

محاضرات خطبة الأعمى بالعربية ومساوئها

# THE PROS AND CONS OF DELIVERING A KHUTBAH IN ARABIC TO AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING AUDIENCE<sup>1</sup>

---

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## ADDRESSING THE FOREIGN ELEPHANT IN THE MASALLĀ ROOM

Given that the majority of masjids in the United Kingdom are Hanafi orientated, it is safe to assume that every non-Arab speaking Muslim at least one time in his life has experienced the scenario of sitting in the masjid on a blessed *Jumu'ah* before an English speaking *khateeb* who reels off from memory or a piece a paper between his hands a scripted sermon in Arabic.

Let us delve deeper into the dynamics of the scenario. You are one of the many congregates who are packed into the house of Allah on the blessed day of *Jumu'ah*—a day when Allah created Adam, entered him into a *jannah*, accepted his repentance, sent him down to earth and caused him to taste death. Surely, it is no coincidence that this all took place on *Jumu'ah*? Thus, this must be a clear sign that points to the stupendous significance of *Jumu'ah*. So, the *khateeb* ascends the *mimbar* to deliver a religious reminder that should summon the ears to listen because the hearts are being formally addressed. The *khateeb* starts off by fully or partially orating the Prophet's *Khutbah-Hājah* in the Arabic language and then he transitions into a scripted sermon that, no matter what Hanafi masjid you attend, invariably ends with scripted supplications and a reminder about specific virtues that personify the elite of the Companions and then he instructs the congregates to stand for the prayer.

---

<sup>1</sup> Compiled by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

Now, from the viewpoint of the *khateeb*, it seems that he has executed his religious duty accordingly, but from the viewpoint of the congregants, what has he really achieved outside of his self? Have his words gone transitive or did they paradoxically remain intransitive? Let us play out both viewpoints sequentially but concomitantly because both viewpoints are correlatively coordinating a shared reality. The *khateeb* is standing on a platform which makes his physical being a point of mass focus. He has a microphone to amplify his voice to make his verbal being a point of mass focus. He is physically and audibly in the most advantageous position to execute the wise purpose of a *khutbah* to remind the believers because to remind is to benefit the believers. Meanwhile, and this is a ‘meanwhile’ that is taking place in the same room, the congregants are sitting below and before him, faced in front of him, perfectly positioned to receive a required weekly reminder in a society wherein the opposing reminder is a daily reminder.

Whilst the *khateeb* is delivering his scripted sermon to a sea of bodies united in the physical realm, are their collective minds and hearts unified by his religious reminder? Surely the answer has to be a resounding no! because he is sermonising in a language that the majority cannot comprehend. Thus, while the bodies are united before him, the hearts have vacated the building in different directions. So this raises a question: **given that this same scenario happens week in and week out, do the masses really come to the Hanafi masjids for the reminder or do they only come to fulfil the obligation of the Friday prayer?** This also makes a mockery of the command of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) by rendering it void of wise purpose:

إِذَا سَمِعْتَ إِمَامَكَ يَتَكَلَّمُ فَأَنْصِتْ حَتَّى يَفْرَغَ

**When you hear your Imām speaking, remain quiet and listen until he has finished.<sup>2</sup>**

What is the point of commanding people to be silent and listen if they cannot comprehend the language they are commanded to listen to?! Is this not a clear proof that the language the people are commanded to listen to should be the language they can understand so that they can fulfil the command to listen? What is the point of listening if you cannot understand? Listening without understanding is a kin to chewing food without being capable of swallowing.

---

<sup>2</sup> Classed as *Sabeeh* by Shaykh al-Albāni in *Tamām al-Mannah*, p. 338.

Surely the people responsible for running Hanafi masjids must know that sermonising in a language that is generally not comprehended by the masses is counterintuitive and thus counterproductive to securing the objectives of a *khutbah*. Therefore, one would think that there must be pros that outweigh this massive con and that these pros must come in the form of jurisprudential evidence.

