**Balance and Moderation**



**9.105.** Say: "Work, and God will see your work, and so will His Messenger and the true believers; and you will be brought back to the Knower of the Unseen and the witnessed, and He will make you understand all that you were doing (and call you to account for it).(1)



**28.77.** "But seek, by means of what God has granted you, the abode of **the Hereafter** (by spending in alms and other good causes), without forgetting your share (which God has appointed) in this world. Do good to others as God has done good to you (out of His pure grace). Do not seek corruption and mischief in the land, for God does not love those who cause corruption and make mischief. "(2)



**93.11.** And as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim it!(3)



**102.8.** And on that Day, you will most surely be questioned as to all the favors (**bestowed** on you).

**HADITH**

Narrated by Abu Huraira r.a.: “**The Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ‘Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but to try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by offering the prayers in the mornings, afternoons and during the last hours of the nights.’” (5)

One of the things that indicate that words will be weighed is the Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah (radi Allahu anhu), according to which the Prophet (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said: “Two words which are light on the tongue but will weigh heavily in the Balance and are beloved to the Most Merciful: Subhaan Allaah il-‘Azeem, Subhaan Allaahi wa bi Hamdihi (Glory be to Allah the Almighty, Glory and praise be to Allah).” (6)

A persons actual deeds will be weighed and is indicated by the Sahih Hadith narrated from Abu’l-Darda’ (radi Allahu anhu) who said: “I heard the Prophet (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) say, ‘There is nothing that will be placed in the Balance that will weigh more heavily than a good attitude. The one who has a good attitude will attain thereby the status of one who fasts and prays (a great deal).’”(7)

**Question:** In almost every area of life today, serious deviations of thought are seen and extremism is credited. What are the points to be careful about for those who wish to avoid extremism?

**Answer:** Being balanced and maintaining moderation is very important for being able to practice religion in the way God Almighty meant and to make it become the spirit of our lives. For when balance is lost, one strays to one of the two extreme levels—excessiveness or apathy (insufficiency). As these two extremes evoke one another in a reactive pattern, they give way to a vicious cycle. In fact, freedom from the two extremes is through adherence to the Practice of the Pride of Humanity, who always counseled moderation to his community.

**The middle way**

The **Quran**ic concept of the Sirat al-Mustaqim (Straight Path) has usually been defined with reference to following the “middle way,” or moderation, at the three main human faculties of desire, aggression, and reasoning.[1] However, it is possible to evaluate other factors, such as rivalry, envy, intention, and viewpoint, within the same perspective. Indeed, it is possible to talk about following a middle way for every feeling and thought inherently found in human nature.

For example, if we take “viewpoint” (nazar) in terms of gaining insight into phenomena and evaluating them, being an optimist represents the upper extreme, whereas a pessimist represents the lower extreme, and a truthful one represents the middle way. As the first two only tend to see the good or bad side in everything, a truthful person tries to evaluate everything realistically. Nevertheless, (as seeing things and phenomena happening around one through the eye of wisdom make the person think, and thereby act, positively) Bediüzzaman expressed in his Seeds of Truth, “Those who see positively, think positively; those who think positively take delight in life.” In addition, even with respect to things that do not seem very pleasant, it is better to hold positive considerations as far as it is possible to do so. But this does not mean overlooking the reality and living in a world of fantasy. What needs to be done is to see things as they are without escaping realities or giving into hopelessness, which means having the “middle way,” or a “balanced viewpoint.”

Actually, when the middle way is taken and moderation is maintained, even the human carnal soul, which seems to be evil, can serve as a positive factor for spiritual progress. Even Satan, who leads people astray with his temptations and deceptions, can be a means for spiritual progress as a factor that makes people turn toward God (as far as the wisdom of his creation and his position is correctly understood). On the other hand—may God forbid—if Satan is assumed as a separate power who is able to exert force, it will lead people to deviation, like the situation of those who think that light and darkness have a force and power on their own. Those who hold this belief think that light and darkness are individual powers, that light brings no harm, but the representatives of darkness have to be pleased. Hence, they commit undreamed-of evils with this deviant consideration. Satanists who act with this philosophy try to please Satan so that they can be saved from its evil. Imagining a powerless creature who has no weapon but deceit and beguilement—God forbid—as a being that possesses a part of the power and force that belongs to the Creator, is the upper extreme, to the degree of insanity. On the other hand, dismissing its deceit and beguilement and turning a blind eye to its goading and whisperings, and thus ignoring the warnings in **the Quran and Sunnah**, is the lower extreme. Satan is a clear enemy of man; if someone does not give his willpower its due and becomes heedless, he risks losing eternal bliss through the hand of his relentless and faithless archenemy.

