

Surah al-Jum'a, Chapter 62

(Friday)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 11

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eleven Verses. One of the fundamental goals of the Chapter is to encourage the Muslims to congregate for the weekly establishment of the Friday prayer.

The Chapter opens with the glorification of Allah and the Prophetic Call and proceeds to suggest that the Muslims are not supposed to be like the Jews to whom the Torah was granted but they failed to act upon it.

The Muslims are suggested to leave everything aside upon hearing the call to the prayers and hasten toward the remembrance of Allah, otherwise they deserve to be censured. It is enjoined that the blessed Chapter be recited in the first prayer unit on Friday night.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Numerous traditions have been narrated concerning the recitation of the Chapter independently or as a part of daily prayers.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites the Chapter, God Almighty will bestow ten good qualities upon him throughout the Muslim lands as many as the number of those who establish or

fail to establish the Friday congregational prayer. 1

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that it is incumbent upon each and every believer following the Imams to recite Surah al-Jum'a and

"Glorify the Name of your Most Exalted Lord" (sabbih ism rabbika al-a'la)

on Friday night and Surah al-Jum'a and Surah al-Munafiqin at Friday noon. Thus, he has followed Allah's Messenger (S) in his actions and God Almighty will reward him with Paradise provided that he also acts upon Qur'anic Injunctions. 2 Such Rewards are in store for him.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The preceding Chapter opened with

"glorify" (sabbih)

and the blessed Chapter in question opens with

"glorifies" (yusabbih)

to reflect that glorification was, is, and will be for God Almighty. Glorification of God Almighty is the basis of all true Islamic beliefs and doctrines. The blessed Chapter, opening with the glorification of God Almighty, makes a reference to some of the Divine Attributes of His Beauty and Glory as well as His Most Beauteous Names.

Such reference is the prelude of the prospective discussions. The blessed Verse is saying that whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorify God Almighty at all times and thereby physically and spiritually glorify Him of all defects and shortcomings.

He is the Lord Who is the Owner, the Sovereign, and free from all defects. He is the Sovereign, the Holy.

Thus, emphasis is laid on His Ownership, Sovereignty, and being free from any wrong-doing or defect, since the Arabic word

malik ("**sovereign**")

connotes the innumerable wrong-doings of the sovereigns which are unholy, but such adverse connotations are all purified by the employment of the word

quddus ("**holy**").

On the one hand, emphasis is laid on might and knowledge as the pillars of the state. As it will be mentioned below, such attributes are closely connected with the prospective discussions hereunder reflecting that the selection of the Divine Attributes in different Qur'anic Verses follow a certain order and a particular interrelation.

It is worthy of note that elaborate discussions are to be found above under 17:44 and 24:41.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that whenever a servant utters

"Glorified is Allah" (subhan Allah)

whatever is beneath the Divine Throne will accompany him in his glorification and tenfold Rewards will be granted to the servant uttering such glorification; whenever he utters

"Praise be to Allah" (al-hamdu li-'llah),

God Almighty will grant him all the Bounties in this world until he meets with God Almighty when the Bounties in the Hereafter will be granted to him.³

Glorification of God Almighty is a kind of showing gratitude unto Him.

The Holy Qur'an is saying that whenever triumph falls into your share, glorify God Almighty

("Whenever the Help of Allah and the conquest comes unto you. And you see that the people convert to Allah's religion in multitudes. So glorify the praises of your Lord and invoke Him for Forgiveness. Indeed, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and the One Who forgives."⁴).

Glorification of Allah is the atonement for the words uttered or heard at gatherings.

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that upon his return from gatherings, he uttered the formula

"Glorified are You, their Lord, and in Your praise" (subhanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika)

saying that it was the atonement for the gathering (innahu kaffara al-majlis).

Glorification of Allah is a means of salvation.

Concerning the Prophet Jonah (Yunus; AS), the Holy Qur'an says:

"Had he not been from amongst them who glorify Allah. He would have verily remained inside its belly [the fish] until the Day of Resurrection"⁵.