### WHAT DO THE FUQAHĀ SAY?

Whether it be the Hanafī fuqahā or the other fuqahā from the other three schools of thought, they all agreed that it is preferential for the *khutbah* to be delivered in the Arabic language. The point of difference amongst them was with regard to whether Arabic was a condition for its validity or its perfection. Some of the fuqahā, the Mālakis and the Hanablis, are of the view that Arabic is a condition for its validity even if the people listening do not understand the Arabic language. Some of the fuqahā, Shāfa'is and some of the Hanablis, are of the view that Arabic is mandatory unless all of the listeners do not understand the Arabic language and in this case the khutab should be delivered in their own language. A third view amongst the fuqahā, some of the Shāfa'is and Abu Haneefah,<sup>3</sup> is that delivering the *khutbah* in Arabic is recommended but not obligatory and thus it is permissible for the khateeb to deliver the *khutbah* in another language.<sup>4</sup>

As you can see, the majority of the fuqahā subscribe to the view that a condition for the validity for the Friday *khutbah* is that it must be delivered in the Arabic language. It is important to keep in mind at this point that these scholarly views were all formulated when the Arabic language was the lingua franca of the Muslim ummah and that it would have been religiously counterproductive to deliver a *khutbah* in a language other than Arabic. Thus, reasoning that the Arabic language is a condition for the validity of a Friday *khutbah* has a strong foundation to build on when the people being addressed are natives to the Arabic language. Why would you deliver a *khutbah* to people who comprehend Arabic in a language other than Arabic?

---

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, this is the view of the progenitor of the Hanafi madhhab, Abu Hanifah. He is of this view that it is not obligatory to deliver the khutbah in Arabic and that the Khateeb may deliver the khutbah in his own language. This is why we have to make a distinction a *مذهب شخصي* (personal *madhhab* of an Imam) and a *مذهب اسطلاحی* (a conventional *madhhab* that evolved after an Imam). If Abu Hanifah were alive, I wonder what he would say to the people who adhere to his madhhab?

<sup>4</sup> *Mawso'ah al-Fiqhiyyah* (p.180).

So what are some of the arguments that the Hanafī fuqahā present to justify delivering a *khutbah* in Arabic even if its listeners do not understand the Arabic language?

### THE HANAFI STANCE

On Islamqa.org, which is a Hanafī oriented website, Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani concedes **“It is true that Islam being a universal religion, does not want to restrict it to a particular race or language,”** but then he goes on to argue in spite of that the following:

**But at the same time, we notice that while leaving a wide spectrum of education and preaching open to any language convenient for the purpose, Islam has specified some limited functions to be performed in Arabic only. For example, it is mandatory for every Muslim to perform his five times prayers (Salah) in Arabic. This rule applies to all non-Arabs also who cannot normally understand what they are reciting, rather, sometimes it is difficult for them to learn the exact pronunciation of the Arabic words used in the prayers. Likewise, Adhan is the call for attending the congregation of Salah. It is addressed to the local people. But it is made obligatory that it is pronounced in Arabic. Its translation into any other language is not acceptable. Similarly, while performing Hajj we are directed to read talbiyah in Arabic.**

It clear here that he is arguing a case of analogy to substantiate his position with regard to Arabic being a condition for the validity of the Friday *khutbah*. However, is his case of analogy correlatively strong? Let us stress test the robustness of his case of analogy with respect to the prayer. Reciting Arabic in the prayer is indeed a condition for the validity of the prayer, according to the majority of the fuqahā,<sup>5</sup> but the part of the prayer that must be recited in Arabic to fulfil this condition is the opening of the prayer. Ubādah ibn Sāmit said that Allah’s Messenger said,

لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ

**There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book (al-Fātihah).<sup>6</sup>**

---

<sup>5</sup> Abu Hanifah was of the view that it is permissible for a person to recite the Qur’an in other than the language of Arabic. Some of his companions said that it is only permissible for those who cannot recite Arabic.

<sup>6</sup> Reported by Bukhāri and Muslim.

This is an explicit statement from the one who does not speak from his desires (ﷺ) that serves as a compelling evidence for the impermissibility of reciting *al-Fātiha* in a language other than Arabic during the prayer. With regard to the rest of the prayer, such as reciting other chapters, saying the *tasbeeh*, the *tashabbud*, it is obligatory to learn to say them in Arabic if one is able to do that but if he is unable then, according to the majority of the fuqahā, it is permissible for him to say them in his native tongue until he learns. So where is the evidence from the divine sources to apply this legal ruling to the ruling of delivering the khutbah in Arabic? Where is the evidence to even suggest that if a *khateeb* does not sermonise in Arabic then his sermon is invalid, especially if he is sermonising to a non-Arabic speaking people? Mufti Muhammad goes on to state,