**Victims of success**

As it is very important to strike a balance at the negative factors that can lead one to destruction, it is also very important for people to strike a balance with **respect** to their feelings concerning the achievements that they are blessed with. That is, it is also necessary to watch one’s step concerning the deeds of the heart and body realized in the name of faith, worship, and morality by not straying from the middle way. For example, believers must do their best and seek perfection in observing all their acts of worship such as the daily Prayers, alms, pilgrimage, fasting, supplicating to God, and reflecting on His works. As decreed in the **Quran**, “Work, and God will see your work, and so will **His Messenger** and the true believers” (at-Tawbah 9:105), all the righteous works must be realized in the best way with a consciousness of presenting them to God, His Messenger, and believers. In short, believers must not feel content with what they do but should seek perfection in all of their acts of worship. However, even if they attain a nearly perfect performance, they should never become insolent by laying claim on the consequent success; it is God Almighty who creates success. If being superficial, slothful, and heedless at worship is the lower extreme, then the upper extreme is having insolent pride in one’s acts of worship and laying a claim on the blessing which is granted by God after the servant’s meticulous efforts. Because, even though the worshipper exerts oneself and seeks perfection, laying claim on the consequent success leads to ruin through arrogant sanctimony.

Therefore what becomes a person who attains success are modesty, humbleness, and humility. One must always say, “It is not deserved of a servant like me; how has this kind favor been granted to me?” As believers should try to do their best, they should also know to tan their carnal soul by beating it up, as tanners once did for tanning hides. In addition, they should never forget that the achievements and success they are granted might, indeed, be tests for them, which may lead to their ruin if personal pride is felt.

Imagine that some false prophets—such as Aswad al-Ansi and Musaylima the Liar—appeared even at a period when the true light illuminated everywhere. Those poor people became victim to certain gifts they saw in themselves and perished in the claws of pride and egotism.

**An inflation of the “Divinely-guided” saviors, in an age of arrogance**

Surely such cases of deviation and misguidance are not limited to a particular period in history. Almost every period witnesses such events. Today, as well, you can see some people who can talk or write impressively or have taken a few steps on the spiritual path, who lose their balance and seek to become an idol and display due arrogance. When they display themselves and when a circle of naïve ones begins to form around them, they start seeing themselves like a bright star immediately. For this reason, there is an inflation of Mahdis—the so-called “Divinely-guided” people, today. Even a humble servant like myself knows five or six such “saviors” who have appeared in **Muslim community**. Three of them even tried to contact me—in fact, one of them came here recently. He said he was twenty-two years old. He then told me, “I thought that I was from the lineage of the Prophet’s grandson Husayn, but after extensive research I learned that I was also from the lineage of the Prophet’s other grandson Hasan.” I tried to remind him of some points about humbleness and modesty. I tried to tell him that the sign of worthlessness in worthless ones is their assuming greatness, virtually standing on their toes to look greater than they really are; and the sign of worth in truly worthy ones is their humbly curved stature, in order to look lesser than they really are. After I spoke to him, I thought that he was convinced. To my surprise, the last thing he said before leaving was: “All right sir, but what can I do if I have [been divinely chosen and appointed and thereby] not been given a right to choose at this issue?” However, there is no spiritual rank or title in Islam—including the imamates of the Sunni schools of thought (Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki, and Hanbali) or being the Mahdi—that puts one under obligation of proclaiming it to others, except for Prophethood.[2] However, it is very difficult to tell anything to those who are obsessed with such a thought. May God guide all of the egotist and arrogant ones obsessed with a claim of being Mahdi to the Straight Path.

Let me add one final point here. It should never be overlooked that people with similar claims might surface even in an auspicious circle that is based on an understanding of humbleness, modesty, sincerity, and making no claims whatsoever. Since such people base their arrogance on their affiliation with a certain group, it can be much more difficult to bring them to their senses. For example, one of them might say, “Until recently, I had been a disciple of such and such guide, who was supported by a thousand angels or spirit beings. But now, nine hundred of them have left him and come to support me.” As different examples are seen in every period, people can become a slave to their carnal soul and Satan through various delusions.

