the Lord - the Almighty - from His servant, that is another type, which minds cannot comprehend, nor can intellects encompass. It is modesty of generosity, goodness, and majesty. For He—blessed and exalted be He—is modest and generous. He feels a sense of shyness toward His servant if they raise their hands to Him only to have them returned empty², and He feels reluctant to punish an elderly person who has aged in Islam.”³

In summary, modesty is a virtue that expresses itself as a manifestation of faith, reflecting the believer's sincerity in their belief in Allah and His attributes. It is a practical expression of the effects of that faith by embodying the attributes that a believer is permitted to adopt from the attributes of Allah, the Almighty. This noble virtue encompasses legislative and moral objectives that will be discussed in the following section.

Second, Legislative and Ethical Objectives: Islam is founded on the principles of morals, which serve as the ultimate purpose of the Prophet's mission, peace be upon him. Al-Shatibi said: “The entire Sharia is essentially about embodying noble morals” This is why the Prophet Mouhammed, peace be upon him, said: “I was sent to perfect noble morals.”⁴

Religion is indeed about morals, and morals are the essence of religion. Morals are the outcome of sound belief and sincere worship. The obligations of Sharia are not merely hollow rituals if the effects and fruits of these obligations do not manifest in the character and behavior of the servant. If morals are corrupted, it is a sign of corrupted faith and belief.”⁵

Linking its obligations to the concept of duty and reward is one of the strongest motivators for good and the most powerful incentives for ideals and values. This makes it follow the doctrinal foundation upon which the obligations of Sharia are built. The most evident proof of this is that the initial phase of

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya: *Al-Bayan al-Wafi fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna li-Ulama' Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, Jami' al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, vol. 1, p. 170.

² Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hadith no. 23714; and by al-Albani in *Sahih al-Tirmidhi*, Book of Supplications, Chapter on the Supplication of the Messenger (peace be upon him), Hadith no. 3556.

³ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya: *Madarij al-Salikin Bayna Manazil Iyyaka Na'budu wa Iyyaka Nasta'in*, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, 1416 AH - 1996 CE, vol. 2, p. 242.

⁴ Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, p. 124.

⁵ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Arab Islamic Culture Between Authenticity and Modernity*, Beirut, Dar al-Risalah, 1st edition, 2001, with modifications, pp. 27-28.

establishing this religion commenced with the reformation of the creed and its purification from the impurities of paganism, in parallel with the refinement of morals and the purification of souls from vile attributes, so that hearts unite in the oneness of Allah, and souls rise above trivial matters.¹

The role of promoting ethics did not end with the conclusion of the Meccan period; rather, it is clearly evident in most of the practical legislations during the Medinan period. Al-Shatibi said: “The Meccan legislations, which were the initial ones, were generally unrestricted and aligned with the norms of rational people and the principles of noble ethics. They involved engaging in all that is known for its good customs and avoiding all that is known for its bad customs, except for what the mind is completely isolated from determining, such as the limits of prayers and similar matters. Most of these were left to the discretion of the responsible individuals in those customs and were subject to their efforts to adopt what suited them and what they could achieve from those general virtues and noble qualities in their devotion to the One Worshipped. This included performing obligatory and voluntary prayers as explained in the Quran and Sunnah, spending money to help those in need, and supporting the poor and destitute without a fixed measure in Sharia, maintaining family ties whether close or distant according to what sound minds deem appropriate, observing the rights of neighbors and the community of faith among relatives and strangers, reconciling disputes among all people, and responding with what is best. These unrestricted legislations were not specified with constraints later on.”²

Civil legislations aim, through their obligations, to educate those responsible by imparting moral and educational meanings with each obligation. For example, the verse of Allah Almighty says (and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allāh is greater) Al-Ankabut 45.

We find that abstaining from immoral and reprehensible acts is an educational outcome achieved by the responsible person through performing prayers with the required conditions of humility and submission. The effect of modesty appears in compliance and vigilance, which is a result of the modesty firmly established in the believer's soul. Thus, he does not approach immoral and reprehensible acts because his prayer prevents him from doing so. His zakat (charity) purifies him from greed and stinginess, so he fulfills what Allah has imposed on him in what he has been entrusted with, and his soul is purified. His fasting, known only to his Creator, fosters piety and reverence for the Lord of all worlds. Similarly, all other obligations, as the servant's awareness of Allah's gaze upon him and His monitoring of his actions makes him endure the hardships and

¹ Muhammad Mustafa Shalabi, *Introduction to Islamic Jurisprudence*, Dar al-Jami'ah, 10th edition, 1985, pp. 50 and following, p. 281.

² Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, p. 41.

burdens of these obligations. This is what makes them bear fruit and achieve their purposes.

Ibn al-Qayyim said “When the servant knows that the Lord, the Exalted, is watching him, this knowledge instills in him modesty. This modesty drives him to bear the burdens of obedience, just as a servant who works in the presence of his master is active and bears the burdens, especially with the kindness of his master and his love for him, unlike when he is absent from his master. The Lord, the Exalted, never takes His gaze off His servant, but the servant’s heart may lose sight of this gaze. When the heart loses sight of Allah’s gaze and pays less attention to it, this results in a lack of modesty and audacity.”¹

“It becomes evident that the role of ethics is significant, as superficial theorizing without considering the inner realities and truths will not bear fruit. Therefore, Islamic jurisprudence has walked hand in hand with the law of ethics, never separating. The impact of ethics is clear in many of its legislations. For example, the prohibition of usury aims to purify souls from selfishness and greed, fostering a spirit of cooperation among people and protecting society from conflicts and disputes resulting from the dominance of the wealthy over those in need. Similarly, the prohibitions of gambling, alcohol, adultery, and slander aim to elevate the soul from taking others’ property unjustly, harming others physically or in their honor, or consuming what harms it.”²

Thirdly: Educational and Purification Objectives:

Modesty is the fertile ground in which a Muslim is nurtured, as it instills a strong religious and educational conscience. It is a crucial element for the purification and elevation of the soul, serving as a foundation for the educational and purifying goals of modesty, and Allah knows best, are as follows:

1.Preserving the innate nature (fitrah) that humans are created with:

Ibn Ashur said: “Fitrah is originally a term for the state of creation, similar to the word ‘creation’ as explained by the verse: ‘the fiṭrah of Allāh upon which He has created [all] people’ (Al-Roum30), meaning that He has created and formed them upon it, making them capable of it.”³

Ibn Atiyyah said: “The reliable interpretation of this term (fiṭrah) is that it refers to the innate nature and state within a person, which is prepared and equipped to recognize the creations of Allah, deduce from them the existence of their Lord, and understand His laws.”⁴

Allah said: “So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.” (Surah Al-Roum, 30)

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madarij al-Salikin*, vol. 2, pp. 52-53.

² Muhammad Mustafa Shalabi, *Introduction to Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 281, 284.

³ Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, *Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Dar Sahnoon, no edition, n.d, vol. 22, p. 89.

⁴ Ibn Ashur, previous reference, vol. 22, p. 89.

And the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) said: “Every child is born upon the fitrah, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian, just as an animal produces a perfect animal: do you see any among them that are mutilated? Then Abu Huraira recited: ‘The fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion.’”¹

Thus, fitrah is the innate nature and disposition upon which humans are created and prepared to live. Morals can be either innate, granted to a person from the beginning, even if they are a disbeliever, or acquired. Modesty is one of the morals that people are naturally endowed with², and a person can be nurtured to increase or decrease it. If one abandons modesty, this abandonment is a deviation from the fitrah upon which we were created.

When we look at the conditions of our youth today, and the transformations they are experiencing, such as attempts at effeminacy, the spread of deviance among them, and the imposition of improper unions between different types of people, it clearly indicates this dangerous deviation from the fitrah that Allah has created His servants upon.

2. Purification of the Soul:

In language, purification refers to both increase and cleansing, with both meanings relevant to its terminological definition. In this context, it pertains to the spiritual cleansing referenced in the verse: “And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it (8) and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness” (Surah Ash-Shams, 7-8), “He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]” (Surah Ash-Shams, 9-10).

Ibn Kathir said in his interpretation of these verses: It is possible that the meaning is: “He has succeeded who purifies his soul,” meaning by obeying Allah, as Qatadah said, and cleanses it from vices and lowly morals, as in the verse: “He has succeeded who purifies himself” (Surah Al-A’la,14). “And he has failed who

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, Book of Funerals, Chapter on If a Child Converts to Islam and Dies, Is the Funeral Prayer Offered for Him, Hadith no. 1358, vol. 2, p. 94; and by Muslim in his Sahih, Book of Divine Decree, Chapter on the Meaning of Every Child Is Born upon the Fitrah and the Ruling on the Death of the Children of Non-Muslims and Muslims, Hadith no. 2658, vol. 4, p. 2047.

