

Speaking in a language other than Arabic

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: In our home, most of our conversation is in French and we rarely speak Arabic. So is using another language than Arabic prohibited?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

The basic principle is that it is not permissible to imitate the Jews, the Christians and the A'aajim (non-Arabs) and it is an obligation to do the opposite of what they do, in accordance with several religious texts addressing this issue; and among these texts is to use their language and imitate their accent and their gestures while speaking their language as this indicates some affection and a hearty sympathy towards them. Indeed, the appearance is the mirror of what is hidden inside as Ibn Taymeeyah رحمه الله has stated.

However, apart from this basic rule, it is allowed to use their language when necessary and to learn the foreigner's language and writing to benefit from their sciences and to translate them into Arabic to keep safe of their misdeeds and wickedness (evils) as stated by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he said to Zayd Ibn Thaabit رضي الله عنه: "**Do learn the Jews' language, for I do not trust them about our book**"¹.

Thus, it is worth pointing out that learning the foreigner's language should be for the previously mentioned reasons, but to become a part of the Muslims life in their discussions and mails in all their way of life cannot be allowed at all. And to replace the Arabic language with a foreign language is tantamount to replacing the best by the lowest (less important); this would be a kind of allegiance to the disbelievers which is blameworthy according to the religious rules as stated by the Qur'aanic texts concerning the principle of allegiance and disavowal which is the fruit of Tawheed (Islaamic Monotheism) and the firm bonds in Islaam.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ; and our last prayer is all the praises and thanks are to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers of Allaah are to Muhammad, his Family, Companions and Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

¹ Reported by Al-Baihaqee (12557), from the hadeeth of Zayd Ibn Thaabit رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in As-Silsilah As-Saheehah (1/364) (187).