

Radio Sermon: Moderation

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All-Knowing, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

First sermon:

Among the characteristics of this True Religion is that its source, system, purpose, and destination are Divine, and that it is a humanitarian religion. It befits all places and times. Moreover, it is realistic, i.e. it does not accept the bad reality, but it strives to improve and change it by realistic means. This true Religion is clear in such a way that none deviate from it except those who are far astray. It also joins between constancy and development in a wonderful way. One of the most prominent qualities of this true Religion is **“Moderation”**.

If Allah so wills, this subject will be dealt with in terms of the meaning of Moderation in Islam and in terms of its aspects in the creed, system, kinds of worship, treatments, morals, and regulations.

As previously mentioned, one of the most prominent qualities of Islam is Moderation, which means temperance or balance between two opposite or contradictory things so that neither of them stands alone in effectiveness and expels the other and so that neither of them takes more than its due value, overtaking or oppressing the other. In Islam there is neither excessiveness nor negligence, neither extravagance nor default, neither oppression nor anarchy, and neither exaggeration nor depreciation. Every thing takes its due share according to a just balance. Hence, Islam is moderate between abominable materialism and unrealistic spiritualism, between bitter reality and imaginary idealism, between tyrannical individualism and overwhelming collectivism, between monotonous constancy and unbalanced change, between urgent needs and out-of-reach values, between cold rationalism and flaming sentimentalism, between corporal desires and spiritual requirements.

Moderation in Islam comes from Allah's Words:

“Thus, we have made you a nation justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.”

[2 : 143]

It is out of Allah's Infinite Divine Wisdom that He has chosen Moderation, or temperance, to be a characteristic of this Nation, which is the last nation, and of this Message, by which all Messages were sealed, for Allah sent the last of His Prophets with it as a Messenger to all mankind and as a mercy to all worlds. Moderation is interpreted as “justice” in the following verse:

“Thus, we have made you a Nation justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.”

[2 : 143]

Thus, Moderation means justice; and justice is something that reconciles between two disputing parties without partiality to either. Also, justice is to give everyone their due rights without any fraud or inequity. Interpreters of the Noble Quran said that the word “*moderate*” means “*just*” in Allah's Words

“Said one of them, more moderate (than the rest), ‘Did I not say to you, why not glorify (Allah)?!’”

[LXVIII; 28]

because the more moderate part of something is its middle; and the middle of a circle is its centre. The word "Moderation" is also used to refer to the good human qualities that are moderate between illaudable extreme qualities. Courage, for example, is moderate between cowardice and recklessness.

Moderation also means straightness of the way and keeping away from deviation and deflection. The Straight Path, as one of the exegetes of the Noble Quran holds, is the Straight Way, which is in the middle of the deviant ways. Among the so many bent lines between two points, the straight line is the shortest and most straightforward. In his prayer, a Muslim asks his Lord to show him the Straight Path seventeen times a day when he reads Al-Fatiha:

"Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray."

[1: 6-7].

Those who incurred Allah's Wrath are those who exceeded, and the straying ones are those who neglected. Those who incurred Allah's Wrath are those who knew the truth but deviated from it, and the straying ones are those who did not know the truth and, hence, deviated.

In Islam Moderation means excellence, goodness, and distinction in both spiritual and material matters. The best bead of a necklace is the middle one; the chief of a people is always in the middle with the followers around him. Concerning spiritual matters, Moderation is better than extremism; and it has been rightly said: "*the best thing is the middle*" and "*virtue is in the middle between two vices*". In explanation of Allah's Words Ibn Katheer said, "**Thus, we have made you a moderate nation**", the word *Moderate* here means better and more perfect, as it is said: 'Quraish is the most moderate ancestry among the Arabs', which means the best. The Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was in the middle among his people, i.e. the noblest one among them. Also, the middle prayer is the best prayer.

Islam has intellectual, spiritual, and behavioral aspects. When one of these aspects grows extraordinarily, usually at the expense of other aspects, then the result will be *Extremism*. But when these three aspects grow naturally and equally, in such a way that no one aspect dominates the others, then *Excellence* will be the result. We look forward to excellence not to extremism.

Moderation also represents safety and keeping away from danger, as edges and ends are usually exposed to danger and corruption, contrary to the middle which is protected and preserved by the things around it. Moderation is security and stability, but extremism is excessiveness, deviation, and corruption.

Moderation represents strength, as the middle is the centre of power. Effectiveness, brightness and hotness of the Sun's rays are stronger in the middle of the day when it is in the middle of the sky. Also, man is stronger when he is youthful, which is in the middle between weakness of childhood and that of old age.

