

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A short summary of

The Biography of Imām 'Aẓam Abū Ḥanīfah Raḥimahullah

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (150 A.H/767 A.D) is a well known *Mujtahid*<sup>1</sup> born in the year 80 A.H. (689 A.D.). He is known as «The Greatest Imām» (*al-Imam al-A'zam*) and is the first of the four Mujtahid Imāms and the only successor (*tābi'ī*) amongst them. He was born into a family of tradesmen in the city of Kūfa in 'Irāq.

Although Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was born in Kūfa, he was originally from Persian origin. It was first his grandfather named 'Zawta' who, after accepting Islām in Persia at the time of Ali *RadhiAllahuAnh's* Caliphate, came and settled in Kūfa. After settling in Kūfa, his grandfather 'Zawta' changed his name to 'No'man'.<sup>2</sup> He (i.e. Abu Hanīfah's grandfather) then later had a son named Thābit. Thābit was the father of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. He named Imām Abū Ḥanīfah 'No'man', identical to the name of his father. Al-Khatib al-Baghdādi records a statement from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's grandson, Isma'īl bin Ḥammād, who gave Abū Ḥanīfah's lineage as 'Thabit bin No'mān bin Marzuban' and claiming to be of Persian origin.

Umar *RadhiAllahuAnh* has said regarding Kūfa, that it is the 'treasure house' of Imān. All the Mufasssireen, Muhadditheen, and Fuqahā were based in Kūfa. The year Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was born was the year in which many ṣaḥābah were passing away. It's even said that the grandfather of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, No'mān, took him to Ali *RadhiAllahuAnh* and asked him to make dua for Abū Hanīfah.<sup>3</sup>

## 'Abu Hanīfah'

There is a widespread belief that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had become famous by the title 'Abū Ḥanīfah' simply because he had a daughter named 'Hanifah', that he once faced difficulty solving an issue that he was presented with and it was his daughter 'Hanifah' who promised to give him the answer to the issue if he agreed to adopt her name in his title - and which after agreeing and receiving the answer - he titled himself that. However, this is a mere fabrication and has no basis. In fact, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah did not have any daughter named 'Hanifah', he only had one son named 'Ḥammād'<sup>4</sup> who he named after his teacher

---

<sup>1</sup>A mujtahid is a scholar who is qualified enough to perform ijtihād. When rulings do not directly appear in the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth, juridical analogy (*qiyās*) is done after going through several Ahadīth and pre-existing rulings. This process is known as ijtihād.

<sup>2</sup> *Seerat Aimma Arba'a*; Maulana Qāzi Athar Mubārakpūri; Pg. 31

<sup>3</sup> *Tarīkh Baghdād*; Khatīb Abū Bakr al-Baghdādi; V. 13; Pg. 327

<sup>4</sup> al-Khatīb; *Tarīkh Baghdād*; V. 13; Pg. 329

'Ḥammād bin Abi Sulaymān'. In reality the reason why he became famous with the title 'Abu Hanīfah' is because 'Hanīfah' refers to the upright monotheistic religion, which is mentioned in the Qurān <sup>5</sup> and 'Abu Hanīfah would mean someone who stays steadfast on the truth and orthodoxy. He was seen as one who was in the forefront in being the leading scholar in the legislative laws of faith.<sup>6</sup>

## "Ajami'

The 'Arabs have termed all Non-'Arabs as "Ajamis' meaning those who are 'dumber' compared to the 'Arabs since they don't know the Arabic language. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was also a non-'Arab. He was neither from the offspring of Rasūlullāh ﷺ nor was his lineage originally Muslim. In fact, he wasn't a Siddīqi, Fārūqi, Uthmāni, or an 'Alawi. Despite all this, and being a Non-Arab, today the majority of the Muslims have chosen Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as their *imām* and most decisions and laws are given according to the Hanafi Law.<sup>7</sup>

## Early years of learning

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was first recognized as someone who would grow to reach high heights when Imām Sha'bi saw him. Imām Sha'bi was from amongst the scholars of Kūfa. When he saw Imām Abū Ḥanīfah - and at that time Imām Abū Ḥanīfah wasn't attending any religious class - Imam Sh'abi felt as though he appeared as someone who had the potential to grow into such a personality that would benefit the ummah. That's when he was first encouraged to start attending a class. Therefore, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah enrolled in the classes of Imām Hammād bin Abi Sulaymān *Rahimahullah* (d.120 A.H./738 C.E.) thus, Imām Hammād was from whom he attained the initial stages of his knowledge from. The predominance of fiqh in the career of Abū Ḥanīfah seems to be emphasized by the source whereas his interest in theology was curiously, but repeatedly played down. In various places Abu Hanifah is quoted to have said that after a period of complete immersion in theology, he realised that it had adverse effects and was of little use. Therefore he shifted his interest to jurisprudence (*fiqh*). He stayed and learned with Imām Hammād for 18 years.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The plural of 'Hanīf' is 'Hunafa'. Both forms have come in the Qur'ān, see Qur'ān 22:31, 2:135, 3:95.

