



READINGS in
ISLAMIC DA'WAH

EDITOR
Mohd. Yusuf Hussain



HUM Press

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THE FRIDAY KHUṬBAH AS A CHANNEL OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH

Mohd Yusof Hussain

The Friday *khutbah* (sermon) is an excellent channel of Islamic *da'wah*. It has been used for such purposes every week for fourteen centuries to deliver important messages and information about Islam. It was delivered by the holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the four rightly guided caliphs, victorious army generals and *'ulamā'*. Listening attentively to it every week were world and national leaders, diplomats, scholars and the common people. They came to perform the *ṣalāt al-Jum'ah* (Friday prayer) every Friday in obedience to Allāh's command:

"O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday (The day of assembly) hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allāh and leave off business (and traffic). That is best for you, if you but knew."

al-Jum'ah (62): 9

In most Muslim countries, Friday is a national holiday. So it is possible for Muslims of all ages and occupation to perform *ṣalāt al-Jum'ah* (Friday prayer). They wear clean clothes and come to the mosque early.

The Friday *khutbah* is an excellent channel of Islamic *da'wah* because it could reach all the male members of the Muslim community. They are "captive audience" in the sense that once they are in the mosque they have no choice but to listen to the *khutbah*.

This chapter discusses the practice of communicating Islamic messages and information through the Friday *khutbah* and its function in achieving the goals of Islamic *da'wah*.

The Khuṭbah

The *khuṭbah* (sermon) is an oral presentation delivered by a *khatib* to an assembled congregation. It has a fixed and important place in *ṣalāt al-Jum'ah* (Friday prayer).

The *khuṭbah* is delivered by the *khatib* in a standing position from a *mimbār* (pulpit). It is divided into two parts and the *khatib* sits down for a moment between the two parts of the *khuṭbah*. In Arabic speaking countries the *khuṭbah* is delivered in Arabic. In non-Arabic speaking countries the *khuṭbah* is delivered in the national or local language.

In the early period of Islam the *khuṭbah* was delivered by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) himself. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) died in 632 his successors the rightly guided caliphs Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (r. 632-634), Umar al-Khaṭāb (r. 634-644), Uthmān ibn 'Affān (r. 644-656), and 'Alī ibn Abī Talīb (r. 656-660) used to deliver the *khuṭbah*. So also did the caliphs after them. It was only after the death of caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813-833) the son of caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809) that the tradition of appointing others to deliver the *khuṭbah* started.

In delivering the *khuṭbah*, the *khatib* follows the steps, format, style and standard set by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) which include greeting the congregation with the salutation. "Assalāmu 'alaykum" (peace be upon you); sitting down on the chair on the *mimbār* (pulpit) until the *azān* (call to prayer) is called by the *mu'adhin* (muezzin); stands up facing the congregation while holding a "staff" in his right hand after the *azān* is called and "making the *ṣalāt* long and the *khuṭbah* short."

The *khatib* begins his *khuṭbah* by expressing the *ḥamdata* (praise be to Allāh), the *ṣalawat* (peace and blessings) upon Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the admonition of *taqwa* (God fearing piety) and the *shahādah* (the Islamic witness of faith). Expressing the *shahādah* is a must. According to Ahmad bin Hanbal "A *khuṭbah* without a *shahādah* is like a mutilated hand. There are a number of ways of beginning a *khuṭbah*." One of them is as follows;

"All thanks and praises are due to Allāh whom we thank, seek for help and invoke for forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils within ourselves. He whom Allāh guides will never be misled and he whom He misguides will never

find one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, the one and no partner has He and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger."

The *khatib* then recites a few verses of the Qur'ān relevant to the topic of his *khuṭbah*. He can choose any topics related to Islamic beliefs and teachings.

The *khatib* stays focus on one topic. He quotes freely from Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, the opinions of the four imams - Shāfi'i (d. 819), Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855), Mālik (d. 795) and Abū Hanīfah (d. 767) and also Ibn Hishām (d. 827) as well as the works of al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) especially his *ihyā' 'ulm al-dīn* (revival of the religious sciences) to support and illustrate his points.

The *khatib* completes his discussion of the topic in the first part of his *khuṭbah*. In the second part of the *khuṭbah*, the *khatib* calls upon the congregation to build upon their *taqwā* (God fearing piety) and to call on Allāh to shower His blessings upon the holy Prophet. He makes these calls by reciting relevant verses from the Qur'ān:

"O you who believe! Fear Allāh as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam."