Moderation represents the point of unity and the center of meeting. In other words edges and ends may be innumerable, but the middle always remains one point at which all edges meet; it is the middle and the center. The center of a circle is in its middle at which all lines which come from the circumference meet. A moderate idea is the point at which all extreme ideas may meet. Hence, moderation and temperance are the way to and the center of the nation's intellectual unity. Therefore, extremist ideas stimulate separation and discrepancy among people, the thing which moderate schools, which are in accordance with the Book and the Sunna, do not usually do.

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The above-mentioned was about the meaning of Moderation in Islam, but what about aspects of this moderation?

From the view point of ideology, the religion of Islam is moderate between the false beliefs of naïve superstitious people who believe every thing they hear and take things for granted, on the one hand, and the materialists, who deny every thing that is not sensual, and who hearken neither to the sound of their original pure nature nor to the call of human mind or Divine miracles, on the other.

True Islam calls for belief in what is proved by definitive evidence although it considers certitude based on

senses, deduction and oral communication as definitive ways for receiving information. All superstitions and conjectures which are beyond this are rejected. To this effect, Allah, All-Mighty, says:

“Say, ‘Produce your proof if you are truthful’.”

[II ; 111]

He also says:

“If anyone invokes besides Allah any other god, for which he has no authority, his reckoning will be only with his Lord; and verily the unbelievers will not prosper!”

[II ; 117]

Islam is moderate between those who consider the universe as the real existence but reject all metaphysical things, which eyes can not see, as mere superstitions and illusions, and those who consider the universe as an illusion and a mirage which a thirsty person mistakes for water.

Although Islam considers the universe as a reality, it goes beyond this reality to a greater one. In other words, it goes from the universe to the Maker, from the creation to the Creator, from the system to the Designer, from the forms to the Former, from the disposition to the Disposer, and from education to the Educator. In other words, the universe is a reality that leads to a greater reality, namely that this universe has a Creator, an Educator, and a Director, Who is existent, unique, and perfect.

Islam is moderate in its view point concerning the holy Prophets, who are human beings, just like us: they eat food, walk in streets, many of them have wives and offspring, but they excel in knowing their Lord, in their obedience to him, and in their sincerity to Him. He, All-High, chose them, purified them, protected them from committing sins or misdeeds, sent down to them His Divine Revelation, and bestowed upon them His Divine Miracles. This is exactly the view of Islam of the Holy Prophets and Messengers (PBUT).

Islam is moderate between those who believe only in the mind as a means for perceiving the facts of existence, and those who do not believe except through inspirations or illusions, and do not acknowledge the role of the mind in proving or disproving any realities.

Islam determines that religion consists of revelation and communication; and since the most dangerous thing in communication is truthfulness and authenticity, the human mind has two tasks concerning it: proving the verity of communication and understanding it in order to apply it. Hence, by the mind you can attain belief in Allah with certainty; by the mind you believe in His Book, the Glorious Quran, with certainty, through its miraculous inimitability; and by the mind you believe in His Messenger, Muhammad, (PBUH), with certainty, through His Book. Here the role of the mind in research ends and its role in acceptance begins through verifying and understanding. The facts which the mind fails to understand, because they lack effects that denote them, have to be received through Divine Revelation without making the mind a judge on them. This is Islamic Moderation in its method of reception and authentication of facts.

Islam is moderate in the kinds of worships it enjoins on its adherents. Concerning ritual worships, Islam holds a moderate opinion that stands between canceling them and devoting oneself completely to them. Hence, ritual worships in Islam are not only limited, rational, and justified by people's interests, but also connected with behavioral worships. In other words, Allah, All-Mighty, does not accept prayer that does not prevent man from doing enormities or abominable deeds, fast that does not prevent saying falsehood or acting thereby or pilgrimage performed with ill-gotten money. Expenditure of wealth on charities is also unacceptable if accompanied by profligacy and iniquity. To this effect, Allah, All-Mighty, says:

“Say: ‘Spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall not be accepted from you, you are indeed dissolute people’.”

[IX; 53]

Hence, Islam is worship and work: an accepted worship based on good righteous work, and good work based on proper devoted worship.

Narrated Abu Hurairah: the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Do you know who a bankrupt is?” they said: “A bankrupt among us is he who has neither Dirhem nor property.” He said: “A bankrupt of my nation is he who comes on the Day of Judgment with praying, fasting, and giving Zakat (alms); but he comes after he has cursed this (person), and slandered that, and eaten the money of another, and shed the blood of another, and hit another. Then this one is given from his good deeds, and that one is given from his good deeds; and if his good deeds are vanished before paying what is imposed upon him, then some of their sins will be taken and thrown upon him, and then he will be cast into Fire.”

