

Q: What is meant by Farz Kifayah? What is its religious and social significance? In the present era, which affairs are considered to be included in the scope of Farz Kifayah?

Introduction:

Islam does not only emphasize individual piety but also collective responsibility. The Shariah divides obligations into Farz 'Ayn (individual duties) and Farz Kifayah (collective duties). Farz Kifayah refers to those obligations which absolve the rest of the community; but if neglected entirely, the entire ummah is sinful. This reflects Islam's balance between individual spirituality and social solidarity.

The Quran declares: "Let there be [arising] from you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be successful." (Aal-e-Imran 3:104). Scholars like Imam Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah have stressed that such obligations preserve both the religious spirit and the worldly welfare of the Muslim community.

Meaning Of Farz Kifayah:

Farz kifayah is a duty that is communally binding. If some Muslims perform it, the rest are absolved; but if nobody fulfills it, the sin falls upon the entire community. A classical example is funeral prayer (Salat al-Janazah). Imam Nawawi explains: "Janazah prayer is Farz Kifayah. If some pray, the obligation is fulfilled; if none do, all Muslims nearby are sinful."

Religious Significance:

Farz Kifayah ensures the continuity of religious obligations without burdening every individual. It protects the community from collective sin and keeps essential practices alive. The Quran commands: "And let not all of you go forth; let a group from every division of them go forth to obtain understanding in religion and warn ~~at~~^{ding} their people when they return to them that they might be cautious." (At-Tawbah 9:122). Imam Ghazali in Ihya Ulum al-Din explains that sciences such as medicine, mathematics, and crafts fall under Farz Kifayah because the community's survival

depends on them. Thus, the religious significance lies in securing both the spiritual and worldly needs of Muslims.

Social Significance :

The social dimensions of Farz Kifayah is equally vital. It strengthens communal solidarity by assigning duties that safeguard the welfare of the Ummah. Ibn Khaldun, in his Muqaddimah, noted: "Farz Kifayah sustains civilization, for without scholars, judges, and craftsmen, society would collapse." The principle distributes the responsibilities and allows for specialization - doctors, engineers, rulers, and scholars - so that no individual is overburden^{ed}. It also act as a moral safeguard, ensuring that justice, healthcare, education, and defense are not neglected. The Quran emphasizes collective responsibility in justice: "Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression". (Al-Maidah)

Scope Of Farz Kifayah in the Present Era:

The scope of Farz Kifayah is dynamic and extends to new challenges of every age. Traditional obligations like funeral rites, defense of Muslim lands, and appointment of judges remain valid. However, contemporary needs expand the scope further. Imam Ghazali regarded medicine, mathematics, and crafts as Farz Kifayah, showing Islam's recognition of worldly sciences. Shah Waliullah Dehlawi in Hujjatullah al-Baligha argued that Farz Kifayah covers all functions necessary for the preservation of religion and worldly welfare. Today, this includes modern fields like healthcare, scientific research, engineering, education, and governance. Moreover, scholars argue that new areas such as media responsibility, countering propaganda, environmental protection, and technological development also fall within this obligation. Ibn Taymiyyah supported this dynamic view, stating: "Whatever is needed to establish religion and worldly affairs becomes a duty upon the community."

Conclusion:

Farz Kifayah is an Islamic principle that combines spirituality with social responsibility, preserving Shariah obligations and ensuring collective welfare. In Quran, Aal-e-Imran, Allah says, "Let there be among you a group who call to goodness, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; it is they who will be successful." Scholars like Imam Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah expanded its scope to all essential functions of society. In today's era it expands beyond funeral rites and defense to education, healthcare, governance, and social justice, making it a dynamic principle safeguarding both faith and society.