**The translation of these words cannot serve the purpose. While greeting each other, we are obligated to say “Assalamu Alaykum” in the exact Arabic words. “Peace Upon You” an exact translation of “Assalamu Alaykum” cannot fulfill the requirement of the recognized (masnoon) greeting even though the former expression is more comprehensible for an English knowing person than the latter. Similarly, while commencing an important work it is desirable to say “Bismillah al-Rahman, al-Rahim”. These specific Arabic words may be translated into English or any other language easily understood by the speaker and the addressee but it will always be preferable to recite the original Arabic words.**

Conveying the *salām* is not the same as delivering a *khutbah* for 15-30 minutes to an audience who do not speak Arabic. Furthermore, the *salām* is a supplication that is made up of three words which can be learnt in a matter of a combination of moments. Can the same be said for a series of Arabic sermons that last for at least 15 minutes? We think not. What applies here also applies to the “Bismillah al-Rahman, al-Rahim”. Mufti Muhammad goes on to state,

**However, for being an internationally united ummah, the Muslim should have some common features, specially in the ways of their worship. The modes of worship which require some oral recitations have, therefore, been prescribed in a manner that all recitations are carried out in one common language, regardless of the linguistic affiliation of the recitors. Arabic has been selected for this purpose, because it is the language in which Qur’an was revealed and in which the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) addressed the humankind. The Holy Qur’an and Sunnah of the**

Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) have been taken as the basic resources from where the rules of Shari'ah are deduced. Both being in Arabic, it is always desirable that a Muslim acquaints himself with it to the best possible extent. To make Arabic a common medium of expression for all Muslims, at least in the ritual reciting, serves this purpose also. When a non-Arab Muslim performs prayer in Arabic five times a day, he automatically establishes a strong relationship with the Qur'anic language which makes him understand a number of the terms and phrases used in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah.

There is no doubt that Arabic, historically at least, is the lingual blood that courses through the veins of the collective body of Muslims, pumping religious oxygen to the heart. However, it is important to remember that language, much like blood, contains oxygen and nutrients. Language itself is nothing if it has no religious oxygen to transport to the Muslim heart. We are not just bonded by a common language called Arabic; that at best is a religious symbol. We are bonded by what the language carries of religious oxygen that allows us to collectively breathe in the oxides of Islam. The goal to understand Islam and practise it accordingly is greater than the goal of uniting the Ummah on one common language. The latter goal in the western world is less realistic than the goal of uniting the Ummah regardless of language, and even that goal seems unrealistic. The Arabic language should not be reduced to a hollow symbol on a Friday afternoon for 15 minutes that serves only as a reminder of times gone by. Arabic language should be taught in the masjids, institutes and Muslim schools and then we can make it mandatory in the masjids on a blessed Friday afternoons.

**In short, it is enjoined upon the Muslims in some modes of worship that their oral recitations must be in Arabic. Therefore, to resolve the issue of the language of Khutbah we will have to examine whether the Khutbah of Friday is a form of worship or it is an ordinary lecture meant only to educate people.**

We agree that **“it is enjoined upon the Muslims in some modes of worship that their oral recitations must be in Arabic”** but where is the evidence from the Book and the Sunnah that a Friday *khutbah*, which is not just an oral recitation, must be delivered in Arabic to a people who do not understand Arabic?

Mufti Muhammad proceeds to bring some points to further outline his position:

**It is established by authentic resources that the Khutbah of Friday is a part of the prayer and stands for two Rak`at of prayer. Every day, other than Friday, the prayer of zuhr consist of four Rak`ats, while on Friday the number of Rak`at of the Jumu`ah prayer has been reduced to two, and the other two Rak`ats have been substituted by the Khutbah. Sayyidna Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) the second caliph of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) says: The Khutbah has been prescribed in lieu of two rakats. Whosoever fails to deliver Khutbah must pray four rakat.**

This view that the Friday prayer is a part of the prayer that stands for two Rak`at of the prayer, namely Zuhr, is based upon a statement which has been attributed to Umar ibn al-Khattāb:

كَانَتْ الْجُمُعَةُ أَرْبَعًا ، فَجُعِلَتْ رَكْعَتَيْنِ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْخُطْبَةِ ، فَمَنْ فَاتَتْهُ الْخُطْبَةُ فَلْيُصَلِّ أَرْبَعًا

**The Jumu`ah prayer was four units of prayer but two units were assigned to the khutbah. Thus, whoever misses the khutbah then he should pray four units of prayer.<sup>7</sup>**

Many of the scholars of hadith have classified this narration as weak. Additionally, one could argue that the *khutbah* does not stand for two rak`ah because the Imam faces the Qiblah in the prayer whereas the khateeb faces the congregation. Moreover, if the *khutbah* were indeed two rak`ah of the prayer, why do we see in many Hanafi masjids on many occasions people still making collections with portable card machines for the masjid even when the khateeb has started the *khutbah*?

