

إعداد خطيب ماهر

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the wickedness of our souls and from our evil deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whoever He misguides, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family and Companions, and those who follow them rightly, and may He grant them peace.

Given people's constant need for what ensures their good state of affairs, the Shariah has come with what fulfils that purpose. This includes matters related to Friday sermons. Therefore, the responsibilities of the Friday sermon speaker are significant. In light of this, we were determined to prepare a book titled "A Beneficial Summary for the Muezzin, Imam, Khatīb, and Rulings Related to Mosques"¹, and to translate it into several languages. It includes several topics, from them:

The Friday Prayer, its concept, its time, and some of its rulings pertaining to the legally accountable person; as well as the Friday sermon, its ruling, conditions, pillars, Sunnahs, and its translation; and

¹ <https://islamcontent.com/ar/single-content/74839>

also the scholarly and moral qualifications that the Khatīb (preacher) should possess, the etiquette of the sermon and the preacher, its purpose and objectives, and how to prepare it.

As the topic is of great importance, this Second Treatise, entitled (Preparing a Skilled Orator), comes as an expansion and supplement to the previous book.

We ask Allah to make our deeds righteous and sincere for His sake alone, and to bless them. And Allah knows best, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad.

The importance of the Khutbah

The Friday pulpit is one of the most powerful—rather, the most powerful—means of influencing people if it is utilized well, as the preacher addresses the people once every week over a span of years, be they few or many, while they have opened their minds and hearts to him. Thus, they are not distracted from him, even by touching a pebble, and they receive from him advice, exhortations, lessons, and morals on a recurring and continuous basis.

The successful and blessed Khatīb whom Allah has blessed with a persuasive style and powerful eloquence will undoubtedly have a profound influence on them. His influence may be stronger and more powerful than that of a teacher on his

students, and even stronger than the influence of social media. This is because the sermon is connected to a great act of worship, which is the prayer; and because the eloquent, sincere, and articulate Khatīb addresses the people directly while standing before them. They see his facial expressions and the look in his eyes, and he thus influences them through their senses of hearing and sight, touching their hearts and minds. They remain attentive to him throughout his sermon as he presents them with rational and scriptural arguments and proofs, through which he is able—by Allah's permission—to persuade them and correct their understanding.

The successful and divinely-guided Khatīb (Orator) is he who has made the pulpit one of the most important means of spreading goodness and knowledge, but does not confine himself to it. Rather, he participates and contributes in every field of goodness and righteousness to the best of his ability. Wherever there is goodness, you will find him among its pioneers, and wherever there is sacrifice for the sake of Allah, you will find him among His soldiers.

This, then, is the Khatīb: the one who is dedicated to calling to Allah and benefiting the Muslims—following the example of the Prophets and Messengers, peace and blessings be upon them, and the sincere scholars and preachers of the

Ummah of Islam—and is keen on renewal, engaging, and captivating his listeners.

There are many Khatībs who possess the essential qualities of a preacher, yet their sermons do not bear the desired fruit, as is required of a Khatīb who delivers the message with truthfulness and sincerity.

Every Friday, he addresses a topic that touches upon their feelings, addresses their needs, and captivates their hearts, meeting with them fifty times over a single year. Is there, then, a method more effective than this?

It is, therefore, no wonder that the Friday sermon is one of the noblest rites of Islam, and one of the most significant arenas for calling to Allah, conveying His law, and establishing 'the proof' upon His servants. It is a rite the enemies of Islam wish they had the like of in their religion, to the extent that one of the leaders of the parties that wage war on Islam said: "Ah, if only I had pulpits like these?!"

The nobility of sciences and crafts is measured by the nobility of their purposes. Oratory has a purpose of great significance, which is to guide people to the truths and to inspire them toward what benefits them in this life and in the Hereafter.

And Oratory is counted among the means of sovereignty and leadership.

Oratory is a matter of great honor, and its honor lies in the one who undertakes it being astute, knowledgeable, and eloquent"¹.

The Lawgiver has made it obligatory upon a the worshipper to remain silent and listen to you—my brother, the preacher—during your sermon. The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said:

«إِذَا قُلْتَ لِصَاحِبِكَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ أَنْصِتْ، وَالْإِمَامُ يَخْطُبُ، فَقَدْ لَعُوتَ».

'When you say to your companion on Friday: 'Listen,' while the Imam is delivering the sermon, you have indeed engaged in idle talk.' Agreed upon² 'You have engaged in idle activity' means that one does not attain the reward of performing the Friday prayer.

In fact, it is recommended for people to turn their faces toward you, and An-Nawawī, Ibn al-Mundhir, and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy upon them) have reported that their is a unanimous agreement that this is highly recommended³.

¹ - "Al-Khatābah 'ind Al-'Arab", by Muhammad Al-Khadir Husayn: 178-179.

² —Narrated by Al-Bukhārī: (934), and Muslim: (851).

³ - "Al-Majmū": 4/447.

**{The angels of the Most Merciful are
listening to you, so give them the reverence
they are due.}**

It is a sufficient honor and a matter of pride for you, O speaker of the Friday sermon, that the angels of the Most Merciful attend and listen to your sermons and exhortations. The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, as reported in the two Sahihs¹: "When it is Friday, the angels stand at every door of the mosque and record the people in the order of their arrival, and when the Imam sits (on the pulpit), they fold up their sheets and come to listen to the Dhikr."

And when this is realised, the sermon will occupy a great status in one's heart, and one's eagerness will increase for speaking the truth, fulfilling a trust, advising people, and avoiding seeking their approval or flattering them.

Who, then, is like you, O blessed preacher?

Allah made it obligatory upon the people to listen to you and be attentive to your words. He forbade them from being distracted, even by fiddling with pebbles, and from denouncing evil during your speech. And He made His angels listen to you.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhāri (3211) and Muslim (850).

This makes it incumbent upon you to be sincere for the sake of Allah, to offer the utmost counsel in your sermons and admonitions, and to make the purpose of your sermons the remembrance of Allah, the admonition of the people, enlightening them about the matters of their religion, and what benefits them in their worldly life.

Which Is Better: Delivering the sermon extemporaneously (without much preparation) or reading It from a paper?

