

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY OF SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SODIQ MUHAMMAD YUSUF IN THE INTERPRETATION OF FIQH ISSUES

Abstract. *This article theoretically analyzes the methodological approach of Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf in the presentation of fiqh issues. The main focus is placed on his method of simplifying, systematizing, and adapting fiqh knowledge to the reader. In the study, the work Kifoya is considered as the author's didactic model, and its mode of presentation is evaluated not in connection with classical traditions of fiqh expression, but in relation to modern educational needs. As a result, it is substantiated that Shaykh Muhammad Sodik's approach is aimed not at deep scholarly discussion of fiqh, but at delivering it in an understandable, systematic, and easy-to-learn form.*

Keywords: *Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf, fiqh methodology, religious didactics, fiqh education, knowledge transfer, Kifoya, simplification, systematization, Islamic law, learning model*

INTRODUCTION

The science of fiqh has historically been formed as a complex and multi-layered system of knowledge. It embodies not only a set of rulings, but also the deep scientific mechanisms for their derivation, justification, and regulation. Therefore, the study of fiqh often proceeds in two directions: on the one hand, understanding the rulings themselves, and on the other hand, how they can be mastered. It is precisely this second direction—namely, the method of teaching and explaining fiqh—that has acquired particular importance in the modern era.

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Classical Hanafi sources, including concise texts and their commentaries, were mainly intended for advanced specialists within a scholarly environment. They require a high level of preparation, possess dense terminology, and are often presented without explanation. This makes them complex for a broader audience. At this point, the issue arises of how to simplify, systematize, and present fiqh knowledge in a form suitable for the learner. This is not merely “simplification,” but a methodological choice.

The fiqh legacy of Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf draws attention precisely at this point. His work *Kifoya* is not merely a text that compiles fiqh rulings, but can be viewed as a model for re-presenting them. Here, the author attempts to transform a complex fiqh system into a simpler, more understandable, and more learnable form without breaking its structure. As a result, fiqh knowledge begins to transform from a “closed scholarly text” into a “learnable system.”

MAIN BODY

One of the most difficult issues in working with the fiqh heritage is presenting a complex scientific system in a way that is understandable to the learner without distorting it. This is not a simple translation or abbreviation. It is a choice. Which aspects to preserve, which to temporarily set aside, what to reveal, what to leave implicit... In this sense, Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf’s approach appears as a set of methodological decisions.

While reading *Kifoya*, one gradually notices something: the text attempts to construct fiqh not as a complex science, but as a learnable system. Here, the main emphasis seems to be placed not on the ruling itself, but on how it is received. Perhaps this is a subjective impression, but it is clearly visible in the structure of the text.

First, it is necessary to address the issue of simplification. The term “simplification” is often misunderstood, as if it lowers the scientific level. In fact, it is a method of managing complexity. In classical fiqh texts, especially concise ones, rulings are presented in a highly compressed form. For example, issues such as ablution or ghusl are expressed in just a few lines, within which many conditions and exceptions are hidden (1, 6). This method was effective in its time, as it was intended for a scholarly environment. However, for the modern reader, this method is not always convenient. Because the reader must understand the terminology, uncover hidden logic, and sometimes interpret

the text without commentary. Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq takes this point into account. In *Kifoya*, simplification is carried out in two directions.

The first is simplification at the linguistic level. Instead of complex fiqh expressions, simple, fluent, and often everyday language is used (5, 3). This significantly facilitates the reading process.

The second is structural simplification. Issues are presented in an orderly, step-by-step manner. Sometimes complex rulings are divided into smaller parts. This does not impose on the reader the obligation to understand everything at once.

These two methods work together. As a result, the text is not only read, but gradually understood.

Another important aspect is systematization. Fiqh itself is a systematic science. However, this system is not always explicitly visible. Sometimes it is hidden within the text, especially in concise works. In *Kifoya*, however, the system is more explicit. Issues are presented in a logical sequence, interconnected, and step by step. For example, when discussing ablution, first its definition is given, then its obligations, and then its nullifiers (5, 66–91). This may seem simple, but it is didactically significant. Because the reader begins to think in terms of “what?”, “how?”, “when does it break?”. There is a small but important difference here. In classical texts, the system exists but is hidden. In *Kifoya*, the system exists and is shown.

