

Imam-e-Aazam Abu Hanifa (Radi Allah Unho)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction of FIOAH

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shaafi and Imam Ahmed bin Hambal (*radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in*) are the leaders of the four schools of Fiqh (Islamic Law).

"FIQH" is the *Science of Islamic Law or Jurisprudence*. It refers to the collection and compilation of Islamic laws based on the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of Sayyiduna Rasulullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*). These great Muslims devoted themselves to the task of developing the science of understanding Islamic Law and its practise.

Although they differed from each other, all the four great Imams had great respect for each other. They were all teachers and pupils of each other for the common goal of enhancing their knowledge about Islam. All of them were unanimous on Aqa'ids (Islamic Beliefs). We, as Muslims, must respect the different Sunni schools of thought.

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu's*) full name was Numan bin Thaabit bin Zuta bin Mah. He was born in Kufa in Iraq in 80 A.H. He belonged to the pious period of the Taabi'ins (Successors of the Sahabas).

DIVINE MISSION

It is stated in a Hadith Shareef which Imam al-Harizmi reported from Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (*radi Allahu anhumA*) that Sayyiduna Rasulullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "Among my Ummah, there will come a man called Abu Hanifa. On the Day of Resurrection, he will be the light of my Ummah." Another Hadith Shareef states: "In every century, a number of my Ummah will attain to high grades. Abu Hanifa will be the highest of his time." These two Ahadith are recorded in "Durr al-Mukhtar."

EARLY LIFE

While still in his youth, he met great Sahaba like Sayyiduna Anas bin Malik, Sayyiduna Sahl bin Saad and Sayyiduna Abul Tufail Amir bin Wathilah (*radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in*). Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) was first brought up as a trader, but soon started taking deep interest in Islamic learning.

EDUCATION

He attended the lectures of Sayyiduna Hammad Basri (*radi Allah anhu*) in Fiqh and then began to study the Hadith. He learnt under great scholars in Kufa. In Basrah he studied under two great Taabi'ie scholars who had learnt Hadith under the Sahaba.

In Makkatul Mukarammah and Madinatul Munawwarah, he learnt under Sayyiduna Ata bin Abi Rabah and Sayyiduna Ikramah (*radi Allahu anhumA*). In fact, Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) had numerous teachers. Some historians say that he learnt Hadith from about 4 000 scholars.

Some of his famous teachers were: Sayyiduna Imam Baaqir, Sayyiduna Imam Jafer Saadiq, Sayyiduna Ali, Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah, Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Umar, Sayyiduna Aqabah bin Umar, Sayyiduna Safwaan, Sayyiduna Jabir and Sayyiduna Abu Qatadah (*radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in*).

AS A TEACHER

When his teacher, Sayyiduna Hammad Basri (*radi Allahu anhu*) passed away, Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) was 40 years old and he began teaching. He became very famous and travelled many places. Students from all over the Muslim world came to him to listen to his lectures, interviews and debates. Imam Maalik (*radi Allahu anhu*) also learnt under him.

When he was 56 years old, Caliph Mansur came to power after the Ummayyad dynasty was overthrown by the Abbasids in 132 A.H. Since Imam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) opposed the Caliph's ruthless killing of the Ahle Bait, he was arrested. The Caliph offered the Imam the post of a Qaadi (Judge), but he refused. The Caliph Mansur had him beaten with a stick 30 strokes. His feet bled. Caliph Mansur repented and offered Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) 30 000 pieces of silver. The great Imam refused once more. He was imprisoned again and thrashed 10 more strokes every day.

PASSES AWAY

In the Month of Rajab 150 A.H., Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) passed away while in Salaah. He had been poisoned by the orders of Caliph Mansur. His Janaza Salaah was performed six times and each time 50 000 people took part. People continued to come and pray for him for 20 days after he was buried. He was 70 years old.

In 459 A.H. a Mazaar (Tomb) was built for him by the Seljuki ruler Alp Arslan. He lies buried in a Tomb situated near Baghdad in Iraq.

STUDENTS

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) left behind about 980 students. The most famous among them being:

- | Sayyiduna Qadi Abu Yusuf (*radi Allahu anhu*)
 - | Sayyiduna Imam Muhammed (*radi Allahu anhu*)
 - | Sayyiduna Imam Zufur (*radi Allahu anhu*)
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PERSONALITY

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) earned his living by trading. Every Friday, he distributed 20 gold coins to the poor for his parents soul. For 40 years Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) performed the Fajr Salaah with the Wudu that he made for the Esha Salaah (ie. he did not sleep after the night prayer). He performed Hajj 55 times. He used to recite the entire Holy Quran once every day and once every night. Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) had so much of Taqwa (Piety) that for 30 years he fasted every day (except for the 5 forbidden days). He often read the Holy Quran in one rakaah or two. He did not accept any presents from anyone. He wore clothes like those of the poor. Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) once said: "*I laughed once in my life and I regret it.*" He talked little and thought much. It is said that at the place where his soul was taken, he read the Holy Quran 7000 times.

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