112041 - Friday khutbah in languages other than Arabic

the question

Could you kindly detail what should be done by the congregation for Juma prayers? Basically, we listen to a speech in our language then Adhan, then four sunna salaat. After this the Imam devlivers the khutba in Arabic. During his khutbha how should we sit? Then there is a pause in the khutbha, what should be recited here?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The fuqaha’ are unanimously agreed that it is better for the khutbah to be in Arabic, but they differed as to whether that is essential. There are three points of view:

1-

That it is essential for it to be in Arabic for the one who is able to do that, even if the listeners do not know Arabic.

This is the view of the Maalikis and it is the well-known view of the Hanbalis.

See: al-Fawaakih al-Diwaani (1/306) and Kashshaaf al-Qinaa’ (2/34).

2-

That it is essential for it to be in Arabic for the one who is able to do that, unless none of the listeners know Arabic, in which case he should give the khutbah in their language.

This is the correct view according to the Shaafa’is, and it is the view of some of the Hanbalis.

See: al-Majmoo’ by al-Nawawi (4/522).

3-

It is mustahabb for the khutbah to be in Arabic but it is not essential, and the khateeb may deliver the khutbah in his own language instead of Arabic. This is the view of Abu Haneefah and some of the Shaafa'is.

See: Radd al-Muhtaar (1/543) and al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (19/180).

This third view is the correct one, and it is the view favoured by a number of our contemporary scholars, because there is no clear evidence to say that the khutbah must be in Arabic, and because the purpose of the khutbah is to exhort, benefit and teach, which can only be done by using the language of the people present.

It says in a statement of the Fiqh Council of the Muslim World League:

The fairest opinion is that using Arabic when giving the khutbah on Friday and at Eid in countries where it is not spoken is not a condition of it being valid, but it is better to say the preliminaries of the khutbah and any Qur'aanic verses quoted in Arabic, so as to get non-Arabs used to hearing Arabic and the Qur'aan, which will make it easier to learn it and read the Qur'aan in the language in which it was revealed. Then the khateeb can follow that with exhortation in their language which they understand. End quote.

Qiraaraat al-Majma' al-Fiqhi (p. 99) (fifth session, fifth statement).

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 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.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (8/253).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Perhaps it is better, and Allaah knows best, to discuss this matter in detail and say:

If the majority of people in the mosque are non-Arabic speakers who do not understand Arabic, then there is nothing wrong with giving the khutbah in a language other than Arabic, or delivering it in Arabic then translating it.

But if most of the people present know Arabic and understand it in general, then it is better to stick to Arabic and not go against the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), especially since the salaf used to deliver khutbahs in mosques where there were non-Arabs present, and it is not narrated that they used to translate it, because Islam was prevalent and so was Arabic.

As for the evidence that it is permissible in cases of necessity; there is some evidence to that effect in sharee'ah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might

make (the Message) clear for them”

[Ibraaheem 14:4]

For example, when the Sahaabah invaded non-Arab lands such as Persia and Byzantium, they did not fight them until they called them to Islam via interpreters. End quote.

Majmoo’ Fataawa Ibn Baaz (12/372).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The correct view with regard to this matter is that it is permissible for the khateeb to deliver the khutbah in a language that the people present understand, if the people present are not Arabs and do not know Arabic. He may deliver the khutbah in their language, because that is the means of explaining to them, and the purpose of the khutbah is to explain the sacred limits of Allaah to His slaves, and exhort them, and guide them. But the verses of Qur'aan should be recited in Arabic, then explained in the language of the people.

The fact that he may give the khutbah in the language of the people is indicated by the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them”

[Ibraaheem 14:4].

Allaah stated that the means of conveying should be in the language that the people addressed understand. Based on that, he may give the khutbah in a language other than Arabic, but if he recites verses of Qur’aan, they must be in Arabic, in which the Qur'aan was revealed, then after that he may explain them to these people in their language. End quote.

Fataawa Noor ‘ala al-Darb .

See the answer to question no. 984.

Secondly:

The format of Jumu’ah prayer should not be changed to what is mentioned in the question, whereby there are two khutbahs, one before the adhaan in the people’s language and another after the adhaan in Arabic. Rather there should a khutbah either in the language of the people or in Arabic then translated into the other language straightaway whilst the khateeb is still on the minbar.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about translating the Friday khutbah into some other languages, after Jumu’ah prayer in al-Masjid al-Haraam, so that those who do not know Arabic could benefit from it. He replied:

We do not agree with what has been mentioned, and there is no justification for delivering another khutbah on Friday before or after the prayer.

If the aim is to translate the khutbah to those who do not understand Arabic, then the khutbah etc can be translated via the radio at times other than Jumu’ah prayer. End quote.

Majmoo’ Fataawa al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem (3/20).

We encourage all Muslims to learn Arabic, because it is the language of the Qur’aan and through it they can understand Islam better, and understand the meanings of the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Shaykh Rasheed Rida (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

We have stated more than once that knowledge of Arabic is obligatory upon every Muslim, because understanding the religion, establishing its rituals and fulfilling its obligations all depend on understanding this language, and cannot be valid without it. Although the Friday khutbah does not absolutely have to be in Arabic, this ritual is of great importance.

The non-Arabs who entered Islam in the early period hastened to learn Arabic in order to understand the Qur’aan and Sunnah and to form bonds through the language without which the

unity of the ummah cannot be achieved. The Sahaabah used to address the people in Arabic in every land that they conquered, and it was not long before the language of the lands that they entered became Arabic, due to the influence of the spirit of Islam, not for worldly gains or by force of compulsion. If they had thought that it was acceptable to leave the non-Arab nations who entered their religion with their own languages, they would have hastened to learn the languages of those nations and established the religious obligations and acts of worship for them in those languages, and Greek would have remained Greek, Persian would have remained Persian, and so on.

The difference in languages that we see today among Muslims is one of the most serious bad effects of politics. If the Ottoman and Iranian states do not try to spread Arabic in their realms, there will come a day when they will regret that. We cannot rely on any religious reform in India or elsewhere in the Muslim world, unless Arabic is taught from the primary stage and is made the language of knowledge. End quote.

Majallat al-Manaar (6/496).

Fourthly:

With regard to praying four Sunnah rak'ahs before Jumu'ah, there is no Sunnah prayer before Jumu'ah. Rather it is prescribed to offer voluntary prayers in general before it, without specifying any particular number. This has been discussed in the answer to question no. 6653 and 14075.

And Allaah knows best.