A Practical Guide to

Giving Friday Sermons

Fiqh of the Sermon & Varied Opinions

The legal (*fiqh*) aspects of the Friday Sermon (*khuṭbah*) vary with respect to the aspects scholars categorize as essential (*farḍ*) or recommended (*mustaḥab*). This guide presents the basic obligations and recommended aspects of the Sermon according to the Shāfiʿī School of Law because it generally fulfills the requirements of the other Schools of Law.

Integrals (*Arkān*) of the Sermon[1]

The Friday *khuṭbah* consists of two Sermons which are divided by a brief period of the imām sitting. Below are the necessary integrals that must be present in the Friday Sermon in order for it to be considered valid:

1. Standing: To be in a standing position while delivering both *khuṭbahs*.

2. Praise: To begin both *khuṭbahs* by saying, "*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*" ("Praise be to God"), or a variation of that. For example, "*Inna al-ḥamda lillāh*" ("Praise is for God") or "*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rab al-ʿālamīn*" ("Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds").

3. Salutations: To invoke God's peace and mercy upon the Prophet Muḥammad s in both *khuṭbahs*. This can be fulfilled by merely saying, "*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Muḥammad*," ("O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad") although it is better to include the Prophet's family and companions in the invocation. For example, "*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿala ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim*" ("O God send your peace and mercy upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions").

4. Call to *Taqwā*: To urge the attendees to have *taqwā* (fear and consciousness of God) in both *khuṭbahs*. This can be fulfilled several ways, for instance, by reciting verses of the Qurʾān that call to *taqwā*, or by simply saying, "*Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh*" ("I counsel you to have fear of God").

5. Sitting: To sit briefly between the 1st and 2nd *khuṭbah* for no longer than the time it takes to pray 2 brief rakʿahs.

6. Verse of Qurʾān: To recite one verse of the Qurʾān in either of the two *khuṭbahs*. One verse, or an understood portion of a verse, fulfills this requirement.

7. Prayer (Dua'a) for the Believers: To supplicate (*duʿāʾ*) for the believing men and women in the 2nd *khuṭbah* for something which benefits them in the hereafter. This is fulfilled by saying, "*Allāhumma ighfir lil-Muʾminīn wa al-Muʾmināt*" ("O God, forgive the believing men and women").

Prophetic Practices (*sunnahs*) of Friday

It is especially important upon the one giving the Friday Sermon (*khaṭīb*) to perform the

Sunnahs of Friday. The following are a few of the recommended acts for Friday.

1. *Ghusl*: Performing the ritual bath (*ghusl*) before the Friday Prayer.

2. Wearing White: The Prophet s used to love white clothing, and he encouraged wearing white clothing to *Ṣalāt al-Jumuʿah*.

3. Reciting Surat Al-Kahf: It is highly encouraged to read the 18th Surah from the Qurʾān on Friday.

4. Good Scent: It is also a *Sunnah* to adorn oneself with a nice scent.[2]

Practical advice on public speaking[3]

For many people, the Friday Prayer is their primary method of revitalizing spiritually for the entire week. For this reason, it is important to both prepare a good sermon and convey it well. A poorly delivered *khuṭbah* can have adverse effects on the community and should be avoided.

These are some basic guidelines that apply to public speaking in general and should be used when giving the Friday Sermon:

- Speak in an audible voice, making it easy for those listening to hear and understand.
- Speak clearly and do not be monotonous!
- Use certain gestures and hand movements to clarify and highlight important points, but do not be excessive in using them.
- It is important to be even more formal during the Friday Sermon for *Ṣalāt Al- Jumuʿah* than one would normally be while teaching a lesson or presenting a lecture. Jokes and other types of informal speech should be avoided.
- Make appropriate eye contact to make sure that attendees are focused and listening.
- Do not read verbatim from a printout!
- Repeat the most important points of the lesson and give a summary of what was just mentioned.
- Tell stories to gain the attention and concentration of those who are attending preferably stories about the Prophet Muḥammad s, other prophets and messengers, and righteous people.
- Be appropriate in length—give the topic its due right, but do not wear out the attendees. A 20-25 minute time limit is ideal for the *khuṭbah*. Depending on the group one might need to make the *Ṣalāt al-Jumuʿah* short—e.g. People taking a lunch break from work to attend the Friday Prayer.
- In the case of the short winter days, be cognizant of the short time window of *Ẓuhr*; therefore make sure to complete both the *khuṭbah* and Prayer before the time of *ʿAṣr*.
- Select an appropriate topic that is both relevant as a *khuṭbah* and relevant to the realities of life of those who are hearing it.