It is narrated that when man utters

"Glorified is Allah,"

all the angels salute him (sallu 'alayhi kullu malakin).⁶

According to another tradition, while prostrating himself in his prayers and at other times, Imam Sadiq (as) repeated the formula

"Glorified is Allah"

and at times he repeated it five hundred times.⁷

According to the religious worldview, man is not the only being that praises and worships God Almighty, but all creatures worship Him at all times. Asked by a certain man to work a miracle, the Noble Prophet (S) took a handful of sand from the ground and the sound of the praises by the sand was heard upon the Noble Prophet's (S) request and Allah's Permission.⁸

The Noble Prophet (S) once said:

"There are many a mount better than their riders, since they praise God Almighty more than their riders."

Allah's Messenger (S) forbade beating animals since they glorify God Almighty.⁹

Several points deserve attention in terms of the glorification by the creatures in the world of existence:

1. The Holy Qur'an regards the glorification by the Creatures to be out of knowledge and understanding;

"Each one knows verily their prayer and glorification,"¹⁰).

2. Everyone may not understand the glorification by other creatures;

"Though you understand not their glorification,"¹¹).

3. The glorifications by creatures are different.

Imam Sajjad (as) narrates from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), that he said:

*"Birds glorify God Almighty each morning invoking Him to provide them with their daily sustenance."*¹²

It is worthy of note that according to the religious worldview, the world of creation glorifies God Almighty

("Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorify Allah").

It is noteworthy, however, that in terms of existential glorification, there exists no difference amongst the creatures of the heavens and the earth, including inanimate beings, plants, animals, birds, and man. The other point is that glorification is supposed to be based on certain criteria and reasons.

Glorification solely belongs to the One who possesses Sovereignty, Holiness, Might, and Wisdom;

("Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. ").

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

2. He it is Who sent amongst the unlettered ones a Messenger from amongst themselves to recite unto them His Verses, to foster them and absolve them of polytheism and discord, and teach them the Heavenly Book and Wisdom. And indeed, they had been formerly in manifest error.

This blessed and significant Verse treats of Divine Unity and Attributes as well as the Prophetic Call of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) interrelated with Divine Might, Wisdom, and Holiness, saying that He is the One Who appointed a Messenger from amongst the unlettered to recite His Verses unto them and purify them in the light of the recitation of these Verses from any kind of polytheism, error, and corruption and also teach them the Book and Wisdom, though they were formerly in manifest error.

It is worthy of note that the Prophetic Call, whose characteristics may not be interpreted but through inimitability reflect Divine Glory and Existence, saying that God Almighty is the One Who appointed the Messenger (S) and created such masterpiece in the process of Creation.

The Arabic plural noun umiyyin whose singular form is ummi ("unlettered," attributed adjective from the nominal form umm "mother), denoting that the noble Prophet (S) did not receive any schooling but what he learned from his mother.

Some scholars maintain that the word ummi connotes "from Mecca," since Mecca was called "the mother of dwelling places" (umm al-qura). According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the people of

Mecca had neither Scriptures nor a Divinely appointed leader, hence the designation ummi was Divinely attributed to them. 13

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is from the same unlettered people such that the significance and greatness of his Prophetic Call be reflected and it may also demonstrate the veracity of his Call, since the Holy Qur'an, a Book with such profound and great contents and an exalted culture like the Islamic culture may not be the fruit of human thought, let alone an unlettered person who had not received any formal education.

The Light shines from the shadows. It is a verdant and luxurious orchard in the heart of the desert. It is a plain miracle and a manifest proof reflecting the veracity of his Call.

The blessed Verse in question summarizes the goal of the Prophetic Call in three sections: one is of the preliminary aspect, namely the recitation of Divine Verses; the two other sections, i.e. purification of the soul and teaching the Book and Wisdom constitute two great final goals.

The Noble Messenger of Allah (S) was appointed to foster and educate people in terms of knowledge, ethics, and practice such that by means of the two wings, they may soar into the sky of happiness and proceed on the path toward Allah and attain to proximity with Him. It is also worthy of note that three out of four Qur'anic Verses give the precedence to self purification and one Verse gives the precedence to teaching over fostering good qualities.