In the realm of social relations, Islam is moderate between turning your left cheek to him who hits you on the right one, and between paying someone back tenfold. Allah says:

“And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, help and defend themselves. The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree), but if a person forgives and makes a reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah; surely He loves not those who do wrong.”

[XLII; 39-40]

He, Most Gracious, also says:

“And if you punish (your enemies), punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, verily, it is better for those who are patient. And endure you patiently; your patience is not but from Allah. And grieve not over them and be not distressed because of what they plot.”

[XVI; 126-127]

By virtue of the above Verses it is quite clear that the offender is obligated to pay the price of his offence, but the right-owner can forgive willingly. In other words, equity is compulsory, but pardon and forgiveness are voluntary.

In the realm of ethics, Islam is moderate between extremist idealists, who consider man as an angel or semi-angel and, therefore, draw for him a level he could not reach, and the extremist realists, who consider man as an animal, or semi-animal, who lives only for lusty desires and enjoyments just like brute animals.

In fact Islam starts from the fact that man is made up of both mind and instinctive desire. If his mind leads him to know his Lord, and if he controls his desire according to his Creator's system, he becomes more exalted than angels. But if he fails to use his mind properly, forgets the secret underlying his existence, or fails to get himself acquainted with his Lord's System, and hence, falls easy prey to his desires and caprices, he will be lower even than brute animals.

Islam is moderate in its outlook on the present life. It stands between those who consider the present life as everything, claiming, “There is nothing except our present life, and we shall never be raised up again.”, and worshipping their desires and materialistic interests, and those who consider their existence in this present life as an evil thing and so they withdraw from life and deprive themselves of its lawful dainties and ornaments. Islam holds that both the life of the present world and the Afterlife as one integrated entity the first part thereof leads to the second and is closely linked thereto.

Moreover, Islam makes a kind of balance between *spiritualism* and *materialism* and stands, in Moderation, between them: between religion and life, between values and needs, between man's instinct and mind, and between his desires and principles. As Allah wants him to be, man is not someone who detaches himself from the world, withdraws himself from life, devotes himself to worship, spends his lifetime in laziness and idleness, leads an ascetic life with no enjoyment, lives in celibacy and does not get married, worships without rest, prays all his nights, fasts all his days, has nothing to do with this world, and his lot from this life is barely bread and worn-out patchy clothes. This is not man as Allah desires him to be, neither is he someone, like the owner of the two gardens, whose story is narrated in the Noble Quran, who prides over his friend, boasting of his good

fortune, strutting with his gardens, and saying: "I have more wealth than you, and I am mightier in followers!", and about whom Allah says:

"And he entered his garden, wronging himself, he said: I do not think that this will ever perish. And I do not think that the Hour (of Judgment) is coming, and if I am indeed returned to my Lord, I shall surely find a better resort than this."

[XVIII; 35-36]

Then Allah sent onto his garden a thunderbolt from the heaven. So it became a slope of dust and its water deep-sunken in the earth.

And Allah does not desire that man be like Qarūn (Korah) whom Allah granted treasures the keys thereof would have been a burden for a company of strong men. But he tyrannized against his people, became conceited with his wealth, attributed the favour to himself, and said: "what I have been given is only because of a knowledge that I have." So Allah made the earth swallow him and his house.

From the Islamic point of view, the real man that Allah desires is neither the former nor the latter, but, rather, a double-natured creature, that is made of a wisp of clay and a breath of Allah's Spirit. Allah says:

"Behold! Your Lord said to the angles: 'I am creating man from clay. When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit into him, fall you down prostrate before him.'"

[XXXVIII; 71-72]

By his material clayey element, man is able to work in the earth, to make it prosperous, to discover the treasures and boons which Allah has put therein, and to utilize its resources for his benefit and for accomplishing his mission. And by his spiritual element, man is able, to ascend to a higher horizon, to look forward to a more sublime world, and to endeavour to a life which is better and more enduring. In other words, a true Muslim is someone who utilizes matter but does not enslave himself thereto, someone who makes use of the treasures and boons which are in the earth without being used or enslaved thereby. This is confirmed by Allah's Words:

"O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and commit no excess; for Allah loves not the transgressors. Eat of the things which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, in whom you believe."