[5] Some of the following points are based on the booklet: Al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar bin Hafīẓ, Thaqāfat al-Khaṭīb

- Speeches that can be divisive or controversial should be avoided. Do not mention sectarian terms such as "Salafī," "Ṣufī," or "liberal Muslims," because the Friday Sermon is meant to gather all Muslims and unite their hearts in mutual love and piety. *Khuṭbahs* should be spiritually uplifting and inspiring, giving people the drive to make it through the next week.

- *Khuṭbahs* are primarily spiritual reminders, but can also be a platform for mentioning current events. In this case, find a religious topic that relates to the current event and tie the two together—be sure not to lose the spirituality of the *khuṭbah*, but also do not forget to address the current affairs that are pertinent to the congregation.

- It is also of the utmost importance that one's ideas are organized during the Friday Sermon to provide a clear message to attendees. One should be sure to clearly introduce the topic, and then support the topic by presenting relevant verses, *ḥadīths*, and stories. In addition, the *khaṭīb* should highlight the lessons and wisdoms to be taken from the verses and ḥadīths.

- Make sure to translate any important Qurʾānic verses, *ḥadīths*, and *duʿāʾ*— especially since the majority of people attending the Friday Prayer will most likely not understand Arabic.

- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, one should conclude by connecting the passages quoted to a practical way of implementation for the attendees, so that the *khuṭbah* does not remain abstract and theoretical; rather, worshippers can realize the lessons mentioned are relevant to their lives.

Template for Basic Khutbah

1st Sermon:

1. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* ("Praised be God"). *
2. *Allahumma ṣallī ʿala Muḥammad* ("O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad"). *
3. *Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh* ("I counsel you to fear God"). *
4. Verse of the Qurʾān (or else you must recite it in 2nd Sermon). *
5. Begin 1st Sermon i. Intro
   ii. Lessons
   iii. Conclusions
6. Sit down briefly. *

End of 1st Sermon

2nd Sermon:

7. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* ("Praised be God"). *
8. *Allahumma ṣallī ʿala Muḥammad* ("O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad"). *

9. *Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh* (“I counsel you to fear God”). *

10. Begin 2nd Sermon

11. إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

Inna Allāha wa malāʾikatahu yuṣallūna ʿalā an-nabī, yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ʿalayhi wa sallimū taslīmā.
(“God and His angels bless the Prophet so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.” —Qurʾān 33:56).

12. *Allāhumma ighfir lil muʾminīn wa al-muʾmināt* (“O God, forgive the believing men and women”). *

End of 2nd Sermon

Begin the Prayer

Template for Khutbah

1st Sermon:

1. *Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rab al-ʿālamīn.*[7] *

2. *Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿalā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim.*[8] *

3. *Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ittaqū Allāha ḥaqqa tuqātihi wa lā tamūtunna illā wa antum Muslimūn.*[9] *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

4. Content of 1st *Khuṭbah*

5. If using a verse from Qurʾān in the 1st *Khuṭbah*, precede the verse with:
Aʿūdhu billāhi min ash-shayṭān ar-rajīm.[10]

6. When ending the 1st *Khuṭbah*, say, “*Astaghfir ullaha al-ʿaẓīm lī wa lakum wa lī jamīʿ al-Muslimīn, fa-staghfirūhu innahu huwa al-Ghafūru ar-Raḥīm.*[11]

7. Sit down briefly. *

End of 1st Sermon

2nd Sermon:

8. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (“Praised be God”). *

9. *Allāhumma ṣalli ʿala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿala ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim.* *

10. *Ūṣīkum wa nafsī bi taqwā Allāh.* *

11. إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

Inna Allāha wa malāʾikatahu yuṣallūna ʿalā an-nabī, yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ʿalayhi wa sallimū taslīmā.[12]

12. *Allāhumma ighfir lil muʾminīn wa al-muʾmināt*.[13] *

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِٱلْعَدْلِ وَٱلْإِحْسَٰنِ وَإِيتَآئِ ذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ ٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَٱلْمُنكَرِ وَٱلْبَغْىِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