Alī-Imrān, 3:102

"Allāh and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Send your blessing on him and salute him with all respect."

al-Aḥzāb, 33:56

He then prays (*du'ā*) for the ruler of the state, the *mujāhidīn* (those who engage in *jihād*) and the believers, both men and women. After the *du'ā*, he invites the congregation to perform the Friday *ṣalāt* (prayer).

The Prophet's (s.a.w.) Khuṭbah

The Prophet (s.a.w.) had delivered many *khuṭbah* on a number of topics in his life-time. However, the most memorable *khuṭbah* delivered by the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the *khuṭbah* delivered during his farewell pilgrimage (*Ḥajjat al-wadā'*) in the tenth year of the *Hijrah* (migration to Madinah). It was a long *khuṭbah*. In it the holy

Prophet (s.a.w.) reminded Muslims of their responsibilities and the salient teachings of Islam. He reminded them not to revert to disbelief, not to commit injustice, not to take *ribā'* (usury), to treat women kindly, to treat all Muslims as brothers and that all humankind are equal in the sight of Allah. The holy Prophet (s.a.w.) also hinted that this may be his last *khutbah*. The *khutbah* was delivered in Arabic. The following is the content of the *khutbah*:

"All thanks are due to Allāh. Whom we thank, seek for help, invoke for forgiveness and repent to. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils within ourselves and from the evils of our deeds. He who Allāh guides will never be misled and he who He misguides will never find one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone. Who is without partners, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. O servants of Allāh! I recommend you to have fear of Allāh and encourage you to obey Him. O people! Hear me and I will explain to you, for I do not know if I will meet you again after this year of ours and this gathering of yours (at 'Arafah).

O people! Verily your blood and property are sacred to one another (i.e., Muslims) until you meet your Lord like the sacredness of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this city of yours. Verily, you will meet your Lord and He will ask you about your actions, and I have indeed conveyed (Allāh's message). Therefore, anyone among you who was entrusted by others, let him give the trust back to those who entrusted him (upon request). Verily every transaction of *Ribā'* (usury) is annulled, but you will have only your capital. You will neither commit injustice, nor will you be wronged. Allāh has decided that there should be no more *Ribā'*, and the *Ribā'* of al-'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muṭālib (the Prophet's uncle) is also annulled. Verily all blood feuds from the time of *Jāhiliyyah* (age of ignorance) are annulled. I start with annulling the blood feud of the son of Rabī'ah bin al-Harith bin 'Abdul Muṭālib, who was nursed in the area of the tribe of Banī Lathī, and whom the tribe of Huthail killed. It is the first blood feud from the time of *Jāhiliyyah* that I annul. Verily, the virtues prized during the *Jāhiliyyah* are all annulled, except *al-Sidānah* (maintenance of the *Ka'bah*) and *al-Siqāyah* (providing *zam-zam* water to pilgrims). Verily, intentional

killing warrants the Law of Equity. (execution, unless relatives of the victim forgive and accept blood money). While unintentional killing which results from being killed by a staff or a rock warrants a *Diyah* (blood money) of a hundred camels, he who increase this amount will be among the people of *Jāhiliyyah*. O people! Satan has given up hope that he will ever be worshipped in this land of yours, so he is satisfied that you obey his suggestions such as to regard evil acts as insignificant. Therefore, beware of this danger to your religion.

Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief; the unbelievers are led to wrong thereby, for they make it lawful one year, and forbidden another year, in order to adjust the number of month forbidden by Allāh and make such forbidden months lawful. The evil of their course seems pleasing to them. But Allāh guides not those who reject faith.

al-Tawbah, (9):37

Verily, the division of time has turned to its original form, which was recognized when Allāh created the Heavens and the Earth. The year to Allāh are of twelve months, out of which four months are sacred. Three are in succession *Dhu al-Qa'dah, Dhu al-Hijjah and Mūharrām*, and (the fourth is) *Rajab* of (the tribe of) Mudhar which comes between *Jumād al-Thāniyah* and *Sīra ṭhar*.

O people! You have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. Among your rights are that they do not allow someone you dislike to step on your mat (i.e., your home) and that they do not commit ill-conduct. If they do, then Allāh has allowed you to refuse to share their beds, and beat them lightly. But, if they refrain and return to obedience, then they have the right over you to receive support and clothing according to what is affordable. Treat women kindly, for they are your partners and do not get any benefit for themselves. You took them (as wives) by Allāh's Covenant and permit you to enjoy them sexually by Allāh's Word. Therefore, fear Allāh on matters related to women and treat them kindly.