The point reflects that the two affect each other. Ethics is gendered by knowledge in the same manner that knowledge is gendered by ethics. The point refers to the originality of fostering good qualities. It is noteworthy, however, that rue sciences are hereby intended rather than those in the attire of sciences. 14

The difference between the Book and Wisdom may be in that the former implies the Holy Qur'an and the latter alludes to the sayings and teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) termed as sunna ("tradition"). The word Book may also connote Islamic Injunctions and Wisdom may make a reference to its philosophy and secrets.

The phrase

"manifest error"

tersely alludes to the Arabs in pre-Islamic times and the error that had cast its shadow on their societies. They were in plain error since they fashioned idols out of stone and wood and resorted to such inanimate objects in time of need. They interred their daughters alive and even took pride in such villainy saying that thus they did not let aliens lay their hands on them.

Their worshipping rituals included clapping and whistling around the House of Ka'ba which was even circumambulated by stark naked women. All kinds of superstitions prevailed over their thought.

They took pride in waging war and shedding blood and plunder and regarded women as worthless merchandise on whom they gambled. Women were deprived of the most basic human rights. Hatred and enmity passed from fathers to their children as a consequence of which shedding blood and slaughter were quite common.

The Noble Prophet (S) came unto them and delivered them out of the shadows of error through the Book and Wisdom. Educating such people and saving them from error and leading them unto the Straight Path is one of the glories of the Islamic faith and one of the manifest miracles of our eminent Prophet (S).

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 3-4

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

3. And a Messenger unto another group who have not yet joined them. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

4. That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace.

The Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is not only addressed to his contemporaries but it embraces all men from different races and regions and no one is able to impede the dissemination of the Islamic faith in future.

The blessed Verse is saying that he is appointed to proclaim his Prophetic mission unto other believers who have not joined former converts yet. Later generations were fostered through the teachings of the Noble Prophet (S) and used the pure springhead of the Holy Qur'an and Muhammadan traditions (sunna) as they were also embraced by the great Prophetic Call.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question includes all the peoples from Arabs and non-Arabs who came into being following the Noble Prophet's (S) Companions.

It is narrated that upon the recitation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) was asked regarding the identity of such people.

The Noble Prophet (S) put his hand on Salman's shoulder, saying:

"If faith happens to be on the star of Thuraya, proverbial for being farthest from the earth, men from this group, namely Persian, will attain to it. 15

Since such things all spring from Divine Might and Wisdom, the blessed Verse 3 closes by saying that He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

The blessed Verse 4 makes a reference to such great Divine Grace, namely the Noble Prophet's (S) Prophetic Call and his teachings, saying:

"That is Allah's Grace which He bestows on whom He wills and regards worthy of it. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace."

It is worthy of note, however, that the expression

"on whom He wills"

does not imply that God Almighty bestows His Grace and Mercy upon everyone without measure, but His Will is accompanied by His Wisdom, as it is reflected in the first Verse of the blessed Chapter in question by the Divine Attributes All-Mighty and All-Wise.

Elaborating on such Divine Great Grace, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in his Nahj al-Balagha says:

"Look at the Divine Graces bestowed upon this community when His Messenger (S) was appointed to proclaim his Prophetic Call unto them and thereby unified them. Behold that such Great Bounty was bestowed upon all of them and the rivers of His Graces flow onto them and the true religion with its Blessings embraced them. They are embraced by such Bounties and live happily thereby." 16

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 5

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ بِئْسَ مَثَلُ
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

5. The similitude of those who were entrusted with the Torah, but who subsequently failed in it, is as that of a donkey which carries huge burden of books [though they fail to understand them]. How bad is the example of the people who deny Allah's Àyat ("Verses, Signs"). And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.

The preceding Verses treated of the Prophetic Call, but the blessed Verse in question deals with the Jews who could recognize the Noble Prophet (S) on the basis on their Scripture, the Torah, but they

were too obstinate to acknowledge his Prophetic Call. The Arabic word asfar is the plural form of sifr connoting a book that reveals the truth.¹⁷

The Torah consists of different books each of which, termed sifr, resembles a Qur'anic Chapter. The blessed Verse criticizes the Jews but it also alludes to the Muslims warning them against hearing the Qur'anic Verses but failing to act upon them.

