



There was once an eagle that lived atop the highest of mountains, nesting among the crags. One day, the eagle felt curious about the village that lay at the foot of the mountain and decided to pay it a visit. As it landed on the ground below, an old lady suddenly threw a sack over it, capturing it and taking it to her home!

Once at home, she took the bewildered and frightened eagle out of the sack. Never having seen an eagle before, she looked at it and exclaimed, *“You poor bird! Nobody’s been looking after you! Your nails are so long and filthy! And your beak has become curved and sharp! And your wings are overgrown! Shame!”* Sayi  
ng so, she clipped the eagle’s wings. Then, she trimmed its beak. Finally, she cut its talons.

Obviously, that was the end of the eagle. With its wings trimmed, it could no longer fly. With its talons trimmed, it could no longer hunt, and with its beak cut, it could no longer eat. What seemed like kindness was, in reality, absolute cruelty to the eagle as it effectively killed the bird. Furthermore, it obliterated the beauty and unique features of the eagle, which lay in its curved beak, hooked talons and large, powerful wings, and rendered the eagle indistinguishable from an overgrown chicken.

In comparison to this example, Allah Ta’ala has blessed the Ummah of Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) with the quality of hayaa (modesty and shame). This is their own special quality that sets them apart and distinguishes them from every other Ummah and religion, and this is the quality on which the survival of their imaan is dependent. To some people, hayaa may seem to be a hindrance and obstacle in the path of ‘progress’. The reality is that stripping a Muslim of hayaa is an act of utter cruelty and completely handicaps a person, preventing him from progressing on the path to Jannah.

Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) has said, *“Hayaa and imaan have been joined together. When one leaves, the other follows.”*  
(*Mustadrak Haakim #58*)

When hayaa has been joined to imaan, we can understand that if a person inculcates more hayaa in his life, his imaan will also proportionately progress, and if one loses his hayaa, he will soon thereafter lose his imaan

*(may Allah Ta'ala save us all)*

Similarly, Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) has mentioned, "Indeed every religion has a distinguishing characteristic, and the distinguishing characteristic of Islam is hayaa."

*(Sunan Ibni Maajah #4181)*

If a Muslim is void of hayaa, he or she will eventually become indistinguishable from the disbelievers.

*Sadly, this is commonly witnessed today, where many Muslim brothers and sisters, on account of their dressing, etc, cannot be distinguished from the disbelievers.*

It is a lamentable reality that we live in an age of indecency, shamelessness and immorality. However, instead of being swept away by the tsunami, we should rather strive to rekindle the spirit of hayaa – especially as the very survival of our imaan depends on the level of our hayaa. For this purpose, Uswatul Muslimah has commenced a new category on the website dedicated to the revival, promotion and understanding of hayaa.

This category is entitled 'Hayaa Handbook'. Insha-Allah, we will regularly post articles to this category, discussing and elaborating on different dimensions of hayaa and its role in our lives.

*May Allah Ta'ala accept us all to lead lives of complete hayaa and to strive for the revival of hayaa, in our own lives and in the lives of others.*