

Surah al-Jumu'ah (62)

سورة الجمعة

'Congregation'

The surah derives its name from the prominence within it of the word '*jumu'ah*', meaning 'Congregation'. Like the other Madinan surahs it contains matters pertaining to the Islamic order, as well as matters of faith. While the preceding 'Surah al-Saff' concluded on the topic of manifestation and triumph of the followers of Jesus, *peace be upon him*, this surah opens on the topic of the Divine mission among those without a scripture, citizens of Makkah, 'the maternals' (*ummiyin*); both peoples received Divine messengers and books.

By the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

By the name of Allah... The beginning is in the name of God in whose hand are all things; and the beginning is in the name of He in whose hand are all things solely because He is worthy of that, and in seeking His mercy – and He in whose hand are all things is the worthiest of our seeking His mercy.

...**The Compassionate, the Merciful.** He who bestows mercy on the servants with grace, for His mercy is a grace bringing completion upon the incomplete.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth glorifies Allah – the King, the All-Holy, the Mighty, the Wise. (1)

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقَدُّوسِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

Whatever is in the heavens and that in the earth is glorifying to Allah, ... The skies and everything in them, and the earth and all that it contains, is constantly saying 'glory to Allah' (*subhānallah*), so declaring His purity of being and above being in any way incomplete. And these declarations of His purity are either existential (*takwīn*), in that by existing everything is a sign indicating that He is an all-knowing, all-powerful Creator; or it is by a tongue or a way of their own understanding.

...**the King...** It is given for *al-malik*; it means that His word is absolute throughout existence, and any authority other than His authority is figurative.

... **the All-Holy ...** It is given for *al-quddus*, meaning that He is holier than to have any fault, deficiency or imperfection.

... **the Mighty ...** It is put for *al-ʿaziz*. He is dominant in His sovereignty.

... **the Wise.** It is put for *al-hakīm*. He does everything according to beneficence and wisdom.

(It is) He who raised among the 'maternals' a Messenger from amongst them, reciting upon them His signs and purifying them and teaching them the Book and the wisdom; even though beforehand they were in a clear straying. (2)

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ
قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

(It is) He who raised... It means that Allah the Exalted sent.

... **among the maternals ...** It means the Arabs. They are called 'maternals' (*ummiyin*) either because the reference is to the people of the City of Makkah, called the *umm al-qura* 'mother of villages' - as the outlying villages of Arabia in general and the H̄jaz in particular were under its influence; [*Ummi* means citizen of *umm al-qura*]. Or because the Arabs were in the main unlettered and illiterate, and so, in their ignorance, were like one born to his mother with no experience beyond her. That the Messenger was sent among the Arabs does not mean that his mission was limited to them.

... **a Messenger...** To guide them.

... **from amongst them**, ... and from their land.

... **reciting upon them His signs**... It means that he recited to the Arabs His signs and proofs; or it means the portents or *ayaṭ* of the Qur'an.

... **and purifying them**... He gave them the purification of knowledge, for a careful teacher cleanses his pupils of the dirt and wounds of the heart by protecting them from the vices and from the dishonourable deeds.

... **and teaching them the Book**... It means His rules and His Law (*shari'ah*).

... **and the wisdom**; ... So that they would know how to place things in their place, for the meaning of wisdom is to place things in their place.

... **even though beforehand they were in a clear straying**. Before the Messenger came to them the 'maternals' were in clear and obvious deviation. They were without the correct beliefs, without virtuous actions, without wholesome habits and without refined ethics. The meaning is that he delivered them to the highest level of perfection, even though before him they were at the most distant depth of deviation.

And others of them who have not yet joined to them; and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (3)

وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لِمَا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾

And others of them... It means that he taught other maternals, up until the day of resurrection. They are 'of them', either in the sense that they are their descendents, or in the sense that in faith they are of the same substance.

... **who have not yet joined to them**; ... 'Not yet' (*lamma*) indicates that they have not joined, but that they will, and their joining to them is expected.

... **and He is the Mighty**, ... He is overwhelming in His authority, and so able to guide those others.

... **the Wise**. He places things in their places.

That is the profusion of Allah – He gives it to whom He wills; and Allah is holder of magnificent profusion. (4)

ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤﴾



That is the profusion of Allah... The sending of the Messenger is Allah's bounty and mercy — upon the Messenger in His making him a Messenger, and upon humankind in His honouring them by guiding them.

