



The Status of Imam Azam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit

(May Allah be pleased with him)

قال رسول الله ﷺ لو كان الدين (الايمن- العلم) عند الثريا لذهب به رجل من فارس او قال من أبناء فارس حتى يتناوله، صحيح مسلم ج 2 ص 312/ صحيح بخارى ج 2 ص 727
قال الحافظ المحقق جلال الدين السيوطى الشافعي رحمه الله هذا أصل صحيح يعتمد عليه في البشارة بأبي حنيفة رحمه الله وفي الفضيلة التامة إلى أن قال، أن الإمام أبا حنيفة رحمه الله هو المراد من هذا الحديث ظاهر لا شك فيه، {الخيرات الحسان ص 13/ ازالة الخفاء ج 1 ص 271/ اتحاف النبلاء ص 424}

إمام أعظم أبو حنيفة رضى الله عنه

Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله – The Tabi'ee (one who saw or met the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ):

Allah ﷻ says: 'And the foremost to embrace Islam of the emigrants and the helpers and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah ﷻ is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him..' (s9,v100)

This verse of the Holy Qur'an refers to the greatness of three groups of people after the Nabi ﷺ. The greatness is concerning the fact that Allah ﷻ has revealed in the Holy Qur'an that He is pleased with these people.

- 1. The Muharijeen (Emigrants):** Those people who accepted Islam and migrated from their communities to Madinah Munawwarah. **The Ansar (Helpers):** The inhabitants of Madinah Munawwarah who assisted and sacrificed their property, wealth etc for the hospitality of the Prophet ﷺ and migrating Companions ﷺ.
- 2. The Sabiqoon & Awaloon (The Foremost & First to accept Islam):** Those people who were the very first amongst the Companions ﷺ to accept Islam after the announcement of the Prophethood. (Tafsir Uthmani)
- 3. The Followers:** In the Tafsir of the Ghair Muqalid scholar – Safiyul Rahman Salfi Mubarakpuri; *Tafsir Ahsanul Bayan*, p264, he writes: 'the followers refers to those individuals who, with sincerity follow the way shown by the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ – they are known as Tabi'een. Those Muslims that did not see the Nabi ﷺ but attained the company of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ.'

From the scholars of the past there are 4 outstanding scholars through whom Allah ﷻ benefited the Ummah immensely. From these four Imams, only Imam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit رحمه الله had the honour and privilege of meeting the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Hafiz ibn Hajar Al Asqalani رحمه الله (d:852H) stated: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was born in the year 80 Hجري. At that time, Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa رحمه الله (d:87H) was residing in Kufah.

Allamah Zahabi رحمه الله (d:748H) writes: 'When Sayyidina Anas bin Malik رحمه الله (d:93H) came to Kufah, Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله met and sat in his company many times'. (Tazkiratul Huffaz, vol1, p147/ Tehzeeb ut Tehzeeb, vol10, p449)

Hafiz ibn Kathir رحمه الله (d:774H) writes: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله saw Sayyidina Anas bin Malik رحمه الله. Some scholars state that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله attained Hadith from 7 Companions of the Prophet ﷺ'. (Al Bidayah wal Nihayah, vol 10, p107)

Allamah Suyuti رحمه الله has written in his book 'Tabyeedul Sahifa' the narrations from these 7 Companions ﷺ (The 7 Companions mentioned are: Sayyidina Anas bin Malik رحمه الله, Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa رحمه الله, Sayyidina Abdullah bin Harith رحمه الله, Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Unays رحمه الله (d:94H), Sayyidina Wathila bin Asq'a رحمه الله, Sayyidah Ayesha bint Ajrad رحمه الله, Sayyidina Muaqal bin Yasar رحمه الله. (Dars Sunan Tirmidhi, vol1, p92)

An example of the Hadith related from Anas bin Malik رحمه الله:

Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله relates from Sayyidina Anas bin Malik رحمه الله from the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ said: 'The seeking of knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim.' (Tabyeedul Sahifa bi Manaqib Imam Abu Hanifa)

Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله met other Sahabah Companions ﷺ; Sayyidina Malik bin Huwayrith رحمه الله (d:94H), Sayyidina Mahmood bin Labeed رحمه الله (d:99H), Sayyidina Sahl bin Haneef رحمه الله (d:100H), Sayyidina Harmaas bin Ziyad Al Bahili رحمه الله (d:102H), Sayyidina Abu Tafayl Aamil bin Wathila رحمه الله (d:110H).