13. *Inna Allāha yaʾmuru bil ʿadli wa al-iḥsāni wa iytāʾi dhi l-qurbā, wa yanhā ʿan l-faḥshāʾi wa l-munkari wa l-baghī, yaʿiẓukum laʿallakum tadhakkarūn*.[14]

14. *Fadhkurū l-Allāha al-ʿAẓīma yadhkurkum, washkurūhu ʿalā niʿamihi yazidkum, wa lā dhikru l-Allāhi akbar*.[15]

15. *Wa aqim aṣ-Ṣalāh*.[16]

End of 2nd Sermon

Begin the Prayer

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[7] "Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds."
[8] "O God, send your peace and mercy upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions."
[9] "You who believe, be mindful of God, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment." (Qurʾān 3:102).
[10] "I seek refuge in God from the accursed devil."
[11] "I seek God's forgiveness for myself, you all, and for all Muslims. Seek His forgiveness, indeed He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."
[12] "God and His angels bless the Prophet so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace." (Qurʾān 33:56).
[13] "O God, forgive the believing men and women."
[14] "God commands justice, and goodness, and giving to relatives; and forbids indecency, and abomination and injustice, cautioning you that you may be mindful." (Qurʾān 16:90).
[15] Remember God the Exalted and He will remember you, thank Him for His blessings and He will increase you, and there is nothing greater than the remembrance of God.
[16] Start the Prayer.

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1. **Length of Khutbah**

Please keep in mind that a Khutbah is not a lecture. The purpose of the Khutbah is to remind the people about their religion and insha Allah inspire people to better themselves. The khatib is there to give advice to himself and the rest of the congregation. It is in the tradition that the Prophet (may Allah's peace be upon him) would not give a khutbah longer than 15 minutes.

Please have respect for those brothers and sisters who had a very exhausting morning of Friday anatomy lab, and those who have to rush to class afterwards. Let us keep the Khutba short, concise, and focused. Once again, please keep the over-all time constraints in mind.

2. **Content of Khutbah**

Please realize what was stated above, the khutbah is a short piece of advice. Its better for the khutbah to not be the forum for preaching about controversial issues or hot political issues and references. It should be inspiring and motivational.

The Khutbah should be in two parts. After finishing the first part the Imam should sit down for a short while (enough so that Subhan Allah can be recited 3 times). The first part should be the topic chosen by the khatib. The second Khutbah should end with peace and blessings on the Prophet and his companions and with du'a for all the people.

There is something that should be REALLY stressed here. Realize that we have those who come to Jummah that may not normally attend either here or at home for many reasons. Al hamdu lillah for all those who attend and become involved in MSA. We also have non-muslims that sometimes attend our prayers to see how we worship. Lack of foresight or rashness in our dealings may serve to drive these people away and/or drive away first termers and potentially alienate non-muslims from Islam. So please bear in mind that the Friday Prayer can be a great way to make Da'wa or, if the khutba is inappropriate, turn people off from seeking The Almighty.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not treat people the same. He addressed people in their capacity. He addressed the desert Arabs quite differently than the city Arabs of Makkah or Medina. Allah (SWT) gave him the wisdom to judge the needs of a people and respond accordingly in order to bring them closer to the truth.

We have people in our congregation that have been conditioned, for whatever reason, to disconnect themselves when they don't feel part of the larger group, or feel their needs and sensitivities aren't being addressed. We have non-muslims that have been conditioned by what they see in the media that muslims are angry and irrational. Insha Allah let us use wisdom in our dealings, so we bring people closer to Islam.

3. **Supplication (Duah)**

If one wants to make a supplication for muslims in various parts of the world, here is a suggestion: simply ask Allah (SWT) to give help to all those who righteously struggle in His way against injustice. Please leave out words that are commonly misunderstood by muslims and non-muslims alike (Jihad, Mujahadeen, etc.).

4. **Procedure of Jummah**

It better to adhere to a constant format. The first call to prayer (Adhan) should be at 12 or afterwards as soon as the prayer area is ready for the Salaat al Sunnah. There should be 5-10 minutes for people to pray 2 or 4 rakaats. At this time the khatib should NOT be praying or sitting in FRONT of the congregation. Once the Sunnah is done, the khatib will approach the Prayer rug in the front, turn to the congregation and give the greeting of peace. He will then sit down on the prayer rug, and the Muazzin will give the call to prayer.

