

The Evolution Of Hanafi Fiqh, And The Sanad

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Many people with little knowledge give the perception that Imam Abu Haneefah (rahmatullahi alaihi) came out of nowhere, and people following his interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah are in error. This can easily be refuted by Ibn Abidin's (rahmatullahi alaihi) statement, he gives the analogy of the evolution of the Hanafi fiqh as bread, he says:

"Abdullah ibn Masood (radiallahu anhu), who sowed the seeds of this knowledge, was one of the greatest and best learned ones of the Sahaba (radiallahu anhum). Alqama (rahmatullahi alaihi), his disciple, watered these seeds and turned them into crops, and Ibrahim Nakha'i (rahmatullahi alaihi), his disciple, reaped the harvest, that is, gathered the pieces of this knowledge together. Hammad Kufi (rahmatullahi alaihi) threshed it, and his disciple, Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa (rahmatullahi alaihi), ground it, that is, he classified the knowledge into sections; Imam Abu Yusuf (rahmatullahi alaihi) made dough from it, and Imam Muhammad al-Shaybani (rahmatullahi alaihi) baked it. Muslims have been eating the morsels prepared in this procedure."

Why the [Hanafi Fiqh](#) is associated with the Sahabi 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh). I did say in the beginning that this is partly true, but it's not entirely true, in the sense that the [Hanafi Fiqh](#) is not just based on 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh)'s ahaadeeth or his sayings and fatawa. But he does play a very integral and important role.

On one occasion it was reported to Sayyidna 'Ali (radiallahu 'anh) that Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh) had given a fatwa about a question of meerath (inheritance). When Sayyidna 'Ali (radiallahu 'anh) had heard the fatwa he said, **'May Allah have mercy upon 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood. Indeed he was a Faqeeh (jurist).'**

Masrooq was a famous Tabi'ee. And al-Sha'bi was another famous Tabi'ee. Tabi'ee is a successor to the [Sahabah](#) radiallahu anhum. Al-Sha'bi (a famous muhaddith) says himself that, **'I saw more than five hundred Sahabah (radiallahu 'anhum).'** And al-Sha'bi says of Masrooq that, 'I have never seen anyone more eager and more zealous in his search for knowledge, than Masrooq.'

And Masrooq was one of the leading students of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh). And not only Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh), Masrooq travelled all over the Islamic World at the time, and learnt from Umm al-Mu'mineen 'A'isha Siddeeqa (radiallahu 'anha), to the extent that it's been related that Masrooq was actually adopted by Umm al-Mu'mineen 'A'isha Siddeeqa (radiallahu 'anha). Meaning, not adopted as a child, but because of her love for him, respect for him, and his zeal for learning. And because of the respect and the service that he offered to Umm al-Mu'mineen 'A'isha (radiallahu 'anha). She treated him as her own son.

Masrooq also learnt from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (radiallahu anhu), and many of the Sahaabah in many different cities. The same Masrooq says, after having studied under so many [Sahabah](#) (radiallahu 'anhum), and having been treated as a son of Umm al-Mu'mineen 'A'isha Siddeeqah (radiallahu

anha), he says, **'I have found the Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) to be like pools of water. Some of them are pools that irrigate one man. There are pools that irrigate two men. There are pools that quench the thirst of three men. There are pools that quench the thirst of ten men. And their are pools, that if all of the people of the world were to come to them, they would be able to irrigate them and quench their thirst. And 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood was one of them.'**

The same Masrooq also says that, **'Of all of the Sahaabah (radiallahu ta'aala anhum), the knowledge of all of the Companions is distilled and condensed and reaches the peak, in six people. Sayyidna 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood, Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Sayyidna Abud-Darda, Sayyidna Ubay Ibn Ka'b, and Sayyidna Zaid Ibn Thaabit (radiallahu ta'aala anhum).'** And then Masrooq says, **'Of all of these six people, the knowledge of these leading six Sahabah is condensed and distilled in only two people, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (karamallahu wajhah), and 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu ta'aala 'anh).**

Now, Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh) had thousands of students. Many of them were leading Imams of their time. But probably the most famous was Alqama. And this Alqama, he wasnt a Sahabi, but he was a student of Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Ma'ood, and other senior Sahabah. He was a very close companion and attendant of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh). He would wait on 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood, so much so that 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh) himself said, **'Whatever I know, Alqama knows.'** Allahu Akbar. What a testimony on behalf of a non-Sahaabi by a Sahaabi.