Allamah ibn Hajar Makki Shafi رحمه الله (d:975H) writes: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was from amongst the senior of the Tabi'een. About this group Allah ﷻ says: 'also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah ﷻ is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him..' (s9,v100). This was an honour and favour which Allah ﷻ bestowed upon Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. (Al Khairatul Hasaan, p51)

Innumerable Muhaddith and scholars of the past have recorded the fact of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله from being amongst the Tabi'een. (Tazkira Muhaditheen, vol 1, p5)

The scholars of every age are acquainted with the fact that during the time of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله there was an immense amount of Fitna, specifically in the vicinity of Iraq. The Rawafid, Khawarij and Mutazilla were working to eradicate and change the true pristine teachings of Islam as it was received from the Prophet ﷺ. At this time, Allah

ﷺ guided Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله to propagate and uphold the true teachings of Islam and combat the onslaught from the deviant sects and groups. He (Imam Abu Hanifa) presented the Deen in the true manner of the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions رضي الله عنهم to the masses and reminded them of their obligations through the authoring of such works as 'Fiqh-ul-Akbar'. The Ghair Muqalid scholar; Shaykh Muhammad Ismail Salafi writes: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was the one, by whose knowledge, beliefs, and actions were an example for the masses. He combated and suppressed the uprising of the deviant groups such as Rawafid Shi'a, Khawarij and Mutazilla in an astonishing manner. May Allah ﷻ bestow Mercy upon Abu Hanifa رحمه الله constantly and grant him a high station in paradise.' (Fatawa Salafiyah, p141)

An oppressive ruler, Abu Jafar Mansoor, ordered Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله to take the position of chief justice of the Islamic empire. However, Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله refused to take the post due to the tyranny of the ruler. Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was afraid of the injustices that would be forced upon him by the ruler. He was as a result imprisoned and beaten severely for his rebellion. Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله preferred to suffer punishment in this world than be held accountable in the next. In this state of oppression and injustice, Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was martyred with 30 lashes in 150H. (Al Khairatul Hasaan, p61/ Baghdadi, vol 13, p328/ Zelul Zawahir, vol 2, p492)

When Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله would recollect the oppression which was inflicted upon Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, he would cry and supplicate for the Mercy of Allah for Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. Due to the fact that Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله also had to face an oppressive ruler. (Baghdadi, vol 13, p327/ Manakib Mawfiq, vol 2, p169/ Al Khairatul Hasaan, p59/ Ibn Khulqan, vol 2, p164)

The Holy Qur'an and collections of Hadith, there are only two conditions upon which the proclamation of war has been threatened by Allah ﷻ Himself. (1) The consumption and dealing with interest. (2) Saheeh Bukhari: The ones who trouble the pious servants of Allah ﷻ (Awliya).

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ ان الله ﷻ قال من عادى لي وليا فقد آذنته بالحرب (صحيح بخارى كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع/ درمنثور جلد 4 صفحه 189)

The Good News and Virtue of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله in Light of the Holy Qur'an and Sahih Hadith:

Allah ﷻ says: 'And others among them (Muslims) who have not yet joined them. And He is the All-Mighty, the Wise.' (s62,v3)

Allah ﷻ established the religion of Islam through the Arabs in the first instance. Then Allah ﷻ utilised many exemplary personalities from the non-Arabs to propagate Islam. It is related in the Hadith from the Prophet ﷺ: 'The Prophet ﷺ was asked about the verse of the Holy Qur'an: 'And others among them (Muslims) who have not yet joined them...' The Prophet ﷺ placed his blessed hands on the shoulder of Salman Farsi رضي الله عنه and said: 'If knowledge and religion went as far away as Suraya (the furthest star in the sky), then a man from them (Faris) will bring it back from there.' (Saheeh Bukhari, vol 2, p727/ Saheeh Muslim, vol 2, p312)

Shaykh Allamah Jalaludin Suyuti Shafi رحمه الله and others have (concluded) that the above mentioned Hadith refers to Imam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit رحمه الله. (Tafsir Uthmani, p733 printed in Madinah Munawwarrah)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه related from the Prophet ﷺ: 'If the religion went as far away as Suraya (the furthest star in the sky), then a man of Persian descent will attain it.' (Saheeh Muslim, vol 2, p312/ Saheeh Bukhari vol 2, p727)

It is a well known open truth that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was of Persian descent, through narration and historical references. Allah ﷻ has also blessed many personalities from Persian descent with a great understanding of the Deen (religion). The great status and positive attributes of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله have been recorded through the very testimony of great scholars of the past. It is for this reason that Allamah Jalaludin Suyuti Shafi رحمه الله indicated that without doubt, the verse of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith mentioned above refers to the person of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. Despite not being from the followers of the Hanifi Fiqh, he accepted this analogy. (Al Khairatul Hasaan, p13)

Hadhrat Shah WaliAllah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله writes: 'The man of Persian descent mentioned in the Hadith, can be no other than Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله.' (Izalatul Khafa, vol 1, p271)

Azhar bin Kaisan رحمه الله states: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream. Behind the Prophet ﷺ were Abu Bakr Siddique رضي الله عنه and Umar Farooq رضي الله عنه. I asked them (the Shaykain رضي الله عنهم), can I pose a question to the Prophet ﷺ? They said: 'Yes, but do not raise your voice.' I then proceeded to ask the Prophet ﷺ about the knowledge of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'His knowledge has come out from the knowledge of Sayyidina Khidr عليه السلام – (Ilm Ludni – guidance and knowledge from Allah ﷻ).' (Al Khairat ul Hasaan, p64)

