

The Role of "Usul al-Fiqh" in Islamic Jurisprudence

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ABSTRACT

This article explains the basics of Islamic law in detail, in particular its main sources, such as the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus, and comparison. The author describes the role of Usul al-Fiqh in Islamic law.

Key words: *Islam, "Usul al fiqh", Qur'an, sunnah, ijma ', qiyas*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic law is based on the principles of justice as set out in the Qur'an and a number of additional sources. It regulates various spheres of human and social life and consists of legal criteria coordinating the interaction of people with each other and with the authorities.

Islamic jurisprudence is based on the word fiqh, which is translated from Arabic as "knowledge", which means "understanding" [1]. Although the word "fiqh" in the dictionary means "to understand", "to comprehend", it refers not only to knowledge, but also to profound understanding, perfect and detailed understanding. Thus, a "faqih", i.e. a legal expert, must know and memorise the rules of Shariah, as well as know all their reasons and wisdom, and also understand the aims of the founder of Shariah. Therefore, a person who simply knows the rules of Shariah is not considered a faqih, even if he is called a scholar.

MAIN PART

Over time, Islamic law as a separate legal system has become increasingly important around the world. This type of law originated and developed during the Arab Caliphate and did not extend beyond the Arabian Peninsula for a long time. The process of its development ranged from the patriarchal and religious community of Arab statehood to the evolution of major empires. The abolition of the Arab Caliphate did not undermine the position of Islamic law; on the contrary, it acquired a new dimension and became the basic law in a number of Asian and African countries that embraced Islam in the Middle Ages.

Muslim law is one of the main modern legal systems with its own legal culture, ideology and science [3].

Muslim law is a living universal doctrine that is flexible and requires comprehensive consideration of any issue that arises. A deep knowledge of jurisprudence allows the clergy to prioritise, address complex issues consistently, defend the principles of faith when necessary and promote religious practice when permitted [4].

Muslim law embodied elements of the former legal cultures of the East, i.e. legal customs and traditions. The institutions of the Iranian legal system were also used during the Omayyad dynasty, as well as Byzantine and partly Roman law. In the creation of the pillars of Shariah this link between Eastern and Western civilisations is felt, albeit in part. The rule of law in Islamic law was founded by the Prophet and the four righteous caliphs who followed him. In addition, the holy books of Muslims, the Qur'an and the Sunan, were compiled by interpreting the rulings, words and deeds of our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Shariah was originally called the law of religion [5], and its theoretical and normative parts covered not only legal norms but also ethics. In the early stages of the development of Shariah, the emphasis was not on human rights but on one's duties to Allah.

In the eighth century, when Sharia faced feudal forms of social relations, it underwent a process of transformation from divine legal thinking - from rationalistic, random ways of making legal rules - to logical-systemic rules. Some time later, in the ninth century, jurists introduced into Muslim law the rational assessment of normative behaviour, i.e. human actions are assessed as legal actions, but this does not mean deviating from the conservative principles set out in the Quran and Sunnah. Any Muslim outside his country must observe and respect the fundamentals of Islam. Gradually, with the spread of Islam, Shariah became the legal system of the world. This distinguished it from the laws of Western European states, which were characterised by their peculiarities, limited scope of action and internal divisions.

Sharia law has also spread beyond the Near and Middle East to Central Asia and the Caucasus, to the North, as well as partially to East and West Africa and a number of South-East Asian countries. However, this spread of Islam and Sharia led to specific features and differences in the interpretation of individual legal institutions and in the resolution of legal disputes. Later, two main trends emerged in Islam.

The division in Shariah was Sunni and Shia. The struggle between these spheres was reflected in legal norms concerning various aspects of state and social life. Shiites, for example, advocated the inheritance of state power and the consolidation of secular and religious power in the hands of priests and imams. Shiites accepted only legends from the reign of Caliph Ali. The Sunni representatives, in turn, divided into independent schools of jurisprudence, and the names of prominent Muslim jurists: the Hanifis, Maliks, Shafis, and Hanbalis became widely known. The most widespread of these were the Hanafi schools of law in Egypt, Turkey and India.

