

Contributions of Imām Abū Hanīfah on Prophetic Hadīth: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Imam Abū Hanīfah is considered one of the prominent scholars who contributed most to adhering to the spirit of revelation and authentic Prophetic practices, proven by his contributions to the consecration of Islamic Fiqh. Fiqh and Prophetic Hadiths are interdependent, so Sharī'ah rulings must be justified either by revelation, by Prophetic practices, or by analogy with the evidence of the two primary sources of Sharī'ah. Therefore, the works of Imam Abu Hanifah refer to the Quranic *āyāt* and the Hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH). The paper aims to analyse the works and contributions of Imam Abū Hanīfah on Prophetic Hadīth. Relying on the descriptive and analytical methods in this study, this paper explores some of the original contributions of Imam Abū Hanīfah, especially in transmitting and promoting the Hadīths of the Prophet (PBUH). This paper also responds to some misunderstandings, being an ongoing debate between experts who seem to have negative attitudes about factual facts and realities related to Imam Abū Hanīfah's contributions to the history of the development of Prophetic Hadīths. This paper also responds to the severe criticism levelled against the actual image of Imam Abū Hanīfah by referring to quotations from Muslim scholars whose credibility and depth in the field of Prophetic Hadīth, throughout Islamic history have been accepted.

Keywords: Abū Hanīfah. Hadīth. Contributions, Fiqh.

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Introduction

In 17 A.H., the Kūfah city of Iraq was conquered by Caliph ‘Umar ibn Khattab (RA), and he sent Abdullah ibn Mas‘wud (RA) to Kūfah to promote Islamic teachings and learnings in the city. More than 1000 companions of the Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Kūfah city¹, of which 70 companions were participants of Badr, and 300 were participants in the Bai‘atur-Ridhwān. Among the prominent companions were Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqās, Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, Hudhaifah Ibn Yamān, Ammār Ibn Yāsir, and Abdulah Ibn Abī Awfā (RA). Imām Ibrahīm ibn Yazid al-Nakhayī reported:

"هبط الكوفة ثلاثمائة من أصحاب الشجرة وسبعون من أهل بدر"²

“Three hundred of the people of the Bai‘atur-Ridhwān and seventy of the people of the Badr landed in Kūfah.”

The Islamic capital of Khilāfat was transferred to Kūfah city during the reign of Ali (RA), and more than 4,000 individuals studied and acquired Islamic education and knowledge under his supervision. Amongst the famous students are ‘Alqamah ibn Qais (d.62 A.H.), Al-Aswad (d. 75 A.H.), and Shuraih Ibn al- Hārith (d.80AH). Others like Ibrāhīm an- Nakha‘i, Amr al-Sha‘abi, and Abul-Wāil were among the students of Alqamah & Al-Aswad. During this time, Kūfah city was known as one of the major centers for Islamic studies and sciences.

Let's look at the status of Kūfah city in Islamic education and knowledge. We must say that the city was a very famous center filled with Islamic education and learning where the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) settled. In this city, Abdullah ibn Mas‘wud (Allāh be pleased with him) himself contributed much knowledge of Islam according to the testimony of ‘Ali ibn Abī Tālib (Allāh be pleased with him).³ During the arrival of ‘Alī (Allāh be pleased with him) at the city, he remarked, “You have filled this city with knowledge and understanding.”⁴

"لما قدم علي عليه السلام الكوفة وخرج إليه ابن مسعود مع أصحابه حتى سدوا الأفق فلما

رأهم علي عليه السلام قال ملأت هذه القرية علما وفقها"

“When ‘Alī (Allāh be pleased with him) came to Kūfah and Abdullah ibn Mas‘wud (Allāh be pleased with him) came out with his companions until they blocked the horizon, when ‘Alī (Allāh be pleased with him) saw them, he said: this village has been filled with knowledge and understanding (fiqh).”

¹ Shamsuddin Abul Khair Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdur Rahmān al-Sakhāwī, *Fathul Mugīth Bi Sharhi Alfīyyāt al-Hadīth*, Editing: ‘Ali Hussain ‘Ali, (Egypt: Maktabatu al-Sunnah, 2003 AD), Vol: 4, p 111.

