

## THE NOTION OF MODESTY THROUGH HIJAB: AN ANALYSIS OF HAYA' IN SOFIA KHAN IS NOT OBLIGED

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**Abstract:** Ayisha Malik's "*Sofia Khan is not Obligated*" (2016); is a successful 'Chick Lit' novel on Muslim dates. It recounts the tale of a second generation British Muslim woman who faces challenges in her personal, professional and social life due to her decision of wearing the hijab, full time. This study focuses on Aysha Malik's general concentration on hijab throughout the text and zooms it out critically. The concept of 'haya' from the Islamic points of view is chosen to foreground the analysis of the study. 'Haya' is a combined package of versatile good aspects of a person; consisting one's religious belief, modesty, having the sense of self-dignity, the way of gazing, talking and behaving to others and also the way to interact with both men and women. Of course 'wearing hijab' is one of the visible features of 'haya' (Aisha Wood 2006), symbolising modesty. The paper intends to pursue after Sofia's coming of age through her practicing 'haya' in everyday life. Sofia is a die heart follower of Islam, at the same time, she is a feminist. She is not subjugated by any unsuitable situation or person and this mix attitude gives her a heroic look. Sofia's coming of age in this novel is noteworthy, even her strong faith in religion transforms her personality into a missionary. Thus, the Muslim dating story ultimately turns into the icon for the whole community of Diasporic Muslim women. Finally, this paper suggests that practicing 'haya' in everyday life, one can meet the spiritual development, which is an ultimate goal of every single Muslim. For Muslim women it starts with carrying the mentality of wearing hijab in any situation. Applying the concept of 'haya' through the hijab matter and relating it to the Muslim women in the West add the flavor of originality to this paper.

**Keywords:** Challenges of Muslim women, Islamic Rituals; Faith; Substances of Haya'; Modesty and Veil.

### Introduction

The word 'modesty', holds the picture of aristocracy and fashion of clothing in general sense, specially in the case of women. "Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire" (1 Timothy 2:9). Depending on age,

nations, place, era and religion, the attitude towards modesty differs, but the core of every religion preaches to be modest internally. Of course, the modesty inside is reflected in one's attitude and choice of dress. "There's an inseparable link between your heart and your clothes. Your clothes say something about your attitude. If they don't express a heart that is humble, that desires to please God, that longs to serve others, that's modest, that exercises self-control, and then change must begin in the heart. For modesty is humility expressed in dress" (C. J. Mahaney 2008).

This study gets interest in the variations of modesty, viewed by different researchers in different ways. Though much scholarly works have been done on modesty, very few have explored 'modesty' through hijab in the 'Islamic Chick Lit fiction', which is directly connected to the modern young Muslim women living within the hybrid culture. On the basis of corpus preference, this study picks "Sofia Khan is not Obligated" and determines to analyse 'modesty' through the lens of the Islamic concept of haya, in relation to the Muslim protagonist of this novel (Sofia). Taking information from the Quran, Sunnah and the past research, this study has noticed that modesty is well explained by the Islamic word 'haya', while 'haya' is a power and an ability which can change the picture of the present world. Just we need to practice it in our daily life. Here Sofia is an example, whose sense of haya leads her in wearing the hijab fulltime and influences her to represent herself as an idol of the whole Muslim community. All her eagerness to be a good Muslim endeavors to satisfy her personal and professional dignity and also her continuous struggle to establish her religious identity have promoted a scope for this study to analyse it critically.

### **About the Text**

"Sofia Khan is not obliged" is the first novel of Aysha Malik which is, published in the recent year (2016) and has achieved a great success for the writer. Aysha Malik is one of the South Asian Muslim diaspora writers who reflects her own foreign life through the character, called 'Sofia', which she designs in this novel. Through Sofia, she voices for the Muslim diasporas who are harassed and dominated by the cultural strain, social pressure and male dominance. And, in the case of the diasporic migrant women, an added challenge is, to face the new land and to adjust the new lifestyle. They live the life of double oppression- 1) as 'the second race citizens and 2) as the Diaspora entities' (Asim Karim, Zakia Nasir 2014). Aysha Malik also depicts a very simple and original story of the Muslim diasporic lives in the western city. But the way she presents Sofia's life style, her demands, likings, dislikings and every single step of her life that it holds the steadiness of the plot-flow and makes the novel unique.

"Sofia Khan is not obliged" is a Muslim romantic comedy written in the style of Bridget Jones's Diary in the form of a diary. In this novel, the protagonist - Sofia Khan is a second generation Muslim woman of 31 years old living in London who lives with her Pakistani immigrant family. Sofia is a universal character in the western city whose life is at the same time heartbreaking and heartwarming ([The Writes of Woman](#), 2016). Sofia figures out how to live in the West with the complexities of steady existence of a Muslim, where she gets the title of a 'terrorist' only for wearing her hijab on, where to discover a place for paying without any one's cocked eyebrows is to discover something with full delight. At the same time she voices for her own choice and right. She dreams for a world, where nobody to ask her to do what she ought not to do, nobody to question on wearing hijab, no outsider giving her any title over her clothing, nobody to direct her work way.