Abu Ma'ani Al Fazl bin Khalid رحمه الله states: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream, I asked the Prophet ﷺ: 'What do you say about the knowledge of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله?' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'He has such knowledge for which people are needy.' (Al Khairat ul Hasaan, p65)

Allamah ibn Atheer Al Shafi رحمه الله (d:606H) stated: 'It is clear that the reality of the truth and acceptance of Allah ﷻ of the status of Imam Abu Hanifa's رحمه الله knowledge and Fiqh, is that there is a majority of followers (more than 70% of the Muslim Ummah) from the people of knowledge and others even to this day, who follow Imam Abu Hanifa's رحمه الله teachings.' (Jamiul Usool/ Mukadama Nisbur Raya, p39)

The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'That thing which the Muslims regards as good, is also considered good in the sight of Allah ﷻ' (Masnad Ahmed, vol 1, p626 / Adu Dawood Tiyalasi, p33)

The Status of Imam Azam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله in the Science of Hadith:

قال صالح بن محمد الأسدی عن يحيى ابن معين كان أبو حنيفة رحمه الله ثقة في الحديث (تهذيب التهذيب ج 10 ص 450/ جامع بيان العلم ج 1 ص 149) (أن الإمام ذكر في تصانيفه نيفا وسبعين ألف حديث) وانتجب أبو حنيفة رحمه الله الآثار من أربعين ألف أحاديث (مناقب موفق ج 1 ص 95/ الجواهر ج 2 ص 474)

The Birth of Imam Azam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit رحمه الله took place in 80 Hijri in the City of Kufah, Iraq. There were a number of Great Companions of the Prophet ﷺ living in Kufah at this time. Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله attained knowledge from many of the leading scholars of the Tabi'een. The greatness and lofty status of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله in the science of Fiqh is unanimous amongst the scholars of the Salaf.

In the introduction of Al Bayanul Azhar, great scholars are mentioned, amongst whom are: Imam ibn Abdul Bar, Allamah Khateeb Baghdadi, Allamah Zahabi, Hafiz Al Hadith ibn Hajar Al Asqalani رحمهم الله and others... They have mentioned that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله is a Tabi'ee as he had seen the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. There is no doubt in this regard as in respect of being a Sahabi or Tabi'ee the seeing of The Prophet ﷺ or the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم is sufficient. It is not a condition that one must also relate Hadith from them respectively. Verily, Imam Abu Hanifa Noman bin Thabit رحمه الله is a great Tabi'ee and in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah there are many verses and narrations referring to the greatness of these people. (Tazkira Muhaditheen, vol 1, p5)

Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Nadim رحمه الله states: Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله is from amongst the Tabi'een, as he met many Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. In his time he was known to be very careful in his practise of Islam and was also a great worshipper (Muttaqi & Zahid). (Ibn Nadim, vol 1, p298)

Allamah Zahabi رحمه الله (d:748H) writes: 'When Anas bin Malik رحمه الله (d:93H) came to Kufah, Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله met and sat in his company many times'. (Tazkiratul Huffaz, vol 1, p147/ Tehzeeb ut Tehzeeb, vol 10, p449)

Shaykhul Islam ibn Abdul Bar Al Maliki رحمه الله write: the well known authentic narrator of Hadith, Hammad ibn Zayd رحمه الله has narrated many Ahadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. (Al Intiqaa, p130)

Today, the envious and jealous amongst people are spreading a great lie in respect of Imam Abu Hanifa that he did not have access to Hadith. Some say that he did have access to Hadith but very few. How can it then be that a very respected narrator of Hadith such as Hammad ibn Zayd رحمه الله is able to narrate many Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله?

Shaykhul Islam ibn Abdul Bar Al Maliki رحمه الله states in respect of Imam Waqi' bin Al Jarrah رحمه الله: 'Waqi' bin Al Jarrah knew all the Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. He had heard many Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله'. (Jami' Al Bayanul Ilm, vol 2, p149)

Muhaddith ibn Adi رحمه الله (d:365H) writes: 'from the scholars of Fiqh, after Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله there was nobody who had more Hadith than Asad ibn Amr رحمه الله'. (Lisaaunul Mizaan, vol 1, p384)

It is well known that Imam Asad ibn Amr would collect many Ahadith. From the statement of ibn Adi رحمه الله it can be seen that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله had collected even more Ahadith than ibn Amr رحمه الله.

Imam Makki bin Ibrahim رحمه الله (d:215H) relates that he stayed in the company of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله and heard and learnt Hadith and Fiqh from him. He also states that he acquired many Hadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. (Tazkira, vol 1, p332)

Imam Makki bin Ibrahim رحمه الله was the teacher of Imam Bukhari رحمه الله (d:256). There are 22 narrations which are known as ثلاثيات 'Thalathiyat' (these are narrations which have only 3 narrators between The Prophet ﷺ and Imam Bukhari رحمه الله). 11 of these 22 have the name of Imam Makki bin Ibrahim رحمه الله in the chain of narrators. Imam Makki bin Ibrahim رحمه الله was a very well known scholar whom followed the Hanifi Fiqh.

