

## Surah 9. At-Tauba

Asad: With all this, it is not desirable that all of the believers take the field [in time of war]. From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going forth to war, and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith, and [thus be able to] teach their homecoming brethren, so that these [too] might guard themselves against evil. <sup>162</sup>

Malik: It is not proper that the believers should go forth all together. Therefore, why not a squadron from each division stay behind so that they may obtain the understanding of Deen (Al-Islam), and admonish the people when they return to them so that they may refrain from un-Islamic conduct!

Pickthall: And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware.

Yusuf Ali: Nor should the believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil). <sup>1373</sup>

Transliteration: Wama kana almuinoona liyanfiroo kaffatan falawla nafara min kulli firqatin minhum ta ifatun liyatafaqqahoo fee alddeeni waliyunthiuroo qawmahum itha rajaAAoo ilayhim laAAallahum yahtharoonah

Khatab:

?However,? it is not necessary for the believers to march forth all at once. Only a party from each group should march forth, leaving the rest to gain religious knowledge then enlighten their people when they return to them, so that they ?too? may beware ?of evil?.

## Author Comments

162 - Lit., "admonish their people when they come back to them, so that they might be on their guard". Although the above injunction mentions specifically religious knowledge, it has a positive bearing on every kind of knowledge - and this in view of the fact that the Qur'an does not draw any dividing-line between the spiritual and the worldly concerns of life but, rather, regards them as different aspects of one and the same reality. In many of its verses, the Qur'an calls upon the believer to observe all nature and to discern God's creative activity in its manifold phenomena and "laws", as well as to meditate upon the lessons of history with a view to gaining a deeper insight into man's motivations and the innermost springs of his behaviour; and, thus, the Qur'an itself is characterized as addressed to "those who think". In short, intellectual activity as such is postulated as a valid way to a better understanding of God's will and - if pursued with moral consciousness - as a valid method of worshipping God. This Qur'anic principle has been emphasized in many well-authenticated sayings of the Prophet, for instance, "Striving after knowledge is a sacred duty (faridah) for every man and woman who has surrendered himself or herself to God (muslim wa-muslimah)" (Ibn Majah); or, "The superiority (fadl) of a learned man over a [mere] worshipper [i.e., one who merely prays, fasts, etc.] is like the superiority of the full moon over all the stars" (Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hanbal, Darimi). Consequently, the obligation of the believers to "devote themselves to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith" (li-yatafaqqahu fi 'd-din) and to impart its results to their fellow-believers relates to every branch of knowledge as well as to its practical application.

1373 - Fighting may be inevitable, and where a call is made by the ruler of an Islamic State, it should be obeyed. But fighting is not to be glorified to the exclusion of all else. Even among those who are able to go forth, a party should remain behind-for purposes of study, so that when the fighters return home, their minds may be attuned again to the more normal interests of religious life, under properly instructed teachers. The students and teachers are soldiers of the Jiha4d in their spirit of obedience and discipline.

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