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Salatul Jumuah in the Thoughts and Words of Ayatullah Shahid Murtadha Mutahhari

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What is Salat al Jumu'ah?

Islam has, within its teachings, a weekly prayer service referred to as *Salatul Jumu'ah*. This *Salat* has been mentioned within the Noble Qur'an itself within the Surah of the same name – *al-Jumu'ah* (62):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

“Oh you who have true faith! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on the day of Jumu'ah (Friday – the Day of Assembly) then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave all business. That is best for you if you but knew!” (62:9)

What is *Salatul Jumu'ah*? *Salatul Jumu'ah* is simply the same *Salatul Dhuhr* on the day of Friday (*Jumu'ah*) – however it has a few differences from the regular *Salat* that we perform. First off, the *Salatul Dhuhr* that we commonly perform is four *Rak'at*, however *Salatul Dhuhr* on the day of Friday – whose name is *Salatul Jumu'ah* – is only two *Rak'at*. So then how did it happen that this *Salat* was changed

into a two *Rak'at Salat*? We will discuss this point later on.

The second difference is that it is obligatory (*wajib*) that it be performed in congregation (*Jama'at*) however it is not obligatory to perform any of the other *Salat* in *Jama'at* – *Salatul Dhuhr*, *'Asr*, *Maghrib*, *'Isha* and *Fajr*.

The third difference is that in which ever locality *Salatul Jumu'ah* is held – it is obligatory (*wajib*) upon the people who live within a distance of two *Farsakh* (12.48 km) in every direction to attend that *Salat*, except if they have a valid excuse.

The fourth difference is that in which ever locality the *Salatul Jumu'ah* is established, it is not permissible for another *Salatul Jumu'ah* to be held for a distance of one *Sa'a* (6 km) – and thus, only that one *Salatul Jumu'ah* can be held.

Just imagine if such a *Salat* were to be held (keeping these laws in mind) – what kind of enormity and magnitude it would hold! If for example in this city that we are presently in – meaning Tehran – if there was to be one *Salatul Jumu'ah* held here¹, then we would see that for the distance of two *Farsakh* (12.48 km) – from the point we are presently at until the north point of *Shimran* and to the south point near the city of *Ray* and from all points stretching from the east to the west of this city – everyone would gather in one area.

In addition, for a distance of 12 kilometers from this point people from all around would join all together for this *Salat* and for a distance of 6 kilometers, no other *Salatul Jumu'ah* would be permitted to take place and thus, we would be limited to this one *Salatul Jumu'ah*. Just imagine what kind of a great gathering would take place at that time!

This *Salat* must be performed in two *Rak'at* – not four *Rak'at*. Why?? It has been related quite frequently in the *ahadith* and narrations and is also one of the established beliefs of our faith that

وَإِنَّمَا جُعِلَتِ الْجُمُعَةُ رَكْعَتَيْنِ لِمَكَانِ الْخُطْبَتَيْنِ

“On Fridays we make two *rak'at* to place two *khutbahs*”

This means that this general prayer for all people – this *Salat* which all people must gather to perform and which must not be like the other *Salatul Jama'at* that we sometimes see taking place in the *Masjid* where people are scattered about (with small groups of *Salatul Jama'at* individual from one another) – and in which it is obligatory that before the *Salat*, two speeches are given – this *Salat* must be preceded by two speeches which actually take the place of the two *Rak'at* of *Salat*.

This is the point which I wished to bring forth that within our sacred religion of Islam, we have a belief that speeches and lectures are actually a part of the religion – it is a part of the *Salat*. Amir al-Mo'minin

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (prayers be upon him) has even said, “*The khutbah (speech) is Salat.*”

During the time that the Imam (of *Jumu’ah*) is giving the speech, the people must listen to what he is saying – all people must remain quiet and must not say a word – they must be listening to the *khutbah*. As long as the speaker has not come down from the chair on which he was standing to deliver the lecture, all of the people in attendance must be sitting as if they were in a state of *Salat*. Of course there is one exception here that the *Imam* of *Jumu’ah* who is giving the speeches need not be sitting or facing the *Qiblah*.

Thus, these two speeches which are obligatory in this *Salat* actually take the place of the two *Rak’at* of the *Salat* of *Dhuhr*.