After the second call, the khatib can stand up and start the khutbah first by giving praise to Allah by saying "Al hamdu lillah" saying the declaration of faith (two shahadah), peace and blessing upon the Prophet (salaat and salam) and then proceeding with their khutba.

At the end after the khutba is finished the Iqamat al Salah (call for starting of the prayer) is said and the prayer performed. Again please be mindful of the time constraints so that by around 12:30 the prayer is finished. Ending earlier is fine but please do not exceed the time by more than 5 min while keeping the prayer itself short as that is the best way to ensure the focusing on prayer and not let the minds of all wander off about worldly affairs.

PLEASE be familiar with this format BEFORE you give the Khutbah that Friday. These guidelines are to

make the Friday prayer consistent, run smoothly and to decrease confusion and ambiguities.

Jazakallah Khair (may Allah reward your good deeds), may the Lord of the Universe bless us, and guide us all.

Muslims should attend Juma'a (Friday) prayers because it is ordained on them by Allah. In Surat #62 Al_Juma'a comes the clear order from Allah : (62:9) O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know. The remembrance of Allah is interpreted as (While performing the salaat of Juma'a): The listening to a khutba that focuses on Muslims' loyalty to Allah, with the main objective of inspiring and motivating Muslims to order and practice virtue (ma`roof) and forbid vice (munkar). This is supported by several authentic Hadiths, the following appears in Sahih Muslim: Narrated Abu Huraira "The person who takes a bath then comes to the Jum`a prayer, then offers the prayer that was destined for him, and then keeps silent till the Imam finishes the sermon, and then prays along with him, his sins between that time and the next Friday would be forgiven, and even of three days more" (similar hadiths appear in Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, & Ahmad bin Hanbal)

THEME OF KHUTBA

The objective of the Khutba is to give Muslims hope and encouragement. Emphasis should be on forgiveness and chance for repentance rather than on punishment. Keeping in view the work environment, no bad language or Dua'a damning any other group of people is to be used in Juma'a Khutba. Rather, ask for the misguided to be guided by Allah. Fiqh matters that are common to major schools and have the agreement of the majority of the Jurists are to be brought up. Do not discuss differences. Muslim social problems are to be addressed positively without hurting anyone by singling out or "pointing fingers", but rather by using generality and examples of our Prophet's (PBUH) life in dealing with similar problems. The Khutba is not the right place to settle personal conflicts between Muslims. Political events are to be mentioned, if at all, only to relate causes and effects that are relevant to Muslims. Political events should be mentioned only with the purpose of educating the Muslims and raising their level of awareness, and should be evaluated against the Qur'an and Sunnah guidelines and principles. In general, any topic that might cause division "fitnah" among Muslims is forbidden to be mentioned, any topic that might lead to the Unity of Muslims is encouraged in the Khutba. Khutba is not a place to settle scores.

FORMAT OF THE KHUTBA

The khutba should be formed of two parts with a short break of (istighfar) asking Allah's forgiveness, between them. The Khateeb takes his place and greets the Muslims by Assalamu'Alaikum. The Adhan is called. The two parts of the Khutba begin with Hamd to Allah (swt) and Thanaa on His prophet (pbuh). Khateeb mentions the title of Khutba and explains what he means using Qur'an and Hadith where possible. In all, both parts have to contain at least one Ayat from the Qur'an and one Hadith of the the prophet (pbuh). The two parts of the Khutba have to be closed by Duaa of forgiveness and request of Allah's guidance to us. It is preferable that the second Khutba is largely devoted to Duaa.

THE SALAAT OF JUMA'A

It is two rakaa't jahran (said aloud). Imam of salaat may or may not be the Khateeb. (Should be selected according to Qur'anic knowledge, and marital status respectively). This is supported by the following Authentic Hadith: "The Imam of the group should be the one who is most knowledgeable^ about the book of Allah; if they are equal in that respect, then the one most knowledgeable about the Sunnah; if they are equal in that respect, then the one who emigrated first; if they are equal in that, then the eldest one, and let no one lead another amongst his family (or in his household), or in his dominion, or take a better place than him, except by his permission", (appears in all six Sahih books except Bukhari, Also appears in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal). ^ - The following footnote appears in the translation to Sahih Muslim by `Abdul Hamid siddiqi: "The original word ('aqra'uhum) means one who is the greatest reciter (of the Qur'an) among them. But here recitation does not mean mere reading; it implies one who is well versed in the Qur'an, who has a deep insight into it, who has the greatest devotion to it, and who can recite it well." Iqama only is called after the khutba is completed. No additional adhan is said before the salaat.