In her personal life Sofia possesses a very lovely and supportive Muslim family. Her friends are always there to heal her wounds and to walk her more smoothly. She splits her going to be

wedding with Imran, who wants Sofia to stay with his full family after marriage, as a whole in the wall. In her professional life she does not leave any try to get total success. The publishing company hires her to write a book on light Muslim dating though she wants to write something more serious.

*“The Muslim experience of dating is quite diverse, and crazy things do happen, people make strange choices. I needed that variety. And it wasn’t about just a protagonist finding love; it was about the experience of living in London as a Muslim, and trying to find someone as a Muslim” (p-77).*

Sofia practices with modern Islam, she is a devout to her religious belief and at the same time she is a feminist. She is a modern Muslim woman, who never forgets her boundaries of her religion, but also values her own points of view. She has total self-control over her own attitudes towards individuals. In her romantic life, for some time being, Sofia is perplexed with the fake love of Naim, who is charming, funny and flirty but totally unreliable. Next-door neighbor Conall barely says a word for at least half of the book. He is a delightful character who goes from an almost wordless presence to teaching Sofia how to box. “I have a thing for male characters who teach women how to protect themselves instead of just offering to protect them (I also have a thing for women who start off as badasses and men who respect that badassery, but that fits into a whole different genre).

*“He’s a man who knows the value of a good cup of tea and a working car, and you have to respect that, too”.*

At the very beginning of the book, Sofia is called a 'terrorist' by a stranger and this moment continues troubling her all through the story. Her manager needed to pet her hair under her scarf. She is repeatedly alluded to as "That Muslim young lady". She parts up with her going to be husband because of the hole in the wall circumstance; her mother wants her not to wear a hijab, she never accepts sex before marriage, and the boss at her office guides her to compose an interesting Muslim dating book, though she wants to write something stronger. Most of the plots come from Sofia’s attempts to balance her work life, her inner hope to define a true Muslim as life partner, several dating with different guys in account to write something for the book and also from the emotional crisis of her many friends and relatives. Above all, the unique practice of wearing hijab, praying five times a day, fasting in Ramadan and all her attempts to be a good Muslim have promoted a decent look to this novel. Sofia’s dream to be the model for all Muslim ladies and her struggles to make her dream true are the common portrayal of the Muslim women in the western land. Moreover, the story is more about, a coming of age tale than a romance novel. It’s very much about Sofia’s attempts of cementing her modest Muslim life in London.

### **Related Works**

As “Sofia Khan is not obliged” is published in the recent year (2016) and no scholarly works have been done yet purposely on this novel, it is quite difficult to mention any citation regarding this novel, at the same time there are many scopes to work with this novel as its arrival period is still very new. As soon as “Sofia khan is not obliged” is published, the book worms accepted this novel with much positive reaction and started sharing their opinions and feedbacks at different blogs. Unfortunately, not a particular scholarly paper has been composed yet on the novel. In this point, this work is definitely exclusive one.

In need of insightful works on the content, this paper targets to specify the related studies on 'modesty', 'haya' and 'hijab'; as these are the main focus of this study to discuss and analyse. Modesty ('haya' in Arabic) is a personality trait, wherein one remains polite and humble without necessarily lacking self-esteem or self-confidence (Azizah and Putri, 2013). The act of modesty can be classified into two main categories: (a) physical modesty in terms of dress code and design humility and (b) inner modesty in terms of internal perception (self-improvement or self-motivation) and social interaction (shyness, humility, and politeness) (Azizah and Putri, 2013).

This study aims to reconnect hijab with a vibrant inner spirituality and restates hijab wearing as a religious, spiritual practice more than a personal, social, cultural or political statement. Few studies have investigated on wearing hijab and its significance (Haddad, 1984; Zuhur, 1992; Zenie-Ziegler, 1988; Ruby 2006; Fakhraie 2008). Researchers have viewed hijab from different perspectives. Hijab is a portrayal of women's agency (Amrah Abdul Majid 2016). It is an 'empowering tool of self-expression through which women increase their relationship with their own faith and culture' (Susan Taha & Ida Baizura, 2014). The practice of wearing hijab by a Muslim woman is as 'an articulation of faith and an embodiment of prescribed frameworks for modesty which is totally divine' (Cheruvallil Contractor, 2012). The Vice Chair for MAS Greater L.A.'s Tarbiya Department cited with great worry that "I was always afraid of dying without wearing hijab" ([Lobna Mulla](#), 2012). According to her, hijab is a fard and she got the knowledge of the holy Quran and Sunnah. Writers should mark veil as the freedom of mobility by their own choice to accept or reject to wear it (Daphne Grace, 2004). Hijab does not make a difference just to garments. It is a perspective, conduct, and way of life (Amrah Abdul Majid, 2016).

Focusing on the act of wearing hijab from the religious and social perspective Li Chen et al. concentrate on the future conceivable outcomes on this design. They connected the dissent angling hypothesis and examined the hijab style in non-Muslim nation (America) over meetings and came to the discoveries that the design there relied upon the deciphering of the hijab wearer and unquestionably the causes varied from each other's (Li Chen et al., 2014). Sulaiman Sheu Adua in 2013), worked on how the women should wear dresses globally according to Islam. He also supports the prohibition towards beautification by transforming body parts. And he also suggests that modest dress up is of the main active actions, which can control the blasphemy over adulteries. Aisha Wood chipped away at the religious purposes behind wearing hijab. To her, the wellspring of all the great conduct of a Muslim is essentially the concept of hay'a or Modesty. He recommends that as Islam educates to lead a complete, all-encompassing and extensive lifestyles, the Muslim country ought to make out the genuine importance of Din' (lifestyle) and follow the way minutely (Aisha Wood Boulanouar, 2006). Nasser has composed that selection of a hijab "passes on an open message/explanation, both about the wearer and about the relationship between the wearer and potential viewers" (Nasser Mervat, 1999).

