

## [Prayer During The Friday Khutbah](http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/593_23-11-2010/prayer-during-the-friday-khutbah-.html)

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The Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) has instructed that whenever a person enters the masjid, he should perform two rak'ats of prayer before sitting down. This prayer is called tahiyyat al-masjid [greeting of the masjid], and it is a sunna prayer.

However, these two rak'ats are not to be performed at times in which prayers are undesirable [makruh]. Islamic law has designated the following times as undesirable:

- (1) after the Fajr prayer until sunrise;
- (2) after the 'Asr prayer until sunset;
- (3) from the beginning of sunrise until the sun is a spear's length above the horizon [i.e. when a distance equal to the sun's diameter appears between the sun and the horizon];
- (4) from the time the sun is at its highest point in the sky until it moves on [istiwa']; and
- (5) from when the sun turns yellow before sunset until after it has set.

Hence, it is recommended to perform the tahiyyatal-masjid upon entering the

masjid at any time other than these disliked times. There is however one other exception to this general rule. Since the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) forbade any form of prayer or conversation during the Friday sermon [khutba], it is not allowed that a person perform the tahiyyat al-masjid upon entering the masjid while the sermon is in progress. This is the opinion of the Hanafis and many others.

Some scholars state that a person entering the masjid at such a time should still perform a set of two rak'ats prior to sitting down and listening to the imam's sermon. They go as far as designating it a desirable act even at that time.

The following is a discussion regarding this very issue. It seeks to determine the exact procedure a person should follow when he enters the masjid during the Friday sermon. The evidence used by the Hanafi school to establish the impermissibility of performing salat while the sermon is in progress will be presented first; after which we will analyze the few seemingly contradictory narrations that are used to prove the permissibility of prayer in this time.

### **The Qur'an On This Issue**

**Allah, the Exalted, says:**

**“So when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and remain silent, that you may receive mercy.”** (al-Qur'an 7:204).

This verse was revealed concerning salat (and, according to some opinions, concerning the sermon

too). Now, since the sermon has been likened to prayer and since the verses of the Qur'an are recited in it, the command of this verse shall apply to the sermon as well; which means that a person would have to observe silence during the sermon and listen attentively to what is being said. This also means that the person should not occupy himself in prayer during the sermon.

It is related from 'Umar (radiallahu anh) that the two sermons on Friday are equal to two rak'ats of prayer. This is probably why the rak'ats of Friday prayer are only two, whereas the rak'ats of Zuhr are four. He states: **"The sermon is equivalent to two rak'ats; therefore, whoever misses the sermon should perform four rak'ats [of Zuhr] instead."** (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 2:128, Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq)

It should be remembered that this was his personal view, and the ruling of the majority of scholars is that a person should still join the two rak'ats Friday congregation with the imam even if he happened to miss the sermon.

Since the sermon is similar to the prayer, it could be concluded from this that one should also remain silent and listen carefully while the sermon is in progress, just as one would while in prayer. The wisdom behind disallowing all forms of prayer, remembrance [dhikr], supplication [du'], and even enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong [amr bi'l-ma'ruf and nahy'an al-munkar] —which is permissible on all other occasions—is due to the fact that if a person engages in tahi'yat al-masjid or any other activity while the sermon is in progress, he will not be able to listen attentively to the imam's sermon.

### **The Hadiths On This Issue**

1) Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anh) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: **"Whoever says, 'Remain silent,' while the imam is delivering the sermon, he has nullified [his reward]."** (Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1:114)

2) Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anh) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam): **"When you say, 'Remain silent,' to your companion on Friday while the imam is delivering the sermon, you have nullified [your reward]."** (Sahih Muslim 1:281, Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar)

Since merely reminding another person to keep quiet during the Friday sermon has been prohibited by these hadiths, it follows that tahiyyat al-masjid, which is a supererogatory [nafli] action, must also be disallowed while the Friday sermon is being delivered. The following hadith further clarifies this deduction:

3) 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma) narrates that he heard the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) say, **"When one of you enters the masjid to find the imam on the pulpit [delivering the sermon], then no prayer or conversation [is permitted] until the imam finishes."** (Majma' al-zawa'id 2:184)

This hadith in itself may have been classified by some as being defective due to the narrator in its chain, Ayyub ibn al-Nahik. There is mixed criticism about him. Some scholars of hadith have called

him trustworthy, while others have called him weak. However, despite this, there are many other aspects which bolster its acceptability. Ibn Abi Shayba has related some other narrations of Ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma) (the narrator of this hadith) which would indicate that Ibn 'Umar's personal opinion and practice was in conformance with his narration. This adds strength to his narration.

