

**The Friday Prayer- Part I: The Fiqh of the
Friday Prayer**

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Aspects of the *Khutbah*

A General Description of the Prophet's *Khutbah*

From the numerous authentic hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and elsewhere concerning the *khutbah*, one can construct the general fashion that it used to take. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would ascend the *minbar* and greet the congregation. His *minbar* had three steps to it and it was to the right of his place of prayer. He would sit and the people would sit around him. Then the *adhan* would be given at the front of the mosque. While the *adhan* is given, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would repeat after the caller and would say, "And I also [bear witness]," when the caller would say, "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah," and "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." After the *adhan* would be finished, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would then stand and deliver a *khutbah*. He would begin by praising and glorifying Allah. After that, he would say, "*Amma badu*," which basically implies, "And now to proceed." When giving the *khutbah*, the Prophet would raise his voice, his cheeks would become red, he would read verses from the Quran and give the people an admonition. He would demonstrate his anger and would become like someone who is warning of an approaching army. He would then sit briefly, as a kind of rest. Then he would stand again and address the people. After the *khutbah*, he would come down from the *minbar* and the *iqama* for the prayer would be given and he would lead the prayer.

His *khutbahs* would be short and to the point. During the *khutbah*, he would not raise his hands while making supplications. Instead, he would point with his right index finger during the *khutbah*.

It is also recorded that he would lean on a staff during the *khutbah*. According to ibn al-Qayyim, this was done before the *minbar* was built. After that time, it is not narrated that he ever leaned on anything.¹

If a special occasion arose during his *khutbah*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would tend to it and then he would return to his *khutbah*. For example, when a person was stepping over people, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to sit down as he harmed the people. If a person came with some necessity, he would tend to it, such as the person who asked him to supplicate for rain.

The Status and Necessary Parts of the *Khutbah*

A Continual Practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Before discussing the status and necessary parts of the *khutbah*, a point from Islamic legal theory must be discussed. This concerns the status of an act that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to continually perform.² Should such an act be considered obligatory

¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zaad*, vol. 1, p. 429. Ibn al-Qayyim goes on to refute the idea that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to lean on a sword and that was a sign that this religion is established and upheld through the sword. It has never been narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to lean on a sword during the *khutbah*. Amazingly, in *Irwaa* (vol. 3, p. 78), al-Albani quotes *Manar al-Sabeel*, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would deliver the *khutbah* while [leaning] on a staff or sword. Recorded by Abu Dawud," and afterwards al-Albani says, "*hasan*." A study of that hadith in *Sunan Abu Dawud* shows that there is no mention of a sword whatsoever.

² Here the discussion is only concerned with what is known as *al-fi'l al-mujarrad*. That is, the actions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed but they are not directly related to the implementation of a command in the Quran or in his speech nor are they related to matters that are specific to him or his time and place and so forth. In addition, the discussion here is only concerning those acts concerning which it cannot be determined if they were obligatory upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), recommended even for him or simply permissible for him.

or simply recommended? It seems that many of those actions that were discussed above as part of the *khutbah* were performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) during every *khutbah*. Is this enough to say that those actions must be obligatory or must there be some additional evidence to conclude that that act is obligatory? Depending upon the answer to this question, the necessary and obligatory parts of the *khutbah* may be many or may be only a few.

This is not the proper place to enter into a lengthy discussion of this point.¹ The three most apparent opinions are that the Prophet's continual performance of an act implies that the act is obligatory, recommended or simply permissible. With respect to deeds related to ritual acts of worship, such as the *khutbah* and prayer, the Prophet's continual performance of that deed must raise it from the level of simply permissible to at least that of being recommended. This is because it must be an act that is meant to get closer to Allah, therefore it must be at least recommended. But for it to be considered obligatory beyond that, according to many legal theorists, there must be some further evidence to support it.² It is certainly at least recommended but there is some doubt about it being obligatory. In this case, one follows what can be considered certain and leaves what is doubtful. That is, therefore, the Prophet's continual performance of a deed is not sufficient in itself for that deed to be considered obligatory. In addition, it is very strange to conceive of such acts as being obligatory while the Prophet (peace be upon him) never verbally gave any indication that they are obligatory.

With respect to aspects of the *khutbah*, though, another argument can be made. This is based on the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Pray in the manner that you have seen me praying." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) According to this hadith, one should make the *khutbah*, which is considered part of the Friday Prayer, in the same manner that the Prophet (peace be upon

¹ For such a discussion, see Muhammad al-Ashqar, *Afaal al-Rasool* (Beirut: Muasasat al-Risalah, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 322-392.

² For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) never missed the two *rakabs* before the *fajr* prayer but it is not said that these two *rakabs* are obligatory.

him) used to make his *khutbah*. Al-Shaukani has forcefully rejected this notion. He says that the Friday Prayer, like all other prayers, begins with the opening *takbir* and ends with the *tasleem*. Hence, the *khutbah* is not part of the Prayer at all and, therefore, that hadith cannot be used to justify obliging the different parts of the *khutbah*.¹

This makes it very difficult to determine the required aspects of the *khutbah*. For the most part, it is recorded how the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his *khutbah* but there is no record of him saying that such and such a part is a requirement of the *khutbah*. At the same time, though, even those who say such acts are not obligatory agree that by virtue of the Prophet (peace be upon him) continually or always performing them, this means that they are the best way to do that action. Therefore, even if some of the acts of the Prophet's *khutbah* are not considered obligatory, it is still the case that the way he made the *khutbah* is the best way. Therefore, one should try to emulate him in that even though it may not be obligatory.

Similarly, recommended actions are at different levels. If it can be shown that the Prophet (peace be upon him) continually performed an act and never abandoned it, then this act must not be considered simply *sunnah* but *sunnah mu'akadah* or a "stressed *sunnah*" that one should do his best not to abandon. This is especially true for easy to perform acts. For example, according to some scholars the sitting between the two *khutbahs* is obligatory. Their only proof for that is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) always did so. This is, as stated above, not sufficient proof to establish the obligation of that act. At the same time, there does not seem to be any reason not to perform that act. Since the Prophet (peace be upon him) always did it and it is difficult to determine if it was obligatory or recommended, it is best to perform that act and not worry about the controversy over whether it is obligatory or not.

¹ Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukani, *Al-Lum'ah fi al-Itidal bi-Idrak al-Rukab min al-Jumu'ah* (Sana, Yemen: Maktabah Bar al-Quds, 1990), p. 25.

The Status of the *Khutbah* Itself. There is some difference of opinion concerning the status of the *khutbah* itself.

One opinion states that the *khutbah* is a prerequisite for the soundness of the Friday Prayer. That is, the Friday Prayer cannot be performed without it. Ibn Qudama wrote, "The *khutbah* is one of the conditions of the Friday Prayer and the Friday Prayer is not valid without it. This is said by Ata, al-Nakhai, Qatada, al-Thauri, al-Shafi'i, Ishaq, Abu Thaur and the *ashab al-ra'i*. We don't know of any difference of opinion on this except from al-Hasan..." This is based on the reports that say that the prayer was shortened from four *rakats* to two *rakats* and the *khutbah* replaced those two *rakats*.¹ Al-Nawawi states that this is the opinion of Malik, Ahmad, al-Shafi'i and the majority of the scholars.² For those scholars, the *khutbah* is a condition in the same way that the minimum number of people are a condition and so forth.

Al-Shaukani strongly refutes this opinion. He says that such a claim can only be made if there is some strong evidence for it. In this case, though, there is no strong evidence. Therefore, this opinion must be rejected.³ Perhaps there is a fundamental problem with this opinion. Most of those same scholars quoted above who say that the *khutbah* is a condition for the prayer also say that if a person only catches one *rakah* of the Friday Prayer, then he only prays one additional *rakah*. But if that person missed the *khutbah*, which is a condition for the soundness of the Friday Prayer, how could it be sufficient for him just to make up one *rakah*?

The second opinion states that the *khutbah* is obligatory. If someone misses the *khutbah*, he has missed an obligatory act and he is therefore sinful. At the same time, though, his Friday Prayer is still valid and he does not, for example, have to pray *Dhuhr* instead of the Friday Prayer. According to al-Shaukani, this is the opinion of the majority of the scholars, including al-Shafi'i, Abu

¹ Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 150. There are reports from Aisha and Umar that the prayer was originally four *rakats* and then the *khutbah* took the place of two of them. In that case, one could understand that the *khutbah* is as essential as the two *rakats* it replaced. But those narrations are weak. See al-Albani, *Irwa*, vol. 3, p. 72 and p. 74.

² Al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 2, p. 514.

³ Al-Shaukani, *al-Lumah*, passim.

Hanifah and Malik¹ but it seems that the scholars of those schools clearly declare the *khutbah* a condition for the soundness of the Friday Prayer and not simply a compulsory duty. Al-Albani also says that the Friday Prayer is obligatory. Al-Shaukani in *al-Seel*, written after *Nail*, also concludes that the *khutbah* is obligatory.²

The evidences for this opinion are the following:

(1) Allah says in the Quran,

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا نودي للصلاة من يوم الجمعة فاسعوا إلى ذكر الله وذروا البيع

"O believers, when the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business" (*al-Jumuah* 9). Based on the incident surrounding this verse, it is clear that what is meant by the "remembrance of Allah" is the *khutbah* itself. Hence, Allah is commanding believers to go to the remembrance and abstain from buying and selling at that time. This command implies obligation.

(2) The Prophet (peace be upon him) always used to give the *khutbah* before the Friday Prayer. In these scholars' eyes, this continual practice is a sign that that act is obligatory.

(3) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Pray in the manner that you have seen me praying." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In essence, the *khutbah* is part of the prayer and, therefore, it must be performed in the manner that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed it. This includes always having a *khutbah*.

