

## USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR PREACHING OF RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF SHARIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The knowledge derived from human experiences and observations is perhaps the main, if not the only, source of change in the world from very beginning. But the recent inventions of science have stunned many by bringing drastic social, cultural, economical and political revolutions in the society. These inventions have affected almost all walks of life. Modern technology has left lasting imprints on the society of mankind. The devices, which seemed strange only few decades ago and many would even doubt their presence and performance, have become daily use items in today's world. It seems difficult, if not impossible, to live a normal life in the modern world without using some of these products, which are gifts of science to human beings. A dweller of modern world is dependent on most of these devices and inventions. Although some of our eastern poets, perhaps disappointed by the wrong use or dejected by the fact that most of the inventors were infidels, describe instruments as death of the sense of courtesy. But it is also an unchallengeable fact that no instrument is good or bad. It is use of an instrument that makes it beneficial or harmful for people. Nuclear technology can destroy an entire city and kill millions of people if it is used for destruction but at the same time it can produce electricity and benefit billions of people in different ways if employed positively.*

**Keywords:** Religion, Sharia, Preaching, Electronic media, TV, Internet

### INTRODUCTION

Like electricity, many other inventions and devices including motorcar, radio, air conditioner, television, refrigerator, air cooler, video cassette recorder, audio player, camera, washing machine, cellular phone and computer etc have become daily use items even in the undeveloped and not-so-developed countries. Although some of these products of science and technology are considered status symbol in some areas.

Electronic media is one these important inventions as it has turned the world into a global village. The role of media can't be ignored in the modern world as it has affected every sphere of life. Like other tools media can be also use for a 'good' or 'bad' purpose. Modern media can be used to inform, educate and entertain people. Though some people consider media only a tool of entertainment, yet a vast majority also exists that deems it appropriate for educating and informing people. The positive use of modern media can create awareness among people and educate them in a befitting manner.

Keeping in view the immense importance of media, it can be used for preaching of religious.

About the importance of media, Mohammad Iftikhar Kokar says: “It is the age of science and technology as new inventions have become the order of the day, bringing changes in all walks of life. In the wake of these changes, journalism has assumed a revolutionary role. In the past, as history tells us, kings and rulers were informed through traditional ways of correspondence. In the past, information were kept limited to a specific circle of influential people. But in the present world of hi-tech communication systems, information reach to all and sundry without any social discrimination.” (1)

### **Use of radio for preaching**

Like other tools of media, radio can be also used for preaching of Islam. But it is appropriate to have a separate radio channel to air and transmit religious programs in simple language so that common listeners can understand the same. Issues pertaining to routine life should be highlighted from such a radio channel. The radio channel can be used for answering queries of listeners about religious issues by taking their live calls. The scholars present in the studio can guide people in a befitting manner by answering their questions about religious issues in a simple language. But it must be kept in mind that a radio station should be established after getting proper approval from the authorities concerned as otherwise it will be considered illegal.

In this regard Mujahidul Islam argues: “To me radio is only a mean of transmission and a tool with the help of which we can convey our messages to others. But nowadays people are misusing it. However, use of radio for preaching of religion should not be criticized. According to scholars, radio itself is not a bad thing but its use makes it good or bad. In Sharia use of radio for preaching and other useful purposes is allowed. But use of the same device for ‘forbidden things’ is invalid. Likewise, we can’t ignore the significance of electronic media in molding public opinion. There is no reason to abandon such a power full mean, which can be used for promoting the true shape of religion. It is also baseless to say that religious messages should not be disseminated through such a device. It is essential to present the true picture of Islam not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. The listeners can be informed with the help of radio about the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his companions and followers. The incidents occurred in the lives of saints and religious scholars can be related to the listeners. Such programs will have a powerful impact as the same can be heard in every house in the area, covered by the radio station. It is also a wrong notion to say that people are interested only in listening to songs and other entertainment programs. It is observed that most of the people want to get religious education and find answers to their queries, related to day-to-day affairs, in the light of Sharia.

It is not only the right of non-Muslims to use radio and other means of communication. The same can be used by Muslims for preaching of their religion. Our predecessors didn’t radio because, like many other devices, it was not invented in their times. It is, therefore, wrong to say that radio can’t be used for preaching because our predecessors have not used it. There was no proper system of publication in the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions. Hand-written manuscripts would have been used as books in those days. But now books are composed with help of computer and published in printing press and no one has any objection to it on the basis that the same was not done by our predecessors. No sane person can oppose the modern system of publication on the basis that it was not practiced by our predecessors. We should face new challenges as the Holy Quran directs us to do so. The Holy Quran directs us to preach without mentioning details. It should be kept in mind that means change with passage of time. Anyhow, to sum it up I will say:

1. Airing religious programs from radio is allowed in Sharia
2. Establishment of a radio station to safeguard the collective interests of Muslims and preach Islam is valid.
3. Recitation of the Holy Quran on radio and interpretation of Hadith is allowed in Sharia. In Saudi Arabia many people have embraced Islam because of such radio programs. (2)

Hazrat Maulana Shafi writes that though use of radio has become repugnant because of the negative involvement of certain quarters of government and general masses, yet keeping in view its significance in airing information and news commentaries its use is allowed in Sharia. Therefore, its manufacturing and use for positive purpose is allowed provided the intention is right. It makes no difference if a buyer uses it later for other purposes. (3)

Presently radio is deemed only a tool of broadcasting that can be used both for positive and negative purposes. It can be used for promotion of vices such as airing music but at the same time religious programs can be broadcasted through it. Programs can be broadcasted for instilling true spirit of religion in the listeners. The negative propaganda against Islam and Muslims can be also countered through radio. If used effectively, radio can play an effective role in promotion of virtues and prevention of vices. (ref -1,2). With the help of radio people can be informed about the nefarious designs of enemies and negative activities of anti-Islam elements.