The Principle Reason for Gathering on the Day of Jumu’ah

You may be surprised by these Islamic commandments which up until now, you may never have heard about or at least, you may not have heard much about and may even ask yourself: “What is the reason for all of this gathering and etiquette on the day of *Jumu’ah*?”

You will be even more surprised when you hear that the main purpose of gathering in this particular fashion is to simply hear a speech (*khutbah*). Thus, how important are these two speeches and what life-giving power do they possess? They are so important that at that time when the one who is performing the *Adhan* (*Muaddhin*) gives out the call:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allahu Akbar!

every single person – wherever he is and whatever work he is doing – must drop everything and rush towards *Salatul Jumu’ah* and must listen to the two speeches and then perform two *Rak’at* of *Salat* in congregation (*Jama’at*) and after this, he would be free to go back to work.

In the blessed Surah of the Qur’an, al-Jumu’ah (62), these commandments have been mentioned, where we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ فَإِذَا قُضِيَ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ

“O you who have true faith! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on the day of Jumu’ah (Friday – the Day of Assembly) then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave all business. That is best for you if you but knew! And when the Salat has been completed then spread out through

the Earth...”(62:9-10)

We should also mention this point right now that usually at the time of *Dhuhr*, the *Adhan* is given and then the *Salat* is performed right after the *Adhan*. However, there is an exception to this rule which is that on the day of *Jumu'ah*, if it has been confirmed that *Salatul Jumu'ah* would be performed, then it is permissible for the *Adhan* to be given before the time of *Dhuhr*. Thus, it is allowed that the *Adhan* is given and the speeches are then started such that when the time for mid-day arrives, then two speeches have finished.²

Once the sound of the *Muaddhin* has been raised for the *Salatul Jumu'ah*, any kind of business transaction is forbidden (*haram*):

وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ

This commandment is directly from the *Qur'an* and is a part of the confirmed rulings of Islam. Both the Shi'a and the Sunni have no difference of opinion on this issue that if a correct *Salatul Jumu'ah* takes place and the *Adhan* for the *Salat* is given, then at this time for example: if the owner of a store is standing or sitting behind the counter and a customer comes in to his store and wants to purchase some cheese for example, and the store owner has the knife in his hand ready to cut the amount of cheese that the person wants, if at this time the sound of the *Muaddin* is heard proclaiming:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

then at this time it becomes obligatory (*wajib*) upon both the store owner and the shopper to drop everything that they are doing and:

فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ج

Haste unto remembrance of Allah and leave your trading.

Meaning that they must rush towards the *Salatul Jumu'ah* and must leave their business transaction aside. It is forbidden (*haram*) to indulge in business transactions at this time. Thus, they must rush towards the *Salat* and listen to those two speeches.

In the *Salatul Jumu'ah*, it is obligatory to give two speeches – not just one. Thus, the Imam must give the first speech then sit down for a short period of time remaining quiet, and then once again stand up and deliver the second speech.

The Contents of the Speeches of Jumu'ah

Now that we have seen the importance of the speech at the time of *Salatul Jumu'ah* and we have seen that the purpose of this gathering is actually to hear these lectures, the question comes up that: "What must be said in these two lectures and speeches?"

First off, the praise and glorification of Allah (Glory and Greatness be to Him); secondly, prayers and blessings must be sent upon the Finality of the Prophets – Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) and the (twelve) *A'imma*h of the religion (peace be upon all of them); thirdly, the people must be advised to a series of important commandments which we will explain later on in this discussion. The fourth thing is that a short Surah from the Qur'an must be recited. All of these elements are things that we possess within the faith of Islam – (nothing has come from outside of our teachings).

Again, so that we can actually understand how important the issue of this gathering is, we see that in the Islamic narrations it is mentioned that it is even obligatory upon those who are working in the prison system, the management and even the police and guards of the prisons to not only be present at *Salatul Jumu'ah*, rather, they are even obliged to bring those people whom they are responsible for guarding in the prison (the inmates).

Thus, the prisoners must be taken out of the prisons so that they may participate in *Salatul Jumu'ah* – this great gathering. They too must listen to the speeches and then when the Salat is finished, they are to return back to their prison cells.