The third opinion is that the *khutbah* is simply sunnah or a recommended act and is neither obligatory nor a condition for the validity of the prayer. This is the opinion of al-Hasan al-Basri, Dawud al-Dhahiri, al-Juwaini, al-Shaukani and Sideeq al-Bukhari. Their strongest arguments are that the above arguments given by those who say it is obligatory are not valid or sufficient to prove that the *khutbah* is obligatory. They also say that the command in the Quran is simply to "go" and to go to the "remembrance" which they interpret as the prayer.³

¹ Al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, p. 326.

² Al-Shaukani, *al-Seel*, vol. 1, p. 298.

³ Al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, pp. 326-327; Sideeq al-Bukhari, *Raudhat*, vol. 1, p. 136.

Upon closer inspection, it seems that the arguments of all three of the above groups are not satisfactory. Therefore, the question will be looked at in a slightly different manner here.

First, there is no question that the Prophet (peace be upon him) always gave a *khutbah* before he prayed the Friday Prayer. This is not considered strong enough to conclude that the *khutbah* is obligatory. That is, there is still some doubt that the act may not be obligatory and, because of that doubt, legal theorists, like al-Ashqar and al-Shaukani, conclude that this can only demonstrate that act is recommended or *sunna*. However, if the Prophet's continual performance of an act is supported with some other evidence, that should be enough to remove the doubt and raise that act to being obligatory. Such corroborating evidence, this author believes, can be found in the case of the *khutbah* of the Friday Prayer.

This further evidence can be found in the Quranic verse,

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا نودي للصلاة من
يوم الجمعة فاسعوا إلى ذكر الله وذروا البيع

"O believers, when the call is proclaimed for the prayer on Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business" (*al-Jumu'ah* 9). In this verse, the meaning of the "remembrance of Allah" as given by the early commentators is the *khutbah* itself. In fact, Al-Tabari records no other opinion; no one stated that it is in reference to the Prayer.¹ Hence, this is a command from Allah to "go and attend the *khutbah*". This being in the imperative implies obligation unless there is some proof otherwise. In this case, those who say that the *khutbah* is only *sunna* offer no proof that this imperative is meant only as a recommendation.

Similarly, buying and selling become illegal at the time of the first call to prayer. In other words, at the time when the *khutbah* is about to begin, it becomes illegal to buy and sell. Obviously, buying and selling is something permissible in general. Under

¹ Abu Jafar al-Tabari, *Jami al-Bayan an Taweel ayi al-Quran* (Bairut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), vol. 14, part 28, pp. 99-102. Al-Babarti (vol. 2, p. 59) states that the commentators on the Quran are agreed that it is in reference to the *khutbah*. It is very strange that in al-Shaukani's commentary on the Quran he does not even mention this as a possible meaning while in *al-Seel* (vol. 1, p. 298) he states that it is a reference to the *khutbah*.

these circumstances this essentially legal act becomes forbidden. This is yet another sign that the *khutbah* must be mandatory as it is not conceivable that buying and selling would become forbidden in order for the people to attend something which is simply *sunna* or recommended. A recommended act could not be so important as to invalidate something as important and permissible as buying and selling.

Furthermore, while talking about the *khutbah* related to the Eid Prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "We will be delivering a *khutbah*. Whoever wishes to stay for the *khutbah* may stay. Whoever would like to leave, may leave." (Recorded by al-Nasai, Abu Dawud and ibn Majah.) In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is explicitly telling his followers that they are not required to stay for the Eid *khutbah*. From the concept of *mafhum al-mukhalifah* ("the divergent meaning"), this could be understood to mean that this *khutbah* is unlike the *khutbah* of the Friday Prayer and one is not required to stay for this *khutbah*. This conclusion can easily be derived when it is noted that the Prophet (peace be upon him) never said anything even remotely similar to that about the *khutbah* of the Friday Prayer.

Finally, one can see that there is a great deal of reward for the Friday Prayer. This includes having all of one's minor sins from the previous Friday plus three days forgiven. Yet the Prophet (peace be upon said), "Whoever makes *ghusl* on Friday, and applies some of his wife's perfume if she has any, and puts on some of his best clothing, then does not step over the necks of people, and does not speak uselessly during the admonition, then it will be an expiation for what is between [the two Fridays]. And whoever spoke uselessly and whoever walked above the necks of people, it will be a *Dhuhr* Prayer [and not the Friday Prayer] for him." (Recorded by Abu Dawud.¹) This means that by speaking improperly during the *khutbah* or stepping over people during the *khutbah*, one will lose the great reward from the Friday Prayer and it will become simply like the *Dhuhr* Prayer. If this is the case of the person who speaks during the *khutbah*, what about the person

¹ Al-Albani called it *sahih*. al-Albani, *Sahih al-Jami*, vol. 2, p. 1048.

who does not even bother to attend the *khutbah* and just makes it to the prayer? In addition, could such a great amount of reward be lost simply because someone spoke during an action which is only recommended anyway and not obligatory?

Logically speaking, also, there must be something that differentiates this Prayer from the other prayers that makes it so significant. This differentiating feature could not possibly be that it is shorter than the regular *Dhuhr* Prayer. Indeed, the outstanding feature is the "remembrance of Allah" and exhortation that precedes it. It would be hard to imagine that this is the main distinguishing feature of the Friday Prayer and yet it is only recommended and not obligatory.

When one puts together all of these different bits of evidence, one will have to come to the conclusion that the *khutbah* is obligatory. Anyone who intentionally misses the *khutbah*, even if he performs the Friday Prayer, must be considered a sinner. The claim that the *khutbah* is only a sunnah goes against the many evidences above, which taken individually may not be sufficient to prove that the *khutbah* is obligatory but when taken as a whole leave no room to think that the *khutbah* may not be obligatory. As for the opinion that the *khutbah* is a prerequisite or condition for the Friday Prayer, there does not seem to be substantial evidence to warrant such a position. Allah knows best.

The Arkan or Necessary Parts of the *Khutbah*. The schools of fiqh differ concerning the necessary and obligatory parts of the *khutbah*. Part of this difference of opinion, again, goes back to how they answer the question of whether the continual performance of an act by the Prophet (peace be upon him) means an act is obligatory or not.

According to the Hanafis, there is only one pillar or *rukn* for the *khutbah*. That is that the *khutbah* must consist of some sort of *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah as it is described in the Quran as *dhikr*. Actually, Abu Hanifah was of the opinion that if the Imam simply said once, "Glory be to Allah," "There is no one worthy of worship except Allah" or "All praises are due to Allah," that would be sufficient as a *khutbah*. However, his two leading students, Abu

Yusuf and Muhammad, disagreed and said that one must deliver what can rightly be called a *khutbah* (which means an address or speech).¹ The Shafis say that there are five pillars for the *khutbah*: (1) Praising Allah at the beginning of the *khutbah*. (2) Prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) must be said.² (3) There must be some admonition to *taqwa* or God-consciousness in both parts of the *khutbah*. (4) A verse from the Quran must be recited. (5) And some supplication or *dua* must be made. The Malikis say that there is only one pillar and that is that some warning concerning the hell-fire or some glad tidings concerning paradise must be given during the *khutbah*. The Hanbalis say that the pillars are four: (1) Praising Allah at the beginning of the *khutbah*. (2) Making prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the course of the *khutbah*. (3) Reciting a verse of the Quran during the *khutbah*. (4) Incitement to *taqwa* must be made.

It seems that the approach of Abu Yusuf, Muhammad and the Malikis is the strongest on this matter. There is no strong evidence to demonstrate the other acts mentioned by the Shafis and Hanbalis can be considered essential components of the *khutbah*. Although no one would deny that they are praiseworthy and correct aspects of the *khutbah*. Actually, if one of the customary practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is considered a necessary component of the *khutbah*, then all the aspects should be considered necessary as there is no real way to distinguish between any of them.

¹ Al-Sarakhsi, vol. 2, p. 30.

² Concerning the prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the *khutbah*, Nasir al-Din al-Albani wrote, "What is well-known is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would mention his noble name while stating the testimony of faith during the *khutbah*. But as for him saying prayers upon himself (peace be upon him), that is something concerning which I do not know of any hadith." al-Albani, *al-Ajubah*, p. 55, fn. 1. Similarly, Ibn Qudama wrote, "It is possible that it is not obligatory to say the prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention that in his *khutbahs*." Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 152. Al-Qamuli also stated that in the *khutbahs* narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him), there is no mention of him saying prayers upon himself. See Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Zubaidi, *Itihaf al-Sadaat al-Mutaqeen* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiya, 1989), vol. 3, p. 367.

Again, Sideeq al-Bukhari has an excellent comment on the so-called conditions for the *khutbah*. He states that the proper *khutbah* is the type that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to make, wherein he would exhort the people to do good and intimidate them concerning doing evil. This is the real purpose and intent of the *khutbah*. As for praises of Allah, prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) or reading a verse of the Quran, all of these things are external to the main purpose of the *khutbah*. Simply because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do those things does not mean that they are necessary parts of the *khutbah* or the goal of the *khutbah*. Those were all just introductory aspects and not the intent of the *khutbah*. According to Sideeq al-Bukhari, it was the custom of the Arabs that if they wish to state something, they would begin with praising Allah and saying prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). That is a good practice, he states, but it is not the purpose of the *khutbah*. If someone simply does that and does not make any admonition to the people during his *khutbah*, it is obvious that he has not performed the *khutbah* in the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But if he includes those things along with his admonition, then he has performed the *khutbah* in the manner that is best and most complete.¹

Obligatory and Sunan Acts of the *Khutbah*

In the general description of the *khutbah* given above, a number of different acts were described. In this section, they shall be discussed in greater detail, including a discussion of whether the scholars consider them obligatory or simply preferred acts of the *khutbah*.

