

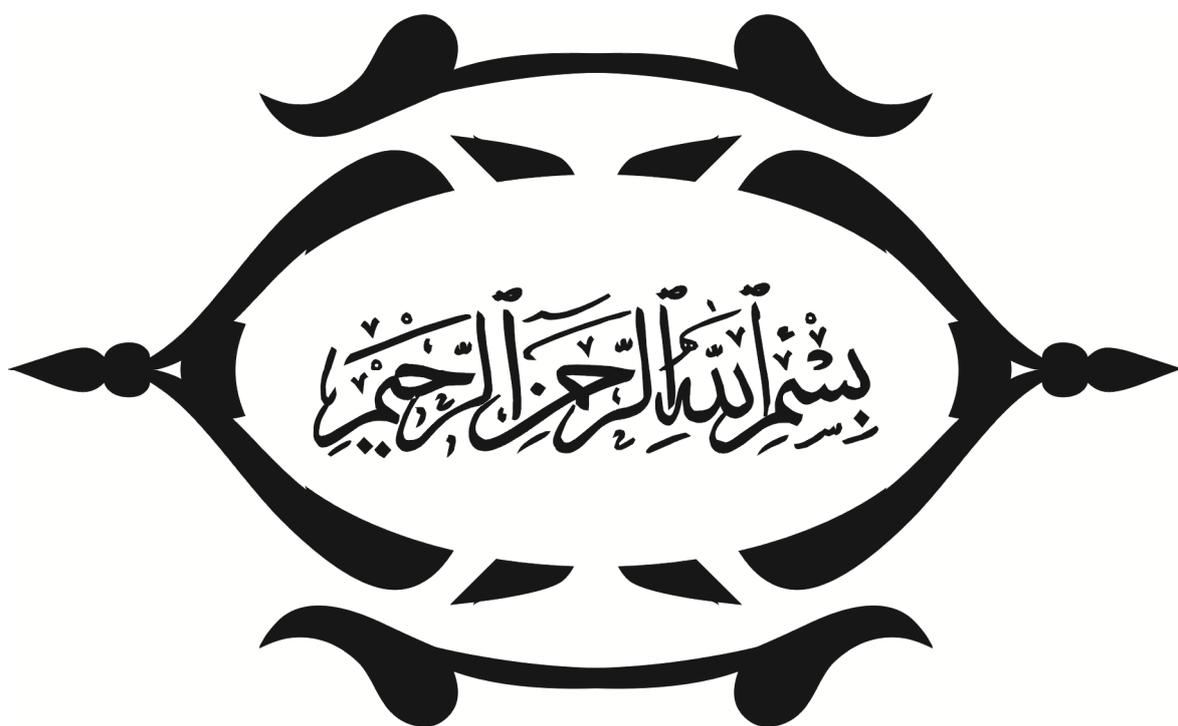


مجمع فقهاء الشريعة بأمريكا

Contemporary Issues Related to the Friday Prayer (نوازل صلاة الجمعة)

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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 نبينا محمداً عبده ورسوله وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم تسليماً كثيراً.

أما بعد

The Friday Prayer is an Act of Worship

The Friday Prayer (صلاة الجمعة) is a very important act of worship in Islam. When performed properly, it acts as expiation for the worshipper. Allah has explicitly commanded the Muslims to attend this prayer and He has also stated the essence and purpose of this act of worship:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (١)

“O you who have believed, when [the *adhan*] is called for the prayer on the day of Friday, then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew” (al-Jumuah 9).

Yet this act of worship, like any other act of worship, must be performed in the manner that is pleasing to Allah. That is, it must be done in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. If someone intentionally performs the Friday

الجمعة: ٩ (١)

Prayer in a way different from what is prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah, not only may that deed be rejected by Allah but it may also be a source of His displeasure and wrath. Hence, Muslims, especially those who are leaders of communities, should do their best to learn the proper and correct manners of performing the Friday Prayer.

It can never be forgotten that the Friday Prayer is first and foremost a ritual act of *ibaadah* (worship). Being such, the “freedoms” of a jurist are somewhat limited because the basic ruling concerning acts of worship is that one must retain a stricter adherence to the clear and apparent meanings of the texts. This does not deny that there may be some “rational” component to the act but overall it is an act of *ibaadah*. It is in the light of this fact that one must attempt to address numerous new occasions and possibilities concerning the Friday Prayer.

In this paper, an attempt shall be made to address the following “contemporary and new issues” concerning the Friday Prayer:

1. What is the ruling concerning using technology, such as laptops, Ipads, Powerpoint, etc., during the Friday Khutbah?
2. What is the ruling concerning the Khateeb speaking to the congregation during the Khutbah in order to get a response from them so that they pay more attention, like what occurs during regular lectures?
3. What is the ruling of an instantaneous translation of the Khutbah and what that implies of people touching and using the devices during the khutbah?
4. What is the ruling of having lessons on Friday in the mosque before the Friday Prayer? What is the relationship these days between that and the prohibition to hold such a gathering?
5. What is the ruling of passing around of the donation collection plate during the khutbah?

A Description of the Friday Khutbah of the Prophet

Before discussing some of the contemporary issues related to the Friday *Khutbah*, it is good to recall the example and guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). 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 *tauheed* do they

teach or knowledge disseminate? If we study the *khutbahs* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions, we find them filled with perspicuous guidance, *tauheed*, attributes of Allah, explaining the basic articles of faith, inviting people to Allah, and drawing their attention to His providential care that makes Him 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⁾ Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah, *Zaad al-Maad fi Hadyi Khair al-Ibaad* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 409-410.

The Use of Technology During the *Khutbah*

Today's technology offers all sorts of fascinating means by which to convey information. The use of computers and high-tech gadgets have been commonplace in many mosques. In some mosques, very few Muslims read the physical *mushafs* before prayer, as they rely on their smart phones for the Quran. Many *khateeb*s no longer have hard copies of their notes and use only soft copies, with their computers or Ipads with them.⁽¹⁾ There is no question that technology has offered unprecedented access to sources of knowledge and various means of extracting that knowledge. In the fields of education and teaching, computers are an everyday usage. In particular, *Powerpoint* and similar applications have become popular tools for many a lecturer and teacher. Since these tools have been commonplace in educating and lecturing, the obvious question arises as to whether or not they should be used in the Friday *khutbah*s or whether or not they are even permissible to be used in the Friday *khutbah*s.

In order to answer this question properly, a couple of preliminary topics will be discussed and then everything will be tied back together to this question, Allah willing.

THE PROPHET'S MANNER OF TEACHING AND INSTRUCTING

For many reasons, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been described as the first or best "teacher" in history.⁽²⁾ Obviously, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not have *Powerpoint* or other contemporary

⁽¹⁾ In the same way that there seems to be no objection to the *Khateeb* using written notes during a *khutbah* there should not be any objection to his using notes on a computer or an Ipad.

⁽²⁾ See, for example, the blog entitled *al-Muallim al-Awwal* (The First Teacher) by Fuad al-Shalhoob, available at <http://uqu.edu.sa/page/ar/79955>.

means available to him. However, at the same time, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) implemented numerous teaching and educating techniques.

This is not the proper place to discuss all of the teaching techniques of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, definitely some of his practices have relevance to the issues being discussed here.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to interact with the listeners and audience. One can conclude that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wanted to raise the listener from being a passive listener to an active participant. An example of this nature is found in *Sahih al-Bukhari*:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «إِنَّ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ شَجْرَةً لَا يَسْقُطُ وَرَقُهَا، وَإِنَّهَا مَثَلُ الْمُسْلِمِ، حَدَّثُونِي مَا هِيَ»
 قَالَ: فَوَقَعَ النَّاسُ فِي شَجَرِ الْبَوَادِي قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: فَوَقَعَ فِي نَفْسِي أَنَّهَا النَّخْلَةُ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ، ثُمَّ قَالُوا: حَدَّثْنَا مَا
 هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: «هِيَ النَّخْلَةُ»

Ibn Umar narrated: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree the leaves of which do not fall and is like a Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree." Everybody started thinking about the trees of the desert areas. And I thought of the date-palm tree but felt shy to answer. The others then asked, "What is that tree, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied, "It is the date-palm tree."

Sometimes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would ask a question simply, it seems, to alert the listeners and make sure that they are paying attention. This was the case in the following incident:

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: خَطَبَنَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ، قَالَ: «أَتَدْرُونَ أَيُّ يَوْمٍ هَذَا؟»، قُلْنَا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، فَسَكَتَ حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ سَيَسْمِيهِ بِغَيْرِ اسْمِهِ، قَالَ: «أَلَيْسَ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ؟» قُلْنَا: بَلَى، قَالَ: «أَيُّ شَهْرٍ هَذَا؟»، قُلْنَا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، فَسَكَتَ حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ سَيَسْمِيهِ بِغَيْرِ اسْمِهِ، فَقَالَ «أَلَيْسَ ذُو الْحِجَّةِ؟»، قُلْنَا: بَلَى، قَالَ «أَيُّ بَلَدٍ هَذَا؟» قُلْنَا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، فَسَكَتَ حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ سَيَسْمِيهِ بِغَيْرِ اسْمِهِ، قَالَ «أَلَيْسَتْ بِالْبَلَدَةِ الْحَرَامِ؟» قُلْنَا: بَلَى، قَالَ: «فَإِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرَامٌ، كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا، إِلَى يَوْمٍ تَلْقَوْنَ رَبَّكُمْ، أَلَا هَلْ بَلَغْتُ؟»، قَالُوا: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: «اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ، فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِبَ، فَرُبَّ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْعَى مِنْ سَامِعٍ، فَلَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفَّارًا، يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ»

Abu Bakrah narrated: The Prophet (ﷺ) addressed us on the day of the Sacrifice and said, "Do you know what day is today?" We replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better," and then we remained silent thinking that he may give it a new name. He then said, "Is it not the Day of Sacrifice?" We said, "Certainly." He then said, "Which month is this?" We replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better," and then we remained silent thinking that he may give it a new name. He then said, "Is it not Dhu-I-Hijjah?" We said, "Certainly." Then he said, "Do you know what town this is?" We replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better," and then we remained silent thinking that he may give it a new name. He then said, "Is it not the Inviolable

Land?" We said, "Certainly." He then said, "Allah has made your blood, your properties and your honor sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of yours in this month of yours, in this town of yours until the day that you meet your Lord." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

At other times, it appears, he would ask in order to pique the curiosity of the listeners:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُعَلَّى، قَالَ: مَرَّ بِالنَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَأَنَا أُصَلِّي، فَدَعَانِي فَلَمْ آتِهِ حَتَّى صَلَّيْتُ ثُمَّ أَتَيْتُ، فَقَالَ: «مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنِي؟» فَقُلْتُ: «كُنْتُ أُصَلِّي، فَقَالَ: "أَلَمْ يَقُلِ اللَّهُ: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾»^(١) ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَلَا أَعَلَّمَكُمُ أَعْظَمَ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُخْرَجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ» فَذَهَبَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ لِيُخْرَجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ فَذَكَرْتُهُ، فَقَالَ: «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي، وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْهُ».