According to some traditions, the Jews said that Muhammad's Prophetic Call was not addressed to them. Thus, the blessed Verse 4 is warning them that had you had read your Scripture carefully and have acted upon it, you would not have said such words, since the Torah bears the glad tidings of the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S).

The blessed Verses 5 and 6 are saying that those upon whom the Torah was sent and they were entrusted with it but failed to understand and act upon it resemble a donkey carrying the burden of books, but it may merely feel the burden. It is not different for it to carry rocks and wood or books containing the most precise secrets of Creation and the most fruitful lessons for a better life.

Such obstinate people contented themselves with the recitation of the Torah without reflecting upon its contents and acting upon them, the similitude of such people is the animal proverbial for ignorance. It is the most telling similitude for those who claim to know something but fail to act upon their pretended knowledge, since they carry the burden of knowledge without being blessed by its blessings.

Those who deal with the words of the Holy Qur'an without being aware of its contents and fruitful lessons are like those mentioned herein. It is a warning to the Muslims to be aware such that they do not end up like the Jews.

Such Great Divine Bounty is not for merely keeping at home without reading it and reflecting upon it or pass beneath it before traveling or send it with a mirror to a new home. Thus, they degrade their Scripture to such extent. Their utmost efforts may be to recite it beautifully and commit it to heart without any reflection in their individual and social life through reflecting upon its Verses and acting upon its Injunctions.

The similitude proceeds to say that the people who denied Divine Verses and Signs will have a dire fate. Such people are likened to donkeys since they denied Divine Verses and Signs by their words and deeds.

It is in a similar vein that we read elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an¹⁸ concerning the Jews:

"Is it that whenever there came unto you a Messenger against your concupiscent desires, you turned arrogant? Some [of the Messengers] you denied and some you slew."

The blessed Verse 5 closes with a terse sentence:

"And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers."

It is true that Guidance is Divine Work, but it requires a certain background, which is the spirit of seeking the Truth that should be engendered by man and wrong-doers are far from it.

Finally, it would be of interest to read some traditions concerning the Jewish scholars and others who failed to act upon their knowledge:

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the preaching and admonitions of the scholars who fail to act upon their knowledge are effaced from the hearts in the same manner that rain drops fail to stay on rocks.

It is narrated from Imam Sajjad (as) that it was mentioned in the Bible that a scholar who failed to act upon his knowledge would not accrue anything but disbelief and being far from God Almighty.

In Mizan al-Hikma it is narrated from the Imam that a scholar who fails to act is likened to a candle from whose light other benefit but he perishes himself. 19

Surah al-Jum'a - Verses 6-8

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ
إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ۗ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالَمِ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

6. Say: "O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allah, to the exclusion of other people, then long for death if you are truthful [so that you may receive the Rewards apportioned by Allah for His Friends].

7. But they will never long for it, because of what they have done before [e.g. distortion of the Scripture and concealment of the Noble Prophet's (S) virtues]. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrong-doers.

8. Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The Jews regarded themselves as the chosen nation and expected preferential treatment.

They even claimed to be the sons of God and at times considered themselves as His intimate friends, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an²⁰:

"And the Jews and the Christians says: "We are the children of Allah and His loved ones [even if they intended a figurative sense of the word]."

Treating of such unfounded ambitions entertained by those to whom the Scripture had been sent though they failed to act upon it, the Holy Qur'an is asking the Noble Prophet (S) to say unto them that if they imagined to be God's friends and different from other people and they were true in their claims, then they could yearn for death, since friends yearn for meeting their friends.

We know that the spiritual meeting with God Almighty will happen on the Day of Resurrection when the mundane veils will be cast and the dust of concupiscent desires subside.

Then, man may see the beautiful countenance of the beloved and set foot in His proximity and find his way into the Friend's Confines. If they are true in their claims to be His intimate friend, why are they immersed in the mundane life and are fearful of death. Entertaining such fear reflects that their claims are unfounded.