<sup>6</sup> Mahammad Zakariyyah al-Kandhalawi *'Awjaz al-Masalik ila Muwatta Malik'*, V.1; Pg.176

<sup>7</sup> *Four Illustrious Imams*; Maulana Makbool Ahmed Saharwi; Pg. 20

<sup>8</sup> al-Khatīb; *Tarīkh Baghdād*; V. 13; Pg. 334

He had a lot of respect for Imām Hammād *Rahimahullah* and his other *mashaikh*. It's mentioned about Imām A'zam that he had so much respect for Imām Hammād that he never established any learning center during the lifetime of Imām Hammād *Rahimahullah*. Never did Imām Abū Ḥanīfah even stretch his legs towards the house of Imam Ḥammād. It was only after the demise of his teacher, when Imām Abū Ḥanīfah established a madrasah where people would flock towards in thousands. People would come to learn from him from Damascus, Basra, Yemen, Baghdād, Misr and many other places. <sup>9</sup>

## Towards Haramāin

After learning with Imām Hammād in Kūfa, he did not confine himself there rather he also went out to Basra and Haramain to further his studies. When Imām Abū Ḥanīfah heard that 'Atā bin Abi Rabāh *Rahimahullah* (d. 117 A.H./735 C.E) has met 200 ṣaḥābah,<sup>10</sup> he went to Mecca with the intention of studying under him. 'Atā *Rahimahullah* respected Imām Abū Ḥanīfah so much that he would ask other students of his to stand up and make space for Imām Abū Ḥanīfah to sit. Another person who was present in Mecca when Imām Abū Ḥanīfah went there and from whom Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was very fortunate to learn from was 'Ikramah *RadhiAllahuAnh*.<sup>11</sup>

Then Imām Abū Ḥanīfah went to Madinah al-Munawwarah and obtained two sanads from there. One from Sulaymān *Rahimahullah*,<sup>12</sup> and the other from Sālim *Rahimahullah*.<sup>13</sup> In Madīnah there were seven senior 'ulamah but when Imām A'zam *Rahimahullah* went there, these two were the only remaining senior scholars of Madīnah hence why he was able to acquire the sands of only these two senior scholars. Imam Abu Hanīfah also learned from Imām Bāqir and Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq who hailed from the family of Prophet <sup>14</sup> ﷺ

---

<sup>9</sup> *Four Illustrious Imams*; Pg 29

<sup>10</sup> *Tahzīb al-Tahzīb*; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalāni; V7; Pg. 200

<sup>11</sup> The slave of Abd Allah bin 'Abbās and cousin of Rasulullah.

<sup>12</sup> It's been said that he was the slave of Maimoonah, wife of prophet, *RadhiAllahuAnha*.

<sup>13</sup> The grandson of Umar *RadhiAllahuAnh*

<sup>14</sup> *Four Illustrious Imams*; Pg 25

## His *mashaikh*

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah also received sanads from many other 'ulamah as well. Although it's more well-known about him that he acquired all of his knowledge almost entirely from Basra, Kūfa and Haramain, some do say that he traveled to other cities for the purpose of gaining knowledge. His teachers approximately numbered 4000.<sup>15</sup> One of his teachers was 'Amr bin Shurahbīl *Rahimahullah* who had met 500 ṣaḥābah<sup>16</sup> and as mentioned previously, 'Atā bin Abi Rabah was another prominent teacher of his who had met 200 ṣaḥābah. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had also learned from Imām Malik *Rahimahullah* who, in fact, was 13-15 years younger than him. Despite him being younger, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah sat in his classes and learned from him.<sup>17</sup>

