

Need for Imam

There are four sources from which guidance is derived. Quran, Sunnah, consensus of the Sahaba, and independent legal reasoning of learned scholars, particularly the four: Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

As mankind faces countless dynamic challenges, reasoning must be applied to derive rulings for issues which may not be found in Quran and Hadith. The Four Imams were pious individuals who had served their whole lives learning and teaching and many passed away in the defense of Islamic teachings. They truly were and are worthy of being followed.

The breadth of their knowledge, noble character, and exemplary stature was attested to by their contemporaries. They were praised by centuries of scholars to come after them.

As travelers in this world, it is imperative upon us to choose a leader, a trustworthy Imam, who we can rely on as a guide to avoid being lost. The Four Imams are such individuals.

Following a trustworthy Imam is a source of unity for people and prevents differences of opinion from turning into a source of division. The practice of following an Imam is thus full of wisdom.

Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "When three set out on a journey, they should choose one of them to be their leader" (Abu Dawood)

When the Messenger of Allah intended to send Mu'adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he asked: "How will you judge when the occasion of deciding a case arises?" Mu'adh replied: "I shall judge in accordance with Allah's Book." He asked: "(What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah's Book?" He replied: "(I shall act) in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah." The Prophet asked: "(What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and in Allah's Book?" He replied: "I shall do my best [which means independent legal reasoning] to form an opinion and I shall spare no effort." The Messenger of Allah then patted him on the breast and said: "Praise be to Allah Who has helped the messenger of the Messenger of Allah to find something which pleases the Messenger of Allah." (Abu Dawood)

Faqir Muhammad Ahmed had envisioned to create this brochure. Subsequently a brother saw prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in a dream with four imams which he shared while he was not aware of this undertaking. May Allah accept.

Contents have been taken from *Foundational Principles of Fiqh* by Shaykh Zulfikar Ahmad (db)

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Imam Abu Hanifa

Sayyidina Numan Bin Thabith, well-known by his title Imam Abu Hanifa, was born in 80 Hijri and passed away in 150 Hijri. The last Sahabi to leave this world was Abu Al Tufail, may Allah be pleased with him; he passed away in 110 Hijri. During the life of Imam Abu Hanifa, several Companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him, were still alive. Imam Abu Hanifa's grandfather, Hazrat Numan, met Sayyedina Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and asked him to make dua for his son Hazrat Thabith and thereafter Abu Hanifa was born.

According to Ibn Khalkan, Imam Abu Hanifa met four companions of the Prophet. In Kufa, Ana's Ibn Malik and Abdullah Bin Ali Kawfa. In Makkah Mukarrama, Abdullah Ibn Tufail. In Madina Munawwara, Sahl Ibn Sa'd al-Sa'idi. May Allah be pleased with them all. Imam Abu Hanifa was a Tabi'i (a Muslim who has seen a Sahabi). He sought knowledge from 350 teachers.

During the life of Imam Abu Hanifa, there was a body of forty consulting scholars who were experts in various aspects of Islamic knowledge. Imam Waqi Bin Jarrah confirmed that the great work of Imam Abu Hanifa could never be doubted when he had great scholars of the time in his consulting body.

The Four Imams Why We Follow Them



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Quran

The Quran is an unparalleled source of divine guidance that brings us out of darkness and into light. The verses cover various aspects of life. The Quran guides us in the matters of:

- Social justice & human rights (49:13)
- Purpose of our existence (51:56)
- Importance of good character (17:23)
- Attaining paradise (23:1-11)
- Living a truly fulfilling life (10:58)

Quran is a miracle that is linguistically unmatched and contains scientific matter that spans astronomy (36:40), physics (21:30), embryology (23:12-14) and more.

