

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ
 مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
 وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

The translation of the verse which I have just read is as follows:

“O ye who believe! when the call is made for Prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off *all* business. That is better for you, if you only knew.” (62:10)

This is the only verse in the Holy Quran that speaks about the Friday Prayer. There are many other verses which speak about Prayer in general but this is the only one where Allah addresses all the believers and tell them that they must find the time to come for the Friday Prayer. In fact, if one observes well, one will notice that a majority of Muslims do resort to the mosque for Friday Prayer. The verse urges Muslim believers to leave all business and to go for the remembrance of Allah. If Muslims follow the instructions received from Allah they must stop all activities at the time of Jummah prayer and go to the mosque for the remembrance of Allah. All other activities are of lesser importance than the remembrance of Allah at the time of Jummah prayer. And Allah also tells us that going to the mosque for this purpose is good for each one of us if only we knew. This means that we might think that going for prayer on a Friday is just another distraction from our work. But Allah wants us to understand that if we had the true knowledge concerning the scheme of things (Why we are here? Where we are going? How we should live our life etc.), we would have understood that leaving everything behind

and resorting to the mosque is good for us eventually. We all need to bear this in mind.

According to Quranic commentators, it is after the revelation of Surah Jumu'ah in Medina that Muslims started praying Jummah prayers. Prior to that they only read Zuhr prayer. You will recall that in this chapter there is the verse “*wa aakhareena minhoum lamma yalhaqou behim wa howal azizul hakim*” (62:4) meaning “And among others from among them who have not yet joined them.” We have a hadith in Bukhari which reads as follows:

Abu Hurairah reports

One Day we were sitting with the Holy Prophet when Sūra Jumu'ah was revealed. I asked the Holy Prophet, 'Who are the people to whom the words "And among others from among them who have not yet joined Them" refer.' Salmān the Persian was sitting among us. Upon my repeatedly asking him the same question, the Prophet put his hand on Salman and said, 'If Faith were to go up to the Pleiades, a man from these would surely find it' (Bukhari).

This hadith shows that the words of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) were prophetic. Throughout the ages, there have been people of Persian descent who have tried to revive the faith and one of the most illustrious was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908), the founder of Jamaat Ahmadiyya.

The word *jum'ah* (Friday), the name of the day during which the *khuṭbah* is delivered, is derived from the Arabic verb *jama'a*, which means to **gather**, to **collect**, and to **unite**. The institution of the *jum'ah* prayer brings together Muslims in congregation for the fulfillment of this weekly obligatory ritual. Hence, praying in congregation is a condition for the validity of the Friday service, which explains the relationship between the words *jum'ah* (Friday) and *jama'ah* (congregation).

According to Muslim tradition, God chose Friday as the day for the obligatory congregational *khuṭbah* and prayer because Friday is the most virtuous day of the week. In their commentaries on verses 62:9–11, the exegetes assert that Friday is the most virtuous day because it was the day

when God finished creation, the sixth day, during which He created the heavens and earth. Based on prophetic sources, exegetes also say that God created Adam on a Friday; placed Adam in Heaven on a Friday, and ironically, removed Adam from Heaven on a Friday. Muslims believe that the Last Hour will commence on a Friday. Furthermore, a Prophetic tradition speaks of a certain hour on Friday in which all prayers are answered by God. Religious scholars disagreed on when exactly that hour occurs, although most agree that it is either between the *khutbah* and the prayer, or at the end of the day.

Anyhow, my main purpose in talking again about Jumu'ah is to remind our members mainly that it is in their own interest that they try to attend the Jumu'ah prayer with us. There are five conditions that make it mandatory for a person to attend the Friday service: 1. being a resident (*muqīm*) of the city or town, since travelers are exempt from attending; 2. being male; 3. having reached the age of puberty; 4. being free; and 5. being healthy, as sick people are exempt from attending. If a person meets these conditions, attending the congregational *khutbah* and prayer becomes obligatory unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a heavy rain, taking care of someone who is sick, or any life-threatening situation that prevents a person from attending. As far as women are concerned, it is not an obligation for them to attend but if they do, it is to their advantage.

