

# The preparation day and the Sabbath in Islam

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## The Sabbath in the Qur'an

In the Arabic language, as in the Hebrew language the "first day" of the week corresponds with Sunday of the planetary week. The Islamic and Jewish weekdays begin at sunset. In Arabic, days of the week is numbered except for Friday and Saturday.

### Sunday يوم الأحد

الأحد pronounce as AL-AHAD means Day One from the Arabic 'one'-wahid.

### Monday يوم الإثنين

الإثنين pronounce as AL-ITHNAYN means Day Two from the Arabic 'two'-ithnayn.

### Tuesday يوم الثلاثاء

الثلاثاء pronounce as ATH-THULATHA meaning Day Three from the Arabic 'three'-thalatha.

### Wednesday يوم الأربعاء

الأربعاء pronounce as AL-ARBA'AA meaning Day Four from the Arabic 'four'-arba'aa.

### Thursday يوم الخميس

الخميس pronounce as AL-KHAMEES meaning Day Five from the Arabic 'five'-khamsah.

### Friday يوم الجمعة

الجمعة pronounce as AL-JUMU'AH meaning Day of Gathering from the Arabic 'gather'-jum'ah.

### Saturday يوم السبت

السبت pronounce as AS-SABT meaning to Rest or Day of rest. 'Sabt' in Arabic means "to hibernate, to not do anything".

	Arabic	English
1	(Yaum) al-Aḥad الأحد (means first day)	Sunday
2	(Yaum) al-Ithnayn الاثنين (second day)	Monday
3	(Yaum) ath-Thalaathaa' الثلاثاء (third day)	Tuesday
4	(Yaum) al-Arba'aa' الأربعاء (fourth day)	Wednesday
5	(Yaum) al-Khamīs الخميس (fifth day)	Thursday
6	(Yaum) al-Jumu'ah الجمعة (gathering day)	Friday
7	(Yaum) as-Sabt السبت (Sabbath day)	Saturday

The preparation day of the Sabbath, the day known in the West by its pagan name, Friday, is called yaum (or Yom) al Juma'ah in the Qur'an. The preparation to be made on this day is integral to the Sabbath itself

The Qur'an states: *"When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the Remembrance of Allah, and **leave off business**: That is best for you if ye but knew"* (62:9).

The next verse says:

**Chapter Al-Jumu`ah (The Congregation, Friday) 62:10** *And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah , and remember Allah often that you may succeed.*

The period in the afternoon on the preparation day, which is used for the preparation for the Sabbath. This is the yaum al Juma'ah, which has become so central to Muslims. They have lost sight of its relevance to the Sabbath and separated it from and elevated it above the Sabbath, contrary to the Law of God.

The practice of holding a special service on the sixth day of the week allegedly dates from the time the Arabian Prophet was at Medina, but the divergences and developments were from much later times (cf. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (ERE), Vol. 10, p. 893).

The Qur'an, at Chapter 62 Juma'ah (Congregation), enjoins this practice on Muslims. The statement is that when Muslims is summoned to Juma'ah prayers, they are to hasten to the remembrance of Allah and cease trading. This is a reference to the fact that in the

afternoon of Friday all trading ceased and people prepared for the Sabbath. The more cunning of later Muslims directed this to the afternoon of the sixth day alone, and abandoned the Sabbath.

Christians replaced the seventh-day Sabbath and made the first day of the week (known as Sunday) their Sabbath.

The Prophet warned them clearly, at Chapter 62:5, that those to whom the burden of the Torah was committed yet refused to bear it are *“like a donkey laden with books”*. Despite that warning, Hadithic Muslims abandoned the Torah and the Sabbath enshrined in it. Instead of heeding the Prophet, they ignored him and kept trading, not only on the sixth day – which they termed Juma’ah – but also on the Sabbath, which he was trying to protect. He makes this point at Chapter 62:11, that no sooner do they see merchandise or merriment they flock to it *“leaving him (you) standing all alone.”*

He can only be referring to the complete preparation period and the Sabbath. It is absurd to suggest that the Prophet established the Friday afternoon to replace the Sabbath, when he elevates the Torah and the Scriptures in the same text. The preparation period for the Sabbath, now known as the Juma’ah, is enshrined in the Torah, Exo 16:5. All men must be given time to prepare for the Sabbath, which is the true Day of Congregation or yaum al Juma’ah.