The Imam who performs the *Salatul Jumu'ah* must also follow certain manners and etiquette. These include that he should wear a Turban (*'Ammamah*) on his head – meaning that he should have something covering his head, just as the *'Ammamah* of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) was.

May Allah protect Agha Hajj Agha Rahim Arbab from Isfahan. Maybe many of you have heard about this man. He is one of the high ranking scholars in the fields of *Fiqh*, *Usul*, Philosophy and 'Arabic grammar and is even versed in the traditional sciences. He is also a student of the late sage, Jahangir Khan Qashqa'i and just like the late Jahangir Khan Qashqa'i, till this day he too wears a simple hat made of an animal skin.

His appearance is just as other scholars from the point of view of the 'Aba, Qaba and his physiognomy and the only difference is that he wears a simple animal skin hat. He is also one of those people who firmly believes in the institution of *Salatul Jumu'ah* and he himself also used to lead the *Salat* in Isfahan.

However, since the people who would come to the *Salatul Jumu'ah* were not the kind of true believers and were not of those who firmly believed in *Salatul Jumu'ah*, the Friday prayer was not that great and magnificent Salat that Islam has envisioned it to be. However, whenever he comes for the *Salatul*

Jumu'ah, he always has a small *'Ammamah* upon his head which he wraps around his head once or twice.

I still remember in the month of *Farwardin* in the year 1339 (according to the Iranian Lunar Calendar) when I was in his presence in the city of Isfahan and the topic of *Salatul Jumu'ah* came up in the discussion. He said to me, *"I do not know when the Shi'a will remove the shame and disgrace of abandoning Salatul Jumu'ah from their necks at which time the other divisions within Islam who constantly refer to us as those people who have abandoned the Salatul Jumu'ah will also be removed from us."*

He even expressed a wish and has said that, *"I wish that in this Masjid al-A'zam in Qum which has been built through spending millions of Tumans that one magnificent Salatul Jumu'ah would take place in there."*

In addition, when the Imam comes, he must stand and while standing, he delivers the speeches. In this blessed verse of the Qur'an, it is mentioned;

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا ۚ قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

But when they see some bargain or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave thee standing. Say: "The (blessing) from the Presence of Allah is better than any amusement or bargain! And Allah is the Best to provide (for all needs)." (62: 11)

This verse means that these people who have no sense of upbringing and training and who still possess the traits and qualities of the people of the days of Ignorance – when they spot some merchandise or hear the drum or other instrument being played, they leave you (the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family)) standing alone and run after the goods and merchandise.

This verse refers to the event when one time, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) was standing, busy delivering the speech of *Jumu'ah*. All of a sudden, the sound of a drum which was a sign that a business caravan was making its way into the city, was entering the gates of Madinah. The people – due to fear that all the goods would be sold out fast – ran to buy the merchandise that were being offered and left the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) standing alone.

Our point in bringing this up is this statement in the verse, that:

وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا

"They leave you standing (alone)." (62: 11)

Thus, you must be standing when you give the speech for *Jumu'ah*. It has been stated that it is an innovation in the religion (*Bid'ah*) to sit and give the *Jumu'ah* speech which is something that Mua'wiyah (ibn Abu Sufyan) brought into Islam.

The issue then comes up that: Does the Imam of *Jumu'ah* and the one delivering the speeches (*Khatib*) have to be the same person or is it possible that one person gives the speeches while another person leads the *Salat*? This in its self is a separate ruling. A majority – or rather all of the scholars are of the opinion that it must be one person who delivers the lecture and is the Imam of the *Jama'at*. In the belief of some of the scholars, one of the primary conditions of the Imam of the *Salatul Jumu'ah* is that he must be able to give the speech. In many *ahadith*, it has been mentioned that:

إِمَامٌ يَخْطُبُ

“The Imam (of the Jama'at) is the one who gives the (two) speeches.”

Another condition is that the Imam, while standing and delivering the speech, must be leaning on, or holding in his hand a sword, spear or a stick and he must deliver the speech in this fashion.

A Hadith from the 7th Imam in relation to the Khutbah of Jumu'ah

In the *khutbah* of *Salatul Jumu'ah*, in addition to the praise and glorification of Allah (Glory and Greatness be to Him) and the remembrance of the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) and the *A'immah* of the religion (prayers be upon all of them) and the recitation of one short Surah being obligatory (*wajib*) , it is also obligatory on the *Khatib* to advise the listeners (of their duty to Allah (Glory and Greatness be to Him)) and as much as necessary, must also advise them of the issues relevant to the Muslims. In relation to what information is necessary to convey, it is best that we discuss this issue from the *ahadith*.