To Deliver the *khutbah* from a *Minbar*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to deliver the *khutbah* while on the *minbar*. The *minbar* was to the right of his place of prayer when he would be standing facing the *qiblah*. Sahl ibn Sad al-Saidi narrated the history of the *minbar*. He said, "By Allah, I know of what wood

¹ Sideeq al-Bukhari, *al-Raudha*, vol. 1, p. 137. Al-Shaukani (*al-Seel*, vol. 1, p. 299) also has an excellent and similar passage on this point.

the *minbar* was made, and no doubt I saw it on the first day when the Messenger of Allah took his seat on it. The Messenger of Allah sent for such and such Ansari woman and said to her, 'Order your slave-carpenter to prepare for me some pieces of wood on which I may sit at the time of addressing the people.' So she ordered her slave-carpenter and he made it from the tamarisk of the forest and brought it (to the woman). The woman sent that *minbar* to the Messenger of Allah..." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Jabir ibn Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to stand by a stem of a date-palm tree (while delivering the *khutbah*). When the *minbar* was placed for him, we heard that stem crying like a pregnant she-camel until the Prophet (peace be upon him) got down from the *minbar* and placed his hand over it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

The *minbar* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had three steps to it. It was kept at only three steps until Marwan increased them six steps during the time of Muawiya. It is reported that this was done because the number of people had increased. Therefore, by raising the height of the *minbar*, more people would be able to see and hear the Imam. Nowadays, due to microphones, there is no need to increase the number of steps of the *minbar*. It is best for it to be three steps, in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Abu Maali of the Hanbalis said that if there is no *minbar*, the *khateeb* should stand to the left of the place of prayer. That is, the opposite side of where the *minbar* would be.¹ However, this opinion seems baseless.

Before sitting on the *minbar*, the *khateeb* turns to the congregation and greets them. This action was recorded as having been performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) by ibn Majah, Tamaam in *al-Fawa'id*, ibn Adi, Abu Nuaim, ibn Abu Shaibah, Abdul Razzaq and al-Baghawi. Unfortunately, all of the chains that report this from the Prophet (peace be upon him) are weak. However, al-Albani concludes that they support each other

¹ al-Mardawi, vol. 2, p. 395.

and may be accepted. In addition, he states that this action was reported with sound chains from Uthman ibn Affan and Umar ibn Abdul Aziz. In the narration from Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, it explicitly states that the congregation replied to his greetings.¹

Al-Shaukani points out that Abu Hanifah and Malik consider this action disliked. They say that the Imam greets the people upon entering the mosque and there is no need to repeat that act.² Most likely, if they were aware of the above hadith, they did not consider that hadith acceptable. It seems though that it is a *hasan* hadith and, therefore, the hadith must be followed and their statements must be ignored. This is in no way an insult to these great scholars. On the other hand, it is in accord with their own teachings as they both made statements to the effect that if any authentic hadith contradicts their sayings, one must follow the hadith and disregard their sayings.

The Khateeb sits on the minbar while the call to prayer is being made. Al-Bukhari records that when Muawiya sat on the *minbar* and the caller to prayer said, "Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar," he would say, "Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar." When the caller said, "Ashhadu an la ilaha illa-llah," Muawiya would say, "And (so do) I." When the caller said, "Ashhadu anna Muhammadar-Rasulullah," he would say, "And (so do) I." When the call to prayer was finished, Muawiya said, "O people, when the caller to prayer pronounced the call I heard the Messenger of Allah upon the *minbar* saying what you have just heard me saying."

¹ Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Silsilat al-Abadith al-Sahihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif, 1991), pp. 106-107, hadith no. 2076.

² Al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, p. 321. Al-Albani states that he knows of no narration that shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) greeted the people upon entering the mosque and then again upon sitting on the *minbar*. See al-Albani, *al-Ajuba*, p. 58, fn. 2. Al-Tabarani, in *al-Ausat*, and ibn Adi actually record such a hadith that combines both actions. Al-Haithami said about that hadith, "Al-Tabarani recorded it in *al-Ausat* and in its chain is Isa ibn Abdullah al-Ansari and he is weak although ibn Hibban lists him in *al-Thiqat* [his book of trustworthy narrators]." However, ibn Hajr concludes that it is a very weak hadith. See Nur al-Din al-Haithami, *Majma al-Zawaid wa Manba al-Fawaid* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1982), vol. 2, p. 184; ibn Hajr, *al-Dirayah*, vol. 1, p. 217.

The Khutbah is to be Given While Standing. All of the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) make it clear that he gave the *khutbah* while standing. Ibn Umar stated, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would deliver the *khutbah* while standing and then he would sit, then stand again as you do nowadays." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Jabir ibn Samura said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to deliver the *khutbah* while standing. He would then sit and then stand up and address the people while standing. He also stated, "Whoever informed you that he (the Prophet) delivered the *khutbah* while sitting told a lie. By Allah, I prayed with him more than two thousand times." (Recorded by Muslim. The two thousand times includes the five daily prayers.)

Al-Nawawi writes that according to al-Shafi'i and his followers it is a must for the correctness of the *khutbah* that the *khateeb* give it while standing, if he has the ability to do so, while sitting in between the two *khutbahs* if he has the ability to do so. If the person cannot stand, he should appoint someone else in his place. If he gives the *khutbah* while sitting or lying down because he does not have the ability to do so standing, then the *khutbah* is still valid in the same way that a prayer said sitting is valid when the person is not able to stand.¹ Imam Malik considered the standing aspect as obligatory. If one does not do it, he has committed a sin although the *khutbah* is still valid. Abu Hanifah simply considered it a *sunnah*. Similarly, reports have come from Ahmad that it is sufficient for the Imam to sit while delivering the *khutbah*.²

The strongest opinion seems to be that it is obligatory. That is, it was the continual practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it was the understanding of the Companions that sitting during the *khutbah* was abominable. Kab ibn Ajurah entered the mosque and Abdul Rahman ibn al-Hakm was giving the *khutbah* while sitting. Kaab objected to that and recited the following verse from *Surah al-Jumuah* which describes the people leaving the Prophet (peace be upon him) standing while he was delivering the *khutbah*,

¹ Al-Nawawi, *al-Majmu*, vol. 4, p. 514.

² See ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, p. 401; Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 150.

وإذا رأوا تجارة أو لهوا انفضوا إليها وتركوك
 قائما قل ما عند الله خير من اللهو
 ومن التجارة والله خير الرازقين

"But when they see some merchandise or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you [Muhammad] standing [while delivering the *khutbah*]. Say: That which Allah has is better than any amusement or merchandise. And Allah is the Best of providers" (*al-Jumu'ah* 11). (Recorded by ibn Khuzaima.)

Again, a general principle that could be applied in many of these matters is the following: There is no question that these are the ways in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed the *khutbah*. The Prophet (peace be upon him), as Allah states in the Quran, is the best example for mankind. Since these are relatively easy matters to perform, and although there is some difference concerning whether they are obligatory or not, it is best to perform these matters in the way that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed them. In this way, the person's religion will be saved from any form of confusion or mistaken conclusions. Allah knows best.

Two Khutbahs are Given and Between them the Imam sits for a Brief Moment. This practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is confirmed in the hadith narrated above concerning standing during the *khutbah*. According to Imam al-Shafi'i, having two *khutbahs* is one of the conditions for the soundness of the Friday Prayer. Al-Shaukani wrote, "To stand during the two *khutbahs* and to sit between them is confirmed from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and whoever does otherwise has committed an innovation."¹ However, Malik, al-Auzai, Ishaq, Abu Thaur, ibn al-Mundhir and the scholars of *ra'i* say that one *khutbah* is sufficient. Hence, for them, there is no harm in performing the *khutbah* without a sitting. In fact, ibn Qudama states that it has been narrated that Ali ibn Abu Talib, al-Mughirah ibn Shubah and Ubayy ibn Kaab gave *khutbahs* and did not sit until they were finished.² The difference evolves from

¹ Al-Shaukani, *al-Seet*, vol. 1, p. 299.

the manner in which people view this sitting. If the scholar considers it an act related to the act of worship, he will say it is obligatory or, at least, a stressed sunnah. If the scholar believes it to have been done simply so the *khateeb* can rest, he will conclude that it is not a necessary aspect of the *khutbah*.²

It seems from the hadith describing this sitting that there is no speech during that time³ Ibn Hajr, however, states that this does not negate the making mention of Allah or invocations silently.⁴ In any case, there is no sunnah or recorded statements that are preferred to be said during the time of sitting.

The length of the time of sitting is considered by some scholars to be similar to the time of sitting for the "sitting of rest" between the first and second *rakahs* of any prayer. Some say that it is to be for the amount of time it takes to recite *surah al-Ikhlās*. In any case, there does not seem to be any clear guidance from what is reported on this point. Therefore, it is not possible for anyone to insist on a specific amount of time or to object to any specific amount of time, although it is clear that the sitting was brief.

Those scholars who say that the brief sitting and pause is obligatory, also state that if a person is not able to stand, and therefore gives the *khutbah* sitting, he should pause and be silent during the *khutbah* and that would take the place of his sitting.⁵

Khair al-Din Wanaly makes a very important point concerning the second *khutbah*. He wrote,

¹ Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 153. It is claimed that Uthman gave a very short *khutbah* upon being named caliph but the story of that *khutbah* is not authentic. See al-Zailai, vol. 2, p. 197; ibn Hajr, *al-Darayah*, vol. 1, p. 215.

² Ibn Rushd, *Bidayah*, vol. 1, p. 164. Al-Babarti (vol. 2, p. 58), al-Sarakhsi (vol. 2, p. 26) and al-Zubaidi (vol. 3, p. 374) each mention a hadith from ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to only give one *khutbah* until he got older and his weight became too much for him, after which he would sit and rest between the two *khutbahs*. If this hadith is true, it would answer the above question. However, this author has not been able to locate this narration in any book of hadith.

³ Some hadith explicitly state that nothing was stated during that time. See al-Albani, *Irua*, vol. 3, p. 70.

