

The Greatest Imam (al-Imam al-Aa'zam) Abu Hanifa Nau'man Ibn Thabit Radi Allahu Anhu



Imam al-A'zam Abu Hanifa's (Alaihir raHma) full name was Nu'mān ibn Thābit ibn Zuṭā ibn Marzubān. 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 Rasoolullah (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 Maalik, Sayyiduna Sahl bin Saad and Sayyiduna Abul Tufail Amir bin Wathilah (radi Allahu Anhumul Ajma'een). Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) had numerous teachers. Some historians say that he learnt Hadith from about 4000 scholars. Some of his famous teachers were:

Sayyiduna Imam Baaqir
Sayyiduna Imam Jafer Saadiq
Sayyiduna Ali

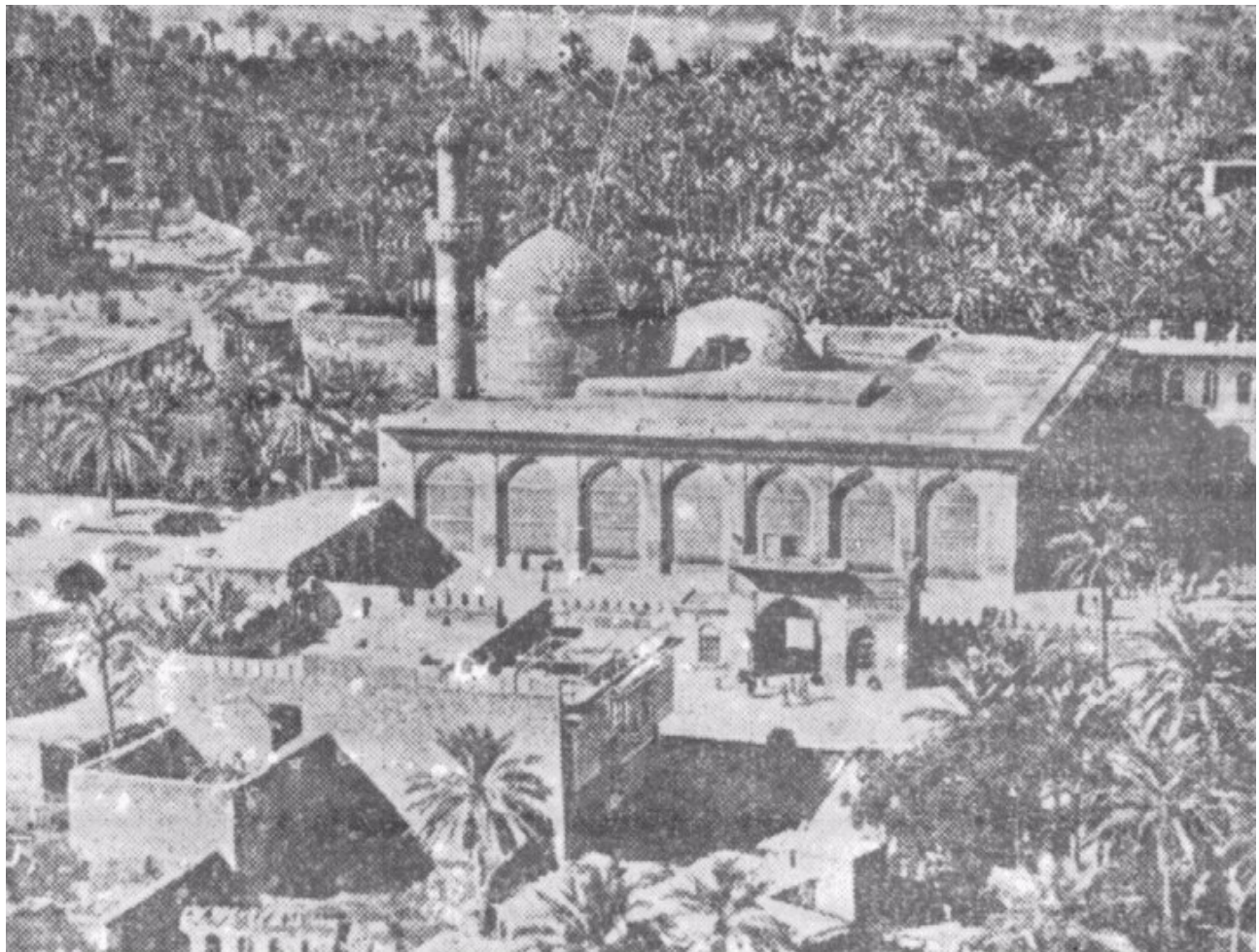
Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah
Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Mas'ud
Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Umar
Sayyiduna Aqabah bin Umar
Sayyiduna Safwaan
Sayyiduna Jabir
Sayyiduna Abu Qatadah and etc. (Radi Allahu Anhum Ajma'een).