Another article which is much similar to this paper displays hijab as both material and conceptual object. According to Rahela Nayebzadah, hijab is a material object as it is a piece of cloth and depending on culture, belief and practice it reveals different looks. Again, some of the wearers do not wear hijab only to cover their head, hair or beauty rather to them hijab is a concept of modesty in regards to dress, behavior, speech, and way of living. She recommends that it is extraordinary to wear hijab by feeling its actual significance (Rahela Nayebzadah, 2010).

Tariq-Munir investigated the social and familial components that influence Muslim ladies' choice to wear the hijab and how their families respond to their choice to wear the hijab. He also points out that the hijab wearers have to experience both strong and unsupportive demeanors from their families on that account of wearing hijab. He tries to draw the way that the women handle this situation against wearing hijab outside their home and offers the suggestion to hold the power of hijab, feel the fragrance of it and grab it as a regular practice (Erum Tariq-Munir, 2014). The author's purpose is to explore the social and familial factors that affect Muslim women's decision of wearing the hijab and to focus on the reactions of their families towards their decision. 'I specifically argue that the process through Muslim women in America come to wear the hijab is multi-faceted and involves both social and familial factors. I also argue that these women encounter both supportive and unsupportive attitudes from their families over their decision to wear the hijab. With Muslim women as such visible symbols of Muslim American society, it is imperative that they become active in the Muslim society as well as in the mainstream American society in order to improve the public impression of Muslim women as meek, uneducated and confined to their homes'.

Fatima Sahrish in her paper, 'Veil: Epitome of Feminine Modesty or Symbol of Oppression' works on the famous female poet Imtiaz Dharker's 'Purdah and Other Poems'. From here she takes the issue of the veil to prove it as the symbol of epitome of feminine modesty while the veil in a conservative Islamic society is strictly imposed by patriarchy, which subjugates a woman in the name of security. Throwing the references from proper sources she comes to the findings that a distinction is made between what is told in Islam regarding purdah and how she is mistaken to say that this orthodox religion forces women to observe purdah against their will. According to Fatima Sahrish 'It may be a propaganda according to the western media and should not be brought into the practice of occidental and oriental colours. No religion forces women to observe anything against their will and it is not a compulsion on anybody' (Fatima Sahrish 2016). According to her, Veil harms no one and if a woman decides to wear it, it shows that she is following one of the Allah's many commandments and that she loves Allah unconditionally (Fatima Sahrish 2016).

To view the modesty here is an interesting paper by Asifa Siraj (2011), 'Meanings of modesty and the hijab amongst Muslim women in Glasgow, Scotland', where Asifa Siraj gets her result by interviewing 30 participants. Of them 50% were hijabies. Her research starts with the debate between traditional Muslim scholars and Muslim feminists about whether the hijab is an Islamic obligation. She takes the opinions from Muslim, non-Muslim, hijabies, also non-hijabies. She gets much positive and negative result for and against hijab. But finally she gets that despite their contrasting views on veiling; both groups of participants hold remarkably similar views on the importance of female modesty. She supports their shared views on modesty which are influenced by the idealised feminine traits, demonstrated within Muslim culture, with an insistence on modesty, chaste deportment and manner of dress.

Hijab tells much about modesty. The perception of modesty layouts an unmistakable portability and connection convention for both sexes, which is by and large more excessive for women (Maududi, 1991). So the women cannot help veiling themselves. It is a common belief of Muslim women that by protecting their modesty and wearing hijab with pride and self-regard; they must satisfy Allah and can be reacquainted as unadulterated and virtuous Muslim ladies in the world. In fact, by covering herself a lady is masking her sexuality, in any case, allowing her gentility to be brought out. She needn't bother with her sexuality to go into coordinated efforts with men at all degree.

The most remarkable issue in the recent new columns is the shooting in the Mosque in New Zealand (March 15, 2019). After this incident on Friday women in New Zealand started wearing hijab to respect and support the Muslims. Prime Minister of New Zealand *Jacinda Ardern* also showed tribute towards the Muslims and the modesty of Islam. That proves that surely headscarves are the sign of modesty, tribute and respect.

“Women all over New Zealand put on headscarves on Friday to show solidarity with Muslims a week after 50 people were killed at two mosques in the city of Christchurch”( <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/new-zealand-women-wear-headscarves-to-support-muslims-after-shootings>).