Undoubtedly, there are many benefits for a Khatīb to read from a paper, and it may be more suitable for many Khatībs and speakers than speaking extemporaneously. This is an observation and fact.

Improvisation has a significant impact on the speaker's interaction and enthusiasm, and this, without a doubt, leads to the engagement, enthusiasm, and emotion of the listeners, and vice versa.

It is well-known that when the senses of hearing and sight are combined in receiving information, it is more powerful for comprehension, impact, and retention of information, unlike when only one of them is used. Thus, the Khatīb who improvises, faces the people, and addresses them with his eyes is more powerful in his influence than the one who

delivers a sermon from a paper, from whom the people only receive that information through the sense of hearing. Even this reception is not as powerful as is the case with the Khatīb who improvises, for his voice is stronger and more engaging.

Whoever has tried extemporaneous delivery repeatedly, and finds in himself a great deal of hesitation, stuttering, forgetfulness, or intense fear and anxiety, and does not see these matters diminish with the passing of time and frequent practice, then he should read the sermons from a paper. For not everyone is granted success in speaking extemporaneously. And Allah, the Exalted, just as He has apportioned material provisions among people, He has also apportioned intangible provisions among them, such as character, abilities, talents, and aspirations.

The steps for successful speaking are eight:

First: Sincere supplication for assistance with that, and turning to Allah Almighty with sincerity and humility.

Second: True reliance on Allah Almighty in this matter and placing sincere trust in Him. Allah is as His servant thinks of Him, and whoever relies on Him, He is sufficient for him and will take care of what concerns him and what he seeks.

Third: Listening to distinguished preachers and benefiting from their experiences.

Fourth: Delivering the sermon in seclusion, even if within the mosque via an internal loudspeaker, is preferable; however delivering it from the pulpit is far more preferable.

Fifth: Training oneself in expressing emotions and strengthening affection.

I have reflected upon the greatest secrets of those successful in speaking, delivery, and influence: I found that the secret and the reason for this—after the assistance of Allah—is the strength of the emotion they possess, and their ability to express their feelings in detail and not in a general manner, and in accordance with the guidelines of the Sharīʿah.

For the power of emotion impels the eloquent to express it and the wise to manifest it, attracting hearts with its charm and captivating minds with its beauty and brilliance. As for one weak in emotion, much of his knowledge perishes with the death of his emotion, and his impact upon the people vanishes with the death of his feelings.

The speaker must be filled with enthusiasm for what he calls for and a belief in its truthfulness, because what comes from the heart enters the heart. The speaker's enthusiasm must be stronger than that of his listeners to overflow onto them and

quench their thirst; otherwise, they will sense his apathy, and the effect of his words will be lost.

Constant practice is necessary, through writing down one's inner thoughts and feelings, speaking them aloud to oneself, and then disclosing them to a loved one.

Whenever feelings are imprisoned and restrained, they dry up and are depleted; and whenever they are free—provided they are in accordance with the religious regulations—they gush forth and flow, nourishing the pages with writing and authorship, the pulpits with sermons and eloquence, and the hearts of the people with love and affection.

Dear brotherly Khatib, unleash your feelings and emotions, so that the spirit of life, creativity, revival, growth, and mercy may be brought to life within you and within others.

Therefore, he whose sentiments are noble: his character becomes noble, his soul is honored, his loved ones become numerous, his enemies become few, his proof becomes clear, his eloquence is strengthened, and his articulateness becomes great.

Sixth: Seeking advice from one who is truthful, wise, experienced, and sincere, who can point out his faults so that he may avoid them, and his good qualities so that he may be firm upon them and increase in them.

Seventh: Preparing early for the Khutbah (sermon).

Eighth: Reading books concerning preparations for the sermon and its delivery¹.

(Anxiety and nervousness at the start of delivering sermons is something common and customary.)

When you first start giving Khutbahs you will find yourself feeling anxious and fearful at the beginning of your speech. This is something natural in all human beings. You may also feel that this is a result of people looking at you, or your own assumption of your scholarly weakness.

What may also increase your anxiety is the feeling that people sense this and dislike it in the speaker, which may be a cause for them to turn away from you.

Undoubtedly, with your abundant attachment to Allah, your reliance upon Him, and your sincere supplication, along with prolonged practice, the fear will completely vanish, until you reach the stage of finding enjoyment in the sermon and anticipating Friday to taste the sweetness of delivering the sermon.

¹ —See: A Beneficial Summary for the Muezzin, Imam, Khatib, and Rulings Related to Mosques: p.95, <https://islamcontent.com/ar/single-content/74839>.

Thus, it is only a matter of patience before the treasures of divine success and the favors of the Most Generous, the Bestower, the Exalted, are opened for a person.

So, bearing the hardship of striving in the beginning brings the expanse of bliss, status, and happiness in the end.

Say to yourself: After hardship comes relief and an end to distress, and after toil comes rest. It is but a moment of patience, so be patient and remain steadfast, that you may ascend the pulpits and openly proclaim the call to Allah. And Allah has spoken the truth, and who is more truthful in speech than Allah?

(وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا)

(As for those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our ways) [Surat al-‘Ankabūt: 69]

And how fine is the statement of Qatādah (may Allah have mercy upon him): "O son of Adam, if you do good only when you feel energetic, your soul will be inclined to weariness, lethargy, and boredom. Although the believer is the one who perseveres, the believer is the one who strives to be strong, and the believer is the one who is resolute."¹. The one

¹ —Tafsīr Al-Qurtubi (1/251). And the narration from Qatādah (may Allah have mercy on him) was reported by Abu al-Qāsim ibn Bishrān al-Baghdādī (d. 430 H) in his Amālīh (1454).

who is strict with himself: is one who obligates himself to persevere in maintaining good deeds.

(Ways of overcoming excessive fear of public speaking)

Fear—especially at the beginning—is a very familiar and normal matter, as was previously mentioned. Rather, it is a positive thing that helps one to be diligent in preparing the sermon and restrains the self from the overconfidence that leads to looking down on people, neglecting the quality of the scholarly material, and failing to select appropriate wording and meanings.

However, the persistence of fear in every sermon and for a long time is a negative matter—what is known as 'social phobia' in modern times. One should take measures to overcome it. Among these measures are:

First: Sincerity to Allah Almighty, seeking refuge in Him, and frequent supplication asking Him to grant you tranquility and send down serenity upon your heart.

