

## [The Legality Of The Four Schools](http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/543_07-11-2010/the-legality-of-the-four-schools.html)

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Each of the four schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) has its sources in the Qur'an and hadith, and they differ only on interpretation, application, and scholarly analysis of those sources. Therefore, it is very possible that if one finds the arguments and evidences presented in the works on Hanafi jurisprudence to be strong and convincing, he may feel the same way when reading literature from the other three schools. It is for this reason that the great Imams had a deep and mutual respect for one another's legal positions. Consequently, accepting as valid the opinions of all four legal schools would become a cornerstone of Sunni jurisprudence.

However, the etiquette that was and is still observed by each of the four schools is:

'Our opinion is correct with the possibility of being incorrect, and their opinion is incorrect with the possibility of being correct.'

Hence, the scholars of one school do not criticize the scholars of another school, but rather understand that each is following an interpretation of the same sources of Shari'a (the Qur'an and hadith) as propounded by their Imams - all of whom possessed the ability to infer ruling directly from the Qur'an and hadiths of the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

These four schools have been accepted century after century by Ahlus-Sunnah w'al-Jama'ah. Although there are those who do not follow a school of jurisprudence and claim to rely only on the hadiths, what they are in fact claiming is a place alongside the four Imams. These same people also follow the interpretations of scholars they trust, which is similar to following one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. The difference however is that they replace the opinions of the righteous Imams of earlier centuries with the opinions of scholars of latter times.

They are just deluding themselves. It is much better and safer to stick to one of the four schools.