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## **The Contribution of Imam Shafi’I Hanafi, Maliki and Hambali to the Field of Religious Sciences with Particular Reference to Islamic Law**

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**Abstract:** The contribution of Muslim scholars to the field of various knowledge is remarkable. Down the history, early Muslim scholars have contributed immensely to the field of Natural science, Social sciences, Human sciences and religious sciences; perhaps, that is due to the intellectual freedom enjoyed by scholars which motivates them to think critically and creatively as well as their ability to transform the ideals of the Qur’an to daily conduct such as hard work, Perseverance, sincerity honesty and patience in seeking knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Based on this fact, this article aims to explore some achievements accomplished by some gigantic Muslim scholars (such as Imam Shaf’i, Imam Hanafi, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal) to the field of religious sciences with particular reference to dimension of Islamic Law. Yet, to achieve the objective of this article, historical approach will be applied, that is by conducting historical study of their roots and personalities, followed by their Unique works and intellectual achievement. Lastly, the article will provide a brief conclusion and the lessons that can be learnt from the accomplishment of these genius Muslim Scholars.

**Keywords:** Muslim Scholars, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi’, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, Imam Hanafi, Religious Sciences, Islamic Law

### **Brief Introduction**

Islam is comprehensive way of life, it urges human being to seek knowledge, it sees acquiring knowledge as an act of worship or Ibadah, moreover, the first revelation to

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the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was not about opulent lifestyle nor about luxurious entertainment, but it was exclusively about seeking knowledge, this indicates that knowledge is power, and it is through knowledge man can discover the truth and via knowledge he can also explore Allah's customary laws. Hence, this divinely fact has created a spiritual power and tremendous impulse in some energetic Muslim scholars, who eventually contributed to various fields of knowledge. Yet as far as this article is concerned, the unique contribution of four A'imah (leaders) of Islamic schools (Imam Shafi', Imam Hanafi, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal) will be explored, their personality, biography and their intellectual works will also be evaluated. Indeed, the historical method has been chosen for this purpose, that is by studying and evaluating the immense contribution of these genius Muslim scholars to the development of Islamic law.

### **Islamic Law Imam Shafi'i His Biography**

Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idriss descended from the Hashimi family of the Quraysh tribe to which the Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, belonged. He was born in Gaza, Palestine in 150H / 767CE, and became famous as Imam Ash-Shafi'i. His father died when he was very young and he was brought up by his mother in a very poor home. Thinking his relatives would help her raise him to be a good Muslim, she took him to Makkah. He spent a lot of his time among the Bedouins as he mastered Arabic and acquired great knowledge of Arabic poetry. He is known as 'Nasir al Sunnah' (one who saved the Sunnah).<sup>1</sup> He was honoured as al-Imam al Mujaddid in that he is the Mujaddid of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. At the age of twenty, he went to Madinah and remained there as a student of Imam Malik till the latter's death in 796CE..... He spent a total of nine years with Malik during which he managed to learn everything Malik had to offer. As a result, Imam Malik made this comment: "No scholar more brilliant than Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'I ever came to me as a pupil." He also came into contact with other learned men from whom he acquired more knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Imam Ash-Shafi'i possessed a very sharp memory and knew all of Imam Malik's Muwatta by heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Imam Muhammad Ibn Idriss Shafi'ee was born in Ghazah, Palestine in the year 150 AH. Imam Shafi'ee was a descendent from the Hashimi family of the Quaraish tribe to which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) belonged. His father died around the time of his birth and his mother migrated to Makkah with Imam Shafi'ee when he was 2 years of age

But, acquiring the knowledge of the scholars in Madinah was only the start for Ash-Shafi'i because he travelled extensively to most of the places known for knowledge at the time. In 187H / 804CE, he visited Syria and from there proceeded to Egypt where he settled. As a student of Imam Malik, he was received with great honour and respect by the people and scholars of Egypt. And, in 810CE he went to Baghdad and there he was surrounded by a large number of students who were eager to acquire knowledge of the faith and practices of Islam from him. One important student there was Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal<sup>2</sup>.

The Shafi'i school of Fiqh (Jurisprudence) emerged from these students who practised and propagated the views and rulings of Imam Ash-Shafi'i through their writings and preaching.

Imam Ash-Shafi'i wrote several books, the most well known of which is called *Al-Umm*, which is a collection of writings and lectures of the Imam. A number of his students have also collected his writings, lectures and rulings in the form of books, or quoted him in their books. Meanwhile, Baghdad, Iraq and Cairo, Egypt were the chief centres of Imam Ash-Shafi'i's activities. It is from these two cities that the teachings of the Shafi'i school spread in the 9th century CE. During the time of Sultan Salahuddin, the Shafi'i Madhhab (or school of Jurisprudence) was the most prominent in Egypt, and to this day the Imam of the Al-Azhar Masjid is always a Shafi'i and the Shafi'i Madhhab is industriously studied along with that of the other three schools of the Ahlus-Sunnah.

Imam Ash-Shafi'ee was a man of strong and vigorous mind, better acquainted with the world than Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik. He formed, from the materials furnished by Imam Jafar as-Sadiq, Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifah, an eclectic school, which found acceptance chiefly among the middle classes. The Shafi'i Madhhab has followers in Northern Africa, parts of Egypt, in Southern Arabia, and the Malayan Peninsula, and among the Muslims of Ceylon and the Bombay State in India.