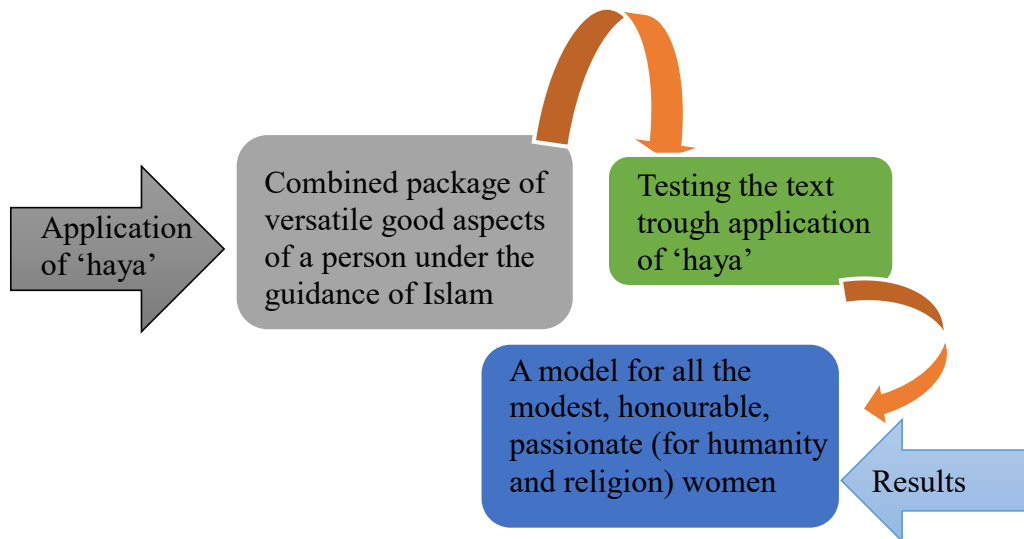
Allah has strictly asked both the men and women likewise, to cut down their look and secure their subtlety (The holy Quran 24:30-31). Specially the women must have to tow the veil over their chest and not to reveal their beauty. Islam always endorses modesty and decorum in terms of minimizing the social immorality and Hijab helps women to achieve the goal of having a balanced moral society. Hijab is an indication of humility. Hijab could be viewed as the insurance that women receive against allegation of good corruption and in some outrageous cases infidelity (Oula Abu Hwajj, 2012).

The above recognition of literature is suggesting that hijab wearers are treated differently by different researchers. Some researchers are presenting a specific modest culture, some present hijab as a religious message between the wearer and the viewers, some throw views on hijab wearing, from the religious and social perspective, some of them search the results for the Muslim women in the west and some other relate the headscarves to modesty and haya. This existing research suggests that Hijab is not just a covering dress, rather it tells more. It brings out the wearer's conduct, behavior, discourse and appearance in broad daylight. The headscarf is an external indication of an inward responsibility to adore the almighty- Allah. Of course it, symbolizes a promise of devotion. And this dedication will start with the sense of haya and culminate with modesty. Hijab possesses its own voice, it can talk, and it tells the whole world of the modesty of Islam. This study redesigns ‘hijab’ and names it- ‘a visible form of haya’.

### **Measurement/ Method**

A paper gets success when the theoretical concepts are applied and they get matched with the contents or (here the selected text). It is already mentioned that this paper applies here, the concept ‘haya’ as the scale of measuring the novel “Sofia Khan is not Obligated”, Now let's see how the concept of haya is shown or used in the text. Though Hijab is the symbol of terrorism to some people, as they think Muslims are terrorists; but this article is not going to discuss over that contradictory topic. Rather in this paper hijab is representing all the Muslim women and their power modesty. Sofia is the leading character of those women.

This paper research is designed in the qualitative way. The concept of haya is taken into granted by this paper and would be proved its presence in the novel “Sofia Khan id not Obligated”. Being defined the meaning of ‘haya’ and described its characteristics, a model of the Muslim women would be created. Taking this model as an examiner, the text would be analysed by this paper and would gain its goal.



**Fig 1: Results of Practicing 'Haya' In One's Life**

### **The Substance of Haya/Modesty**

Modesty is something intellectual which spurs to be a decent Muslim (Janmohamed, qtd. in Akbar & Taylor 2010). As per Janmohamed, modesty involves soul which should be acclimated at unsurpassed. From the glance of Islam, modesty is derived from the concept of 'haya'. Modesty and Haya are interwoven with each other. In Islam, modesty relates specifically to haya and haya starts with maintaining modesty in covering the body as indicated by the control of the Quran and Hadith. Haya is such a notion that acquaints with everything those are best in Islam. This small word is worth full enough to add importance to this study. The Muslims who are determined to hone "haya" are must be Modest, Humble, Simple, Shy, Moderate, Decent, Polite, Pious, Lowered in look, Respectful and clearly loyal towards Allah (swt). Haya' is an obligatory and center esteem that ought to saturate our lives. It might be communicated in various courses relying upon the connection, yet we ought to hold the substance of this cornerstone quality.

There is no single interpretation of the word 'Haya' in the English Dictionary. It is taken from Arabic language. According to Islamic phrasing Haya' is the great quality; it is the distinguishing characteristic of Islam. It covers several meanings like- dignity, unobtrusiveness, modesty, bashfulness, and hesitancy. Most of the cases Haya is defined as shyness. But this shyness is not for an indication of shortcoming or absence of certainty or experience rather, it is an indication of self-control and certainty. It is a decent way to be modest and this bashfulness is to control own self not to do any off-base. This feeling of cognizance is called haya (Mawlana Sheikh Mehmet Adil Sabbath, 2015). Haya, in one hand, crafts people feel their own honor and pride and to be glad with great deeds and on the other hand, despondent and uncomfortable with awful deeds. A man, who does not see his own ill manners and immodest conduct, really has lost his 'Haya', lost his Iman (Zeinab Hassan Ashry, 2016). 'Haya' is the mental state of human being, which leads one to keep away from shameful deeds and activities. It is a motive power which motivates a man to earn higher traits and clean ethics.