² Ibn Taimiyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah fī Naqdi Kalām al-Shi‘ah al-Qadariyyah*, edit: Muhammad Rashād Sālem, (Pub: Islamic University of Imām Muhammad Ibn Saūd, 2nd ed, 1984 AD), p 527.

³ Muhammad Zāhed al-Kawtharī, *Fiqh Ahlil ‘Irāq, Wa Hadīthuhum*, Ad: Prof. Dr. Sālem Abū ‘Āsī, (Cairo: Dār al-Basāir, 1st ed, 2009 AD), p 40.

⁴ Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abī Sahl al-Sarkhsī, *Al-Mabsūt*, (Bairūt: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1993 AD), vol. 16, p 68.

Kūfah city became a hub of knowledge and education where high numbers of Sahabah and Taabi'een and their students were available to promote Qur'ānic studies and Prophetic practices.⁵ Anas Ibn Sīrīn (ra) stated upon arriving in the city of Kūfah:

"أتيت الكوفة فرأيت فيها أربعة آلاف يطلبون الحديث وأربعة مائة قد فقهوا"

"I came to Kūfah and found 4000 people in search of Hadīth and 400 people in search of fiqh."⁶

So, the city of Kūfah is a well-known place where the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH), their successors, and greatly respected scholars settled to disseminate Qur'ānic studies and Prophetic Sunnah; and Hadiths and *Athar* became part of the knowledge that was circulating more than ever before.⁷ Imām Abu Hanifah was born in 80AH in Kūfah and grew up there.⁸ A few of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and their successors lived there then.⁹

Contributions of Imām Abu Hanifah on Prophetic Hadīth

Imām Abu Hanifah is considered one of the Tabi'īn (second generation after the Companions of the Prophet) and met with a few companions of the Prophet (PBUH). Even Ibn Hajar al-Haithami al-Shāfi'e mentioned in his book '*Al-Khairāt al-hasān*' that Imām Abu Hanifah had narrated from 17 companions of Prophet (PBUH) and among them were Anas ibn Mālik (RA), Abdullah Ibn Abī Awfā (RA), Abdullah Ibn Hārith (RA), Abdullah Ibn Umais (RA), Jābir Ibn Abdullah (RA), and Wāthilah ibn Asqā (RA).¹⁰ So in Kūfah, Imām Abu Hanifah, through some of his teachers such as Shaikh Hammad, Shaikh Ibrāhīm Nakha'i, and Shaikh Al'qama, inherited the legacy of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH).¹¹

Another important point to be highlighted is that many prominent *Muhaditheen* agreed that Imām Abu Hanifah was privileged to meet the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), especially Anas ibn Mālik (RA), and among the *Muhadithīn* were Khatīb Baghdādi, 'Allamah Ibn Hajr, 'Allamah Nawawi, Allamah Zahabi, Allamah Zain ul Abidin Sakhawi, Hafiz Abu Na'im Asbahani, Imam Dar-Qutni, Hafiz ibn Abdul Bar, Allama ibnul Jauzi etc.

⁵ Dr. Muhammad Taher al-Qaderi, "*Hadiser Pran Kendro Kufa SHohor O Imam Azam Abu Hanifa RH. (Kufa city, the Center of Hadith and Greatest Imam Abu Hanifa RH.)*", Translation in Bengali: Shaikh Allamah Abdul Hai Nadwi. Shah Abdul Zabbar Foundation, 2016, P 55-56.

⁶ Qādhī al-Hasan Ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rāmharmuji, *Al-Muhaddith al-Fādil Bain al-Rāwī wa al-Wā'ī*, (Dār al-Fikar, 3rd ed., 1984 AD), 569.

⁷ See: Mohamamd Akram Nadwi, *Abu Hanifah: his life, legal method and legacy*, (Kube Publishing Ltd, Markfield, UK), 2010, P. 10-11.