Second: Drinking soothing beverages before the Khutbah, such as mint and other similar things, for it has a calming effect on anxiety and fear.

Thirdly: Training the soul to welcome criticism and rejoice in it as a path to progress and innovation, and to not fear error.

Fourth: Arriving early, for undoubtedly, the speaker who rushes to make up for lost time will become agitated and unsettled, overcome by an anxiety and tension that will persist even during the Khutbah.

Fifth: Raise your head to look at the people and speak extemporaneously at times, even if you initially face difficulty, make mistakes, or hesitate. Persisting in not deviating from your paper and failing to look at the audience confidently will cause the listeners to lose enthusiasm for your words and will perpetuate your fear and apprehension of the pulpit.

Some preachers with years of experience in preaching, who nonetheless do not deviate from their written notes nor look at the audience, have stated that they experience fear and anxiety with every sermon. Indeed, one of them says, "With every sermon, it is as if I am preaching for the first time, out of worry and apprehension!"

However, do not look at the faces of the people at the beginning of your speeches, for your eyes may fall upon someone you are intimidated by and you become flustered, and you may be overwhelmed by the people's gaze. Rather, look at their heads, without focusing on them as individuals or on their eyes.

Sixth: While ascending the pulpit, do not think about potential negatives or mistakes. Rather, think

of the expected positive outcomes, by the will of Allah, and the great benefits you will reap from your khutbah: benefiting the people, Allah granting you success in establishing the rite of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and calling people to Him.

Seventh: Practice proper breathing before the sermon. This is to take a deep breath through the nose, holding it for a few brief moments, and then exhaling slowly. This type of breathing has a profound effect on relieving stress. Specialists and medical professionals have mentioned that normal breathing pumps seven to ten liters of oxygen to the brain, whereas proper breathing pumps around seventy-five liters of oxygen. This leads to a reduction in the levels of anxiety and stress hormones. This has been tested and found to have a significant effect in relieving stress, anxiety, and worry.

During the sermon, try to take a deep breath in a manner that does not draw the attention of those present; do this by inhaling quickly and deeply through the mouth or nose at an appropriate pause. Then, after this breath, resume speaking, and do so at nearly every pause.

(The best response to mistaken criticisms directed at you.)

O brother preacher, once you are convinced of a decision you have made, a method you have chosen, or a path you have followed, after deliberation and reflection and consulting with experts: pay no heed to the critics and the blamers. For no one, no matter what they do or how high their status, will ever be free from the criticism of people.

If you pay heed to their criticism, your resolve will weaken, your heart will become constrained, and you will lose the desire for improvement and innovation.

There is no book, nor article, nor work, but that there is one who will dispraise and criticize it.

You should treat critics with kindness and respect, respond to them with what is best, and accept the truth they offer without disdain, even if the critic is someone you do not hold in high regard.

(Advices for the speaker before the Khutbah)

It is incumbent upon you, O brother Khatib, to undertake several matters before the sermon that will aid you—after seeking the help of Allah Almighty—in standing upon the minbar and delivering your sermons. Among them are:

First: Be mindful that you are going to convey the messages of Allah and call to Him, and recite—sometimes—the words of Allah Almighty:

﴿الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ﴾

(those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him, and they do not fear anyone except Allah,) And, at other times, recite the verse that reads:

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

(Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, does righteous deeds, and says, “I am one of the Muslims [submitting to Allah]”?) [Surat Fussilat: 33].

and in His saying:

﴿قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾

(Say [O Prophet], “This is my way. I call to Allah with clear evidence— I and those who follow me. Glory be to Allah, and I am not one of those who associate partners with Him.”) [Surat Yūsof: 108]

This drives you to greater sincerity, determination, and emulation of the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), and to be mindful of the ultimate purpose of preaching, for which Allah Almighty sent His prophets and messengers: to convey and spread the religion. This is the greatest station in the world.

Secondly, pray to Allah just before ascending the pulpit, that He grants you sincerity, divine

guidance, and correctness, and to make what you say beneficial to yourself and others. For many Khatibs and speakers have not taken heed of their own words; and even if they do, they soon forget what they said, especially after a long period has passed.

And always ask Him, the Almighty, to grant you eloquence and clarity in speech.

Thirdly: Preparing a collection of sermons, often well in advance of their delivery, with the period between their preparation and delivery may be months or even years.

For when a topic comes to your mind, or you come across a valuable insight during your reading, a hadith that captures your attention, or a verse upon which you have reflected: record it immediately without delay, at a time when emotions are fervent and thoughts are clear and interconnected. If you were to postpone writing at that moment, these thoughts and reflections would be lost, and it would become difficult to remember and recall them. Then, write down whatever your heart brings forth. Then, begin to gather the scholarly material—without undue effort—from the Qur'an and Sunnah and the statements of the people of knowledge whose words you have come across while reading their books or books that have quoted them. Search for them via al-Maktabah ash-Shamilah or on the Internet when necessary.

Pay special attention to the Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic Hadīths, the sayings and reports of the predecessors, history, and the works of contemporary, pious scholars, particularly with regard to emerging issues and modern day events.

Whatever you find pertaining to the subject of the sermon: take it and place it in a computer file, without arranging or reviewing it.

Thus, you should always do this with any topic or point of benefit that come to mind or that you encounter. Write down whatever occurs to you at that moment, and research and write what you can on the subject. Then, leave it and proceed with your usual reading. If you later find a point of benefit, a verse, or a Hadīth related to one of the sermons you have written, whether in full or in part, then add it to that sermon.

A sermon may remain with you for several years. Deliver it in your lessons, lectures, or talks, for in doing so, subtleties and benefits that had not occurred to you before will be revealed to you, you will recall things you had forgotten, and it will be ready and as complete as possible when you deliver it in the Friday sermon.

Fourth: Deliver it in its entirety or in parts through talks in the mosques or in your private gatherings, and the purpose of this is:

a. Consolidating the information and preserving it.

b. Disseminating it among the people, particularly in mosques that are not close to the main mosque where you deliver the khutbah, as your congregation is generally not present at those locations.

c. It allows for a more thorough exploration of the subject. Often, during or after a speech, other important matters that should be addressed will become apparent to you, or questions and inquiries will arise from the audience.

