

(3) Some Common Objections Raised Against The Hanafi Madh'hab

http://www.muftisays.com/blog/Seifeddine-M/1205_18-02-2011/%283%29-some-common-objections-raised-against-the-hanafi-madh%27hab.html

Third Objection

A common objection which is nothing short of gross ignorance is that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (رضي الله عنه) was not a muḥaddith (hadith expert), and hence many ḥadīths did not reach him. Therefore, it is unwise to follow an imām whose knowledge of the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (عليه السلام) was deficient.

Answer

It is totally incorrect to claim that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (رضي الله عنه) was not a muḥaddith or that he lacked knowledge of ḥadīth. It is established through many sources that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (رضي الله عنه) spent many years travelling across the muslim world to acquire ḥadīths, until he became a ḥadīth master (ḥāfiz al-ḥadīth). He remained a student in the circle of the muḥaddith 'Atā ibn Abī Rabāh (رضي الله عنه) in makka for several years, with 'Atā (رضي الله عنه) recognising him from amongst his distinguished students. Similarly, he obtained narrations from muḥaddiths all across the muslim world.

Kufa, the Imām's birthplace and where he spent most of his life, was a hub of learning and ḥadīth circles. Major Companions such as Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) had migrated to Kufa and transmitted their wealth of narrations to their students who held their circles throughout the city. 'Allāma Zāhid al-Kawthārī (رضي الله عنه), in his Fiqh Ahl al-'Iraq – printed as an introduction to 'Allāma Zayla'ī's (رضي الله عنه) Nasab al-Rāya, vol.1, pg.16-18 - has recorded a number of their students who taught ḥadīths in Kufa, making the city a focal point for hadith students from around the muslim world. These narrators include: 'Ubayda Sulaymānī (رضي الله عنه) (d. 72 ah), 'Amr bin maymūn (رضي الله عنه) (d. 74 ah), Zarr bin Ḥubaysh (رضي الله عنه) (d. 82 ah), Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī (رضي الله عنه) (d. 74 ah), Suwayd bin Ghafala (رضي الله عنه) (d. 82 ah), 'Alqama ibn Qays (لهال رحمه) (d. 82 ah), Masrūq (رضي الله عنه) (d. 63 ah) and others. Thus, the ḥadīths which were prevalent in makka, Madīna, Syria and 'Iraq were undoubtedly in the knowledge of the Imām. Consequently, the Imām's biographies testify to his abundance of narrations, his many teachers and students.

Another interesting fact is that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (رضي الله عنه) narrates many ḥadīths with chains that are termed thunā'iyāt (narrations consisting of two narrators) and thulāthiyāt (narrations consisting of three narrators). This means that between the Imām and Allāh's Messenger (عليه السلام), there only exists three narrators and often only two. In a book entitled Al-Imām al-A'zam Abū Ḥanīfa Wa 'l-Tunā'iyāt fī Masānīdihī, by Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sa'dī (رضي الله عنه), it is stated that **just the thunā'iyāt (narrations consisting of two narrators) of the Imām are approximately two hundred and nineteen narrations.** This makes his narrations, according to the standards of the classical ḥadīth scholars (muḥaddithūn), **stronger than the narrations found in the Saḥīḥs of Bukhārī and muslim,** as one will find that the number of narrators between them

and the Messenger (ﷺ) are in most cases not less than four (in fact, the thulāthiyāt of Imām Bukhārī (ﷺ) only number twenty-one narrations). This proves beyond doubt that Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (ﷺ) was **not only a reputable muḥaddith, moreover he was among the major authorities and experts of ḥadith!**

(Understanding Taqlid: Following One Of The Four Great Imams, Mufti Muhammad Sajjad)