AS A TEACHER

When his teacher, Sayyiduna Hammad Basri (Alaihir raHma) passed away, Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (Alaihir raHma) 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 Malik (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) 30000 pieces of silver. The great Imam refused once more. He was imprisoned again and thrashed 10 more strokes every day.

PASSES AWAY

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (Alaihir raHma) 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 Arsalan. He lies buried in a Tomb situated near Baghdad in Iraq.



STUDENTS

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (Alaihir raHma) left behind about 980 students. The most famous among them being:

- a. Sayyiduna Qadi Abu Yusuf (Alaihir raHma)
- b. Sayyiduna Imam Muhammed (Alaihir raHma)
- c. Sayyiduna Imam Zufur (Alaihir raHma)

PERSONALITY

Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) 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 (Alaihir raHma) 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.



GREATNESS OF IMAM ABU HANIFA

Yahya ibn Sa`id al-Qattan said:

“We have not heard better than Abu Hanifa’s opinion and we have followed most of his positions.”

Yahya ibn Ma`in, he said of Abu Hanifa that

“He is not only thiqa (trustworthy) but thiqa thiqa. Al- Dhahabi even calls Ibn Ma`in a fanatic Hanafi.”

Al-Fadl ibn Dukayn, one of the major authorities of Ahl al-Hadith. He said:

“Muslims should make du`a to Allah on behalf of Abu Hanifa in their prayers, because the Sunan and the fiqh were preserved for them through him.”

Waki` ibn al-Jarrah, he replied to some of them:

“You barred us from Abu Hanifa, are you going to bar us from Zufar??” (Zufar took over the teaching of Hanafi Fiqh in Kufa and Basra after the Imam.)

Abu Mu`awiya al-Darir, he said:

“Love of Abu Hanifa is part of the Sunnah”.

Ibn Dawud al-Khuraybi:

“Among the people there are plenty of enviers and ignorant ones concerning Abu Hanifa.”

Bishr al-Hafi, he said:

“None criticizes Abu Hanifa except an envier or an ignoramus”.

Ibn al-Mubarak. When al-Awza`i criticized Abu Hanifa, Ibn al-Mubarak copied a compilation of Abu Hanifa’s fiqh under the name al-Nu`man. Al- Awza`i read it without interruption except for Salat al-Fard. Then he said:

“This Nu`man is a grand master (hadha nabilun min al-ashyakh). Go to him and take as much as you can from him!” Ibn al-Mubarak said: “This is the Abu Hanifa you had forbidden me to see.” (Tarikh al-Baghdad)

Ibn al-Mubarak considered one’s hatred of Abu Hanifa a mark of Divine wrath.

He also said:

“If Allah had not rescued me with Abu Hanifa and Sufyan [al-Thawri] I would have been like the rest of the common people.” Al-Dhahabi relates it as: “I would have been an innovator.”

Ibn `A’isha mentioned a fatwa of Abu Hanifa then said:

“Truly, if you had seen him you would have wanted him ! Truly, his similitude and yours is as in the saying:

Curse them much or not, I care little to blame you;
But fill - if you can! - the space they left vacant.”

GOLDEN WORDS OF WISDOM:

- Knowledge without deeds is like a body without a soul. As long as knowledge does not embrace the existence of action it will not be enough not agreeable nor sincere.
- Difficulties are the result of sin. The sinful therefore does not have the right to lament when difficulties befall him.
- To reduce the connection of the World means that a person takes that which is essential from the World and leaves that which is non essential.
- That person who seeks knowledge to attain the World finds that knowledge has no place in his heart.
- That person whose knowledge does not prevent him from committing sin and transgressions then who is that person who has suffered or incurred a greater loss than him.
- For the attainment of knowledge satisfaction is useful and satisfaction is not gained by increasing information but by decreasing it.



*Mawlid an-Nabawi Sharif Celebrations at the Mosque of Imam al-Aa'dham Abu Hanifa
Nau'man Ibn Thabit Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu in Aa'dhamiya, Baghdad Sharif, Iraq*