In Durr-e-Mukhtar we find “.....” (4)

“Beating of Tabor out of pride is invalid for the sake of propagating warnings among people is valid”

Allama Shamsi writes “.....” (5)

“Few things (devices) in themselves are not permissible but the intentions make them valid. Playing of an instrument depends on the intention of a player and his taste. It is the intention that makes things valid or invalid.” (6)

The importance of motive, behind an act, can be judged from the fact that selling and buying of grapes is allowed in Sharia. However, it becomes impermissible if the same commodity is brought or sold for preparing wine. (7)

Likewise, commenting on use of gramophone, Hazrat Thanvi writes that issuance of decree sometimes depends on the nature of devices and sometimes on the motives behind their use. If look at the structure as well as usage of gramophone, it becomes evident that the device neither resembles harmonium nor can it be played like that. It is like echo, produced among the mountains and empty buildings. (8)

In the light of the above discussion, it can be said that establishment of radio station as well as launching of website for useful purposes are not objectionable, provided the motive behind them is not against the Sharia.

So it is also clear that establishment of a radio station is allowed in Sharia as it permits positive use of gramophone and internet.

Rashid Hussain Nadvi, highlighting the significance of radio, says that for preaching of religion, establishment of a radio station and use of internet is not only allowed but essential. Installation of a radio station for preaching of religion becomes essential in those areas where people have no

access to other facilities of religious education. In such area, radio can be used for preaching of religion and prevention of vices.

Similarly, the decree of Maulana Abdul Rahim Sahib Lajpori further explains the issue. “Radio is meant for listening to news and other speeches but nowadays many people are misusing the device. However, for the people, who use the device for rightful purposes like listening to news etc is allowed. Only those people, should be blamed, who misuse the tool with wrong intentions. So its manufacturing, repairing and services as well as business are not opposed by Islam. (9)

### **Impact of TV**

In today’s world TV has become a necessity. Owing to the revolutionary achievements of science, the world has become a global village. In the modern world a news reaches from one corner of the world to another within minutes. Many religious scholars have talked about permissibility of use of TV. Few references are given below. Ref-1 Rahim Decree Ref-2 Addurul Mukhtar

#### ***Our views about use of TV***

Keeping in view the above facts, watching TV can be allowed on the following grounds:

1. Preaching is one of the most significant elements of Islam, according to Imam Malik. The use of TV for preaching is allowed in those areas, where life is busy and people have not time to go to a certain place and get religious education or get information about religion. (10)
2. Islamic Fiqh allows taking a picture for passport as without possessing a passport no one can go abroad and passport can’t be availed without taking a picture. It shows that sometimes religious decrees are issued keeping in view needs of people. Same is the case of TV as it is also used on the basis of needs.

Abdul Wahab Khalaf writes that “generally people consider five things -- religion, body (physical needs) mental capabilities, self respect and wealth-- very important” (11)

If taking a photo is allowed in Sharia for the sake of physical and monetary needs it can also be allowed for promotion of religion.

So it can be said that use of TV for preaching is allowed in those areas where people have no or little access to centers of learning.

The holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went to Akkaz Bazar for preaching despite the fact that people present there were indulging in un-Islamic rituals. But the Prophet visited the ‘unholy’ place to preach to people. (12)

Visionary scholars believe that modern electronic media has become an effective weapon after the end of the era of cold war. So it is very advisable to use this weapon in the current era against the infidels. At time of war certain invalid things become valid. Same is the case of media warfare. Media war has become more virulent in the present time. The importance of media can be judged from the fact that Jews, who are lesser in number as compared to many other nations, are controlling the entire world with the help of media.

### **CONCLUSION**

The gist of the above arguments is that telecasting programs from TV on basis of need is allowed in Sharia according to Maliki point like taking a picture is allowed for getting a passport.

Similarly, keeping in view importance of media in the modern world, establishment of a TV centre for preaching of religion is allowed in a specific area.

### **Internet and preaching of religion**

After newspapers, books, radio, TV, dish antenna and other means, a new tool has been introduced to influence people. This new tool is called internet. Though it is absolutely a scientific invention, like many others, yet it depends on the user as for which purpose he uses it. We can say that internet is neither software nor a hardware, but a widespread connectivity of a large number of numbers. Internet is neither a property of an individual nor an institution. In simple words, we can say that it is a mechanism used by different types of people through their computers.

### **Use of internet**

Internet is only a mechanism to propagate one's personal views. It has been monopolized by the west so it is used mostly as a tool for anti-Islam propaganda. If we stop using internet, we will be unable to inform other people about our religion. So, in our opinion use of internet for preaching and promotion of Islam is not only allowed but essential. Uploading photos on a website should be treated like TV programs for rightful purposes.

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