Muhaddith Bashir bin Musa رحمه الله (d:288) states about their teacher Imam Abu Abdur Rahman Al Mukari رحمه الله (d:213): he heard 900 Ahadith from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. When Al Mukari رحمه الله would relate Hadith to us from Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, he would say: 'We heard from the king of kings from the science of Hadith...' (Tazkira, vol 2, p168 / Tarike Baghdad, vol 13, p345 / Manaqibe Karoori, vol 2, p216)

Hafiz Abu Naeem Asfahani رحمه الله narrates with an authentic chain in Masnade Abu Hanifa رحمه الله from Yahya bin Nasr رحمه الله: 'Yahya bin Nasr رحمه الله stated: I went into the house of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, it was filled with books. I asked about the contents of these books and Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله replied that they were books of Hadith. The Ahadiths that I am relating, I attained from there...' (Al Intiqa, p319)

Imam Mus'ar bin Kadam رحمه الله who was a very great memorizer of Hadith, stated: 'I was a seeker of knowledge in the same generation as Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. We attained the knowledge of Hadith and Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was the foremost of us in this respect. We then busied ourselves in worship and piety (asceticism) and Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was the foremost of us in this respect. When we started studying Fiqh you can see to what extent Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله excelled...' (Mankibe Zahabi, p27)

Hafiz Abu Muhammad رحمه الله has written in this work 'Usool-e-Hadith': 'When Imam Shu'ba رحمه الله and Imam Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله would have a difference of opinion in respect of a Hadith, they would say: "Let us take this to Mus'ar as he is the scale of Ahadith". It is well known that Imam Shu'ba رحمه الله and Imam Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله were given the title of Amir ul Mumineen fil Hadith. They would present their disputes to Imam Mus'ar bin Kadam رحمه الله, who himself

was an Imam of Hadith. Imam Mus'ar bin Kadam رحمه الله has stated that in every field of Islamic science he studied with Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, he would see Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله as a more accomplished master in that field.

The status and standing of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله in Hadith can only be understood and respected by one who is himself was a person of High Taqwah, a Hafiz of Hadith and a very knowledgeable scholar of Islam.

The well known Imam of Hadith and history, Hafiz Abu Sa'd Sumani رحمه الله writes: 'when Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله busied himself in Hadith, he undertook it in such a manner of depth and sacrifice that the knowledge he attained, others could not.' (Kitabul Ansaab, p196)

Imam Bakr bin Muhammad Zeranari رحمه الله stated: 'The extent of knowledge and collection which Imam Abu Hanifa held in Hadith can be understood from the first work of Hadith he compiled, Kitabul Athaar. In this compilation, Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله selected approximately 1,000 Ahadith from 40,000.' (Manaqibul Imamul Azam, vol1, p95)

Makki bin Ibrahim رحمه الله (d:215H) who was an Hadith teacher of Imam Bukhari رحمه الله said: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was one of piety, accustomed to worship, a great scholar of Islam, one who was desirous of the Hereafter, truthful in speech and the greatest Hafiz of Hadith in his time.' (Manaqibul Imamul Azam)

Note: Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik رحمه الله were very close to the time of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and he witnessed the end of their blessed generation. Imam Abu Hanifa was born in 80AH and died in 150AH and this makes him from amongst the Sahabah and Kubar-Tabi'een (great Tabi'een) time.

It should be understood that in the field of Hadith there are two chains through which Hadith is narrated, one is the Matan-e-Hadith, this is the original statement of the Prophet ﷺ i.e. what the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said'. The second is Sanad-e-Hadith which indicates the different chains from the teachers who taught this Hadith— i.e. chain indicating Hadith in the manner 'So and so heard from so and so' etc.

It was the practise of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله that what ever Islamic ruling he devised, he would support it with the most authentic as well as relative Hadith accessible. The Fatwa was then presented in front of 40 specialist muftis (who were considered leaders and jurists in their own fields) of that blessed time and only if there was no objection to the ruling or supporting Hadith would it be accepted as part of the Hanafi Fiqh. The rulings that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله wrote in his gatherings were accepted by all the great participating scholars and many issues were debated for days before reaching any conclusion. For this reason Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله used to state as a challenge to confirm his authenticity: 'If you find anything that is against my rulings from the authentic Hadith, leave my opinion.'

Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمه الله stated: 'I heard from Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله: "Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was extremely cautious in attaining knowledge. In the matter knowledge he was very fearful of Allah ﷻ. He would not accept even minor discrepancies. He only accepted those Hadith that reached him from authentic narrators and that were 'Saheeh' truly authentic. From amongst the Saheeh also, He would only narrate that which was the last action of the Prophet ﷺ. The foundation for it being the last action of the Prophet ﷺ was the evidence of the scholars of Kufah carrying out those actions (many Companions from Badr and Hudabiya: amongst whom were, Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Masood رضي الله عنه, Anas bin Malik رضي الله عنه etc were the scholars of Kufah. In the time of Abu Hanifa رحمه الله Kufah was the residing city of many great Sahabah رضي الله عنهم and was therefore also a centre of knowledge). Even so, without a valid reason, a group has criticised Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, may Allah ﷻ forgive us and them.' (Al Intiqa, p142)

From the Pious predecessors there were a great number of Scholars who would narrate Ahadith with extreme caution and fear of Allah ﷻ for being held to account for their speech, that they would also relate rulings from the Prophet ﷺ directly.... But not take the name of the Prophet ﷺ specifically; from amongst them, Sayyidina Umar رضي الله عنه, Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه, Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Masood رضي الله عنه and many other Sahabah رضي الله عنهم Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was also of this thought and practice.

In the time of Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik رحمه الله, there were very few Sanads of Hadith as the teachers where fewer, they learnt directly from the Tabi'een and Sahabah رضي الله عنهم. As more scholars taught students, the number of Sanads increased, but the Matan-e-Hadith remained the same. For example: In Bukhari, the first Hadith: 'the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Every action is according to its intention.' This is the Matan-e-Hadith. This same Hadith is repeated with slight variation more than 20 times by Imam Bukhari رحمه الله in his Sahih Bukhari through different teachers. This is Sanad-e-Hadith.

The people who insult Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله and belittle his rank and knowledge present very weak arguments to support their claims. When their arguments are scrutinised, it becomes clear that they are based on statements with chains of narrations, which the authentic scholars of Ahadith have classified as weak and worthless, whether or not these statements are attributed to Allamah Khateeb Baghdadi, Durul Qutani, Abu Nuaym رحمه الله.

Hafiz Ibn Jawzi Hanbali رحمه الله (d:597H) related through his chain of narration from Ismail bin Abul Fadl al Asbahani رحمه الله, who states: 'Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was of those who understood the Hadith in a superlative manner. I do not like 3 individuals due to their extreme prejudice and little justice is found in them: (1) Abu Abdullah Al Hakim رحمه الله, (2) Abu Nuaym Al Asbahani رحمه الله, (3) Abu Bakr Khateeb Baghdadi رحمه الله.' (Al Tazkira, vol 4, p131/ Al Muntazim, vol 8, p269)

Al Malik ul Mu'azam رحمه الله writes: 'I say Ismail bin Abul Fadl al Asbahani رحمه الله was a truthful and authentic Hafiz ul Hadeeth. He specialised in Sanad-e-Hadith and Matan-e-Hadith.' (As-Sahamul Museeba, p134)

In contemporary times there are two groups that seek to defame and lower the rank of Imam Abu Hanifa and other pious predecessors رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ. They spread lies and hate due to their ignorance and envy, one is the Rawafid (shi'a) and the other like them who do not accept the consensus of the Sahabah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, is the Ghair Muqalideen (so called Salafi & Ahle Hadith).

The scholars of Hadith have derived a few (Rijaal ul Hadith – research about the narrators) rulings by which to judge narrators of Ahadith. It is necessary to understand these rulings or the authenticity of a narrator of Hadith cannot be verified. It is an understood fact that even the greatest and most respected of Muhaditheen have had some objection directed towards their personality. For example: 'Yahya ibn Mu'een رَحْمَهُ اللهُ raised an objection about Imam Shafi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, Imam Karabesi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ raised an objection about Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, Imam Zehli رَحْمَهُ اللهُ raised an objection about Imam Bukhari رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, Imam Ahmed رَحْمَهُ اللهُ raised an objection against Imam Awzai رَحْمَهُ اللهُ... Darul Qutani رَحْمَهُ اللهُ has written in his books, *Al Istadarakat and Al Tatubbu'*, objections in respect of 200 narrations in Saheeh Bukhari and Muslim. Hafiz Iraqi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ has written on the works of *Saheeh Bukhari* and *Saheeh Muslim* in his books *Shara Al Fiya and Al Sharahul Kabeer*. (Qawaid Uloom Al Hadith, p 169)

If these objections were to be accepted then none of the Muhaditheen would be considered authentic and trustworthy in narration. To the extent that Ibn Hazam رَحْمَهُ اللهُ referred to Imam Tirmidhi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ and Imam Ibn Majah رَحْمَهُ اللهُ as 'Majhool' (not acceptable in any manner). There have also been incorrect claims made against the personality of Imam Nasai رَحْمَهُ اللهُ. Will the Ghair Muqalideen accept every one of the claims above? This in effect will mean that no Hadith collection can be accepted by them and they will be labelled as Munkare Hadith (to deny Ahadith).