## He *Rahimahullah* was a successor (*Tabi'ī*)

The year 80 A.H. was the year in which many ṣaḥābah were passing away. Some are of the opinion that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had met a group of the ṣaḥābah. Imam Abu Ma'shar Abd al-Karīm bin Abd al-Samad al-Tabrī al-Muqri al-Shafī has narrated that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has said: «I have met seven companions of Rasullullah ﷺ and they are: 1) Anas bin Mālik 2) Abd Allah bin Juz al-Juzaydī 3) Jābir bin Abd Allah 4) Ma'qal bin Yasār 5) Wāthila bin Asqa' 6) A'ysha bint 'Umar and 7) Abd Allah bin Unais *RadhiAllahuAnhum.*» On the other hand, Hamza al-Sahmī says: I heard Dār Qutnī saying: «Imām Abū Ḥanīfah did not meet anyone from the ṣaḥābah except that he had only seen Anas bin Mālik and not heard (him narrating) anything.»<sup>18</sup>

'Allāma Jalalud Dīn al-Suyūti *Rahimahullah* has said: "This question [of Abu Hanīfah being a Tabi'ī] was raised to Hāfiz Ibn Hajar *Rahimahullah* and he replied saying, "Imām Abū Ḥanīfah lived at the time of a group of Ṣaḥābah, as he was born in Kūfah in the year 80 A.H., and at that time 'Abd Allah ibn Abi 'Awfa resided therein, since he died after that by agreement; and in Basra at that time there was Anas bin Mālik who died in the year 90 A.H. or thereafter."

---

<sup>15</sup> *Uqūd al-Jamān fi Manāqibi Abi Hanīfah No'mān*; Muhammad bin Yusuf Sālihi; Pg. 183

<sup>16</sup> *Tazkiratul Huffāz*; al-Dhahabī; Pg. 79-81

<sup>17</sup> *Four Illustrious Imams*; Pg. 28

<sup>18</sup> *Tabyīdh al-Sahīfah*; Jalālud Dīn al-Suyūti; Pg. 13

"Ibn Sa'd narrated with an unproblematic chain that Abu Hanifah *Rahimahullah* Anas bin Malik *RadhiAllahuAnh*. Other Şahābah besides these two were alive in the lands [of Islām] after this." <sup>19</sup>

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has numerous narrations that reach a companion of Rasulullah ﷺ however, the chains are not free from weakness (*dhaif*). The majority of scholars are of the opinion that by seeing a sahabi alone, a person will be considered as a tabi'ī, and it's not necessary for him to spend a long time with the sahabi. Due to this, Imam A'zam will be considered a tab'ī since he had seen many şahābah, however there are differences whether he has narrated from them or not. In conclusion, the scholars have unanimously agreed that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has seen Anas bin Mālik *RadhiAllahuAnh*.

During Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's time, there were many '*ulamah* that were contemporary to him like: Imām Awza'ī who was present in Syria, Imām Hammād who was present in Basra, Sufyān al-Thawrī who was present in Kūfa, and Imām Mālik bin Anas who was present in Madīnah. However, none of these '*ulamah* had the opportunity of seeing any of the şahābah and therefore earning the title of a Tabi'ī the way Imām Abū Ḥanīfah did. <sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah holds the status of being a Tabi'ī. In this regard, I feel it's worth mentioning the the reason why we emphasis on this point and repeatedly say that he's a Tabi'ī and use this to support his authenticity and credibility is because of the blessed saying of Nabi ﷺ: "The best people are (the people of) my era, then those who come after, then those who come after" and Abu Hanifah falls under the second category of this hadith. Rasulullah then further mentions that after these three eras, falsehood and deception will become so apparent that people will start giving false evidence. <sup>21</sup>

## Owning a Business

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Pg 15

<sup>20</sup> *Uqūd al-Jamān*; Pg. 49-50

<sup>21</sup> Sunan Abi Dawūd

Since the time of his grandfather, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's family owned a business of silk - which made millions. After his father, the business was left at the hands of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. It was a factory in Kūfa where thousands of yards of silk was prepared and yearly exported to Persia, Arabia, and Syria. He had many agents working for him and running his business as well. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was such that he abstained from interest so much that even when he had a credit balance with someone he wouldn't try to benefit from them in anyway from the fear that it may come under the roof of interest. Once Imām Abū Ḥanīfah happened to be out on a hot day when someone told him to take shade under the shade of someone's home. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah refused saying that the person had a credit balance with him and if he were to take benefit from the shade of the house, on the day of Qiyāmah, he would have to answer for this act of his that might be construed as interest (*ribā*).