... – **He gives it to whom He wills**; ... It is known that Allah bestows no mercy save in accordance with wisdom, upon whoever merits the favour.

... **and Allah is holder of magnificent profusion**. His profusion is more magnificent than the grace of any other, just as it is more magnificent than any favour bestowed by another.

The theme now turns to warn the Muslims of the necessity of holding tight to the Law, so that they not become like the Jews, who turned from implementing the Torah after their holding tight to it during the time of Moses, peace be upon him:

The similitude of those burdened with the Torah and then carried it not is that of the donkey carrying tomes – atrocious is the similitude of the people who belie the signs of Allah; and Allah guides not the wrongful people. (5)

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ
يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

The similitude of those burdened with the Torah... They were given the Torah by Allah, glory be to Him, to implement. The term 'burdened' (*hūmmil*) shows that they held to the Torah reluctantly and with great difficulty, rather than with spontaneous enthusiasm.

... **and then carried it not...** They deliberately refrained from acting in accordance to it. They dismissed it and abandoned its rules.

... **is that of the donkey carrying tomes...** 'Tomes' is put for *asfaḥ*, the plural of *sifr*, meaning scriptures or book. The donkey that carries books upon its back does not benefit from them. And the Jews are like that: although they have the Torah on their backs they do not benefit from it and do not implement its rules; and whoever superficially holds to the Qur'an without implementing it is the same.

... **atrocious is the metaphor of the people who belie the signs of Allah;** ... That people is the Jews who practically belied the Torah, through their actions, and belied Allah's signs in the Qur'an. The ayah means: vile is the tribe for whom this is the metaphor; for a vile metaphor is only for a vile people.

... **and Allah guides not the wrongful people.** Allah does not guide by means of His unseen favours a people or tribe who wrong themselves with disbelief and disobedience after their being guided to a path which they failed to follow.

The Jews imagined they were the God's elect, even after their abandoning the Torah, and the theme now refutes this idea:

Say: 'O ye who are judaized, if ye claim that ye are Allah's friends, apart from humankind, then yearn for death, if ye be truthful.' (6)

قُلْ يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ رَعَمْتُمْ أَنْكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ
دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

The address is to the Messenger, *may Allah bless him and his family*. He was to say to those called Jews, who followed Judaism, that if they really thought they were the God's chosen people, above the rest of mankind, and that all others are not loved by God, then they should be longing for death. That is because the true 'friend' of Allah has no fear of death, as He is sure of a high rank over there.

And they will never yearn for it, due to what their hands have sent forward; and Allah is knowing of the wrongful. (7)

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

And they will never yearn for it due to what their hands have sent forward; ... The Jews will never ever long for death, on account of what they have done in disbelief and disobedience, and because their condition in the hereafter will be horrible. Attributing to the hands that which they send on to the hereafter is on account of how it is the hands that are most active in actions.

... **and Allah is knowing of the wrongful.** He is knowing of their situation and shall recompense them for their injustice; it is a warning to the Jews.

Is their not longing for death and their fleeing from it of any benefit to them?

Say, 'Indeed the death from which ye flee – indeed it will meet ye, thereupon ye shall be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform ye of what ye did.' (8)

قُلْ إِنْ أَلَمَّوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّوْنَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلْقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ
تُرْجَوْنَ إِلَىٰ عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

Say, ... The address is to Allah's Messenger.

... **'Indeed the death from which ye flee – indeed it will meet ye ...** He was to tell them that their flight from death, through their developing the means of health and their avoidance of life-threatening situations, would not prevent them from the meeting to which they would be summoned, which is definite with no doubt about it.

... **thereupon** ... That is, after their deaths.

... **ye shall be returned** ... Since man issues from the will and intention of Allah, glory be to Him, his journey to His reckoning and requitals is like returning to Him.

... **to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed**, ... He knows what is secret and what is open. 'The unseen' (*al-ghayb*) is what is absent from the senses; the witnessed is that which appears to them, or before which a person is present.

... **and He will inform ye of what ye did.**' They will be informed, as a prelude to the requital, of all they did, good or evil.

With the clarification of the necessity of implementing the Law, so as not to be like the Jews and their failure to implement the Torah, the theme turns to clarify a magnificent law: the Friday prayer. This prayer is obligatory during the period of the presence (of Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him), but as for the period of the absence, our scholars differ in their views. I have discerned that it was obligatory in the presence of the Imam or his representative only during the period in which the Imam had a free hand; thus there is no report of an Imam performing it after Imam Hūsayn, peace be upon him – and this was not due to cautious concealment (taqiyyah). That is the secret of why the view of it being not mandatory is widespread among our scholars.