During his life Imam Ash-Shafi'ee also suffered from political intrigues. For instance, after studying under Imam Malik in Madinah he was sent to fill an office Yemen, where he was accused of political involvement which resulted in his arrest. He was

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<sup>2</sup> Shafi'i Fiqh: A Brief Outline of the Shafi'i School's Transmission. (2015). Retrieved July 3, 2017, from <http://shafiiiqh.com/>

taken as prisoner to Harun ar-Rashid. The Khalifah, however, found him innocent and the Imam was honourably released. Imam Ash-Shafi'i died in the year 820CE in Egypt.

### **Imam Shafi's Contributions Related to Usul Al- Fiqh**

It is undeniable fact that. Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idriss. Al Shafi'I is well known as a master of Usul al- Fiqh. He started to study hadith and Fiqh at a very young age from imam Malik in Madina. Having read Kitab al Muwatta of Imam Malik with heart, he return to Iraq and starts his own study circle overthere. Here, he decided to make his own legal ruling of Shafi'i's doctrine which is devided into two phase. The first phase is known as old doctrine or al- Mazhabul –Qadim and which contains on the ruling given during period he got settle in Iraq. However, the second phase is called Al- Mazhab Al- Jadid which contains his legal ruling in Egypt<sup>3</sup>. The validity of the first doctrine is considered in the second doctrine even though it may contain a certain contradiction. Here are some of his famous books and works to the field of religious sciences.

#### **1. Kitab Al- Risalah**

First of all and formost, The Risāla by ash-Shafi'i (d. 820), full title Kitab ar-Risāla fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh (Arabic: *الفقه أصول في الرسالة كتاب* "book of the communication on the foundations of comprehension (i.e. Islamic jurisprudence)") is a seminal text on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence

The word risāla in Arabic means a “message” or “letter, communication”. Shafi'i's treatise received its name owing to a traditional, though unverified, story that Shafi'i composed the work in response to a request from a leading traditionist in Basra, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Maḥdī; the story goes that Ibn Maḥdī wanted Shafi'i to explain the legal significance of the Quran and the sunna, and the Risāla was Shafi'i's response.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hassan, W. Z. W., Alias, J., Jamsari, E. A., Luqman, A., & Abdullah, S. (2015). The approach of knowledge transfer in deriving Shafi'ite Hukum. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 260-271.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala, trans. by Majid Khadduri, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961, pp. 19-21 (Translator's Introduction).

In this work, al-Shafi'i is said to have outlined four sources of Islamic law<sup>5</sup> though this division based on four has been attributed to later commentators on the work rather than to Shafi'i himself<sup>6</sup> Al-Shafi'i is said he revised and re-read Al-Risala four hundred times<sup>7</sup>

Al- Shafi'i popular with his book Al- Risalah as the source of Usul Fiqh for the entire world. During 700 to 800s, they were competition between two philosophies on how to develop Islamic law. One philosophy argues that Hadith should exclusively be applied during the study of study of Islamic law, whereas another view argues that there should be a room for human reasoning in the study of Islamic law. Indeed, Imam Al-Shafi'i studied the both philosophies and views, then he introduce a new methodology known as Usul al Fiqh. So, Kitab Al-Risalah provides a reasonable and rational way in deriving Islamic law and jurisprudence. Thus, Al-risalh applied this new method masterminded by Imam Al-Shafi'i.

### **Contents of Al- Risalah al Shafi'i**

1. Introduction
2. On al-Bayān (Perspicuous Declaration)
3. On Legal Knowledge
4. On the Book of God
5. On the Obligation of Man to Accept the Authority of the Prophet
6. On the Abrogation of Divine Legislation
7. On Duties
8. On the Nature of God's Orders of Prohibition and the Prophet's Orders of Prohibition
9. On Traditions
10. On Single-Individual Traditions
11. On Consensus (Ijmā')
12. On Analogy (Qiyās)
13. On Personal Reasoning (Ijtihād)
14. On Juristic Preference (Istiḥsān)
15. On Disagreement (Ikhtilāf)

<sup>5</sup> McNeill, William H., and Marilyn Robinson Waldman. *The Islamic World*. University of Chicago Press, 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Does Shafi'i Have a Theory of 'Four Sources' of Law?, taken from the PhD dissertation of Joseph E. Lowry, *The Legal-Theoretical Content of the Risala of Muhammad B. Idris al-Shafi'i*, University of Pennsylvania, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Haddad, G. F. "Imam Shafi'i". *islamqa.org*. Retrieved 29 May 2018.

### Sources of Law in Al- Risalah

The primary sources of law attributed to Shafi'i's book are the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition. Most Muslim commentators have also referred to Shafi'i's sections on consensus and analogical reason as comprising legal sources<sup>8</sup>

On the question of consensus, Shafi'i obligated affirmation of all living Muslims - both the learned and the laymen - in order to declare a true consensus<sup>9</sup> Later followers of his school considered this to be practically impossible, and thus expanded upon the definition<sup>10</sup>

Hence, Imam Shafi'i had decided to use this method in making his Islamic law, indeed, this method will be used after the interpretation of Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah in searching the proof. Besides, this method will only be used when it is investigated properly and thoroughly.

Next, Imam Al Shafi'i also concerned of the view from the companion. This method is used in making the law exceeding al Qiyas<sup>11</sup>. Qiyas means the process of deductive analogy in which the teaching of hadith are compared and contrasted with those in the Qur'an. Indeed, this method has been also used by Imam Shafi'i in completing his book of Al-Risalah<sup>12</sup>.