The fact of the matter is that the Friday afternoon assembly was used long before the Arabian Prophet and the name of the day was reportedly given it by one of the Prophet’s ancestors (cf. ERE, *ibid.*, p. 894).

The term juma’ah came to be used in place of the term al ‘arubah known from the Talmudic references to the preparation eve for the Sabbath (cf. *ibid.*). Thus Hadithic Muslims came to change the emphasis from the preparation for the Sabbath to a separate system of worship that was not envisioned or sanctioned by the Prophet and the Qur’an. Christians moved from the Sabbath to Sunday using similar reasoning.

The Qur’an, when it was revealed, bore witness to Jews of the authority of Jesus, which they had rejected by the time of the prophet. To Christians it bore witness that Jesus was not the third of three, that is, a person in a Trinity, a false doctrine that was well established but still new at the time of the revelation of the Qur’an. Both Christians and Jews might have done well to take the Qur’an more seriously.

On the other hand, it may well be that Muslims would do well to re-evaluate the Qur’anic injunctions in regard to the Sabbath. Sunni traditions report that the prophet had the habit of performing two prostrations of Duha prayer in the Quba mosque on Saturday mornings and only Saturday mornings.

"The Prophet used to go to the Mosque of Quba every Saturday (sometimes) walking and (sometimes) riding." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 21, Number 284)

The Prophet used to go to the Mosque of Quba (sometimes) walking and sometimes riding. Added Nafi (in another narration), "He then would offer two Rakat (in the Mosque of Quba)." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 21, Number 285)

In other words, the Prophet kept the Sabbath. There are similar historical references to the rightly guided Caliphs as well. Muslims do not follow this sunna of the prophet.

The Prophet said of the Sabbath in Qur'an Chapter 4, which was written to the Jews as people of the Scriptures and to the Trinitarians as prophecy from God:

**Qur'an 4:47-48** *O ye People of the Book! believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hindwards, or curse them as **We cursed the Sabbath-breakers**, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out. <sup>48</sup> Surely **Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him**, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin.*

This verse also takes the same event as an illustration, and this is more carefully described in chapter seven to come. It differs from the preceding verse in being addressed to Christians as well as Jews. The worship of false gods always has been associated with the Sabbath, and here the association reappears most clearly. To this is added a third sin, the rejection of the Qur'an. That is, the Qur'an makes appeal to the unity of God and the universal obligation of the Sabbath as a witness that the Qur'an is true revelation. To reject the Qur'an is to call down upon oneself the curse of the Sabbath-breaker. By the same token, acceptance of the Qur'an implies acceptance of the witnesses to its truth: the obligation to observe the Sabbath and to ascribe no partners to God in a Trinity.

"The Sunday has long usurped its place in the Christian world. And this elevation of the day of the sun to the honors of the Sabbath of the Lord, has been attended with the most disastrous consequences to the churches. Not willing to acknowledge that the Roman power has authority "to command holy days under sin," and not willing to reform their practice and exchange popular tradition for the commandment of God, they have been reduced to the greatest straits in their vain efforts to uphold Sunday by the Scriptures. To do this **they have not only done violence to the language** of the commandment, but, again, to justify this, **they have adopted rules of interpretation which make the Bible a plaything for their fancies**, and cause it to be scorned by many thinking men. If, in as plain a matter as law, **words may be made to mean the opposite of what they say**, and applied to anything except that of which they speak, what is the value of the Bible as a revelation?" {ST Dec 22, 1881 EJ Waggoner}

The same process that is used to exalt Sunday is used to exalt the Trinity; doing violence to the words so that Father and Son no longer mean Father and Son.

- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is not explicitly stated in Scripture.

- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was introduced in the centuries after the first apostles.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, confuses righteousness by faith. The Trinity takes away the *relational* access to God and Sunday focuses on the event of the resurrection rather than the *relationship* we enter into on the Sabbath.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is the heart and soul of Catholic faith.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was rejected by the SDA pioneers.