One of the principles of hadith [usul al-hadith] is that any narration supported by the constant practice of the Companions (radiallahu anhum) and Followers (rahmatullahi alaihim) will acquire enough strength to be used as evidence. This means that the message of the above hadith, despite the criticism leveled at its chain, can be accepted. The fact that there are many other rigorously authenticated [sahih] hadiths that relay the same message as the above hadith makes it even more legitimate to use as proof. We will see in the following paragraphs that this opinion was not an isolated one but was rather the opinion of numerous Companions and Followers.

4) It is related from Salman al-Farsi (radiallahu anh) that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: **"A person who performs the ritual bath [ghusl] on Friday, attains as much purity as he can, applies oil or some scent found in the house; then departs for the masjid and does not force two people apart [to sit between them]; and performs as much prayer as Allah has willed for him, and then maintains silence while the imam speaks, will have all his sins from the present Friday to the next forgiven."** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1:122, Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:369)

5) A similar narration of Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anh) in Sahih Muslim has the following variation: [...] **and performs what has been ordained for him, then observes silence until the imam finishes his sermon...** (Sahih Muslim 1:283)

6) Another narration of Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (radiallahu anhuma) contains the following variation: [...] **and performs what Allah has ordained for him, then observes silence when the imam appears...** (Sunan Abi Dawud 50 U)

7) Nubaysha al-Hudhali (radiallahu anh) narrates from the Messenger of Allah: **"When a Muslim performs ghusl [ritual bath] on Friday, approaches the masjid without inconveniencing anybody; and if he finds that the imam has not yet appeared, he engrosses himself in prayer for as long as possible; and if he finds the imam present, he sits silently and listens attentively until the imam completes the Friday prayer..."** (Musnad Ahmad)

Imam Haythami states regarding the above hadith that **"Imam Ahmad has narrated this hadith and its narrators are those of Sahih al-Bukhari except for the shaykh [teacher] of Ahmad, who is trustworthy."** (Majma' al-zawa'id 2:171)

None of the above hadiths mention that it is virtuous or even permissible to perform prayer once the imam has appeared for the sermon. The reason why this has been prohibited is due to the musalli's inability to attentively listen to the imam's sermon and to the verses of the Qur'an he is reciting.

**The Companions (Sahabah - Radiallahu anhum) And Followers (Tabi'een - rahmatullahi alaihim)**

## On This Issue

1) It is related from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas and Ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhum) **"that they disliked any prayer or conversation on Friday once the imam had appeared [to deliver the sermon].** (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 2:124)

2) It is narrated from Ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma) **that he would remain in prayer on Friday, and when the imam would appear he would stop praying.** (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 2:124)

3) 'Uqba ibn 'Amir (rahmatullahi alaih) has been reported as saying **that prayer while the imam is on the pulpit [minbar] is a disobedience [ma'siya]** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:370)

4) It is narrated from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (rahmatullahi alaih) **that a person [who enters the masjid on Friday while the imam is delivering the sermon] should sit down and not engage himself in any prayer.** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:369)

5) It is narrated from Khalid al-Hadhdha' (rahmatullahi alaih) that Abu Qilaba (rahmatullahi alaih) **arrived while the imam was delivering the sermon. He sat down and did not perform any prayer** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:369)

6) Abu Malik al-Qurazi (rahmatullahi alaih) narrates that **the "sitting" of the imam on the pulpit [minbar] signals an end to all prayer, and his "sermon" [signals an end] to all talking.** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:370)

7) Ibrahim al-Nakh'ay (rahmatullahi alaih) says, 'Alqama (rahmatullahi alaih) was asked, **"Do you speak while the imam is delivering the sermon or after he has arrived [to deliver it]?"** He said **no** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:370)

8) It is related from Mujahid (rahmatullahi alaih) that **he disliked to pray while the imam was delivering the sermon** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 1:370)

Another important point is that the angels have also been reported to wrap up their registers as soon as the sermon begins. The following hadiths reveal that as the imam begins his sermon, the angels put away their records in order to listen to the sermon.

