

Imam Bukhari's rule of 4 & our Shaykhs

Imam Bukhari used a four angled rule which helped him to study Hadith.

We use the Aid of our freinds at mosque who go to a few lectures here and there and then we take the adivce from Hadhrat Mowlana Peer Google (WWW) to study Hadith and to deduce the best ruling to suit our own fancies.

Our present times of extreme negligence and laziness, where the maximum extent of education in this science is (normally limited to studying) the six authentic books of hadith for one to call himself a hadith scholar, can be likened to **“A monkey who has a bit of turmeric powder and wishes to be called a grocer.”** The extent to which this group of half-baked scholars graduating from madrasas has made a mock of our religion cannot be found in the time of our predecessors, even if we were to search for it. The main cause for this current degeneration among the scholars stems from our confidence in our virtues and our reliance upon our defective and unsound knowledge. In fact, the jurists of the later centuries [muta'akhhirin] have prohibited us from issuing any religious verdicts based on our own opinions. Instead, they have advised us to transcribe the verdicts from similar religious verdicts of the past.

But NO! In these times, even the most intricate of scholarlistic issues, let alone ordinary concerns, have become subjected to the people's whims and fancies. To Allah alone do we complain and He alone is the Helper.

Once again I stress ""There is safety in following just one Madhab"

Imam Suyuti relates (through his chain) that Muhammad ibn Ahmad said: "When Abu 'l-Abbas Walid ibn Ibrahim was deposed as the chief justice of Rayy (formally of the great cities of Persia located a few miles from Tehran) and he came to Bukhara, my teacher, Abu Ibrahim Al-Khatalli took me with him to see Walid.

My teacher requested him to narrate those hadiths to me which he had heard from his teachers. He replied, 'I have not heard anything from them.' My teacher was quite shocked and remarked, 'How can you say that you have not heard anything from them whereas you are a deeply-read scholar?' Walid then related his story saying, 'When I became a rational and mature adult and I developed a passion towards the science of hadith, I went to Imam Bukhari (may Allah be pleased with him) and explained my intentions to him. He

advised me thus, **“Son, before you set out to pursue any field, make sure you are well-grounded with its prerequisites and demands. And remember that a person cannot become a perfect scholar in the science of hadith until and unless he writes four things with four other things, which are as indispensable as four things, which resemble four other things. (He must write these things) in four times, with four conditions, in four places, upon four things, from four types of people, and for four objectives. All of these four-angled things can only be achieved with another four things coupled with another four. Once all these things are achieved, four things will become insignificant before him and he will be tried with four other things. If he exercises patience in these four trials, Allah will honor him with four things in this world and award him four things in the hereafter.”**

I said, “May Allah have mercy upon you. Please explain these four-angled things for me.” He said, “Certainly. The four things he has to write are:

- (1) the statements and commands of Allah’s Messenger (PBUH).**
- (2) the sayings of the Companions and their relative ranks.**
- (3) the sayings of the Tabi’een and their ranks (i.e. who among them are reliable and who are not), and**
- (4) the conditions of all the narrators who narrate hadiths.**

These (four pieces of information) must be written together with the following four things:

- (1) the actual names of the narrators,**
- (2) their appellations or titles (kunya),**
- (3) their places of residence, and**
- (4) their dates of birth and death (to determine whether the narrator actually met the people he has narrated from).**

(These are indispensable to him) just (as four things are necessary with four other things:)

- (1) as praises of Allah (are necessary) with the khutba,**
- (2) as salutations (are necessary) with mention of the name of Allah’s Messenger (PBUH).**
- (3) as Bismillah (is necessary) with a sūra (of the Qur’an), and**
- (4) as the takbir is necessary with the salat.**

These resemble four other things (which are names of four categories of hadith):

- (1) the musnadat [narrations traceable to the Messenger],**
- (2) the mursalat [narrations transmitted by a Follower from the Messenger directly without a Companion in between],**

**(3) the mawqufat [narrations traceable only to a Companion], and
(4) the maqtu'at [narrations traceable only to a Follower].**

(These things must all be written) in four times:

- (1) in his childhood,**
- (2) in his age of discernment (i.e. close to maturity),**
- (3) in his youth, and**
- (4) in his old age.**

(In other words, he must continue acquiring hadiths at all times throughout every stage of his life? They must be written) under four conditions:

- (1) while his is occupied,**
- (2) while he is free,**
- (3) in his poverty, and**
- (4) in his affluence.**

(In other words, he must diligently pursue the knowledge of these things no matter what his circumstances may be).

This is done at four places:

- (1) in mountainous terrain,**
- (2) on the seas,**
- (3) in cities, and**
- (4) in rural areas.**

(In other words, he must endeavour to acquire this science from the right teacher, no matter where that teacher is located. He writes what he has acquired) upon four things:

- (1) upon stones,**
- (2) upon shells,**
- (3) upon skins, and**
- (4) upon bones.**

(In other words, even when he does not find paper he will continue recording it somewhere) until he finds the paper upon which to preserve it. (He acquires it from four different types of people.

- (1) from his seniors,**
- (2) from his juniors,**
- (3) from his counterparts, and**
- (4) from the books of his father, provided he has firm conviction that these are his father's books.**

(In other words, he endeavours to acquire this science in every way possible without feeling ashamed to obtain it even from his juniors. He has four objectives for doing all of these things.

- (1) to acquire (this science) solely for the pleasure of Allah ,**
- (2) to practice upon the hadiths which confirm to the verses of the Holy**

Qur'an,

(3) to propagate (the science) to those who seek it, and

(4) to write it out so that it can be a source of guidance to those who will come after him.

Thereafter, the aforementioned four things cannot be acquired (unless he has first acquired) four other things that are part of human acquisition:

(1) the knowledge of how to read and write,

(2) lexicography and vocabulary,

(3) morphology, and

(4) syntax

Together with four other things that are not of human acquisition, but are bestowed by Allah :

(1) sound health,

(2) ability,

(3) an ardent desire for learning, and

(4) a retentive memory.

Once all the aforementioned four-angled things are attained by him, then four things will become insignificant before him:

He will then be afflicted with four things:

(1) his enemies will rejoice at his distress,

(2) his friends will reproach him,

(3) the ignorant will taunt him, and

(4) the scholars will be jealous of him.

Once he exercises patience on these calamities, Allah will honor him with four things in this world:

(1) the honor of contentment [qana'a],

(2) conviction coupled with awe and dignity,

(3) the pleasure of sacred knowledge and

(4) eternal life.

(On top of that,) Allah will honor him with four things in the hereafter:

(1) the honor of intercession on behalf of whomever he pleases,

(2) the shade of the throne of Allah on the day when there will be no shade available except the shade of His throne,

(3) the privilege to provide water to whomsoever he pleases from the pool of Muhammad [al-Kawthar], and

(4) close proximity with the Prophets in the Highest of the High Places

So now, my son, I have told you whatever I have heard from my teachers. Now you have the choice to either pursue this field or to abstain from it.”

These are the principles and rules Imam Bukhari has laid out for every

individual who wishes to become a hadith scholar or a student of hadith. We should take heed of Imam Bukhari's advice and hold firmly onto it. In actual fact, the science of hadith is even more difficult to attain than Imam Bukhari (may Allah be pleased with him) describes.

Taken from Shaykh Muhammed Zakariyyas book "The differences of the Imam"

http://www.muftisays.com/blog/abu+mohammed/447_15-10-2010/imam-bukhari%27s-rule-of-4-%26amp%3B-our-shaykhs.html