The Shia are also divided into a number of independent schools: the Ismaili, the Ja'fari and the Zaidi. Extremely comprehensive thinking and Islamic practice has caused some confusion in people's understanding of the basics of the Quran. After all, the basic idea of the Shariah is that the peculiarity of the conditions of life is that it applies only to the Muslim and to relations between Muslims.

The Shariah Code consists of three parts: *worship* (duties related to religious worship), *problemat* (purely legal rules) and *torment* (a system of punishment). The rules were firmly established; they determined all norms of human relations in the family and society, regulated civil law relations, and regulated the process of resolving property disputes. There was also a definite system of punishment for violations of Shariah law.

The basic unit of the Shariah in the Muslim law is *fiqh* (the doctrine of Muslims about the rules of conduct, as well as a set of social norms), the process of its development consists of several stages [9].

The first stage is the period of the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (pbuh) in the path of Islam (610-632). The only source of Muslim law at that time was the Qur'an and then the Sunnah. The Qur'an was the basis for the formation of Shariah, and the Prophet's application of this principle in everyday life (Sunnah) was to explain the principles laid down in the Qur'an. Thus, Islamic law prohibits immorality, adultery, drunkenness and usury. Commercial fraud cases were condemned. In short, Islam rejected all situations that were harmful to man and endorsed aspects that were beneficial [10]. The legal part of these important norms took shape during the lifetime of our Prophet, and later these norms became the source. But they were not enough to systematically

govern all Muslim relations.

The second stage of the development of jurisprudence lasted from the time of the righteous caliphs, i.e. from Abu Bakr to the death of the fourth caliph Ali (d.632–661). During this period, the sphere of influence of Islam expanded, and the main task of jurisprudence was to positively influence the culture and customs of the occupied territories. In this context, the need to address the many problems that arose among the indigenous peoples also became an important impetus for the development of fiqh.

During this period, the caliphs shaped new ways of dealing with problems. A unified system for assessing the legitimacy and justice of Muslim movements was developed. This includes the following sequence of actions:

- 1) Finding solutions in the Qur'an;
- 2) If there is no answer in the Qur'an, using the Sunnah, the words and actions of the Prophet in search of a solution;
- 3) If there is no answer in the Sunnah, an assembly of the leading companions of the Prophet may be called and a unanimous decision may be reached as a result of discussion (consensus);
- 4) If unanimity is not reached, a majority opinion may be taken into account;
- 5) If the meeting did not reach a decision, the Caliph may finalise it on the basis of his interpretation - *ijtihad*.

This *ijtihad* became a precedent and was later used to resolve similar situations.

The third stage coincides with the Umayyad dynasty. This period is characterised by the emergence of various conflicts and many new trends. One of the representatives of this movement was the famous caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz. Some call him the fifth righteous caliph because he instructed him to start collecting the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. During this period, the number of *ijtihads* increased significantly and the hadith began to spread.

In 750–950 A.D., during the Abbasid dynasty, Islamic law developed significantly. During this period, the number of sects gradually decreased and the main trends were maintained. The peculiarity of each sect is that this *ijtihad*, peculiar to that school of legal thought, arose and each school began its own way and its followers began to call themselves by sect names.

From 1258 until the middle of the 19th century the field of jurisprudence underwent a certain process of stagnation. The process of unification and revitalisation which began in the 19th century continues to this day. This includes a weakening of sectarian fanaticism, processes involving extensive use of comparative jurisprudence in modern educational institutions where Muslim religious traditions are studied.

Thus, by the end of the Middle Ages the doctrinal and normative foundations had become more complex and the Sharia, which had undergone significant changes, had become a very complex and unusual legal phenomenon. Today, Islamic law is a legal system that is part of the world's legal culture [12]. There is no Islamic country in the world whose legal system has not been influenced by Shariah law.

1. The main sources of Islamic law

The main source of Islamic law is the Koran. Translated from Arabic, the Koran is the holy book for Muslims, which means "read aloud". According to Islamic teaching, it is a collection of revelations sent by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad. The verses of the Koran were transmitted through the angel Gabriel for almost 22 years [13].