9) There is a narration of Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anh) in Sahih al-Bukhari, as well as in other collections, regarding the angels recording the names and times of the worshippers arriving for the sermon on Friday. Towards the end of this hadith, the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) says, **"Thereafter, when the imam appears, the angels wrap up their records and begin to listen to the admonition [dhikr]."** (Sahih Muslim 1:283, Sahih al Bukhari 1:127, Sunan al-Nasa'i 205)

10) A narration from Abu Umama (radiallahu anh) states: **"When the imam appears, the records [of the angels] are put away."** (Majma' al-zawa'id 2:177)

11) A narration from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (radiallahu anh) states: **"When the muezzin calls for prayer**

**[adhan] and the imam sits on the pulpit, the records [of the angels] are wrapped up, and they enter the masjid listening attentively to the admonition [dhikr]."** (Majma' al-zawa'id 2:177)

12) In his commentary on Sahih Muslim, Imam Nawawi (rahmatullahi alaihi) has stated that **the same (i.e. that no prayer during the sermon) was the practice of 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali (radiallahu anhum)**. (Sharh Sahih Muslim 1:288)

13) Allama Shawkani (rahmatullahi alaihi) states that the great hadith master Zayn al-Din 'Iraqi (rahmatullahi alaihi) has **related the same practice from Muhammad ibn Sirin, Qadi Shurayh, Ibrahim al-Nakh'ay, Qatada, and Zuhri (rahmatullahi alaihim)**.

14) Ibn Abi Shayba (rahmatullahi alaihi) has **also reported this opinion from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, Mujahid, 'Ata', and 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr (rahmatullahi alaihim)**.

These narrations highlight and further establish the position of the Hanafis on the issue of prayer during the Friday sermon. Their opinion is that it is impermissible to perform salat while the sermon is in progress.

### Analyzing The Seemingly Contradictory Hadiths

1) Jabir (radiallahu anhu) narrates: **Sulayk al-Ghatafani (radiallahu anhu) arrived on Friday and sat down while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering the sermon. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered him to stand and perform two rak'ats and to make them short.** (Sahih Muslim 1:287)

This hadith is used by those who claim that it is permissible to perform two rak'ats during the sermon. This however is very difficult to accept due to the following reasons:

(a) This hadith cannot stand as evidence for prayer being permissible at the time of the sermon, because it speaks of a lone and isolated incident. It was only once that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered somebody to rise and perform two rak'ats during the sermon. In fact, there are a number of narrations which state that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered people to sit down during the sermon.

There is one hadith about a desert Arab [a'rabi] who had come to Allah's Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to complain about drought, then had appeared a week later to complain about heavy floods. This person arrived during the Friday sermon, but the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not command him to perform two rak'ats.

Anas (radiallahu anhu) narrates: A person entered [the masjid] on a Friday from the door opposite the pulpit upon which the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering the sermon. He faced the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said, **"O Messenger of Allah, properties have been destroyed and the pathways blocked. Pray to Allah that he send us rain."** The narrator says that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) raised his hands and prayed, **"O Allah, grant us rain."** It began to rain, and, by Allah, we did not see the sun for a week. Thereafter, the person arrived

through the same door the following Friday while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering the sermon. He faced the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said, **“O Messenger of Allah, property have been destroyed and the pathways blocked. Pray Allah to stop the rain.”** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1:137)

Another narration tells us that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) once observed a person during the sermon who was hurrying over people's shoulders. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him: **"Sit, for you have inconvenienced [the people]."** (Sunan al-Nasa'i 207, Abi Dawud)

It is quite clear that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not order him to perform any prayer, but told him to sit down quickly. In another narration of Jabir (radiallahu anh) it states: [On one occasion] the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) positioned himself on the pulpit and said, **“Be seated.”** Ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) [who had just entered] sat down instantly by the door of the masjid. When the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) saw him he said, **“Come forth, O 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.”** (Sunan Abi Dawud 156)

Again, the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not order him to perform prayer, but instead told him to come forth and sit. A hadith in Sahih Muslim states:

**‘Umar (radiallahu anh) was once delivering the sermon when ‘Uthman (radiallahu anh) arrived. ‘Umar (radiallahu anh) admonished him for not having performing the ritual bath [ghusl], but did not order him to perform any prayer.** (Sahih Muslim 1:280)

None of these incidents indicate a command for prayer while the sermon is in progress. In fact, they instruct that one should sit down while the imam is delivering the sermon, which proves that the one occasion on which the

Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered Sulayk al-Ghatafani (radiallahu anh) to stand and pray was due to another reason. The hadith of Sulayk therefore cannot be used to prove the desirability of prayer during the Friday sermon.