⁸ Gāwī, Wabhī Sulaymān, "*A'lām Al-Muslimīn 5 – Abū Hanīfa Al-Nu'mān Imām Al-Ayimmat Al-Fuqahā*", (Dimashq: Dār Al-Qalam, ed., 6, 1999 AD), P. 47-48.

⁹ Mohamamd Akram Nadwi, *Abu Hanifah: his life, legal method and legacy*, (Kube Publishing Ltd, Markfield, UK), 2010, P. 23.

¹⁰ Shihābuddin Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Hajar al-Haitamy, *Al-Khairāt al-Hasān Fi Manāqib al-Imām al-a'jam Abu Hanīfah al-N'umān*, (Syria-Damasq: Dar aluda and Rashad, 1st ed., 2005 AD), p 63-68.

¹¹ Gāwī, Wabhī Sulaymān, "*A'lām Al-Muslimīn 5 – Abū Hanīfa Al-Nu'mān Imām Al-Ayimmat Al-Fuqahā*", (Dimashq: Dār Al-Qalam, ed., 6, 1999 AD), P. 55.

قال الذهبي: "أنه رأى أنس بن مالك وهو صغير".¹²

Al-Dhahabi said: "He (Imām Abu Hanifah) saw Anas ibn Mālik (RA) when he was young"

"وإنما المحفوظ أنه رأى أنس بن مالك لما قدم عليهم الكوفة".¹³

"And it is preserved (information) that he (Imām Abu Hanifah) saw Anas ibn Mālik (RA) when he came to them in Kūfah"

وفي رواية قال: "رأيت مرارا وكان يخضب بالحمرة".¹⁴

And in a narration, the Imam (Imām Abu Hanifah) said: "I saw him many times, and he used to be dyed red."

قال الإمام أبو سعد: "أن أبا حنيفة رأى أنس بن مالك وعبد الله بن الحارث بن جزي الزبيدي".¹⁵

Imām Abū Saād (RA) said: "Imām Abu Hanifah saw Anas bin Malik and Abdullah bin Al-Harith bin Juzy Al-Zubaidi."

قال الإمام الدار قطني: "إنما رأى أنس بن مالك بعينه".¹⁶

Imam Al-Dar Qutni said: "Indeed, he saw Anas ibn Mālik (RA) with his own eyes."

قال البغدادي: "رأى أنس بن مالك".¹⁷

As al-Baghdādi said: "He saw Anas ibn Mālik (RA)".

Imām Abu Hanifah had also traveled to three other important places for higher education: Makkah, Madinah, and Basrah.¹⁸ For example, Ata ibn Abu Rabah, a renowned scholar in Makkah, was one of his teachers. Imām Abu Hanifah became an expert in Tafsīr, Hadith, theology, and the science of Fiqh.

The First Compilation of Hadiths and Imām Abu Hanifah

¹² Al-Haitamy, ShihÉbuddin Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn ‘Ali Ibn Hajar al-Haitamy. (1983). *Al-KhairÉt al-HasÉn Fi ManÉqib al-ImÉm al-a‘jam Abu HanÉfah al-N‘umÉn*. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1983, 1st ed.), P. 32.

¹³ Shamsuddin al-Dahabi, *Siyar al-Nubalā*, (Cairo: Dār-al-Hadith, 2006 AD. Vol: 4, p 412.

¹⁴ Mohammad Ibn Yousuf al-Sālihī, *‘Oqūd al-Jimān Fi Manāqib al-Imām al-a‘jam Abu Hanīfah al-N‘umān*, (Lajnah Ihyā al-Ma‘rif al-Nu‘māniyyah, 1974), p 49.

¹⁵ Al-Muwaffaq Ibn Ahmad al-Makki, *Manāqib Abī Hanīfah*, (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-Garbi, 1981 AD), vol: 1, p 25. And, Abu Naim Asbahani, *Musnad of Imām Abu Hanīfa*, (Riadh: Maktabat al-Kawthar, 1st ed., 1994 AD), p 24.

