

Khutbat Al-Hājah

A discussion regarding its requirement in literary works

By
Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah
رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى



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Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah

Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah Al-Shāmī Al-Ḥalabī is widely recognised as a prominent scholar of recent times who hails from Aleppo, Syria. Shaykh dedicated his life to serving the religion of Allāh, studying the religious sciences under a diverse range of influential scholars from Aleppo and Damascus as well as India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt and other nationalities. Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ attained an advanced diploma from Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt.

The respected Shaykh dedicated a number of years to teaching in the Department of Islamic Law (Shar’iah) and Arabic Literature at Damascus University as well as Imām Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh (IMSIU), Saudi Arabia. Shaykh Abdul Fattāḥ has been likened to the pious predecessors (*Salaf Ṣālihīn*) in terms of his wisdom and wealth of knowledge regarding the fields of Ḥadīth Sciences (*‘Ilm Al-Ḥadīth*), Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and verification of Ḥadīth transmitters (*‘Ilm Al-Rijāl*) as well as chains of narration. His humble, empathic and balanced character was representative of the true scholars.

Shaykh Abū Ghuddah held Shaykh Al-Hind Mahmūd Ḥasan in high esteem as well as Imām ‘Abdul Ḥayy Lucknawī. He had a passion for Lucknawī’s literary works, most of which he worked to publish, edit and annotate. Shaykh was a frequent visitor of India, its libraries and Islamic seminaries and was always keen to meet its scholars.

Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ edited a great number of Arabic manuscripts and wrote numerous commentaries and other literary works, all of which contain a treasure trove of knowledge for students studying the noble Ḥadīth Sciences. His books: *Ṣafahāt min Ṣabr al-‘Ulama’ ‘ala Shadāid al-‘Ilm wa al-Taḥṣīl* (Patience of Pious Predecessors In Seeking Knowledge), *Qīmat al-Zamān* (The Value of Time), *Al-Rasūl al-Mu‘allim* (Prophet Muhammad The Teacher) and *Min Adab al-Islām* (Some Etiquettes of Islam), are extremely beneficial and widely appreciated.

In 1317 AH (1997), Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah returned to his Lord leaving an extraordinary legacy for students and scholars. May Allāh the Almighty accept his efforts and grant him Jannat al-Firdaws.

Preface



This booklet is a summary of Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah’s book titled “*Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah Laysat Sunnatan fī Muṣṭaḥal Al-Kutub wa al-Mu‘allafāt*”. In this book, Shaykh has presented some discussions related to the *Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah*, namely, the issue raised by Shaykh Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī regarding the *Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah*. Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ elaborated on the fact that it is not Sunnah to begin books and literary works with this Khutbah, rather it is only Sunnah for speeches and sermons. This research has utilised multiple sources from the Prophet ﷺ, the Ṣaḥābah, and their righteous followers (*tābi‘īn*). It will also illustrate the discrepancies found in Shaykh Albānī’s argument.

Whilst teaching *Mishkāṭ Al-Maṣābiḥ* at Madani Madrasah (London), the Ḥadīth of *Khuṭbat al-Ḥājah* was discussed and students were advised to refer to Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah’s book for further reading. Upon their completion of reading the book, I instructed them to make a summary of it so that it can be available for English readers as well. Hence the booklet at hand is the initial work of two of our

students: M Ahmadzay and N Muhib. A short biography of Shaykh has also been included along with a few footnotes.

May Allāh the Almighty grant them all the ability to acquire ‘*Ilm Nāfi*’ (beneficial knowledge) and implement ‘*Amal Ṣāliḥ*’ (righteous deed). Ameen.

Mahfuz Ahmad

Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " عَلَيْنَا خُطْبَةُ الْحَاجَةِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مِنْ يَهْدِهِ
اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ يَقْرَأُ ثَلَاثَ آيَاتٍ { يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ
وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ } { يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا } { يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا }

Translation:

“Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ) that: “He (ﷺ) taught us the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah: Praise be to Allāh, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allāh leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. Then he (ﷺ) recited the following three verses: “O you who believe! Fear Allāh as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims”; “O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him he created his wife, and from them, he created many men and women, and fear Allāh

through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allāh is Ever an All-Watcher over you”; “O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allāh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth.”

The Wisdom Behind the Selection of Verses¹

The Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah is known due to its common use in Nikāḥ ceremonies. It comprises of four verses from three different Ṣūrah.

