



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GIVING FRIDAY SERMONS

BY AMJAD M. TARSIN

A collective obligation for the Muslim community is establishing the Friday Prayer (*Ṣalāt Al-Jumu‘ah*). Because of its great importance in the religion, we should take particular care in properly establishing it. God the Exalted says in the Qur’ān,

“Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the Day of Congregation (Jumu‘ah), hurry towards the remembrance of God and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if you only knew—then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out God’s bounty. Remember God often so that you may prosper.” (62: 9-11)

The Friday Prayer (*Ṣalāt Al-Jumu‘ah*) centers on the sermon (*khuṭbah*). This sermon is so essential to the prayer service that even merely speaking during it invalidates one’s reward for that *Jumu‘ah*. The Messenger of God ﷺ said, “Whosoever speaks on the Day of Congregation (*Jumu‘ah*) while the *imām* is giving the sermon, then that person is like a donkey carrying books.¹ And the one who says to that person, ‘Listen!’ has no [reward for] *Jumu‘ah*.”²

This brief guide and template seeks to clarify some of the requirements of a Friday Sermon (*khuṭbah*) in order to have a sound and valid Friday Prayer (*Ṣalāt Al-Jumu‘ah*). This guide is not meant to be comprehensive or scholarly, but it is meant to be a practical guideline that can easily be followed and established in mosques, community centers, universities, and schools.

In addition to clearly defining the essential integrals (*arkān*) of the Friday Sermon, this guide provides advice on making effective sermons that are beneficial for the audience.

¹ In other words, they are doing something of no benefit to them.

² Narrated by Aḥmad, Al-Bazzār, and Ṭabarānī.

Also, included are two appendices:

- Appendix A: A template for a Sermon that only contains the bare minimum in order for it to be legally valid. This template is meant for beginners.
- Appendix B: A template for a Sermon that contains many of the recommended sayings and verses that the Prophet ﷺ said in his Friday Sermons; this is meant for those who want something more robust than the bare minimum and are more comfortable with the Arabic language.

And success is from God, and His assistance and support is sought. ■

FIQH OF THE SERMON & VARIED OPINIONS

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

INTEGRALS (*ARKĀN*) OF THE SERMON³

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

1. **STANDING:** To be in a standing position while delivering both *khuṭbahs*.
2. **PRAISE:** To begin both *khuṭbahs* by saying, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*” (“Praise be to God”), or a variation of that. For example, “*Inna al-ḥamda lillāh*” (“Praise is for God”) or “*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rab al-‘ālamīn*” (“Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds”).
3. **SALUTATIONS:** To invoke God’s peace and mercy upon the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in both *khuṭbahs*. This can be fulfilled by merely saying, “*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘ala Muḥammad*,” (“O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad”) although it is better to include the Prophet’s family and companions in the invocation. For example, “*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘ala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ‘ala ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim*” (“O God send your peace and mercy upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions”).

³ All of these rulings were taken from: Imam an-Nawawī, *Al-Maqasid: Nawawī’s Manual of Islam*, trans. Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 2002), 62-64.

4. **CALL TO TAQWĀ:** To urge the attendees to have *taqwā* (fear and consciousness of God) in both *khuṭbahs*. This can be fulfilled several ways, for instance, by reciting verses of the Qur’ān that call to *taqwā*, or by simply saying, “*Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh*” (“I counsel you to have fear of God”).
5. **SITTING:** To sit briefly between the 1st and 2nd *khuṭbah* for no longer than the time it takes to pray 2 brief rak’ahs.
6. **VERSE OF QUR’ĀN:** To recite one verse of the Qur’ān in either of the two *khuṭbahs*. One verse, or an understood portion of a verse, fulfills this requirement.
7. **PRAYER FOR THE BELIEVERS:** To supplicate (*du‘ā’*) for the believing men and women in the 2nd *khuṭbah* for something which benefits them in the hereafter. This is fulfilled by saying, “*Allāhumma ighfir lil-Mu’minīn wa al-Mu’mināt*” (“O God, forgive the believing men and women”).

PROPHETIC PRACTICES (*SUNNAHS*) OF FRIDAY

It is especially important upon the one giving the Friday Sermon (*khaṭīb*) to perform the Sunnahs of Friday. The following are a few of the recommended acts for Friday.

1. **GHUSL:** Performing the ritual bath (*ghusl*) before the Friday Prayer.
2. **WEARING WHITE:** The Prophet ﷺ used to love white clothing, and he encouraged wearing white clothing to *Ṣalāt al-Jumu‘ah*.
3. **RECITING SURAT AL-KAHF:** It is highly encouraged to read the 18th Surah from the Qur’ān on Friday.
4. **GOOD SCENT:** It is also a *Sunnah* to adorn oneself with a nice scent.⁴

⁴ This *Sunnah* only applies to males.

PRACTICAL ADVICE ON PUBLIC SPEAKING⁵

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

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

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

⁵ Some of the following points are based on the booklet: Al-Ḥabīb ‘Umar bin Hafīz, *Thaqāfat al-Khaṭīb* (Tarīm: Maktab al-Noor, 2001).