Fifth: Deliver it on Friday, approximately two hours before the sermon, just as you would deliver it in the sermon.

Sixth: You should not overly burden yourself with excessive research and preparation. Instead, your primary focus should be to gather material that first benefits you, and then benefits the listeners of their various levels.

I have found that overexertion in anything is harmful and arduous, and it often leads one to quit, or to experience boredom and a lack of energy.

(Recommendations for the preacher on what to do while delivering the Khutbah)

There are several things you should do during the sermon, including:

First: Do not force yourself to fabricate emotions or to conceal them when experiencing the events of stories, situations, and moral lessons. According to

the context, express your feelings through your facial expressions, the expression of your eyes, and the modulations of your voice.

Know that the more natural and free from affectation your delivery is, the greater its impact will be. Therefore, adhere to your own natural manner and the style you use in conversation outside of the sermon, paying careful attention to your intonation and improving your delivery.

Many Khatibs adopt a style for the sermon that is completely different from their own natural one, as if they believe that sermon delivery has a monotonous and single style of its own. This causes them to lose their impact on the listeners and prevents them from reaching their hearts.

Secondly, the Khatib should not deliver the sermon in a monotone way, nor speak so quickly that the listeners cannot follow it properly. He should speak at a deliberate pace, making brief pauses where necessary. He should also be mindful of the tone of his voice, adapting it to the context. He should raise his voice and speak more quickly when the situation demands it.

Third: Calculate the sermon's duration accurately, and do not prolong it except when necessary.

Fourth: When you see violations committed by worshippers during the Khutbah (sermon), point them out gently; for instance, if you see someone

speaking during the Khutbah (sermon), make a general reminder about this mistake.

(Recommendations for the Khatib after the Khutbah)

There are several things you should do after the Khutbah, among them:

First: Giving praise to Allah Almighty for granting you success in the delivery of the sermon.

Second: Listening to your khutbahs after delivering them, with the aim of identifying the positive aspects to reinforce and solidify them, and the negative aspects to avoid and steer clear of them.

All of this is:

First: In veneration of the status of the Khutbah (sermon), for it has its merit and status in Islam.

Second: Respecting the worshipers who have come in obedience to their Lord, in response to the call of their Creator, and out of love for listening to what you have to say.

You can also refer it to a sincere advisor who can guide you on its positive and negative aspects.

Likewise, if it can be recorded and published, especially in countries where preachers are few, it should be disseminated in both audio and written formats so that the general public who do not pray with you may benefit from it.

It is also good if one were to create a page on social media, as well as a dedicated website.

Likewise, cooperating with websites that publish sermons and publishing their sermons on them, especially the translated sermons, due to their scarcity.

(General advices for the Preacher and the Caller to Allah)

O my brother, the Friday preacher, the following are pieces of advice for you, which are but a reminder for us:

1 Give glad tidings and do not repel people.

The successful and effective Khatib is one who brings glad tidings and does not repel, instills in people a spirit of optimism and hope, dispels the gloom of despair and lethargy, and urges diligence and action.

Beware, O my brotherly Khatib, of having the topics of your sermons revolve around tragedies, calamities, and the negativities that may occur in every time and place. Rather, make the majority of your sermons about optimism and mentioning the shining examples in morals, conduct, and individuals, so that the people may take these

¹ Narrated by Abu Dāwūd (531), Ibn Mājah (987), Ahmad (17906), and others; Al-Albāni classified it as Sahih (authentic).

morals, conduct, and individuals as a role model and a guiding light.

And if you see a mistake, there is nothing wrong with pointing it out and warning people against it in the legislated manner and with an appropriate approach.

**¹ Set the common people before your eyes.
(Focus on them)**

Keep the common people before your eyes, and may Allah protect you: for they are the most deserving of your sermons and exhortations; as the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Uthmaan ibn Abi al-'Aas (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was made the leader of his people:

"وَأَقْتَدِ بِأَوْعَفِهِمْ".

And be guided by the weakest of them."²

That is: Be considerate of the condition of the weakest person among your audience, and pray in a manner that is not burdensome for them; being considerate of those with weaker understanding is no less important than being considerate of those with weaker bodies.

If you tend only to their elite and their inner circle, and your admirers and your students, whilst

¹ — Madārij As-Sālikīn (2/66).

² — "Sayd al-Khātir": 67.

neglecting the common people, this will surely lead you to several pitfalls:

First: Being wary of staying away from harsh wording, forcing rhymed prose, and selecting topics that suit their level to the exclusion of the vast majority of the common people, and so on.

Second: Depriving the common people of beneficial admonitions and the addressing of social issues; because you are preoccupied with what interests the educated and others like them. They wish to hear about the subtleties of knowledge, deductions, and new and unfamiliar matters. Some of them wish to hear about politics and deep immersion in current affairs, and this will not benefit them in their religion or their worldly life.

Third: Corruption of the intention; instead of being purely for the sake of Allah, it becomes directed towards pleasing your admirers and seeking what impresses and pleases them.

When you see the people's admiration for your sermons and their eagerness to attend and listen to them, you will undoubtedly consider them as people and preach what pleases them.

And then, Allah Almighty removes from you blessing, acceptance, usefulness, and benefit.

The Khatib's concern with benefiting the general public does not mean that he should not address important issues that may be above the level of many of them, which may benefit some specialists

such as students of knowledge or officials and the like; but this should be done according to the level of need for that.

¹ Beware of self-conceit or of people's praise of you.

When the Friday Khatib ascends the minbar and sees the crowds of people who have gathered before him, having come specifically for him, and he sees among them the scholar, the physician, the elder, the judge, the wealthy, and the official, he may be overcome with self-admiration. This is especially the case if he knows that many of them have come for his sake. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the prudent Khatib to seek refuge in Allah from self-admiration and arrogance, to strive against his own self every Friday to be rid of self-admiration and self-importance, and to attribute the grace to Allah, the Exalted, Who has brought the people to him.

One of the righteous predecessors said: "If you sit to address a gathering of people, be a preacher of your own heart and self and do not get deceived by their gathering around you. They observe your outward appearance, while Allah watches over your inward state."²

¹ [Narrated by Muslim (2642)]

² —"Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam" by Ibn Rajab: 1/84.