Relativity of Time

...indeed a single day before Allah is like a thousand years according to your calculation. (Quran 22:47)



Creation of Universe

Did not the disbelievers observe that the heavens and the earth were together, so We parted them, and We made every living thing from water? So will they not accept faith? (Quran 21:30)

Development of Fetus

We (Allah) created man from a quintessence of clay. We then placed him as a nutfah (drop) in a place of settlement, firmly fixed, then We made the drop into an alaqah (leech like structure), and then We changed the alaqah into a mudghah (chewed like substance), then We made out of that mudghah, izam (skeleton, bones), then We clothed the bones with lahm (muscles, flesh) then We caused him to grow and come in being and attain the definitive (human) form. So, blessed be God, the best to create. (Quran 23:12-14)

Sunnah

Sunnah is what the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said and did. He did not say anything of his own desire (53:3) and thus his sayings are divine guidance. Scholars have been so meticulous in preservation of the Sunnah that it spawned the science of Hadith, the like of which does not exist for any other person in history.

Sunnah explains the Quran and is required for determining:

- Method of praying
- Prophetic understanding of Quranic verses
- Prophetic guidance on all matters of life

Companions & Ijma'

The Sahaba witnessed the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Their understanding of the faith is substantiated by Allah and the Prophet, peace be upon him, as a source of guidance.

In fact the Prophet, peace be upon him, commanded us to follow the companions. 'Ijma-e-sahaba, consensus of the companions, and by extension, the consensus of the ummah is the third source of guidance for Muslims.

“Allah will not cause my ummah to agree on falsehood; the hand of Allah is with the jamaa‘ah" (At-Tirmidhi)

"The tribes of Israel broke up into seventy-two sects. My ummah shall break up into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in the Fire except for one: [That group] which follows what I and my Companions are following." (At-Tirmidhi)

Qiyas - Analogy



Qiyas means analogy, a tool used by learned scholars to derive a ruling. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the last and final messenger as proven by over 100 Quranic verses and over 200 ahadith along with the consensus of the companions & ummah. The verses of Quran are over 6000 and the ahadith add up to more than 50,000. Nevertheless, the problems facing humanity are unlimited.

For example, is buffalo (jamoos in Arabic) halal? While there is no hadith that talks about jamoos, scholars draw analogy to cow (baqarah) to determine its permissibility

Like algebra, derived principles can apply in novel problems. The Prophet, peace be upon him, also used qiyas to convey that one can do hajj for someone if they are not able to. (Musnad Ahmad)

Once Amar Bin Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, became ritually impure. He could not take a bath due to extreme cold. He performed tayammum (purifying by touching the dust) and led the prayer. Upon return, the Prophet, peace be upon him, asked him why he led the prayer in a state of impurity. He then recited the verse: 'Do not kill yourself; without doubt Allah is very kind upon you' (Quran 4:29). Upon hearing that, the Prophet smiled, peace be upon him.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, greatly emphasized that one can draw a reasoning from the orders of shariah. On one occasion a Jewish funeral passed by and the Prophet stood up as a sign of respect. The Companions mentioned that the deceased was a Jew. The Prophet answered, was he not a human being? (Sahih Bukhari)

Fiqh - Understanding

A faqih is one who has deep understanding of the religion.

The Four Imams had spent their whole lives studying the religion, they were qualified to do qiyas due to their knowledge and understanding.

Allah commands us to learn from scholars of understanding:

"And We did not send before you messengers except men whom We inspired with revelation. So ask the people (having the knowledge) of the message, if you do not know." (Quran 21:7)

Even with thousands of companions, the majority of the companions sought religious rulings from only a select few such as: Umm-ul-mumineen Ayesha, Sayyedina Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Abdullah Bin Masood, Mu'adh Bin Jabal, Amir Muawiyah, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Sayyidina Umar appointed Ammar bin Yasir the governor of Kufa, and Abdullah ibn Masood the judge. He ordered the people to follow them.

It is an established practice of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Companions, to appoint a scholar and order the people to follow them in their guidance and rulings.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said that when Allah wants to bless someone He makes him a Faqih in the religion. (Sahih Bukhari)

One Faqih is heavier on Satan than a thousand worshipers. (Ibn Majah)