Despite the fact that there are numerous verses in the Qurʾān that mention marriage, the verses selected for the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah do not mention marriage. This raises the question of the wisdom behind the selection of these verses. Upon closer analysis, three qualities are mentioned within the verses. If adopted by both spouses they promise prosperity and happiness for the couple:

- ❖ **Taqwa:** This virtue has been mentioned in all three verses. If both spouses are mindful of Allāh’s commandments in a general sense as well as in regard to marriage and each other’s rights, they will live a beautiful life.

¹ This small section is taken from the Mishkāt lessons of Ustadh Maḥfuz Aḥmad.

- ❖ *Maintaining familial ties*: both sides should respect each other's families and not insult or speak badly about their in-laws.
- ❖ *Communication*: to speak truthfully to one another.

The source of this narration:

The following scholars and others have all narrated this Khuṭbah from Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) as Marfū‘²: Abū Dāwūd Al-Tayālīsī³, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal⁴, Abū Dāwūd Al-Sijistānī⁵, Imām Tirmīdhī⁶, Imām Nasā’ī⁷, Ibn Māja⁸, Abū Ya‘lā⁹, Imām Ṭaḥāwī¹⁰, Al-Ṭabarānī¹¹, Al-Ḥākim¹², Imām Bayḥaqī¹³.

² A statement attributed to the Prophet ﷺ.

³ P. 45, Ḥadīth : 338.

⁴ V. 5 p. 271.

⁵ V. 6 p. 153.

⁶ V. 4 p. 337.

⁷ V. 3 p. 104-5.

⁸ V. 1 p. 609, Ḥadīth : 1892.

⁹ V. 9 p. 167.

¹⁰ V. 1 p. 6-7.

¹¹ V. 10 p. 98, Ḥadīth : 10080.

¹² V. 2 p. 172.

¹³ V. 7 p. 146.

Some scholars have declared the Ḥadīth as Mawqūf¹⁴, they include: Ṣufyān Al-Thawrī narrating from ‘Abd Al-Razzāq (*muṣannaf* ‘Abd Al-Razzāq)¹⁵, Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd*)¹⁶, Abū Ya‘la (*Al-Musnad*)¹⁷, Imām Bayḥaqī (*Al-Sunan Al-Kubrā*)¹⁸, Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid narrating from ‘Abd Al-Razzāq too¹⁹, and from his route in *Sharḥ Al-Sunnah* (Imām Baghawī)²⁰, Zuhayr Ibn Mu‘āwiyah narrating from Al-Nasā’ī (*Sunan Al-Kubrā*)²¹. The chains of transmission which mention Ṣufyān, Ma‘mar and Zuhayr are authentic.

This Khuṭbah has also been referred to as Tashahhud Al-Ḥajāh by Imām Tirmīdhī²² and Imām Al-Nasā’ī²³ on the authority of ‘Abthar ibn Al-Qāsim, from A‘mash, from Abū Ishāq Al-Sab‘ī, from Abū Aḥwas from Sayyidunā ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) who said: “*The Prophet ﷺ taught us the tashahhud for prayer and during times of need...*”

¹⁴ A statement attributed to a Ṣaḥābī (it is his own statement).

¹⁵ V. 6 p. 178.

¹⁶ V. 6 p. 153.

¹⁷ V. 9 p. 150

¹⁸ V. 7 p. 146.

¹⁹ V. 6 p. 178.

²⁰ V. 9 p. 49.

²¹ V. 6 p. 126.

²² Jami’ Al-Tirmīdhī: 1105.

²³ Sunan Al-Nasā’ī : 5502.

The meaning of Ḥājah and occasions when the Khuṭbah is considered Sunnah

Although the Ḥadīth that have been compiled on this subject do not explicitly imply the meaning of “Ḥājah” there are multiple narrations which clarify that it was a widely practised custom for the Khuṭbah to be read during the Nikāḥ ceremony, especially during the era of the *tābi‘īn* as stated below:

In the Musnad of Abū Dāwūd Al-Ṭayālīsī²⁴ it is narrated on the authority of Shu‘bah who says “*I said to Abū Ishāq Al-Sabī‘ī (the teacher of Shu‘bah)- who had narrated the Khuṭbah mentioned - ‘Is this Khuṭbah for Nikāḥ or other occasions too?’ He said, “it is suitable for any need.”*”

The way in which Shu‘bah posed his question indicates that this Khuṭbah was widely known to be read during the Nikāḥ in that era, which was the era of the followers of the Ṣaḥābah (*tābi‘īn*).