Narrated Abu Saeed Al-Mu'alla: While I was praying, the Prophet (ﷺ) called me but I did not respond to his call. Later I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I was praying." He said, "Did not Allah say: 'O you who believe! Give your response to Allah (by obeying Him) and to His Apostle when he calls you?'" He then said, "Shall I not teach you the most superior Surah in the Qur'an before you leave from the mosque?" The Prophet was later about to leave from the mosque and I reminded him of that and he said, "(It is), 'Praise be to Allah,

الأنفال: ٢٤ (١)

the Lord of the worlds,' which consists of seven repeatedly recited Verses and the Magnificent Qur'an which was given to me." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

One could argue that these last two examples are similar to what speakers do today—especially Christian preachers—when they are trying to provoke a response from the audience, making sure that they are alert and listening to the speaker.

In addition, long before *Powerpoint* came along, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did use visual aids and techniques in teaching. He would sometimes use hand signals and motions to signify meaning. These are simply different ways of conveying information to a listener. Perhaps even more relevant, the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) even used drawings to explain points. In one instance, he Prophet (peace be upon him) displayed in a graphic fashion the reality of this life and the dreams that people have. Al-Bukhari records:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: خَطَّ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ خَطًّا مُرَبَّعًا، وَخَطَّ خَطًّا فِي الْوَسْطِ خَارِجًا مِنْهُ، وَخَطَّ خُطَطًا صِغَارًا إِلَى هَذَا الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ مِنْ جَانِبِهِ الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ، وَقَالَ: " هَذَا الْإِنْسَانُ، وَهَذَا أَجَلُهُ مُحِيطٌ بِهِ - أَوْ: قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِهِ - وَهَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ خَارِجٌ أَمَلُهُ، وَهَذِهِ الْخُطَطُ الصِّغَارُ الْأَعْرَاضُ، فَإِنْ أَخْطَأَهُ هَذَا نَهَشَهُ هَذَا، وَإِنْ أَخْطَأَهُ هَذَا نَهَشَهُ هَذَا "

Narrated `Abdullah: The Prophet (ﷺ) drew a square and then drew a line in the middle of it and let it extend outside the square and then drew several small lines attached to that central line, and said, "This is the human being, and this, his lease of life, encircles him from all sides, and this (line), which is outside (the

square), is his hope, and these small lines are the calamities and troubles (which may befall him), and if one misses him, another will snap (i.e. overtake) him, and if the other misses him, a third will snap (i.e. overtake) him."

Figure 1 displays the manners in which scholars have understood this visual aid used by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

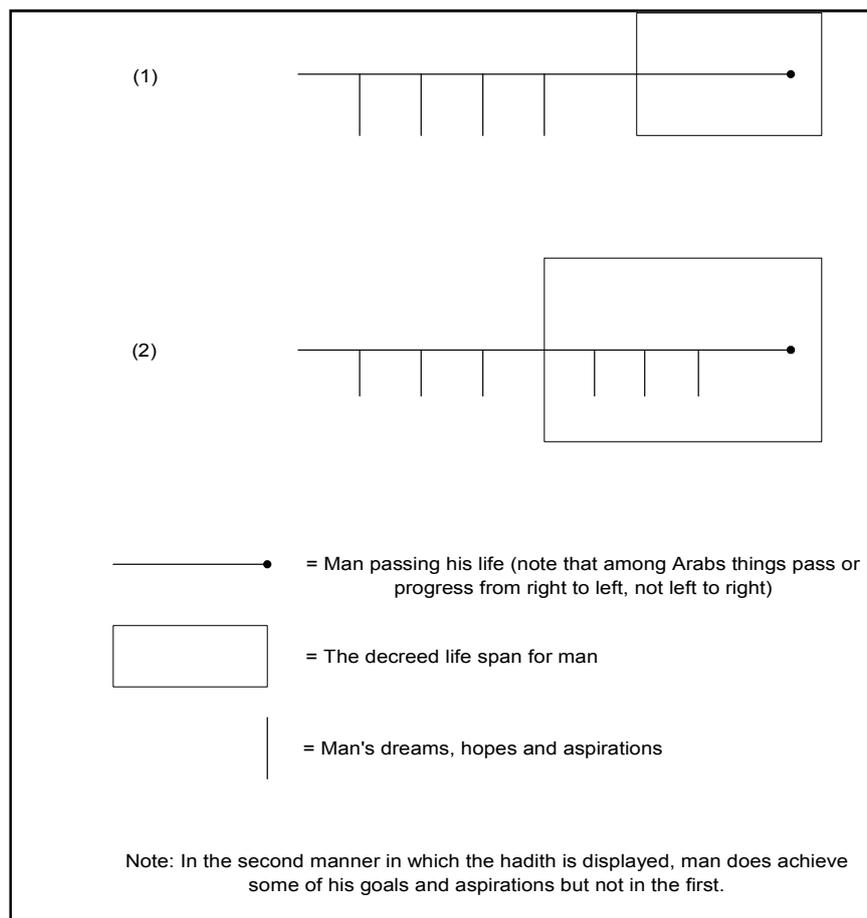


Figure 1. How the Prophet (peace be upon him) Displayed the Dreams and Hopes of Humans⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ This figure was taken from the author's *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of Al-Nawawi* (Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Publications, 2009), vol. 2, p. 1274.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would even use what would nowadays be termed a "prop." In one case, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) picked up a dead goat and raised it in front of the people, as in this hadith from *Sahih Muslim*: The Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a dead goat which had either very small ears or mutilated ears. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took it and said to his Companions, "Which of you would like to have this for one *dirham*?" They said, "We do not desire it. What would we use it for?" The Prophet again said, "Would you like to have it for your own?" They said, "By Allah, even if it were alive, we would find it defective, since it has small ears; what do you think now that it is dead?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then told them,

فَوَاللَّهِ لِلدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ هَذَا عَلَيْكُمْ

"By Allah, the world is more insignificant to Allah than that [dead goat] is to you." The narration in *Musnad Ahmad* explicitly states, فَرَفَعَهُ، فَتَنَاوَلَهُ، "he took it and raised it up." Obviously, this was so the people could see it and to give more emphasis to the lesson that he was making.

On another occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used gold and silver as props:

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَلِيًّا، يَقُولُ: أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ذَهَبًا بِيَمِينِهِ، وَحَرِيرًا بِشِمَالِهِ، ثُمَّ رَفَعَ بِهِمَا يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ: " هَذَا

حَرَامٌ عَلَى ذُكُورِ أُمَّتِي "

Ali said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took some gold in his right hand and silk in his left and raised them up with his arms and said, "These two are forbidden for the males from my Nation."⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) would even use practical demonstrations to instruct the Companions. One clear example of this nature has to do with the timings of the prayer. Muslim records on the authority of Buraidah:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَهُ عَنْ وَقْتِ الصَّلَاةِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: «صَلِّ مَعَنَا هَذَيْنِ - يَعْنِي الْيَوْمَيْنِ - فَلَمَّا زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ أَمَرَ بِإِلَّا فَأَذَّنَ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهُ، فَأَقَامَ الظُّهْرَ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهُ، فَأَقَامَ العَصْرَ وَالشَّمْسُ مُرْتَفِعَةً بِيَضَاءِ نَقِيَّةٍ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهُ فَأَقَامَ المَغْرِبَ حِينَ غَابَتِ الشَّمْسُ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهُ فَأَقَامَ العِشَاءَ حِينَ غَابَ الشَّفَقُ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَهُ فَأَقَامَ الفَجْرَ حِينَ طَلَعَ الفَجْرَ، فَلَمَّا أَنْ كَانَ اليَوْمُ الثَّانِي أَمَرَهُ فَأَبْرَدَ بِالظُّهْرِ، فَأَبْرَدَ بِهَا، فَأَنَعَمَ أَنْ يُرَدَّ بِهَا، وَصَلَّى العَصْرَ وَالشَّمْسُ مُرْتَفِعَةً أَخْرَهَا فَوْقَ الَّذِي كَانَ، وَصَلَّى المَغْرِبَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَغِيبَ الشَّفَقُ، وَصَلَّى العِشَاءَ بَعْدَمَا ذَهَبَ ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ، وَصَلَّى الفَجْرَ فَأَسْفَرَ بِهَا»، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَيُّنَ السَّائِلُ عَنْ وَقْتِ الصَّلَاةِ؟» فَقَالَ الرَّجُلُ: أَنَا، يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: «وَقْتُ صَلَاتِكُمْ بَيْنَ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ»

A person asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the time of prayer. Upon this he said, "Pray with us these two, meaning two days." When the sun passed the

⁽¹⁾ Recorded by Ahmad and others. According to Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., it is *sahih*. See Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muasassah al-Risaalah, 1997), vol. 2, p. 146.

meridian. he told Bilal to make the call to prayer. Then he told him to pronounce the *iqaamah* for the Dhuhr Prayer. (Then at the time of the afternoon prayer) he again commanded and *iqaamah* for the afternoon prayer was pronounced when the sun was high, white and clear. He then commanded and *iqaamah* for the evening prayer was pronounced, when the sun had set. He then commanded him and the *iqaamah* for the night prayer was pronounced when the twilight had disappeared. He then commanded him and the *iqaamah* for the morning prayer was pronounced, when the dawn had appeared. When it was the next day, he commanded him to delay the noon prayer till the extreme heat had passed and he did so, and he allowed it to be delayed till the extreme heat had passed. He observed the afternoon prayer when the sun was high, delaying it beyond the time he had previously observed it. He observed the evening prayer before the twilight had vanished; he observed the night prayer when a third of the night had passed; and he observed the dawn prayer when there was clear daylight. He (the Holy Prophet) then said, "Where is the man who inquired about the time of prayer?" He (the inquirer) said, "Messenger of Allah, here I am." He (the Prophet) said, "The time for your prayer is within the limits of what you have seen."

