

## Moderation in Islam and avoiding extremes BS Foad, MD 2013

Muslims are ordered to be moderate and avoid extremes in the way they live their lives. Avoiding extremes apply to many aspects:

- 1-When we pray or fast we should be moderate, and not excessive. We should not pray all night, or fast every day of our lives
- 2-When we spend we should be moderate, not be excessive or misers
- 3-Our views should be moderate, and not extreme
- 4-We should make life easy for others and not difficult
- 5-We should be kind, not harsh or severe in our temperament

The Qur'an states:

□ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

*Thus have We made of you an Ummat (nation) justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves;  
Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 143*

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Do not follow extremes in your religion, for those before you perished because they were extreme and excessive)

Narrated by Nesa'ee, Ibn Majja & Ahmad

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked: O messenger of Allah what are the needs most beloved to Allah? He said:

(The deeds most beloved to Allah are those deeds done on a regular basis (day in and day out), even if little)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim after Aesha.

The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

(Do what you are capable of)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim after Aesha.  
The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

(Do what is right, and do the best you can, but take breaks and rest; and be moderate and not excessive, then you will reach your goal)  
Narrated by Bokhari after Abou Horaira.

### **Our worship should be moderate, and not excessive**

Prophet Muhammad did forbid his companion Amrou Bin Abdul A's from praying all night, or fasting every day of his life. He said to him: (O Abdullah I was told that you fast all day and that you stand up in prayer all night!) He said: Yes O messenger of Allah. He said: (Do not do that; fast but not every day, and pray but not all night long; for your body has rights over you, and your eyes have rights over you, and your wife has rights over you, and your guests have rights over you. It is enough to fast three days out of each month, for every good deed that you do is rewarded ten times, therefore you are rewarded as if you fasted every day of your life). Amrou said: I can do more. The Prophet (PBUH) said: (Then fast as Dawood (David) the Prophet of Allah used to do, and fast no more than that, he used to fast one day, then break his fast the next day)  
Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

Three men came asking the Prophet's wives about his worship at home. They said: Allah has forgiven His sins; Who are we from Allah's prophet!. One of them said: I will stand in prayer every night of my life. The second man said: I will fast every day of my life. The third man said: I will not marry. When Allah's messenger (PBUH) heard what they said, he said: (By Allah, amongst you I fear Allah the most, and I am most conscious of Him; but I fast and break my fast, and I pray at night, but I sleep part of the night, and I marry women; whoever does not wish to follow my way, is not one of us)  
 Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim after Anas

We learn from these two Hadeeth (Sayings of the Prophet) that:

- We should not stand up in prayer all night long. We can pray part of the night, but we need our sleep and rest.
- We can offer optional fast seeking to get close to Allah, but not every day. Three days of each month is quite sufficient as the Prophet (PBUH) told us. If we fast too much we harm ourselves and our health
- It is the Sunnah of the Prophets and hence the way that we should follow to get married and have a family.

Our acts of worship should not interfere with our other duties or obligations. We need to work and earn a living, and do our work to the best of our ability. We need to be good to our families and take care of them. We have duties towards our friends and our community.

### **We should enjoy life in moderation**

There is a notion among some Muslims that it is better to shun this life and its pleasures, and devote one's life in worship, like prayer and fasting. This is wrong understanding of what the Qur'an teaches us. The Qur'an states that we should enjoy the good and pure things that Allah has provided for us:

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
 الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

*Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who understand.*

*Al-Araf 7: 32*

We are told to spend, but not in an excessive manner, and at the same time not be misers:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴾

*Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes);  
Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 67*

There is nothing wrong in enjoying life and in becoming rich, as long as we give Zakat and help those who are poor and needy and share with others what Allah blessed us with:

﴿وَأَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذُرْ ثَبَدِيرًا﴾

*And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.  
Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 26*

### **Enjoying life is lawful and allowed as long as:**

- We enjoy things in moderation, and are not excessive
- We enjoy what is lawful, and avoid what Allah has prohibited
- That such enjoyment does not diver us from our duty in worshipping Allah
- That we do not become arrogant, rather appreciate God's blessings over us

### **Our views should be moderate and not extreme**

Our views should be based on proper interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah (tradition of Prophet Muhammad PBUH). To illustrate this concept I will give two examples. Extremists regard non-Muslims as Kuffar (rejectors of faith) and as such according to their view have no rights, therefore killing them is no big deal. On the contrary, they regard that as Jihad in the way of Allah. They consider themselves in a state of war with all non-Muslims. This is wrong interpretation of what the Qur'an is teaching us about how we should behave with non-Muslims who are peaceful and are not enemy combatants. The Qur'an tells us to treat them with kindness and justice:

﴿لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾

*Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just.*

*Al-Mumtahina (Woman to be examined) 60: 8*

*Killing an innocent soul is forbidden in Islam. The Qur'an orders us to safeguard and respect human life for it is precious:*

﴿ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ ﴾

*Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause.  
Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 33*