A great scholar Rijaal ul Hadith Imam Yahya ibn Saeed Al Qattan رَحْمَهُ اللهُ was himself a student of Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ. Together with this, Hafiz Zahabe رَحْمَهُ اللهُ writes in *Tazkiratul Hufaaaz*, Hafiz ibn Abdul Bar رَحْمَهُ اللهُ writes in his book *Al Intiqa* stated that they used to give fatwa upon the rulings on Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ. (Dars Tirmidhi, p100)

Allamah Sindi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ writes in *Kitabul Taleem*, related the statement of Imam Yahya ibn Saeed Al Qattan رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, he said: 'Verily from the Ummah today, Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ understands the knowledge that was given to the Nabi ﷺ in the best manner. I swear by Allah, Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ is an authentic narrator.' (Dars Tirmidhi, vol1, p101)

The analogy of the groups that spreads lies and falsehood in respect of the Salaf as Saliheen is like the one who spits towards the skies.

An individual insulted Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ in the presence of Amir Ul Mumineen fil Hadith Abdullah bin Mubarak رَحْمَهُ اللهُ. Abdullah bin Mubarak رَحْمَهُ اللهُ rebuked him severely saying: 'I am astonished at you, you are disrespecting that individual who has read his five daily Salah within one ablution for 45 years. Every night, he has completed the entire recitation of the Holy Qur'an in two rakaats of prayer and everything that I have attained in the knowledge of Fiqh is from that very person, Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ.' (Baghdadi, vol 13, p355 / *Manaqib Mawfiq*, vol 1, p236 / *Tabyeedul Sahifa*, p35)

Shaykul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah رَحْمَهُ اللهُ writes: 'There are many issues of Fiqh upon which many people have differed with Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ. However, no one can doubt the greatness of Imam Abu Hanifa's رَحْمَهُ اللهُ status in Fiqh and knowledge. People have without reason sought to find fault with Imam Abu Hanifa, even implicating lies and fabricated information against his personality. For example: making of the wild pig Halal and the like of it.' (*Minhaaj Ul Sunnah*, vol 1, p259)

Amir Ul Mumineen fil Hadith Abdullah bin Mubarak رَحْمَهُ اللهُ states: 'Amongst the people, I have seen the greatest worshipper is Fudayhl bin Ayad رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, the most knowledgeable is Sufyan Thawri رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, and the greatest jurist is Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ.' (*Manaqibe Karoori*, vol 1, p90)

Imam Yazid bin Haroon رَحْمَهُ اللهُ (d:206H) relates: 'I wrote and attained knowledge from more than 1000 teachers, but by Allah, from all of my teachers, I have not seen one more God-Fearing and cautious of speech in spreading knowledge than Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ.' (*Manaqib Mawfiq*, vol 1, p195)

The well known Muhaddith Abu Muqatil Hafs bin Salam رَحْمَهُ اللهُ states in respect of Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ: 'In his time, Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ was the Imam of the World in the fields of Hadith, Fiqh and Taqwa. His life was an example for the Ummah to distinguish between the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat and the deviant sects. He was an individual of the Truth, despite the worldly persons who tried to influence him towards the World. However, Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ was not influenced by this, he was then lashed, due to which he departed this world for the next.' (*Akbar Abu Hanifa wa Asahabi*, p79)

قال الإمام عبد الله بن داود الخريبي رحمه الله: يجب على أهل الإسلام أن يدعوا الله لأبي حنيفة رحمه الله في صلواتهم قال وذكر حفظه عليهم السنن والفقهاء .
(تاريخ بغداد ج13 ص342/ البدايه والنهائيه ج10 ص107)

Allamah Abdullah bin Dawood Al Khareebi رَحْمَهُ اللهُ states: 'It is necessary for the Muslim Ummah that after their prayers (Salah) they make Du'a for Imam Abu Hanifa رَحْمَهُ اللهُ, as he has preserved and transmitted the Hadith and knowledge of Fiqh.' (*Tareekh Baghdad*, vol 13, p342/ *Al Bidayah wal Nihayah*, vol 10, p107)

The City of Kufah , Iraq:

نزل الكوفة الف وخمسون رجلا من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأربعة وعشرون من أهل بدر (كتاب الكنى والأسماء ج1 ص174)

After the wrongful martyrdom of the third khalifa, Sayyidina Uthman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (d:40H), the khilafat of Sayyidina Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ commenced. In the rule of Sayyidina Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, he had to face and combat many differences and disputes within the

Ummah. To ensure a firm political foundation for the Islamic state, Sayyidina Ali عليه السلام chose to move the Khalifat from Madinah Munawwarah to Kufah in Iraq. In that time, all the scholarly and judicial rulings originated from Kufah, which was regarded as the centre for knowledge of the Islamic empire. In this respect, Allamah Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله states: 'the knowledge and Fiqh of Sayyidina Ali عليه السلام became apparent and spread to the Ummah from the time he moved to Kufah.' (Minhaj Ul Sunnah, vol 4, p137/ Hujjatullahi Baligha, vol 1, p132)

It should be remembered that knowledge had reached Kufah become the arrival of Sayyidina Ali عليه السلام, Kufah was an established centre of teaching religious knowledge.