² Scholars have differed on whether modesty (al-haya') is innate or acquired. Psychologists believe that the first signs of modesty begin early and become apparent by the age of one year. Inherited traits play a role in the degree of shyness in a child, which becomes more susceptible to positive or negative direction by the age of three years, at which point the influence of the environment becomes clear. Ibn Sina said: ‘... And not everything that is well-known is so by nature; some things are accepted as truth in one’s natural disposition, but not everything that is well-known is necessarily a primary intellectual or imaginary truth. These things are not innate but are established in the mind because they have been continually practiced since childhood. They may also be driven by a love for peace and cooperation, which humans are compelled to seek, or by certain human traits like modesty and sociability, or by extensive induction, or by the fact that a statement in itself has a subtle condition that makes it purely true, yet this condition is not noticed, and the statement is accepted in general.

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instills it [with corruption],” meaning he who buries it and diminishes it by forsaking it from guidance, until he commits sins and abandons the obedience of Allah Almighty. It is also possible that the meaning is: “He has succeeded whom Allah purifies his soul, and he has failed whom Allah instills his soul [with corruption].”¹

Alternatively, it can refer to the development of the soul through the enhancement of its positive qualities. The soul needs constant nourishment for its purification and requires care and follow-up to increase in goodness, just as the body increases in energy and knowledge², so that it becomes worthy of the honor that Allah has bestowed upon it. Modesty has an impact on this purification, as modesty nurtures and purifies a person.

Modesty is of two types:

It plays a crucial role in purifying and preserving the soul, preparing it to reach its Lord. Modesty protects the soul from actions that would bring disgrace before Him and acts as a shield against them. It also preserves one’s good deeds from being nullified and diminished, as it guides the soul towards its Lord, seeking His pleasure. It protects one’s faith in Allah from anything that extinguishes its light, diminishes its joy, and weakens its strength.³

Self-purification is achieved through the following:

1. Self-control:

This refers to controlling oneself and weighing one’s actions against high moral standards. It is well-known that self-control is particularly important when one is angry, as anger can cause a person to lose control and act or speak in ways they would normally be ashamed of. Similarly, self-control is necessary in the face of desires, pleasures, and doubts that can tarnish one’s honor and religion.

An illustrative story of self-control is that of Al-Qa’nabi⁴ and his encounter with the Prophet Mouhammed’s (peace be upon him) saying: “Among the sayings

¹ Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, edited by Mustafa al-Sayyid Muhammad and others, Mu'assasat Qurtuba, Tafsir of Surah Ash-Shams, vol. 8, p. 410.

² Al-Daddo, previous reference.

³ Ibn al-Qayyim, Madarij al-Salikin, vol. 2, p. 30.

⁴ Abdullah bin Maslamah Al-Qa’nabi was a young man who lived a life of frivolity and indulgence, drinking wine with his companions without any sense of restraint or modesty. One day, while sitting in front of his house, he saw people following a sheikh. He asked about him and was told, “This is Shu’bah ibn al-Hajjaj.” He asked, “Who is Shu’bah?” He was told, “He narrates hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).” Al-Qa’nabi went to him and demanded, “Narrate to me a hadith.” Shu’bah remained silent and then said, “You are not worthy of that.” Al-Qa’nabi threatened him, saying, “You will narrate to me or I will stab you with this knife!” Shu’bah then narrated: “Mansur narrated from Rabi’ from Abu Mas’ud al-Badri (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘From the words of the earlier prophets that people have reached is: If you feel no shame, then do as you wish.’” This had a profound impact on Al-Qa’nabi, leading to a radical change in his life. He became a seeker of knowledge and a student of Imam Malik, eventually becoming one of his prominent students who carried his knowledge to Iraq. He later became a teacher of Bukhari and Muslim. It is said that he only narrated this hadith from Shu’bah. This story is mentioned by Muwaffaq al-Din Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi in his book “Kitab al-Tawwabin,” which discusses

of the earlier prophets that has been passed down is: "If you feel no shame, then do as you wish."¹ This had a profound impact on him, completely transforming his personality. He became one of the scholars of Hadith and a student of Imam Malik, known for his trustworthiness and prominence, and a teacher of Bukhari and Muslim. Before this transformation, he was a young man who did not control his actions, indulged in his desires and whims, and oppressed others.

