



Ādāb al-Istiftā' – Etiquettes of Posing Questions

1. The **intention** for posing a question to a mufti should be to ascertain knowledge with which one can deal with a particular situation in their life; in other words, to act according to Allah the Almighty's wishes. It is not to debate with him or challenge him when he responds. Similarly, the mufti is not expressing his opinion but rather highlighting the position of his particular legal school. So it is not a mufti that makes ḥalāl or ḥarām, rather he explains what is already ḥalāl or ḥarām. Furthermore, one should not demand evidence from the mufti for his position. His statement as a legal expert is proof.
2. One should **select** a reputable mufti whom one considers to be technically gifted, adequately qualified, pious, God-fearing and one who lives by his knowledge and imparts it to others. It is not appropriate to go from one mufti to another seeking a particular answer as then you are not following Allah the Almighty's wishes but your own desires and whims.
3. The **question** should be posed clearly with all the necessary details. If it is written or typed, then it should be reasonably grammatically sound to allow the mufti to understand the question. It may require the mufti to correspond with the questioner so a means of contact should be supplied so this can be arranged. The context for each question is very important as the response is based upon the context. If the question is posed by phone or when the mufti is outside of his dār al-iftā' then s/he should not expect an immediate response as the mufti could possibly be preoccupied in other thoughts. Even if the mufti is in his dār al-iftā' then again he may be preoccupied so he may give a time for the questioner to call back or will take their details and respond at a later time. Highlight the speed of response you require; this does not mean the mufti will respond in that time but at least he can decide, if he is available, whether he has sufficient time to respond. Speeds of responses could be Immediate, Urgent (within 24 hours), Standard (within the week) and 'at your earliest convenience' (when available). Do not continuously harass the mufti for a response. He will usually have other responsibilities and he would have scheduled time to respond to your query. Bear in mind even the 'simplest' of questions can take hours looking through pages of text. In other words, a 'quick question' does not guarantee a 'quick response'. The questioner should not state within the question boundaries or parameters by stating 'giving me evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah please respond...' the reason is a mufti is one who follows a madhhab and as such does not have the legal acumen or capacity to give verdicts directly from the sources, except in new matters which have no precedent. The mufti will answer from the reputable books of fiqh of his madhhab.
4. The **answer** is specifically for the questioner and is not wise to share with someone else as their context could be different. Act upon the advice of the mufti as he has detailed.

والله اعلم وعلمه أتم

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