THE SUNNAH SALAAT & AFTERWARDS

Time should be given for Muslims to perform Sunnah (2 or 4 rakat) after the Juma'a is over, and after announcements are made. Refrain from talking loudly when others are still praying. The Khateeb or another person, after taking the khateeb's permission, should announce special events relevant to the community. All announcements must also be previously cleared with the ISC officers. The place of Salat (Masjid) should be left quietly, with solemnity.

DURATION OF THE KHUTBA

Traditionally, the Khutba of the Prophet (PBUH) did not exceed 10 minutes. His salaat was longer than his Khutbas. But some Sahabah kiram (followers of the Prophet (PBUH)) during their time took more than 10 minutes in their Khutbas. Yet, no more than about 25 minutes. However, the companions of the Prophet, in general followed his example; long salaat and short Khutba.

KHATEEB'S CHARACTER

Should have good knowledge of the Qur`an and Sunnah. Must be a male adult and hopefully sane Muslim. Should be practicing what he preaches. Should be in good relationship with Allah, and always aspiring to improve it. Should be a good Daia, e.g. should not lose his temper, insult etc., does not discourage but encourages people to Islam, is not harsh in behavior, will be listened to by Muslims and (interested) non-Muslims alike. A good example of the Ayat of Sura #3 'Al `Imran: 3:159) Thus it is by the mercy of Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around you.

Putting all this into consideration, we find it relevant to cite the following guidelines, set forth by the late prominent Muslim scholar and *da`iyah* **Sheikh Muhammad Al-Gahzali**:

"The mosque is the heart of the Islamic community and the place where the believers meet day and night to fulfill their obligations to Allah and seek His guidance and help, glory be to Him.

The Friday *khutbah* is a major Islamic ritual, which penetrates the hearts in moments when people are ready to accept the guidance. That is why the message of the *khutbah* is extremely effective.

The Imam who studies his subject and presents it well is contributing a great deal in teaching the Ummah and leading its revival. He also contributes to the nation's materialistic and intellectual development and connects the tomorrow with its glorious past.

I aspire to contribute to bettering the quality of the *khutbahs* in the masjids (mosques). I would like to make the pulpit a true image of Islam's pure knowledge and supreme education. The masjid is a place where great emotional and intellectual energy is stimulated. This is especially true on Friday when the worshipers listen attentively to the Imam. The Imam explains to them the teachings of Islam and shows them the rules that Allah has put forth, as well as Islam's pure knowledge and education.

Therefore, I would like to give these brief guidelines for what I believe is essential for the Friday *khutbah*. These guidelines will make the *khutbah* a spring for spiritual and intellectual growth:

1. It is recommended that to make *khutbah* on one main topic. The speaker who talks about many issues distracts the audience from a focus. The result would be that he alternates between different emotions and ideas. Regardless of his eloquence and fluency, he would never succeed in drawing a clear image about the teachings of Islam. Clarity is crucial for education. Ambiguity and excessive generalization is of no use. The Friday *khutbah* is not a theoretical session, but a practical explanation of the truth.

2. The sub-themes of the *khutbah* should flow in a logical sequence. The audience should feel as if they are ascending steps. At the end of the *khutbah* the audience would reach the

conclusion that the speaker has aimed for. The speaker should be selective of which scripts facilitate the objective of his speech.

3. The *khutbah* is mainly discussing the Islamic values, which are derived from the Book of Allah, the Sunnah, and the traditions of the *salaf* (the early righteous Muslims). Thus, each and everything in the *khutbah* should be supported by a Qur'anic verse, an authentic hadith, or an acceptable fact. There should be enough contained in these sources for advice and guidance. Therefore, it is not acceptable at all for a *khutbah* to include non-authentic stories, let alone fabrications. Scholars permitted the use of non-authentic hadiths for certain actions. However, they put on their use the condition that these hadiths do not violate the core Islamic basics and fundamentals. I think that there is enough authentic hadiths for the learned speaker. Moreover, there are enough stories in the hadiths of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), the guided Caliphs, and the leading scholars.