⁴ Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, p. 406.

⁵ Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, p. 406. Al-Shaukani (*al-Seet*, vol. 2, p. 299) says that there is no evidence for a pause in that case.

The second *khutbah* is the same in length and duration as the first *khutbah*. It must also contain guidance and instruction, as is in accord and is relevant to the people who are listening to the *khutbah*. It must point to the occurring problems and the important matters that the Muslims are facing and teach the people the Islamic view of those things. And the second *khutbah* should not simply be filled with invocations and asking for blessings upon the Companions and their Followers, naming them one by one. Asking for Allah's pleasure upon the Companions and the Followers may be done by every individual in his own house without any need for him going to the mosque for that matter and then returning to his house in the same manner he left it, without having learned anything or understood anything about the affairs of his religion or world.¹

Raising the Voice During the *Khutbah*. Jabir ibn Abdullah said, "When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) delivered the *khutbah*, his eyes became red, his voice rose, and his anger increased such that it was like one giving a warning about the enemy and saying, 'The enemy has made a morning attack on you and in the evening too.'..." (Recorded by Muslim.) This shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was emotional during the *khutbah*. In this way, his speech was more likely to affect the listeners. This is a sunnah that is missing from many of the *khutbahs* today, especially in the Muslim world. Many times a *khutbah* is simply read from a collection of *khutbahs* and the one reading it has no or little emotion. Hence, the effect upon the listeners, if any, is very little indeed.

The *Khutbah* is to be "Short". Jabir ibn Samura narrated, "I used to pray with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and both his prayer and *khutbah* were of moderate length." (Recorded by Muslim.) In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Prolonging the prayer and shortening the *khutbah* is a sign of one's understanding of the religion. So, prolong the prayer and shorten the *khutbah* for there is charm in (precise) expression." (Recorded by Muslim.)

¹ Wanaly, pp. 177-178.

The Content of the *Khutbah*. Discussing the content of the Prophet's *khutbahs*, ibn al-Qayyim wrote,

The *khutbah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) reinforced the fundamental articles of faith, like belief in Allah, the Exalted, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the meeting with Him. He would mention Paradise and hell-fire and what Allah, the Exalted, has promised to His devoted servants and the people who obey Him and what Allah has promised to His enemies and the miscreant. While listening to his *khutbah*, the hearts would be filled with belief in Allah, His oneness and His majesty. His *khutbahs* were not like speeches of those who speak only of matters of concern to common folk, lamenting earthly life and frightening people of the approaching death. Such speeches cannot inspire faith in Allah or strengthen belief in His oneness or move people by allusion to His mighty works in history, nor can they kindle in hearts intense love for Allah, making the listeners look forward eagerly to the time they will meet Him! The people who hear such speeches gain no benefit at all, except that they will die and that their wealth will be distributed and their bodies will be turned to dust. Woe to such poets, what sort of faith is fostered by such sermons, and what sort of *tawhid* do they teach or knowledge disseminate? If we study the *khutbahs* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions, we find them imbued with perspicuous guidance, *tawhid*, attributes of Allah, explaining the basic articles of faith, inviting people to Allah, and drawing their attention to His providential care that makes Him so beloved to His slaves. His *khutbahs* referred to Allah's dealings with others in the past so as to warn his listeners against His wrath and exhort them to remember Him, thank Him and win His pleasure and love. Those who heard these *khutbahs* were inspired with the love of Allah and they looked forward eagerly to meeting their Lord. As time went by, the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was forgotten and other things prevailed. The main purpose of the *khutbah* was forgotten. The eloquent and nice words that moved the hearts became rare in speeches. The main thrust of the *khutbah* was neglected. The hearts were no longer touched and the basic purpose of the *khutbah* was lost.¹

¹ Quoted in Sabiq, vol. 2, pp. 140-141.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to recite portions and whole *surahs* of the Quran during the *khutbah*. In fact, sometimes his *khutbahs* simply consisted of *Surah Qaf*. In the following passage from al-Izz ibn Abdul Salaam, he explains, among other things, the wisdom behind reading that particular *surah* during the *khutbah*. He wrote,

The *khateeb* must not mention anything in the *khutbah* except for what is consistent with its purpose of praising Allah, supplications, exhorting to good and intimidating concerning evil, reminding of the promises and warnings. [He may mention] anything that stirs one to obey Allah and drives one away from disobeying Allah. This includes reciting the Quran. The Prophet (peace be upon him) often used to recite *surah Qaf* in his *khutbahs*. This is because it is comprised of the remembrance of Allah, praising Him, then it mentions His knowledge of what is whispered in the soul and of what the angels record of man's obedience or disobedience. Then [this *surah*] mentions death and its harshness as well as the Day of Judgment and what occurs at that time and that the deeds of the creation will be presented. Then it mentions Heaven and Hell. Then it mentions the Resurrection and the coming out from the graves. Then it advises the person concerning the prayers. Whoever discusses other things is an innovator. One should not mention the caliph, kings and princes in the *khutbah*. This is a place reserved only for Allah and His Messenger. "And the mosques are for Allah alone, so invoke not anyone along with Allah (*al-Jinn* 18)." If an event that affects the Muslims occurs, there is nothing wrong with discussing that event in the *khutbah*. [But it should be] from the point of view of what the *Shariah* has to say about it and to encourage the people to respond accordingly, such as preparing for the enemy or the *khateeb* encouraging the people to make jihad... And the *khateeb* must avoid words or terms that only a few or the special [*al-khawass*] understand. The purpose is to benefit those present through exhortation and admonition. [To use such terms] is a repugnant innovation. It is like someone delivering a *khutbah* to Arabs while using non-Arabic terms that they don't understand. And Allah knows best.¹

¹ Quoted in Salman, pp. 385-386.

The main purpose of the *khutbah* is a *dhikr* (reminder of Allah) and *mauidha* (admonition). These are essential aspects of the *khutbah*- perhaps the only essential aspects of the *khutbah*- and the *khateeb* must never forget them. Unfortunately, nowadays, it is possible to hear *khutbahs* which contain very little, if any, mention of Allah and reminder of one's duty to Allah and belief in Him. Some speakers become captivated with current events and politics that they forget the nature of the *khutbah* itself. Current events and politics may be discussed in the *khutbah*. Sometimes they must certainly be discussed. Yet even when discussing these matters one must try to tie these aspects into the goal of the *khutbah* and reminding the people of their responsibility to Allah and not simply make the *khutbah* a social commentary.

Abdullah al-Ghamdi has presented some excellent points of guidance for the *khateeb*. Among the ones he mentioned, those related to the content of the *khutbah* are the following: First, the *khateeb* must make himself knowledgeable of the correct beliefs of the Pious Forefathers. This will keep him from straying and harming the listeners by giving them false beliefs and notions that go against the Quran and sunnah. Second, he must make himself knowledgeable of the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and what reports are confirmed from him. This must be done in order to avoid spreading false and weak hadith among the followers.¹ In fact, this is one of the gravest mistakes that *khateeb*s make today. They do not ensure that the hadith they use are authentic hadith. Therefore, instead of guiding people to the straight path during the *khutbah*, they spread false and unsubstantiated beliefs and statements from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is a must upon the *khateeb* to do his best to use only authentic hadith in his *khutbah*.

Al-Ghamdi also stated that the *khateeb* must make his intention for delivering the *khutbah* solely the pleasure of Allah. Salman adds that the person must do his best to be pious and be setting a good example so the people will listen to and be affected by him. He should also be aware of how to pray properly such that

¹ Abdullah al-Ghamdi, *Salat al-Jumuah* (Taif: Maktabah al-Tarifain, n.d.), p. 25.

he leads the people properly and corrects them when they make mistakes. Also, he should be aware of the situation of the people that he is addressing, such that he can advise them concerning their situation or mistakes.¹

Making Supplications During the *Khutbah*. It is confirmed that supplications may be made during the *khutbah*. But on this matter, two points must be made. First, it is not from the sunnah for the Imam or the congregation to raise their hands while the Imam makes supplications. Umara ibn Ruwaiba saw Bishr ibn Marwan on the *minbar* raising his hands and Umara said, "O Allah, disfigure these hands. I have seen the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) gesture no more than this with his hands," and he pointed with his forefinger. (Recorded by Muslim.) In other narrations, it is stated that this was in reference to when the Imam was making supplications in the *khutbah*. (Recorded by Ahmad and others.) Al-Shaukani calls the raising of the hands during the *khutbah* an innovation. The only exception to this is when the prayer for rain is made, in which the *khateeb* stretches his hands out during the supplication.²

A second point concerning these supplications at the end of the *khutbah* is made by the Permanent Committee for Legal Rulings of Saudi Arabia. In one legal ruling, they wrote,

For the Imam to supplicate for the Muslims is legally sanctioned as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so. But the Imam must not insist on particular supplications but should make different supplications depending on the situation. As for the amount of the supplications, being many or few, it depends on the need at the time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes repeat the same supplication three times while sometimes he would repeat it only twice. It is a sunnah for the *khateeb* to do his best to perform the *khutbah* and supplications in the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him).³

¹ Salman, pp. 380-381.

² Al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, p. 333.

³ Ibn Baz, et al., vol. 1, p. 389.

Permissible Acts by the *Khateeb*. A number of different hadith from the Prophet himself (peace be upon him) demonstrate that it is permissible for the *khateeb* to do a number of acts during the *khutbah* and such acts do not affect the correctness or validity of the *khutbah* in any way. Note the following hadith:

Jabir ibn Abdullah narrated that while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was delivering the *khutbah*, a man entered the mosque and sat down. The Prophet asked him, "Did you pray (two *rakahs*)?" The man said, "No." So the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "Then stand and pray." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) From this hadith, one can conclude that it is permissible for the *khateeb* to speak to members of the congregation and for them to reply during the *khutbah*. In essence, if the *khateeb* sees anything wrong, he may correct it even if he is in the middle of delivering his *khutbah*.