### **Haya as the Figure of Faith**

Modesty is additionally viewed as a critical piece of an imperative fraction of faith (Profet SWM). Without having faith on religious preaches and rites one cannot be firmly modest and to be steady on faith more than fifty catalysts work together; haya' is one of those (Al-Bukhari, 1.8). The prophet reminds us that haya (modesty, etc.) is an essential part of one's faith: "Faith consists of more than sixty branches and haya (it covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together; amongst these are self-respect, modesty, blissfulness and scruple) is a part of faith" (Narrated by Abu Hurairah, Al-Bukhari, Vol 1, Book2, Number 8). Haya'(faith) is about believing on the Almighty, on the prophets and angels, on the life hereafter and on all the indications written in the holy Quran (Al-Tirmidhi, 3115).

Faith' is the main source of haya. If the Muslims have strong faith in their religion, their creator and in the Quran, all the substances of haya automatically would be followed by them.

- 1) Haya towards the Almighty 'Allah'---- We must be modest towards the Omnipotent. We ought to ingrain a profound feeling of haya' before Allah SubhanahuWata'la, as He is ubiquitous and can see whatever we do though we cannot see him. "Do whatever you will. Indeed, He sees all that you do." (Al-Fussalat, 41:40). So it is a test for us as if, He is in front of us, as the feeling of somebody's presence makes us to think about our image before them. Haya is the precious moral quality of Islam, which helps us to grow that sense of the unseen presence of Allah. The 'Ulama' said: The reality of Haya is that it is a quality that makes one gives up inappropriate and repulsive qualities, actions and sayings and it prevents one from failing to give what is due to others.
- 2) Haya towards the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ---- Taking after the guidance of the prophet (SWSM) and focusing on his Sunnah, the Muslim ought to be modest towards the prophet (peace be upon him). A verse is taken from an urdu poem: "Without love for the Prophet it is difficult to find God". Islam is based on Iman, a Muslim must maintain the path of Iman and it consists of seven main articles of faith - (1) belief in God, (2) Muslim Beliefs, Practices, and Values, (2) belief in the Prophets, (3) belief in Divine Books, (4) belief in the Day of Judgment, (5) belief in Angels, (6) belief in Destiny or fate and (7) belief in life after death. And the way people keep faith in religion and apply it in their life is haya'. So, haya' towards the prophet cannot be ignored in any ways. The lives of the prophets are the guidelines for the common mess (H.G. Koenig, S. Al Shohaib 2014).
- 3) Haya toward the angels----Human beings are always surrounded and guarded by angels. Almighty Allah clarifies this in the Qur'an: "and surely there are indeed over you preservers, honorable writers, (who) know whatever you perform" (Al-Infitar, 10-12). We need to be mindful of the nearness of these superb blessed messengers and we should show haya by feeling their presence. The last prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) said: "be careful, never be bare for you are being gone to by the blessed messengers who never abandon you aside from when you answer the call of nature or when you lay down with your spouses. Along these you ought to be modest towards them and have respect for them" [al Tirmidhi].
- 4) Haya towards mankind--- Haya' never permits a Muslim to bargain in brutal and savage behavior with individuals. A Muslim who is practicing Haya' could never permit any kind of misuse of others in accomplishing individual advantages. He would manage

individuals on the premise of admiration, balance, and equity. With Haya' there is no space for resilience for any treatment which is debasing to any person or any sort of segregation between individuals of race, shading, nationality, or citizenship.

- 5) Haya and Self-respect----- Haya' persuades man to keep his social status perfect, unadulterated, or more questions. Haya' motivates man to defend his humility, pride and respect and maintain a strategic distance from any sort of activity that may harm his reputation and sense of pride. Haya' keeps us far from all dishonorable and despicable deeds regardless of how they are immaterial. Haya' makes us stay away from deficiencies of the tongue, talk, reality, not to break our guarantees, regard the ties of family relationship, abstain from a wide range of unfortunate behavior.
- 6) Haya in Speech----- People who practice haya in their character, never permit futile and rubbish words leaving from their mouths under any situation. They do not feel modest to be required futile discussions and waste their time in insignificant matters. They better know that the tongue is the important organ for communicating the demeanor of the heart. To be silent is superior to anything vain discussion and talk in hogwash and false matters. The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhiwasallam, uttered: "Iman won't fix up unless your heart fixes up, and your heart won't fix up unless your tongue fixes up" (Al-Tirmidhi). He likewise specified: "Foulness won't be blended with anything besides it will flawed it. Also, when Haya' won't be blended with anything besides it will consummate it".

Many proverbs have been written as verse by the Great men for the sake of being modest in using language: "Allow no ruining talk to depart from your mouths, yet just, for example, is useful for working up, as fits the event, that it might offer solace and effortlessness to the individuals who listen" (Ephesians, 2001). A sharp tongue and a dull brain stay at the same head (Glori Lamisi).