O people! Comprehend my words, for I have indeed conveyed (the Message) I have left you two things, and if you hold on to

them, you will never fall astray for they are plain and clear: the Book of Allāh (the Qur'ān) and the *Sūrah* of His Prophet.

O people! Hear what I say and comprehend it: know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and that all Muslims are brothers. No Muslim is allowed to possess his brother's property except what he gives away with a good heart, so do not wrong each other. I ask you by Allāh, have I conveyed (His message)? They said, "Yes, by Allāh!" The messenger of Allāh said, "O Allāh, be your witness. Do not revert to disbelief (become infidels) after me by striking the necks of one another."

O people! Your Lord is One and your father is one, for all of you are from Adam and Adam was created from dust. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allāh is that (believer) who has *Al-Taqwā* (piety). Verily an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab except by *Taqwā*. Have I conveyed? They said, "Yes" He said, "It is a responsibility upon those who are present to convey this information to those who are absent."

O people! Allāh has appointed a designated share for each rightful inheritor, so there is no will for a rightful inheritor. None should give away more than a third of his will. The child belongs to the bed (where he was born), and for the adulterer is the stone. Verily, he who claims a father other than his own father, or takes possession of a dependent other than his own, then on him will be the curse of Allāh, the angels, and all of mankind, and Allāh will not accept from him any prayer or fast. May Allāh's peace and blessings be upon you.

For generations, Muslim *Khutib* (person who delivers the sermon) have studied the Prophet's *khutbah* and tried to use it as a model.

Contemporary *Khutbah*

Today's *khutbah* follow the format and pattern set by the Prophet (s.a.w.). However, they are delivered not only in Arabic but also in other languages spoken by Muslims around the world such as Persian, Turkish, Hindi, Tamil, Indonesian, Malay and English.

There is not much change in the topics discussed. The purpose is to impart the eternal message of Islam, to remind Muslims of their responsibilities, to motivate them to do what is good and right, and to warn them of the dire consequence of doing what is wrong. Examples of topics chosen are the meaning and significance of the declaration *Lā Ilāha illa Allāh* (there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh), the importance of *ṣalāt* (prayer), *Ḥajj* (annual pilgrimage to Makkah), *sawm* (fasting during the month of *Ramādān*), *zakaāt* (required alms-giving) and *jihad* (strive in the way of Allāh); the need for *da'wah* (call to Islam), *tarbiyah* (proper upbringing and education of children), and *ta'lim* (instructions in Qur'ān and *Hudūdh*); the importance of seeking knowledge (*ilm*) as well as current issues, challenges and problems facing the Muslim community and the *ummah*, such as secularism, liberalism, capitalism, socialism, westernization, corruption, drug addiction, crime, increasing divorce rate, loose morality and disunity among Muslims, as well as solutions to these problems.

Some topics are seasonal, such as *Ma'a al-Hijrah* (with the Hijrah) and *awal Muharram* (first day of *Muharram*) are chosen as topics in the month of *Muharram*; *mawlid al-nabi* (birthday of Prophet Muhammad [s.a.w.]) a topic in the month of *Rabi al-awwal*; *sawm* (fasting) and *laylatu al-qadr* (night of power and excellence) are topics in the month of *Ramādān*; and *isrā' wa laylatu al mi'raj* (night journey) is chosen as a topic of *khutbah* at the end of the month of *Rajab*.

Implication for *Da'wah*

The Friday *khutbah* is an excellent way of reaching the Muslim community and getting their attention every week. Through the Friday *khutbah* the message of Islam as well as Allāh's commands and prohibitions can be conveyed and discussed.

Members of the Muslim community who perform the *ṣalāt al-Jum'ah* every week listen attentively to the *khutbah*. No one speaks a word. Their attention is on the *khutib* (person who delivers the sermon), as they listening to every word he says.

Every *khutib* who stands on the *minbar* (pulpit) every Friday knows that he has a heavy responsibility. Not only is he an *imām* (leader of prayer) but he is also a *dā'i* when he delivers his *khutbah*.

He call the *jamā'ah* (congregation) to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

Today, in most major cities in the Muslim world, the Friday *khutbah* is broadcast live through the radio and television. This enables the Friday *khutbah* to be heard beyond the hall of the mosque. It can be heard by those who could not attend the Friday prayer, by which includes women, children and even non-Muslims thereby increasing the usefulness of the Friday *khutbah* as a channel of Islamic *da'wah* in the present era.

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