¹⁶ Jalāl Uddīn al-Suyūti, *Tabyīd al-Sahīfah Bi Manāqib Abī Hanīfah*, (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1st ed., 1990 AD), p 36.

¹⁷ Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādi, Ahmad. *Tārīkh Bagdād*, (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub Ilmiyyah, 1931 AD), vol: 13, p 325, Number: 7297.

¹⁸ Dr. Muhammad Taher al-Qaderi, *“Hadiser Pran Kendro Kufa SHohor O Imam Azam Abu Hanifa RH. (Kufa city, the Center of Hadith and Greatest Imam Abu Hanifa RH.)*, Translation in Bengai: Shaikh Allamah Abdul Hai Nadwi. Shah Abdul Zabbar Foundation, 2016, P 39.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz appointed Shaikh Abu Bakr bin Al Hazam and Shaikh Muhammad bin Shihab Al-Zuhri to compile all Hadiths in a book. Before that time, the Hadiths had not been compiled and instead were learned by heart or memorized.¹⁹ The Hadiths in the first compilation were attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) by either one narrator (*Sahabi*) or two narrators in the middle (*Sahabi* and *Tabi'ī*). This first compilation was made available for Imām Abu Hanifah, and he derived his *Shar'i Masa'il* from the compilation of Hadiths. It was quite easy for him to receive Hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH) by two narrators and by one narrator in the middle, although the number was not many.

Therefore, we can highlight that the Hadiths called *Thuna'i* (Hadiths are considered of the highest quality) were narrated by Imām Abu Hanifah, and they are not available in other famous Hadiths books of Bukhārī, Muslim, etc. We can find only 22 hadiths with three narrators (*Thulathiyyāt*) in Bukhārī, and 20 of them were reported by the followers and pupils of Imām Abu Hanifah.

It is also reported by some prominent scholars such as Imām Muaffaq ibn Ahmad Al-Makkī, Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Makkī, and Imām Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Sālehi al-Shāmī that Imām Abu Hanifah had received the knowledge of Qur'ān, Hadiths and Prophetic practices from over 4000 teachers, which included companions of Prophet (PBUH) and *Tabi'ī*. Imām Al-Sabīlī said:²⁰

"إن أبا حنيفة تتلمذ عند أربعة آلاف من شيوخ أئمة التابعين"

"Abu Hanifah was a student of four thousand of the scholars of the *Tabi'īn*."

ذكر ابن حجر الهيتمي المكي الشافعي: "شيوخ أبي حنيفة..هم كثيرون".²¹

Ibn Hajar al-Haithamy mentioned: "The sheikhs (teachers) of Imam Abu Hanifah... are many".

Imām Abu Hanifah as a Narrator of Hadiths and his trustworthiness in Narrating Hadiths

The authority and reliability of Imām Abu Hanifah in Islamic fiqh are accepted by all, but some still doubt his reliability in the narration of Hadiths. The truth is that while the Imam focused on Fiqh, his dependence on Hadīth and *athar* is manifest in his lessons and rulings. Indeed, he is among those who have narrated large numbers of Hadiths.²²

¹⁹ Hakim Abīsan Al-Mutairi, '*Tarīkh Tadwīn al-Sunnah wa Shubhāt al-Mustashriqīn*', Kuwait University 2002. P. 51-55

²⁰ Al-Khawārijī, '*Jamī' al-Masānīd*', Chapt. 1. P. 32. And, Al-Sālehi, '*Oqūd al-Jimān*', ibid, p 63-87. And, Gāwī, Wahbī Sulaymān, "*A'lām Al-Muslimīn 5 – Abū Hanīfa Al-Nu'mān Imām Al-Ayimmat Al-Fuqahā*", (Dimashq: Dār Al-Qalam, ed., 6, 1999 AD), P. 57.

²¹ *Al-Khairāt al-Hasān Fi Manāqib al-Imām al-a'jam Abu Hanīfah al-N'umān*, ibid, p 36.