Upon looking at Ḥadīth compilations, not one scholar of Ḥadīth has placed the Ḥadīth in regards to Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah under the chapters relating to mannerisms or that which is

²⁴ P. 45, Ḥadīth: 338.

supposed to be said at the beginning of letters and literary works. It is important to note that there are a few variations of the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah, all of which have been compiled under the chapters of marriage²⁵ or Friday prayers²⁶. This further emphasises very clearly that this Khuṭbah is not recommended to be written at the beginning of literary works.

The Prophet ﷺ is known to have started many sermons with this Khuṭbah, however, this was not a regular practice as he would also utilise other prayers and words of admonition as well.

²⁵ See muṣannaf ‘Abd Al-Razzāq, muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, Sunan Al-Dārimī, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmīdhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Al-Jarūd (Al-Munṭaqā), Abū ‘Awānah (Musnad Al-Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Mustakhraj ‘Ala Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim), Ibn Al-Sunnī (‘Amal Al-Yawm wa Al-Layla), Mustadrak Al-Ḥākim, Al-Bayḥaqī (Sunan Al-Kubrā), Imām Baghawī (Sharḥ Al-Sunnah), Khatīb Tabrīzī (Mishkāṭ Al-Maṣābiḥ), Ibn Taymīyyah (Al-Kalim Al-Ṭayyib), Ibn Daqīq Al-‘Id (Al-Ilmām bi-Aḥādith Al-Aḥkām), Ibn Ḥajar (Bulūgh Al-Marām).

²⁶ Imām Nasā’ī (Al-Mujtabā) in the chapter “How to perform the Friday Sermon”. He also includes it in the chapter on Marriage under “The speech which is recommended to be said at the time of Nikāḥ”.

Evidence of the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah in letters of the Prophet ﷺ and Ṣaḥābah

As for the letters written by the Prophet ﷺ to political leaders and governors, they have been preserved to this today in history books and autobiographies and are widely available for readers to access. However, the fact remains that not one of these letters has begun with Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah nor the two Shahadahs.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī’s work titled “*Fatḥ Al-Bārī*”²⁷, which is a commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī, mentions under the explanation of the narration which discusses the letter sent to Heraclius, that the opening statement was: “In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind”. Imām Nawawī²⁸ is cited to have said this is evidence that states that all writing should open with the name of Allāh even if it is being sent to a non-Muslim. He justifies his statement with the Ḥadīth of Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه):

²⁷ V. 8 p. 487-88, Tafsīr of Sūrah Al-e-Imran.

²⁸ V. 12 p. 107-8, Chapter of Jihad and Siyar (*international relations between countries*).

"كل أمر ذي بال لا يفتح بذكر الله فهو أقطع"

Any matter which does not begin with the name of Allāh is“

”deprived of blessings

This Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) has been transmitted through various routes of narration, some of which state the “*name of Allāh*”, the “*remembrance of Allāh*” and the “*praise of Allāh*”. Although the phrase in this Ḥadīth gives a general meaning, it also refers specifically to those requirements which are necessary for delivering a sermon. As mentioned above, it was not a custom of the Prophet ﷺ nor those after him to start written works like so.

The condition of starting with the praise of Allāh the *Tashahhud* being said is specific to a sermon, as opposed to other important matters which start with the full *basmalah* or just “*bismillāh*” such as before intercourse and slaughter or some which start with a specific phrase such as the *Takbīr* at the beginning of prayer.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar also explains in the beginning of “*Fatḥ Al-Bārī*”, Imām Bukhārī’s decision to leave out words of praise

²⁹ Musnad Aḥmad: 8712.

and the Shahādah at the beginning of his Ṣaḥīḥ compilation.
He says:

وقوع كتب رسول الله ﷺ إلى الملوك وكتبه في القضايا مفتحة بالتسمية دون
حمدلة وغيرها - كما في حديث أبي سفيان في قصة هرقل وفي حديث البراء في
قصة سهيل بن عمرو في صلح الحديبية وغير ذلك من الأحاديث: يشعر بأن لفظ
الحمد والشهادة إنما يحتاج إليه في الخطب دون الرسائل و الوثائق.