You must be devoted to Allah Almighty with sincerity and strengthen your faith. Beware of taking delight in people's praise of you; for many people when they praise they exaggerate. You know yourself best!

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "The greatest trial is the praise of the common people, for it has deceived so many!"¹.

It is not a fault to be pleased with people's praise of you or your sermons, for it was said to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "What do you think of a man who does a good deed and people praise him for it?" He said:

«تِلْكَ عَاجِلُ بُشْرَى الْمُؤْمِنِ» .

"That is the immediate good tidings of the believer."²

So when the believer does a good deed If one performs a good deed sincerely for Allah, and Allah then casts good praise for him into the hearts of the believers, and he rejoices in Allah's favor and His mercy and is gladdened by that, it does not harm him..

The defect and sin is only when you are filled with `Ujb` (self-conceit) due to their praise, so you rejoice in your efforts and your deeds, and attribute

¹ [Narrated by Muslim (869)]

² [Usūl Al-Inshā' Wa Al-Khitābah, by Ibn 'Āshūr (126)]

the favor to yourself, while your rejoicing is not in the favor, mercy, and generosity of Allah, Who brought goodness to you, made it beloved to you, and made it easy for you.

Aversion to criticism and hatred of sincere advice is a sign of being afflicted with the disease of self-conceit.

1 Speak of that which benefits them in their religion and their worldly life.

Let those who come to listen to you hear what will benefit them in their religion and their worldly life, and ask yourself during your preparation: What benefit will I bring to the people in their religion and morals when they leave the mosque?

And what they will not benefit from, do not mention it.

So what benefit would they derive if I were to speak, for example, about the intricacies of politics, or to speak at length about the calamities of the Muslims?

And what benefit would they gain from me raising an issue that is shrouded in ambiguity, due to its sensitive nature and my fear of stating it plainly, thus resorting to hints and allusions that only the most select few can understand?

¹ —Narrated by Al-Bukhāri: (3568), and Muslim: (2493).

And what would they gain when I advise the ruler in front of the people, explicitly or implicitly, and advising the ruler in public was forbidden by the righteous predecessors; for it often stirs up tribulations and brings harm upon the speaker.

5. Striving for quietness during the Khutbah.¹

The Khatib must remain calm during the Khutbah and not get carried away by enthusiasm, lest he digress from the topic or say things he might regret later. If the Khatib becomes overly enthusiastic, he will likely lose his focus and control over his words, and his voice may rise to the point of disturbing many of the listeners.

² Warning against prolonging the Khutbah

The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, used to shorten the Khutbah, and so did his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as well as the pious predecessors of the Ummah who came after them, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on them.

Abu Wā'il (may Allah have mercy on him) reported: 'Ammār (may Allah be pleased with him) gave us a Khutbah, and he spoke briefly and eloquently. When he came down, we said: O Abu al-Yaqzhān, you spoke eloquently and briefly; if only

¹ — Zād Al-Ma'ād Fi Hady Khayr Al-'Ibād: 1/409-410.

² — Ibid.: 1/ 386.

you had spoken longer? He said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) say:

«إِنَّ طَوْلَ صَلَاةِ الرَّجُلِ، وَقَصَرَ خُطْبَتِهِ، مِثْلُ مِثْنَةٍ مِنْ فَقْهِهِ، فَأَطِيلُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَأَقْصِرُوا الْخُطْبَةَ، وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ سِحْرًا» .

‘A man's lengthy prayer and short Khutbah is a sign of his understanding, so lengthen the prayer and shorten the Khutbah, for there is a charm in eloquent speech.’.

His words: “You took a breath” means you lengthened the Khutbah.

His saying, (ma’innah): i.e., a sign, ‘From his Fiqh’ : i.e., that by which a person's Fiqh is known, and anything that indicates something is a sign of it.

Shortening the sermon has three precious benefits:

First: Following the Sunnah.

The second: The ease of preparing the sermon, and the attainment of peace of mind during its preparation, delivery, and after its completion.

Many speakers used to feel burdened by the sermon, from the dawn of Friday or even before, and they would be mentally preoccupied with its preparation. However, when they shortened the sermon, not exceeding ten minutes, that entire burden was lifted, or most of it.

Third: To make it easy for the listeners, as almost all people agree on being comfortable with the one

who shortens his sermon, and having an aversion to the one who lengthens it.

The suitable duration for the speaker and the listeners is approximately ten to fifteen minutes; for all people are almost in a unanimous agreement that a short sermon is more beloved to them and less burdensome than a long one.

(Avoid obscure speech)

Avoid obscure speech, for people neither need it nor benefit from it, even though one may want to mention it and do so excessively.

Esteemed orators and eloquent speakers have warned against obscure speech.

(Avoid forced rhymed prose (Saj'))

Saj' is "the correspondence of the final words of prose phrases on a single rhyme." The Wise Lawgiver has forbidden the affectation of Saj', and it was disliked by orators and eloquent speakers; "because Saj' is not free from the affectation of words that veils the minds of the listeners from a complete understanding of the meanings. If rhyming is to be overlooked in it, it is only what occurs spontaneously without affectation; that is, the rhyming that seeks the speaker, not that which the speaker seeks".

Avoid indulging in unnecessary rhyming, for this affectation burdens you with the hardship of crafting it and burdens the listeners with the

hardship of understanding it. However, if it comes to you naturally, its words flowing effortlessly from your tongue, and is clear to the listener, then there is no harm in it.

(Caring for a proper appearance)

The speakers attention to the uprightness of his external appearance should be no less than his attention to his inner self, as the uprightness or corruption of what is apparent is merely a result of the uprightness or corruption of what is hidden. The uprightness of the orator's appearance can be achieved by the following:

First: the beauty and cleanliness of his clothes, without overdoing it or extravagance.

Second: The good appearance of his body through cleanliness, smelling good, shaving or trimming his mustache, and letting his beard grow.

Third: The beauty of his face through his cheerfulness and smile when greeting people outside the mosque, and when beginning the sermon and after concluding it. For a sincere smile, a cheerful face, and a pleasant demeanor endear the preacher and his sermons and advice to the people. It is an act of worship for one who is sincere to Allah in it, and it is what captivates the minds and hearts. The actions of a cheerful person are praiseworthy and his minor faults are accepted, unlike the frowning, scowling person, from whom refuge is

sought, and upon meeting them distress and constriction overcome the heart.