Clear text was directed at the people who were following Trinitarianism. In the point regarding the transgressing of the Sabbath, it has been rendered by Arberry as cursed them as we cursed the Sabbath-men, thus concealing the real intent of the curse which was for their transgression of the Sabbath (A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford, 1964). Dawood shows that it is specifically directed at Sabbath-breakers (N.J. Dawood, *The Koran*, Penguin, 1983, p. 371). It seems there are vested interests on both sides aimed at preventing the understanding of the Sabbath both in Islam and Christianity.

***Qur'an 7:163*** “Ask them (O Muhammad) of the township that was by the sea, how they did break the sabbath, how their big fish came unto them visibly upon their sabbath day and on a day when they did not keep sabbath came they not unto them. Thus did We try them for that they were evil-livers.”

The Sabbath-breaking event is described in more detail here. According to tradition this took place in a seaside Jewish community during the time of David. Because of their injustice God gave them a trial. He caused fish to appear in their weirs on the Sabbath, but not on other days. If they had not set out their weirs on the Sabbath, this could not have occurred. In so doing they dared God to punish them. At the same time, God tested their Sabbath observance by bringing fish only on that day. He would not have done so had they been obedient.

Many people claim that Sabbath observance is impossible. It has become impossible for them precisely because they have refused to observe it. In failing to observe it, they have lost the spiritual capacity to appreciate it.

The other mention of the Sabbath is in chapter 16.

***Qur'an 16:124*** “The Sabbath was appointed only for those who differed concerning it, and lo! Thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ.”

Two other translations run thus:

“The punishment for profaning the Sabbath was imposed only on those who had differed about it and thy Lord will surely judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed.” (The Holy Qur'an, Islam International Publications Ltd., 1988.)

The Qur'an, a new translation by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Curzon Press, 1971, gives the following:

*“The penalty for profaning the Sabbath was imposed only on those who had differed about it, and thy Lord will surely judge between them on the day of Judgment concerning that wherein they differed.”*

The words “penalty” and “punishment” at the beginning of the verse are supplied by the translators because they are implied in the word **ju'ila**. The meaning of the verse is that there is a punishment for Sabbath-breaking, but it is to be carried out upon those who dispute the obligation to keep the Sabbath. Furthermore, it is concluded from this text that no punishment for Sabbath-breaking is to be carried out before the Day of Judgment

This is an excellent illustration of how the Qur'an complements and completes the Bible. In the Bible we are faced with two problems. The first is that the punishment for Sabbath-breaking is death. In practice, this is not carried out in the current age.

The interpretation of Torah correctly shows that the Sabbath is ongoing and is enforceable by the death penalty. Christ showed by his example how the legislation of the OT was to be interpreted. He did not as Christianity claims abrogate it. More importantly the OT shows that the Sabbath will be enforced again in the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. We know from Zechariah 14:16-21 that the feasts will be enforced during that time and that the punishment will be no rain in due season which carries with it the death penalty by starvation.

The Qur'an provides an explanation, which explains the practice in the current age. It has been totally misunderstood and misrepresented by the Hadith and by both Jews and Christians. No visible punishment is meted out for Sabbath-breaking. It is nonetheless real and immediate.

In relation to the concept of the Sabbath rest after the creation, the Prophet clearly says that God then (after the work of creation) mounted the throne (Qur'an 7:54; 10:4; 32:4-5).

The eschatological intent of the preparation period al 'arubah, now called Juma'ah by Islam, regarding the resurrection is contained in Qur'an 62:6-8.

Biblically, this period covers the Last Days and the build-up to Messiah and the subjugation of the nations. It has the same significance in the week as the period from the Feast of Trumpets up to the Day of Atonement has for the Feast periods in the year.

All Muslims are duty bound to provide, each week, from the afternoon on the sixth day of the week to end of day on the seventh day or Sabbath, a work-free period to its entire people. Failure to do so results in penalty in the resurrection, as they are in breach of the Torah and the Qur'an.

## **Conclusion**

We are obligated to prepare for the Sabbath on the sixth day. Through adequate preparation we are all enabled to partake in the Sabbath-rest of God, and we are enabled to keep the Sabbath holy. When God gave His preparation day and Sabbath commands, He was clearing the way for us to follow Him. If we obey His words and do not pursue our own “pleasures” (which does include our own work) on the Sabbath, we can come to know the only True God and His Christ, which is eternal life (Jn. 17:3).

(This article largely based on article written by Dr. [Thomas McElwain](#))

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