Now let us make a cautious observation. The positive aspects of simplification and systematization are clear. However, at the same time, some elements are reduced. For example, disagreements are presented less frequently, alternative views are reduced, and some subtle details are omitted. This raises a natural question: does this approach “oversimplify” fiqh? It is difficult to give a definitive answer. Perhaps it depends on the goal. If the goal is deep scholarly research, it is certainly insufficient. But if the goal is to learn fiqh, this approach justifies itself.

Another important methodological aspect is information filtering. Not everything is included in *Kifoya*. This is not accidental. The author deliberately highlights the main ruling and reduces secondary details. This concentrates the reader’s attention on the core. And perhaps this is part of the methodology. When this approach is compared with classical commentaries, the difference becomes even clearer. For example, in broader commentaries, a single issue is explored from various perspectives, hypothetical

questions are raised, and alternative views are presented (3, 14–31). This is scientifically rich, but complicates the learning process.

Kifoya, on the contrary, reduces excessive variations, maintains the main line, and guides thought in a “correct direction.” This allows the reader to avoid confusion. At this point, a general conclusion can be drawn: Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf’s methodology is based on three main pillars: simplification, systematization, and filtering. When these three elements work together, fiqh knowledge becomes understandable, structured, and easy to learn.

If one attempts to read *Kifoya* not only as a fiqh text but also as instructional material, another aspect gradually becomes apparent: in this work, the author seems to constantly “take the reader into account.” That is, not only the ruling is considered, but also the person who receives it. This is not a simple matter. In classical fiqh texts, such an approach is not clearly visible. At this point, Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf’s methodology can be interpreted as a reader-centered model. In this model, the complexity of knowledge is less important than how it is received.

First, what is meant by a “reader-centered approach”? In this approach, the author constructs the text not for himself, but for the person who reads it. That is, not “how knowledge is given,” but “how it is received” becomes more important. This is clearly noticeable in *Kifoya*. For example, if we pay attention to the order in which fiqh issues are presented, they are often arranged according to the principle of simple to complex, general to specific, and basic to additional (5, 59–63). Although this is a simple methodological rule, it is not always observed in fiqh texts. In some classical texts, issues are arranged according to scholarly logic, but this order is not always convenient for the reader.

In *Kifoya*, a different approach is taken. For example, when a topic is presented, first its general essence is given, then the main ruling, and then necessary details. This corresponds to the reader’s cognitive process. In this sense, this approach can also be called somewhat “psychological,” as it takes into account the process of knowledge acquisition.

Another important aspect is the management of informational load. Fiqh texts are usually dense. A single page may contain many rulings, exceptions, and conditions. This burdens a new learner. In *Kifoya*, however, this load is reduced, issues are divided into

smaller blocks, unnecessary details are shortened, and the main idea is highlighted (5, 54–117). This prevents the reader’s attention from being scattered. Sometimes, while reading the text, one gets the impression that the author has anticipated “where the reader will struggle.” For example, complex terms are used less frequently, and when they are used, they are understandable through context; places left without explanation are minimized. This creates internal comfort for the reader.

Now another important issue—graduality (gradation). In *Kifoya*, knowledge is not presented all at once, but step by step. The learner does not immediately encounter complex issues. According to this method, it is based on the principle of foundation first, then expansion, and then complication. This approach is also used in modern pedagogy. There is a small but important difference here. The classical fiqh text: “knowledge is ready—take and understand”; *Kifoya*: “knowledge exists—but it must be mastered step by step.”

Another methodological aspect is limiting alternative views. In *Kifoya*, often one main ruling is presented and that is it. Alternative opinions or disagreements are given less frequently. This can be evaluated in two ways: the positive side is reduced confusion; the negative side is reduced depth. However, from a didactic point of view, this choice is understandable. Because for beginner and intermediate learners, too many alternatives are not always beneficial. This raises an important question: does this approach limit fiqh thinking or, on the contrary, gradually shape it? It is difficult to give a definite answer. Perhaps both aspects exist. But one thing is clear—this approach facilitates learning.