In the first volume of the book *Wasa'il ash-Shi'a* on page 357 in relation to the *ahadith* concerning the *khutbah* of *Salatul Jumu'ah*, there is a hadith that has been narrated from both the book '*Illulash Shara'i*' and also '*Uyun al-Akhbar al-Ridha*'. This hadith has been narrated from Fadhl ibn Shadhan Nishapuri who is one of the greatest and most reliable narrators that we have where he has quoted from Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon him). In this hadith, he has quoted the Imam (peace be upon him) as saying:

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَتِ الْخُطْبَةُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ لِأَنَّ الْجُمُعَةَ مَشْهُدٌ عَامٌ

“Surely the khutbah on the day of Jumu'ah has been placed there since Jumu'ah (Friday) is the gathering day of the common populous.”

فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِأَمِيرٍ سَبَبٌ إِلَى مَوْعِظَتِهِمْ وَتَرْغِيبِهِمْ فِي الطَّاعَةِ وَتَرْهِيْبِهِمْ مِنَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ

“And so, it was desired (by Allah) that the leader (of the Salat al Jum’ah) would be able to provide exhortation and encourage (the listeners) to get closer to the obedience (of Allah) and to warn and frighten them concerning going against (the laws of Allah).”

وَتَوْقِيفِهِمْ عَلَى مَا أَرَادَ مِنْ مَصْلَحَةٍ دِينِيَّةٍ وَدُنْيَاةٍ

“And also, so that the people would be made aware of what is good for them in relation to their religion and religious affairs and of the worldly affairs as well.”

وَيُخْبِرُهُمْ بِمَا يَرِدُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ الْآفَاقِ مِنَ الْأَحْوَالِ الَّتِي فِيهَا الْمُضَرَّةُ وَالْمُنْفَعَةُ

“And in addition, (the Khatib) would also inform the people of that which is happening – both the good and the bad – far away (to the Muslims of other lands and countries) and to keep them in the scheme of what is occurring.”

Sometimes, the events that are taking place within the world of Islam are things that we must give the good tidings to the other believers about – instances where advancements are made and which are a pride and a boost for Islam and the Muslims and it is good that these things are conveyed to other Muslims.

Another time, bad events plague the world of Islam and thus, these too must be conveyed to the Muslims so that they are made aware of the plight of other Muslims – for example, they should know that in this past week what has happened to their brothers in Algeria or other parts of the world.

So then, why is it important that two speeches be given? Why can we not just be content with one speech – and should there be a difference between these two speeches? In this same *hadith* that we just mentioned it is stated:

وَإِنَّمَا جُعِلَتْ خُطْبَتَيْنِ لِيَكُونَ وَاحِدَةً لِلتَّنَاءِ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَالتَّحْمِيدِ وَالتَّقْدِيسِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَ الْأُخْرَى لِلْحَوَائِجِ وَالْإِنْذَارِ وَ الدُّعَاءِ لِمَا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُعْلِمَهُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ وَ نَهْيِهِ وَ مَا فِيهِ الصَّلَاحُ وَ الْفَسَادُ

“And surely the reason why two speeches have been made obligatory is that in one of them, the praise of Allah and the glorification and sanctification of Allah, The Noble and Grand, should be carried out. However as for the second speech, the mentioning of the needs of the people and warning them and inviting them to that which they need to know of the commandments and prohibitions (of Allah) and that which is righteous and wicked (from amongst those acts).”

However just as the compiler of Wasa'il ash-Shi'a has stated, this does not need to take up the entire time of the speech.

[1.](#) Please keep in mind that this lecture was given prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and thus, Salatul Jumu'ah was not taking place in Iran. (Tr.)

[2.](#) There is a difference of opinion amongst our 'Ulama in this issue as some permit the Adhan and speeches to start before the time of Dhuhr where as others say it is not permissible. Please refer to the rules of Salatul Jumu'ah of the Marja' whom you follow. (Tr.)

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