From all of the above, it seems clear that the modern teaching techniques involving interacting with students and all sorts of visual demonstrations are nothing more than extensions of practices that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself had established. Hence, their permissibility, in general, is beyond question.

THE PROPHET'S MANNER OF GIVING KHUTBAHS

The *khutbah* is special in many ways that distinguish it from the general admonitions and teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Most obvious, the time and manner of the *khutbah* is very regulated. In fact, there are two "*khutbahs*," as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would sit and then stand again and continue speaking. He was not known to have done that at other times of teaching. Additionally, it is forbidden for the member of the congregation to speak during the *khutbah* while there is no such clear and strong prohibition of speaking during any other kind of instruction or admonition.

What this demonstrates is that the Friday Khutbah or admonition cannot *a priori* be dealt with in the same fashion as other instructions or speeches of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). There are many modes of teaching that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) implemented outside of the *khutbah* but is never to have been reported to have used during the *khutbah*. This is a case of *tark al-Nabi* or "actions that the Prophet did not do (although it was possible for him to do them)."

TARK AL-NABI: THE ACTIONS THE PROPHET (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON HIM) DID NOT PERFORM⁽¹⁾

Given certain prerequisites, what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do is considered just as much as his Sunnah as what he did do. Perhaps the greatest example demonstrating the concept of *tark al-nabi* to be a legal source was the Companions' hesitance in combining the Quran into one book or *mushaf*. Their main argument was: How can something be done that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do? Furthermore, the Companions were fully aware that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had conveyed the entire message from Allah, leaving nothing out. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told them,

⁽¹⁾ Those who wish to introduce new "forms of worship" seem to be not content with the legal theoretician's concept of *tark* or "actions that the Prophet avoided." They wish to argue that simply because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not perform an act of worship, it does not mean that Muslims today are not free to perform that act. Some of them have even gotten to a point that they claim that there is an agreed upon principle that states, "*al-tark* does not produce any ruling in and of itself." Historically speaking, this was the view only of some Sufis and some Mutazilah. Unfortunately, this thought has also been spread by some English speakers as well on their websites. Recently, one individual wrote on his blog, "However, I would like to remind you of the important agreed upon usuli principle that, 'al-tark la yufid al-hukum bi dhatihi.' Meaning, that the Prophet or his companions (ra), leaving something does not make its absence forbidden (a ruling in itself) unless it was clearly addressed by revelation as being forbidden or disliked." For this reason, the concept of *tark* is given some attention here. One can understand why Sufis in particular may push for this view as they have traditionally performed "acts of worship" that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never performed, such as avoiding eating for lengthy periods of time, performing "dances" as means of *dhikr*, celebrating the Prophet's birthday and so forth. This approach goes against the way of the Companions and the conclusions of the legal theorists throughout the centuries. For a presentation and a refutation of the Sufi views on this issue, see Mohammad Mallah, *Al-Tark ind al-Usooliyyeen* (Master's Thesis, Annajah National University, Nablus, 2010), pp. 66-89. Incidentally, the early Mutazili Abu al-Husain al-Basri wrote, "As for emulating the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it could be with respect to what he did and what he avoided. As for emulating him in what he did, it is that we do the action in the form that he did it because he did it. As for emulating him in what he avoided, it is that we avoid similar to what he avoided in the manner that he did because he avoided it." Muhammad Abu al-Husain al-Basri, *al-Mutamad fi Usool al-Fiqh* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1403 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 343. Incidentally, the supposedly agreed upon principle, "*al-tark la yufid al-hukum bi dhatihi*" (*al-tark* does not produce any ruling in and of itself) is not found, to the best of this author's knowledge, in any book on Islamic legal theory (*usool al-fiqh*) or Islamic legal maxims (*qawaaid*)

لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يُقَرِّبُكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَيُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَّا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَيُقَرِّبُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَّا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ

“There is nothing that takes you closer to Paradise and distances you from Hell-fire except that I have ordered you to perform it. And there is nothing that distances you from Paradise and takes you closer to Hell-fire except that I have prohibited it for you.”⁽¹⁾

Thus, the legal theorists understood that the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) extended to that which he did (his actions) as well as that which he did not do (his *tark*). Therefore, the *tark* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is an authority in Islamic Law.⁽²⁾ This is a well-known, well-established and incontrovertible point. Numerous scholars have discussed this topic in their books on Islamic Legal Theory (*Usool al-Fiqh*). Ibn al-Samaani, for example, wrote, “If the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) avoided something than it is obligatory upon us to follow him in that. Don’t you see how when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was offered lizard, he withheld his hand from it and avoided eating it. Then the Companions withheld themselves from it and left it until he told them, ‘No [it is not forbidden], but it is not found in the land of my people and that is why I do not like eating it,’⁽³⁾ and he gave

⁽¹⁾ According to al-Albaani, this hadith is recorded by Abu Bakr al-Haddaad in *al-Muntakhab*. Al-Albaani affirms its authenticity in Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheehah* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabah al-Maarif, 1996), vol. 6, pp. 865ff, Hadith #2866.

⁽²⁾ A comprehensive presentation of the evidences for *tark* being an authority in Islamic Law may be found in Muhammad al-Jaizaani, *Sunnah al-Tark wa Dilaalatuhaa ala al-Ahkaam al-Shariyyah* (Dammam, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn al-Jauzi, 1431 A.H.), pp. 72-80.

⁽³⁾ This hadith is found in *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

them permission to eat it.”⁽¹⁾ Perhaps, al-Shaukaani summed up the topic best when stated simply, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) avoiding something is the same as his doing an act with respect to emulating him concerning that act.”⁽²⁾

However, similar to the actions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), one must be careful in dealing with the *tark* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). As a default, the actions and *tark* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are examples for the Prophet’s Nation. At the same time, though, one must be aware of the various categories that his actions and *tark* fall into.⁽³⁾ In particular, there are some special cases that do not establish a ruling in and of themselves. For example, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) may have left an act simply due to personal tastes, such as the example stated above of not eating the lizard. Furthermore, there are numerous acts that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not perform simply because it was impossible for him at this time. For example, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never drove a car. Since it was not possible, one cannot argue that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) intentionally avoided that act. In that case, no ruling can be derived from his *tark*.

⁽¹⁾ Abu al-Mudhaffar al-Samaani, *Qawaati al-Adillah fi al-Usool* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1999), vol. 1, p. 311.

⁽²⁾ Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, *Irshaad al-Fuhool fi Tahqeeq al-Haqq min Ilm al-Usool* (Daar al-Kutub al-Arabi, 1999), vol. 1, p. 119.

⁽³⁾ An excellent and detailed discussion of the categories of the actions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) may be found in Muhammad al-Ashqar, *Afaal al-Rasool wa Dalaalatuhaa ala al-Ahkaam al-Shariyyah* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 2003), *passim*. He discusses the *tark* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in vol. 2, pp. 45-69.

It goes without saying that *Powerpoint*, projectors and the like were not used by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It also goes without saying that they were not available to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, they do not fall under the category of *tark al-nabi* as they are all things that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could not have done. However, that is not the point here.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did have means available to him that were in many ways similar to the instructional techniques of *Powerpoint* and projectors. In the earlier discussion, it was shown how he used drawings and props in order to educate his followers. At the same time, though, there is no record of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explicitly using some of those techniques during a Friday Khutbah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do so although he *could* (theoretically) have easily done so. That the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) intentionally avoided those instructional techniques during the Friday Khutbah could be of significance. It is established that there are many rulings that are specific for the Friday Khutbah, including absolute silence when the *Khateeb* is speaking.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) not implementing these feasible instructional techniques should not be ignored in any ruling concerning what is permissible during the Friday Khutbah.

⁽¹⁾ As shall be discussed shortly, Allah willing.

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Perhaps an important question to ask at this point is: Is there any real need for a Khateeb to use *Powerpoint* or modern technology in his *khutbah*?⁽¹⁾ Ideally, one would hope that the *khutbah* is an admonition that is coming from the heart of the Khateeb to the hearts of the listeners. "Plain speech" should normally suffice. Rick Penciner noted in his article on whether *Powerpoint* enhances learning, "Consider some of the greatest orators of the twentieth century. Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr. They were all able to deliver impactful and memorable speeches without the aid of PowerPoint and other visuals."⁽²⁾ The website *Muslimmatters* once had a blog entitled, "Top Ten Islamic Lectures of All Time." None of those top ten lectures used *Powerpoint* and, as far as this author is aware, none of the lectures that the comments mentioned employed *Powerpoint*

⁽¹⁾ The evidence is not very conclusive on whether *Powerpoint* is an effective tool in teaching/learning. Penciner writes, "Traditional lecture-format PowerPoint, however, does not produce significant difference in learning (typically demonstrated as performance on examinations) compared to several alternatives. Some studies have shown that students performed worst on test scores with PowerPoint lectures compared to traditional formats." Rick Penciner, "Does Powerpoint Enhance Learning," (available at <http://cjem.deckerip.com/index.php/article/does-powerpoint-enhance-learning>), p. 110. [The studies of Hossein Nouri and Abdus Shaheed are inconclusive at best. See Hossein Nouri and Abdus Shaheed, "The Effects of PowerPoint Lecture Notes on Student Performance and Attitudes," *The Accounting Educators' Journal* (Volume XVIII, 2008), pp. 103-117; Hossein Nouri and Abdus Shaheed, "The Effect of Powerpoint Presentations on Student Learning and Attitudes," *Global Perspectives on Accounting Education* (Volume 2, 2005), pp. 53-73.] Perhaps the greatest critic of *Powerpoint* is the specialist in the visual display of quantitative information Edward Tufte. Tufte strongly criticizes the way people use Powerpoint as well as its means of communicating knowledge. For example, based on another research, he says (p. 3) that bullet outlines "can make us stupid." Kangas has extended Tufte's critique and applied the famous Whorfian hypothesis of linguistics to demonstrate how damaging Powerpoint could be to learning. Doumont has responded to Tufte. Doumont's most important critique of Tufte is that it seems that Tufte sometimes forgot that Powerpoint presentations are not supposed to be standalone reports but are supposed to be used by a presenter to improve the material. The NASA example that Tufte used though was a case where a Powerpoint presentation was used as a standalone report with possibly disastrous consequences. It should be noted that Doumont himself warns about the misuse and abuse of Powerpoint as well. See Edmund Tufte, "The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint," (available at <http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/powerpoint>); Brian Kangas, "Not Waving but Drowning: A Review of Tufte's *The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint*," *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (Volume 24, Number 3, 2012), pp. 421-423; Jean-Luc Doumont, "The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint: Not All Slides are Evil," *Technical Communication* (Vol. 52, No. 1, 2005), pp. 64-70.