O ye who believe, when the call to the prayer is made on the Day of Congregation, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah, and leave aside trade – that is better for ye, were ye knowing.
(9)

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءٰمَنُوْا اِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا اِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَذَرُوْا الْبَيْعَ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

O ye who believe, when the call to the prayer is made... The practice of the Messenger was that he would sit upon his *minbar* while Bilal called the *adhaan* at the door of the Masjid, and a second *adhaan* would be called on the *minbar*. This continued after him during the time of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. When 'Uthman came [to power], he would have the *adhaan* called firstly on the roof of his house. This is the 'third *adhaan*' that is said to be an innovation. It is called the 'third *adhaan*' as it is in addition to the two legitimate *adhaans*. The *adhaan* from the roof is not part of Islam.

... **on the Day of Congregation**, ... It means during a part of the Friday; i.e. that part which is required for the Friday prayer. The day is called *al-jumu'ah* because it is the day of the public congregation (*ijtima*) for the prayer. It was a holiday before Islam, and then it was legislated in Islam.

... **then hasten to the remembrance of Allah**, ... It means go to the *Jumu'ah* prayer without delay.

... **and leave aside trade** ... It seems that 'trade', here, means any occupation that prevents one going to the prayer.

... **that is better for ye, were ye knowing** ... Those who know about these things know that hurrying to the prayer and desisting from trade is better for the believers, both in their religion and their world.

So when the prayer is over, then disperse in the earth and reach for Allah's profusion, and remember Allah much, that ye might thrive.
(10)

فَاِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاذْكُرُوْا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾

So when the prayer is over, ... That is, once the *Jumu'ah* prayer is concluded.

... **then disperse in the earth**... The believers may then disperse in the earth, each going to his own work.

... **and reach for Allah's profusion**, ... It means seek through trade and so forth the provision of Allah and His grace. The imperative conveys legality and lawfulness, It is not an order signifying an obligation.

... **and remember Allah much**, ... He is to be remembered by tongue and by heart, while seeking His bounty and at other times, for He cleanses the heart of the dirt of heedlessness and disobedience.

... **that ye might thrive**. It might be that in such ways we will achieve His contentment with us and His generosity.

Jabir ibn ʿAbdullah narrates: ‘A caravan arrived while we were praying behind the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family. So the people scattered towards it, leaving only twelve men, myself among them. Then this ayah came down.’

The Messenger is quoted as saying: ‘By Him in whose hand is my soul, if you had all followed them until none of you were left, the valley would have become an inferno for you.’

And when they see trading or a distraction they scatter towards it, and leave thee standing.

Say: ‘That which is with Allah is better than distraction and trade, and Allah is the best of provisioners.’ (11)

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ هَمَّوا أَنْفَضُوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ



And when they see trading ... It means when those who are praying the *Jumuʿah* prayer see an alternative opportunity to buy or sell. These opportunities would come with the arrival of caravans from far-off places, upon fixed occasions. This meant that whoever failed to rush to purchase his needs would find that the goods he needed would be sold out, so that he would have to wait for the next fixed market-day until he could buy what he needed.

... **or a distraction ...** It refers to the drums that members of the caravan would beat as they arrived in order to announce their arrival to the people of the town. Such noises distract from the remembrance of Allah, and preoccupy those who wish to turn to the prayer.

... **they scatter towards it, and leave thee standing ...** Each in his own way ran off towards the distraction and the trade, leaving the Messenger standing delivering the *Jumuʿah* sermon, without a thought for his status, and putting the world above the hereafter.

... **Say: ‘That with Allah is better than distraction and trade ...** The Messenger of Allah was to tell them that the reward for remaining and listening to the sermon is better than distraction, and better than trade. At the beginning of the verse the order given was trade and distraction, whereas here it is distraction and trade. There the order starts with the more significant, in that they scattered for trade and for less than that, distraction. Here, the order starts with the less significant, meaning that the rewards of Allah are greater than distraction and than which is more than that, trade.

... **and Allah is the best of provisioners.** They should not have thought that had they refrained from transactions with the caravan they would have remained without provision, for Allah would have provisioned them from the abundance of His bounty.