From the ninth to the tenth centuries, religious and juridical schools began to form as the foundation of Islamic law, *ijtihad* was banned, and theoretical teachings became the main source of

Islamic law. Judges began to refer to the works of jurists in addition to the Qur'an and Sunnah to resolve a particular legal situation [14].

The role of these theoretical teachings continued until the mid-nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century there was a detailed codification of legal norms, a new source of law emerged and the role of Sharia courts diminished. The adoption of Western legal institutions and concepts determined the dualism of the legal systems of Muslim countries. Later, in the twentieth century, Muslim law retained its position in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf countries and emerged as a legal norm regulating social relations in the form of jurisprudence.

By the mid-twentieth century the legal systems of the Europeanized Arab countries began to form, with some variations, on the basis of two main models - Romano-Germanic and Anglo-Saxon [15].

2. Another authoritative and binding source of law for all Muslims was the Sunnah ("sacred tradition").

It consisted of many accounts of Muhammad's rulings and actions (saas) and included legal layers reflecting the development of social relations in Arab society.

Full editing of the hadith took place in the ninth century and six collections of the Sunnah were compiled [16]. The Sunnah has different definitions in the Shariah. Circumcision is not above the law, rather it is a set of events to be modelled in the processes of life. Scholars have analysed the evolution of the Prophet's socio-political and religious views and it is appropriate to use them widely in formulating the basic principles of the Shari'ah to achieve a balance between the laws of religious education and development. Such features are ideally suited to demonstrate the most moderate solution in overcoming the multifaceted problems in human life. It is because of these features that true Muslim scholars can find judgements that are sufficiently responsive to the demands of the times, given the advances of civilisation. And Muslim law can fully respond to this with its humane features.

Ijtihad is a set of facts not requiring proof and a set of rules of conduct based on a rational interpretation of vague rules of the Quran and Sunnah or gaps between these sources. It forms the basis of most of the rules governing human relations. It may be said that such freedom to evaluate secular problems is not given to everyone, but the essence of ijtihad is to find an answer to a question that has no ready-made solution consistent with Shariah.

Other minor sources of law have been added to it as a source of law to supplement Shariah law. Because of the widespread use of the Ijtihad method in the Middle Ages, Muslim law received an active theoretical development. More specifically, the founders of the above-mentioned major schools of law later disseminated this doctrine through the works of their leading followers and disciples [17].

That is why Muslim jurists do not create a new code of conduct for mujtahids, but only seek it by first finding a solution that is in the Shariah - if it is not in its clear rules, it can be based on its rules, vague instructions or general principles and goals. All the sources of Islamic law are closely interrelated and, if they do not define it in the Sunnah, they can help regulate certain types of human behaviour.

Thus, according to some contemporary scholars, the main problem in Islamic law is to define the general parameters that exist in the sources and the relations between people on a religious basis, and the legal details are of secondary importance [18].

3. Consensus is the general opinion of influential Muslim jurists.

It can be said that the third place in the hierarchy of sources of Islamic law is the consensus, which is considered to be "the general opinion of influential Islamic jurists". The consensus belongs to the group of authoritative sources of Shariah, along with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The consensus consists of various contradictory views on religious and legal issues expressed by followers of Muhammad (pbuh) or, later, by the most influential Muslim jurists. The interpretation of the text of the Qur'an or Sunnah is the approximate content of this third source. But it may also have been created by the formation of new norms that were no longer associated with Muhammad (pbuh).

Ijmo establishes independent rules of conduct and is binding. As one of the main sources of Shariah, its legitimacy derives from the instructions of our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Also, the role of this source in the development of Shariah is that it enabled the ruling religious elite of the Arab Caliphate to create new legal rules adapted to the changing conditions of feudal society, taking into account the specifics of the conquered countries [19].

Consensus cannot establish norms that are not specified in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It affirms a clear legal interpretation of the provisions of these two main sources of Shariah. According to jurists [20], consensus is used to deepen and develop legal interpretation of the divine sources. Its connection with the Qur'an and the Sunnah has been legitimised and a number of terms have come into force even after the Prophet's death.