Danaba wrote: 'The tongue is a sword or a magic wand; it can cut and kill; or love and heal'. Goutam Buddha the father of Buddhism uttered: "The tongue can kill without drawing blood."

- 7) Haya through Dress (Hijab) ---- Each tribe or country follows its own particular idiosyncratic dress code respecting its own culture. These distinctions are expected to a great extent to the diverse climatic conditions, conventional legacy, proficient morals and social introduction of every tribe, country and calling and also religious belief (Sulaiman Sheu Adua, 2013). Veiling and isolation as a sign of honour, which in this connection is for all intents and purposes inseparable from modesty and submission towards God. The main characteristic of Islam is also to be modest and this modesty binds many conditions. And covering the whole body is the main condition of Islam. And this is the main concern of this study also.

*'Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! God is sensitive about what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that, which is apparent and to draw their veils over their chests, and not to reveal their adornment.'* (Quran 24:30)

The most imperative motive is the conviction of Muslim which specified in Al-Quran (Surah Al Noor 24:31).

*‘And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or their sons or those whom their right hands possess, or male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! So that you may be successful’.*

This entire comprehension quoted from the Quran about wearing Hijab makes it clear that what does Allah asks the Muslim women to wear and how they should remain. In Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59) also the direct command for Muslim ladies is seen like:

*‘O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments; this will be more proper, that they may be known, and thus they will not be given trouble; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful’.*

Wearing a Hijab fortifies the Muslim females' confidence towards Allah. It makes them more certain about different circumstances, free and deferential (Jasperse, 2009).

### **Analysis (Searching Haya in “Sofia Khan is not Obligated”)**

In "Sofia Khan is not Obligated" the main character is a decent case of such a woman who rehearses the Islamic ceremonies not only for a reassurance or to keep up the religious clothing regulation; rather she does it to satisfy her God and also to her self-soul.

“Why do you think I wear hijab? Part of religious, part of good sense” (pg- 200).

Her conviction supplies her strength to battle against all impediments and to be stronger in decision making. Several times she recalls the citation from the holy Quran. The concept of haya’ is also well explained in the Holy Quran, part of which already has been discussed above.

To analyse the substances of haya in this selected novel, Sofia’s speeches and actions are highly needed to be focused for the sake of the progress of this study.

- 1) Haya towards the invisible presence of the Almighty: During the entire text “Sofia Khan is not Obligated”, the readers can see enough ups and downs in Sofia’s life. Sofia has recently come from a marriage break-up. She has been given the title of a terrorist by a stranger only for her Muslim look with Muslim attire, she is perplexed with her jumbled writing career and she is also helpless in finding a true Muslim husband. But she always finds a new hope to move better. She keeps a strong thought in mind that  
“If things are thrown off balance, you shouldn’t worry about it. God will chuck down something on the other side of the scale to even things out, though it may very well be a shaky start” (P. 27).

Failing to decide about her marriage and choosing the right person she got panic and searched the way to seek guidance from God by doing the ‘Istikhara’ prayer which is for seeking the help from God to make all difficult deeds easy for His followers (p. 302).

Whenever she got perplexed by the thought of her writing career or of the future life in searching a true Muslim life partner, she used to remember God whole-heartedly and recharged

herself by praying: “Thinking about the future makes me nervous. “Praying, I’ve learned, is the only antidote to nerves” (p. 103).

In any baffled situation she begs help from the Almighty as if she can feel the presence of Him. ‘If I’m making a mistake, send me sign, God. Any sign. Like make it rain or something’ (p. 373).

Even getting something positive she never forgets to thank God and becomes more grateful: “Whoever said prayers are futile?” (p. 201). Being a die-heart religious woman, several times she repeated that she never missed fasting in the Ramadan month and any prayer in any place.

At the Mehedi party of Maria everyone was dancing with joy, but Sofia was watching from a corner. Conall asked was it God who was protecting her to dance. She answered, ‘Yes, it’s going to send me to hell as a matter of fact’ (p. 190). All her cravings to get God’s guidance and consolation are nothing but the outcome of ‘haya’, her deep faith in her religion (this study intends to match, these of her instincts as haya). Sofia’s haya’ toward the invisible presence of Allah and the angels protects her to do sex before marriage while it is a common young and mixed culture happening all over the world. Premarital sex was viewed as an ethical issue which was forbidden in many societies and considered a sin by various religions, yet since about the 1960s, it has turned out to be all the more broadly acknowledged, particularly in Western nations (WIKI). But what about those Muslim women who still value their own dignity and practice haya’ in full swing- “Yes, we date. No, we don’t have sex before marriage. Yes, I pray five times a day. With all this explaining I thought it’d be easier to just write a book about it.”

Sofia is also a human being; she also wants to hug someone with polite behavior. Her unconscious mind several times wanted to hug whenever she felt softness for the key man, Naim and also the lovely Conall, while every time she remembered: ‘A hijabi shouldn’t really hug man.’ (Pg- 79). Her haya always protected her to do this simple act too, because this is odd looking and surely she cares her religious boundaries. And being told to write on Muslim dating book she is quite sure that she is not going to write the traditional dating book like having usual romantic dates, having sex with boyfriends and so on. Rather, she will write how she dreams to be an ideal Muslim lady, and most probably it will not be such interesting as the traditional one: ‘I don’t suppose anyone would like to read about my string of God-awful dates?’ (p. 17). She never gets tired to find a place for prayer at anywhere. This is nothing but the practice of haya towards Allah. Even in the office, hospital, market normally there is no exact place for the Muslim for prayer, but she does not care what people think to see her arse being in the air. By her modesty she gets to find her place to pray at any corner.