In some commentaries and fiqh works, one issue is explored from various perspectives, hypothetical questions are raised, and discussion expands (3, 6–85). This is scientifically rich but difficult for the learner. *Kifoya*, on the contrary, reduces discussion, highlights the main idea, and does not confuse the reader. This makes it effective as a teaching manual.

In the study of fiqh texts, content is often placed at the center. That is, what ruling is given and how an issue is resolved are considered important. However, gradually another question arises: in what form are these rulings being delivered, and what is the scientific significance of this form itself? This question allows us to view Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf’s approach from a different perspective. Because

considering *Kifoya* merely as a fiqh manual seems somewhat narrow. It can also be viewed as an experience of reorganizing fiqh knowledge. Here, the issue is not creating new rulings, but presenting existing knowledge in a new form.

First, this approach can be considered as a model of knowledge transfer. Fiqh knowledge exists in classical sources. It is formed, systematized, and refined over centuries. However, delivering this knowledge to the modern learner is not always easy. The reason is that language changes, thinking changes, and methods of learning change.

At this point, Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq's approach appears as transferring knowledge "from one form to another." This is not simple copying. It is processing. In this process, three main stages can be identified:

1. Selection – what information is needed and what is temporarily set aside.
2. Reformulation – complex ideas are expressed in simpler form.
3. Organization – knowledge is arranged in a sequence convenient for the learner.

These three stages are clearly visible in *Kifoya*.

Now let us attempt to evaluate this approach theoretically.

At first glance, this method appears to be merely didactic simplification. That is, presenting complex knowledge in a simple way. However, upon deeper consideration, a methodological choice becomes evident. For example, reducing disagreements, limiting alternative views, and highlighting the main ruling. This is not simple reduction. It is structuring knowledge.

The positive aspects of this approach are that learning fiqh becomes easier, the reader is not confused, and the main ruling is understood more quickly. This is especially important for beginner and intermediate learners. However, caution is also necessary. Because the reduction of disagreements, the shortening of discussions, and the omission of details may affect the depth of fiqh thinking. That is, this approach facilitates learning but does not always increase depth.

At this point, an important question arises: is this methodology a new stage for fiqh science or merely a didactic variant? Perhaps it is not an entirely new stage. However, it would also be incorrect to evaluate it as a simple "simplified version," because there are conscious methodological decisions involved.

If this approach is evaluated from the perspective of fiqh education, its significance becomes even clearer. In modern education, systematization, graduality, and clarity are fundamental principles. *Kifoya* corresponds precisely to these principles. From

this perspective, Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq's approach can be seen as an attempt to harmonize classical fiqh with a modern educational model.

Another important aspect is the issue of audience. Classical fiqh texts were mainly written for students, scholars, and academic circles. *Kifoya*, however, is adapted for a broader readership, independent learners, and a modern audience. This expands the social scope of fiqh knowledge.

There is also a subtle point here. Popularizing fiqh is not always easy. Because excessive simplification may harm scientific accuracy. Therefore, balance is necessary. *Kifoya* attempts to maintain this balance: the ruling is preserved, but the expression is simplified. This is a complex methodological task.

CONCLUSION

In this article, the methodological approach of Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf in presenting fiqh issues was analyzed on a theoretical basis. During the study, his work *Kifoya* was considered not merely as a presentation of fiqh rulings, but as an instructional model focused on how they are delivered. This approach, while closely connected with the classical Hanafi heritage, was found to differ significantly in its mode of expression and didactic orientation.

The analysis shows that Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq facilitates the process of understanding fiqh knowledge by simplifying, systematizing, and adapting it to the learner. In this process, he softens complex terminology, arranges issues in a logical sequence, and highlights the main rulings. As a result, fiqh knowledge becomes closer to a learnable system rather than a closed scholarly text.

At the same time, this approach has certain limitations. In particular, the reduction of disagreements, the limitation of alternative views, and the omission of certain details may not immediately reveal the deeper layers of fiqh thinking. However, this should be evaluated not as a methodological flaw, but as a deliberate choice. Because the author's main goal is not to conduct deep scholarly debate, but to present fiqh in a form that is convenient for learning.

In general, Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf's approach represents an important methodological experience aimed at adapting fiqh knowledge to modern educational needs. He does not change fiqh itself, but changes the way it is received. This serves as an important factor in ensuring the continuity of fiqh and its accessibility to a wider audience.

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