*"The letters that the Prophet ﷺ wrote and sent to kings, as well as letters written in other matters, were opened with the name of Allāh, his praise and other words, such as in the Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Ṣufyān (رضي الله عنه) in regards to the letter written to Heraclius and in the Ḥadīth narrated by Al-Barā' (رضي الله عنه) regarding the story of Suhayl Ibn 'Amr in the treaty of Hudaibiyyah as well as others indicate that words of praise and shahadah are only needed in sermons rather than letters and treaties."*³⁰

It is important to mention that there are some letters written by the Prophet ﷺ which start with "I praise to you Allāh"³¹. But the fact remains that no letter has started with

³⁰ V. 1 p. 8.

³¹ See the letter written to King Negus (Najāshī) in *Majmū'ah Al-Wathā'iq* by Dr Hamīdullah p. 75 no.20/1000. See also the letter to Al-Munẓir Ibn Sāwī p. 114 no.75

the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah, rather according to Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah’s extensive research, he has not found a single letter or contract that has started with Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah in the sources he has looked through. Instead, they have all been opened with the name of Allāh³².

When analysing the writing of the Ṣaḥābah including the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafā’ Al-Rāshidūn*), none of them began their letters with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah. The same is found among the righteous predecessors (*Salaf*) and those who came after them (*Khalaf*). The scholars of Ḥadīth science are known to have begun their works in the name of Allāh only, occasionally adding prayers of praise, salutations and blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ and the two shahādahs. Once again, not a single work has started with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah that has been mentioned above.

The word *Khuṭbah* during the time of the Prophet ﷺ was utilised in reference to the following: delivering the Friday sermon, what is said at the Nikāḥ ceremony or Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah. The term was never used to refer to pieces of

³² The prophet ﷺ’s letter in regards to the alms taken from the narration of ‘Amr Ibn Ḥazm. See *Nasb Al-Rāy Li-Aḥadīth Al-Hidāyah* by Imām Zayla‘ī v. 2 p. 335-343.

writing. The following chapters will highlight the opinions of some prominent scholars in regard to this matter:

Mullā ‘Alī Qārī’s Opinion

Mullā ‘Alī Qārī (رحمه الله) mentions in his book “Jām‘i Al-Wasāi’l fī Sharḥ Al-Shamā’il”:

“When most authors do not act upon the apparent meaning of this Ḥadīth (Every speech that does not begin with the tashahud (ḥamd or thanā) is like the hand which has been cut off (i.e. there are no blessings in it), it indicates that the apparent meaning is not what should be interpreted.

This suggests that the word Khuṭbah can be interpreted in different ways. The most correct view in the context of this Ḥadīth is that it refers to those sermons that were commonly said during the time of the Prophet ﷺ on Fridays, Eids and other occasions. The practice of writing began after that.”³³

The apparent meaning of the word “Al-Khuṭbah”, - according to its typical usage during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ,

³³ V. 1 p. 5.

the Ṣaḥābah and their senior followers (tābi‘īn) - is “*every important speech which one intends to address the people with*”³⁴.

‘Allāmah Khalīl Aḥmad Saharanpurī uses this to clarify the matter in his book *Badhl Al-Majhūd*³⁵. He states that the apparent meaning of this word does not extend to - according to the tradition of the Prophet ﷺ - the beginning of books, and letters. As such, Mullā ‘Alī Qārī’s statement that “*Writers have not acted upon the apparent meaning of this Ḥadīth* ” is actually an understatement. In reality, these writers believe that the apparent meaning of this Ḥadīth does not even include the beginning of books, and letters. This aligns with the practice of the Prophet ﷺ, the rightly guided Caliphs, the leaders that followed and others.

³⁴ See Sunan Abī Dāwūd, V.4 p.361 from the second print of Shaykh Muhyī Al-Dīn ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd. Imam Tirmīdhī also reported it in his collection, V. 4 p. 239 under “Kitāb An-Nikāḥ” in “Bāb mā jā’a fī Khuṭbat Al-Hājah” after the ḥadīth of Khuṭbat Al-Hājah. Imam Bayḥaqī also included it in “Sunan Al-Kubrā” V. 3 p. 209 under “Kitāb Al-Jumu‘ah” in “Bāb ma yustadallu bihī ‘ala wujūb Al-Taḥmīd fī Khuṭbatil Jumu‘ah”.

³⁵ V. 19 p. 88.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar's Opinion

In the introduction of Fatḥ Al-Bārī³⁶ Ibn Ḥajar (رحمه الله) rejects the statement of some that: “*Imām Bukhārī began his book with a Khuṭbah in which he included Ḥamd and Shahādah, but later on some of those who reported from his book omitted it*”.