The blessed Verse 7 makes a reference to the main cause of their fear of death, saying that because of what they have already done, they never yearn for death. However, God Almighty is All-Aware of the wrong-doers. The point is that man fears death because of two reasons.

Firstly, he does not believe in the Hereafter and regards death as a monster of non-existence and the shadows of perdition. In such case, it would be natural to fear death and flee from non-existence.

Secondly, one may believe in the Hereafter, but he is fearful to attend the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection because of the evil deeds committed in this world. Since the Jews believed in the Day of Resurrection and the hereafter, they were afraid of death owing to their evil deeds.

The Arabic plural noun

***thalimin* ("wrong-doers")**

covers a broad semantic range encompassing all the evil deeds committed by the Jews ranging from slaying the eminent Prophets sent by God Almighty for their guidance to their accusations, transgression of bounds and rights, plundering people's possessions, and all ethical corruptions.

The blessed Verse 8 is saying that entertaining such anxiety and fear may not solve any problems, since death is in store for all human beings.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Say: [O Prophet (S)!] "Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to [Him], the Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you have done."

The law of death is one of the most general and all-encompassing laws of this world.

The eminent Prophets and the Archangels all die and nothing shall remain but the Pure Divine Essence, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an²¹:

"Whatever is on the earth will perish and the Countenance of your Lord full of Majesty and Glory shall remain forever."

Death, attending the Divine Just Tribunal and taking care of the records of the past deeds are of the certain laws of this world and God Almighty is All-Aware of all His servants' intentions and deeds. Thus, the only way to put an end to such fear is to purify ones heart from sinful impurities and refraining from committing evil deeds. One whose record is clean will not fear of the audition of his records.

Thus, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"By Allah! The son of Abu Talib [i.e. 'Ali (as)] loves death more than his mother's breast²²"

and when the most wretched Ibn Muljam struck him a blow on his head and thereby split it, he cried:

"By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I was saved."

He elsewhere says that death is sweeter than honey [particularly for the friends of God Almighty who are virtuous and are close unto Him].

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 9

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

9. O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you if you did but know!

Friday is accorded particular attention in the Islamic faith and many a tradition reflect such significance. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Friday is the lord of the days of the week and possesses the most elevated rank before God Almighty.²³ Friday is the day of helping the deprived and the poor and it is narrated that Muslim are supposed to expend alms on Friday.²⁴ The Lord of the Age, the Twelfth Imam (as) will end his Occultation and will arrive on Friday.²⁵

The Noble Prophet (S) says:

"God Almighty renders good deeds many folds and effaces evil deeds on Friday and promotes the ranks of the believers, wards off afflictions, and answers the prayers of the believers on Friday.²⁶ Whoever visits the tomb of his parents or either of them, his sins shall be forgiven and his name will be recorded with the righteous.²⁷ Other traditions have also been narrated in tradition sources regarding the merits of Friday."

It is worthy of note that the preceding blessed Verses treated of concise discussions on Divine Unity, Prophetic Call, the Hereafter, and criticism of the Mammonist Jews and the blessed Verse in question deal with one of the most significance obligations of the Muslims that is of great significance and constitutes one of the main goals behind the Revelation of the blessed Chapter in question and it is the Friday prayer and some of its laws.

The blessed Verse above all addresses all Muslims saying:

"O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Friday prayer, hasten toward the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you [than trade] if you did but know!"

The passive verbal form *nudiya* ("is called") connotes prayer call, since there is no call in the Islamic faith but that to establishing prayers. Thus, upon hearing the prayer call, it is incumbent upon Muslims to leave off trade and hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty.

The clause

"That is better for you" (dhalikum khayrun lakum)

connotes that the establishment of Friday prayer and leaving off business at that time entails significant benefits for the Muslims if they truly reflect upon it, since God Almighty is Needless of others and is Most Gracious toward all people. It also alludes to the philosophy and the benefits of the Friday prayer.

It is noteworthy, however, that leaving off trade encompasses any activity interfering with the remembrance of God Almighty. Another point worthy of note is that the Arabic word *jum'a* originally denotes congregation which ad hoc connotes the congregation of people for the establishment of the Friday prayer; though the connotation of the word is not restricted to what is mentioned.