Abu Rifaa narrated, "I came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was delivering the sermon, and I said, 'Messenger of Allah, here is a stranger and he wants to learn about this religion and he does not know what this religion is.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) looked at me and left his sermon until he came to me, and he was given a chair and I thought that its legs were made of iron. The Messenger of Allah sat in it and he began to teach what Allah had taught him. He then came (to the *minbar*) for his *khutbah* and completed it to the end." (Recorded by Muslim.) Commenting on this particular hadith, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi wrote,

This hadith shows how eager and earnest the Holy [sic] Prophet was in instructing people in religion. He was always prepared to give individual attention when he felt it necessary. This hadith also indicates that a chair can be used and the sermon can be suspended and then resumed when there is a genuine need for it.¹

Imam Muslim records this hadith amid the different hadith concerning the Friday Prayer. This gives a clear impression that

¹ Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar al Arabia, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 414, fn. 1155. Al-Nawawi states that the scholars are agreed that if anyone comes to ask about faith and how to become a Muslim, it is obligatory to immediately answer his questions and to teach him. Al-Nawawi, *Sharh*, vol. 6, p. 165.

Imam Muslim believed this event to be related to the Friday *khutbah*. The hadith implies that it is permissible to have a long break during the *khutbah*. However, it need not automatically be assumed that this incident took place during a Friday *khutbah*, since the word *khutbah* can be used for any kind of speech. It could have been another *khutbah* or address that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was giving. Al-Nawawi points out that perhaps the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned and began his *khutbah* anew or his speech with the stranger was directly related to the *khutbah*.¹ Those two assumptions seem far-fetched. The strongest view is to state that there is no evidence that this incident took place during the Friday *khutbah*.

Abu Huraira narrated, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was delivering a *khutbah* and al-Hasan and al-Husain [the Prophet's grandsons] came and they were wearing two red shirts and they were tripping while walking. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came down from the pulpit and picked them up and placed them in front of himself, and then he said, 'Allah and His Messenger have told the truth. Verily, your wealth and your children are a trial. I looked to these two children walking and tripping, and I could not be patient, so I broke off from my *khutbah* and went to pick them up.'" (Recorded by al-Nasai, Abu Dawud and others.) Once again, there is no explicit mention that this took place during the Friday *khutbah*.

The first hadith from Jabir ibn Abdullah is the only one that explicitly states that that event during the Friday Prayer. Hence, one should not automatically conclude that the acts described in the latter hadith are permissible during the Friday Prayer. Instead, one should adhere closely to the sunnah and conclude that the Imam may speak to individuals during the *khutbah* and they may respond if there is some overwhelming need to do so, such as ordering what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

The *Khateeb* Reading a "Verse of Prostration" During the *Khutbah*. Al-Bukhari records that Umar ibn al-Khattab recited

¹ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh*, vol. 6, p. 166.

Surah al-Nahl on the *minbar* on Friday. When he reached the "verse of prostration," he got down from the *minbar* and prostrated and the people prostrated with him. The next Friday, Umar ibn al-Khattab recited the same *surah* and when he reached the verse of prostration, he said, "O people, when we recite the verses of prostration [during the *khutbah*], whoever prostrates does the right thing, yet it is no sin for the one who does not prostrate." And Umar did not prostrate on that day. Ibn Umar added, "Allah has not made the prostration of recitation compulsory but if we wish we can do it."

Based on this report, ibn Qudama wrote,

If the *khateeb* reads a "verse of prostration" during the *khutbah*, if he wishes he may descend the *minbar* and prostrate. If he is able to perform the prostration while on the *minbar*, he may do so. If he does not perform the prostration, there is no harm. Umar did it and he also left it. This is al-Shafi'i's opinion [also]. Uthman, Abu Musa, Ammar, al-Numan ibn Basheer and Uqbah ibn Umar all did not perform the prostration. This is also the view of the "scholars of personal reasoning" although for them the prostration is obligatory. Malik said, "The person should not descend as it is [like] a voluntary prayer and the person should not be performing that in the midst of the *khutbah*."¹

The Congregation Faces the *Khateeb* During the *khutbah*.

Another practice from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is for the people to face the *khateeb*, even if this implies sitting around the *khateeb*. This has been narrated from ibn Umar and Anas. (Recorded by al-Bukhari in *mualaq* form.) Ibn al-Mundhir stated that there is practically a consensus concerning the preference for this act. Although it has been narrated from a few that they would sit facing the *qiblah* (such as al-Hasan and Saeed ibn al-Musayyab), the reports from the Companions show that the people should face the *khateeb*. This makes it easier for them to listen, pay attention and be in tune to the *khutbah*.²

¹ Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 157.

² Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 151; ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, p. 402. Al-Sarakhsi (vol. 2, p. 30) says that in crowded places, it is best to sit facing the *qiblah* as otherwise it would be difficult to make the lines straight and so forth after the *khutbah*. Allah knows best.

name and there is no way to determine who he actually was. There is no question that this chain is very weak, especially because of the presence of Baqiyah and the "unknown" narrator he narrates from. Therefore, due to its great weakness, this chain cannot be used as supporting evidence for the hadith of Muadh ibn Anas.

The third path, recorded by ibn Adi, goes through Abdullah ibn Maimum al-Qadaah. There is no question that this narration cannot be used as supporting evidence in any way. In talking about this Abdullah, al-Bukhari used one of the strongest terms of condemnation (ذاهب الحديث) that he had ever used.¹ Ibn Adi concludes that the majority of what he narrates is not supported by anybody else's narrations.² He is the only person to have ever narrated this hadith from Jafar ibn Muhammad. There is no doubt that this narration is very weak and unacceptable for supporting evidence.

Therefore, one is left with one weak narration and two very weak narration. A very weak narration means it is not acceptable for supporting evidence. Hence, the weak narration remains weak and cannot be raised to the level of *hasan*. This is the conclusion here and it was also the conclusion of al-Shaukani, al-Manawi, ibn al-Arabi and (apparently) Imam Ahmad.³

Hence, in conclusion, there is no acceptable evidence to say that one should not sit in *al-ihtiba* posture during the *khutbah*. As Imam al-Shafi'i stated, as quoted above, any kind of sitting that has not been expressly prohibited by the *Shariah* is permissible as

al-Tahdhib, ibn Hajr concludes that Abdullah ibn Waqid is most likely al-Haruwi, who is a trustworthy narrator. He says that because Abdullah ibn Waqid al-Harani, who is a rejected narrator, would have been too young to narrate hadith from Muhammad ibn Aqlan. (See ibn Hajr, *al-Tahdhib*, vol. 6, p. 66.) However, there is no need to make such an assumption. Baqiyah used to commit every kind of *tadlis*, including dropping narrators from higher up in the chain and replacing them with the term "on the authority of" from an earlier narrator. Hence, he could have dropped the link between Abdullah ibn Waqid al-Harani and Muhammad ibn Aqlan and simply stated, "Abdullah ibn Waqid on the authority of Muhammad ibn Aqlan."

¹ Quoted in ibn Adi, vol. 4, p. 1504.

² Ibn Adi, vol. 4, p. 1506.

³ See al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, p. 309; al-Manawi, vol. 6, p. 313; ibn al-Arabi, vol. 2, p. 302.

long as one does not harm others and, it should be added, one's private parts are not exposed. Allah knows best.

The Sunnah is for the *Khateeb* to Lead the Prayer. Ibn Qudama states that the sunnah is for the same person who gave the *khutbah* to also lead the prayer. This was the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as that of his successors. Only if there is some viable excuse to do otherwise is it considered acceptable for another person to lead the prayer (in the same way that this is acceptable in the midst of a prayer). Imam Ahmad clearly stated that it is not permissible without some valid reason for it. However, some scholars say that there is no harm in such a practice since the *khutbah* is separate from the prayer. They are, in essence, similar to different prayers and it is permissible for one person to lead one and another person to lead the other.¹

Ibn Baz gave a similar response when he was asked about this matter. He stated,

The sunnah is for the one who leads the prayer to be the same person who gave the *khutbah* as this was the continual practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it was preserved by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and those who followed them, may Allah be pleased with them. All of them, during their times, if they gave the *khutbah*, they themselves would lead the prayer. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, "Pray in the manner you have seen me pray." And he also said, "Adhere to my sunnah and the sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after me." But if one person gives the *khutbah* and the other leads the prayer due to some acceptable excuse, it is permissible and the prayer is valid. However, if that is done for no permissible reason, it is going against the sunnah and the prayer is still valid according to the strongest opinion among the scholars.²

If the *khateeb*, for example, is one who cannot pronounce the Quran very well and, therefore, his recitation in the prayer may not be valid, it would be permissible for him to give way to somebody else to lead the prayer. That would constitute a valid excuse. On the other hand, to have a different *khateeb* simply for the sake of

¹ Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 154.

² Ibn Baz, et al., vol. 1, p. 393.

having different scholars take part in the Friday Prayer, as has happened in some Islamic conferences, cannot be considered a valid excuse.

In some places in the United States it happens that one person gives the first *khutbah* and somebody else gives the second *khutbah*. There is no question that this is not in accord with the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after him. It is best to avoid such a practice as, since the *khutbah* is an "act of worship", the burden of proof lies upon those who say such an act is permissible while there does not seem to be any clear proof to that effect.

Another practice is for one person to give a *khutbah* and then while he sits another person gives a translation (which is in essence another *khutbah*) and then the first person stands again to give the second *khutbah*. There is no question that this is in violation of the sunnah. This is nothing more than giving three *khutbahs* for the Friday Prayer. If the Companions objected to the *khateeb* sitting during the *khutbah* or raising one's hands during the *khutbah*, there does not seem to be much question that they would have objected to this practice also.

