

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا تَبَاتٍ أَوْ

انْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا ﴿٧١﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:71

O You Who Believe!

- Take your precautions.
- And either go forth in parties or go forth all together.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

The preceding verse, as you may see, had prepared the ground for the central theme contained in these verses which stimulate and exhort the believers to fight in the way of Allah.

The believers spent their days under very perilous circumstances, when these verses were revealed, probably during the second spring of the Prophet's stay in Madina. Arabs had risen against them from all around in order to extinguish the light of Allah and demolish the slowly rising edifice of Islam. The Messenger of Allah (S) was busy in fighting the Makkan idol-worshippers and Qurayshite friends, sending precautionary expeditions to various directions and raising structure of religion in the society. But that society was honeycombed with groups of hypocrites, and those internal enemies enjoyed great power and influence.

On the day of Uhud it was clearly seen that their number was not much less than half of the believers' number. Those hypocrites used to upset the plans of the Messenger of Allah (S) and waited for him to meet with some disaster. They hindered the believers from carrying out their duties, while some of the believers too were not free from spiritual disease, and who used to give various information to their enemies.

All around, Madina was ringed with Jewish tribes who deceived and misguided the believers. From old days, Arabs of Madina respected those Jews and accorded them honor. Taking its advantage, the Jews misled them with false statement and wrong advice, in order to weaken their will and nullify all their endeavors. On the other hand, they used to instigate the polytheists against the Muslims, and encourage the idol-worshippers in their struggle, telling them to remain firm in their denial and disbelief, and to harass and torture the believers who were still in Makkah.

The order to go forth is based on the order to “take your precaution”, as the conjunctive *fa* (then) shows. Apparently it strengthens the view that ‘precaution’ refers to means of precaution. That is, it alludes to fully-fledged preparation for *jihad*. The meaning: Take your arms, make full preparation and go forth to your enemy either in separate detachments (for minor expeditions) or all together (for major battles).

Understandably, preparation and equipments would differ from one operation to another, depending on number and power of enemy. The alternatives of going forth in detachments or all together are not meant to give option or choice to the fighters; rather it looks at the strength and number of enemies – if they are few in number, go in small detachments, but if they are numerous, then go all together.

The verse, specially in the context of the next one, *And surely among you is he who would certainly hang back*, is a warning to the believers not to let down their arms, not to slacken their efforts and not to show any laxity in the conduct of *jihad*; otherwise, their morale will go down, their zeal for raising the standard of truth will be inflicted by inertia, holding back from fighting the enemies of Allah. In this way, they will lose the opportunity to cleanse the earth from uncleanness of disbelief and polytheism.

It is a comparison between the believers and the unbelievers in their respective styles of fighting; or more precisely, in the two groups’ motives of fighting. This comparison clearly shows the excellence of the believers’ way over that of the unbelievers. The way of the believers leads to, and relies on Allah, in sharp contrast to the unbelievers’ way. This provides another motivation for the believers to fight.

The unbelievers by following the Satan’s way have gone out from the guardianship of Allah. Now they have no guardian or friend except the Satan who is the friend of polytheists and of those who worship other than Allah. So, he is their friend and they are his friends.

The strategy of the Satan is weak, because it is the way of *taghut* which is against the way of Allah, and all power and strength belongs to Allah alone. Now, nothing is left for the way of *taghut*, that is, for the strategy of the Satan, except weakness. Allah by exposing the weakness of the unbelievers’ way. Encourages the believers to fight against them. Obviously, the statement that the Satan’s strategy is weak *vis-à-vis* the power of Allah, is not a denial of its hold on those who follow their desires.

[At-Tabrisi] has written under the verse, *O you who believe! take your precaution*:

Arms have been called 'precaution', because it is the instrument with which one guards oneself from danger.

He has further written that this meaning is narrated from Abu Ja'far (AS). again he writes:

It has been narrated from Abu Ja'far (AS) that *in detachments* means (small) expeditions, and *in a body* refers to the army.
(Majmaul-bayan)

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

Fight against your enemies to defend yourselves and your faith.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

In the previous verse, the subject was upon the obedience of Allah, the leadership of the immaculate ones, and sovereignty of the Prophet (S) In this verse. The words imply of being careful of the necessity of power, intelligence and a martial preparation for the Islamic community and for the divine leadership.

The Arabic word /hizr/ means: 'being alert', 'being on the look out', and 'The means of defence'.

The Qur'anic term /thubaat/ is the plural form of /thubat/ which means: 'separate parts of forces'.

Explanation

1. Muslims should be prepared and alert. They should be cognizant of the plans, number of forces, the sort of weapons, spirit, and internal and external co-operation of the enemy. Then they should design their affairs and act accordingly.

2. Muslims must be trained in military courses.

" O' You who have Faith Take your precautions (keep weapons with yourselves) , ..."

3. Muslims should be mobilized.

"... or march off all together."

4. Muslims have to utilize the different styles of challenging with enemy.

"... Then either advance in parties or march off all together."

5. Muslims must protect the bounds of their country. Acting upon the message of this verse is the secret of honour and glory, while neglecting it is the mystery of the fall and failure of Muslims.