Thus it should not be forgotten that even at the time when the seeds sown have began to flourish and gardens are filled with roses, an invasion of thorns is always possible. Believers should always be vigilant on the path on which they walk. There will always appear some people to misguide naïve ones. As thorns can exist near roses, ravens might begin to crow near nightingales. Thus, those who have not heard the nightingale, who are not accustomed to its beautiful singing, can be enthralled by the crowing of the raven. For this reason, believers must be alert against such deceptions and constantly maintain vigilance with a good insight—like that of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar, may God be pleased with them—and act sensibly.

[1] The Sirat al-Mustaqim is the “middle way” having nothing to do with any extremes. It is the middle way, considering human psychology and the realities of life and creation. In educating people, it disciplines and ennobles the faculty of “reasoning,” saving it from the extremes of demagogy, cunning and stupidity, and so leads to sound knowledge and wisdom. The disciplining and ennobling of the faculty of “aggression” and impulse of defense saves that faculty from wrongdoing, oppression and cowardice, and leads to justice and valor. The faculty of “desire” is saved through discipline from dissipation and hedonism and grows into chastity. (Ed.)
[2] The Prophets who were Divinely chosen and appointed with the mission of Prophethood were required to declare their **Prophethood** and convey the Revelations they received to their people. (Ed.) (8)

 **What is the believers’ version of the concept of self-confidence or self-esteem? Can we strike a balance between being an ordinary person and cherishing high goals?**

**What is the believers’ version of the concept of self-confidence or self-esteem? Can we strike a balance between being an ordinary person and cherishing high goals?**

Self-confidence, or self-esteem, is usually defined as a person’s believing and trusting in himself, relying on his personal abilities and opportunities, living in peace with his own person and environment, and being content with himself in general. Even though it has a positive aspect in terms of urging us to look at life positively, this term is an expression of a notion whose underlying meaning and connotations do not comply with universal humane values. The term “self confidence” expresses a perspective which originates from an egotistic worldview.

Naturally, a person’s character needs to be revealed in order to be able to improve his or her talents and capabilities. However, while seeking their development we should not flatter individuals excessively and throw them into whirlpools of egotism. We should not make a person become a know-it-all and act insolently; we should not let issues rely on a single individual’s restricted personal capabilities, limited power, and feeble will.

First of all, it is inevitable for a person who approaches every issue with respect to his or her personal talents, power, and capacity and keeps saying “I” to become totally egocentric; it is inevitable for them to grow more and more arrogant by feeding their ego with every achievement and everything they do. On the other hand, it is also obvious that a self-centered person who has too much trust in himself will become completely desperate at the slightest slip or fall; he will not find anything to hold on to and will not be able to rise again.

People have the sense of and need for confidence engrained in their nature. However, a person who does not know whom he should trust and who cannot correctly identify the true source of reliance will finally turn into a complete egotist and he or she will ascribe every matter to himself or herself. Such a person will even nurture some perspectives leading to unbelief; she or he will go too far and—**God** forbid—say, “I have created…”, or “such and such has created….” In time, these people will become narcissists, self-admirers who are fond of themselves, their behavior, their manners, and their appearance. They will be ready to reject and criticize any thought, measure, and solutions other than their own.

**We have trust and confidence in God**

In this respect, a principle of “fulfilling what befalls on the free will and then relying on God” should replace the notion of self-confidence in the eyes of a true believer of God. Humans are blessed with the “free will,” which is a very special gift. We are responsible for using all the senses and feelings granted by God Almighty as capital, but expect the result and reward from Him again. Likewise, the feeling of confidence is always ascribed to God in the Qur’an and the practical example of the Prophet, since **God Almighty** is the one who creates everything and who directs every affair. If we use the potentials placed in our nature as seeds and then put them to practice as an intention and wish to be realized, God Almighty grants us the power and possibility to accomplish that act. Regarding it as mental power, as directing one’s own thoughts and actions with that power, or as God’s direct favor on the human free will within the sphere of causes, no matter how we define fulfilling what befalls the free will, when we wish to do something and incline towards it, the Creator of the Universe renders it possible for us to realize that intended act. Therefore, we should always put our faith in God and rely on His execution. Accordingly, true believers firstly have faith in God in every matter and make use of the abilities He has bestowed on them. In addition, they ascribe achievements not to themselves but to Divine Providence. They know that all of these come from God and they have complete faith that future achievements also lie in the power of God. Such people, while fully acknowledging their impotence and weakness, are very powerful at the same time, for they are well aware of the true source of power. Such people are very rich, since they are conscious that they are fed from the treasures of **Divine Mercy**. They become heroes of the fact that “belief is both light and power. Those who attain true belief can challenge the universe.” (Nursi, Twenty-Third Word). Therefore, they have the courage to defy worlds. The fortress they take refuge in and the sword they make use of is the truth, “There is no power except with God.”

