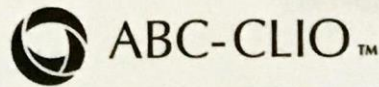
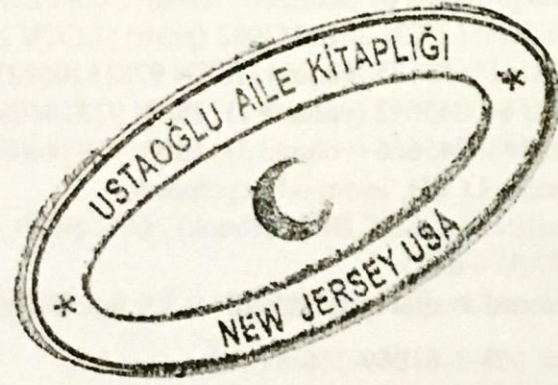


# Islam

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## Further Reading

Al Tusi, Mohammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali Abu Ja'far. *A Concise Description of Islamic Law and Legal Opinions*. London: ICAS Press, 2008.

Haleem, Muhammad Abdel, Omar Adel Sherif, and Kate Daniels. *Criminal Justice in Islam: Judicial Procedure in the Shari'a*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003.

## Extravagance

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Islam is a religion of moderation, modesty, and balance. It acknowledges that the whole universe is created on the basis of balance; for this reason, the Islamic precepts generally promote a balanced approach in all departments of life. The Quran, noting that the universe is built on a delicate balance and equilibrium, seeks to ensure that a Muslim leads a moderate life by complying with what Allah asks and avoiding what he prohibits. This general approach also applies to the concept of extravagance. As a general rule, Islam considers extravagance as something that a Muslim should stay away from. In the strongest terms, it is prohibited both in the Quran and the hadiths as well as in the practices of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Yet it remains a moral consideration and obligation without a legal consequence or sanction.

Islam evaluates the term “extravagance” in both its narrowest and broadest senses. In a narrower sense, extravagance is discussed mostly in connection with economy, another term that Islam pays utmost attention to. The Quran adopts a fairly negative tone and stance toward all practices and tendencies of extravagance, which include anything that destroys balance in the individual and collective life, economic transactions, ecology, mutual relations, and interactions between people. Extravagance is considered under Islam as a state of anomaly and deviation from what is regarded as natural for the people; from this perspective, it is an extreme that should be temporary.

Islam adopts a realistic and midway approach in prescribing rules and standards for individual and communal life. As a result, Islamic sources indicate that an individual is entitled to meet his or her needs through legitimate means and that a life in seclusion should be avoided because it is an extreme preference. However, a Muslim, this approach suggests, should also be aware that he or she is not the real possessor of what is on Earth because Allah owns everything in the universe, and people are entitled to make use of what is on Earth on a temporary basis.

Such an approach further indicates that Muslims should consider that other members of society also have a right to get their fair share of these sources. This basically refers to a fair distribution of economic resources. However, the Islamic



perspective on economy is visibly different from the secular and liberal approach. Liberal economic thinking suggests that greater economic utility requires greater amounts of expense and exploitation; by doing so, this line of approach encourages the individual to consider his or her own needs without paying attention to the social and collective utility and priorities, assuming that increased individual satisfaction will contribute to attainment of an optimum level of social satisfaction.

Islam, on the other hand, offers a simple and yet strong solution: it strongly discourages extravagance, which in the broadest sense means attention to making the optimum use of sources and avoiding overuse and exploitation of them. In this approach, the term "extravagance" is closely related to the term "economy," which also has a narrow and broad meaning. In a broader sense, economy refers to a state of affairs whereby the individual and the community need to be moderate and avoid extremes but also should seek to maximize their satisfaction. In a narrower sense, on the other hand, it connotes a behavior of average expenditure in the field of finance. Islam promotes moderation and proportionality in the use of economic resources, indicating its opposition and negative stance in regard to economic extravagance.

A secondary meaning of extravagance as it is referred to in the Quran is disbelief or association (or partnership) with Allah. In some instances, these terms are used interchangeably to define a disproportionate and extreme tendency and preference. Transgression of boundaries established by Allah is considered a grave violation, which may amount to disbelief. From this perspective, it could be said that extravagance is regarded in the Quran as something that could be attributed to the infidels and disbelievers.

Extravagance is also seen as an act contrary to what is supposed to be done. Justice in this context appears to be the most crucial principle in the construction and sustenance of social peace and order. Failure to take proper measures for attainment and delivery of justice is also extravagance. The judicial system and principles that should be invoked in case of victimization cannot disrupt the order and social equilibrium when preventing injustice and repression.

Finally, Islamic terminology uses extravagance to refer to extreme emotionality. Islam, of course, cannot identify objective standards and measures for the boundaries of emotions and senses. Emotional needs, on the other hand, may take a person to extreme ends: love and hatred. Islam promotes moderation and temperance at both ends and recommends a grounded and balanced approach. But in the end, this is only a moral recommendation that makes a person better in his or her judgments and able to attain a sounder state of physical and mental health. This verse in the Quran is a recommendation for moderation in emotions: "But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not" (2:216).



In a narrower sense, extravagance is defined as extreme use of economic resources and unnecessary economic activities; it appears that the Quran uses the term in a broader sense to refer to a wide range of meanings including association, disbelief, extremity, exploitation, and acts and behaviors against human nature. In a strong statement, the Quran emphasizes that Allah does not like those who are excessive in acts, spending, and emotions (7:31).

*Murat Ustaoglu*

**See also:** Ethics; Islamic Economy; Justice (*Adl*); Modesty; Trade in Islam

### Further Reading

Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Quranic Principle of Wasatiyyah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

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## Extremism in Islam

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Extremism in Islam has been defined in many ways and linked to a number of antimodern intellectual movements that resist the dominant interpretation of Islam. Islamic fundamentalism differs from extremism, because extremism is the combination of a strict interpretation of Islam coupled with the use of political violence against apostates and unbelievers. Thus, there are many Muslim fundamentalist movements that have used violence and neither support nor participate in the extremist movements that have taken hold during the last 60 years.

The Kharaji movement could be called the first extremist group in Muslim history. The Kharaji movement began during the first Muslim century as part of the first battle for power between the prophet's cousin Ali ibn Talib and Muawiyah, a distant relative of Uthman and governor of Syria. Initially the Kharajis asserted support for Ali ibn Talib as the leader of the Muslim community; however, they withdrew support for the caliph according to their belief that the caliph was infallible as long as he ruled justly. Ali agreed to arbitration with Muawiyah rather than battle for the position of caliph. Many of the Kharajis believed that the choice to arbitrate was not in accord with Islam and thus that Ali had abused his position as caliph. The Kharaji perspective asserted that he had committed sin, which was equivalent to apostasy. The Kharajis believed that Muslims who did not follow their perspectives about Islam were also apostates and should be brought to justice through execution. As a result, a Kharaji assassin killed Ali Ibn Talib during *faqr*