Once a lady offered Imām Abū Ḥanīfah some cloth for 100 dirhams. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah enlightened her that the cloth was worth 500 dirhams not 100 and purchased it from her in that amount. Another example of his piety and cautiousness in his business is when he once informed one of his agents that used to sell cloth for him that a certain consignment of cloth had a flaw in it and that he should inform the buyer of the flaw before selling it. It so happened that the agent forgot to inform the buyer of the flaw and therefore sold it. When Imām Abū Ḥanīfah became aware of this, he was so saddened that he gave all the money he received from that cloth into charity.

## Respect for his mother

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's father passed away when Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was in his youth but his mother remained alive. His mother was very attached to one specific scholar and referred to him for every issue she faced instead of referring to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. Despite this, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah would take his mother to that scholar and ask him to give answers to her questions. The scholar would often feel shy answering in the presence of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as he was well aware of the great knowledge Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had. Many a time, it so happened that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah would explain to the scholar what the answer to the issue should be, and thereafter take his answer to his mother telling her that this was what the scholar had answered.

## Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's piety

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah neither harmed nor deceived anyone. He was someone who was not only generous with his wealth, but with his knowledge as well. He had such a personality that he never asked anyone for a favour. He was someone who would never speak ill of anyone, not even his enemies. He either spoke good or remained silent. He had the ability to explain things well and make it so simple that the listener was able to easily understand and have his questions and doubts clarified.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had so much fear of Allah ﷻ that whenever the Qur'an was prayed, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah would tremble upon hearing about Allah ﷻ's wrath and punishment. He would constantly be engaged in worship or spreading knowledge. From Isha to Fajr he would engage himself in worship (*'ibādah*) and worship. He would pray night prayers (*tahajjud*) and voluntary prayers (*nawāfil*) and would complete one Qur'an every day. However some scholars say he would complete the recitation of a whole Qur'an in three days. Ibrahim ibn Rustam al-Marwazi says, I heard Khārija bin Mus'ab saying: "Four are the Imams that recited the entire Qur'an in a single rak'a: `Uthman ibn `Affān, Tamim al-Dāri, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, and Abū Ḥanīfah.»<sup>22</sup> This nocturnal habit of being engaged in worship the whole night and praying Fajr with the wudhu of 'Isha remained for 30 years.<sup>23</sup> although some say he did this for 40 years, the former opinion is more well-known. Nevertheless, despite him being occupied with teaching and trade, this was Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's measure of worship. From Fajr to Zuhr he would teach his classes and thereafter take a short nap if it were the Summer months. He would then resume his teaching after Asr. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah would spend the remaining time visiting the sick and helping out the poor.

## Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's wisdom<sup>24</sup>

Once a husband came to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and wanted to solve an issue he was facing. He told Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that he got angry and took an oath that he would not speak to his wife until and unless she speaks to him. The wife also happened to be very hot tempered and also takes an oath that she won't speak to him until and unless he speaks to her. After a while they began regretting their promises and the husband then first goes to Sufyaan Thawri *Rahimahullah* who tells him that he must pay *kaffārah* (atonement) in order to be able to break his promise and speak to his wife. The man was grieved and came to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah to find a

---

<sup>22</sup> al-Khatīb; Tarīkh al-Baghdād; Pg. 355

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.,Pg. 353

<sup>24</sup> Refer to 'The Wisdom of Abu Haneefa' by Maulana Ahmad Ali

solution for his difficulty. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah told the man to go and speak to his wife as he no longer has to pay kaffarah. When this answer of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah reached Sufyaan Thawri *Rahimahullah*, he got angry at Imām Abū Ḥanīfah for giving the 'wrong' fatwa. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah explained that when the wife replied, 'I will also not speak to you until you speak first', she already spoke to her husband. It is now permissible for the husband to speak to his wife as he had taken oath to not talk to his wife 'unless' she speaks with him, and her reply was her speaking to him.<sup>25</sup>

