

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Jumu'a*, 62.

This is the sixth Sūra in the Madinah series of short Sūras which began with S. lvii.

The special theme here is the need for mutual contact in the Community for worship and understanding: for the spirit of the Message is for all, ignorant and learned, in order that they may be purified and may learn wisdom.

The date has no special significance: it may be placed in the early Madinah period, say between A.H. 2 and 5.

Summary.—The Revelation has come among unlearned men, to teach purity and wisdom not only to them but to others, including those who may have an older Message but do not understand it: meet solemnly for the Assembly (Friday) Prayer, and let not worldly interests deflect you therefrom. (lxii. 1-11).

Al-Jumu'a, or the Assembly (Friday) Prayer.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. Whatever is
In the heavens and
On earth, doth declare⁵⁴⁴⁹
The Praises and Glory
Of Allah,—the Sovereign,⁵⁴⁵⁰
The Holy One, the Exalted
In Might, the Wise.
2. It is He Who has sent
Amongst the Unlettered⁵⁴⁵¹
A messenger from among
Themselves, to rehearse
To them His Signs,⁵⁴⁵²
To purify them, and
To instruct them in The Book⁵⁴⁵³



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ

الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَأَن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

5449. See n. 5408 to lix. 24, where I have explained the difference in signification between *sabbaha* and *yusabbihu*. The latter form is used here, to express an actual fact. 'Everything declares the Praises and Glory of Allah, because Allah's mercies extend to all His creatures: He sends His Revelation for the benefit of the ignorant and unlettered as well as for those who have learning in their midst, especially as the latter are apt, by the very weight of their ponderous learning, to miss the real point and spirit of Allah's Message.'

5450. See lix. 23, and n. 5402. Here we have two of the divine attributes repeated from lix. 23 and two from the end of lix. 24, implying a reminiscence of all the beautiful divine attributes mentioned in that passage.

5451. *The Unlettered*: as applied to a people, it refers to the Arabs, in comparison with the People of the Book, who had a longer tradition of learning, but whose failure is referred to in verse 5 below. As applied to individuals, it means that Allah's Revelation is for the benefit of all men, whether they have worldly learning or not.

5452. *His Signs*: Allah's wonderful Signs in His Creation and in His ordering of the world. It may include the Verses of the Qur-ān, but they are more specifically referred to as "Book" in the next line but one.

5453. Cf. ii. 129, and n. 129. Read again the attributes in the last verse. Allah is full Sovereign, and therefore cares for all His subjects, including the meanest and most ignorant, and sends His prophets or messengers to them. He is the Holy One, and therefore purifies and sanctifies those who were steeped in superstition and wickedness. =

And Wisdom,—although⁵⁴⁵⁴
They had been, before,
In manifest error;—

3. Alongwith others of them,⁵⁴⁵⁵ who
Have not already joined them:
And He is Exalted
In Might, Wise.

4. Such is the Bounty of Allah,
Which He bestows
On whom He will:⁵⁴⁵⁶
And Allah is the Lord
Of the highest bounty.

5. The similitude of those
Who were entrusted
With the (obligations
Of) Taurat,
But who subsequently failed
In those (obligations), is
That of a donkey⁵⁴⁵⁷

وَأَٰخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

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

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ
الْإِصْرَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِمَثَلِ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفَٰلِٰغِينَ ﴿٥﴾

= He is Exalted in Power, and therefore He can confer all these blessings on the most unlikely people (verse 3), and no one can stay His hand. He is wise, and therefore He instructs in wisdom, both through written Scriptures, and in other ways, e.g., by means of a knowledge of life and its laws, and an understanding of His wonderful universe.

5454. Previous ignorance or error is no bar to a person or nation receiving the blessings of Allah's revelation, provided such person or nation has the will to come to Allah and the capacity to bear His Message. For an instance of incapacity through arrogance, see verse 6 below.

5455. *Others of them:* i.e., others than those among whom the holy Prophet came as a messenger. In other words his Message is for his Arab people and his non-Arab contemporaries as well as those who live in other ages, and have no personal contact with him or his Companions.

5456. That is, according to His wise Will and Plan, and also as a result of His unbounded generosity to all.

5457. The Children of Israel were chosen as special vehicles for Allah's Message early in history. When their descendants corrupted the Message and became guilty of all the abominations against which prophets like Isaiah inveighed with such zeal and fire, they merely became like beasts of burden that carry learning and wisdom on their backs but do not understand or profit by it.

Which carries huge tomes
(But understands them not).
Evil is the similitude
Of people who falsify
The Signs of Allah:
And Allah guides not
People who do wrong.

6. Say: "O ye of Jewry!"⁵⁴⁵⁸

If ye think that ye
Are friends to Allah,
To the exclusion of
(Other) men, then express
Your desire for Death,
If ye are truthful!"⁵⁴⁵⁹

7. But never will they
Express their desire
(For Death), because of
The (deeds) their hands
Have sent on before them!
And Allah knows well
Those that do wrong!

