

Do the means of Da'wah change from time and place?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question: Do you hold that the means (wasaa'il) for da'wah (call to Islaam) are tawqeefiyyah (dependent upon revelation) just like the prayer, fasting and all the other acts of worship? Or do you hold that da'wah is mainly an act of Ijtihadiyyah worship (dependent upon one's own investigation and deduction) based on the understanding of the textual evidences and religious benefits, which are considered and called for by the means, such as having knowledge and commanding the good?

Answer: Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹ Yes. I believe that the means (for giving da'wah) vary from time and place. And this is something that no Faqeeh or scholar of the Book and the Sunnah will dispute.

The means differ from time and place; however proceeding towards applying these means requires knowledge of what the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)² was upon from his guidance and Sunnah. The general rule for this is that: It is not permissible to turn away from the means that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has handed down to us with the excuse that "The times have changed." So if there exists some type of means, by which that which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was upon can be supported, such as the means we use today – such as tape-recording and book printing and the easy means of distribution – in order to bring the knowledge to distant places, then no one can forsake this.

However, we know that many callers to Islaam today have accepted some types of means that the Divine Legislation has not prescribed. Rather, they are the means that the Divine Legislation has ordered us to oppose! I think that the cause for the acceptance of these means on their part is due to (their) ignorance of Islaam. And we don't need to give examples, but instead we say that most of the times there cannot be found any scholars, knowledgeable of the Qur'aan and Sunnah, in these Islaamic groups and parties that exist today. The majority of the people who run these groups are from the enthusiastic youth who are zealous for Islaam, then from those who do not exert themselves to study Islaam, by way of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah upon the methodology of the Salaf as-Saalih.

Talk concerning this topic will only lengthen and prolong. So we will now give an example of a dispute that broke out during the close of one Ramadaan between one state and another, such that some states fasted 29 days, and the other land completed 30 days! So in some of the western lands, such as America, there were some Islaamic Callers (i.e. people of Da'wah) who announced that their method for confirming the crescent at the beginning and end of the month was based on astronomy. Either they were ignorant of the truth or they disregarded it and pretended to be ignorant about it. And as it is said: "The sweeter of the two is (still) bitter."

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "We are an illiterate nation. We do not record nor do we estimate. A month is like this, like this and like this – [or he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) gestured with his hands three times like this, and this and this, meaning thirty days]." Then he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "A month is like this, this and this [meaning twenty nine days]."

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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And in some of the authentic narrations, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **"And if it becomes too cloudy, then complete the month as thirty days."** In many of the lands in which the people give rulings according to their own way, some astronomers confirm the crescent for Ramadaan by astronomical estimations and calculations. And the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has nullified this type of means. Even if it is a means based on knowledge, then only a few people in some lands are aware of this knowledge. Whereas the prescribed means that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has made as a proof for the beginning of the new month or the termination of the current month is the innate natural and human means of physical sighting. And it is not the scientific sighting, which we are not able to share knowledge of to all people.

Based on this, it is not permissible to cast off this type of means, which Islaam has brought, by claiming that times have advanced and changed. So it has become clear from by previous explanation that it is not proper today to take a means that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was able to take (during his time, but which he didn't). The discussion on this topic will prolong severely. Ibn Taymeeyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) has a very beneficial section in his book Iqtidaa as-Siraat-il-Mustaqeem Mukhaalafatu Ashaab-il-Jaheem dealing with this matter. I will abridge what I can from the words of Ibn Taymeeyah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ):

The means that are introduced in a time and a place are divided into two categories:

1. A means of which a need for using it existed during the time of Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) but he did not use it. So introducing it is an innovation.
2. A means of which there did not exist a need to use it during the time of Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said: *"So it should be examined. If the need for introducing this means and using it is to make the Muslims refrain and lessen in their application of the rulings of the Religion, then it is not permissible to use them. And if this is not the case, then it is permissible."* And Allaah is the One who grants success.