²² Abu 'Abdillāh al-Hussain Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ja'far al-Saimarī, *Akhbār Abī Hanīfah wa Ashābuhu*, (Bairut: 'Alan al-Kutub, 2nd ed., 1985 AD), p 21-23.

The trustworthiness of Imām Abu Hanifah in narrating Hadiths was transmitted and certified by five prominent Imams of al-Jarh wa ta'dīl. They are Imām Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (202 – 275 H), the author of the *Sunan*²³; Ali ibn 'Abd Allah al-Madini (161 – 235 H)²⁴; Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj (85 – 160 H), the creator of the science of al-Jarh wa l-Ta'dīl; Yahya ibn Ma'in (158 – 233 H), the great scholar of al-Jarh wa l-Ta'dīl²⁵; Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (321 – 405 H), the author of *al-Mustadrak*²⁶.

Imām al-Suyūṭī stated in 'Tabyīd al-Sahīfah' that Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī had said, "Ibn Sa'd narrated with a *sanad* in which there is no harm that Abu Hanifah saw Anas."²⁷

"وقد أورد ابن سعد بسند لا بأس به أن أبا حنيفة رأى أنسا وكان غير هذين في الصحابة بعده من البلاد أحياء."

"Ibn Saād reported with a good chain of narrators that Imam Abu Hanifah saw Anas, and other than these two among the companions after him from the country was still alive."

"وقال صالح بن محمد: سمعت يحيى بن معين يقول: كان أبو حنيفة ثقة في الحديث، وروى أحمد بن محمد بن محمد بن القاسم بن محرز، عن ابن معين: كان أبو حنيفة لا بأس به. وقال مرة: هو عندنا من أهل الصدق، ولم يتهم بالكذب ولقد ضربه ابن هبيرة على القضاء، فأبى أن يكون قاضياً"²⁸

Sālih ibn Muhammad said, "I heard Yahya ibn Ma'in say, 'Abu Hanifah was reliable in hadith.' Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Qasim ibn Mihraz narrated from Ibn Ma'in, 'There is nothing wrong with Abu Hanifah.' And he said once, 'He is according to us from among the people of truth and was never accused of lying. Ibn Hubayrah physically assaulted him to take up the judiciary, but he refused to be a judge."

The Legacy of Imām Abu Hanifah in the Sciences of Hadith

²³ Abdul Fattāh Abū Guddah, *Al Intiqā Fī Fadāili Aïmma al-Talāsa al-Fuqahā*, (Bairūt: Dār al Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, 1st ed., 1997 AD), p66-67.

²⁴ Ibn 'Abdul Bar, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi*, Addition: Abul Ashbāl al-Zuhairi, (Al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Jawjī, 1994 AD), p 1083.

²⁵ Abu Zakariyah Yahyā Ibn Mu'in, *Mā'rifat al-Rijāl*, Ad: Muhammad Kāmil al-Qassār, (Dameshq: Majma' al-Lugah al-'Arabiyyah, 1985 AD), vol.: 1, Number: 230, p 79. And, Yousuf Ibn 'Abdur Rahmān al-Mijjī, *Tahjīb al-Kamāl Fī Asmā al-Rijāl*, Ad: Dr Basshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, (Bairūt: Muassat al-Risāalah, 1st ed., 1980 AD), vol.: 29, p 424.

²⁶ Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Abdul Hakam al-Nīsāpūrī, *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Hadith*, v.: 1, p 255.

²⁷ Suyūṭī, *Tabyīd al-Sahābah*, ibid, p 34.

²⁸ Yousuf Ibn 'Abdur Rahmān al-Mijjī, *Tahjīb al-Kamāl Fī Asmā al-Rijāl*, Ad: Dr Basshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, (Bairūt: Muassat al-Risāalah, 1st ed., 1980 AD), vol.: 29, p 424. And Shamsuddin al-Dahabi, *Siyar al-Nubalā*, (Cairo: Dār-al-Hadith, 2006 AD. Vol: 6, p 395.

The famous books of Hadiths were written and published almost 100 years after the departure of Imām Abu Hanifah. Many of these books' scholars and authors were Imām Abu Hanifah's disciples.