- Speeches that can be divisive or controversial should be avoided. Do not mention sectarian terms such as “Salafi,” “Şufi,” or “liberal Muslims,” because the Friday Sermon is meant to gather all Muslims and unite their hearts in mutual love and piety. *Khuṭbahs* should be spiritually uplifting and inspiring, giving people the drive to make it through the next week.
- *Khuṭbahs* are primarily spiritual reminders, but can also be a platform for mentioning current events. In this case, find a religious topic that relates to the current event and tie the two together—be sure not to lose the spirituality of the *khuṭbah*, but also do not forget to address the current affairs that are pertinent to the congregation.
- It is also of the utmost importance that one’s ideas are organized during the Friday Sermon to provide a clear message to attendees. One should be sure to clearly introduce the topic, and then support the topic by presenting relevant verses, *ḥadīths*, and stories. In addition, the *khaṭīb* should highlight the lessons and wisdoms to be taken from the verses and *ḥadīths*.
- Make sure to translate any important Qur’ānic verses, *ḥadīths*, and *du‘ā’*—especially since the majority of people attending the Friday Prayer will most likely not understand Arabic.
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, one should conclude by connecting the passages quoted to a practical way of implementation for the attendees, so that the *khuṭbah* does not remain abstract and theoretical; rather, worshippers can realize the lessons mentioned are relevant to their lives.

KHUṬBAH TOPIC SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggested topics that, *in shā’ Allāh*, may be of benefit. These suggestions are not exhaustive, and one should be conscious of choosing the most appropriate topic for the congregation.

- Social Responsibilities
 - Community Service
 - Respect Towards Parents
 - Rights and Responsibilities of Brotherhood
- Love of God and His Messenger
 - Reflecting on the Names and Attributes of God
 - Thankfulness to God the Exalted
 - Lessons from the Life of the Messenger of God ﷺ

- Turning Towards God
 - Repentance, and Fear & Hope
 - Benefits and Worship in Ramaḍān, Dhul Ḥijjah, etc.

 - Good Character & Prophetic Virtues
 - Patience
 - Forbearance
 - Generosity
 - Mercy

 - Basic Explanation of a Short Chapter of the Qur'ān and/or Ḥadīth

 - Importance of Prayer (*ṣalāt*) and Supplication (*du'ā'*)
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APPENDIX A

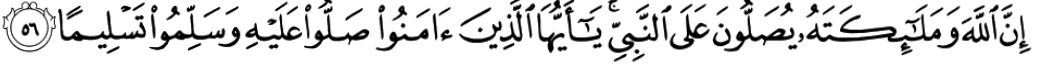
BASIC *KHUTBAH* (INTENDED FOR BEGINNERS)⁶

1st Sermon:

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

End of 1st Sermon

2nd Sermon:

7. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (“Praised be God”). *
8. *Allahumma ṣalli ‘ala Muḥammad* (“O God, send your mercy on Muḥammad”). *
9. *Ūṣīkum bi taqwā Allāh* (“I counsel you to fear God”). *
10. Begin 2nd Sermon
11. 
Inna Allāha wa malā’ikatahu yuṣallūna ‘alā an-nabī, yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alayhi wa sallimū taslīmā.
 (“God and His angels bless the Prophet so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.” —Qur’ān 33:56).
12. *Allāhumma ighfir lil mu’minīn wa al-mu’mināt* (“O God, forgive the believing men and women”). *

End of 2nd Sermon

Begin the Prayer

⁶ The necessary integrals of the *khutbah* are marked with a * in this template.

APPENDIX B

1st Sermon:

1. *Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rab al-‘ālamīn.*⁷ *
2. *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘ala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ‘alā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim.*⁸ *
3. *Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ittaqū Allāha ḥaqqā tuqātihi wa lā tamūtunna illā wa antum Muslimūn.*⁹ *

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ۚ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

4. Content of 1st Khuṭbah
5. If using a verse from Qur’ān in the 1st Khuṭbah, precede the verse with:
*A‘ūdhu billāhi min ash-shayṭān ar-rajīm.*¹⁰
6. When ending the 1st Khuṭbah, say, “Astaghfir ullaḥa al-‘azīm lī wa lakum wa lī jamī‘ al-Muslimīn, fa-staghfirūhu innahu huwa al-Ghafūru ar-Raḥīm.”¹¹
7. Sit down briefly. *

End of 1st Sermon

2nd Sermon:

8. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (“Praised be God”). *
9. *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘ala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ‘ala ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim.* *
10. *Ūṣīkum wa nafsī bi taqwā Allāh.* *

11.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

*Inna Allāha wa malā‘ikatahu yuṣallūna ‘alā an-nabī, yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alayhi wa sallimū taslīmā.*¹²

12. *Allāhumma ighfir lil mu‘minīn wa al-mu‘mināt.*¹³ *

13.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

*Inna Allāha ya‘murū bil ‘adli wa al-iḥsāni wa iytā’i dhi l-qurbā, wa yanḥā ‘an l-faḥshā’i wa l-munkari wa l-baghī, ya’izukum la‘allakum tadḥakkarūn.*¹⁴

⁷ “Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.”

⁸ “O God, send your peace and mercy upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions.”

⁹ “You who believe, be mindful of God, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment.” (Qur’ān 3:102).

¹⁰ “I seek refuge in God from the accursed devil.”

¹¹ “I seek God’s forgiveness for myself, you all, and for all Muslims. Seek His forgiveness, indeed He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

¹² “God and His angels bless the Prophet so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.” (Qur’ān 33:56).

¹³ “O God, forgive the believing men and women.”

¹⁴ “God commands justice, and goodness, and giving to relatives; and forbids indecency, and abomination and injustice, cautioning you that you may be mindful.” (Qur’ān 16:90).

14. *Fadhkurū l-Allāha al-‘Aẓīma yadhkurkum, washkurūhu ‘alā ni‘amihi yazidkum, wa lā dhikru l-Allāhi akbar.*¹⁵

15. *Wa aqim aṣ-Ṣalāh.*¹⁶

End of 2nd Sermon

Begin the Prayer

¹⁵ Remember God the Exalted and He will remember you, thank Him for His blessings and He will increase you, and there is nothing greater than the remembrance of God.

¹⁶ Start the Prayer.