2. Avoiding Vices:

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Avoiding vices preserves the soul, as it works to protect and safeguard it from what disgraces, blemishes, and degrades it in the sight of Allah Almighty, His angels, His believing servants, and all His creation. For whoever values and honors his soul will protect, elevate, and purify it, placing it in the highest ranks, competing with those of strong resolve and perfection. On the other hand, whoever devalues and belittles their soul will allow it to fall into vices, unleashing its desires, loosening its restraints, and neglecting it, ultimately failing to protect it from disgrace. At the very least, avoiding vices preserves the soul². Vices obscure the heart and extinguish its light, whereas faith serves as the heart's illumination. Vices certainly diminish or extinguish this light. Good deeds increase the light of the heart, while sins extinguish it."

3. Modesty Revives the Heart:

Modesty (al-haya') comes from the word for life (al-hayat), and from it is derived 'al-haya' for rain, though it is shortened. The strength of a person's modesty is directly proportional to the vitality of their heart. A deficiency in modesty signifies a dead heart and spirit. The more vibrant the heart, the more profound the modesty.³

4. Modesty is the foundation of all goodness:

Modesty leads only to goodness. Bashir bin Ka'b said: "It is written in wisdom that modesty brings dignity and tranquility." Imran replied: "I am narrating to you from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and you are narrating to me from your book?" Modesty is entirely good. He said, or he said: "Modesty is all good." Modesty is the source of all good because it encourages one to adopt noble and high morals. It makes its possessor calm and dignified, Putting things in their rightful places, showing respect and honor to oneself and others, and steering clear of immoral acts and forbidden behaviors are essential because engaging in them is not fitting for a person of integrity. This leads to earning the love of the Creator and gaining the esteem of His people.

Modesty carries within it educational and purifying purposes, manifesting in the preservation of a person's natural disposition. It also works on purifying the soul by developing and increasing it with good qualities. Through this purification,

the repentance of various individuals from the Ummah. Some scholars have disputed the authenticity of this story.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, Book of the Stories of the Prophets, Chapter "Abu al-Yaman narrated to us," Hadith no. 3483, vol. 4, p. 177.

² Ibn al-Qayyim, Madarij al-Salikin, vol. 2, p. 26.

³ Ibn al-Qayyim, Madarij al-Salikin, vol. 2, p. 48.

self-control is achieved, avoiding vices and maintaining a pure heart and thus modesty was the root of all good.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say, by the grace of God, that modesty is fundamentally an attribute of Allah Almighty, befitting His majesty and greatness. Modesty is a trait that Allah has instilled in human nature, and the texts of Shariah emphasize the importance of adopting it, as it is one of the qualities that leads to earning Allah's love.

Modesty is one of the most essential elements of human behavior, representing one of the highest and most noble virtues. It elevates the Muslim individual and keeps them away from vices and sins. For this reason, it is a goal and purpose of our Shariah. Some of its objectives include:

Modesty as a Faith Objective:

Modesty reflects the sincerity of a believer in their faith in Allah and their recognition of His attributes. It is a practical expression of the effects of that faith by embodying the qualities that a believer is permitted to adopt from Allah's attributes. Faith and modesty are closely intertwined; if one is lost, the other is also lost.

Modesty as a Legislative Objective:

This results in sincere faith by making a person aware of God's presence and supervision, leading to modesty before Him. This, in turn, fosters excellence in one's actions. The opposite is seen with a lack of modesty and brazenness. Since Islamic jurisprudence aligns with the law of ethics, our legislation inherently carries an ethical character, including the virtue of modesty.

Modesty as an Educational Objective:

It is manifested in preserving a pure nature by working on self-purification and growth through commendable traits. This leads to self-discipline, avoidance of vices, and a lively heart. Modesty becomes the root of all goodness, making its possessor calm and dignified, placing things in their rightful places, showing respect and honor to oneself and others, and steering clear of immoral acts and forbidden behaviors are essential because engaging in them is not fitting for a person of integrity. This leads to earning the love of the Creator and gaining the esteem of His people.

Recommendations

Modesty is a key virtue that reflects the ability to prioritize important interests. It is essential to work towards reviving the value of modesty, particularly in the hearts of young people, by educating them about its importance. Attention should also be given to teaching examples of modesty from the lives of individuals who were characterized by this trait, as well as organizing conferences and seminars and writing research about it

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