A Christian king once sent a person to Baghdad to ask the Muslims three questions with the intention of befuddling them and confusing them about their religion Islām. The Caliph of that time gathered the best scholars of Baghdad and allowed the Christian to propose his questions. The Christian then climbed up the pulpit and asked three questions. His first question was, "Who was there before Allah ﷻ?" Second question was, "Which direction is Allah ﷻ facing right now? And third question was, "What is Allah ﷻ doing right now?" The scholars were left puzzled upon hearing these questions. Amongst them at that time, was little Imām Abū Ḥanīfah with his father. He asked his father to let him answer the questions. After getting permission from the Caliph, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was allowed to answer the questions. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said, "As for your first question, who was there before Allah ﷻ, are you able to count backwards?" The Christian replied saying yes. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah told him to count backwards and so he did. "4...3...2...1..." he counted and then stopped. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah asked him, "Why did you stop? What's before 1?". He replied saying: "There is nothing before 1". Imām Abū Ḥanīfah thereafter told him, "If there is nothing before the metaphorical one, then how can there be something before the real ONE?". Then Imām Abū Ḥanīfah continued to his second question saying: "As for you second question, which direction is Allah ﷻ facing right now, you tell me which direction does a candle light up when you light it up?". He replied saying, "no particular direction, all around it". Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said: "Then if the metaphorical light (candle) brightens up all around it, then what do you think about the light of all lights (Allah ﷻ)?"<sup>26</sup> and as for your third question, "What is Allah ﷻ doing right now, in order for me to answer this question, you must come down and let me climb up the pulpit as you are the questioner and I am the being questioned". The Christian came down and let Imām Abū Ḥanīfah climb up after which he said, "What Allah ﷻ is doing right now is, he's

---

<sup>25</sup> The Wisdom of Abu Haneefah ; Maulana Ahmad Ali ; Pg.

<sup>26</sup> Meaning that Allah ﷻ is not facing any particular direction and lightens up all around him through his noor.

making the one who's on *haqq* (truth) go up and the one who's on *baatil* (falsehood) to come down. This is what Allah ﷻ is doing right now".<sup>27/28</sup>

## His students

Just like the number of his teachers, his students also totaled to 4000. From amongst his students, Imām Abu Yusuf and Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Shaybāni were from among his most distinguished students. Imam Abu Yūsuf later went on to becoming the supreme *Qazī* (judge) of the '*Abbasi Caliphate*. Imām Waqī' was also one of his students and later become the teacher to the authors of *Sihāh Sitta*.<sup>29</sup> Imām al-Dhahabi has mentioned his six main teachers in hadīth, of which one is Abu Hanīfah.<sup>30</sup> Imām al-Bukhāri has narrated eleven of his *tulāthiyyāt* from Imam Makki bin Ibrahīm Balkhi (d. 215 A.H.) who had Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as one of his teachers in Hadīth and all the great Muhaddithīn have agreed upon his authenticity.<sup>31</sup>

## Dreams

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah once saw himself in his dream digging the grave of Rasulullah ﷺ and collecting his blessed bones. Someone asked Ibn al-Sirīn about the interpretation of this dream and in reply he answered saying: "Whoever saw this dream will make knowledge so apparent that none other before him has ever done."<sup>32</sup>

'Ali bin 'Uthman Hajveri Lahōri *Rahimahullah* was a staunch Hanafi of the leading awliyā of the Indian subcontinent. He once fell asleep in the tomb of Bilāl *RadhiAllahuAnh* when he was in Damascus and saw an interesting dream. He says he saw himself in Makkah and saw Rasulullah ﷺ entering from the gate of Banū

---

<sup>27</sup> Meaning every motion that is occurring right now, is happening as a result of Allah ﷻ's doings. If Allah ﷻ doesn't do this, no movement could take place and we would have all perished.

<sup>28</sup> The Wisdom of Abu Haneefah ; Pg. 11

<sup>29</sup> Uqūdul al-Jamān Pg 88-158

<sup>30</sup> Tazkiratul huffāz; V.1; Pg. 268

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Pg. 268

<sup>32</sup> al-Khatīb; Tarīkh Baghdād V. 13; Pg. 335

Shaybah. He saw that Rasulullah ﷺ takes a man in his lap just as an elder takes a child in his lap. He (i.e. 'Ali bin 'Uthmān) then runs towards Rasulullah ﷺ and starts kissing his hands and feet. Rasulullah ﷺ knew that he wished to know who the man in his lap was so Rasulullah ﷺ informed him that it was 'Ali bin Uthmān's Imām and the Imām of the ummah, namely Imām Azam Abu Hanīfah *Rahimahullah*.<sup>33</sup>

## Glad tidings from The Ahādīth

Abu Hurayrah *RadhiAllahuAnh* reports that Rasulullah ﷺ says: «If the dīn were at the Pleiades, even then a person from Persia would have taken hold of it.» or «one amongst the Persian descent would have surely found it.»<sup>34</sup>