So, my brother, be cheerful in countenance, and you will find contentment; you will find people drawn to you, speaking well of you among themselves, accepting your guidance and admonitions, and overlooking your mistakes and slip-ups.

Fourth: His modesty and etiquette in his walking, ascending the pulpit, and sitting upon it, and his gracious reception of the people while seated and during the Khutbah.

It is also noted that when some Khatībs sit before the sermon, they do so in a manner that shows their indifference to the people, and they occupy themselves with scanning people's faces. When they commence the sermon, they cast looks at the people that suggest they are indifferent and unconcerned about them, as if to convey that they are brave and bold. They address them in a harsh tone and a loud voice, issuing direct commands and prohibitions to them. This approach is one that souls do not accept; rather, they are repelled by it.

Fifth: Refraining from unnecessarily wiping or touching the beard and from looking around excessively, especially while sitting on the minbar. Such action diminishes the Khatīb's aura or suggests his indifference toward his audience.

Sixth: The siwāk should be used gently and with good manners. Some Khatibs—may Allah guide them—enter the mosque while using the siwāk in a conspicuous manner. Some of them continue to use it right up until they are about to begin the sermon. Consequently, pieces of the siwāk remain in their mouths, and they spit them out while delivering the sermon. Such behavior is reprehensible and may suggest a disregard for the people and for the great status of the sermon.

Seventh: Adhering to the Sunnah in one's dress code by avoiding dragging one's clothes, and with the beard by growing it. The speaker is a role model, and how can people follow the example of someone whose actions contradict his words? How can people be influenced by the words of someone whose words have not influenced himself?

Eighth: Calmness of the body during speech; for it is a sign of the serenity of the soul.

(Variation in the Preparation Time of the Sermon)

Duration of the preparation of the sermon: This varies according to the Khatīb's culture and knowledge, and the subject matter he will deliver, for the subject matter is of two types:

First: It should be scholarly, addressing juristic or creedal matters and their foundations. These must be allocated a timeframe befitting the status

of the topic; they should not be taken lightly, nor prepared only a few hours before the sermon.

Second: That it is admonitory, social, or the like, so its preparation time is generally short.

My advice to the beginner in giving the sermon—one who lacks sufficient experience and knowledge—is to initially benefit from the sermons of a predecessor whose sermons are characterized by three qualities:

First: It being short, so that it is not difficult to deliver.

Second: It must be grammatically and factually sound.

Third: It should be free from difficulty whether in wording or content.

It is permissible for him, over time, to modify or add what he sees fit. He should then attempt to write the sermon himself, benefiting from those who preceded him.

(Avoiding the Direct Commands of the Listeners)

Avoid using words that are directed as commands to the listeners while excluding the speaker, such as 'do' and 'do not do'. Instead, use phrases like 'let us do' and 'let us refrain'. This phrasing conveys your humility to the listeners, your love of good for them as you love it for

yourself, and that you are not superior to them in religion or character.

The successful Khatīb directs his words to himself before directing them to others, and preaches to himself before preaching to others. Thus, the words in his sermons are directed to himself first and foremost, before he directs them to the people. If he does that, Allah will elevate him, enable him to benefit from his own words, and increase him in guidance, acceptance, and sincerity.

1 (When is imitation in the khutbah praiseworthy and blameworthy?)

Do not imitate a particular Khatib in his style or substance, because what suits him may not suit you. Imitation stifles your creativity and diminishes one's talents. Therefore, deliver your sermon according to the abilities, talents, and knowledge that your Lord has granted you.

As for the beginner, there is no harm in them benefiting from others in terms of style and content. However, they should not be a mere copy of them; rather, they should use this as an aid to elevate themselves in their level.

¹ - "Al-Khatābah 'Inda Al-'Arab", by Muhammad Al-Khidr Husayn: p. 189.

(Do not grieve over the small amount of attendees, nor be overly happy if they are many)

Know—may Allah cause you to be of benefit—that the soul desires a large number of listeners and attendees, especially from your relatives and friends. Perhaps you even ask about their attendance, or reproach—even if only in your heart—the absence of one of them. Therefore, strive against your self to be free of this disease, for their absence does not mean that you are weak, but rather that they find comfort and benefit with another speaker, or they may not be coming due to its proximity from their home, or for other reasons.

The truthful preacher rejoices when they hear that people attend the sermons of another person, they pray to Allah for that person's guidance and benefit, and commends them for the good that they know of them.

If you see a small attendance and people turning away from you, hold yourself to account, for the deficiency may be from you: either from a weakness in your delivery, or from the weakness of the content you present, or due to prolonging the sermon, or a weakness in your sincerity, or for other such reasons.

Seek counsel from sincere, counseling brothers, and ask them to be present with you or to listen to

your sermon. Ask them sincerely to give you their observations and opinions, and you will come away with beneficial results, by the permission of Allah, the Exalted.

(The Importance of Good Preparation)

If you are one of those who delivers the sermon with little to no preparation, you should prepare for it thoroughly and never be negligent in that regard, even if the topic seems simple and easy and you have addressed it previously.

Thorough preparation is one of the most pleasurable matters for preachers; indeed, they eagerly await Friday to deliver what they have prepared and labored over.

Persisting in a lack of preparation and relying solely on the sermons of others has many negative consequences, including the following:

First: It causes weakness of aspiration, feebleness of resolve, and degradation of the soul, as it becomes content with imitating others.

Second: It makes you lose enthusiasm, energy, and pleasure, so it becomes like a burden you want to remove from yourself, and this affects your mannerisms and people's acceptance of you.

Third, many people feel that the Khatib does not prepare the sermon himself but rather copied it from someone else. This is because the sermon's style and substance differ from his own style and

level; consequently, the khutbah finds no acceptance from them.

Fourthly: The benefit from it is negligible, if any, since a deed that lacks diligent research and preparation is soon forgotten and vanishes.

You will not progress, nor will your ambition increase, nor will your resolve be magnified, nor will benefit be derived from your knowledge—except as Allah Almighty wills.