[V; 87-88]

"It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse you through its tracts and enjoy and eat of His provisions, and unto Him is the Resurrection." [LXVI; 15], and: "And when the prayer is finished, then may you disperse through the lands, and seek of the bounty of Allah, and celebrate the Praises of Allah often (and without stint), that you may prosper."

[LXII; 10]

The Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) sought Moderation and balance between the present life and the Hereafter following after the Quranic supplication:

"And there are men who say: O Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and safeguard us from the torment of the Fire!"

[II; 201]

The Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to supplicate:

"O Allah! Make right for me my religion, which is immunity for my affairs! Make right for me (the

affairs of) my life of this world, wherein is my living! Make right for me my Hereafter, to which is my return! Make life for me a source of increase of every good! And make death for me comfort from every evil!"

The Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to eat from the dainties of this world, and did not deprive himself thereof; yet he did not make them his foremost occupation nor the core of his thinking. He used to invoke:

"O Allah! Do not make this world our greatest concern, nor the limit of our knowledge!"

Whenever he saw among his Companions any kind of immoderation, whether in worship, fast, or prayer, at the expense of their body, family, or work, he would say:

"Your body has a right upon you; your wife has a right upon you, and your visitors have a right upon you, so give everyone their due right."

He (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) also used to say:

"I swear by Allah that I am the most fearful of Allah among you, and the most devoted to Him among you; but I fast and breakfast, I pray and rest, and I marry women; so whosoever does not follow my tradition does not belong to me."

He also used to warn his Companions of being deceived by the life of this world:

"By Allah! It is not poverty that I fear to befall you, but I fear that this life be given to you as it was given to those who were before you, then you compete with each other for it as they competed for it, and (consequently) it destroys you as it destroyed them."

In this context, it is worth mentioning that according to several Prophetic Hadiths, filial piety is equivalent to Al-Jihad (the Holy Strife) for the Cause of Allah, and so is a wife's piety towards her husband. Good upbringing of children, particularly the girls, is a way to Paradise and an incessant spring of good reward from the Lord, Most Gracious, even after the parents' death. Moreover, if a Muslim's job whereby he earns a living is lawful, legally earned, and meant for self-and-family sufficiency and for providing service to other Muslim brethren or fellow humans, it is considered as a kind of worship whereby he comes near to Allah, provided that it does not distract man from his religious obligations or duties or hinder him from seeking knowledge.

In Islam, individualism and collectivism unite together in a wonderful balanced way in which freedom of an individual and interest of the community are in equilibrium, rights and duties are equivalent, and profits and responsibilities are justly distributed. In Islam, the Legislator is the Creator of man, so it is impossible that such Wise Creator legislates commandments and regulations that might paralyze or clash with man's human nature. Allah has created man with double-nature, individual and collective, at the same time. Individualism is an original part of man's existence. That is why man loves not only his existence but also the safety, continuity and perfection thereof. Nevertheless, he has a natural tendency to co-exist with others, and hence, he gets confused and unbalanced if he isolates himself from society or is forcedly isolated by solitary confinement. The perfect system for man is that which observes these two aspects, i.e. individualism and collectivism, so as none of them dominates the other. Consequently, it is not surprising that Islam, which is Allah's Religion that conforms to man's original pure nature, is a just and moderate system, which does not oppress the individual for the sake of society, neither does it aggrieve society for the sake of the individual. It does not spoil the individual by giving him more rights than he requires or deserves, neither does it exhaust him by a large number of duties imposed upon him. Nay, it rather charges him with duties that are by no means beyond his capacity or ability.

Through its moderation, Islam gives man rights that are equivalent to his duties, and that satisfy his needs, preserve his dignity, and guard his humanity.

Therefore, out of its utmost care for man's individualistic tendency, Islam prohibits bloodshed and secures

the individual's right to live. To this effect, Allah, All-Mighty says,

“If anyone slays a person –unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.”

[V; 32]

That is why Islam obligates requital for homicide and confirms that such requital saves the life of both the individual and society.

Islam also confirms freedom of belief. In other words, according to the teachings of Islam, it is unlawful to compel anyone to quit his religion and embrace another. To this effect, Allah, Most Gracious, says:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion! Truth stands out clear from Error. Therefore, whosoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has verily grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks; and Allah hears and knows all things.”

[II; 256]

Islam confirms sanctity of man's good reputation and fame; and it strives to secure the individual's right for honor and dignity. Therefore, it is unlawful to insult a person or to slander him. To this purport, Allah, Most Merciful, says:

“O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others, it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former); nor let some women laugh at others, it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former); nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other by (offensive) nicknames; ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used of one) after he has believed; and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.”