It goes without saying that spreading on the earth and seeking daily sustenance are not obligatory acts but they are regarded as the permission to do the same. However, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the expression that procurement of daily sustenance after the establishment of the Friday prayer entails Divine Satisfaction and Blessings. It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) visited the marketplace after the establishment of the Friday prayer.

The imperative sentence

"Hasten toward the remembrance of Allah" (wa 'dhkuru 'llah kathiran)

denotes that man is supposed to remember God Almighty against the abundant Blessings bestowed upon him.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the word

"remembrance" (dhikr)

herein connotes "thought, reflection" (fikr) as it is narrated that one hour of thinking is better than one year of worshipping.²⁸

There are some exegetes who hold that the Injunction reflects keeping God Almighty in mind while trading and refraining from transgressing the principles of truth and justice. Nonetheless, it is crystal clear that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is quite broad in the semantic range and encompasses all these interpretations.

It is also certain that the spirit of "remembrance" is "thought" without which it is devoid of meaning and what leads to salvation is the remembrance intertwined with thought at all times. Remembering God Almighty at all times basically makes it penetrate into the depth of soul and eradicates the roots of ignorance and negligence as the main causes of all sins, and set man on the path of salvation and deliverance.

Surah al-Jum'a - Verse 10

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

10. Then when the prayer is ended, you are free to disperse through the land and seek Allah's Bounty and remember Allah much that you may be saved.

Worldly possessions are Divine Bounties in Qur'anic terms. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that after

the establishment of the Friday prayer, return to your trade and procuring revenue.

The Noble Prophet (S) is narrated as saying that whoever devotedly remembers God Almighty in the marketplace and place of trade while people neglect their obligations and merely attend to their business. Such person devotedly attending to the remembrance of God Almighty will receive the Rewards one thousand virtuous good acts and will be granted with Divine Forgiveness.²⁹

The blessed Verse is saying that when the prayer comes to an end, you are free to disperse in the land, invoke God Almighty for bestowing His Bounties upon them, and remember Allah at all times so that you may attain to salvation.

The injunctive

"Seek Allah's Bounty"

and similar Qur'anic expressions oftentimes connote seeking daily sustenance and engagement in trade and business, but it is clear that the semantic range of such expressions are broad and trade and business are included in it. Therefore, some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that such expressions connote visiting the ailing and the believer and gaining knowledge.

Surah al-Jum'a – Verse 11

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

11. And when they see some merchandise or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it and leave you standing [while reciting your sermon]. Say: "That which Allah has [of Bounties and Blessings] is better than any amusement or merchandise! And Allah is the Best of providers."

According to the exegetic sources, once the Noble Prophet (S) was reciting the sermons of the Friday prayer when a caravan of tradesmen entered Medina while beating their drums. Most of the Muslims left the Noble Prophet (S) leaving his sermon unfinished. It was on that occasion that the blessed Verse was revealed to censure their unworthy act.

The blessed Verse merely criticizes the Muslims for leaving the Noble Prophet rather than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. Showing disrespect to the Divinely appointed leader is worse than leaving the sermon and the prayer incomplete. The blessed Verse, addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), is saying that what is with God Almighty is better than amusement and trade and God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The Blessings and Rewards that will fall into the shares of the Muslims for their attending the Friday prayer, listening to the Noble Prophet's (S) sermons and admonitions, and the spiritual education derived from them are not to be compared with anything else and if they fear that their daily sustenance be severed, they are wrong since God Almighty is the Best Provider.

The adverb of manner

***qa'imān* ("standing")**

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) recited the sermons of the Friday prayer while he was standing. In this vein, it is narrated on the authority of Jabir ibn Samura that he never saw the Noble Prophet to recite the sermons while sitting and whoever says that he seated while reciting the sermons, reject his claim.³⁰

The Significance of the Friday Prayer

Fore and foremost, the blessed Verse in question reflects the significance of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer as a religious obligation.

