

DAILY QUR'ANIC REFLECTIONS

From Juz' 11: Emigrate to elevate!

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

Yet it is not for the faithful to go forth en masse. But why should not there go forth a group from each of their sections to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware? (al-Tawbah:122)

Reflections:

Besides the commandment to strengthen the defences of the Muslim community at the material and physical level, the Almighty has an exception to the general commandment to struggle. The nature of this exception is not to exclude anyone from persevering for the wellbeing of the community, rather it is to bring to attention a greater, more profound and necessary struggle – the battle to maintain the cultural grounding of the community in true knowledge that can defend the God-centered identity and the God-conscious lifestyle of the Muslim nation. It is reserved for a group of individuals from every section of society, to seek deep understanding of religion and bring others to a religious lifestyle to save them from eternal peril.

Being a believer is a requirement: The person engaging in seeking religious knowledge must begin with a deep attachment to the Truth, not as a cognitive concept, rather an existential connection. A student of religion does not engage in learning to simply amass facts, and a plethora of information to regurgitate before others; rather studies for the sake of Allāh (SWT) to deeply understand religion and endeavour to bring it to the practical level of implementation to strengthen the belief of others and the honour and dignity of the Islamic community.

Getting out of the comfort zone: A seeker of Truth seeks it wherever he can find it, as if it were his lost property. But surely there are places on earth where access to eternal truths received through revelation is easier. These centers of learning provide not only a conducive learning environment to engage in intellectual discourse, they also provide a spiritual zone for the nurturing of noble moral virtues, emulating from the true scholars of religion. But with a condition: the person in search, needs to seek it, by leaving his comfort zone, emigrate and elevate.

Deep learning, every section: Islam being a way of life is not limited to personal spirituality, rather sees it as a precursor to social and global spirituality. The prophets of God were sent to all parts of the world, where their main call was to ‘worship Allāh, and abhor Tāghūt’ – the forces that invite away from the light (of God-centeredness) to the darkness (of egotism). Thus, Islamic learning, which theoretically touches every aspect of life, needs people from every section of society to learn and assist in practically implementing a God-inspired approach to foster societal enrichment and elevation. The command in this verse, makes this a communal obligation, to be fulfilled by some. The word *tafaqquh* denotes deep understanding, of the form and the spirit of Islam. In a beautiful narration from Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) he describes three traits that define the height of perfection: “Perfection at its epitome is the deep understanding of religion, perseverance in the face of trials, and balanced management of life affairs”¹.

To ponder: How does this verse define for us the criteria for sources of our own religious knowledge?

¹ al-Kāfi v.1 p.32