According to ibn Qudama, it is a must that the prayer follow the *khutbah* without any break in between. If there is a long pause of silence or discussion between the two, then the *khutbah* must be started once again. He states that custom and culture are the deciding factors to determine what is a long or short break. If the *khateeb* needs to make ablution after the *khutbah*, he may go and make ablution and then lead the prayer as long as it was not a long time between the *khutbah* and the prayer.¹ Unfortunately, though, there is no direct or concrete evidence for this opinion in the Quran or sunnah. There is a hadith that would imply that it is permissible for there to be some break between the *khutbah* and the prayer. Anas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) came down from the *minbar* on Friday and a man spoke to him about some need and he talked with him and then went to the place of the prayer and led the prayer. (Recorded by al-Nasai, Abu Dawud and

¹ Ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 157.

others.) But it seems that this hadith is weak¹ and therefore it may not be used as evidence in the *shariah*.

How the Prophet (peace be upon him) Used to Begin His *Khutbahs*

The Shafis and Hanbalis state a condition that the *khutbah* must begin with the praises of Allah. This is based on the hadith, "Any speech that does not begin with praises of Allah is defective." (Recorded by Abu Dawud.) According to some scholars, this hadith is *hasan* but al-Albani has provided strong evidence to show that it is, in fact, weak. In fact, Abu Dawud, who recorded this hadith, himself pointed out the weakness of this hadith.²

However, another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning the *khutbah* is authentic: "The Friday *khutbah* that does not contain the testimony of faith is like a defective hand." (Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi.)³

Furthermore, it was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to begin all of his speeches, not just the Friday Prayer, with what is known as *khutbah al-haqjah*. Here is the text of this introductory speech:

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه
ونستغفره
ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا
ومن سيئات أعمالنا
من يهده الله فلا مضل له
ومن يضلل فلا هادي له
وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله
وحده لا شريك له
وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله

¹ See al-Shaukani, *Nail*, vol. 3, p. 338.

² Al-Albani, *Tinam*, pp. 333-334.

³ See al-Albani's comments on this hadith in *Tamam*, p. 334.

يا أيها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله
 حق تقاته
 ولا تموتن إلا وأنتم مسلمون
 يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم
 الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة
 وخلق منها زوجها
 وبث منهما رجالا كثيرا ونساء
 واتقوا الله الذي تساءلون به
 والأرحام
 إن الله كان عليكم رقيبا
 يا أيها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله
 وقولوا قولا سديدا
 يصلح لكم أعمالكم
 ويغفر لكم ذنوبكم
 ومن يطع الله ورسوله
 فقد فاز فوزا عظيما
 أما بعد

This speech may be translated as the following:

"All praises are due to Allah. We praise Him, and seek His Help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and from our sinful deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one can mislead. And whoever Allah misguides, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah. He is One, having no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. O believers, have *taqwa* [God-consciousness] of Allah according to His right and die not save as Muslims. O mankind, have *taqwa* of your Lord, the One who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and from them spread many men and women. And fear Allah from whom you demand your mutual rights and [do not cut] familial relations. Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you. O believers, have *taqwa* of Allah and always speak the truth. He

will direct you to do righteous deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great achievement. To proceed:"

Strictly speaking, the above portion is what is known as *khutbah al-haajjah*. In some hadith, it is also recorded that afterwards the Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes say,

فإن خير الحديث كتاب الله
 وخير الهدي هدي محمد
 وشر الأمور محدثاتها
 وكل بدعة ضلالة

This may be translated as,

"Verily the best speech is the Book of Allah. And the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The worst affairs are the innovated ones. And every innovation is misguidance."

Some narrations state as the last sentence,

وكل ضلالة في النار

This opening speech was used by the Prophet (peace be upon him) whenever he desired to speak about any matter, regardless of the type of address or *khutbah* he was giving. The following hadith from *Sahih Muslim* shows how the Prophet (peace be upon him) would begin almost any speech with these words. Ibn Abbas reported that Dimad came to Makkah and he belonged to the tribe of Azd Shanua. He used to protect the person who was under the influence of charms. He heard the foolish people of Makkah saying that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was under a spell. He said, "If I were to come across this man, Allah might cure him through me." He met him and said, "Muhammad, I can protect one who is under the influence of charms, and Allah cures whosoever He desires at my hand. Would you like that?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) told him, "Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, seek His help; and He whom Allah guides aright, there is none to lead him astray. And he who is led

¹ For a complete discussion of the sources and authenticity of these words, see Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Khutbah al-Haajjah* (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1400 A.H.), passim. Note that the last portion contains three verses of the Quran: *Surah al-Imran* verse 102, *Surah al-Nisa* verse 1, *surah al-Ahzab* verses 70-71.

astray, there is none to guide him. And I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, He is One, having no partner with Him, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger." After hearing this, Dimad said, "Repeat these words of yours before me." The Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. Dimad then said, "I have heard the words of soothsayers and the words of magicians, and the words of poets, but I have never heard such words as yours, and they reach the depth [of the ocean of eloquence]. Bring forth your hand so that I may make an oath of allegiance to you on Islam." So he made the oath of allegiance to him.

Given the Prophet's continual use of this opening, there is no question that it is preferred for every *khateeb* to begin his *khutbah* with this passage. If the *khateeb* does not have the ability to say it in Arabic, he should at least start with the translation of this passage.

Note that in this speech, most of the supplications are made in the first person plural ("we") while the testimony of faith is made in the first person singular ("I"). Ibn Taimiya has offered some explanations for this. He states that no one may make the testimony of faith on behalf of anyone else. Nor will it be accepted if done on another's behalf. On the other hand, the seeking of help, refuge and forgiveness may be done on others' behalf. A man may ask for forgiveness for another person or that Allah may help him or protect him. That is why these supplications are made in the plural. Furthermore, he states, these are supplications and it is preferred for a person to seek them for himself as well as for his brother Muslims. As for the testimony of faith, it is a statement about what he testifies to and what is in his heart. He can only state that for himself as he knows not what is in the hearts of others. Allah knows best.¹

¹ Ibn Taimiya's words were quoted by his student ibn al-Qayyim and may be found in Abu Bakr ibn al-Qayyim, *Tabdhib* on the margin of Abd al-Adheem al-Mundhiri, *Mukhtasar Sunan Abi Dawud* (Beirut: Dar al-Marifah, 1980), vol. 3, p. 54.

Does the *Khutbah* Have to Be in Arabic?

The Hanafis say that it is permissible to say the *khutbah* in languages other than Arabic, regardless of whether the congregation is mostly Arab or not. The Hanbalis say that it must be in Arabic if possible. If not, then at least the verses (which are pillars in their opinion) must be in Arabic. The Shafis say that the pillars must be in Arabic while the rest of the *khutbah* may be in any language. Al-Nawawi, a Shafi'i scholar, wrote that a second opinion among the Shafis is that it is simply preferred to be in Arabic because the purpose is an admonition which may be achieved in any language. Then he states that the Shafis who say it is required in Arabic opine that if no one is available to say the *khutbah* in Arabic, it may be said in their language for the period of time it takes for them to learn Arabic. If they do not learn Arabic, they are sinners and must pray the *Dhuhr* Prayer instead of the Friday Prayer.¹

The Malikis are the only ones who say that it must be in Arabic without any exception but this is not consistent with the one pillar of the *khutbah* that they mention (that it must be an admonition). But how could one give glad tidings of paradise or warnings of Hell in Arabic to people who do not understand Arabic?

From among the modern scholars, Abdulaziz ibn Baz has responded to the question concerning the permissibility of saying the *khutbah* in languages other than Arabic. He stated that some scholars say it is forbidden. They wish to keep the Arabic language strong in the hearts of the Muslims, follow the same that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did and also encourage those who do not know Arabic to learn Arabic. Others say that if many of the people in the audience do not speak Arabic, it is permissible to state the *khutbah* in whatever language they may understand. This is because the *khutbah* is meant to guide and exhort the people and this would not be possible if it was stated in a language they did not understand. Therefore, it is more important to achieve the goals of the *khutbah* rather than just the outward form handed down from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn Baz

¹ Al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 4, p. 522.

states that if some of the listeners know Arabic, then it would be best to give part of the *khutbah* in Arabic and then translate it into the other language during the *khutbah*. This way you combine together both views and attain the goals of the *khutbah*. As supporting evidence for his view, ibn Baz quotes the verses of the Quran that state that whenever a messenger was sent to any people, he would speak in their language.¹ Similarly, Zaid ibn Thabit was instructed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to learn Hebrew in order to teach the Jews and establish the "proof" against them. And when the Companions were about to battle any people, they would not fight until they had explained Islam to those people in the language that they understood. If it is difficult for a people to learn Arabic, they must be taught and preached to in the language that they can understand. Therefore, translation, especially today, is a necessity and *dawah* or calling others to the straight path cannot be made without it.²

As stated earlier, in *ar-Raudhat an-Nadiya*,³ Sideeq al-Bukhari has a discussion of the purpose of the Friday *khutbah*. Basically what he said is that if one gives the *khutbah* and simply praises Allah, recites some verse of the Quran and makes *dua*, without any admonition or teaching for the people, then he has not met the basic purpose of the *khutbah*. If one gives the people an admonition without saying the praises of Allah, and so forth, then one has met the purpose of the *khutbah* but he has not done so in the best manner possible. If one gives both an admonition and praises Allah, then he has met the purpose of the *khutbah* and he has done so in an excellent manner.

From all of the above, one can conclude that Arabic is not a pillar of the *khutbah* and, if the people do not understand Arabic, the whole of the *khutbah* is definitely not to be given in Arabic as in such a case the purpose of the *khutbah* would not be met.

¹ The verse he is referring to is *Ibrahim* 4.

² Ibn Baz, et al., vol. 1, pp. 405-406.

³ Sideeq al-Bukhari, p. 137.

