

## The religion of Islam is appropriate for every time, place, and condition – Imam Ibn Uthaymeen



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah says:

يَسْتَقِيمَ نَأْمِنْكُمْ شَاءَ لِمَنْ

**For whoever wills among you to take the straight path** (Surah al-Takwir Verse 28)

Here, the Arabic noun for the verb used is **إِسْتِقَامَةٌ (istiqaamah)** which means “**moderation.**” And there is nothing more moderate or just than the justice found within Allah’s legislated religion. Previous legislations were suitable for earlier nations, appropriate for their time, place, and circumstances. Likewise, after the mission of the messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the legislation he brought is suitable and applicable to those to whom he was sent – everyone from the beginning of his mission until the end of this world.

There is a well-known saying in our religion: The religion of Islam is suitable and ensures the well-being of every time, place, and circumstance. When people stick to it, Allah corrects the affairs of creation.

Consider that a person is instructed to pray standing. If he is unable to stand, then sitting, and if unable to sit, he may pray lying down. In this way, the religion is suitable and easily applied—and progressive—according to the circumstances of each individual. This religion is appropriate for every time, place, and condition. Similarly, someone who washes for prayer may use water if he is able or has it. Otherwise, he may use clean sand or even pray without washing at all. This is because Allah’s religious legislation, all of it, is based on moderation and justice. There is no unfairness, discrimination, oppression, strictness or hardship in it. For this reason, Allah refers to it as " **the straight path** " .

The opposite of this **istiqāmah**, this moderation or “**straightness**,” is **deviation** – deviation to the side of extremism and intolerance or deviation to the side of negligence and slackness. So people follow three different paths regarding the religion of Allah: 1) the path of extremism, intolerance, or extravagance; 2) the path of negligence and carelessness, and 3) the path of moderation between the two extremes. This third path is the " the straight path " , the praiseworthy manner of following the religion of Allah.

As for the first and second paths, extremism and negligence, both lead to destruction. They destroy their followers with excessiveness or negligence. For example, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) forbade people from going to the extreme of intolerance and harshness; he said:

الْمُتَّطِعُونَ هَلَكَ ، الْمُتَّطِعُونَ هَلَكَ ، الْمُتَّطِعُونَ هَلَكَ

**The harsh ones are destroyed, the harsh ones are destroyed, the harsh ones are destroyed.**[54]

Harshness brings about hardship and causes people to leave the religion of Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ). The other extreme, that of negligence and carelessness, has also been criticized. Allah says, describing the hypocrites:

أَقْلِيلَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ يَذْكُرُونَ وَلَا النَّاسَ يُرَاءُونَ كُسَالَى قَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِلَى قَامُوا وَإِذَا

And when they stand up for prayer, they stand with laziness and (only) to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allah but little. [Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:142]

The religion of Allah is one of moderation, between extremism and negligence, and this is why Allah says:

**"For whoever wills among you to take the straight path".**

Whoever wills to take this path, let him not deviate right or left. He should constantly remain straight on his religion.

As for this “straightness” as it relates to behaving with the creator—which is to worship him alone—it also relates to one’s behavior with his creation. So your character toward people should be between these two extremes. Neither be harsh, intolerant, and overly strict; nor be careless, or behave as inferior or feeble. Rather, behave with seriousness though with leniency toward others.

Some scholars used to advise judges to be lenient yet without weakness, strong yet without harshness. One’s leniency and gentleness should not lead him to become weak, yet one’s strength should not lead him to behave harshly with others. Instead, a person should be lenient but not weak, strong without harshness so that he achieves moderation in all his affairs. You find some people always acting rough, inflexible, or confrontational as if he is above everyone else. This is wrong. Others you see them among people as if they were worthless, so humble that they belittle themselves. They behave totally indifferent or as if they have no dignity. This is also wrong.

People should be between the two extremes as was the guidance and character of the prophet ( عليه وسلم صلى الله ). He was tough in situations which called for that, gentle when gentleness was appropriate. So we should try to behave with others with seriousness and determination yet also with leniency and mercy.

#### **Footnotes:**

[54] Collected by Muslim. Imam al-Nawawī, in his explanation of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, explained the Arabic word in the ḥadīth الْمُتَنَطِّعُونَ (al-Mutanattī’ūn), to mean, **“The extremists who go beyond the limits in their statements and actions.”** In another ḥadīth collected by Muslim, the prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said:

الْعُنْفِ عَلَى يُعْطِي لَا مَا الرَّفْقِ عَلَى وَيُعْطِي ، الرَّفْقِ يُحِبُّ رَفِيقُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ

Indeed, Allah is gentle and loves gentleness. He gives due to gentleness that which he does not give due to harshness.

**Source:** [Explaining Surah al-Takwir](#) – Shaykh Uthaymeen | Translated by Abu az-Zubayr Harrison

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