The second example is how we invite others to Islam. Extremists believe that non-Muslims are to be forced to become Muslims against their will because it is the religion that Allah accepts, and no other religion is valid. This is against the teachings of the Qur'an, which tells us that every human being is free to accept faith or reject faith, and that we cannot force anyone to become a Muslim against his will:

﴿ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ ﴾

*Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error:  
Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 256*

*And*

﴿ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفِرْ ۗ ﴾

*Say, "The Truth is from your Lord": Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it  
Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 29*

*It is not the will of God to force mankind to believe against their will:*

﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ ﴾



*If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth!  
Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!  
Yunus (Jonah) 10: 99*

### **We should make life easy for others and not difficult**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised his emissaries to Yemen to make life easy and not difficult. He said:

(Give glad tidings, and do not make others hate you or run away from you; and make things easy and not difficult)  
Bokhari & Muslim.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said:

(This religion is one of ease, and not restrictions; anyone who tries to make it strict and difficult will be overcome; therefore, do what is right, and do what you are capable of, and be informed of good news; and seek help in prayers by morning and by evening)  
Bokhari

We learn from this Hadeeth (Saying of the Prophet):

- We should not make things difficult for ourselves, or for others. Rather We should make Islam easier to follow and allow others to love the religion and follow its guidelines
- We should do what is right, and avoid what is wrong. Obviously such understanding requires knowledge and experience
- We should do what we are capable of, because Allah does not ask a soul to do more than it can bear.
- We should be content and happy because we have done our duty, and we should put our trust in Allah
- We should seek help in prayer, because prayer is our link to Allah, and through Him we obtain our guidance and support

Aesha related:

(Whenever Allah's messenger (PBUH) was given a choice between two courses of action, both lawful, he always chose the easy one, as long as there is no sin in it)  
Bokhari & Muslim

The Qur'an tells us:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

*Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties.*

*Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 185*

We should not ask others to do more than they are capable of, because Allah does not place a burden on a soul more than it can bear:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

*On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns*

*Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 286*

### **We should be kind and not harsh or severe**

We should follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who was kind and not harsh or severe in temperament:

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

*It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).*

*Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 159*

People will listen to someone who is kind and caring, and will run away from someone who is harsh and severe. The companions loved Allah's messenger because he was kind, decent, forgiving and cared about them.

## **Moderation in Islam and avoiding extremes**

**BS Foad, MD 2013**

### **Islam is a religion of moderation and avoiding extremes**

*“Thus We have made you a nation justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and that the messenger a witness over yourselves” Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 143*

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (Avoid extremes in your religion; those before you perished because they were extremes) Nesa’ee, Ibn Majja & Ahmad

When asked: What are the deeds most beloved to Allah? He said: (The deeds most beloved to Allah are those done day in and day out on a regular basis, even if little) Bokhari & Muslim

(Do what is right, and what you are capable of, and take breaks and rest; be moderate and not excessive, then you will reach your goal) Bokhari

### **Our worship should be moderate and not excessive**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did forbid his companion Amrou Bin Al’As from fasting every day, or praying all night. He told him that he can fast three days of each month, and he can pray part of the night, but also sleep part of the night, and reminded him that he has other obligations towards his health and his family that he needs to fulfill (Bokhari & Muslim).

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) heard the story of the three men who vowed to fast every day, or stand up in prayer every night, or not marry, he said: (I know Allah the best, and I am most conscious of Him, but I fast but not every day, and I pray at night, but also sleep part of the night, and I marry women; Whoever does not want to follow my way, does not belong to me) Bokhari & Muslim

### **We should enjoy life in moderation, and not be excessive**

*“Say: “Who has made it unlawful to enjoy the gifts of Allah or good and pure things that Allah has produced for His servants?” Al-Araf 7: 32*

*“And those who when they spend are not excessive or misers, but follow a moderate course inbetween” Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 67*

### **Our views should be moderate and not extreme**

We should treat non-Muslims with kindness and justice

*“Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not because of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from treating them with kindness and justice” Al-Mumtahina 60: 8*

We should not force non-Muslims to become Muslims against their will:

*“Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands clear from error” Al-Baqara 2: 256*

### **We should make life easy for others, and not difficult**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (Make life easy and not difficult; give glad tidings, and do not make others hate you or run away from you) Bokhari & Muslim

(This religion is one of ease and not restrictions; anyone who tries to make it strict and difficult will be overcome. Therefore, do what is right, and do what you are capable of, and be happy, and seek help in prayer by morning and by evening) Bokhari

Aesha said: (Whenever Allah’s messenger was given a choice between two courses of action, both lawful, he always chose the easy one, as long as there is no sin in it) Bokhari & Muslim

*“Allah intends every facility for you, and does not want to put you to difficulty” Al-Baqara 2: 185*

### **We should be kind and not harsh or severe**

*“It is the mercy of Allah that you became kind and gentle with them; if you were harsh or severe they would have dispersed from around you; therefore overlook their mistakes, and seek God’s forgiveness for them, and consult them in your mutual affairs” Al-Imran 3: 159*

The Prophet’s companions loved him because he was kind, caring and sincere. People will listen to someone who is kind and gentle, and run away from someone who is harsh and severe.