These days we see that even if some people fail to attend, they might not be completely bereft of the blessings of Jummah. I suggest that at the time of Jummah Khutbah and prayer they might offer their own Zuhr prayer alone and remember Allah much. As far as the khutbah is concerned, they might listen to it on What's App or they might make it incumbent upon themselves to read it when it is posted on the website. In this way, although they are unable to participate in the congregational prayer they might get some blessings that are associated with Jummah. I suggest that people do not take this to be a simple matter that can be easily ignored. One should do one's best in trying to put into practice what Allah has made obligatory for Muslims. If despite our best efforts, we fall short of the required standard we can expect Allah to show us His Mercy.

In addition, it is also established from the words of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) from a longer narration, “Know that Allah, Most High, has made the Friday prayer obligatory upon you” [Ibn Majah] and “Whosoever misses three Friday prayers by taking the matter lightly, Allah will seal his heart”. [Tirmidhi]

These were some words that I wanted to share about Jummah. Now I will share with you some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah which could help us to stay on the right track as far as our life is concerned. He says:

“After deep reflection and the receipt of constant revelation from God, I have come to know that though there are a large number of religious sects in this country and religious differences swell up like a flood, the cause of all these contentions is that most people suffer from a decline of the spiritual faculties and of the fear of God. The heavenly light by means of which man can distinguish between truth and falsehood has disappeared from most hearts. The world is taking on the colour of atheism and though the tongues utter the words ‘God’ and ‘*Permeshwar*’, the hearts are more and more inclined towards denial. This is testified to in practice by an absence of good actions. I do not question the integrity of anyone who practices righteousness in secret, but the general condition is that the true purpose of religion is ignored. Most people pay little attention to **purity of heart, true love of the Divine**, true sympathy with His creatures, gentleness, mercy, justice, meekness and all other pure moral qualities like righteousness, cleanliness and truth which are the spirit of religion. It is a matter of regret that religious contentions are on the increase, but spirituality is declining.

The real purpose of religion is to recognize God Who has created the universe and to arrive in His love at a stage where the love of everything else is burnt up and to have sympathy with His creatures and to put on the garment of true purity. I observe, however, that this purpose is neglected in this age and most people adhere to some branch of atheism. The recognition of God Almighty has sadly declined and for this reason boldness in committing sin is increasing. It is obvious that that which is not recognized is not followed by the heart, nor is there any love for it or any fear of it. All types of fear and love and appreciation are created by recognition. This

shows that the prevalence of sin in today's world is due to lack of understanding. One of the great signs of a true religion is that it should present many means of acquiring the recognition and understanding of God Almighty so that man might be able to restrain himself from committing sin, and so that becoming aware of Divine beauty he should partake of perfect love and so that he should regard cutting asunder from God as worse than hell. **To avoid sin and to be devoted to the love of God Almighty is a grand goal for man and is that true comfort which can be described as heavenly life.** All desires that are opposed to the pleasure of God are the fire of hell and to spend one's life in their pursuit is to lead a hellish life. But the question is how can one be delivered from such a life? The knowledge that God has bestowed upon me in this context is that deliverance from this house of fire depends upon true and perfect understanding of the Divine. Carnal passions that pull people to themselves constitute an irresistible flood which is flowing fiercely to destroy faith, and it is impossible to stem that which is irresistible except through that which is perfect and overwhelming in itself. For this reason, perfect understanding of the Divine is needed for the attainment of salvation. [Lecture Lahore, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 20, pp. 147-149]

“O my dears! It is a true and tried philosophy that to escape sin, man needs perfect understanding and not any type of atonement. I tell you truly that if the people of Noah had attained the perfect understanding which creates perfect fear, they would not have been drowned, if the people of Lot had been bestowed that understanding, they would not have been subjected to a rain of stones, and if this country had been bestowed that recognition of the Divine Being which makes one tremble with fear, it would not have suffered ruin from the plague as it did. But deficient understanding yields no benefits, nor can its result, which is fear and love, be perfect. The faith that is not perfect is useless and the love that is not perfect is useless, and the fear that is not perfect is useless, and the understanding that is not perfect is useless, and the food and drink that are not perfect are useless. Can your hunger be satisfied with a grain of food or can your thirst be quenched by a drop of water? Then, O ye who have little resolve and exercise little effort in the search for truth, how can you hope for great Divine grace in return for a little love and a little fear? To purify a person from sin and to fill his heart with love of the Divine is the work of the All-Powerful One, and to establish the fear of His greatness

in any heart is dependent upon His will. The eternal law of nature is that all this is bestowed after perfect understanding.” (Lecture Lahore)

May Allah grant each one amongst us the understanding that we need so that we might practice Islam in full and may Allah be well pleased with us all, *incha* Allah.