About 125 narrators in the distinguished books of Hadiths like Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmīdhī, Abu Dawood, Nasāī, and Ibn-e-Mājah were teachers (*Shuyūkh*) of Imām Abu Hanifah, and all of them were trustworthy (*Thiqāt*).²⁹

The two acclaimed followers of Imām Abu Hanifah, Imām Abu Yoūsuf and Imām Muhammad, collected Hadiths and lessons from Imām Abu Hanifah and compiled them into books. Most of these are still available and more authentic and reliable than others.

Analysis of the Contributions of Imām Abu Hanifah in Hadiths

There are numerous scholarly views found about the contributions of Imām Abu Hanifah, and some of them are as follows:

- Imām Abū Yousuf said:

قال أبو يوسف: قال أبو حنيفة: "لا ينبغي للرجل أن يحدث إلا بما يحفظه من وقت ما سمعه".

Imām Abū Yousuf said that Imām Abu Hanifah said, "It is not appropriate for a man to narrate except that which he has remembered at the time when he heard it."³⁰

- Sufyan Thawri (167 A.H) told a man who had just visited Imām Abu Hanifah that he had been fortunate to meet the greatest *Faqih* on the surface of the Earth.³¹
- Yahya bin Mueen (233 A.H) generally delivered *Fatwa* on what Imām Abu Hanifah had said and memorized his *Hadiths*. (He heard a number of Imām Abu Hanifah's Hadith).³²
- Muhammad Ibn Sama'ā states, "The Imām has mentioned more than seventy thousand Ahādeeth in his book and has selected Athār (reports) from forty thousand Ahādeeth." Muwaffaq bin Ahmad Makki also referred to Bakr bin Muhammad Zaranjri (152 A.H) had told him that Imām Abu Hanifah 's book 'Kitabul Aathar' is a selection, out of 40000 Hadiths.³³

²⁹ Dr. Muhammad Taher al-Qaderi, "Tabeyeen Kiram, Ilm Hadith and Imam Abu Hanifa (RH). Translation in Bengali: Shaikh Allamah Abdul Hai Nadwi. Shah Abdul Zabbar FOUndation, 2016, P 89.

³⁰ Adh-Dhahabi Shams Ad-Din Muhammad ibn Qaymaz (d 748), *Siyar A'lām An-Nubalā'*, Ar-Risalah Institution, 3rd edition, vol. 6, p. 401.

³¹ Shihābuddin Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Alī, *Al-Khairāt al-Hasān Fi Manāqib al-Imām al-a'jam Abu Hanīfah al-N'umān*, (Syria-Damasq: Dar aluda and Rashad, 1st ed., 2005 AD), p 32

³² Ibn 'Abdul Bar, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlihī*, Addition: Abul Ashbāl al-Zuhairi, (Al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Jawjī, 1994 AD), V: 2, p 149.

³³ Manqibul-Imam-al-A'zam, Vol. 1, P. 95

- Imam Shafi'i (204 A.H) encouraged scholars, saying: “We all need Imām Abu Hanifah in Fiqh. If a man wants to become a perfect *Faqih*, he is required to study his *Fiqh*.³⁴

Logical responses to some misconceptions (*Shubuhāt*)

