

In What Language should the Khutbah be Delivered?

Q: Salaah-167: The Jumu'ah Khutbah is delivered in Arabic in our Masjid but the Urdu translation is also read out. Because this takes up too much of time, it has been stopped, but some Berelwi people are insisting that it be continued. What should the Imaam now do? Please furnish a detailed reply.

Answer: There is no disputing the fact that Rasulullaah SAW. delivered the Khutbah in Arabic. When the Sahabah RADI. the Taabi'een and those after them went to other countries, the people there benefited greatly from them and became Muslims. There was certainly a great need for these people to learn the injunctions of Deen and in the absence of printing presses to print books, leaflets and magazines, the only means of teaching was discourses and lectures. Despite all of this, there are absolutely no narrations to prove that the Sahabah RADI. the Taabi'een, the Muhadditheen, the Fuqahaa and all the past and later day scholars ever delivered the Jumu'ah or Eid Khutbahs in any language other than Arabic. Let alone doing it, they never encouraged it either.

Now the question may be posed about whether this was merely a customary act about which no thought was given or whether it was well thought out act that held many benefits and fulfilled certain objectives. The first point to note is that when something is done continuously by the pious predecessors in every era and amongst the people of every rank of society, it becomes Waajib (compulsory) for us to follow that act. Such an act cannot be marginalised and regarded as an act of habit or custom. The Ulema have therefore accorded to the Arabic language the status that applies to other distinct factors of the Khutbah, such as praising for Allaah, the Shahaadah, Durood, mention of the Khulafaa, etc. Just as these are all necessary features of the Khutbah. so too is the Arabic language.

Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi RAH. says, "An analysis of the khutbahs that were delivered by Rasulullaah SAW. the Khulafaa, the Sahabah RADI. the Taabi'een, those after them and even the Khutbahs of the Muhadditheen, the Mujaahideen and all the rest will reveal that certain factors were common. These are praise of Allaah, the Shahaadah, Durood, mention of the Khulafaa Raashideen and the fact that they were all delivered in Arabic. The importance of the Arabic language can be ascertained from the fact that although the audience of the Khutbahs did not understand Arabic, the Khutbahs were always delivered in Arabic throughout the ages.

(1) The gist of it all is that use of the Arabic language for the Khutbah is not an incidental factor, but is as important a feature of the Khutbah as are other features.

(2) Another explanation is that Arabic has been accorded the status of a national language. Just as the Qur'aan is the constitution of the Muslim nation and the bond between the international Muslim society, so too should the language of the Qur'aan be accorded at least that much importance that it be used in the congregational matters of the Ummah, such as the Khutbahs.

(3) Now take a look at what the Khutbah really is. Is it merely a lecture or does it hold some other value in the eyes of the Shari'ah? Ulema have stated that the Khutbah actually fills the void of two Rakaahs since the Jumu'ah salaah comprises of only two Rakaahs. This means that the Khutbah actually hold the status of salaah. Therefore, just as it is Haraam to speak during salaah, it is also Haraam to speak during the Khutbah. Consequently, the language of salaah should also be the language of the Khutbah.

(4) The Qur'aan describes the Khutbah as Dhikrullaah when Allaah says, "Hasten towards the Dhikr of Allaah." Therefore, just as none disputes the fact that all other forms of Dhikr such as Ta'awwudh, Tasmiya, Tasbeeh, etc are all recited in Arabic and cannot be imagined otherwise, the Khutbah must also be done in the same way.

(5) There are several preconditions attached to the Khutbah. Some of these are:

>??? it has to be delivered after zawaal and not before

>??? it has to be delivered before the jumu'ah salaah and not after

>??? the audience must include males and it will be invalid if delivered to females only

>??? it is necessary that it be delivered even if the audience cannot hear it on account of excessive noise or them being all deaf

These and other conditions make it clear that the Khutbah is an act of Ibaadah and a Dhikr. Had it been merely a lecture or had an overwhelming flavour of a lecture, it would not have had all these conditions attached.

On account of all the above, the Fuqahaa have stipulated that the Khutbah of Jumu'ah and the Khutbah of Eid must be delivered in Arabic and that it is not permissible to deliver it in any other language.

Sharhul Wiqaayah (Vol.1 Pg.342) states, "There is no doubting the fact that delivering the Khutbah in a language other than Arabic conflicts with a Sunnah that has been practiced consistently throughout the ages (Sunnah Mutawaatirah) from the time of Rasulullaah SAW. It will therefore be Makrooh Tahreemi (next to Haraam) to do so."

Imaam Nawawi RAH. who was not a Hanafi but a Shaafi'ee says, "It is a precondition of the Khutbah that it be delivered in Arabic.

As for the practice of reading out .translation of the Khutbah, the first harm of it is that it conflicts with the Sunnah Mutawaatirah, which will render it Makrooh. Furthermore, when people start to regard this act as part of Deen when it is not, it will become a Bid'ah. Rasulullaah SAW. stated that anything introduced as part of the Deen when it is not, it needs to be rejected. In addition to this, it doubles the time of the Khutbah, whereas the Hadith states that the duration of the Khutbah should not be longer than the duration of a Surah from the Tiwaal Mufassal (the Surahs of the Qur'aan from Surah Hujuraat to Surah) such as Surah Qaaf or Surah Mulk. It is Makrooh

to prolong it any more.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. has mentioned that lengthy Khutbahs are a sign of times of evil and corruption and the way of tyrannical rulers.

To address the question of educating people, we should adopt the practices of the blessed times of the Sahabah RADI. Here are a few narrations regarding this matter:

1. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. used to stand on the pulpit before the Jumu'ah Khutbah and continue narrating Ahadeeth until Ameerul Mu'mineen Hadhrat Umar RADI. arrived to deliver the Khutbah.

2. Hadhrat Abu Daraari RAH. reports that Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Busr RADI. used to give advices before the Jumu'ah Khutbah and would terminate as soon RADI. Khoteeb arrived.

3. Hadhrat Tameem Daari RADI. used to deliver a lecture to the people before the Khutbah during the Khilaafah of both Hadhrat Umar RADI. and Hadhrat Uthmaan RADI.

Your Imaam should be congratulated for stopping the practice of translating the Khutbah and for starting to deliver the Khutbah purely in Arabic. It is as if he has given life to a Sunnah, because of which he is entitled to receive the reward of a hundred martyrs and have the companionship of Rasulullaah SAW. Jannah, as stated in a Hadiths.

The Berelwi gentlemen who wish to obstruct this excellent act of enlivening a Sunnah are really making an attempt to bury it again. Even their accepted leader Molvi

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.2