'Allama Jalālud al-Dīn Suyūti *Rahimahullah* reports from muhadditheen like Imām Bukhari and Muslim that these ahādīth refer to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *Rahimahullah*. One of Imām Suyuti's students writes that this statement of his teacher is absolutely true since no other person of Persia has reached the heights of knowledge that Imām A'zam has reached. Shah Waliullah muhaddith Dehlavi also says that the ahādīth refer to none other than Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *Rahimahullah* Imāmul Hadīth Hadhrat Mis'ar bin Qudām<sup>35</sup> says, «I'm sure that a person has nothing to fear if he places Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as a median between himself and Allah ﷻ and follows his madhhab.»<sup>36</sup>

## His final moments

During the initial stages of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's life, the Umayyad dynasty was in rule. The Umayyads, namely Ibn Hubayra, the governor of Marwān in 'Iraq, asked Abu Hanīfah to serve as a judge (*qāzi*) when the civil war broke out in 749 C.E.<sup>37</sup> Abu Hanīfah refused and when he heard that the governor intended to execute him,

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Pg. 335

<sup>34</sup> Sahīh al-Muslim

<sup>35</sup> Hadhrat Mis'ar bin Qudām was the teacher of Sufyān Thawri, Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah, and the teachers of the compilers of the Sihāh Sittah. Despite all this, he was from amongst the students of Imām A'zam Abu Hanīfah *Rahimahullah*.

<sup>36</sup> al-Khatīb; *Tarīkh Baghdād*; V. 13; Pg. 339

<sup>37</sup> *Manaqib of Imam Abū Hanīfa*; Imam Muwaffaq bin Ahmad al-Makki; II, Pg. 22ff. Another version suggests that the post offered to him was the Chancellor of the Iraqi treasury (*bayt al-mal*) Ibid.

he, eventually, escaped to Mecca. Abu Hanifa stayed in Mecca until the establishment of the 'Abbasids in 750 C.E.<sup>38</sup> The head of the Abbasid monarch, Abu Ja'far al-Mansūr, exerted pressure on Abu Hanīfah to accept the post of Chief Judge of the State, but he declined the offer and said he was 'unworthy of the position'. In reality, Abū Ḥanīfah was against the system of the government and the way in which the 'Abbasids came into power but he didn't want to collaborate with the corrupt therefore, he used this statement as an excuse to avoid taking part in the government. This refusal of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah angered the caliphate so he had Abū Ḥanīfah arrested, locked in prison and tortured. He was never fed nor cared for. He suffered such severe whips that the lashes left impressions on his body and as a result, he passed away. Some are of the famous opinion that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah was poisoned to death. When he felt the poison in his body, he started praying and, in a prostrating position, breathed his last<sup>39</sup> In year 150 A.H. in Baghdād at the age of 70.<sup>40</sup> He is buried in the cemetery of Khayzurān<sup>41</sup> and his grave is well known and frequently visited.<sup>42</sup>

Sufyan al-Thawri praised Abū Ḥanīfah when he said: "We were in front of Abū Ḥanīfah like small birds in front of the falcon," and Sufyān stood up for him when Abū Ḥanīfah visited him after his brother's death, and he said: "This man holds a high rank in knowledge, and if I did not stand up for his science I would stand up for his age, and if not for his age then for his Godwariness (wara`), and if not for his Godwariness then for his jurisprudence (fiqh)."<sup>43</sup> Ibn al-Mubarak praised Abu Hanifah and called him a sign of Allah ﷻ . Both Ibn al-Mubarak and Sufyan al-Thawri said: "Abu Hanifa was in his time the most knowledgeable of all people on earth."<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Al-Khatīb; *Tarīkh Baghdād* V.13; Pg. 326-327, and al-Makki I; Pg. 216

<sup>39</sup> *Tabyīdh al-Sahīfah*; Pg. 41

<sup>40</sup> al-Khatīb; *Tarīkh Baghdād*; V. 13; Pg. 331

<sup>41</sup> During the Abbasid period (751 to 1258 CE) it was called Maqbaratul Khayzurān, named after the mother of the famed Caliph Harūn al Rashid (763-809 C.E.).

<sup>42</sup> *Tabyīdh al-Sahīfah*; Pg. 41

<sup>43</sup> al-Khatīb; *Khatīb Baghdādi*; V. 13; Pg. 341

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg. 344