In Short, Al- Risalah is an authentic book of Imam Al-Shafi'i in reference to to the Islamic jurisprudence, because, it is based on authentic reference and source of knowledge (Qur'an and Sunnah). In term of language, the book of Imam al-Shafi'i was written in Arabic language which has been translated into various languages. In conclusion, according to Jalaluddin Al-Suyuthi "It is agreed that Al- Shafi'i is laying the first foundation of the science of Usul al- Fiqh that is completely done by himself". Likewise, Imam Ahmad ibn bin Hambal stated that, "In the past, this science was locked to the of jurisprudence until Allah opens it with Al-Shafi'i". Thus Al- Risalah undoubtedly is considered today as the main source of Islamic jurisprudence.

<sup>8</sup> Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala, trans. by Majid Khadduri, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961, pp. 19-21 (Translator's Introduction).

<sup>9</sup> Khadduri, Introduction to Shafi'i's Risala, pg. 33

<sup>10</sup> Khadduri, pp. 38-39

<sup>11</sup> Walid b. Ibrahim al-Ujaji, Qiyas in Islamic Law – A Brief Introduction, Alfalah Consulting, FRIDAY, 29 APRIL 2011

<sup>12</sup> Late and modern Sunni jurisprudence regards analogical reason as a fourth source of Islamic law, following the Qur'an, prophetic tradition and binding consensus. While Muslim scholarship in the later period traditionally claimed that analogy had existed in Islamic law since their religion's inception

## 2. Kitāb Al Umm

The Kitāb al-Umm (Arabic: *الأم كتاب*) is the first exhaustive compendium of Islamic code of law that is used as an authoritative guide by the Shafi'i school of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) within the Sunni branch of Islam<sup>13</sup> The work was composed by the founder of the Shafi'i school, Imām Al-Shāfi'i (767-820 CE). The term "al-Umm" means "the exemplar."<sup>14</sup> The Kitāb al-Umm is noted for its hermeneutic approach to developing legal principles, basing them on revelation rather than traditional authority?<sup>15</sup>

### Imam Abu Hanifah

#### His Biography

Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān bin Thābit known as Abū Ḥanīfa for short, or reverently as Imam Abū Ḥanīfa by Sunni Muslims<sup>16</sup> was an 8th-century Sunni Muslim theologian and jurist of Persian origin<sup>17</sup> who became the eponymous founder of the Hanafi school of Sunni jurisprudence, which has remained the most widely practiced law school in the Sunni traditions. He is often alluded to by the reverential epithets al-Imām al-a'zam ("The Great Imam") and Sirāj al-a'imma ("The Lamp of the Imams") in Sunni Islam.<sup>18</sup> Imam Abu Hanifa was Born to a Muslim family in Kufa, Iraq., that was during the reign of the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. His father, Thabit bin Zuta, a trader from Kabul (today in Afghanistan), was 40 years old at the time of Abū Ḥanīfah's birth. Abu Hanifa is known to have travelled to the Hijaz region of Arabia in his youth, where he studied under the most renowned teachers in Makkah and Madinah at the time. As his career as a theologian and jurist progressed, he also became known for favoring the use of reason in his legal rulings (faqīh dhū ra'y) and even in his theology. Abu Hanifa's theological school is what would later develop into the Maturidi

<sup>13</sup> . Josef W. Meri, Jere L. Bacharach, (2006) *Medieval Islamic Civilization*, Volume 2, Taylor & Francis Publisher

<sup>14</sup> His massive Kitāb al-Umm (The Exemplar) covers the standard topics found in a work of Islamic law ... .."

<sup>15</sup> Aisha Y. Musa, (2008) *Hadith as scripture: discussions on the authority of prophetic traditions in Islam*, Macmillan.

<sup>16</sup> Abu Hanifa, Encyclopædia Iranica

<sup>17</sup> Pakatchi, Ahmad and Umar, Suheyl, "Abū Ḥanīfa", in: Encyclopaedia Islamica, Editors-in-Chief: Wilferd Madelung and, Farhad Daftary.

<sup>18</sup> S. H. Nasr (1975), "The religious sciences", in R.N. Frye, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Volume 4, Cambridge University Press. pg 474: "Abū Ḥanīfah, who is often called the "grand imam"(al-Imam al-'Azam) was Persian

school of Sunni theology. He is also considered a renowned Islamic scholar and personality by Sunni Muslims<sup>19</sup>.

His ancestry is generally accepted as being of Persian origin as suggested by the etymology of the names of his grandfather (Zuta) and great-grandfather (Mah). The historian Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi records a statement from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's grandson, Ismail bin Hammad, who gave Abū Ḥanīfah's lineage as Thabit bin Numan bin Marzban and claiming to be of Persian origin.<sup>20</sup> The discrepancy in the names, as given by Ismail of Abū Ḥanīfah's grandfather and great-grandfather, are thought to be due to Zuta's adoption of the Arabic name (Numan) upon his acceptance of Islam and that Mah and Marzban were titles or official designations in Persia, with the latter, meaning a margrave, referring to the noble ancestry of Abū Ḥanīfah's family as the Sasanian Marzbans (equivalent of margraves). The widely accepted opinion, however, is that most probably he was of Persian ancestry<sup>21</sup>

### **His Adulthood and death**

In 763, al-Mansur, the Abbasid monarch offered Abu Hanifa the post of Chief Judge of the State, but he declined the offer, choosing to remain independent. His student Abu Yusuf was later appointed Qadi Al-Qudat (Chief Judge of the State) by the Caliph Harun al-Rashid.<sup>22</sup>

In his reply to al-Mansur, Abū Ḥanīfah said that he was not fit for the post. Al-Mansur, who had his own ideas and reasons for offering the post, lost his temper and accused Abū Ḥanīfah of lying.