The full account of Sulayk al-Ghatafani's incident is as follows: **Once, while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sitting on the pulpit waiting to begin the sermon, a Companion named Sulayk ibn Hudba al-Ghatafani (radiallahu anh) who had on very torn and worn clothing entered the masjid. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), after seeing his poverty-stricken state, ordered him to stand and pray. He did this so the other Companions could also observe his condition. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remained silent until he had finished his prayer; then, after seeing that the other Companions had taken a look at him, he encouraged them to contribute to him, which they did with open hearts.** One can clearly see that this was a very special circumstance, in which the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered Sulayk to stand up and pray so that his condition would become known to the Companions. Consequently, this command cannot be classified as generally applicable as it was issued only once to this particular Companion.

(b) The above explanation should be sufficient to understand the true nature of the incident. Another explanation mentioned by some scholars is that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) gave the order to pray before commencing the sermon and then waited silently until the

Companion had completed his prayer. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not recite or say anything while Sulayk prayed, as is understood from a hadith in Sahih Muslim: "Sulayk al-Ghatafani (radiallahu anh) entered the masjid on Friday while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sitting on the pulpit [and had not yet stood for the sermon]." (Sahih Muslim 1:287)

It is a proven fact that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would deliver his sermons standing. Hence, for him to be sitting down (as the narration states) means that he had not yet begun the sermon; so Sulayk's (radiallahu anh) prayer was not performed during the Messenger's (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) sermon but before it. This point is further substantiated by Imam Nasa'i's (rahmatullahi alaih) inclusion of this narration under a chapter entitled, "**Chapter on Prayer Before the Sermon.**" This clearly indicates that according to Imam Nasa'i (rahmatullahi alaih), this incident took place before the sermon had begun.

(c) There are some narrations, however, which indicate that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had already begun the sermon when Sulayk (radiallahu anh) entered. The meaning of these narrations is that he was just about to begin the sermon when Sulayk (radiallahu anh) walked in.

(d) There are also other narrations which mention that Allah's Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) interrupted his sermon and remained silent until Sulayk (radiallahu anh) finished his prayer. The narration in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba contains the following words: "The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), when ordering the Companion to perform two rak'ats, discontinued his sermon until he had finished the two rak'ats." (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 2:110), and the narration of Daraqutni contains the following words: "Anas (radiallahu anh) narrates that **a person from the Qays tribe entered while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering the sermon. The Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told him to stand up and perform two rak'ats and discontinued the sermon until the person completed his prayer.**" (Sunan al-Daraqutni 2:15 U)

This means that the Companion had completed his salat and was no longer engaged in it while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering his sermon.

(e) Yet another explanation for this incident is that, since the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had interrupted his sermon and begun to converse with him, the prohibition of talking or praying was lifted and Sulayk (radiallahu anh) had to no longer adhere to the command "**remain silent and listen.**" Therefore, for him to perform two rak'ats while the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remained silent (and waited for him) was permissible. Ibn al-'Arabi (rahmatullahi alaih) has offered this explanation and considered it most accurate.

(f) It has been already mentioned that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered Sulayk (radiallahu anh) to rise and perform the prayer so as to expose his poverty-stricken state in front of the Companions. In this regard, a narration in Sunan al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasa'i from Abu Sa'id (radiallahu anh) states: "**A person entered the masjid in a shabby state.**" (Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1:93 U, al-Nasa'i 1:208 U)

(g) Another point that should not be overlooked here is that for the two rak'ats to be considered tahiyyat al-masjid, they must be offered immediately upon entering the masjid and prior to sitting down. However, we find in some versions of this narration that Sulayk (radiallahu anh) had sat down upon his arrival, after which the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had instructed him to stand and pray. The narration in Sahih Muslim states: **"Stand up and pray,"** (Sahih Muslim 1:287) and another narration states: **"Sulayk (radiallahu anh) sat down without praying, and the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked him if he had performed two rak'ats? He replied that he had not, so the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) ordered him to stand up and perform two rak'ats.** (Sahih Muslim 1:287)

This proves that he was ordered to stand up and pray in order to reveal his condition to the other Companions.