The Necessity of Being in a State of Purity During the *Khutbah* and Related Matters

The scholars disagree about whether being in a state of purity, having one's private parts covered, having one's clothes and place free of impurities are necessary aspects of the *khutbah* or not. Al-Shafi'i, for example, used to be of the opinion that these were all simply recommended acts. His later opinion was that they are all necessary aspects of the *khutbah*. Ahmad once said that if a person gives the *khutbah* while he is sexually defiled and then makes *ghusl* and leads the people in prayer, that is acceptable. There is no question that from the Hanbalis point of view themselves this is very strange. This is because they require the *khateeb* to recite at least one verse of the Quran yet, for them, it is not allowed for a sexually defiled person to recite the Quran; therefore, how could it be acceptable for a sexually defiled person to be the *khateeb*? The strongest opinion among the Hanbalis seems to be that the person must be free of the major defilements (such as sexual defilement, wherein the person is in need of making *ghusl*) but must not necessarily be free of the minor defilements (wherein the person is in need of making ablution).¹ At the same time, though, they state that it is preferred for the *khateeb* to be free of all kinds of defilements. This is concluded because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to always lead the prayer after the *khutbah* without any break in between for him to make ablution. Hence, that was the continual practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

According to al-Baghawi, the Shafis are all in agreement that the one who is sexually defiled may not deliver the *khutbah* because, for them, it is obligatory to recite part of the Quran in the *khutbah*. However, the argument of some Shafi'is that purity is required for the *khutbah* because the *khutbah* is to be considered like the prayer, because it replaces two *rakats* of the *Dhuhr* Prayer, is completely unacceptable. There is no strong evidence for that view. Furthermore, there are many differences between the *khutbah* and the prayer. It is not acceptable to consider them

¹ Al-Mardawi, vol. 2, p. 392.

analogous.¹

Abu Yusuf seems to be in agreement with the Shafi school while Malik, Abu Hanifah and Dawud do not require a state of purity for the *khateeb*.² Al-Shaukani says that the purpose of the *khutbah* (which is exhorting and reminding) may be met even if the *khateeb* has a major defilement. Therefore, one cannot say that it is a requirement that he be free of such defilement.³

There is no record of the Prophet (peace be upon him) giving the *khutbah* and then afterwards excusing himself to make *ghusl* or ablution. It is difficult, though, to say if this is a necessary, obligatory or recommended part of the *khutbah*. At the very least, the Prophet's actions show that it is recommended. However, there is nothing to prove that it is more than recommended. Therefore, if someone makes the *khutbah* while he is in a state of minor impurity, it seems that the *khutbah* is still valid and he need only make ablution for the prayer. As for the one in a state of sexual defilement, it would not be proper for him to give the *khutbah* as the *khutbah* customarily is at least partially comprised of verses from the Quran and if he were to make *ghusl* for the prayer, it would cause a long break between the end of the *khutbah* and the beginning of the prayer which may harm the members of the congregation. Allah knows best.

Al-Zuhaili wrote that, according to the majority of the scholars, it is sunnah for the *khateeb* to have his private parts covered.⁴ This must be considered a very strange statement. Obviously, it is obligatory upon everybody at all times when they are in public to have their private parts covered. This is also an obligation upon the *khateeb*. Therefore, to say that this is sunnah does not make any sense whatsoever. It is obligatory upon the *khateeb* to cover his private parts. However, if his private parts are uncovered, although he may be sinful, this would not affect the validity of the *khutbah* since there is no evidence that would prove that claim. Although, al-Nawawi concluded that it is one of the necessary aspects or

¹ Cf., al-Sarakhsi, vol. 2, p. 26.

² See al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 4, p. 515; ibn Qudama, vol. 2, p. 154.

³ Al-Shaukani, *al-Seel*, vol. 1, p. 301.

⁴ Al-Zuhaili, vol. 2, p. 290.

prerequisites of the *khutbah*.¹

The Congregation Being Silent During the *Khutbah*

In numerous hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he made it abundantly clear that the members of the congregation must remain silent while the *khateeb* is delivering the *khutbah*.

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "When the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*, and you ask your companion to keep quiet and listen, then no doubt you have done an evil act (*laghaut*)."¹ (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In this particular hadith, the one who is asking the other to be quiet is actually "ordering good and eradicating evil". However, the gravity of speaking during the *khutbah* is so great that even ordering good and eradicating evil is not to be done during the *khutbah*. (Many scholars state that if one must order good or eradicate evil during the *khutbah*, he may only do so by hand gestures and not by speaking.) Hence, one can conclude from this hadith that the person must do his best to remain absolutely silent during the *khutbah*.

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "He who performed ablution well, then came to the Friday Prayer, listened (to the sermon), and kept silent, all (his sins) between that time and the next Friday would be forgiven, with three days extra. And he who touched pebbles caused an interruption." (Recorded by Muslim.) This hadith contains two phrases in Arabic, one meaning that the person listened to the *khutbah* and the other that he remained silent during the *khutbah*. Since it is possible to be quiet and not be listening or to be speaking yet still listening, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has shown that both listening and remaining silent is what is expected from each member of the congregation. Commenting on the last portion of this hadith, Siddiqi wrote,

Lagha means he has spoken without purpose or deviated from what is right or has been frustrated. Here it means that he does not listen attentively to the sermon, but indulges in useless activity

¹ Al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 4, p. 523.

However, the report from the time of Umar contradicts this opinion and must be considered the stronger opinion. However, this does not mean that it is preferred to speak during the times mentioned above; it only implies that it is not forbidden to speak during those times as opposed to during the *khutbah*. For example, it is preferred that while the call to prayer is given, the person listens to the call and repeats after the caller; this is preferred to carrying on a conversation at that time.

Abd al-Rahman al-Shaikh considers it an innovation for the congregation to say prayers upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) aloud after the *khateeb* mentions his name. He states that many of the early and later scholars prohibited this act. In fact, it has not been reported that during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Companions or the Successors that they ever did such an act. Furthermore, it goes against the Prophet's prohibition of speaking during the *khutbah*. Finally, supplications, which include prayers upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), are, in general, to be said silently unless there is a reason to say them aloud.¹ This seems to be the strongest opinion because the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only forbade *laghu* but he also requested that people remain absolutely silent during the *khutbah*.

Many Imams, near the end of their *khutbah*, recite the verse,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

"Allah sends His blessings on the Prophet and so do His angels. O believers, pray for the him and greet him..." (*al-Ahzab* 56). Abu Yusuf and al-Tahawi both stated that the congregation must then state prayers upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) since that is a command. However, al-Sarakhsi has refuted this view stating that the situation during the *khutbah* is analogous to that of the prayer. If, in the prayer, the Imam reads that same verse, the congregation does not offer prayers for the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the prayer. Similarly, they should not do so during the *khutbah* but must remain silent.²

201-202; ibn Hajr, *al-Dar'ayab*, vol. 1, pp. 216-217.

¹ Quoted in Sadlan, pp. 265-267.

Incidentally, al-Shabi, Said ibn Jubair and Ibrahim al-Nakhai were of the opinion that it is required to remain silent only when the Quran is being recited by the *khateeb*; otherwise, they say, it is permissible to speak during the *khutbah*. This opinion must be rejected because it goes against all of the clear narrations that explicitly mention remaining silent during the *khutbah*. In fact, ibn Rushd states that perhaps those scholars were not familiar with the hadith from Abu Huraira concerning speaking while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*.²

Finally, the scholars state that if a person speaks during the *khutbah*, his prayer does not become invalid. However, it is clear from the above hadith, that that person loses all of the special benefits that accrue to the person who prays the Friday Prayer properly. (It is narrated from Ibn Wahb that the one who speaks during the *khutbah* should pray four *rakats* of *Dhuhr* instead of the Friday Prayer; however, that is a strange opinion.)³

Performing Tahiyat al-Masjid Prayer During the Khutbah

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, "When one of you comes to the mosque, he should pray two *rakats* before he sits." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) This two-*rakat* prayer is known as *Tahiyat al-Masjid* or the "prayer of greeting the mosque". Many scholars consider this prayer obligatory. That is, it is a must for anyone who desires to sit in the mosque that before sitting he must pray two *rakats*.⁴

However, there is a difference of opinion concerning the person who comes late to the Friday Prayer, while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*. Should this person pray the two *rakats* first and then sit or should he simply sit and skip the *tahiyat al-masjid* prayer? Once again, there are two apparently conflicting orders:

¹ Al-Sarakhsi, vol. 2, p. 29.

² Ibn Rushd, *Bidayah*, vol. 1, p. 165.

³ Ibn Rushd, *Bidayah*, vol. 1, p. 165.

⁴ Any two *rakats* are considered sufficient for this prayer. That is, if a person enters the mosque and prays two *rakats* of sunnah prayer before, for example, the *Dhuhr* Prayer, that will be sufficient for both his sunnah prayer and the *tahiyat al-masjid* prayer.

One says that he should not sit until he prays two *rakats* and the other states that he should not speak and must remain silent during the *khutbah*, while the prayer is considered a type of speech and engagement that is not allowed during the *khutbah*.

However, on this question, there is a clear hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that seems to settle this issue: Jabir reported that Sulaik Ghatafani came on Friday (for prayer) while the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was delivering the *khutbah*. He sat down. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "O Sulaik, stand and observe two *rakats* and make them short," and then he said, "When any one of you comes on Friday while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*, he should observe two *rakats* and should make them short."

