

9466 - What is moderation in religion?

the question

What is meant by moderation in religion?

Detailed answer

Moderation in religion means that one does not exaggerate and go beyond the limit set by Allaah, and that one does not neglect it and fall short of the limit set by Allaah.

Moderation in religion means following the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Exaggeration means trying to do more than he did, and negligence means not reaching that level.

For example, a man says, "I want to spend all night in prayer (qiyaam al-layl), and never sleep all my life, because prayer is one of the best acts of worship, so I want to spend the entire night in prayer." We say, this is going to extremes in the religion of Allaah, and this is not right. Something like this happened at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), when a group of men got together and one of them said, "I will pray at night and never sleep." Another said, "I will fast and never break my fast." The third one said, "I will never marry women." News of that reached the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and he said, "What is wrong with people who say such and such? I fast and I break my fast. I sleep, and I marry women. Whoever overlooks my Sunnah does not belong to me." These people had gone to extremes in religion, and so the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) disowned them, because they overlooked his Sunnah which includes fasting and not fasting, praying at night and sleeping, and marrying women.

The one who is falling short is one who says, "I do not need to do voluntary (naafil) actions, so I will not do them. I will only do the fard actions. He may even be falling short in the fard actions, so this person is lacking.

The moderate person is one who follows the path of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his rightly-guided successors (al-Khulafaa' al-Raashidoon).

Another example: three men are faced with an immoral man. One of them says, "I will not greet this immoral man and I will boycott him, keep away from him and not speak to him."

The second one says, "I will go with this immoral man, greet him and smile at him. I will invite him to my place and accept his invitation. He is just like any righteous man to me."

The third one says, "I hate this immoral man for his immoral actions, but I love him for his faith. I will not boycott him unless doing so is in his best interests. If there is nothing to be gained by boycotting him, and if that will only increase him in his immorality, then I will not boycott him."

We say that the first man is going to extremes, the second is negligent and the third is moderate.

The same applies to all other acts of worship and dealings with others. People vary between extremism, negligence and moderation.

A third example: A man is a prisoner of his wife, who directs him as she wishes and he does not stop her from committing sin, or urge her to do good. She has taken over his reason and has become the one who is in charge of him.

Another man treats his wife in a harsh, arrogant and high-handed manner. He does not care about her and regards her as less than a servant.

A third man is moderate in his dealings with his wife, as Allaah and His Messenger commanded.

"And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable"

[al-Baqarah 2:228 – interpretation of the meaning]

[The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:] “Let no believing man hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics he will be pleased with another.”

This last man is the one who is moderate. The second one is extreme in his dealings with his wife, and the first is falling short.

The same applies to all other deeds and acts of worship.