

Imam Abu Hanifa (ra): Most Learned Person Of His Time

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Hafiz al-Sam'ani writes: "Imam Abu Hanifa engaged himself in the acquisition of knowledge and exerted himself until he achieved what others did not. Once he visited Mansur (the Abbasid caliph) and found 'Isa ibn Musa with him. 'Isa said to Mansur, **'This is the scholar of the world today.'**" [1]

Makki ibn Ibrahim once remembered Imam Abu Hanifa and said, **"He was the greatest scholar of his time."** [2]

Makki ibn Ibrahim was the Shaykh of Imam Bukhari through whom Imam Bukhari has transmitted most of his narrations whose chains reach the Messenger of Allah (saw) through only three transmitters (thulathiyat). 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak relates: **"I entered Kufa and enquired from the scholars as to who was the most learned person in the city? They told me it was Abu Hanifa. Then I enquired from them as to who was the most devout worshipper and the one most occupied in acquiring sacred knowledge? Again they told me it was Abu Hanifa. Every good characteristic I enquired about, they answered 'We do not know anyone who that characteristic could be attributed to except Abu Hanifa.'**" [3]

Muhammad ibn al-Bishr said, **"I would visit Abu Hanifa and Sufyan al-Thawri. When visiting Sufyan he would ask me where I had come from. I would inform him from Abu Hanifa and he would remark, 'You have just come from the greatest jurist in the world.'"**

Abu Wahb Muhammad ibn Muzahin said, **"I heard Ibn al-Mubarak say, 'The greatest jurist is Abu Hanifa. I have not seen anyone like him in the field of jurisprudence.'"**

Imam Shafi'i reports that Imam Malik was asked if he had met Abu Hanifa? His reply was: **"Yes, I have seen a person who, if he says he could turn this pillar into gold, would be able to provide evidence for it."** [4]

Imam Shafi'i himself once said: **"People are dependant on Abu Hanifa in the field of jurisprudence."** [5]

'Allama Sha'rani writes: **"Imam Shafi'i happened to visit Abu Hanifa's grave during the time of Fajr. He performed the prayer without reciting qunut (a special du'a) and remarked, 'How could I recite qunut in the presence of this Imam when it was his opinion not to recite it.'"** [6]

Imam Abu Hanifa's opinion was to recite the qunut for forty days in Fajr at the time of calamities only.

When the news of Imam Abu Hanifa's death reached Shu'ba, he explained: **"Truly to Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return (Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un)."** He then said, **"The light**

of sacred knowledge has been extinguished from Kufa. They will never find anyone like him again." [7]

Imam Dhahabi writes: "Logic, debate, and wisdom acquired from the forbearers were not, by Allah, the areas of learning pursued by the Companions and Followers (tabi'een); Imam Awza'i, Thawri, Malik, and Abu Hanifa (raa). Their fields of study were the Qur'an and hadiths." [8]

Hence, this establishes that it was the science of Qur'an and hadith that Imam Abu Hanifa excelled in, and not just other subjects.

Notes:

[1] al-Ansab 247

[2] I'la' al-sunan 18:308

[3] al-Mizan 58

[4] Tabyid al-sahifa 16

[5] Tahdhib al-Tahdhib 10:450

[6] al-Mizan

[7] al-Khayrat al-hisan 71

[8] Tadhkirat al-huffaz 192