When the above points are taken into consideration, it makes it quite difficult to claim that tahiyyat al-masjid was permitted at the time of the sermon. The incident of Sulayk (radiallahu anh) was a unique and isolated one, and not one instructing the whole Umma to pray at that time, especially when there are other narrations that clearly prohibit its performance.

2) Another seemingly contradictory narration is as follows: Jabir (radiallahu anh) narrates that once while the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was delivering the sermon he said, **"When you [enter the masjid] and find the imam delivering the sermon... or [he said] "[...] and find that the imam has arrived [for the sermon], you should perform two rak'ats."** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1:156)

This is another narration that is used to establish the desirability of tahiyyatal-masjid at the time of the sermon. The same words are narrated by Imam Muslim (rahmatullahi alaihi) in his Sahih as part of the narration of Sulayk al-Ghatafani (radiallahu anh) (Sahih Muslim 1:287)

It can be said that this narration is in contradiction with the command of the Holy Qur'an and many other rigorously authenticated hadiths that have already been mentioned above. Many explanations have been offered in order to remove the conflict between this hadith and the hadiths of prohibition. One explanation is that the phrase, **"delivering his sermon,"** in the narration, actually means, **"about to begin the sermon"** (i.e. the imam was sitting waiting to begin the sermon). This is one way of reconciling the narrations so that no contradiction remains.

Otherwise, the second way to deal with this issue is to leave it as an independent rigorously authenticated narration in conflict with the other rigorously authenticated narrations of prohibition; and determine, in the light of the principles of hadith [usul al-hadith], which of the narrations are more superior and stronger.

**The result of such an analysis would be that the hadiths of prohibition presented by the Hanafis are stronger for a number of reasons:**

(a) The narrations used by the Hanafis are of a prohibitive nature (i.e. they prohibit the prayer at a particular time), whereas this narration (hadith 2) is of a permissive nature. One of the principles of hadith [usul al-hadith] is that when there is a conflict between hadiths, a hadith prohibiting



something is considered superior to one that permits it. Therefore, since the hadiths presented by the Hanafis are of a prohibitive nature, they are considered superior to those hadiths which are of a permissive nature (i.e. hadith 2).

(b) The narrations of prohibition presented by the Hanafis are more in harmony with the implications of the above mentioned Qur'anic verses, which prohibit anything that would distract a person from listening to the sermon.

(c) The narrations presented by the Hanafis are substantiated by the practice of many of the Companions (radiallahu anhum) and Followers (rahmatullahi alaihim), as has been previously detailed; whereas this narration, if taken as an independent narration, is only supported by the lone narration of Sulayk (radiallahu anh).

(e) There is greater caution in acting upon the hadiths prohibiting tahiyyat al- masjid at the time of the sermon than upon those permitting it, since tahiyyat al- masjid is not considered an obligatory prayer in any opinion. While holding it permissible, neglecting it would not be considered a sin. However, if one were to pray during the sermon while holding the view that it is prohibited, he would be considered sinful for going against what is believed to be a prohibition.

## Conclusion

Many narrations state that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had discontinued his sermon while Sulayk (radiallahu anh) performed his prayer. What would happen today if many people began to arrive late, and worse still, all at different times (as is to be observed nowadays in the masjids)? How many times and for how long would the imam remain silent, and when would he be able to complete the sermon?

The Hanafis have taken all these aspects into consideration in forming their opinion. They have adhered to the hadiths of prohibition and have answered and explained all the seemingly conflicting narrations. Their view has also been fully substantiated by the statements of various Companions (radiallahu anhum) and Followers (rahmatullahi alaihim). **Therefore, we can safely conclude that after taking all the above points into consideration, it will be prohibited to perform two rak'ats of tahiyyat al-masjid after the imam has started his sermon.**