- 2) Haya towards Mankind: Sofia is a loving daughter who cares parent’s sentiment and also a loving sister as well as a loving friend. She cares for the neighbours and also the common people. Once her father was listening Bollywood Music and suddenly turned up the volume. Looking at neighbor’s opened door she “turned the volume down explaining Dad that not everyone on our street is a fan of Bollywood” (p. 25).

Sofia is an optimist and a social worker. After splitting the relationship with Imran sometimes she becomes upset, but at this weak situation she thinks about the common people and doing something for them as lights on the positive side of life “Positive about being alone include being able to focus on other people’s problems, which is very selfless, and far more in keeping with being a good Muslim” (p. 27).

Her love for her friends was real and devoted. In their college life on the situation of Suj's mom's death; Suj wished if the world could stop for a while. Sofia felt her vision with full sympathy and thought: "I saw the world through Suj's blurred vision and wished I could make it stop for her. Even for a moment" (p. 56). The open minded Conall let Sofia to write her writing works in his living room as Sofia needed a quiet place to do that. Imran took it otherwise and asked what she was doing in the neighbour's house. She thought herself: "He didn't seem to understand the concept of human kindness" (p. 262). Again the incident of the 'Children being sold' written in Conall's letter made Sofia so depressed that she couldn't even sleep well (p. 414).

- 3) Haya in self-dignity: To stablish her self-dignity as a respected Muslim woman is the cause of her journey so she never can allow disrespecting her own dignity by anyone. Sofia had a survey for her book and she had a website for that, 'Shady.com'. She received different comments from different participants. Sometimes motivating, most of the time useless and mingled with prestigious issues. For selling Viagra she got a mail which degraded her dignity and she supposed to choose death against that comment: "Please, Earth, open up right now and swallow me, and my laptop, whole."pg – 66. She is quite confident over her own thought that's why she made the decision to leave Imran and split the coming marriage with Imran. "While I am not quite a 'let's live in each other's pocket type of girl, sharing the fundamentals is rather than basic" (p.39).

And after their break up Imaran's sudden decision to marry Sofia, could not change Sofia's mind. She valued her self-respect, valued her dignity. Naim's refusal to marry her also made her insulted and later she refuses to continue the relationship more. By doing that Sofia not only protested her own respect, but raised the dignity level more up of all the Muslim women.

Dying father's request towards Sofia for getting married before his death made her to take a sudden decision to choose Imran again; as Imran was in the mood to marry her at that time. Everything was fixed, all guests were invited, places were booked but before one week of the wedding, Imran said in a normal tone: "It's all the same when you become a Haque. .... Everyone changes their name when they get married." Sofia got so much socked hearing the matter of changing her name after marriage; she took the sudden decision and refused to marry Imran as she can compromise the trivial matters but not self-respect. She answered, "I don't care what everyone does. But I already have a name. I've had it all my life, why should I change it for anyone just because I'm getting married?" (p. 371).

- 4) Haya through speech---Sofia had been always kind, sympathetic and soft towards her parents, friends, sister and towards the strangers. Who never negotiates any decision or thought against her rules she takes the decision to marry Imran whom she does not want to do. Sofia is a polite and soft-hearted lady. She started dreaming of Naim, thinking of him on every special occasion and she supposed to share this feeling with him. At that very moment she could realize that Naim still had the relation behind her and even he never thought to marry Sofia. Sofia controlled herself doing any odd reaction rather she blessed them from her heart and told: "May you both live happily ever after." (p. 213).

Her nice and soft words compel Conall to love her thoughts, to love her religion and even he converts into a Muslim. Sofia values her own self respect same as others'. Her friends had a

word fight over polygamous marriages. Despite of being very good friends, Fozia criticised Hannah for being her second wife of Zulfi (already a married man with kids). Hannah stormed out and had a sudden quit with anger. Next Sofia advised her not to talk like this again: ‘... next time, try to keep the salt away from her emotional wounds’ (p. 40).

- 5) Haya through modest attire: From the beginning to the end for wearing hijab, Sofia is questioned and even insulted for several times. In this novel, Sofia’s mother is the first who does not want Sofia to wear hijab, in fear of Sofia’s late marriage. She never likes Sofia to cover her hair ‘Your hair’s your one beauty- all covered up.’ Even in the hot season mom pointed Sofia’s headscarf and got panic: “Haihai, you want to die from heat?” (p. 10). But Sofia’s strict decision about not removing the hijab can be seen in her modest and witty answer: “Yes, Mum. One day I’ll sweat to death in my hijab”. And she is much proud of her own decision: “I suppose since Mum created me, and I created the hijab situation, covering my hair must feel like a personal affront to her” (p. 10).