**The Holy Qur`an has named the Khutbah as Dhikr in the following verse: “O! believers, when there is a call for Salah on Friday, rush for the Dhikr of Allah and leave trade”. (al-Jumu`ah: 9) Here the word ‘Dhikr’ stands for the Khutbah, because after hearing the Adhan, the Salah (prayer) does not start immediately. What starts after Adhan is Khutbah. That is why the Holy Qur`an did not say, ‘When there is a call for prayer, rush**

---

<sup>7</sup> This narration is *munqata`* (It has two or more successive narrators missing from its chain of narration). ‘Amr ibn Shu`ayb was from the youngsters of the Tabi`een and so he did not meet Umar. There was a generational gap of ninety-five years. Shaykh al-Albāni in *Irwā al-Ghaleel* his (3/72) graded this narration as weak.

for the prayer”, rather it has said, “when there is a call for prayer, rush for the Dhikr of Allah. It is for this reason that all the Muslim schools of jurists are unanimous on the point that it is necessary upon every Muslim to set out for the Masjid as soon as he hears the call and should reach the Masjid at a time when the Khutbah is yet to start because hearing the full Khutbah is wajib (mandatory).

This is sufficient to prove that the Holy Qur’an has used the word ‘Dhikr’ for the Khutbah. Dhikr means ‘recitation of the name of Allah’ as against ‘Tadhkir’ which means ‘giving advice’, ‘to educate’ or ‘to admonish’. This is a clear indication from the Holy Qur’an that the basic purpose of Khutbah is Dhikr and not the Tadhkir and that it is a part of the worship rather than being a normal lecture.

Mufti Muhammad’s claim can be easily contested with the following hadith that was narrated on the authority of Jābir ibn Samurah as-Suwā’i,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يُطِيلُ الْمَوْعِظَةَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ إِنَّمَا هُنَّ كَلِمَاتٌ يَسِيرَاتٌ

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not lengthen the admonition (sermon) on the Friday. He would just say a few words.<sup>8</sup>

In another hadith on the authority of Abu Najeeh al-’Irbād ibn Sāriyah who said,

وَعَظَّنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْعِظَةً وَجَلَّتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ، وَدَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ، فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَأَنَّهَا مَوْعِظَةٌ مُودِعٍ فَأَوْصِنَا

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. So we said, “O Messenger of Allah! It is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us.”<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the terms *tathkir* and *thiker*, which share a lexical root, are not mutually exclusive terms. What prevents ‘giving advice’, ‘to educate’ or ‘to admonish’ from falling under the rubric of *thiker*?

---

<sup>8</sup> Sunan Abi Dāwood 1107. Graded as hasan by Shaykh al-Albāni.

<sup>9</sup> At-Tirmidhi 266.



Mufti Muhammad goes on to say,

**The Khutbah being a part of the prayer no one from the audience is allowed to utter a single word during Khutbah. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has emphasized on this principle in the following words:**

**“If you speak during Khutbah on Friday, you commit absurdity.”**

**“Whoever says to his friend while Imam is delivering Khutbah on Friday ‘keep quiet’ commits absurdity.”**

It is obvious that the words ‘keep quiet’ do not disturb the Khutbah, nor do they stop one from hearing its contents. Rather, they may induce others to maintain silence. Still, the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has forbidden to utter these words during the Khutbah of Friday. The reason is that the Khutbah of Friday enjoys the same status as the Salah itself. While offering Salah, one cannot even say, ‘keep quiet’ to stop someone from speaking. Similar rule has been applied to Khutbah also, which is another indication that the Khutbah of Friday is not like a normal lecture. It is a part of Salah, therefore, most of the rules applicable to Salah are also applicable to it.

The point of analogy here, according to Mufti Muhammad, is that because no one is allowed to speak in the prayer and no one is allowed to speak during the *khutbah* it logically follows that the *khutbah* is like the prayer and thus the *khutbah*, like the prayer, is required to be recited in Arabic. The leaps in logic here is of quantum leaps to say the least. We have already provided evidence to show that the *khutbah* is not the first two rak’ah of the prayer and that means that the evidence he is providing here is now his main evidence because his main evidence no longer legally exists.