The city of Kufah was established in the time of the Khilafat of Sayyidina Umar عليه السلام, Sayyidina Abdullah bin Masood عليه السلام was sent by Sayyidina Umar عليه السلام to teach the people, the Holy Qur'an, Iman Aqidah, Tafsir, Fiqh and Sunnah. Kufah was the centre of Khilafat in the time of Sayyidina Ali عليه السلام. (Minhaj Ul Sunnah, vol 4, p142)

Apart from these major Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, there was many other Sahabah & Tabi'een who resided in Kufah. Allamah Ibn Sa'd رحمه الله (d:230H) who were a Hafiz of Hadith and a great scholar writes: '70 great Sahabah عليه السلام from Badr and 300 participants of the pledge of Hudaibiya resided in Kufah'. (Tabakat ibn Sa'd, vol 6, p4)

The well known Tabi'een, Qatadah رحمه الله (d:118) relates: 'from amongst the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ 1050 resided in Kufah'. (Kitabul Kuna wal Asma, vol 1, p174)

There was a time in Islamic history when Kufah was the centre of the Islamic empire as well as the centre of knowledge. How can an individual doubt the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the door.'

Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمه الله stated: 'I heard from Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله: "Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was extremely cautious in attaining knowledge. He would not accept even minor discrepancies. He only accepted those Hadith that reached him from authentic narrators and that were 'Saheeh' truly authentic. From amongst the Sahih also, he would only narrate that which was the last action of the Prophet ﷺ. The foundation for it being the last action of the Prophet ﷺ was the evidence of the scholars of Kufah carrying out those actions (many Companions from Badr and Hudaibiya: amongst whom were, Sayyidina Ali عليه السلام, Abdullah bin Masood عليه السلام, Anas bin Malik عليه السلام etc were the scholars of Kufah. In the time of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله Kufah was the residing city of many great Sahaba عليه السلام and was therefore also a centre of knowledge). Even so, without a valid reason, a group has criticised Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, may Allah ﷻ forgive us and them.' (Al Intiqah, p142)

It is understood from the statement of Imam Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله that Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله was very particular about whom he would take Hadith from and he (Sufyan Thawri) saw those that criticised and insulted Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله as sinners.

Imam Abdullah bin Ahmed رحمه الله (d:290H) asked his father Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله: 'Should I stay in the company of one teacher, or travel to various scholars to attain knowlesge?' Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله replied: 'Travel... to scholars of Kufah, Basra, Madinah, Makkah for seeking knowledge.' (Tadaribur Rawi, p77/ Fathul Mugeth, p321)

Muhammad bin Sireen رحمه الله (d:110), a well known Tabi'een stated: 'When I arrived in Kufah, there were 4000 students of Hadith in the City.' (Tadareebur Rawi, p275)

Imam Bukhari رحمه الله travelled to many cities and provinces in the Islamic state for the seeking of knowledge. However, he travelled frequently to Kufah and Baghdad. Imam Bukhari رحمه الله himself stated: 'I travelled a countless number of times with the scholars of Hadith to Baghdad and Kufah.' (Fathul Bari Sharah Bukhari, vol 2, p479)

Imam Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat, Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله mentioned four specific cities to his son for his seeking of knowledge. Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله mentioned the name of Kufah preceding even Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah.

The Implication of Being a Man of Analogy أهل الزاى:

In this age, there is a new group amongst the Muslims known as Ghair Muqalideen (so called Salafi & Ahle Hadith). The thought and concern of this group has been shown to be staunchly against the Salaf-us-Saliheen, to the extent that they do not tread cautiously even when speaking of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. It can be said that they are like a small Rawafid Shi'a minded group in this respect. There are numerous rulings and matters wherein which, the Sahabah عليه السلام and scholars of the Ummah are unanimous. The Ghair Muqalideen would take it as an act of worship to go against the Ijma of the Sahabah عليه السلام and scholars of the Ummah رحمهم الله. Their claim that they respect and follow the Salaf-us-Saliheen is nothing but a deception to the masses.

The main complaint that they have in respect of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله and his students is that he is referred to as a man of analogy. There are incidents in the books of scholars, where Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله is referred to as a man of (Rai'y) analogy. The intention of the scholars who gave him this title was out of respect. However, the Ghair Muqalideen have manipulated this view and used it to stain the character of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله.

For this reason, it is necessary to correctly use the term 'a man of analogy' from those qualified in the field of Holy Qur'an, Hadith and Fiqh.