"If I am lying," Abū Ḥanīfah said, "then my statement is doubly correct. How can you appoint a liar to the exalted post of a Chief Qadi (Judge)?" Incensed by this reply, the ruler had Abū Ḥanīfah arrested, locked in prison and tortured. He was never fed nor cared for.<sup>23</sup> Even there, the jurist continued to teach those who were permitted to come to him.

<sup>19</sup> Abu Bakr al-Jassas al-Razi. *Ahkam al-Quran*. Dar Al-Fikr Al-Beirutiyya. pp. volume 1 page 100.

<sup>20</sup> S.H Nasr. Volume 4, Page 474

<sup>21</sup> Cyril Glasse, "The New Encyclopedia of Islam", Published by Rowman & Littlefield, 2008. pg 23: "Abu Hanifah, a Persian, was one of the great jurists of Islam and one of the historic Sunni Mujtahids"

<sup>22</sup> "Oxford Islamic Studies Online". Abu Yusuf. Oxford University Press.

<sup>23</sup> Ya'qubi, vol. III, p.86; *Muruj al-dhahab*, vol. III, pp. 268–270.



On the 15 Rajab 150 H (August 15, 767), Abū Ḥanīfah died in prison. The cause of his death is not clear, as some say that Abū Ḥanīfah issued a legal opinion for bearing arms against Al-Mansur, and the latter had him poisoned.<sup>24</sup> . It was said that so many people attended his funeral that the funeral service was repeated six times for more than 50,000 people who had amassed before he was actually buried. On the authority of the historian al-Khatib, it can be said that for full twenty days people went on performing funeral prayer for him. Later, after many years, the Abū Ḥanīfah Mosque was built in the Adhamiyah neighbourhood of Baghdad. . Meanwhile, the tomb of Abū Ḥanīfah and the tomb of Abdul Qadir Gilani were destroyed by Shah Ismail of Safavi empire in 1508.<sup>25</sup> In 1533, Ottomans conquered Baghdad and rebuilt the tomb of Abū Ḥanīfah and other Sunni sites<sup>26</sup>. May Almighty Allah bless the soul of Imam Abu Hanifah.

### **Imam Abu Hanifah and His Contribution to Religious Sciences (Fiqh)**

Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam A'zam decided in 121 H. (29 years before his demise) that the rules of Fiqh must be written, so he gathered forty of his students who had expertise in different fields and initiated a gathering of discussing Fiqh. Imam A'zam and his selected students would sit and discuss rulings for long periods of time, sometimes for many months on one single issue, trying to come to an agreed conclusion. When they reached an agreement, the students would write down the rulings. The books compiled within these gatherings were attributed to the students as they compiled them, however they are actually the narration and rulings of Imam Hanafi discussed in the Fiqhi gatherings, so they are in fact the books of Imam Hanafi as well. These became known as 'Kutub al- Fiqh al- Hanafi'. Here are some of the books of Imam Abu Hanifa.

1. Al-Fiqh al-Akbar
2. Kitab al-Radd 'ala al-Qadariyyah
3. Al-Aalim wa al-Muta'allim
4. Al-Fiqh al-Absat
5. Kitab Ikhtilaf al-Sahaba
6. Kitab al-Jami'
7. Al-Kitab al-Awsat

<sup>24</sup> Najeebabadi, Akbar S. (2001). The History of Islam. vol, 2. Darussalam Press. pp. 287.

<sup>25</sup> Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire

<sup>26</sup> Burak, Guy (2015). The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Ḥanafī School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

8. Kitab al-Sayr
9. Risalah Abu Hanifa ila 'Uthman al-Bayti
10. Wasiyyah al-Imam Abu Hanifa fi al-Tawheed

Yet, *Al Fiqh al- Akbar* which is one of the greatest book of Imam Abu Hanifa will be explore in details in this segement.

### ***Al Fiqh al- Akbar***<sup>27</sup>

*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar* is one of the earliest texts written on Islamic -creed and one of the surviving works of Abu Hanifa, the Great Imam of jurisprudence and theology which is studied for centuries in the Muslim world, *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar* offers a more nuanced, textured approach to understanding divine oneness (tawhid), the focal point of Islamic belief. It refines one's understanding of the Creator, the messengers and divine communication, and enables one to gain much-needed insight into the realities of this life and the events of the hereafter.

Meanwhile, *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar* not only improves one's understanding of 'aqida and deepens one's appreciation of his or her beliefs, but it endeavors to address questions, which, if left unanswered, could leave insidious doubt and cause communal division. Such questions include: Where is Allah? Does Allah evolve? What constitutes true Islamic belief? Are prophets capable of sinning? Is there creation beyond what we see? What comes after death? These and other are sensitive questions are the subject matters of *Al Fiqh al- Akbar* of Imam Abu Hanifah.