Therefore, consider a sermon that you have prepared well; you will find that you have not forgotten it, and that even if you revisit it years later, you still know what it contains, as if you had delivered it recently.

As for the sermons you quote from others, you will quickly forget them. Test this for yourself: go back to the sermons from four or five years ago, and you will find that you have forgotten them or can barely recall a small portion of what they contained.

You will also not benefit from it in compiling its material to make it into a book from which benefit is derived.

Strive diligently in preparing the sermon as if you were to publish it in a book: source the Aḥādīth and state their degree of authenticity by referring to the statements of the scholars of Hadith; document the references and sources you consulted; and pay careful attention to its grammar, spelling, and language.

(Attention to Punctuation Marks)

When reading the Khutbah, pay close attention to punctuation and pauses, such as commas and the like, and make your own special marks to pause at in consideration of your breathing, to avoid the awkwardness of pausing too frequently in unsuitable places.

(The Importance of Diversifying Topics and Styles)

Vary the topics you present and do not be confined to a single pattern, such as having your sermons focus solely on the states of the hearts or the general affairs of the Ummah. Rather, consider the needs of the people in their religious and worldly affairs.

Rather, employ great variation to instill in people a longing for your sermons.

If you were to make it into a connected chain, there is nothing to prevent it from being cut when needed.

Know that the stories taken from the Quran, the authentic Sunnah, and the sayings of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) have the greatest impact on the listeners, and they contain in them the greatest of lessons, admonitions, and gems of wisdom. So, be keen on them and on presenting them in an engaging

manner, and derive from them their benefits and lessons.

Do not let your sermon be free of mentioning accounts, stories, real-life examples, and the like; so that your sermons don't become tedious and burdensome.

Be particularly diligent in using the optimal style for presenting stories and events, engaging with them wholeheartedly, and letting that manifest in your facial expressions and vocal intonations.

Strive to live the people's reality and their concerns, lest you be in one world and they in another.

The importance of acquiring the skills and arts of delivery and influence.

A Khatib is the most in need of acquiring the skills and arts of delivery, as they must persuade people and capture their attention in order for them to accept what he says to them.

A Khatib who possesses a powerful style and eloquent delivery is often more beneficial to the people than one who lacks such qualities, even if the latter were more knowledgeable and of a higher rank.

It is imperative that the Khatib listens to lessons in the art of delivery, and attending them in person is preferable, or they can read the relevant books on the subject.

Whoever is sincere with Allah and dedicates himself and his time to Him, Allah will grant him from His Kindness and Bounty that which is beyond his reckoning and imagination. And whoever gives to Allah what he loves, Allah will give him beyond what he loves. And whoever devotes himself to Allah, Allah will make His creation serve him and will provide for him the means of bliss, honour, and empowerment.

Thus, nothing stands between you and the blessed gifts of the Majestic Lord except sincere resolve, strength of will for the sake of Allah, forsaking what you love and desire for that which Allah loves and is pleased with, and striving relentlessly to elevate His religion and His law, even if that leads to the lowering of your status in the eyes of the people of this world, of vain desires, and of high positions.

(The Principle of Renewal)

Allah the Almighty has created mankind with a love for renewal and change for the better; thus, you find that people do not settle upon a single condition, and whenever something new emerges in life, they hasten to acquire it when they are able.

A man now is not who he was ten years ago; instead, he has renewed and changed the aspects of his life, livelihood, vehicle, and house for the better.

The Friday Khatib is from the people most in need of renewing and improving their style, and developing their skills of delivery and influence. If they follow a single pattern that they have become accustomed to since they assumed the responsibility of the khutbah, they will undoubtedly not change for the better, but will rather regress. This is because it is in human nature that with age, one's resolve and energy will weaken, their spirit will wither, and their influence will diminish. Therefore, they are in need of what energises them and strengthens their resolve and spirit, and develops their skills and methods, in order to overcome the states of weakness that afflict them, their senses, and their resolve.

Most preachers have not changed noticeably since they started delivering the Khutbah. Does this mean that one has reached perfection from the very start?

No.

Why, then, do they persist in their accustomed method, failing to cultivate their style and presentation, and to take the proper steps toward improvement, renewal, and innovation, when they have striven diligently to improve their material and worldly affairs?

How could they not strive for this, when the position of delivering the sermon is among the most noble and greatest undertakings of their life?

(A Focus on Two Tools of Influence: The Voice and the Gaze)

The successful Khatib is in great need of employing these two tools:

1. The voice is the most powerful tool of impact, and its impact is perfected by observing the following:

a. The level of one's voice should be moderate in its volume and pace; it should not be too low or slow that it causes the listeners to become bored and lethargic, nor should it be too loud or fast that it disturbs them or causes them to be unable to concentrate and comprehend.

b. The Khatib should not speak in a monotone; a consistently weak voice will bore the listeners, while a consistently loud voice will annoy them.

A monotonous delivery causes the listeners to lose interaction with the Khatib's speech, as they will be unable to distinguish between important points and others. Undoubtedly, important and influential speech requires a noticeable raising of the voice with an accelerated pace, or lowering it with a slower one.

c- Shaping the vocal delivery of sentences according to their context: if it is a question the sentence is delivered in the manner of an inquiry, an exclamatory in the manner of expressing wonder, and so on.

d. Open your mouth wider than you do in your usual speech. This helps to clarify the articulation of letters, prevents them from mixing together, and allows for better control of the voice. However, do not exaggerate, as excessively opening the mouth leads to over-enthusiasm and an appearance that is not befitting of the Khatib.

Deliver the sermon in your normal voice, and do not adopt a special tone or delivery for it. This will create a barrier between you and the people and cause you to lose your most powerful tools for influencing the listeners.

Pause briefly in situations where it is suitable to do so: if the preacher comes across an important idea that he wishes to instill in the minds of his listeners, he should turn towards them and look directly into their eyes for a moment without saying anything.

This sudden silence has a great impact on them, drawing their attention and making each one of them attentive and eager for what will follow the silence.

But the silence should not be a long interval and without affectation.

An example of that is: 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) sent a piece of gold to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and he distributed it among some of his Companions.

Then a man approached and said: "Fear Allah, O Messenger of Allah!" (...)