Allamah Ibn Atheer Al Jazari Al Shafi رحمه الله (d:606H) stated: 'For the scholars of Hadith, a man of analogy is taken to mean 'an individual who uses his intellect and depth of knowledge to derive benefit and rulings from Hadith which a

layman or one not as skilled as him in Islamic knowledge would be able to do'. (Nihaya, vol 2, p179 /Mukadama Tahwfatul Ahwazi, vol 1, p206)

Shaykhul Islam Allamah Shabir Ahmed Uthmani رحمه الله (d:1369H) stated: 'Analogy means to see things with the internal 'eye' of the heart and for the thought and intellect to delve deep into a matter.' (Fathul Mulhim, p72)

The Faqih and Alim of Madinah Munawwarah from amongst the Tabi'een was known by the very name 'Rabiha tul Rai'y' (Rabiha the one of analogy). Hafiz Zahabi رحمه الله writes: 'He was an Imam, Mujtahid, Hafiz ul Hadith, Faqih and a master of Analogy... for this reason he was known as Rabiha tul Rai'y رحمه الله.' (Tazkira, vol 1, p148)

To this extent, the Ghair Muqalideen have allowed their staunchness to prevent them from reflecting on the Sahih Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ. It is related from Sayyidina Mu'awiya رحمه الله and Ibn Abbas رحمه الله that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'The one for whom Allah ﷻ desires good, He ﷻ grants him understanding of Deen'. (Saheeh Bukhari # 71)

Abdullah bin Mas'ud رحمه الله narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: 'When Allah ﷻ intends favour of a slave, gives him clear understanding of Deen, and inspires him His guidance and wisdom'. (Majma'al Zawaid, vol 1, p327)

This very 'understanding of Deen is referred to as Rai'y, Analogy. There are many incidents in which the Sahabah ﷺ utilised their analogy to deduce rulings and verdicts in the absence of the Prophet ﷺ. When the Companions would reach Madinah Munawwarah they would seek clarification from the Prophet ﷺ as to their analogy. For example: the performance of Tayamum in the absence of water in order to pray, to not pray Asr until the conquest of Khaibar etc... would this type of analogy of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ also be treated as incorrect and a deviation? It is a fact that when the Companions ﷺ narrated their analytical analogies to the Prophet ﷺ, he ﷺ neither reprimanded them or advised them against doing such. Would the Ghair Muqalideen refer to this concurring of the Prophet ﷺ in the same manner that they criticise Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله?

Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله and his students were amongst the most knowledgeable from amongst the people of knowledge in their generation. It is for this reason that the scholars of their generation would refer to them as 'people of analogy', out of respect of their understanding of Deen.

The well respected scholar of Islamic history Allamah ibn Khuldum رحمه الله stated: 'The status of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله is so elevated in the field of Fiqh, that no other scholar is akin to him. The proof for this is that the people of knowledge of his generation accepted his greatness in Fiqh; in particular Imam Malik رحمه الله and Imam Shafi رحمه الله'. (Mukadama Ibn Khuldum, p447)

Just as, the Nabi ﷺ stated: 'The virtue of the virtuous can only be realised by the virtuous'. (Kanzul Amar #37318)

Yazid bin Haroon رحمه الله stated: 'The sayings of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله can only be understood and respected by those with deep Islamic knowledge'. (Manakib Mawfiq, vol 2. p48)

Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Nadim رحمه الله (d:385H) writes: 'Knowledge, whether it be on the land or the sea, in the East or the West, near or far... Wherever it has reached, it is due to the efforts and sacrifice of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله.' (Introduction of Ibn Nadim, p299)

From the Men of Hadith, Amir ul Mumineen fil Hadith Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمه الله is the only one who is free from criticism. There are even those who voiced criticism of the likes of Imam Bukhari رحمه الله. Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمه الله travelled extensively to seek knowledge and attain Hadith, when he reached the gatherings of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله in Kufah, he stayed in his company until the passing of Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله.

Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمه الله states: 'From amongst the people, the greatest Faqih (jurist) is Imam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله. I have not seen anyone like him. If Allah ﷻ did not bless me through the knowledge attained from Abu Hanifa and Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله, I would be like the general masses.' (Tetheebul Thetheeb, vol 1, p50)

Concisely, after researching the Holy Qur'an and collections of Hadith, there are only two conditions upon which the proclamation of war has been threatened by Allah ﷻ Himself. (1) The consumption and dealing with interest. (2) Saheeh Bukhari: The ones who trouble the pious servants of Allah ﷻ (Awliya)

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ ان الله ﷻ قال من عادى لي ولياً فقد آذنته بالحرب (صحيح بخارى كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع/ درمنثور جلد 4 صفحه 189)

Hafiz Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله states in respect of the Awliya: 'However many narrations there are present in the Ahadith with respect to the Awliya, the Hadith in Saheeh Bukhari is the most correct and authentic.'

It should be borne in mind that repentance should be made before the time of death seeking the Mercy of Allah ﷻ for our wrongs and transgressions against ourselves.

May Allah ﷻ grant us the correct understanding of the Deen. آمين Ameen!

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبيل الخير والسلام .

مفتى محمد يوسف دنكا (عفا الله عنه)

Mufti Muhammad Yusuf Danka

Croydon Masjid & Islamic Centre

01- Muharram- 1431/ 18- December- 2009