8. Say: "The Death from which

Ye flee will truly
Overtake you: then will
Ye be sent back
To the Knower of things
Secret and open: and He

قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوا اِنْ رَّعَيْتُمْ اَنْتُمْ
اَوْلِيَآءُ لِلّٰهِ مِنْ دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمْنُوْا الْمَوْتَ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾

وَلَا يَمْنُوْنَهُ اَبَدًا اِمَّا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾

قُلْ اِنْ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِيْ تَفِرُّوْنَ مِنْهُ فَاِنَّهُ
مُلَقِيْكُمْ فَمَتَرُوْا دُوْنَ اِلٰى عَلِيْمِ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾

5458. Of Jewry is a very different thing from following the Law and Will of Allah. An arrogant claim to be a chosen people, to be the exclusive possessors of divine teaching, to be exempt from any punishment for breaches of the divine law, (cf. ii. 88), is presumptuous blasphemy. It may be Judaism, but it is not in the spirit of Moses.

5459. Cf. ii. 94-96. If they claimed to be special friends of Allah, why do they not eagerly desire death, which would bring them nearer to Allah? But of all people they are the most tenacious of this life and the good things of this life! And they know that their grasping selfish lives have run up a score of sin against them, which will meet its recompense.

Will tell you⁵⁴⁶⁰

The things that ye did!"

SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!

When the call is proclaimed

To prayer on Friday⁵⁴⁶¹

(The Day of Assembly),

Hasten earnestly to the Remembrance

Of Allah, and leave off

Business (and traffic):⁵⁴⁶²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ
الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ
ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١﴾

5460. Before Allah's Judgment-Seat, when Judgment is established, we shall see the full inwardness of all deeds in this world. The veil of illusion and delusion will be torn off. All our secret motives will be laid bare. The results of all our little plots and plans and their reactions on our eternal welfare will be clearly visible to us. All make-believe will disappear.

5461. Friday, is primarily the Day of Assembly, the weekly meeting of the Congregation, when we show our unity by sharing in common public worship, preceded by a Khutba, in which the Imām (or Leader) reviews the week's life of the Community and offers advice and exhortation on good living. Notice the gradations of social contact for Muslims if they followed the wise ordinances of their Faith. (1) Each individual remembers Allah for himself or herself five or more times every day in the home or place of business, or local mosque, or open air, as the case may be. (2) On Friday in every week there is a local meeting in the central mosque of each local centre,—it may be a village, or town, or ward of a big city. (3) At the two 'Ids every year, there is a large local area meeting in one centre. (4) Once at least in a lifetime, where possible, a Muslim shares in the vast international assemblage of the world, in the centre of Islam, at the Makkan Pilgrimage. A happy combination of decentralisation and centralisation, of individual liberty and collective meeting, and contact at various stages or grades. The mechanical part of this ordinance is easy to carry out. Are we carrying out the more difficult part?—the spirit of unity, brotherhood, mutual consultation, and collective understanding and action?

5462. The idea behind the Muslim weekly "Day of Assembly" is different from that behind the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) or the Christian Sunday. The Jewish Sabbath is primarily a commemoration of Allah's ending His work and resting on the seventh day (Gen. ii. 2; Exod. xx. 11): we are taught that Allah needs no rest, nor does He feel fatigue (ii. 255). The Jewish command forbids work on that day but says nothing about worship or prayer (Exod. xx. 10); our ordinance lays chief stress on the remembrance of Allah. Jewish formalism went so far as to kill the spirit of the sabbath, and call forth the protest of Jesus: "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" =

That is best for you
If ye but knew!⁵⁴⁶³

10. And when the Prayer
Is finished, then may ye
Disperse through the land,
And seek of the Bounty
Of Allah: and
Remember Allah frequently
That ye may prosper.⁵⁴⁶⁴

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. But when they see
Some bargain or some
Pastime, they disperse
Headlong to it, and leave
Thee standing. Say:
"That which Allah
Has is better than
Any pastime or bargain!
And Allah is the Best
To provide (for all needs)."⁵⁴⁶⁵

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ
فَإِمَّا قَلِيلٌ مِمَّا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِوِ مِنَ التِّجَارَةِ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

= (Mark. ii. 27). But the Christian Church, although it has changed the day from Saturday to Sunday, has inherited the Jewish spirit: witness the Scottish Sabbath; except in so far as it has been secularised. Our teaching says: 'When the time for Jumu'a Prayer comes, close your business and answer the summons loyally and earnestly, meet earnestly, pray, consult and learn by social contact; when the meeting is over, scatter and go about your business'.

5463. The immediate and temporal worldly gain may be the ultimate and spiritual loss, and *vice versa*.

5464. Prosperity is not to be measured by wealth or worldly gains. There is a higher prosperity,—the health of the mind and the spirit.

5465. Do not be distracted by the craze for amusement or gain. If you lead a righteous and sober life, Allah will provide for you in all senses, better than any provision you can possibly think of.