4. The *khutbah* should never discuss controversial issues. It should never present only a single Islamic opinion and leave out others that are valid. The mosque should unify and not divide people. The Ummah should be gathered around the fundamentals of *iman* (faith) that every person agrees upon versus matters that are subject to personal opinion. There are numerous principles that can make good topics. Muslims have suffered enough from divisions among themselves, and it is about time that the mosques provide unity and harmony.

5. A good speaker cannot ignore current affairs of the world or the Islamic community. If his speech is discussing a different place, time, and people, then he is totally discredited. This is precisely why the Qur'an was revealed over a period of twenty-three years. It dealt with events over time, and therefore, was most effective in its guidance. The Qur'an is a cure for social illnesses, but the speaker must diagnose the disease accurately. Then, he would extract from the Book or the Sunnah the required medication. This process requires experience. Otherwise, he would give the wrong medication and as a result would never be able to cure the disease. Furthermore, if he makes a mistake in the diagnosis, then his *khutbah* is useless, even if it includes a variety of authentic scripts.

6. There is a group of hadiths that promise tremendous rewards for simple deeds. Highly developed scholars warned that these hadiths should not be taken literally. They should be put into context. This means considering the level of sincerity of these good doers. Therefore, a speaker should never include these hadiths in his *khutbah* without proper explanation. Otherwise, he would create a disproportionate representation of the different categories of deeds.

7. Islamic education is meant to foster morals in society and explain the rewards or consequences thereof. There is no harm in mentioning the rewards for good and the punishment for evil in the Hereafter. But it is not recommended to spend the entire *khutbah* on intangible punishments and rewards.

8. It is beneficial to mention political and intellectual achievements in Islamic history. Islam founded a great civilization that sprang from the intellectual movement that the Qur'an initiated and the human consciousness that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) awoke. The objective behind such *khutbahs* is to raise self-confidence among Muslims and to remind them of their global mission.

9. It is well known that some foreign philosophies and atheism infiltrated the Muslim Ummah during its recent historical fall. Thus, it is natural that a good *khutbah* would refute such ideologies. The *khutbah* should avoid excessive arguments, but should focus on presenting the positive Islamic facts. It should, moreover, avoid the mentioning of names. The objective of the *khutbah*, rather, is to protect our spiritual and academic history, and not to defame others publicly.

10. Before facing the audience, a speaker should have a clear image of what he wants to say. He should rethink of his speech to ensure that he is presenting correct arguments that will not cause any negative psychological or social effects. He should also check his evidence. If it is a verse, he is to memorize it well, and if it is a hadith he should narrate it accurately. If he is quoting a book, then he should make his as close to the original as possible. Good preparation

is a sign of respect to oneself and one's audience.

However, sometimes, one is faced with a situation where he is forced to make a speech from the top of his head. The ability to make a speech on the spot comes after much experience with prepared speeches. After some time, one will have accumulated a wealth of speeches that enable the speaker to lecture in numerous situations. However, experience in winging it should not prevent a scholar from good preparation. This shows how much he desires to fulfill his obligation truthfully and how much he appreciates the attentiveness of the people to his message.

11. A *khutbah* that is concise enables the audience to better focus on its teachings and enables the speaker to convey the message more clearly. Excessive speech causes people to forget many details. The most important objectives of the *khutbah* might be lost in the midst of all these additions. Can't one see that a piece of land needs only a certain number of seeds? A farmer must necessarily uproot the extra plants to enable the rest of the plants to grow and bear fruits. Similarly, a human soul does not absorb values unless they are well defined and well presented. Too much talk and presenting too many facts would cause the minds of the listeners to overflow with the information, regardless of how precious those facts are.

Insufficient preparation causes the speech to be too long and thus, boring to the audience. A speaker who moves randomly among rules and instructions is not sure about the effect of his speech and whether or not people are convinced or to what extent. He will keep repeating what he previously said, and will in the process lose the audience's attention.

Excessive talk might also be caused by a misjudgment of time. A lack of common sense can lead the speaker to think that he needs to say all that he has to say, and that people have to listen attentively, whether or not they like it. This is a grave mistake. Conciseness requires making choices, canceling some parts, and confirming other parts. But random talk requires less effort. Actually, five minutes is enough to convey an immense amount of knowledge. And ten or fifteen minutes is enough for a good *khutbah* or lecture."

[1] All of these rulings were taken from: Imam an-Nawawī, Al-Maqasid: Nawawi's Manual of Islam, trans. Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 2002), 62-64.

[2] This *Sunnah* only applies to males.

[3]