What audacity towards the truthful and trustworthy one (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)!

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, astonished by this audacity: "...Who will obey Allah if I disobey Him? Does Allah entrust me with the people of the earth, yet you all do not trust me?

What is between the brackets indicates a brief pause, as the context requires it to draw the listeners' attention and build anticipation for what will be said afterwards.

The first sentence, "What audacity against the truthful and trustworthy one (ﷺ)!!," was an expression of astonishment, as the context required him to formulate it as such.

The second sentence: "Who would obey Allah if I were to disobey him? Does Allah entrust me with the people of the earth, yet you all do not trust me?" was a rhetorical question of denunciation, for the context required it to be formulated as a denouncing interrogative.

2- The gaze: This involves distributing your gaze among all the listeners and letting your eyes co-operate with the speech you are giving, which is done by:

a.

A turning slightly to the right and left, without exaggeration in speed or frequency, as this is not recommended for the speaker in particular; because it indicates that he is being overcome by his emotions, which leads to a lack of precise focus.

b. Opening the eye or pressing on it lightly. The movements of the eye have the greatest effect on those present, who derive from them meanings that the tongue may not express.

The voice and gaze are two fundamental pillars of a preacher's influence on the audience. Without them, he loses the ability to convey his message, persuade them, and capture their attention, enthusiasm, and energy.

It is possible for every Khatib to use them both without difficulty or affectation, but without exaggeration. Exaggeration in this regard indicates frivolity and recklessness, just as excessive peacefulness and stillness leads to boredom and weariness. The best of matters are those that are moderate.

There are certain methods that are inappropriate for the Khatib of the Friday sermon, and among them are:

1. Moving both hands.

2- Adjusting one's cloak or turban, fiddling with the microphones, rocking forward and backward, and the like.

(Do not adhere to a specific formula that has not been established by the authentic Sunnah)

One should not adhere to a specific method only, except for what has been established by the authentic Sunnah, so that it is not thought to be a Sunnah, such as saying: “Bārakallāhu lī wa lakum fil-Qur’ān al-‘Azhīm” (May Allah bless me and you through the Great Qur’an) at the end of the first sermon.

Often, some Khatibs adhere to a supplication at the end of the sermon from which they hardly leave off, and some of them prolong this repetitive supplication. This causes many people to feel weary and bored when the Khatib begins the dua (supplication), as they have grown tired of its frequent repetition in a style that is predominantly narrative and lacks the interaction required in a supplication.

Giving Due Care to the Articulation Points of Letters in One’s Mouth and Preventing Their Overlap.

One should articulate letters precisely from their points of articulation, for this has a profound impact on eloquence, clarity, and the power of speech.

Among the things for which the Khatib is criticized for is pronouncing words hastily, causing him to connect letters and words to the next one before the first has left his mouth. The proper etiquette is to pronounce the letters fully and to articulate the words distinctly.

And so was the speech of the Prophet (ﷺ), the most eloquent speaker ever.

‘Ā’ishah, Mother of the Believers, (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would not speak hastily as you all do.”

(The Purpose of the Sermon, and the Most Important Topics for the Khatib to Address)

The Khatib should transport people from this worldly life, with its worries and events, to the world of the Hereafter and preparation for it; nor should the mosque become a media platform where the Khatib addresses political matters and delves into what does not benefit the listeners in their religion or their worldly life.

The successful Khatib's sermons are mostly about what increases Imān and attachment to Allah Almighty; for if the people's Imān increases and their attachment to their Lord is strengthened, that becomes the greatest cause for them to abandon sins and trivial matters.

Among the topics that the Khatib must not neglect and must constantly reiterate:

Tawhīd (monotheism) and the pillars of Islam.

The description of the prayer and the significance of humility and presence of mind therein.

Seasonal topics, such as addressing the merit of the month of Ramadan when its time arrives.

Warning against tribulations and how to deal with them.

Warning against Bid'ahs (religious innovations)

Warning against the cunningness of Satan and his ways of alluring.

Morals, Manners, and what pertains to them.

Among the topics that increase belief and a strong connection with Allah Almighty are the following:

1. Exalting Allah by mentioning His attributes and bounties in the hearts of people.

2. Holding the Qur'an in great esteem, for it is His speech.

3. Mentioning the stories of the Prophets (peace be upon them), foremost among them the last of them, our Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

4. Mentioning Paradise, its descriptions, and the causes for entering it, and likewise the Hellfire.

5. Giving care to the heart's worship, such as reliance upon Allah, turning in repentance, repentance, awe of Allah, and humility.

The major scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: Whoever contemplates the sermons of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and the sermons of his Companions will find them sufficient in clarification of guidance and the Oneness of Allah; the mention of the attributes of the Lord Almighty, the fundamental principles of faith, and the call to Allah; the mention of His bounties that endear Him to His creation and His days of retribution that make them fear His might; and the command for His remembrance and gratitude, which endears them to Him. Thus, they mention from the greatness of Allah, His attributes, and His names what endears Him to His creation, and they command the obedience, gratitude, and remembrance of Him that endears them to Him. So the listeners depart, having come to love Him, and He has loved them.

Then, a long period of time passed, and the light of Prophethood grew dim. The laws and commandments became mere rituals performed without regard for their underlying realities and objectives. So, they preserved their outward forms and adorned them with various embellishments. They turned these rituals and formalities into traditions that ought not to be violated, while they

violated the objectives that ought not to be violated. Thus, they embellished the sermons with rhyming prose and rhetorical devices. As a result, the spiritual benefit for the hearts diminished—or rather, was completely lost—and their intended purpose was missed".

He said (may Allah have mercy on him) in his speech about the purpose of the sermon: Its purpose is praising and magnifying Allah, testifying to His Oneness and to the message of His Messenger (ﷺ), reminding the servants of His days, warning them of His might and His retribution, enjoining upon them that which brings them closer to Him and to His gardens of Paradise, and forbidding them from that which brings them closer to His wrath and His Fire. This, then, is the objective of the sermon and gathering for it.

It is imperative upon the Khatib to draw people's attention to the widespread errors among them in their creed, acts of worship, morals, social dealings, livelihood, upbringing, and the like, warn them against delving into discord, and teach them the matters of their religion.

And Allah knows best. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all of his Companions.

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