⁽²⁾ Penciner, pp. 2-3. (He, of course, was speaking from a non-Muslim perspective and that explains the examples he choose.)

either. In sum, one definitely does not have to use *Powerpoint* to give a meaningful, effectual and educational speech.

The next big question is that if someone were to use Powerpoint or modern technology in his *khutbah*, what is the content that he is going to present? The literature on Powerpoint (referred to earlier in footnote 14) all seem to agree that Powerpoint is not very useful if simply used to present text. Tufte recommends, for example,

No matter how beautiful your PP [PowerPoint] ready-made template is, it would be better if there were less of it. Never use PP templates for arraying words or numbers. Avoid elaborate hierarchies of bullet lists. Never read aloud from slides. Never use PP templates to format paper reports or web screens. Use PP as a projector for showing low-resolution color images, graphics, and videos that cannot be reproduced as printed handouts at a presentation.⁽¹⁾

Tufte's remarks are somewhat echoed by Penciner,

Ultimately, there is nothing evil about PowerPoint, just about the way PowerPoint is used. PowerPoint is a tool; it is not pedagogy. With careful consideration, effective use of PowerPoint and other slideware can at least result in increased learner satisfaction. Challenging the traditional paradigm of PowerPoint *use and*

⁽¹⁾ Tufte, p. 24. Tufte also repeatedly warns against "PowerPointPhluff," where simple text is embellished with irrelevant and distracting pictures and decorations.

employing more relevant images with narration and less text may result in enhanced learning.⁽¹⁾

How are khateeb's going to be guided or, perhaps, restrained on this issue? The most likely permissible usage of *Powerpoint* would be things like text, charts, graphs and the like. But that is not very exciting nor very useful. It definitely also is not needed. Those who are anxious to truly exploit new technology may wish to spice up their presentations. It is then very possible that pictures and videos would be used. Should one expect video clips containing women, women without hijab, news clips, cartoons, documentaries with music and like during the Friday Khutbah? Perhaps an unprepared *khateeb* might simply share a *khutbah* from Youtube and they all sit and watch, including the "Khateeb" himself.

It is true that most scholars accept today's form of picture (*tasweer*) as permissible for specific purposes, although some somewhat begrudgingly. That does not mean, for example, that they allow displaying pictures in the mosque or during a khutbah.⁽²⁾ Certainly, the sanctity of the mosque itself and the sanctity of the Friday Prayer would preclude the permissibility of these types of showings. They may have their purpose and necessary places but it does not seem that the mosque and the Friday Prayer—which is still a ritualistic prayer with strict limitations on behavior—would be the appropriate place for them. And Allah alone knows best.

⁽¹⁾ Penciner, p. 4 (emphasis added).

⁽²⁾ See Ahmad al-Duwaish, compiler, *Fataawaa al-Lajnah al-Daaimah* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Riaasah Idaarah al-Buhooth al-Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftaa), vol. 1, pp. 689-690.

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE USE OF POWERPOINT AND OTHER MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN THE FRIDAY KHUTBAH

After reviewing the Prophet's manners of teaching, the Prophet's manners of giving khutbahs and the potential of modern technology, it can be concluded that it is best to avoid such things during the Friday Khutbah for the following reasons:

- (1) Similar activities were not recorded to have been done by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Friday khutbahs. That puts these kinds of actions into the category of *Tark al-Nabi*, implying that they should be avoided in the same way that he avoided them. At the very least, such techniques would be considered *خِلَافَ الْأَوَّلَى* or contrary to what would be considered best.
- (2) There is no strong evidence that there is a true need for such modern technology in the khutbah nor that it will add anything beneficial to the khutbah, especially if it is simply text. Thus, in the lack of strong need, once again, it should be avoided as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) avoided similar techniques in his khutbahs.
- (3) There is the potential to use modern technology in the Khutbahs in manners that do not seem proper with respect to the Friday khutbah, such as showing women, having music and the like. This means that some forms of using modern technology in the khutbah go from simply reprehensible to being forbidden.

Note that these conclusions are not a manifestation of conservatively rejecting new technology. There is nothing wrong with new technology per se. However, before it is used, it should be determined to be permissible in its particular usage as well as beneficial in its particular usage. In this case, it was found that there is evidence to indicate some dislike for its usage in the particular case of the Friday Khutbah and it was also determined that there may not be any benefit in using it in the Friday Khutbah.

The discussion here does bring up an interesting question: Why is it that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) employed many educational techniques yet in the Friday Khutbah it seems that he avoided many of them? That is a question that cannot be answered definitively. Perhaps the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left the Friday Khutbah—as opposed to a general lecture or teaching—in its purest form of one Imam speaking directly from his heart to the hearts of the congregation. Perhaps it was to protect the “dignity” of the Friday Prayer, which is part of a ritualistic act, from future infiltrations of multimedia presentations.

Only Allah knows the real reason behind it. However, what is known is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set a special and specific example for the Khutbah and it behooves the Muslims to adhere to that example in order to receive the pleasure of Allah.

The Khateeb Addressing Questions to the Worshippers

It is well-established that the worshippers are supposed to remain silent during the *khutbah*. The following hadith substantiate this point: Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا قُلْتَ لِصَاحِبِكَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ أَنْصِتْ وَالْإِمَامُ يَخْطُبُ فَقَدْ لَعَوْتَ

“When the Imam is delivering the *khutbah*, and you ask your companion to keep quiet and listen, then no doubt you have spoken irreverently (*laghaut*).” (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In this 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*. (Some 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,

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ الْوُضُوءَ، ثُمَّ أَتَى الْجُمُعَةَ، فَاسْتَمَعَ وَأَنْصَتَ، غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَزِيَادَةُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ، وَمَنْ مَسَّ الْحَصَى فَقَدْ لَعَا

“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 a useless 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 such as playing with the pebbles by throwing them leisurely.⁽¹⁾

The following report is also relevant:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، قَالَ: جَلَسَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فَخَطَبَ النَّاسَ، وَتَلَا آيَةً وَإِلَى جَنْبِي أَبِي بِنُ كَعْبٍ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: يَا أُبَيُّ، مَتَى أَنْزَلْتَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ؟ قَالَ: فَأَبَى أَنْ يُكَلِّمَنِي، ثُمَّ سَأَلْتُهُ فَأَبَى أَنْ يُكَلِّمَنِي، حَتَّى نَزَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَقَالَ لِي أَبِي: مَا لَكَ مِنْ جُمُعَتِكَ إِلَّا مَا لَعَيْتَ. فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ جِئْتُهُ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، فَقُلْتُ: أَيُّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، إِنَّكَ تَلَوْتَ آيَةً وَإِلَى جَنْبِي أَبِي بِنُ كَعْبٍ، فَسَأَلْتُهُ مَتَى أَنْزَلْتَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ؟ فَأَبَى أَنْ يُكَلِّمَنِي حَتَّى إِذَا نَزَلَتْ زَعَمَ أَبِي أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِي مِنْ جُمُعَتِي إِلَّا مَا لَعَيْتَ؟ فَقَالَ: «صَدَقَ أَبِي فَإِذَا سَمِعْتَ إِمَامَكَ يَتَكَلَّمُ فَأَنْصِتْ حَتَّى يَفْرُغَ»

⁽¹⁾ Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, trans. *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar al Arabia. n.d.), vol. 2, p. 407, fn. 1133.

Abu al-Dardaa said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was on the *minbar* and was addressing the people and he recited a particular verse. Ubayy ibn Kaab was sitting next to me so I asked him, 'When was that verse revealed?' He refused to talk to me until the Messenger of Allah came down from the *minbar* and then he said to me, 'You have nothing from the Friday Prayer except your vain speech.' When the Prophet (peace be upon him) had finished, I went to him and informed him of what had happened and he said, 'Ubayy has told the truth. If you hear the Imam speaking, be quiet until he is finished.'" (Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tabaraani.⁽¹⁾) In this hadith, one can see that even asking for more information and gaining more knowledge during the *khutbah* is not permissible.

For the majority of the scholars, these hadith imply that speaking during the *khutbah* is absolutely forbidden. This was the opinion of Uthmaan and ibn Umar. In fact, ibn Abdul Barr stated, "There is no difference of opinion among the jurists of the lands that it is obligatory to remain silent for the *khutbah* for those who can hear it."⁽²⁾ Actually, speaking being forbidden is the opinion of the majority of the scholars and is most in accord with the above hadith. Al-Shafi'ee's later opinion was that it is simply preferred to remain quiet during the *khutbah*.⁽³⁾ However, the view of the majority, in the light of the above hadith, is clearly stronger.

It must be noted that some hadith do show that there may be some exceptions to the above strict rule. Among those exceptions is if the *khateeb* speaks to someone in the congregation, it is

⁽¹⁾ According to al-Albaani it is *sahih*. According to al-Arnaaoot et al., it is *sahih lighairih*. Cf., Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Tamaam al-Minah fi Taleeq ala Fiqh al-Sunnah* (Amman, Jordan: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1408 A.H.), p. 338; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muasassah al-Risaalah, 2001), vol. 36, p. 60.

⁽²⁾ Abu Umar Yusuf ibn Abdul Baar, *Al-Istidhkar* (Damascus: Dar Qutaibah, 1993), vol. 5, p. 43.

⁽³⁾ See Ali al-Mawardi, *Al-Haawi al-Kabeer* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), vol. 2, p. 431 for the evidences for his position.

permissible for that person to respond to the *khateeb*. This can be seen in the following hadith—a rare exception to the general rule

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ وَالنَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَخْطُبُ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ، فَقَالَ: «أَصَلَّيْتَ يَا فُلَانُ؟» قَالَ: لَا، قَالَ: «قُمْ فَارْكَعْ رَكْعَتَيْنِ».