Most of the Hanafis say that if a person comes late to the *khutbah*, he should sit without performing the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer. Ibn al-Humam states that ibn Abu Shaibah recorded in *al-Musannaf* that Ali, ibn Abbas and ibn Umar disliked prayers or speaking after the Imam arrives. Then he stated, "The statement of a Companion is a proof and we must follow them in our [Hanafi] opinion as long as it is not denied by any other sunnah." In the same way that speech takes one's attention away from the *khutbah*, so does prayer. Urwah, ibn al-Humam records, said, "If the Imam sits on the *minbar*, there is no prayer."¹ Similarly, it is recorded that al-Zuhri stated that if a person comes while the *khateeb* is speaking, he must sit and not pray. Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If you say to your companion on Friday, 'Be quiet,' you have made *laghu* (vain and useless speech)." By the inferred meaning (*dallalah al-nass*) this must also mean that one should not pray *tahiyyat al-masjid* as that is only sunnah (in their opinion) while ordering good and eradicating evil is obligatory. Some might argue, says ibn al-Humam, that the explicit meaning of the following hadith must take precedence over the inferred meaning of the previous hadith: When a man entered late the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Did you pray?" He

¹ Note that this could easily be understood as referring to superogatory prayers other than the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer. The same is true for the reports from Ali, ibn Abbas and ibn Umar.

answered, "No." So the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "Pray two *rakats* and be swift in doing so." The response to this is that al-Daraqutni records that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped his *khutbah* until the person finished his prayer. This is recorded in *mursal* form by Imam Ahmad through the same authorities. *Mursal* hadith are authorities according to the Hanafi school. As for the Prophet's statement mentioned in *Sahih Muslim*, "If one of you comes to the Friday Prayer and the Imam is giving the *khutbah*, then he should pray two *rakats* and be swift about them," this could mean that he does so while the Imam is silent, as is confirmed in the sunnah, or that statement was possibly made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) before he began his *khutbah*.¹ Al-Sarakhsi adds that the incident concerning Sulaik could have taken place before the prohibition of speaking during the *khutbah*.²

As ibn al-Humam himself points out, there is a conflict between the explicit meaning of some hadith and the inferred meaning of other hadith. In case of such conflicts, the explicit meaning is to take precedence unless there is some overwhelming evidence to show otherwise. His last argument that the statement was made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) before he started the *khutbah* is mere conjecture on his part and cannot be given much weight. His only argument, therefore, is the hadith recorded in al-Daraqutni and Ahmad which states that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) remained silent while the person prayed.

The hadith that states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained silent and waited for the person to finish his prayer has been recorded, through the same source, by al-Daraqutni and Ahmad. Al-Daraqutni stated, "The correct narration is from Mutamar on the authority of his father in *mursal* form. That is how Ahmad and others narrated it from Mutamar." Al-Daraqutni records the same hadith through other chains but those chains are also broken and contain Abu Mashar Nujaih, who is a weak narrator.³ In his commentary on al-Daraqutni's work,

¹ Ibn al-Humam, vol. 2, p. 68.

² Al-Sarakhsi, vol. 2, p. 29.

³ Ali ibn Umar al-Daraqutni, *Sunan al-Daraqutni* (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1982), vol. 2, pp.

Al-Adheemabadi states that this narration contradicts what is confirmed from the Prophet (peace be upon him), "If one of you comes while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*..." Then he states that a weak narration cannot be applied in the face of a confirmed narration.¹ This is the response to ibn al-Human's argument that *mun'sal* hadith are evidence in the Hanafi school. This is true only if they are not opposed by authentic, confirmed hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as is the case here.

Some scholars argue that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told that particular person, Sulaik, to pray two *rakats* and the ruling was only for him. They argue that he was a very poor person and the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted the people to see him and then they would give him charity. In fact, in a narration in *Musnad Ahmad*, it states that he entered the mosque dressed very poorly. This argument must be rejected on a number of grounds. First, the wording of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is general, as recorded by Muslim and others, "When one of you comes and the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*..." If the ruling were just for Sulaik, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would not have made such a general statement. Second, to particularize such an act, one needs strong evidence to show that this was the cause and that that act is not to be generalized. In this case, these scholars cannot offer such evidence. Third, this would imply that the poor can pray during any of the prohibited times in order for them to be seen and to collect charity. This is a view that no scholar seems to hold. Fourth, al-Tabarani recorded a similar incident but with respect to a different Companion, al-Numan ibn Qauqal. Hence, this implies it was a general ruling and not specific to Sulaik.

Yet others argue on the basis of the hadith, "Do not pray while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*." Based on this, they say, one cannot pray *tahiyyat al-masjid* during the *khutbah*. However, as ibn Hajr points out, this hadith is not authentic and even if were authentic, it could refer to voluntary prayers other than the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer.²

¹ 15-16.

² Shams al-Haqq al-Adheemabadi, *Al-Taleeq al-Mughni ala al-Daraqutni*, on the margin of al-Daraqutni, *Suman*, vol. 2, pp. 16-17.

In Ibn Rushd's opinion, the cause for the difference of opinion is the conflict between the rule of analogy and the generality of a certain text. The general text is the hadith concerning the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer, "If one of you comes to the mosque, he should pray two *rakats*." This hadith would include during the time of the Friday Prayer. Yet the command to remain silent during the *khutbah* implies that one must avoid any action that would busy himself from being silent and listening, even if that is an act of worship. The generality of the above hadith is further supported by the specific hadith which states, "If one of you comes to the mosque while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*, he should pray two short *rakats*." This was recorded by Muslim in one narration, although most of the narrations simply state that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered a particular person to pray two *rakats* and did not make a general statement. Then ibn Rushd states, "If this additional wording is authentic, then it is obligatory to act upon it. It is the text on a matter of difference of opinion and it cannot be opposed by analogy."²

Ibn Rushd has referred to the difference of opinion surrounding this hadith although the hadith is found in *Sahih Muslim*. This is one of the hadith from *Sahih Muslim* that al-Daraqutni has criticized.³ Al-Nawawi, in general, refuted al-Daraqutni's criticisms in his commentary to *Sahih Muslim* yet with respect to this particular hadith, al-Nawawi did not make any comment concerning al-Daraqutni's criticism. However, ibn Hajr, in his introduction to his commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, answered al-Daraqutni and showed that this hadith is *sahih* and there is no room to question it.⁴

The Shafis and Hanbalis both agree that the person who enters late, while the Imam is speaking, is supposed to perform the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer. Their evidence are the clear hadith of

¹ Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, p. 411. Actually, ibn Hajr discusses this entire question in great detail. He presents and refutes over ten arguments that the person should not pray *tahiyyat al-masjid* during the *khutbah*. See ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 2, pp. 407-412.

² Ibn Rushd, vol. 1, pp. 166-167.

³ Ali ibn Umar al-Daraqutni, *Al-Ilzam wa al-Tatabba'* (Makkah: Dar al-Baz, 1985), p. 368.

⁴ Ali ibn Hajr, *Hadyu al-Sari* (Riyadh: Dar al-Ifta), p. 355.

the Prophet (peace be upon him) that none of the other scholars were able to satisfactorily respond to. It seems, Allah knows best, to be the clearly correct opinion. In fact, al-Nawawi wrote, while discussing the hadith that contains the general command to pray the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer during the *khutbah*, "I cannot imagine any scholar would hear the authentic wording of this hadith and then he would differ from it."¹ Similarly, Abdul Hamid Siddiqi concluded, "The fact is that the arguments given by Imam al-Shafi'i and Ahmad are more weighty and the hadith mentioned above gives a clear indication that the Holy [sic] Prophet commanded a person to observe two *rak'ahs* while he was delivering the sermon."² Abdul Aziz ibn Baz stated,

That is a clear text on this matter and it is not allowed for any one to go against it. Perhaps this sunnah did not reach Imam Malik, if it is confirmed from him that he prohibited those two *rakats* during the time of the *khutbah*. If a sunnah is confirmed from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), it is not permissible for any to differ from it for the statement of anyone, no matter who he may be. As Allah has said, "O believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger as well as those in authority among you. And if you differ on any matter, take it to Allah and the Messenger if you are truly believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most comely in the end."³

Furthermore, all scholars are in agreement that besides the controversial *tahiyyat al-masjid*, it is absolutely forbidden to intentionally be performing voluntary prayers while the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*.

Incidentally, al-Nawawi and others point out that the Imam does not perform *tahiyyat al-masjid*. That is, when he enters the mosque, he goes straight to the *minbar* and sits and the first call to prayer is given. This was the apparent practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is not narrated in any book that the Prophet (peace be upon him) actually stopped first, prayed *tahiyyat al-masjid* and then proceeded to the *minbar*.⁴

¹ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh*, vol. 6, p. 164.

² Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, vol. 2, p. 413, fn. 1154.

³ Ibn Baz, et al., vol. 1, p. 407.

⁴ Al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 4, p. 529.

Also note that the *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer is only to be performed in a mosque. Therefore, if the Friday Prayer, for some reason, is being held in a place that is not a mosque, there is no *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer. Therefore, if one enters late while the Imam is speaking in such a place, he does not pray two *rakats* but simply sits and listens to the *khutbah*.¹ *

Which takes precedence: Listening to the call to prayer or performing *tahiyyat al-masjid*? Salman wrote that among the common mistakes that people make is that they will enter the mosque while the call to prayer is being given, while the Imam is sitting upon the *minbar*, and then they will wait for the call to finish and then they will pray *tahiyyat al-masjid* while the Imam begins his *khutbah*. Salman says that that is a mistake because listening to the *khutbah* is an obligation while repeating after the call to prayer is simply a sunnah. It is narrated from Thalabah ibn Abu Malik al-Qurdhi that during the time of Umar and Uthman, when the Imam appeared on Friday, they would stop the voluntary prayers and when the Imam began to speak, they would stop speaking. (Recorded by ibn Abu Shaibah with a sound chain.)

However, Salman continues, with a quote from al-Nawawi, if the person enters the mosque and the Imam is just about to finish his *khutbah*, then he should wait standing for the prayer and pray with the congregation. In this way, he will not sit before praying two *rakats*. And, also, he will not be making supererogatory prayers while the prayer is beginning.²

¹ Al-Mardawi, vol. 2, p. 416.

² Salman, pp. 379-380. Also see al-Nawawi, *Majmu*, vol. 4, pp. 550-551; al-Sadlan, pp. 267-268.