

Spirit of the Jumu'ah Khutbah

The following is a summary of a Friday khutbah delivered by **Sheikh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia** on **December 28, 2001** at **Islamic Foundation in Villa Park**. Please note that this article is copyrighted and requests for reprints, publication or distribution must be directed to Darul Qasim. Contact us by clicking on the [contact](#) button.

A further discussion on the language of the Friday Khutbah will follow shortly insha Allah.

Allah has guided us in all walks of life, especially with regards to the five pillars of Islam. In Islam, there are certain rituals that will not change no matter what the external circumstances may be. The basic method of praying, for example, will always be the same, even though you may be sick, traveling, or in a battle field. Likewise with fasting and Hajj. The form of the ritual will remain the same no matter what the social and political climate may be. There is a consistency in the rituals that will not falter because of external pressures. The khutbah of Jumu'ah (Friday) follows the same principle, at least in spirit. I will try to present a picture of the khutbah of salat al Jumu'ah (Friday prayer) from the time of the Prophet T and illustrate how far we have drifted from the spirit of this ritual.

In Madinah, the Prophet T was constantly faced with social, political, economic and personal problems. And he r addressed and resolved these problems on a daily basis. However, the Friday khutbah was not used as a forum to discuss these real problems[i]. Allah says, "O you who believe, when the call for prayer is made on Friday, then rush towards the zikr [remembrance] of Allah and leave business. That is better for you, if indeed you know." The ayah (verse) actually commands you to leave your business, which is part of your life and halal (permissible), to engage in the zikr of Allah, asking Him directly to resolve the problems and issues you may face[ii].

It is evident from the sunnah (example or way) of the Prophet T that this was a spiritual exercise[iii] (i.e. the zikr of Allah) and not a forum to discuss social/political issues, even though he r was submerged in them on a daily basis. In fact, his salat used to be longer than his khutbah and he would often recite surah (chapter) Al-'Ala and surah Al-Ghashiyah. Even if we give consideration to the Prophet's slow recitation and estimate it to be ten minutes, then his khutbah must have been less than ten minutes. If it were less than ten minutes, where would he find the time to discuss the enormous social and political issues of the day?

When we look into the lives of the four imams, we find that even though they were also very much part of the political realities of their time, they did not use the Friday khutbah as a forum to discuss their political views. Imam Abu Hanifah was imprisoned by the khalifah (ruler) for his political views, and died in prison because of poisoning, but he never said the khutbah must entail a discussion about politics. Imam Malik was also persecuted by his governor, but he also refrained from using the pulpit as a forum for politics. Imam Shafii was almost executed, wrongfully, by the khalifah but he also refrained from using the pulpit to preach politics. And we all know that Imam Ahmad was severely tortured in prison for his beliefs but did not use the Friday khutbah to speak out against the injustices against him.

Furthermore, none of these scholars or imams stipulated that discussing contemporary issues was a necessary component of the ritual of the Friday khutbah. As mentioned in the beginning, some rituals will always retain their form no matter

what the external climate may become. The Friday khutbah is one such ritual. It is, as mentioned by Allah Himself, it is the zikr of Allah so we should exhort ourselves towards that. For our political concerns, we must find other forums that are fitting for our times.

[i] Certain people may think that the Farewell Khutba of the Prophet r deals with almost every aspect of life. This is true to a great degree. However, the Prophet T delivered this particular Khutba on the Day of 'Arafaat (Hajj) at the time of Zuhr. He T then asked Bilal t to give the adhan – which he did. The Prophet T proceeded to offer the Salaat of Zuhr and then Asr combining them together. This specifically shows that the Farewell Khutba was not part of the Jumu'ah Salaat because there was no Jumu'ah Salaat offered on that day.

[ii] A man came to the Prophet T before (or as he commenced) his Khutba on Friday and asked him r if he could make dua for rain. Madinah had been in drought for many months at that time. The Prophet T did so and it rained for a whole week. The same companion t came again the following week and asked the Prophet T to ask Allah to make it stop raining. The Prophet T did and it stopped raining. Asking Allah directly during a Khutba to help solve our problems is part of the Sunnah. Discussing them is a different story.

[iii] When Omar saw – during one of his Friday Khutbas – that the Muslim army somewhere outside of Arabia was about to be ambushed by the enemy from behind a mountain – he shouted O Sariyah! The mountain, the mountain. Sariyah was leading the Muslim military expedition. Sariyah heard Omar's shout from almost several hundred's of miles away and reacted quickly enough to avert the danger. This is an example of a spiritual exercise and not one of where the Khatib is discussing some military issue.