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.) There are also some other hadith in *al-Bukhari* and elsewhere wherein people stood and asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) important questions during the *khutbah* and the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not seem to object to their actions. Hence, it is clear from such hadith that this kind of action is permissible. Furthermore, ibn Qudaama points out that any kind of speech that is permissible during the prayer must, by necessity, also be permissible during the *khutbah*. He only referred to speaking due to necessity, such as warning a blind person that he is about to step into something dangerous.⁽¹⁾

As shown earlier, another instructional practice of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was to put questions to the Companions. However, once again, there is no evidence that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah upon him) ever employed this method during the Friday *khutbah*. In fact, as was just demonstrated, there is a command for the listeners to be absolutely silent and listen to the *khateeb*. The

⁽¹⁾ Muwafaq al-Deen Ibn Qudaama, *al-Mughni (wa al-Sharh al-Kabeer ala Matn al-Muqni)* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984), vol. 2, p. 168.

exceptions found in the hadith to this general rule were all due to need and never as an instructional technique. Thus, one cannot make an analogy between those exceptions and putting questions to the congregation as a speaking method.

Once again, this is a case of *tark* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—an action that he avoided during the Friday Khutbah although he could have easily done it and he did do it on other occasions as well. Thus, it is once again definitely best to avoid this practice and this practice should be considered at least *makrooh* during the Friday Prayer.

It should also be noted that this is a common way for Christians to give their sermons, especially in the United States. Some khateebis may have noticed that and may wish to imitate the Christians in this practice. The nature of the Friday Khutbah should remain pristine and not be influenced by foreign influences.

Incidentally, it is very important for khateebis to understand and apply the proper protocols and guidelines for the Friday Khutbah. If nothing else, it gives the congregation confidence that the Khateeb has some understanding and knowledge of the faith, leading the congregation to believe in him and listen to him. For example, more than once this author has heard Khateebis after giving the opening preamble of the Khutbah (what is known as *khutbah al-haajah*) then give the salutations (saying *al-salaam al-alaikum* to the congregation), putting the congregation into the awkward position of knowing whether or not it is permissible to respond to salutations during a Khutbah, even if from the Imam. This action by the Khateeb demonstrates that he has very little knowledge of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to give khutbahs. If someone shows a lack of knowledge of some of the basics of giving the khutbah, one will then question his level of knowledge as a whole and therefore the receptiveness to the khutbah will be lessened.

WHAT IS THE RULING OF AN INSTANTANEOUS TRANSLATION OF THE KHUTBAH AND WHAT THAT IMPLIES OF PEOPLE HANDLING AND USING DEVICES DURING THE KHUTBAH?

The Arabic language is vital to both the proper understanding of the religion as well as its preservation. Thus, there are definitely some benefits to having the Khutbah in Arabic. At the same time, though, the strongest opinion seems to be that it is not obligatory that the Khutbah be in Arabic, especially if most or all of the congregation do not understand Arabic.⁽¹⁾ Since the vast majority of the members of the Muslim congregations in the United States understand English and only a limited percentage of them understand Arabic, it is preferred to have the Khutbah in that common language. This will provide all of the members of the congregation with a feeling of

⁽¹⁾ This is not the proper place to enter into a lengthy discussion of the permissibility of giving the khutbah in languages other than Arabic. This author has discussed it in Jamaal Zarabozo, *The Friday Prayer Part I: The Fiqh* (Ann Arbor, MI: IANA, 2nd edition, 1998), pp. 143-146. The permissibility of giving the Khutbah in other than Arabic is the conclusion of many contemporary scholars [See, for example, Markaz al-Tamayyuz al-Bahthi fi Fiqh al-Qadhaayaa al-Muaasirah, compilers, *Al-Mausooah al-Muyyasarah fi Fiqh al-Qadhaayaa al-Muaasirah* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: 2013), pp. 170-179.] Interestingly, the Hanafis used to be the most accommodating on this issue and yet some contemporary Hanafis are now the least accommodating on this point. Thus, for example, one finds in *al-Muheet al-Burhaani fi al-Fiqh al-Numaani*, "If [the khateeb] were to give the khutbah in Persian, it would be permissible under any circumstances according to Abu Hanifah. Bishr narrated from Abu Yoosuf that if he gave the khutbah in Persian while he is able to speak Arabic, then it would not suffice unless he makes the *dhikr* of Allah [such as the verses] in Arabic or more, then it would suffice..." [Burhaan al-Deen ibn Maazah al-Bukhari al-Hanafi, *al-Muheet al-Burhaani fi al-Fiqh al-Numaani* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Imiyyah, 2004), vol. 2, p. 74.] On the other hand, see for example, Taqi Usmani's *The Language of the Friday Khutbah*. The first and perhaps the strongest point that Usmani makes is that Umar ibn al-Khattaab is narrated to have said, "The Khutbah has been prescribed in lieu of two rakats. Whoever fails to deliver Khutbah must pray four rakat." (That translation is very poor but that is how it is in the English edition. Furthermore, the wording that Usmani presents of the narration is incorrect as well.) His argument then is that the Khutbah is like the prayer and since the pray must be in Arabic, the khutbah must be in Arabic. First, this report is recorded by ibn Abi Shaibah (vol. 1, p. 460) but with a broken chain. Therefore, it cannot be considered a proof. (It was the opinion of some early scholars but, again, that does not make it an authority.) Secondly, it definitely cannot imply that all of the rules and regulations of the Prayer apply to the Khutbah. Otherwise, for example, the Khateeb must be obliged to face the Kaabah and no one, obviously, makes that claim. The most that can be said from this narration is that if the Khutbah is not given at that time on Friday, then one has to pray four rakats of Dhuhr. And Allah alone knows best. Usmani's work is available at <http://www.darultahqiq.com/the-language-of-the-friday-khutbah-mufti-taqi-usmani/>.

belonging, being engaged and learning as well as being connected with the Khateeb and understanding directly from him what he is attempting to communicate.

There could be circumstances in which a Khateeb is desired due to his level of knowledge even though he is not able to communicate in English. In such a case, in order for all to benefit, there may be need for a translation of the Khutbah.

The following possibilities exist with respect to the translation:

A translation could be given while the Khateeb is sitting between the two khutbahs. In reality, though, this would have to be considered three khutbahs then. Each khutbah is simply a communique given by itself and this would constitute three instead of two. That would definitely contravene the Sunnah.

A translation could be given after the Khateeb is done with his two khutbahs but before he prays. This would be similar to the first scenario wherein three khutbahs would actually be given.

A third scenario is where one Khateeb gives the first khutbah and a second khateeb gives the translation in the second khutbah. It is unusual to have one Khateeb give the first khutbah and another give the second khutbah. This definitely goes against the practice established in the Sunnah and there does not seem to be any known precedent for this. However, if one accepts the idea of one person giving the khutbahs and another leading the prayer, then this may be acceptable.

A fourth scenario would be to give the translation after the Prayer is finished. Without any doubt, this would be considered permissible. It puts a strain on the congregation as many times people who heard the khutbah or who are not

interested in listening to the translation do not remain quiet to allow others to hear the translation. Similarly, it makes it more difficult to make *dhikr* or perform *sunan* prayers in the mosque.

A final possibility is to have an instantaneous translation done with members of the congregation listening to the translation through headsets. This scenario can be divided into two subcases. One is where the translator is part of the congregation and is obliged to perform that Friday Prayer. Another is where the translator is not part of the congregation—meaning he has already prayed the Friday Prayer or will join a second congregation, as many mosques have more than one Friday Prayer nowadays. In the first subcase, one problematic issue is that the translator will be speaking while the Khateeb is speaking. A second problematic issue is that some of the members of the congregation will not actually be listening to the Khateeb but will be listening to the translator, whose translation is a speech different from that of the speaker.⁽¹⁾ (Indeed, some translators are very loose in their translation.) In the second subcase, only this latter issue is of concern.

In sum, an instantaneous translation transmitted via headphones is not the ideal manner of performing the Friday Prayer. Everyone should remain silent and listen to the Khateeb. There are though, as demonstrated earlier in this paper, possible exception to this general rule due to need. If the community feels that there is a strong need to so in exceptional circumstances, it seems that it is permissible and the violations that occur may be overlooked due to this need. And Allah alone knows best.

⁽¹⁾ Translation theorists agree that exact equivalence between two similar languages is virtually impossible, not to speak of between unrelated languages such as English and Arabic. Cf., Eugene Nida, "Principles of Translation as Exemplified by Bible Translating," In R. A. Brower, *On Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 13. In fact, Bakr Abu Zaid ruled that translations are original works (*mubtakar*) in their own right. See Bakr Abu Zaid, *Fiqh al-Nawaazil* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1996), vol. 2, p. 162.

WHAT IS THE RULING OF HAVING LESSONS ON FRIDAY IN THE MOSQUE BEFORE THE FRIDAY PRAYER?

The default case would seem to be that if there is no prohibition for such a gathering, then it is permissible. However, in this case, there is an explicit hadith that touches upon this question. The hadith, of course, needs to be discussed with respect to its authenticity, correct wording and meaning.

THE HADITH PROHIBITING GATHERINGS BEFORE SALAAT AL-JUMUAH

There is one explicit hadith concerning having a gathering before the Jumuah Prayer.⁽¹⁾ Abu Dawood, for example, records the following:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ نَهَى عَنِ الشَّرَاءِ وَالْبَيْعِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، وَأَنْ تُنْشَدَ فِيهِ ضَالَّةٌ، وَأَنْ يُنْشَدَ فِيهِ شِعْرٌ، وَنَهَى عَنِ التَّحَلُّقِ قَبْلَ الصَّلَاةِ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited buying and selling in the mosque, announcing aloud about a lost thing in [the mosque], the recitation of poetry in it, and prohibited having a *halqa* (meetings in which people gather, often in semi-circles⁽²⁾) on Friday before the prayer.” Although

⁽¹⁾ There is actually a second hadith recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Mujam al-Kabeer* and *Musnad al-Shaamiyyeen* whose wording is as follows: عَنْ وَائِلَةَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا يُتَحَلَّقُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ الْإِمَامِ Waathilah who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “No gathering should be held on Friday before the Imam comes.” However, this narration comes through Bishr ibn Aun who is known for narrating fabricated reports through this same chain. Thus, this hadith will be ignored here. See Noor al-Deen al-Haithami, *Majma al-Zawaaid wa Manba al-Fawaaid* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2001), vol. 2, p. 331.

