

Avoid Extremes in religion

BS Foad, M.D 2011

Concepts discussed:

- 1-Islam is a religion of moderation, avoiding extremes
- 2-Make life easy and not difficult on others, and do not impose your own views on other people.
- 3-Do not ask others to do more than they are capable of

Islam is a religion of moderation, avoiding extremes

We should be Moderate in the way that we live our lives in everything that we do. We are told not to be excessive or misers in spending:

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

And:

Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute.
Al-Isra'a 17: 29

Muslims are ordered to follow a moderate way and not be extremes:
Thus have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves;
Al-Baqara 2: 143

Even in matters of worship we should be moderate and not extreme
Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) related the story of the three men who asked the Prophet's wives about his worship. One of them vowed to pray all night, and not sleep; the second person vowed to fast every day of his life. The third person vowed to stay celibate and not marry. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(By Allah, amongst you I fear Allah the most and I know Him the best; but I fast but not every day; and I stand up in prayer at night, but not all night; and I marry women. Whoever does not want to follow my way, he is not one of us)

Bokhari & Muslim

The Prophet (PBUH) said to Abdullah Bin Amru Bin Al' As (I was told that you pray all night, and that you fast every day!). Amru said: Yes O Messenger of Allah. He said: (Do not do that: fast but not every day; pray at night, but sleep part of the night: for your body has rights over you, and your eyes have rights over you, and your wife has rights over you, and your visitor has rights over you. It is enough to fast three days of each month, for a good deed is rewarded ten times. Therefore, this way it is considered as if you are fasting all the time) Bokhari & Muslim.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said

(Avoid extremes in your religion; those before you perished because they were extremes)

Nesa'ee, Ibn nmajja and Ahmad after Ibn abbas

The Prophet (pbuh) also said;

(Those who are extreme and strict in their words and deeds will fail and perish)

Muslim after Ibn Masoud

We can ask the question: why extremists fail? Because extreme measures and strict measures and strict way of life is not natural, and cannot be tolerated for long. Who can pray several hours every night, and fast two days each week year after year? Very few people can do that for long. Most people can do the five daily prayers and fast Ramadan, and occasionally fast an optional fast.

Make life easy and not difficult for others

Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) sent a messenger his advice was

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

Bokhari & Muslim after Abi Musa

We learn that in our Da'wa we should not make life complicated or ask people to follow hard or extreme measures. People should love the religion of Islam and understand its principles. This way they will be good Muslims on conviction.

Allah in the Qur'an is telling us that he does not want to make things difficult for us;

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

Al-baqara 2; 185

If Allah intends every facility for His servants, then we too should make life easy and not difficult for others.

Those who complicate things and insist on harsh measures and are too strict in their application of Islam are only frightening other people. They give them the impression and feeling that Islam is difficult and complicated, so they turn away. These are who the Prophet (PBUH) warned against:

(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)

Bokhari

The Prophet (PBUH) guides us to the following:

- Do what is right: Avoid what is wrong. This obviously requires learning
And proper understanding to know what is right and what is wrong
- Do what you are capable of, because Allah does not ask a soul to do or
To bear more than it can
- Be content and happy, because you have done your duty, and put your
Trust in Allah.
- Seek help in prayers, because it is your link to Allah and it is through Him
That we can get guidance and support

Prophet Muhammad's behavior also illustrates that we should follow what is easy and not difficult.

Aesha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that when 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. If there was any sin, he would be farthest away from it than anyone. Allah's messenger never sought revenge for himself in anything, unless Allah's orders were violated, then he would seek revenge for Allah)

Bokhari & Muslim

We learn from this Hadeeth and the Prophet's sayings that we should not make life difficult or complicated. We should not ask others to do things that are difficult if there is an easier alternative as long as both are allowed in Islam

No one should be asked to do more than he/ she can bear

We have limitations as human beings and we differ in our abilities and our tolerance. Some people set high goals for themselves and double their efforts and succeed in achieving these high goals. Others are not able to cope with extra burden and fail under stress. No soul should be asked to do more than it can bear or is capable of doing. The Qur'an explains:

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 2: 286

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(None of you will be saved because of his deeds alone). His companions asked: Not even you O messenger of Allah? He said: (Not even me unless Allah's mercy encompasses me. Therefore do what is right, and do what you are capable of, and seek help in prayers, and be sincere in your intentions)

Bokhari after Aesha

It is better to do a little but on a regular basis and be steadfast therein, rather than do a lot at one time, then stop altogether and do nothing for a long time. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked: What are the deeds most beloved to Allah? He said:

(The deeds most beloved to Allah are those that are done on a regular basis even if little). Then he added: (Do what you are capable of)
Bokhari & Muslim.

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"Thus We have made you a nation justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations and the Messenger may be a witness over yourselves" Al-Baqara 2: 143

"Those who, when they spend are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just balance between these extremes" Al-Furqan 25: 67

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was told about the three men who came asking about his behavior, and one of them said: "I will pray all night long; the other said: "I will fast every day of my life"; and the third said: "I will not marry, but remain celebrant". He said: (By Allah, Amongst You I know Allah the best and I fear Him the most, but I pray part of the night and I sleep; and I fast but not every day, and I marry women. Those who do not wish to follow my way do not belong to us) Bokhari & Muslim

The Prophet (PBUH) said to Amrou Bin Al-As (I was told that you pray all night, and that you fast every day). Amrou said: Yes O Messenger of Allah. He said: (Do not do that. Fast but not every day; pray at night but sleep part of the night. For your body has rights over you, and your eyes have rights over you, and your wife has rights over you, and your visitor has rights over you. It is enough to fast three days of each month, for a good deed is rewarded ten times. Therefore, this way it is considered as if you are fasting all the time)

Bokhari & Muslim

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

He also said: (Those who are extreme and strict in their words and deeds will fail and perish) Muslim
Extreme measures are not natural and cannot be tolerated for long.

Make life easy and not difficult for others

The Prophet's advice to his messengers was: (Give glad tidings, and do not make others hate you or run away from you; and make things easy and not difficult) Bokhari & Muslim

"Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties" Al-Baqara 2: 185

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 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 happy, and seek help in prayer) Bokhari

Aesha related: (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

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(The deeds most beloved to Allah are those done on a regular basis even if little) Then the Prophet (PBUH) added: (Do what you are capable of) Bokhari & Muslim