### **Method of Derivation**

Imam Abu Hanifah himself describes his method of derivation: "First of all I look into the Noble Quran, then search the matter in the Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) and take the narrations of the Faqeeh (jurist) narrators. If the matter is not found in the Qur'an and Hadith, then I turn to the sayings of the companions. If their opinions differ then I prefer any of them. If the opinions of the companions contradict the opinions of others I never go against the opinions of the companions. And, when it come to the opinions of Ibrahim Nakh'ee, Hasan Basari, Ibn Seereen, Saeed bin Musayyib and others then I also apply mind and interpret as they do. In short it easy to conclude that imam Abu

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<sup>27</sup> Abu 'l-Muntaha al-Maghnisawi, with Selections from 'Ali al-Qari's Commentary Including Abu Hanifa's Kitab al-Wasiyya, 2007

Hanifah was extremely pious avoided forbidden things, remained silent and absorbed in his thoughts most of the time, and answer the questions only if he knew the answer. He was very generous and self respecting, never ask a favor of anybody, shunned the company of the worldly-minded and held worldly power and position in contempt. He avoided slander and only talk well of people. Despite the fact Abu Hanifah's school of thought is the last to emerge. It is the most widely followed. The followers of this Mazhab can be found in Pakistan, Afganistan, some part of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and India. Indeed, Abu Hanifah was a man of profound learning and was as generous with his knowledge as with his welth.. despite his richness and having high position in society, Imam A'zam was extremely humble, modest, gentle and polite. He contributed to the field of Fiqh immensely, as such he left legacy behind him, such as Fiqh Al- Akbar, Al Musnad and Al 'Alim Wa Al Muta'alim etc..May Almighty Allah bless his soul.

### **Imam Malik<sup>28</sup>**

#### **His Biography**

His full name is Abu Abdullah Mālik ibn Anas ibn Mālik Ibn Abī 'Āmir Ibn 'Amr Ibnul-Hārith Ibn Ghaimān Ibn Khuthail Ibn 'Amr Ibnul-Haarith. Malik was born the son of Anas ibn Malik (who is not the Sahabi with the same name) and Aaliyah bint Shurayk al-Azdiyya in Medina circa 711<sup>29</sup>. His family was originally from the al-Asbahi tribe of Yemen, but his great grandfather Abu 'Amir relocated the family to Medina after converting to Islam in the second year of the Hijri calendar, or 623 CE. His grandfather Malik ibn Abi Amir was a student of the second Caliph of Islam Umar and was one of those involved in the collection of the parchments upon which Quranic texts were originally written when those were collected during the Caliph Uthman era<sup>30</sup>. According to Al-Muwatta, he was tall, heavysset, imposing of stature, very fair, with white hair and beard but bald, with a huge beard and blue eyes.

Meanwhile, Living in Medina gave Malik access to some of the most learned minds of early Islam. He memorized the Quran in his youth, learning recitation from Abu Suhail

<sup>28</sup> Referred to as the Imam of Medina by his contemporaries, Malik's views in matters of jurisprudence were highly cherished both in his own life and afterwards, and he became the founder of one of the four schools of Sunni law, the Maliki,[1] which became the normative rite for the Sunni practice of much of North Africa, Andalusia, a vast portion of Egypt, and some parts of Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, and Khorasan,[2] and the prominent Sufi orders, including the Shadiliyya and the Tijaniyyah.

<sup>29</sup> Schacht, J., "Mālik b. Anas", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online.

<sup>30</sup> M M Azami, *The History of the Quranic Text*, page 100-101

Nafi' ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from whom he also received his Ijazah, or certification and permission to teach others. He studied under various famed scholars including Hisham ibn Urwah, Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, and—along with Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi Sunni Madh'hab—under the Shia imam from the household of the Prophet's lineage, Jafar al Sadiq.<sup>31</sup>

Malik died at the age of 83 or 84 in Medina in 795 and is buried in the famous Jannat ul-Baqi cemetery across from the Mosque of the Prophet. Although there was a small shrine constructed around his grave during the medieval period, with many Muslims visiting it to pay their respects, the construction was razed to the ground by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during their campaign of demolishing many of the traditional Islamic heritage sites after the kingdom's establishment in 1932.

Malik's last words were related by Isma'il ibn Abi Uways who said, "Malik became sick, so I asked some of our people about what he said at the time of his death. They said, "He recited the testification of faith and then he recited: May Allah bless His soul.

### **Imam Malik and His Contribution to Islamic Law (Fiqh)**

- **Al-Muwatta:** "The Approved," which was said to have been regarded by Shafi'i to be the soundest book on earth after the Qur'an.
- **Al-Mudawwana al-Kubra:** written down by Sahnun ibn Sa'id ibn Habib at-Tanukhi (c. 776-7 – 854-5) after the death of Malik ibn Anas..Yet, this book will touch on Al- Muwatta in details

### **Al Muwatta Ibn Malik**

The Muwatta<sup>32</sup> (Arabic: الموطأ, "well-trodden path") or Muwatta Imam Malik (Arabic: مالك امام الموطأ) of Imam Malik is the earliest written collection of hadith comprising the subjects of Islamic law, compiled by the Imam Malik ibn Anas.<sup>33</sup> Malik's best-known

<sup>31</sup> *Muslimheritage.com. 2005-01-04. Retrieved 2010-04-10.*

<sup>39</sup> The Muwatta' or Muwatta Imam Malik of Imam Malik is the earliest written collection of hadith comprising the subjects of Islamic law, compiled by the Imam, Malik ibn Anas. Malik's best-known work, Al-Muwatta was the first legal work to incorporate and join hadith and fiqh together.