The Qur'an and the Sunnah are the main sources. On the basis of the basic rules contained in them, scholars have established the rules of fiqh. Consensus is now the only dogmatic basis for Islamic law [21]. The Qur'an and the Sunnah are its only historical basis. The third source of Islamic law is of great practical importance. The rules of law, irrespective of their origin, must only be applied in writing until a consensus is reached. Al-Ijma is recognised by all Sunni sects as a source of law, but there is also disagreement among them as to the scope of issues that can be decided on the basis of this source and the range of individuals whose opinions can be considered authoritative.

Al-Ijma is divided into three categories according to the way it is expressed and communicated: 1) "speaking aloud", 2) "practical execution", and 3) "silence".

The opinions of the first two are unanimously regarded as credible, the decisions taken on their basis are not subject to appeal and the issues involved are not subject to review. A third unanimous opinion has been given, and the question taken in respect of it may be reconsidered in the future.

Thus, the main schools of Islamic law had different attitudes towards 'unanimity' (al-Ijma). The Hanafis considered only their Hadith, the opinions of Muhammad's companions (pbuh) to be unanimous, while the Iraqi Mujtahids unanimously accepted 'loud' and 'practical' rulings; the Maliki and Shafi'i considered not only the Mujtahids of Medina and Shafi'i to be independent, but also a source of additional law. The Hanbalis recognised all three categories of consensus and individual statements by the mujtahids of Medina [22].

4. Comparison is a judgement in matters of law.

Qiyas is a source of Islamic law and can be described as "a ruling based on similarity of rules".

There are no direct Shariah texts. Authoritative sources such as the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the unanimous opinion of the companions of our Prophet (pbuh) confirm the correctness of using analogies.

Scholars have identified four main [23] aspects to which the terms of the Shariah are related:

- 1) original - similarity position;
- 2) farrah - position of similarity;
- 3) verdict - the legal norm of the first rule in relation to the second;
- 4) illah - the common basis of the relationship between the two rules, which led to the designation of this legal rule as the Shariah.

Muslim jurists have thus "been able to combine revelation with human reason". As indicated in the definitions of comparison, a rule established in the Quran, Sunna or ijma can be applied to matters not expressly provided for in the sources of that law. Although Islamic law is based on the principle of authority, its sources can be interpreted rationally because there are arguments based on similarity; but it cannot establish basic rules.

There are two types of comparisons: "*explicit*" and "*implicit*". When the reason for the process is determined by a Muslim law legislator, such a comparison is understood to be an explicit comparison. An implicit analogy refers to a situation in which the legislature is unable to determine the reason for a judicial decision and it is difficult to understand. This reason is understood with discount, i.e. based on the conclusion of the reason [24].

All scholars and researchers explain the origin of this source in different ways. Some acknowledge the idea of the influence of the philosophical and legal teachings of the conquered nations. The reason was that the citizens began to use the legal techniques of Greco-Roman law [25].

Others believe that analogy arose in the first century of Islam, when disputes arose between adherents of using logical, rational methods of resolving religious issues based on historical sources, the Quran and the Sunnah. Legal issues are also analysed as a possibility to solve a particular issue through the personal opinion of a Muslim [26].

CONCLUSION

There are also Hanafī theologians and jurists who combine the analogy with the concept of paradise. Other Sunni sects do not recognise this, and representatives of the Muslim school of law, Zahiri, interpret it in their legal practice as "the external sources of the Quran and Sunnah", "clear meaning and literal understanding." [27]

It should be noted that Muslim law does not exist without the religion of Islam, and Islam cannot develop without Muslim law [28].

Although Muslim law has many religious sources, citizens can differentiate and disseminate information according to the importance of all rules, regulations and laws. It should be noted that Muslim law has evolved over the centuries, offering new solutions and rational solutions to Shariah problems. At present, a "modern" Muslim law, different from the established principles of the Shariah, is taking shape.

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