⁽²⁾ The meetings are such that there is an empty space in the middle of the gathering, like a ring or a circle. In reality, it need not be in a circular fashion. Furthermore, from what this author has read, the early scholars understood such a gather to refer to any type of study meeting. For more on this point, see Muhammad Musa Nasr, *Al-Lumah fi Hukm al-Ijtima li-l-Durus Qabl Salat al-Jumuah* (Riyadh: Dar al-Raayyah, 1991), pp. 7-8. For scholars who have interpreted *halqah* as meetings for the purpose of knowledge regardless the manner of the meeting, see Abu =

this hadith has been recorded in many books⁽¹⁾, it is a hadith that is uniquely narrated through the chain of Amr ibn Shuaib on the authority of his father on the authority of his grandfather.⁽²⁾ Additionally, the only one who is known to have narrated it from Amr ibn Shuaib was Muhammad ibn Ajlaan.

THE GRADING OF THE HADITH

The chain of Amr ibn Shuaib on the authority of his father on the authority of his grandfather is a well-known controversial one. It has been critiqued on many counts.⁽³⁾

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Sulaimaan al-Khataabi, *Muaalim al-Sunan* on the margin of Abdul Adheem al-Mundhiri, *Mukhtasar Sunan Abi Dawood* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2001), vol. 1, p. 356; Badr al-Deen al-Aini, *Umdah al-Qaari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar Ihyaa al-Turath al-Arabi), vol. 2, p. 31; Muhammad Ashraf al-Adheemabaadi, *Aun al-Mabood Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1990), vol. 3, p. 294.

⁽¹⁾ Abdul Malik Qaadhi presents the picture below of the chains of this hadith. Unfortunately though it is extremely incomplete:

محمد بن عجلان - ابن شبيب - أبيه	حاتم بن إسحاق	أبو كريب	ابن ماجه	٢٥٩/١	السنن
	أبو الهيثم	محمد بن ربح	ابن ماجه	٢٥٩/١	السنن
	يحيى	أحمد بن حنبل		١٧٩/٢	المسند
		مسدد	أبو داود	٢٨٣/١	السنن
	يحيى بن سعد	إسحاق بن إبراهيم	السنائي	١٧/٢	السنن
		بنار	ابن خزيمة	٢٧١/٢	الصحیح
		يعقوب بن إبراهيم	ابن خزيمة	٢٧١/٢	الصحیح
			ابن خزيمة	١٥٨/٣	الصحیح
	أبو خالد الأحمر	ابن أبي شيبة		١٦٧/١	المصنف
		عبد الله الأشج	ابن خزيمة	٢٧٥/٢	الصحیح
		يحيى بن بكر	البيهقي	٢٢٤/٣	السنن

Abdul Malik Qaadhi, *Mausooh al-Hadith al-Nabawwi: Salaat al-Jumuah* (Riyadh: Dar al-Aasimah, 1410 A.H.), p. 138.

This author found this hadith in at least nine additional collections to those mentioned by Qaadhi.

⁽²⁾ For a list of the hadith texts that are unique through this chain, see Muhammad Ali ibn Al-Siddeeq, *Saheefataa Amr ibn Shuaib wa Bahz ibn Hakeem Ind al-Muhadditheen wa al-Fuqahaa* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Wizaarah al-Auqaaf wa al-Shuoon al-Islaamiyyah, 1992), pp. 149-150.

⁽³⁾ In general, five objections have been made concerning this chain: (1) The chain is broken between Shuaib ibn Muhammad and Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As. That is, Shuaib did not hear hadith from Abdullah; (2) If the grandfather referred to in the chain is Muhammad ibn Abdullah, then the chain is broken between Muhammad and the Prophet (peace be upon him) because Muhammad was not a Companion; (3) The hadith from this chain are based on a book and not the formal methods of transmitting hadith; (4) There are number of objectionable reports that have come through this chain. This is evidence that it could not be the transmission of the preserved collection of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As; (5) Amr ibn Shuaib has been accused of committing *tadlees* and most of these reports from him are with ther term *an*. The first four of these issues are dealt with in detail by ibn al-Siddeeq, pp. 135-145. See also Ahmad al-Suwiyaan, *Sahaif al-Sahaaba wa Tadween al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah al-Musharifah* (N.c.: N.p. 1990), pp. 72-92.

The great grandfather (not the grandfather) of Amr ibn Shuaib was the Companion Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas. The Companion Abdullah used to record some of the Prophet's statements in the Prophet's presence. He thus had his own collection of hadith known as *al-Saheefah al-Saadiqah*, which became his most prized possession. This written collection of hadith was kept in the family and passed down to Amr ibn Shuaib who used to narrate its hadith.

This is not the proper place to delve into all of the difficulties concerning this chain. It is perhaps sufficient here to mention some of the conclusions of the scholars of hadith concerning this chain. Some scholars consider this chain weak, others seem to be uncertain about it and yet a third group considers it *sahih* or acceptable. The compilers of the *Sunan* works, ibn Khuzaimah, ibn Hibbaan (to some extent) and al-Haakim all accept and use as evidence the hadith of this book (*saheefah*). Al-Haakim and ibn al-Atheer both described the hadith of this chain as being at the level of *sahih*. Ibn Abdul-Barr said that the people of knowledge do not differ over accepting and acting by such hadith.⁽¹⁾ Among contemporary scholars, both al-Albaani and Ahmad Shaakir accept this chain as *sahih*.⁽²⁾ Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., have declared this chain *hasan*.⁽³⁾

The scholars of fiqh in particular accept this *saheefah*, including Malik⁽⁴⁾ and Ahmad. Ibn Taimiyyah stated that a *saheefah* that dates back to the Prophet and comes through acceptable means must be considered an authority. Ahmad recognized the possibility of difference of opinion over the work from a hadith point of view. Thus

⁽¹⁾ Ibn al-Siddeeq, pp. 75-76.

⁽²⁾ Cf., ibn al-Siddeeq, p. 77.

⁽³⁾ See, for example, al-Arnaaoot, et al., vol. 11, p. 205.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibn al-Siddeeq also mentions al-Shaafi'ee here but later (p. 147) he contradicts this conclusion.

Abu Dawood quotes him as saying that if the scholars of hadith wish to accept these hadith, they can, and if they wish to abandon them, they can.⁽¹⁾ Al-Bukhari said that he has seen Ahmad, Ali ibn al-Madeeni, Ishaq and others using the hadith of Amr from his father from his grandfather as evidence. He said, "None of the Muslims abandoned them."⁽²⁾ Yahya ibn Maeen said, "If Amr ibn Shuaib narrates from his father from his grandfather, it is a book and due to it comes its weakness."⁽³⁾ He said that Amr is trustworthy in himself but his hadith through the book must be considered weak because they are *mursal* [missing a narrator], as he did not hear those hadith.⁽⁴⁾ Abu Zurah said, "People objected due to the amount that he narrated from his father on the authority of his grandfather. He only heard a few hadith but then took the *saheefah* that he had and narrated it."⁽⁵⁾ Ibn Hajar concludes that if he is trustworthy in himself and he did hear some of the *saheefah*, then it should be considered a sound and acceptable form of *wijaadah* [receiving hadith through a book in one's possession]. Al-Dhahabi concluded, as did others, that these hadith are from the highest level of hasan hadith.⁽⁶⁾

Those who reject this chain include ibn Hibbaan, although he has actually contradicted himself on this point, and ibn Hazm, who is known for his rather stringent view on occasion. There is also a view among the Shafi'ees that such a chain is to be rejected because the chain is broken. Al-Sheeraazi expressed this view in *al-Luma fi al-Usool* and al-Nawawi commented that such is the view of some

⁽¹⁾ Quoted in ibn al-Siddeeq, p. 73.

⁽²⁾ Ibid., p. 73.

⁽³⁾ Ibid., p. 74.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

⁽⁵⁾ Ibid., p. 74.

⁽⁶⁾ Ibid., p. 78.

Shaafi'ees.⁽¹⁾ In fact, al-Shaafi'ee himself "hesitated" in accepting such hadith unless they were supported from another source. However, the majority of the Shaafi'ees accept these hadith.⁽²⁾ Actually, one can find this chain accepted and used as hadith in books coming from all-four schools of fiqh.⁽³⁾

The second issue with this report is that it is solidarity narrated from Amr ibn Shuaib by Muhammad ibn Ajlaan. Muhammad ibn Ajlaan is a narrator that has some critical remarks made about him but in the end it seems clear that he was an acceptable narrator. He was one of Malik's and Shubah's teachers and declared *thiqah* or trustworthy by Imam Ahmad, Yahya ibn Maeen, ibn Uyaina and others. Muslim used in his *Sahih* for corroborating reports.⁽⁴⁾

Thus, al-Nawawi, al-Albaani, Abdul Qadir al-Arnaaoot, Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., and al-al-Wallawi have all declared this particular chain of this hadith concerning having *halqahs* in the mosque before the Friday Prayer as *hasan*.⁽⁵⁾ Ibn Khuzaimah and ibn al-Arabi have declared it *sahih*.⁽⁶⁾

⁽¹⁾ Cf., ibn al-Siddeeq, p. 144.

⁽²⁾ Ibid., p. 147.

⁽³⁾ See, for example, from the Hanafi school: Alaa al-Deen al-Kaasaani, *Badaai al-Sanaai fi Tarteeb al-Sharaai* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1986), vol. 7, p. 77; Muhammad al-Baabarti, *al-Inaayah Sharh al-Hidaayah* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 7, p. 119. From the Maliki School: Maalik ibn Anas, *al-Mudawwanah al-Kubraa* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1994), vol. 1, p. 341. From the Shafiee School: Ali al-Mawardi, *Al-Haawi al-Kabeer* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), vol. 3, p. 384; Abu al-Husain al-Imrani, *al-Bayaan fi Madhhab al-Imaam al-Shafiee* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Daar al-Minhaaj, 2000), vol. 2, p. 637. From the Hanbali School: Muwafaq al-Deen ibn Qudaamah, *al-Kaafi fi Fiqh al-Imaam Ahmad* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah), vol. 4, p. 12.

⁽⁴⁾ One can consult, for example, Shams al-Deen al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan al-Itidaal* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1995), vol. 6, 256-258.