The Muslims are hereby commanded to hasten toward the remembrance of God Almighty upon hearing the Friday prayer call and leave any trade or interfering activity such that when people are entangled with food shortage and a caravan enters for the purpose of trade from which they may meet their demands, they are not allowed to turn toward it but it is incumbent upon them to continue the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.

Such injunction receives recurrent emphasis in Islamic traditions, including a sermon narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) by the proponents and opponents of its transmission according to which the Noble Prophet (S) says:

*"The establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is a Divine Obligation and whoever degrades or denies it in my lifetime or after my demise, God Almighty will lead him to misfortune and will never grant His Blessing upon him. Behold that his prayers, alms giving, pilgrimage to Mecca and his virtuous good deeds will not be accepted by God Almighty unless he repents such evil deed."*³¹

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that the establishment of the Friday prayer is an obligation and standing behind the Infallible Imam (as) for the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer is an obligation and if a man fails to establish the Friday congregation prayers for three weeks without any excuse, he has neglected an obligation and no one neglects three obligations without any excuse unless he is a hypocrite.³²

It is narrated from Allah's Messenger (S) that one who joins the Friday congregation prayer out of faith and for Allah, his sins will be forgiven and he will proceed with a new life.³³ According to a Prophetic tradition, in his Ascension the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) noticed that angels invoked God

Almighty to forgive the sins committed by those Muslims who perform the Friday major ablution (ghusl) and establish the Friday congregation prayer.³⁴

Numerous traditions have been narrated in this vein, but for the sake of brevity, merely another tradition will be narrated herein.

Once the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired:

"O Allah's Messenger! I have repeatedly prepared myself to go on pilgrimage to Mecca but I have failed to do so."

The Noble Prophet replied:

"It is incumbent upon you to establish the Friday prayer, since it is the pilgrimage to Mecca for the needy."

The tradition reflects that many Blessings of the pilgrimage to Mecca may be received through the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer.³⁵

It is worthy of note, however, that failing to establish the Friday congregation prayer has been severely censured and those failing to establish it are regarded as hypocrites when it is an individual obligation (wajib 'ayni), namely at the time of the Infallible Imam (as) assuming the leadership of the Muslim community.

However, at the time of Occultation of the Twelfth Imam (as), it is an optionally incumbent duty (wajib takhyiri; opting between the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer or the noon congregation prayer) in which case failing to establish it is not reprehensible in case its establishment be neither degraded nor denied.

It is noteworthy that the majesty of the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer and its great significance are still the same. Jurisprudential sources may be consulted for further treatment of the subject.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the blessed Chapter opens with the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and it closes with the abandonment of the Noble Prophet (S) serving as a warning to the believers.

1. Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.

2. Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.

3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 10, p. 30.

4. 110:1-3

5. 37:143-144

6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 177.

7. Wafi, vol. 2, p. 157.
8. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, p. 96. The tradition is to found in some other sources.
9. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
10. 24:41
11. 17:44
12. Tafsir al-Mizan; Tafsir Burhan. The tradition is to be found in other exegetical and tradition sources.
13. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
14. Tafsir Nur al-Qur'an, vol. 7; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; Tafsir Nimunih under the blessed Verse in question.
15. Tabarsi's Majma' al-Bayan; 'Allama Tabataba'i's al-Mizan; Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur; Zamakhshari's Kashshaf; Qurtubi's and Maraghi's exegetic works; Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur'an; Bukhari's Sahih.
16. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 192 (Khutba Qasi'a).
17. Raghbi's Mufradat.
18. 2:87
19. For other traditions narrated in this respect, please refer to tradition sources.
20. 5: 18
21. 55:26-27
22. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 5.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 5, p. 17.
24. Ibid, p. 67.
25. Kamal al-Din, p. 164.
26. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 5, p. 63.
27. Ibid, Friday Prayer (salat al-jum'a), p. 245.
28. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 289.
29. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
30. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
31. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 5, p. 7, the Chapter on the Necessity of the Friday Prayer (Bab Wujub Salat al-Jum'a), tradition 28.
32. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 4.
33. Ibid.
34. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 6, p. 91.
35. Ibid, p. 5, tradition 17.

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