<sup>33</sup> al-Kattani, Muhammad ibn Ja'far (2007). Muhammad al-Muntasir al-Kattani (ed.). *al-Risalah al-Mustatrafah* (in Arabic) (seventh ed.). Beirut: Dar al-Bashair al-Islamiyyah. pp. 9, 41.

work, Al-Muwatta was the first legal work to incorporate and join hadith and fiqh together (except possibly for Zayd ibn Ali's Musnad).<sup>34</sup>

Further more. Muwatta is considered to be from the earliest extant collections of hadith that form the basis of Islamic jurisprudence<sup>35</sup> alongside the Qur'an. Nonetheless, it is not merely a collection of hadith; many of the legal precepts it contains are not based on hadith at all. The book covers rituals, rites, customs, traditions, norms and laws of the time of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

### **Historical Background of Muwatta Ibn Malik**

Due to increase in juristic differences, the Caliph of the time, Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, requested Imām Mālik to produce a standard book that could be promulgated as law in the country. The Imam refused this in 148 AH, but when the Caliph again came to the Hijāz in 163 AH, he was more forceful and said:

“O Abū ‘Abd Allāh, take up the reign of the discipline of fiqh in your hands. Compile your understanding of every issue in different chapters for a systematic book free from the harshness of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, concessions and accommodations of ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Abbās and unique views of ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd. Your work should exemplify the following principle of the Prophet: “The best issues are those which are balanced.”[citation needed] It should be a compendium of the agreed upon views of the Companions and the elder imāms on the religious and legal issues. Once you have compiled such a work then we would be able to unite the Muslims in following the single fiqh worked by you. We would then promulgate it in the entire Muslim state. We would order that no body acts contrary to it.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Authenticity of Al Muwatta’ Ibn Malik**

<sup>34</sup> Swartz, Merlin (1991). “Review of Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik translated by Aisha Bewley”. Review of Middle East Studies. 25: 102–103.

<sup>35</sup> Islam is an Abrahamic, monotheistic religion teaching that there is only one God (Allah), and that Muhammad is a messenger of God. It is the world's second-largest religion with over 1.9 billion followers or 24.5% of the world's population, commonly known as Muslims. Muslims make up a majority of the population in 50 countries. Islam teaches that God is merciful, all-powerful, and unique, and has guided mankind through prophets, revealed scriptures and natural signs. The primary scriptures of Islam are the Quran, believed to be the verbatim word of God, and the teachings and normative examples of Muhammad.

<sup>36</sup> Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī b. Muhammad b. Farhūn al-Ya‘murī al-Mālikī, al-Dībāj al-Madhab fī Ma‘rifah A‘yān ‘Ulamā’ al-Madhab, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Nashr, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1996), 25.

Composed the 'Muwatta' over a period of forty years to represent the "well-trodden path" of the people of Medina.<sup>37</sup> Its name also means that it is the book that is "many times agreed upon"- about whose contents the people of Medina were unanimously agreed. Its high standing is such that people of every school of fiqh and all of the imams of hadith scholarship agree upon its authenticity. The Muslim Jurist, Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i also called Imam Al Shafi'i famously said, "There is not on the face of the earth a book – after the Book of Allah – which is more authentic than the book of Malik."<sup>38</sup>

Over one thousand disciples of Malik have transmitted this work from him. This has resulted in differences in the text in various instances. There are thirty known versions of the work of which the most famous is the one transmitted by Yahya al-Laithi. [citation needed]

### **Composition of al-Muwatta [edit]**

Al-Muwatta consists of approximately 1,720 hadith divided amongst the following hadith terminology as follows:<sup>39</sup>

600 marfu` hadith  
613 mawquf hadith  
285 maqtu' hadith  
222 mursal hadiths

### **Distinguishing characteristics**

Amin Ahsan Islahi has listed several distinguishing characteristics of the Muwatta:<sup>40</sup>

1. Its briefness (in size) yet comprehensiveness (in coverage).

<sup>37</sup> Medina, also transliterated as Madīnah, is the capital of the Al-Madinah Region in Saudi Arabia. At the city's heart is al-Masjid an-Nabawi, which is the burial place of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. Medina is one of the three holiest cities in Islam, the other two being Mecca and Jerusalem.

<sup>38</sup> bn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhīd limā fī al-muwattā min al-ma'ānī wa al-asānīd*, vol. 1 (Morocco: Dār al-Nashr, 1387 AH), 76.

<sup>39</sup> The Hadith for Beginners, Dr. Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, 1961 (2006 reprint), Goodword Books

<sup>40</sup> Mabadi Tadabbur-i-Hadith, Amin Ahsan Islahi

2. Malik did not accept any marfū 'hadīth (ascribed to the Prophet) if it was not verbatim transmission of the words of the prophet Muhammad (he even gave consideration to letters, prepositions and particles like wāw, tā, bā etc. in them).
3. No acceptance of Hadith from any innovator - this is a stricter standard than many other muhaddithun.
4. Highly literary form of the classical Arabic. This helps readers develop the ability to understand the language of the prophetic traditions.

In short, Imam Malik was an icon in the field of fiqh, his contribution to this field was so immense and great. He spent his life studying, recording and clarifying the legal parameters and precedents which was passed down to him by the first two generations of Muslims who were the direct inheritors of the perfected form of Islam left by the prophet (s.a.w). Although he is the author of numerous books, his most important work is the kitab al- Muwatta, which deals with the subject of Islamic law based on Ahadith and Sunnah. It is the earliest surviving book of its kind written around 150 A.H, In the most serious note, Mazhab Maliki is widespread in the north Africa, Spain, Senegal Nigeria, and other west Africa Nations. May Allah bless the soul of Imam Malik and reward him with Jannah al- Firdaus Nuzulan.