The first point here is that even though there is a scholarly consensus with respect to the impermissibility of speaking during the *khutbah*, there is a significant exception to this rule—an exception that cannot be applied to the prayer, which calls into question the case of analogy. The exception to this rule is that it is permissible to speak to the *khateeb* out of necessity or for the *khateeb* to speak to the congregants for some important reason. The evidence for this is the following hadith:

أَصَابَتِ النَّاسَ سَنَةٌ عَلَى عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَبَيْنَمَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَخْطُبُ فِي يَوْمِ جُمُعَةٍ قَامَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلَكَ الْمَالُ وَجَاعَ الْعِيَالُ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ لَنَا. فَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ، وَمَا نَرَى فِي السَّمَاءِ قَزَعَةً، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا وَضَعَهَا حَتَّى تَارَ السَّحَابُ أَمْثَالَ الْجِبَالِ، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ عَنْ مُنْبَرِهِ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ الْمَطَرَ يَتَحَادَرُ عَلَى لِحْيَتِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَمَطَرَنَ

Once in the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) the people were afflicted with drought (famine). While the Prophet (ﷺ) was delivering the khutbah on a Friday, a Bedouin stood up and said, "O, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Our possessions are being destroyed and the children are hungry; Please invoke Allah (for rain)". So the Prophet (ﷺ) raised his hands. At that time there was not a trace of cloud in the sky. By Him in Whose Hands my soul is as soon as he lowered his hands, clouds gathered like mountains, and before he got down from the pulpit, I saw the rain falling on the beard of the Prophet.

Whilst it is true that the Friday *khutbah* “is not like a normal lecture”, that does not necessitate that the Friday *khutbah* is like the prayer in the sense that it must be categorically delivered in Arabic. Based upon the evidence presented, why must that be the case? In fact, what prevents us from understanding Mufti Muhammad’s words “**Khutbah of Friday is not like a normal lecture**” to mean that the Friday *khutbah* trumps a normal lecture in the sense that its message to the masses is even more important, more paramount than the message delivered in a normal lecture? Friday is the only day when the best of us and the worst of us gather for more than just a midday prayer. Mufti Muhammad argues,

**If the Imam confines himself to the hamd (praising Allah) and Salah (Durood) for the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and to reciting some verses from the Holy Qur’an and making some Du’a (supplication) and does not utter a single word to preach or to educate people, the Khutbah is held to be valid and the Salah of Jumu`ah can be offered after that.**

Is Mufti Muhammad arguing here for the necessity and the wisdom of delivering the *khutbah* in only Arabic or is he arguing here for the basic requisites for a valid *khutbah*? It is clearly the latter and the latter proves nothing except the latter. Was it from the Sunnah of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) or the rightly guided caliphs after him (رضي الله عنهم) to confine themselves and thus the congregants “**to the hamd and Salah and to reciting some verses from the Holy Qur’an, and making some Du’a and does not utter a single word to preach or to educate people**”?

We will stand aside and allow the book *Selected Friday Sermons* to respond to this rhetorical question:

#### Role of the Khutbah in Islam

In the beginning of Islam, the Khutbah flourished, especially since the Messenger's speeches were the best school: delivering the great Message of Islam to the far corners of the earth. Furthermore, among the best speakers of that time were Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, 'Umar Al-Faruq and Ali bin Abi Talib. Then came the Muslim commanders who brought destruction to the Cesars and kings of Persia.

During the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the profession of Khitabah (speaking) reached its due level of significance and was not restricted to the Friday sermon, but also whenever necessity arose. The Friday sermon played an important role in that. It usually helped calm down disturbances, avert division, restored calmness and diverted wars which people were ready and willing to wage.

The Friday sermon was especially important to the Imam (leaders) of the Muslims in general, prompting the Caliphs to deliver speeches themselves rather than entrust their aides or officials to deliver it. This was the practiced tradition for a long time afterwards, until the Caliphs gave up the practice of giving the Friday speech gradually after the death of Caliph Al-Ma'mun, the son of Caliph Harun Ar-Rashid. He was the last Caliph with a good standard of Khutbah, as demonstrated by the fact that the Friday sermons, he used to deliver collected in various literature books. Afterwards, the Caliphs used to appoint others to deliver the Friday sermon. Ever since, the significance of the Friday sermon decreased, so much so, that the Friday sermon no longer resurrected faith in the hearts of those listening to it. The Friday sermons no longer solidified Tauhid, or conveyed good knowledge to the believers, or reminded them of Allah's Days, nor elevated love for Allah, nor intensified eagerness to meeting Him by performing Jihad and martyred in His Cause. Hence, the audience who listened to the Friday sermon would often depart the way they entered the mosque (regarding the qualities we mentioned) and indeed, we are all for Allah and to Him shall be our return.