Yes, true believers make use of the free will granted by God in the best way possible. On the other hand, they pray as “O God, please do not leave me with my carnal self even for a span as short as the blink of an eye,” putting their trust not in their own selves, but in God Almighty. They take their carnal self and carnal desires as their archenemy and take only God as their best supporter, sole friend, and helper. In the face of every event, they croon, God is sufficient for us; how excellent a Guardian He is! (**Quran**, 3:173), and they voice the truth, O Our Lord! It is in You that We have put our trust, and it is to You that we turn in utmost sincerity and devotion, and to You is the homecoming (Qur’an, 60:4). They always keep loyal to the divine decrees:

“And put your trust in God. God suffices as One on Whom to rely (and to Whom to refer all affairs).” (**Quran**, 33:3)

“God is sufficient for me; there is no deity but He. In Him have I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Supreme Throne (as the absolute Ruler and Sustainer of the universe and all creation, Who maintains and protects it).” (Qur’an, 9:129)

**Answer:** Self-confidence, or self-esteem, is usually defined as a person’s believing and trusting in himself, relying on his personal abilities and opportunities, living in peace with his own person and environment, and being content with himself in general. Even though it has a positive aspect in terms of urging us to look at life positively, this term is an expression of a notion whose underlying meaning and connotations do not comply with universal humane values. The term “self confidence” expresses a perspective which originates from an egotistic worldview.

Naturally, a person’s character needs to be revealed in order to be able to improve his or her talents and capabilities. However, while seeking their development we should not flatter individuals excessively and throw them into whirlpools of egotism. We should not make a person become a know-it-all and act insolently; we should not let issues rely on a single individual’s restricted personal capabilities, limited power, and feeble will.

First of all, it is inevitable for a person who approaches every issue with respect to his or her personal talents, power, and capacity and keeps saying “I” to become totally egocentric; it is inevitable for them to grow more and more arrogant by feeding their ego with every achievement and everything they do. On the other hand, it is also obvious that a self-centered person who has too much trust in himself will become completely desperate at the slightest slip or fall; he will not find anything to hold on to and will not be able to rise again.

People have the sense of and need for confidence engrained in their nature. However, a person who does not know whom he should trust and who cannot correctly identify the true source of reliance will finally turn into a complete egotist and he or she will ascribe every matter to himself or herself. Such a person will even nurture some perspectives leading to unbelief; she or he will go too far and—God forbid—say, “I have created…”, or “such and such has created….” In time, these people will become narcissists, self-admirers who are fond of themselves, their behavior, their manners, and their appearance. They will be ready to reject and criticize any thought, measure, and solutions other than their own.

**We have trust and confidence in God**

In this respect, a principle of “fulfilling what befalls on the free will and then relying on God” should replace the notion of self-confidence in the eyes of a true believer of God. Humans are blessed with the “free will,” which is a very special gift. We are responsible for using all the senses and feelings granted by **God Almighty** as capital, but expect the result and reward from Him again. Likewise, the feeling of confidence is always ascribed to God in the Qur’an and the practical example of the Prophet, since God Almighty is the one who creates everything and who directs every affair. If we use the potentials placed in our nature as seeds and then put them to practice as an intention and wish to be realized, God Almighty grants us the power and possibility to accomplish that act. Regarding it as mental power, as directing one’s own thoughts and actions with that power, or as God’s direct favor on the human free will within the sphere of causes, no matter how we define fulfilling what befalls the free will, when we wish to do something and incline towards it, the Creator of the Universe renders it possible for us to realize that intended act. Therefore, we should always put our faith in God and rely on His execution. Accordingly, true believers firstly have faith in God in every matter and make use of the abilities He has bestowed on them. In addition, they ascribe achievements not to themselves but to Divine Providence. They know that all of these come from God and they have complete faith that future achievements also lie in the power of God. Such people, while fully acknowledging their impotence and weakness, are very powerful at the same time, for they are well aware of the true source of power. Such people are very rich, since they are conscious that they are fed from the treasures of **Divine Mercy**. They become heroes of the fact that “belief is both light and power. Those who attain true belief can challenge the universe.” (Nursi, Twenty-Third Word). Therefore, they have the courage to defy worlds. The fortress they take refuge in and the sword they make use of is the truth, “There is no power except with God.”