Alqama also had thousands of students. Probably his most famous student, who inherited the treasure of knowledge from the thousands of Sahaaba resident in Kufa, and in other areas also, was Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee. Tawoos relates, that **'I once asked my father that why do you go to Alqama, and not the Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam)? When the Sahaba are present, why do you go to Alqama for your knowledge?'** So his father replied to him, **'Because I see the Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) themselves refer to Alqama for knowledge.'**

And this Alqama, as I said, had thousands of students. But probably his best student, and most famous, and the Imaam recognised by all, was Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee. And Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee himself was a Tabi'ee. He saw a number of Sahabah and learnt from them. And, Allahu Akbar, what can be said of Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee. The same Sha'bee who said he has seen more than five hundred Sahaba radiallahu anhum, when Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee (rahmatullahi alaih) passed away, he said to the people after the Janaazah that, **'You have buried the greatest jurist, and the greatest faqeeh of mankind.'** So someone asked al-Sha'bi, **'Was Ibraheem an-Nakha'i a greater jurist than even Hasan of Basra?'** Meaning Imam Hasan al-Basri (rahmatullahi alaih). Sha'bi (rahmatullahi alaih) replied that, **'Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee was a greater jurist than even Hasan of Basra, than all of the people of Basra, than all of the people of Kufa, than all of the people of Shaam, and all of the people of Hijaaz.'** And then he said, **'May Allah have mercy on Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee, for he grew up in a household of fiqh, and he learnt the best of Fiqh from his family,'** because he was from the Nakha'ee family. His maternal uncle was Aswad bin Yazeed bin Qays an-Nakha'ee. He was one of the leading students of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood and Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab.

And, his uncle's uncle was Alqama. And he was also from the Nakha'ee family. So he had two great people to look up to, Alqama and Aswad, and they were the leading students of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radiallahu 'anh), 'Umar Ibn Khattab, Sayyidna 'Ali, and others.

So al-Sha'bi said, '**May Allah have mercy on Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee, he grew up in a house of fiqh, and he mastered fiqh, and he gained the best of fiqh. And then he would sit with us and he gained the best of hadeeth. And he combined the best of Hadeeth and the best of fiqh. When I mourn his loss I mourn the loss of knowledge.'**

Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee was asked that, '**Who should we refer to after your death?**' He said, '**Hammaad.**' And Hammaad was a leading jurist, a leading scholar of Hadeeth and fiqh, of knowledge. He became Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee's successor, because Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee himself said that after me refer to Hammaad. And, after the death of Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee, the scholars of Kufa appointed Hammaad Ibn Abi Sulaymaan as their Shaykh and their leader. And Hammaad Ibn Abi Sulaymaan, his most famous student, and his leading student, was none other than Nauman bin Thaabit Abu Haneefah (rahimahullah).

Now this is the chain, and when Imaam Abu Haneefah (rahmatullahi alaih) used to sit and discuss the masaa'il of deen, he wouldnt just take his opinion. Many 'Ulamaa' have recorded in their books, that Imam Abu Haneefah rahmatullahi alaih had a consultant of forty men. And these forty men would sit with him and discuss the masaa'il of deen. Sometimes they would deliberate on one mas'ala for three days. And only when they were satisfied and more or less agreed on that issue would they record it in the book as a mas'ala of fiqh. It wasnt just one errant, or arbitrary opinion of one man.

And who were the forty, Allahu Akbar! Of the forty who used to sit with Imaam Abu Haneefah (rahmatullahi alaih) were the leading students of the whole of the 'Ulamaa' of Kufa. And amongst Imaam Abu Haneefah (rahmatullahi alaih)'s students, one Alim writes in one of his books, about the group forty who would sit with Imaam Abu Haneefah and who would be consulted by Imam Abu Haneefah (rahmatullahi alaih), and who would deliberate with him on these matters of religion, he says they were '**The greatest of the greatest.**' And it included Imam Abu Yusuf, Dawood at-Ta'i, Imam Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaybani, Imam Zufar, Imam Hasan, and many others.