Therefore, the Muslims who are entrusted with the job of giving the Khutbah, with its significance as the means to direct and teach Muslims the eternal revelation from Allah, should be qualified for this duty by having knowledge of the pillars of the religion, as well as adhering to commandments and legislation. Otherwise, his speech to the congregation will be of no benefit to him and will not reach more than their ears. Hence, the Khatib should be determined that none of those who are listening to his Friday sermon should depart it without gaining some type of benefit. Rather, each one of them should have benefited and left with his heart full of love for Allah, dedication to obeying Him, calling to Him and performing Jihad in His Cause. Also each person should feel fear of Allah and fright from committing disobedience of Him.

Mufti Muhammad states,

Had the purpose been to educate people, it would have been the main ingredient of the Khutbah to say at least a few words for this purpose without which it should not have been a valid Khutbah. But it has been held valid even without the words of preaching or educating. Sayyidna Uthman (May Allah be well pleased with him) delivered his first Khutbah (after he assumed the charge of Khilafat) exactly in this fashion and did not say a single word for the purpose of preaching. Still his Khutbah was held as valid. It was in the presence of the Sahabah, but not one from them challenged the validity of such a Khutbah.

There is a claim in Mufti Muhammad's words which has not been substantiated by quotation or reference. The claim is that Uthmān **“delivered his first exactly in this fashion”**. We would like to see if he is speaking on good, authentic authority because in these times of disinformation and half-truths most claims are not worth the paper they are written on. But let us assume that what Mufti Muhammad states is indeed valid, we would retort that Uthmān was still sermonising to people who understood the contents of his sermon. Is that basic condition being met by the khateeb on Hanafī masjids?

We will end here with two statements from the major people of knowledge in our times.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-Uthaymeen asked a question to his audience: “Is it a condition for the validity of the khutbah that the khutbah be delivered in the Arabic language?” He proceeded to answer by stating the following:

If the khutbah is delivered to the Arabs then the khutbah must be delivered in Arabic. If, however, the khutbah is delivered to non-Arabs then some of the scholars said that the khutbah must be firstly delivered in Arabic and then delivered in the language of the people. Some of the other scholars stated it is not a condition for the validity of the khutbah that it be delivered in Arabic. Rather, the khutbah should be delivered in the language of the people he is sermonising, and this is the correct view,<sup>10</sup> based on Allah’s statement:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

4. And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them.

It is not possible for a people to heed an admonish when they do not know about what the khateeb is admonishing. The khutbah are not made up of words that include words that are deemed worship by their utterances to the extent that we can say that they must be delivered in Arabic (like words recited in the prayer). However, if he mentions a verse then it must be mentioned in Arabic because it is not permissible for the language of the Qur’an to be changed (i.e., he should recite it in Arabic and then give a translation of its meanings in the language of the people).<sup>11</sup>

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas said,

There is no proof in the hadeeth to suggest that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stipulated that the Friday khutbah should be in Arabic, rather he delivered the khutbah in Arabic because it was his language and the language of his people. So the one who addressed them and guided them and reminded them spoke in their language that they understood. But he sent letters in Arabic to the kings and rulers

---

<sup>11</sup> *Sharh al-Mumtā ala Zād al-Mustaqni’.*

of nations, and he knew that they spoke languages other than Arabic, and he knew that they would have them translated into their languages so that they would know what was in them.

Based on this, it is permissible for the khateeb to deliver the khutbah in a language where the people or the vast majority of its inhabitants do not know Arabic to deliver the khutbah in Arabic then translate it into the local language, so that they will understand what he is advising and reminding them of, and they will benefit from his khutbah.

He may also deliver the khutbah in the language of his country, even if it is not Arabic, and thus he will accomplish the guidance, teaching, exhortation and reminder that are the purpose of the khutbah.

But it is better to deliver the khutbah in Arabic and then translate it to the listeners, so as to combine the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in his khutbahs and his letters with achieving the aim of giving the khutbah, and so as to avoid an area concerning which there is scholarly dispute. End quote.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Translation taken from Islamqa.info