Yes, true believers make use of the free will granted by God in the best way possible. On the other hand, they pray as “O God, please do not leave me with my carnal self even for a span as short as the blink of an eye,” putting their trust not in their own selves, but in God Almighty. They take their carnal self and carnal desires as their archenemy and take only God as their best supporter, sole friend, and helper. In the face of every event, they croon, God is sufficient for us; how excellent a Guardian He is! (Qur’an, 3:173), and they voice the truth, O Our Lord! It is in You that We have put our trust, and it is to You that we turn in utmost sincerity and devotion, and to You is the homecoming (Qur’an, 60:4). They always keep loyal to the divine decrees:

“And put your **trust in God**. God suffices as One on Whom to rely (and to Whom to refer all affairs).” (Qur’an, 33:3)

“God is sufficient for me; there is no deity but He. In Him have I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Supreme Throne (as the absolute Ruler and Sustainer of the universe and all creation, Who maintains and protects it).” (Qur’an, 9:129)

Nevertheless, nowadays saying “I” in everything one does and overflowing with arrogant considerations is more common than ever. Egotism is so widespread today that most people use even what has been granted by Divine Providence in the name of their arrogance and use it as elements to feed their ego. For example, most of those who put emphasis on self-confidence contract the plague of vanity in time; they are seized by a feeling of superiority and catch the egotist disease of talking about themselves at every opportunity. Therefore, the term “self-confidence” or “self-esteem” is impossible to reconcile with the perspective of a believer in the true sense of the word. It is a very unnatural term from the standpoint of faith, for it misguides minds and hearts like other spurious expressions do. With an understanding based on the essential values of belief, we all need to pray, “Hold me, O God. Hold me, please. I cannot do without you!” (9)

**BALANCE IN SOCIETY**

**Islam** avoids extremes in order to maintain social balance and order. Therefore, monopoly and cut-throat competition are disapproved. Islam’s essence is justice for all, which enables people to lead a good and happy life while, at the same time, strengthens the bonds of human brotherhood and the social fabric.

The social framework prevalent today in most **Muslim** countries is not Islamic. Many places are characterized by monstrous and oppressive conditions for the poor, rampant corruption, poverty, and need. A few people have acquired substantial wealth and thus enjoy the numerous amenities and luxuries of life, whereas the majority do not even receive two square meals a day. An **Islamic** social order stresses simple and austere efforts that are free from ostentation. The Messenger strove to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, the high and the low. He advocated a society in which one sector would not exploit another, for Islam seeks a balanced life that represents the equilibrium of social forces.

The fullest development of humanity’s potential can be achieved through the implementation of Islamic principles. The optimum level of civilization, which embodies the maximum well-being, can never be possible without spiritual and moral development. All **Islamic principles**, which descend from Divinity, are perfect and absolute. The Islamic approach is therefore just, natural, humane, and perfectly balanced and rational.
Abu’l-Fazl Ezzati outlines the Islamic economic system as follows:

* **Islam** represents a complete way of life. There is no compartmentalization of human activity is Islam. Its economic policy is, therefore, an integral part of the religion of Islam.
* Islamic economic system is based on equality, justice, moderation, and collective self-sufficiency.
* Man’s piritual development is fundamental but his physical welfare is instrumental.
* Islam is based on faith in God, Who has given man the capability to choose between good and evil, and assume full responsibility for his conduct. “Man has only that for which he makes effort, and and this effort will be seen.” (53:39-40)
* **Islam** is a universal system embodying eternal values which safeguard man’s rights while constantly reminding him of his obligation to himself and society.
* Islam forbids exploitation and monopoly in all forms and strictly prohibits unearned interest such as usury, gambling, betting, etc.
* **Islam** honors labor and contracts, enjoins work and toil, encourages man to earn his own living by honest means and to spread his earnings.
* **Islam** encourages mutual helping and never likes “wealth to circulate among the rich only” (59:7). Every member of the **Muslim community** feels obliged to help his poor brother while he is equally entitled to live a private life and to own property.36

**Refrences**

**(1) 9:105/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2) 28:77/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) 93:11/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(4) 102:8/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(5) [Sahih Al-Bukhari]**

**(6) [Sahih Al-Bukhari]**

**(7) [Sunan al-Tirmidhi]**

**(8) Gulen, Fethullah. *The Broken Jug*. http://fgulen.com/. April 2013.**

**(9) The Fountain, July – August 2009, Issue 70**