[II; 11]

He, All-Mighty, also says:

“O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible); for suspicion in some cases is a sin; and spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would abhor it. And fear Allah, for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.”

[II; 12]

Moreover, Islam confirms sanctity of the individual's wealth and property and secures for the individual the right of possession. So it is unlawful to take anyone's property except by one's own free consent and will. Allah says:

“O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities.”

[IV; 29]

Islam also confirms sanctity of one's home. Therefore it strives to secure for the individual the right of personal independence and considers it unlawful to break into anyone's home without his permission. Allah says:

“O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own until you have asked permission and saluted those in them; that is best for you, in order that you may heed (what is seemly).”

[XXIV; 27]

Furthermore, Islam confirms freedom of sincere constructive criticism. Allah says:

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity.”

[III; 104]

Islam also confirms individual responsibility, which is the outcome of religious obligation, freedom of work, and inevitability of reward and recompense. Allah says:

“Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds.”

[LXXIV; 38]

“On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear; it gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns.”

[II; 268]

“Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another’s burden; if one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load, not the least portion thereof can be carried (by the other), even though he be nearly related. You can admonish none except such as fear their Lord unseen and perform Prayer. And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his own soul, and the final Return (of all things) is to Allah.”

[XXXV; 18]

“Therefore, by your Lord, We will, of a surety, call them to account for all their deeds.”

[XV; 92-93]

and

“And fear the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be repaid duly for what it has earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”

[II; 281]

Taking into consideration the social aspect of man, Islam imposes upon him social duties that are equivalent to his rights and stipulates that such rights and individual freedom must be within the framework of the community’s interest and must by no means cause harm to others. In the Islamic community, it is not permissible for an individual to use his right in a way that causes harm to the group; and if the right of an individual clashes with the collective rights of the community, the latter will have priority over the former.

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Since the religion of Islam, including its two sources: the Quran and Prophetic Sunna, symbolizes Allah’s legislative Commandment, since this universe, including its heavens and earth, symbolizes Allah’s Creation-Commandment, and since Allah is One and the same in both his Creation and Commandment, there must necessarily be Moderation and balance in both His Creation and Commandment. But where is Moderation in His Creation?

One of the features of Moderation, or balance, in the universe is that all planets, stars, and galaxies move around each other in orbits as miraculously described by the Noble Quran, in which Allah, All-Mighty, says:

“By the Firmament of Return!”

[LXXXVI; 11]

i.e. each and every heavenly object in the whole universe whirls round another in orbit which causes it to return to the point from which it began orbiting. Such movement and Return is caused and kept in balance by centrifugal and centripetal forces without which all heavenly objects would become one single gigantic heavenly body. In other words, in its constellations and galaxies, the universe is a great Divine Miracle that bespeaks Allah's Infinite Divine Power and Wisdom.

Since the movement of the earth round the sun is oval, when the earth comes near to the sun, it speeds up in order not to be pulled to the sun by the force of gravity. Similarly, it slows down when it is far from the sun in order not to get released from the force of gravity and, hence, get lost in space. This miraculous balance between the centripetal and centrifugal forces betokens Allah's Infinite Divine Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Mercy, and Kindness. In its movement round the sun, if the speed of the earth increases or decreases suddenly, every thing thereon will be destroyed. The miraculous thing is that both acceleration and deceleration of the earth's movement round the sun take place most gently and smoothly by Allah's Most Gentle Divine Hand.

Such is Moderation, or balance, in the horizons; but what about Moderation, or balance, in the creation of man? It has been proved that if the liquidity of man's blood increases, all blood bleeds off from one wound, and man dies. Also, if the viscosity of man's blood increases more than normal, the blood congeals, like mud in streets; and then, if a clot reaches the heart or the brain, man immediately loses his life. Therefore, man's body excretes a hormone that liquefies the blood and another that congeals it. Through the precise miraculous balance between the rate of excretion of these two hormones, blood keeps on a level of liquidity that enables it to run through the delicate vessels and capillaries of the body and to maintain a level of viscosity that prevents it from bleeding off from a very small wound.

Have you not seen this miraculous balance between the hormone of liquidity and that of viscosity?!

Moreover, It has been proved that the pituitary gland is the queen of the endocrine glands. One of its excretions stimulates the thyroid gland, which is responsible for metabolism (i.e. converting food into energy). Another one of the excretions of the thyroid gland discourages the pituitary gland. The mutual influence between these two glands, however, produces balance between man's need for food and his need for energy.

Do you not see this mutual influence between these two glands, and how the excretion of each gland either stimulates or discourages the other?!

Translation :

Auditing :