⁽⁵⁾ Yahya al-Nawawi, *Khulaasah al-Ahkamm fi Muhimmaat al-Sunan wa Qawaaid al-Ahkaam* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muasassah al-Risaalah, 1997), vol. 2, p. 787; Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood (wa huwa Kitaab al-Umm)* (Kuwait: Muasassah Gheras, 2002), vol. 4, pp. 246-247; Abdul-Qadir al-Arnaaoot, footnotes to Majd al-Deen ibn al-Atheer, *Jaami al-Usool fi Ahaadeeth al-Rasool* (Maktabah al-Halwaani, 1971), vol. 5, p. 694; Shuaib al-Arnaaoot, et al., footnotes to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut, Lebanon: Muasassah al-Risaalah, 1997), vol. 11, p. 257; Muhammad ibn Ali al-Ithiyooobi al-Wallawi, *Dhakheera al-Uqbah fi Sharh al-Mujtabaa* (Makkah, Saudi Arabia: Daar Aal Baroom, 1999), vol. 9, p. 24.

⁽⁶⁾ As quoted in al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 4, p. 247.

THE VARIATION IN THE WORDING OF THE HADITH

Another issue that occurs with respect to this hadith is that there is a variation in its wording that could possibly restrict the generality of its meaning. This wording is found, with slight variations in wording, in *Saheeh ibn Khuzaimah*, *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* and *al-Lataaif min Daqaaif al-Maarif*.⁽¹⁾ The text from ibn Abi Shaibah is:

مَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنِ الْخَلْقِ لِلْحَدِيثِ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ قَبْلَ الصَّلَاةِ

“The Messenger of Allah prohibited *halqah* for conversations on Friday before the Prayer.” A significant difference here is that the words, “*li-l-hadeeth*,” could be understood to refer only to worldly or personal discussions as opposed to lessons related to the faith.⁽²⁾ Thus, one could argue on the basis of this narration that the earlier mentioned narration from Amr ibn Shuaib does not prohibit having meetings or *halqahs* before the Friday Prayer in the mosque if those meetings are related to teaching the faith.

However, the narration with this wording only comes through Abu Khaalid Sulaimaan ibn Hayaan al-Ahmar on the authority of ibn Ajlaan from Amr ibn Shuaib. In other words, it is the same hadith going through ibn Ajlaan but only Abu Khaalid narrates in this fashion. In so doing, Abu Khaalid has narrated this hadith from ibn Ajlaan in a manner that contradicts how all of Yahya ibn Saeed al-Qattaan, al-Laith

⁽¹⁾ Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Khuzaimah al-Naisaboori, *Sahih ibn Khuzaimah* (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1980), vol. 2, p. 275; Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaibah, *al-Musannaf* (Cairo, Egypt: Al-Faarooq al-Hadeethah, 2008), vol. 2, pp. 539-540; Abu Musa al-Madani, *al-Lataaif min Daqaaif al-Maarif fi Uloom al-Hifaadh al-Aarif* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1999), p. 70.

⁽²⁾ Interestingly one could argue that this wording or meaning is very consistent with the remainder of the hadith, which seems to prohibit purely worldly actions to be performed in the mosque, such as announcing that one has lost his camel, reciting poetry and so forth. However, that does not indicate that these additional words are correct. In fact, the word for prohibited (*nahaa*) has been repeated in front of the prohibition of having *halqahs* before the Friday Prayer, implying that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could have made this statement separate from the other proscriptions.

ibn Saad, ibn Laheeah, Haatim ibn Ismaeel and Safwaan ibn Isa narrated the exact same hadith from ibn Ajlaan.

Moreover, there are some issues with Abu Khaalid as a narrator. Ibn Adi, who is one of the most complete in his research and discussion of narrators, concluded, after pointing out that Abu Khaalid has a poor memory and makes many mistakes, that what ibn Maeen said about Abu Khaalid is correct: صدوق وليس بحجة "He is honest but he is not an authority in narration."⁽¹⁾ That is especially significant concerning a narration in which he has contradicted at least five other narrators, a couple of whom who are considered among the best in narration.

The conclusion concerning this variation of the report is that it is incorrect and *shaadh* (contradicting stronger evidence). Hence, its meaning need not enter into the discussion of the meaning or implications of the hadith.

REPORTS CONTRADICTING THE HADITH

Another issue concerning this hadith is that there seems to be a number of reports coming from notable Companions and scholars that contradict its implications. This could possibly question its authenticity or raise issues concerning its proper interpretation.

Aasim ibn Muhammad narrated that his father said, "I saw Abu Hurairah go out of Friday on hold on to the *minbar*, standing, saying, 'Abu al-Qaasim, the Messenger of Allah, the Truthful, the Trustworthy, related to us...' And he would continue

⁽¹⁾ Abu Ahmad Ibn Udayy [sic] al-Jurjaani, *al-Kaamil fi Dhua'faa al-Rijaal* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.), vol 4, p. 282.

narrating until he would hear the gate of the door for the Imam of the Prayer open and he would sit.” Recorded by al-Haakim who said that is chain is *sahih* but al-Bukhari and Muslim did not record it. Al-Dhahabi concurred. However, this is possibly an overstatement, as al-Haakim is known for. At best, the chain is *hasan* or has a slight weakness due to the presence of Ahmad ibn Kaamil, who al-Daaraqutni criticized lightly.⁽¹⁾

Abu Awwaanah records that Thaabit al-Araaj used to be sent by his masters to go to the mosque on Fridays and listen to Abu Hurairah narrate hadith before the Imam came out.⁽²⁾ However, Abu Awwaanah narrates this story in *muallaq* form, simply saying, “Al-Humaidi said that Sufyaan narrated to us...,” after presenting the complete chain previously of: “Abu Ismaaeel al-Tirmidhi narrated to us saying that al-Humaidi narrated to us saying that Sufyaan narrated to us...” Abu Awwaanah did narrate from al-Humaidi but technically speaking “he said” is not demonstrating the manner in which he received the narration. This is very subtle but it does mean that the chain has a weakness to it. Furthermore, Abu Awwaanah’s work is a *mustakhraj* (compilation of same hadith with different chains) of *Sahih Muslim* and Muslim did not record this additional portion. Additionally, this additional portion of the report was not even mentioned by al-Humaidi himself in his *Musnad*, although he records the hadith itself.⁽³⁾ However, it may be corroborated with the previous report to conclude that there could be some substance to the notion that Abu Hurairah used to have a *halqah* before the Imam came out on Friday. At the same time, though, it

⁽¹⁾ See Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Lisaan al-Meezaan* (Beirut, Lebanon: Maktab al-Matbooaat al-Islaamiyyah, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 581-2.

⁽²⁾ Abu Awwaanah al-Asfaraaini, *Musnad Abi Awwaanah* (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Marifah, 1998), vol. 3, pp. 63-64.

⁽³⁾ Abu Bakr al-Humaidi, *Musnad al-Humaidi* (Damascus, Syria: Daar al-Saqaa, 1996), vol. 2, p. 294.

is not definitive, as it is possible for Abu Hurairah to narrate hadith privately without actually having a *halqah* or lesson.

Ibn Abi Shaibah records that al-Saaib said, "We used to hold *halqahs* on Fridays before the Prayer."⁽¹⁾ One of the narrators in the chain of this report is Usaamah ibn Zaid and there seems to be agreement that he is weak.⁽²⁾

Al-Tabaraani records an incident where Abdul Rahman ibn Mahdi came to the *halqah* of Yahya ibn Saeed and Muaadh ibn Muaadh on a Friday before the Prayer and he sat outside of the *halqah*. Yahya told him to join the gathering and Abdul Rahman told him, "You are the one who narrated to me from Muhammad ibn Ajlaan...," and then he continued the hadith of Amr ibn Shuaib prohibiting such gatherings on Friday. Yahya then said, "I have seen Habeeb ibn Shaheed, Hishaam ibn Hassaan and Saeed ibn Abi Uroobah having *halqahs* before the Imam comes out on Fridays." Abdul Rahman then said to him, "It reached them that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited such gatherings and then they did it!" At that Yahya remained silent.⁽³⁾

Ibn Abi Shaibah records that Muaawiyah ibn Qurrah said, "I met thirty from Muzainah, all of whom were stabbed or did stab or were struck or struck others for the sake Allah, when it was Friday they would make *ghusl*, wear their best clothing,

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Abi Shaibah, vol. 2, p. 540. According to Ibn Abi Haatim, there is a mistake in the way that Ibn Abi Shaibah recorded it. One of the narrator's is Muhammad ibn Yoosuf while Ibn Abi Shaibah has recorded his name as al-Saaib ibn Yoosuf. See Abu Muhammad ibn Abi Haatim, *al-Ilal* (Mataabi al-Humaidhi, 2006), vol. 2, p. 582.

⁽²⁾ Shams al-Deen al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan al-Itidaal* (Beirut, Lebanon: Al-Resalah al-Alamiyah, 2009), vol. 1, p. 184. Nasr, p. 20, offers a very different response to this report.

⁽³⁾ Abu al-Qasim al-Tabaraani, *al-Mujam al-Ausat* (Cairo, Egypt: Daar al-Haramain, 1995), vol. 6, pp. 358-359. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi also narrates this incident but it is interesting to note that he does not mention the last part where Yahya remained silent and was not able to respond to Abdul Rahman. See al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, *al-Jaami li-Akhlaaq al-Raawi wa Adaab al-Saami* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1996), p. 271.

apply cologne and then go to the mosque and pray two rakahs. Then they would sit and spread knowledge.”⁽¹⁾ The chain of this hadith is *hasan*. This narration, though, does not say that they would hold *halqahs* or gatherings. It is possible to spread knowledge simply by sitting and speaking to others individually or having a questioner come to someone.

Although some of the narrations quoted above were found to be weak, there are undoubtedly possibly more narrations that imply that some scholars had *halqahs* before the Friday Prayer. It would probably be far-fetched to try to deny every report that imply that an early scholar had a *halqah* before the Friday Prayer.

For some of those later scholars, it is possible that they did not accept the hadith of Amr ibn Shuaib because, as was mentioned, there is some dispute about its chain.⁽²⁾ As for other later scholars and also the earliest of scholars, including any Companions, it is very possible that these individuals were unaware of this hadith from Abdullah ibn Amr, as not all statements of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were necessarily known to every Companion or widely disseminated. As noted earlier, the prohibition found in this hadith has only been passed on from Abdullah ibn Amr and hence the others who gave lectures before the Friday Prayer were simply unaware of this report. Similarly, it is also possible that Abdullah ibn Amr was not aware of them having such gatherings in the mosque before the Friday Prayer. Many of those just quoted were in Madinah. Abdullah ibn Amr spent a great portion of his life after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) outside of Madinah, engaged in both jihad and

⁽¹⁾ Ibn Abi Shaibah, vol. 2, p. 566.

