
Facing the Imaam during the Khutbah is the confirmed Sunnah

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Translator: Abu 'Abdis Salaam Siddiq Al Juyaanee

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise and thanks belong to Allaah, the Lord of all that exists. May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon the Noble Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)¹. To proceed:

“On the authority of Mutee’ Bin Al Hakm (رضي الله عنه)² that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to ascend the Minbar and we faced him (while he delivered the khutbah).”³

Imaam Al Bukhaaree narrated this Hadeeth under the chapter heading: “The people facing the Imaam, the people facing the Imaam while he delivered the Khutbah, and Ibn ‘Umar and Anas (رضي الله عنهما)⁴ used to face the Imaam,” then he narrated the Hadeeth of Abee Sa’eed (رضي الله عنه).

Al Haafidh Ibn Hajar⁵ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)⁶ said, “The Author (i.e. Imaam Bukhaaree) extracted from the Hadeeth that which was intended by the chapter heading. The reference point of proof (extracted from this text) is that they (the Sahaabah) used to sit in front of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in order to hear his speech which necessitates that for the most part they were looking at him; this however, does not obscure that which has preceded from the fact he stood during the Khutbah. This is based on the fact that he would deliver lessons while sitting on an elevated place with them sitting beneath him (and facing him). If this was the case outside of the Khutbah, (that they would sit facing him), during the Khutbah would then take precedence due to the evidences which obligate (the congregant) to listen to the Khutbah while remaining silent.”⁷

The wisdom in facing the Imaam is because this posture is most suitable for listening to the speech and exhibiting good behaviour toward the Imaam. Facing the Imaam with your body, heart, and mind is more conducive for understanding the sermon and in compliance with the establishment of fulfilling and attaining the purpose for which facing (the Imaam during the Khutbah) was legislated.

¹ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

² (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him (One male companion)

³ Saheeh, As-Saheehah: 2080

⁴ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu ‘anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

⁵ Haafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) wrote the famous explanation of Saheeh al Bukhaaree called Fath ul-Baaree.

⁶ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

⁷ Fath ul-Baaree [2/402]