### ***Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal***

#### **His Biography**

His real name is Abū 'Abdillāh Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal Ash-Shaybānī (Arabic: الشيباني حنبل بن محمد بن أحمد الله عبد أبو; 780–855 CE/164–241 AH), often referred to as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal or Ibn Ḥanbal for short, was an Arab Muslim jurist, theologian, ascetic, hadith traditionist, and founder of the Hanbali school of Sunni jurisprudence — one of the four major orthodox legal schools of Sunni Islam.<sup>41</sup>

A highly influential and active scholar during his lifetime, Ibn Hanbal went on to become "one of the most venerated" intellectual figures in Islamic history,<sup>42</sup> who has had a "profound influence affecting almost every area of" the traditionalist (literalism-oriented) perspective within Sunni Islam.<sup>43</sup> One of the foremost classical

<sup>41</sup> . Laoust, H "Ahmad b. Hanbal," in Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. I, pp. 272-7

<sup>42</sup> Mohammed M. I. Ghaly, "Writings on Disability in Islam: The 16th Century Polemic on Ibn Fahd's "al-Nukat al-Ziraf", The Arab Studies Journal, Vol. 13/14, No. 2/1 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006), p. 26, note 98

<sup>43</sup> Holtzman, Livnat, "Aḥmad b. Hanbal", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson.

proponents of relying on scriptural sources as the basis for Islamic law and way of life, Ibn Hanbal compiled one of the most important Sunni hadith collections, the Musnad, which has continued to exercise considerable influence in the field of hadith studies up to the present time.

Having studied fiqh and hadith under many teachers during his youth, Ibn Hanbal became famous in his later life for the crucial role he played in the Mihna, the inquisition instituted by the Abbasid Caliphate al-Ma'mun towards the end of his reign, in which the ruler gave official state support to the Mutazilite dogma of the Quran being created, a view that contradicted the orthodox doctrine of the Quran being the eternal, uncreated Word of God.<sup>44</sup> Suffering physical persecution under the caliph for his unflinching adherence to the traditional doctrine, Ibn Hanbal's fortitude in this particular event only bolstered his "resounding reputation. in the annals of Islamic history.

Throughout Islamic history, Ibn Hanbal was venerated as an exemplary figure in all the traditional schools of Sunni thought,<sup>45</sup> both by the exoteric ulema and by the mystics, with the latter often designating him as a saint in their hagiographies.<sup>46</sup> The fourteenth-century hadith master al-Dhahabi referred to Ibn Hanbal as "the true Shaykh of Islām and leader of the Muslims in his time, the ḥadīth master and Proof of the Religion."<sup>47</sup>

### Early life and family

Ahmad ibn Hanbal's family was originally from Basra, Iraq, and belonged to the Arab Banu Shayban tribe.<sup>48</sup> His father was an officer in the Abbasid army in Khurasan and later settled with his family in Baghdad, where Ahmad was born in 780 CE.

<sup>44</sup> H. Laoust, "Ahmad b. Hanbal," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, pp. 272-7

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p 272-7

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Melchert, *The Ḥanābila and the Early Sufis*, Arabica, T. 48, Fasc. 3 (Brill, 2001), p. 356

<sup>47</sup> Gibril F. Haddad, *The Four Imams and Their Schools* (London: Muslim Academic Trust, 2007), p. 301

<sup>48</sup> H. A. R. Gibb; et al., eds. (1986). "Aḥmad B. Ḥanbal". *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. A-B. 1 (New ed.). Brill Academic Publishers. p. 272. ISBN 90-04-08114-3. "Aḥmad B. Ḥanbal was an Arab, belonging to the Banū Shaybān, of Rabī'a,..."



Meanwhile, Ibn Hanbal had two wives and several children, including an older son, who later became a judge in Isfahan.<sup>49</sup>

### Education and work

Imam Ahmed studied extensively in Baghdad, and later traveled to further his education. He started learning jurisprudence (Fiqh) under the celebrated Hanafi judge, Abu Yusuf, the renowned student and companion of Imaam Abu Hanifah. After finishing his studies with Abu Yusuf, ibn Hanbal began traveling through Iraq, Syria, and Arabia to collect hadiths, or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn al-Jawzi states that Imam Ahmad had 414 Hadith masters whom he narrated from. With this knowledge, he became a leading authority on the hadith, leaving an immense encyclopedia of hadith, the al-Musnad. After several years of travel, he returned to Baghdad to study Islamic law under Al-Shafi'i. He became a mufti in his old age, and founded the Hanbali madhab, or school of Islamic law, which is now most dominant in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.. Unlike the other three schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi), the Hanbali madhab remained largely traditionalist or Athari in theology.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to his scholastic enterprises, ibn Hanbal was a soldier on the Islamic frontiers (Ribat) and made Hajj five times in his life, twice on foot.

### Contribution of Imam Ahmad TI Islamic Law (Fiqh)

The following book are the Contribution of Imam Hambal to the field of Fiqh and religious sciences:

1. *Usul as-Sunnah* : "Foundations of the Prophetic Tradition (in Belief)"
2. *As Sunnah* : "The Prophet Tradition (in Belief)"
3. *Kitab al-'Ilal wa Ma'rifat al-Rijal*: "The Book of Narrations Containing Hidden Flaws and of Knowledge of the Men (of Hadeeth)" Riyadh: Al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah
4. *Kitab al-Manasik*: "The Book of the Rites of Hajj"
5. *Kitab al-Zuhd*: "The Book of Abstinence" ed. Muhammad Zaghlul, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1994

<sup>49</sup> Foundations of the Sunnah, by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, pg 51-173

<sup>50</sup> Halverson, Jeffry R. (2010). Theology and Creed in Sunni Islam: The Muslim Brotherhood, Ash'arism, and Political Sunnism. Palgrave Macmillan. p. 34. "The Hanbalite madhhab, in contrast, largely maintained the traditionalist of Athari position."