Ibn Ḥajar also rejected their view, saying that: “It is as if those who make this claim have not seen the literary works of the Imāms; from the scholars of Bukhārī, and the scholars of his scholars, to his contemporaries - like Imām Mālik in his *Muwaṭṭa’*, ‘Abdur Razzāq in his *Muṣannaf*, Imām Aḥmad in his *Musnad*, and Imām Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan*, to the countless individuals who did not start their work with a khuṭbah, and did not include more than ‘bismillāh’. These personalities form a large majority of classical writers.

³⁶ V. 1 p. 9.

Works by Muḥaddithīn which did not begin with Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajjah

Below are the names of several books, from the writings and interpretations of the great scholarly Ḥuffāz, as well as the experts of Ḥadīth, who did not begin their books with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajjah. This proves that omitting the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajjah is the practice of the majority of the Muḥaddithīn and other people of knowledge.

- 1) Imām Mālik's *Muwatta*
- 2) Ibn Al-Mubārak's *Al-Zuhd wa Al-Raqāʿiq*
- 3) Qādi Abū Yūsuf's *Al-Kharāj*
- 4) Imām Shafīʿi's *Al-Umm*
- 5) Muḥammad Al-Shaybānī's *Al-Ḥujjah ʿAlā Ahl Al-Madīnah*

Shaykh ʿAbdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda mentions over 300 books, and without going into depth, it is clear there are countless more works. Amongst these authors, there are many who actually recorded the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajjah in their compilations of Ḥadīth, narrated it to those after them, and even read it time and time again. Amongst them were Muḥaddithīn who specialised in *fiqh* as well as Jurists (*Fuqahāʾ*) who were both experts of Ḥadīth and reliable in the transmission and the interpretation (of *fiqh*).

It would be inaccurate to say that they left out the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah because they were unaware of the Ḥadīth. It would be even worse to say that they did not include the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah because of a deficiency on their part and their negligence of the Sunnah. The reality is that the Sunnah was accurately reported and preserved by the Muḥaddithīn - that it was for the beginning of important sermons.

Shaykh Albānī's view of scholars who have “abandoned this Sunnah”

Shaykh Albānī commented the following in the foreword to the first volume of his “*Silsilat Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ḍa‘īfah wa Al-Mawdū‘ah*”:

“This is the Khuṭbat that the Prophet ﷺ used to teach his companions to say before any statements made in regards to the religion, whether it be the Khuṭbat, read in the Nikāḥ ceremony, Friday prayers or a lecture and so on. In my printed letter, which was published by the esteemed journal “*Al-Tamaddun Al-Islāmī*”, I wrote, “*it has unfortunately been abandoned by all the scholars, as far as I am aware. Perhaps they will return to this Sunnah and revive it*”.

In the foreword to the fourth volume of the same book, he says “*This Khuṭbah, unfortunately, has been abandoned by most speakers and teachers.*” He also suggests that those scholars who do not begin their writings with the Khuṭbah are going against the *Salaf*, and are guilty of having caused this Sunnah to die out due to their lack of concern with ‘reviving the Sunnah’, focusing their efforts towards ‘putting an end to innovation’ instead.

Sharaf Ḥijāz Al-Miṣrī criticises “*Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Kalām Al-Ṭayyib*”³⁷, which cites a statement from Imām Nawawī: “*This Khuṭbah is Sunnah, if nothing from it is done, the scholars agree that the marriage is still valid*”. Shaykh Albānī responds by saying that Imām Nawawī did well to make this comment, because he feared that insisting on the practice would push the people into extremism regarding it. He goes on to say that Imām Nawawī did this with the public’s best interest at heart at the same time, having said that, this has also led to the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah becoming an almost completely forgotten Sunnah.

Despite the fact that the *Salaf* themselves were not aware of this Sunnah (which Shaykh Albānī provided evidence of after the 4th century), Shaykh Albānī made the Khuṭbah wājib. Such that in order for one to be considered Salafī, one must preserve and uphold this Khuṭbah as a Sunnah when beginning any written works.