⁽²⁾ Thus, Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, who recorded the story of Abdul-Rahman and Yahya quoted earlier, noted that some scholars do not accept the narrations of Amr ibn Shuaib and then he said, “It is possible that Yahyaa ibn Saeed and the others in agreement with him did not abide by that hadith due to this reason.” Al-Baghdaadi, p. 271.

government administration. He was outside of Madinah until 25 A.H. He then did spend a good number of years in Madinah but then he left again for Palestine, al-Shaam and Egypt. From the year 45 A.H. until his death in 65 A.H. he was reportedly traveling from place to place, including Madinah, Taaif, al-Shaam and Egypt.⁽¹⁾

The bottom line, though is that, in general—as when Abdul Rahman ibn al-Mahdi put the question to Yahya—none of the actions of any of these scholars is an authority in Islam. Even a statement of a Companion cannot be considered a *hujjah* if it contradicts a statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The *hujjah* or authority rests with the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and, as stated earlier, the hadith prohibiting such gatherings is a *hasan* hadith.

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HADITH

Various scholars have attempted to give an interpretation of the hadith of Amr ibn Shuaib and its legal implication.

For example, al-Tahaawi states that this hadith only refers to a situation where the study circle dominates the mosque. If the *halqah* does not dominate the mosque, then it is not disliked (*makrooh*).⁽²⁾ However, there is nothing apparent in the hadith itself that would lead one to this conclusion.

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi stated that the hadith of Amr ibn Shuaib should be understood to apply to cases where the *halqah* is close to the Imam and as such people are busy speaking among themselves rather than listening to the *khutbah*.

⁽¹⁾ The details of where Abdullah spent his life may be found in Muhammad Saif al-Deen Ulyash, *Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas wa Saheefatuhu al-Saadiqah* (Cairo, Egypt: Muasassah al-Ahraam, 1998), pp. 60-70.

⁽²⁾ Abu Jafar al-Tahaawi, *Sharh Maani al-Athar* (Aalam al-Kutub, 1994), vol. 4, p. 359.

He then states that if the mosque is big and the *halqah* is distant from the Imam, such that his voice does not reach them, then there is no harm in doing that. He says that he had seen a number of his teachers from the jurists and scholars of hadith doing that. He says that it was also done by a number of the Companions and Followers.⁽¹⁾ He then goes on to quote the narration from Muaawiyah ibn Qurrah, quoted earlier, which does not actually establish what he has stated. This is an awkward interpretation of the hadith which, once again, does not seem to be indicated by the wording of the hadith.

Other scholars have simply emphasized the wisdom behind this prohibition without attempting any interpretation to get around the prohibition. Thus, Al-Khataabi said that this hadith means that it is disliked to have study meetings and such before the Friday Prayer as, instead, the people should be involved in prayer, remembrance of Allah and silence in preparation for the *khutbah*. After they finish the Prayer, he says, they are free to gather for such study circles. Prior to the Prayer, there is no question that such study circles or general lectures will be a disturbance to those who are engaged in prayer, making *dhikr* or reading the Quran.⁽²⁾ The problem with such gatherings, says al-Iraqi, is that they cut through the lines and the people who come early to the Friday Prayer should be in lines from the front of the mosque to the back.⁽³⁾

What these various scholars have offered can at best be considered the *hikmah* or wisdom behind the prohibition but none of them can claim that it is the *illah*

⁽¹⁾ Abu Bakr al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, *Al-Faqeeh wa al-Mutafaqqih* (Maktabah al-Tauyah al-Islaamiyyah, 2002), vol. 2, p. 272.

⁽²⁾ Al-Khattaabi, vol. 1, p. 247.

⁽³⁾ Cf., al-Adheemabadi, *Aun*, vol. 3, pp. 417-418.

(effective legal cause) behind the prohibition such that if it is not present, the ruling does not apply.

THE RULING FROM THE PROHIBITION IN THE HADITH

Al-Shaukaani states that the majority of the scholars consider the proscription in the hadith of Amr ibn Shuaib to imply that such *halqahs* are disliked (*makrooh*).⁽¹⁾ However, the strongest opinion among the legal theorists is that the default ruling of a proscription is prohibition (*haram*), not reprehension (*makrooh*).⁽²⁾ What this means is that if someone is going to claim that the proscription does not mean prohibition, the burden of proof is on him to demonstrate why that is the case. Al-Wallawi makes the point that those scholars who say that such *halqahs* are not prohibited but are only disliked do not offer any proof that would change the implication of the original proscription. He concludes that the apparent meaning of the text is that such gatherings are forbidden.⁽³⁾

Others who have also come to the conclusion that such *halqahs* are prohibited include Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani,⁽⁴⁾ and Muhammad Musa Nasr.⁽⁵⁾ Ibn Uthaimen says that if a *halqah* is held and the microphone is used so that all can hear it, that *halqah* is an evil act and an innovation.⁽⁶⁾ The Standing Committee of

⁽¹⁾ Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar* (Cairo, Egypt: Daar al-Hadeeth, 1993), vol. 2, p. 186.

⁽²⁾ There are five well-known opinions among the legal theorists as to the legal value of *al-nahi* (proscription) but the strongest view and the view of the majority is that it implies prohibition. Cf., Hamood Saeed, "Al-Nahi wa Atharuhu fi Ahkaam al-Tahaarah wa al-Salaat wa al-Zakaat: Diraasah wa Tatbeeqa" (Makkah, Saudi Arabia: Umm al-Quraa University, Master's Dissertation, 1994), pp. 73-87.

⁽³⁾ Al-Wallawi, vol. 9, p. 24

⁽⁴⁾ See Nasr, pp. 68-72.

⁽⁵⁾ Nasr, *passim*.

⁽⁶⁾ This ruling from ibn Uthaimen can be found at <http://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?showtopic=140093>.

the Leading Scholars of Saudi Arabia also ruled that such gatherings should not be held.⁽¹⁾ In sum, the hadith points to such gathering as being forbidden.

***CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF HAVING HALQAHS
BEFORE THE FRIDAY PRAYER***

The practice of having lectures before the Friday Prayers has become a regular practice in different parts of the world.⁽²⁾ In some parts of the world, it has become an extremely important practice on Friday. In many of the non-Arabic parts of the world (including the United States) it has become a standard practice to first have a *bayaan* in the local language and then after the call to prayer give the *khutbah* in Arabic, regardless of whether anyone understands Arabic or not.

Once again, as Nasr points out, the time before the Friday Prayer offers a great opportunity to speak to a large setting of Muslims. However, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never offered another lecture before the Friday Prayer, although it would have been quite easy for him to have done so. Hence, this falls once again under the category of sunnah known as *tark al-nabi*. As discussed earlier, this type of sunnah is to be followed in the same way that the sunnah for doing specific acts should be followed.⁽³⁾

Actually, in this case, there is a clear hadith that prohibits such gatherings. That hadith is *hasan* and a proof in Islamic Law. One cannot violate that hadith without sound and strong evidence that what it apparently indicates is not what is meant. This author has found any such "evidence" to be wanting, to say the least.

⁽¹⁾ See Nasr, pp. 66-67.

⁽²⁾ Nasr, p. 41, states that they do this in Jordan.

⁽³⁾ Nasr, pp. 18-19. Nasr (pp. 20-25) responds to those authentic reports that could imply that some of the Companions did hold such meetings before the Friday Prayer. Also see pp. 26-36 for his refutation of other arguments in support of such meetings before the Friday Prayer.

Additionally, and Allah alone knows best, it is possible that another reason for the prohibition of such *halqa*s is that they belittle the importance of the *khutbah*. People should come to the mosque with the intent of listening to the *khutbah*. The *khutbah* has been established for a very important reason and nothing should interfere with it or override its importance. This author has personally attended mosques which have a *bayaan* before the Friday Prayer. He has witnessed with his own eyes a speech before the Friday Prayer, which is the key speech, followed by the call to prayer and then the Khateeb rattling off something in Arabic, which was in some cases not even understandable because the Khateeb did not know Arabic. Sadly, this is making a mockery of the noble institution of the Friday Khutbah, which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dealt with in a very special manner. It turns the Friday Khutbah into a mere ritual with no sense of admonition to it whatsoever. This, it could be argued, is not a *khutbah* then.⁽¹⁾

It is ironic to think that one reason why this is done is that these scholars believe wholeheartedly that the Khutbah must in Arabic--yet they have no clear, direct and affirmative proof for that conclusion while at the same time this forces them to openly contradict a direct proscription of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is a very sad state of affairs and it is important to recognize that this act of having such lectures before the Friday Prayers is in contradiction to a hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and belittles a very important practice in Islam. As such, efforts must be taken to discontinue this practice.

⁽¹⁾ In *al-Mausooah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, they define the *khutbah* as "an arranged speech that encompasses an admonition and preaching in a specific fashion." Wizaarah al-Auqaaf, *al-Mausooah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah* (Kuwait: Wizaarah al-Auqaaf, 1404 A.H.), vol. 19, p. 176.

PASSING AROUND OF THE COLLECTION PLATE DURING THE KHUTBAH

In some mosques in the West as well as some parts of the Muslim world, it has become commonplace to pass around a collection plate while the *khateeb* is delivering the *khutbah*. The scholars of old seemed to have never come across such a practice. However, there is no question that this act is not proper and should be avoided. First, it seems to be a blatant imitation of an act performed by Christians during their religious services—which is probably where the idea came from. This form of imitation is not permissible.⁽¹⁾ Second, this act distracts the members of the congregation. They are supposed to be listening attentively to the Imam. Anything which is considered distracting is abhorred. Third, if simply touching pebbles is considered a useless interruption, obviously the receiving of the collection plate, the reaching into one's pocket to get money to put into the plate and the possible tapping of the next person to get his attention to take the plate must all be considered useless interruptions. In sum, this act should be avoided. Furthermore, one should not take or pass the plate on if he is in a congregation in which this practice is performed as this would be disrupting his listening to the *khutbah*.

والله تعالى أعلم

⁽¹⁾ For more on this point, see the author's "Whoever Resembles or Imitates a People is One of Them (I)," *al-Basheer*, vol. 6, no. 5 (January-February 1993), pp. 11-22.

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