114859 - What Time Does Jumu’ah Start?

the question

Is there any proof from the Quran or Sunnah that it is permissible to perform Jumu’ah prayer before the time of Zhuhr prayer? For example: The time of Zhuhr begins at 1 p.m. The khutbah of Jumu’ah begins at 12 p.m. and prayer is finished before 1 p.m. Are there any conditions or circumstances that would make this permissible?

Summary of answer

The most correct view is that of the majority of scholars, that the time for Jumu’ah is the same as the time for Zhuhr, and undoubtedly this is more on the safe side.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars differed as to the earliest time for Jumu’ah prayer ; there are two views:

- When the sun passes the meridian, like the time for Zhuhr prayer, and it is not permissible to pray Jumu’ah before that.

This is the view of the majority of Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi'i scholars, and al-Nawawi attributed it to the majority of the Companions, the Successors and those who came after them.

Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “There is no difference of opinion among all those whom I met that Jumu’ah cannot be offered until the sun has passed the meridian.” (Al-Umm (1/223)

They quoted as evidence two authentic hadiths:

1. Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and

peace of Allah be upon him) used to pray Jumu'ah when the sun had passed the meridian. (Narrated by al-Bukhari (no. 904); he included it in a chapter entitled Chapter: The time of Jumu'ah [is] when the sun has passed the meridian. It was narrated thus from 'Umar, 'Ali, al-Nu'man ibn Bashir and 'Amr ibn Hurayth (may Allah be pleased with them)"

2. Salamah ibn al-Akwa' (may Allah be pleased with him) said: We used to pray Jumu'ah with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when the sun passed its zenith, then we would go back and try to seek shade. (Narrated by Muslim, no. 860)

- It is permissible to pray before the sun passes the meridian, i.e., the time for it starts before the time for Zhuhr.

This is the view of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ishaq ibn Rahawayh. (See: al-Insaf, 2/375-376, Differences of the Hanbalis concerning the beginning of the time of Jumu'ah, when the sun has risen to the height of a spear or in the fifth hour or sixth hour.)

Those who hold this view quoted a number of hadiths as evidence:

1. Ja'far ibn Muhammad narrated from his father that Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allah said: "We used to pray with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), then we would go back and let our camels used for carrying water rest. Hasan said: I said to Ja'far: At what time was that? He said: When the sun passed its zenith ." (Narrated by Muslim, 858)
2. Sahl (may Allah be pleased with him) said: We used not to take a nap or eat lunch until after Jumu'ah. (Narrated by Muslim, 859)
3. Salamah ibn al-Akwa' (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "We used to pray Jumu'ah with the Messenger of Allah (blessing and peace of Allah be upon him), then we would go back and we could not find any wall offering shade. (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4168; Muslim, 860)

These hadiths do not clearly state that the prayer came before the sun passed the meridian; rather in some of them there is also evidence to support the first view, as in the hadith of Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allah. Hence Imam al-Nawawi included it in a chapter in Sahih Muslim (2/587) entitled "Chapter: Praying Jumu'ah when the sun has passed the meridian."

The same applies to the hadith of Salamah quoted above under the first view: that was when the sun had passed the meridian.

Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The response to their quoting the hadith of Jabir and others as evidence is that all of these reports may be referring to how early it used to be done and how important it is to hasten to do it after the sun has passed the meridian, without waiting for the heat to abate and so on. This is a summary of the interpretation of the scholars for these hadiths. And the action of all Muslims is that they do not pray Jumu’ah until after the sun has passed the meridian. In more detail, the answer is as follows:

In the hadith of Jabir it states that the prayer and letting their camels rest came when the sun passed the meridian, not that the prayer came before it.

The response to the hadith of Salamah is that it offers us proof that the prayer came after the sun had passed the meridian, because it does not mean that the walls offered no shade; rather what it means is that there was not enough shade for a passer-by to seek shade.

And clearer than that is the other report, “[we would] try to seek shade”. This clearly states that there was shade, but it was little. It is well known that their walls were low and their land was closer to the equator, and there was no shade in which shade could be sought until a long time after the sun had passed the meridian.

With regard to the hadith of Sahl, “We used not to take a nap or eat lunch until after Jumu‘ah”, what it means is that they used to delay taking a nap and eating lunch on this day until after Jumu‘ah prayer, because they were recommended to come early to the prayer; if they had gotten busy with any of these things before the prayer, they would have feared missing the prayer or missing out on coming early to it.

This is supported by the report narrated by Malik in al-Muwatta, with his sound chain of transmission from ‘Umar ibn Abi Sahl ibn Malik, from his father who said: I saw a velvet carpet

belonging to ‘Aqil ibn Abi Talib put out next to the western wall of the mosque on a Friday, and when the carpet was fully in the shade of the wall, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) would come out of the mosque and they would come out after Friday prayer and take the nap that we usually took before noon.” (Al-Majmu‘, 4/511-512)

The most correct view is that of the majority of scholars, that the time for Jumu’ah is the same as the time for Zhuhr, and undoubtedly this is more on the safe side.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The best time (for Jumu’ah) is after the sun has passed the meridian, so as to avoid an area of scholarly dispute, because most of the scholars say that it is essential for Jumu’ah prayer to be after the sun passes the meridian. This is the view of the majority.

Some scholars are of the view that it is permissible to pray Jumu’ah before the sun passes the meridian in the sixth hour, and there are hadiths and reports indicating that which are authentic. So if a person prays Jumu’ah shortly before the sun passes the meridian, his prayer is valid. But it should only be done after the sun passes the meridian, following all of the hadiths and so as to avoid an area of scholarly dispute, and so as to make it easy for all people to attend together, and so that the prayer will be at the same time. This is what is better and more on the safe side.” (Majmu‘ Fatawa Ibn Baz, 12/391-392)

And Allah knows best.