Mullā ‘Alī Qārī (رحمه الله) also noted that the Ḥadīth itself makes mention of marriage, Friday prayers, Eid, and lectures - all of which are oral addresses. Therefore, the same ruling cannot be applied to articles, books, letters and so on since

³⁷ (Page 85) Written by Ibn Taymīyyah, with annotation by Shaykh Albānī.

they are written addresses making them fundamentally different. Based on this, scholars cannot be accused of abandoning the Sunnah and it was not right of Shaykh Albānī to have included ‘writing and authoring’ as part of this Sunnah.

Response to Shaykh Albānī's Claim

Taking everything that has been discussed thus far into consideration, Shaykh Albānī's claim becomes even more of an outlier. He regards the scholars from the predecessors (*Salaf*) and the scholars who came later (*Khalaf*) as ignorant because they chose not to begin their works using the *Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah*.

Shaykh Albānī writes in the conclusion to his booklet titled “*Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah Allatī Kāna Rasūlullāh Yu'allimuhā Aṣḥābah*”³⁸ (which was first printed in 1373 AH):

“It is clear to us, from all of the aforementioned Ḥadīth, that this Khuṭbah was used to begin all speeches, regardless of whether it was the Khuṭbat Al-Nikāḥ, the Friday sermon, or on other occasions, and so it is not specific only to Nikāḥ as some individuals believe. In fact, this point is made explicit in some of the chains of the Ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه). The practice of the pious predecessors also supports this, since they used to begin their books with this Khuṭbah. For example, Imām Abū Ja'far At-Ṭaḥāwī, mentioned in the introduction of his book Mushkil Al-Āthār: ‘I am starting with that which the Prophet ﷺ instructed us to begin

³⁸ P. 39, from the second print of the 1389 AH edition.

important matters with, from that which has been narrated through chains which I will mention later on. Shaykh Al-Islam Abū Al-‘Abbās Ibn Taymīyyah also used this method, and he would often begin his writings with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah. This is not something unknown for those who pay attention.”

However, this does not come in the Ḥadīth which he makes reference to in his letter. In fact, Shaykh Albānī did not present anything from these Ḥadīth which proves that the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah is required at the beginning of books or letters.

Where he mentions how some narrations from Sayyidunā Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) make it clear that the Khuṭbah is to be done in written addresses as well, he bases this argument on the phrase:

“في النكاح وغيره”

“In the Nikāḥ ceremony and other occasions.”

In reality, this cannot be attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, or even Sayyidunā Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه). Rather, it was the statement of Abū Ishāq Al-Sabīʿ³⁹.

³⁹ This clarification has been made by Abū Dāwūd Al-Ṭayālīsī in his Musnad P. 45, Ḥadīth : 338.

Another discrepancy in Shaykh Albānī's claim is his generalisation of the fact that the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajāh was actually the practice of the pious predecessors. Yet, he only mentions the names of Imām Abū Ja'far Al-Ṭahāwī (299-321 AH, 4th-century Hijrī), and Shaykh Ibn Taymīyyah (661-728 AH, 8th-century Hijrī) both of whom were born after the 3rd century Hijrī when the era of the *Salaf* ended.

Even if we take these two scholars to be from the *Salaf*, Shaykh Albānī's claim is still invalid when we consider that in most of the works they authored they did not begin with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajāh. Such works from Imām Ṭahāwī include: “*Sharḥ Ma'ānī Al-Āthār*”, “*Mukhtaṣar Al-Ṭahāwī*”, “*Ikhtilāf Al-Fuqahā'*”.

Such works from Ibn Taymīyyah include: “*Al-Istiqāmah*”, “*Minhaj Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah*” “*Sharḥ Al-Aqīdah Al-Isfahāniyyah*”.

The fact that they left out the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥajāh in most of their works shows that both Imām Ṭahāwī and Ibn Taymīyyah held a different opinion to Shaykh Albānī.

Conclusion

Based on narrations, extracts and inherited customs presented, it is clear that it is not Sunnah to include Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah at the beginning of books and letters. Despite Shaykh Albānī's insistence that it is Sunnah, and his claim that all of the scholars from the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* (without exception) who do not practise this Sunnah are ignorant, there is not enough evidence to substantiate this claim.

As a result of Shaykh Albānī's opinion, there are many new books that have been printed in the Arab world whose authors begin their books, or start their introductions with the Khuṭbat Al-Ḥājah, with the belief that it is an established Sunnah in writing and authoring works, which is contrary to the prevalent practice of the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* as has been highlighted in Shaykh 'Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah's research.

Baitul Hikmah Institute

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