6. *Kitab al-Iman*: "The Book of Faith"
7. *Kitab al-Masa'il* "Issues in Fiqh"
8. *Kitab al-Ashribah*: "The Book of Drinks"
9. *Kitab al-Fada'il Sahaba*: "Virtues of the Companions"
10. *Kitab Tha'ah al-Rasul* : "The Book of Obedience to the Messenger"
11. *Kitab Mansukh*: "The Book of Abrogation"
12. *Kitab al-Fara'id*: "The Book of Obligatory Duties"
13. *Kitab al-Radd `ala al-Zanadiqa wa'l-Jahmiyya* "Refutations of the Heretics and the Jahmites" (Cairo: 1973)
14. *Tafsir* : "Exegesis"
15. *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal

### Death of Imam Ahmad Bin Hambal

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal passed away on Friday, 12 Rabi-ul-awwal, 241 AH/ 2 August, 855 at the age of 74-75 in Baghdad, Iraq. Historians relate that his funeral was attended by 800,000 men and 60,000 women and that 20,000 Christians and Jews converted to Islam on that day.<sup>51</sup>

In Short, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal was so pious scholar who devoted all his life in the science of Ahadith and Fiqh. It is said that he learnt almost a million Ahadith by heart. He was probably the most learned in the sciences of hadith of the four great imam of sacred law, and his students included many of the foremost scholars of hadith. Abu Dawud said of him: 'Ahmad gatherings were gatherings of the afterlife; nothing of this world was mentioned. Never once did I hear him mention the worldly things'. He never once missed praying in the night, and used to recite the entire Qur'an daily. May Almighty Allah shower His blessing upon him.

### Conclusion

It is undeniable fact, the contribution of the early Muslim scholars to the various fields of knowledge is highly remarkable in the history. For instance, , in the field of religious sciences, the history has recorded the tremendous contributions of Imam Hanafi, Imam Maliki, Imam Shafi'I and Imam Hambali to the field of Islamic law. Indeed, their various books have been the perfect references in the study of Islamic law for the entire Ummah. To conclude this article it is worthwhile to mention that the energetic

<sup>51</sup> Ludwig W. Adamec (2009), Historical Dictionary of Islam, pp.136-137. Scarecrow Press

contribution of the Muslim Scholars to many aspects of knowledge can be attributed to some factors such as; their love and their strong spirit for seeking knowledge, their deep understanding of the message of the Qur'an and their sincere implementation of the prophetic Sunnah. These factors have seriously contributed to their success and achievement during the Islamic golden age.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Having explored the contributions of Early Muslim Scholars in various fields of knowledge with particular reference to the achievement of Imam Malik Iman Shaf'i, Imam Hanafi and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal(Hambali) to the field of Islamic Law, what are the lessons that the later Muslims can learn from these genius Muslim scholars? Indeed, there is no doubt that many lessons can be learned from the immense contributions of such splendid scholars such as;

Firstly, the Muslim Ummah need to refer to correct teaching of the holy Qur'an and *Sunnah al- Nabawiyyah al-Sharifah*, Which are the two legacies that left by Rasul-lullah. According to authentic Hadith stated by the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) "I left for you two legacies, when you hold them firmly you will never go astray, book of Allah and my *Sunnah*".

Based on above Hadith of the prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), Muslims *Ummah* ought to return to the guidance of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, with particular reference to the view of Qur'an about the factors behind the rise and fall of any civilization. As matter of fact, Qur'an has already stressed on the role of human being himself as a root cause of his own downfall, and that fact is clear in chapter 13:11 of holy Qur'an when Allah said "God (Allah) does not change the condition of a people until their change their own inner selves", similarly in another chapter of the Qur'an, Allah stated that: "corruption has appeared everywhere because of what people have done" (Quran, 30:41) the above Ayyah simply indicates that people are the main architect of their fate and destiny, moreover, they are not only the end but the means of their actions. Human being as means to destroy his end has also stated by the Holy Qur'an when Allah said: "And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad) , And that his deeds will be seen. Then he will be recompensed with a full and the best recompense" (Qur'an, 53: 39-41). Thus, Qur'an and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) are the main solution and primary remedy of malady of the Ummah

Secondly, the Muslim *Ummah* need to remember the importance of knowledge and the purpose of seeking knowledge in Islamic worldview. They should seek knowledge in

all dimensions, because knowledge is power, and, it is via knowledge we can be raised to the highest status by Allah. According to the holy Quran: “Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do”. (Quran, 58:11). And again, through knowledge, we can discover many truths on Sunnatullah (God’s customary way of acting).

Thirdly, there is a need for *ijtihad* among the Muslim Ummah, what i mean by *ijtihad* is creativity, critical thinking and innovation. So, the *Ummah* should refer to Qur’an as a source of their research in all dimensions of knowledge, they should contemplate and ponder about the meaning of verses of the Qur’an for the sake of creativity and innovation.

Fourthly, mutual beneficial reciprocal relationship between the rulers and the scholars is urgent. I mean the friendly relation between the people in power and scholars is essentially needed. As such, the rulers should sponsor the research of academic scholars and intellectuals. Likewise, the intellectuals should academically contribute to the betterment of the nation, and they should propose the establishment of join research venture among the Muslim Ummah. Lastly, it is time for Muslim Ummah to learn from the past, so as to reshape the present and pave the way for an excellent future. The lesson we can learn from the glory and decline of Islamic civilization is that, any civilization on earth can logically be understood by evaluating and analyzing their vision and motivation, and any civilization should not forget the importance of justice, i mean we need to bear in mind that, the Almighty God (Allah) is always Just, and His omnipotence loves justice..Therefore, any civilization that is not based on justice will surely collapse

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