Once Sofia’s mother warned her of the possibilities to be called a terrorist for wearing hijab and cited the example of Nargis’s daughter who was followed by a gang and called Paki by them; even they could harm her or killed her. Once the sequence comes and Sofia was also called a terrorist by a stranger on the way. And the word pinched her for a long time, but at the same time she consoles herself like: Negative comments from people must hurt the hijab wearer, but the feeling of modesty after wearing a hijab is superior enough to ignore those comments of the ignorant people (Why Islam? Web site). She strongly believes that all should rather fear God, not these people who are far away from the light of Islam. Her faith comes clearer when she mentions the sermons given by the Imam of the mosque, about the duties of a real Muslim:

*‘It is the test of Allah; for all of us’. “One of the greatest things a person can face on the earth is the test of separation. Separation, in any form, is loss, but remember: the greatest separation is that of hope. Ignore people who blame us for the action of a few, because a person who has faith is never separated from hope. Do good deeds.” (p. 47).*

On her Shady.com website she received responses like: “A hijab???? Seriously??!! You’re living in the West!!!” (p. 40). Again, some men ask: “You are living in the West- what’s with the hijab?” Then Sofia says: “Honestly, I can’t like God. Life is so much harder without God, you know?” (p. 43). It is obvious that ‘wearing hijab is a perpetual punishment’ for her and she has to struggle a lot in living in the West as a true Muslim woman as she tells: “From a marketing angle.... No one wants a scarfie in the workplace” (p. 31). But ‘hijab’ has always been a religious reminder for her to keep her away from any odd acts even from hugging any man or shaking hands with them and more. She wears hijab not to maintain the Muslim dress code only rather her feelings come forth from the fear of God, from her faith in Islam. Hijab is the strength of Sofia to protest any disregards. Once Naim asks if she really writing a book or doing other business in the name of the survey for writing; Sofia was quite angry and answered with full confidence on her modesty that ‘Of course I’m writing a book. Hijabies don’t lie’ (p. 70). To her hijab must be respected as well as the hijabi. She met the flatterer Naim, whom she started to like, but something stopped her to trust him too. Once Naim offered her to have sex even for once only. She answered: “Next time you say something like that, you are going to get punched in the face..... You need lessons on how to speak to a hijabi” (p.157).

She is always proud and solaced by wearing it with the belief in heart that nothing bad will happen to her as doing good always bring good and faith brings hope. She is such a reluctant Muslim lady who is completely mindful of her identity, who experiences her religious existence without any statements of regret for it at all. She may not be the ideal courageous woman but she never gives up what she trusts in.

After the above discussion, it is clear that all the possible great qualities in human behavior come from the Islamic vocabulary - from the concept of haya and to achieve or to apply those in real life one must have to build up a huge unbreakable wall of 'faith'. If one's soul stands on the solid ground of 'faith', the Substances of haya will be reflected through one's religious rites and lifestyle. For women the sudden appearance of modesty can be blazed by the attire of a Muslim woman and in that case hijab the visible form of haya. If she possesses the power of dignity, the ray of bashfulness and the light of modesty; by people's first sight these must be visible through her hijab on hair rather than a bared headed woman (Latiff, and Alam 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Modesty is the part of various long established traditions, cultures, and religions, but the Western society in the 21st century mostly conceives modesty in Islam to rest on the Muslims' dress code as acts of decency and respect (veiling or hijab). The central importance of being modest is made evident by considering the meaning of the word "Islam" itself. "Islam" comes from an Arabic word root salam, which means peace. Islam means submission or surrendering in Arabic and implies total submission to the Almighty God (Allah) (Mortada, 2011). The act of praying to Allah (God) by making oneself humbly prostrate on the ground symbolizes the Muslims' recognition of Allah to seek constant guidance and support. This act signifies the importance of practicing five prayers a day to constantly remind a Muslim of the need to be humble and modest to Allah (Othman e.l. 2015).

The rituals of Islam help people to be coordinated entirely and provide them the directions part of a decent life to be followed. If all people accomplish the requirements to pay the human poise by revering to each other, modesty automatically will achieve its highest esteemed value. One who follows every bit of the Quran and Sunnah must not be deviated from the real path of humanity and success. In this selected novel, Sofia also believes her religion and practices the religious rituals to meet her needs what she really wants to achieve. Sofia has proved that by practicing haya in everyday life the Muslim women can be judged by their characters, awareness, behavior and modesty. Though 'Sexuality' is an inborn quality of human being which can be used in the worst way; Sofia also proves that wearing hijab is the religious commitment to a Muslim woman, which is communicated by denying her (sexual) wants. Sofia has the potentiality of a feminist, her Islamic rituals match the Islamic ideologies, and she is full of women agency and empowerment. Deviated from the traditional discussion this study pulls the characteristics of Sofia which are fairly analysed through the concept of haya. At this point of view "Sofia Khan is Not Obligated" is judged well by this study.

As a general woman Sofia also loves, dates, makes mistakes, but she crafts the revolution by arousing her self-soul. She is quite conscious of her own right or wrong deeds and she always keeps her endeavors on to correct herself. Wearing hijab is her independent decision and this steadiness is the result of her strong religious belief, her passion to be a better Muslim. Her strong belief is spread out clearly through her attitudes, daily activities, the way she communicates the people around her, through her thoughts and also her voice. Blending all her modest qualities this paper attempts to reveal that wearing hijab can be the first step to make a woman more confident in stepping ahead gradually to be a better Muslim.

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