- A few contemporary scholars unethically claimed that Imām Abu Hanifah was a weak narrator. In response to their claim, let us analyze this in the following:
 - I. The wrong attributions were incorrectly linked to Imām Abu Hanifah without any justification or with ignorance.
 - II. Over 70 renowned scholars accredited Imām Abu Hanifah and his authenticity in Hadiths.
- The false accusations of some scholars on Imām Abu Hanifah of refusing Hadith on 125 cases, including the allegation of Ibn Abī Shaybah, are baseless. The reasons are as follows.
 - I. Other supporting evidence and references from Qur'ān and other sound Hadiths were followed by the Imam.
 - II. Imām Abu Hanifah had a standard process for accepting Hadith *Ahad*.
 - III. Thousands of provisions and rulings on hadiths are found in Imām Abu Hanifah's works.
 - IV. It is more logical to say that Ibn Abī Shaybānī and some others accused Imām Abu Hanifah mistakenly and wrongly.
- Imām Abu Hanifah received knowledge of Hadith and Islamic education from his main teacher and mentor, Hammād ibn Abī Sulaimān (d.120AH), who was a prominent and representative Jurist in Kūfah, and Imām spent 18 years with him.
- One of the most important points to be noted is that the scholars in Kūfah were known as Ahlu-Ra'y, whereas the scholars of Madinah and Makkah were known as AhlulHadīth; in Kūfah, restrictions were imposed for the people in circulating Hadiths to preserve Hadiths from fabrication and lies, unlike Madinah and Makkah.
- At the time of Imām Abu Hanifah and Imām Mālik, there were very few teachers available as they learned directly from Sahabah and Tabi'een, so *Sanads* were of limited number. But later on, the number of *Sanads* increased as the teachers taught more and more students, and of course, the Matan-e-Hadiths remained the same. For example, the first Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari: 'The Prophet 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 Imām Bukhārī in his Sahih Bukhari through different teachers. This is Sanad-e-Hadith.

³⁴ Tārīkh Bagdādī, ibid, v. 23, p 161.

The Scholars of Hadīth did not consider Abū Hanīfa (Ra.) as a dependable source for Prophetic Narration, but what is the fact?

As we see, Imām Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, and other Scholars of Hadith didn't put narration of Imām Abu Hanifah (Ra.) into their Hadīth Collection, and some people accuse that, and Imām Kawtharī mentions it, and he said it in his commentary on the book "شروط الأئمة الخمسة"

"إن الإمام أبا حنيفة لم يخرج له البخاري ومسلم وباقي السنن - عدا الترمذي في العلل والنسائي في حديث واحد - فهذا دليل على عدم اعتبارهم له، أو كونه ليس من علماء الحديث".

"Imām Abu Hanifah was not cited by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and the rest of the Sunans - except for Al-Tirmidhi in Al-Ilal and Al-Nasa'i in one hadith - this is evidence that they do not consider him, or that he is not one of the hadith scholars."³⁵

We say that the scholars of hadith have collected those who fear his hadith will be lost if they leave his narration. They did not narrate or collect from those who already had students who narrated his hadith and transmitted it.³⁶

The leading Fiqhi Imams were mainly devoted to understanding the hadith and its significance, knowing its Nasikh from its Mansukh, Mutlaq, and Muqayyad, generally, and specifically, not narrating the hadith only.³⁷

It is noteworthy that the Shaikhain (Imām Bukhārī and Muslim) did not collect anything from the narration of Imām Abu Hanifah. However, they met his younger disciples and narrated from them. They also did not narrate from the hadith of Imam al-Shafī'i.

Imām Bukhārī did not source anything from Imam Ahmad's hadith except for two narrations. Nor did Muslim narrate anything in his Sahih from al-Bukhari, even though he accompanied him. Imam Ahmad did not provide in his Musnad from the narration of Imam Malik on the authority of Nāfi' via the Imām Shāfi' though it is one of the most authentic chain of narrators - except for four hadiths. Imām Kawtharī concluded his discussion by saying that,

"والظاهر من دينهم وأمانتهم أن ذلك من جهة أنهم كانوا يرون أحاديث هؤلاء في مأمن من الضياع، لكثرة أصحابهم القائمين بروايتها شرقاً وغرباً، وجل عناية أصحاب

³⁵ Gāwī, Wahbī Sulaymān, "Al'lām Al-Muslimīn 5 - Abū Hanīfa Al-Nu'mān Imām Al-Ayimmat Al-Fuqahā", (Dimashq: Dār Al-Qalam, ed., 6, 1999 AD), P. 206.

³⁶ Gāwī, Ibid, P. 206.

³⁷ Al-Haitamī, Shihāb Al-Dīn Ahmad bin Hajr Al-Haitamī, "Al-Khairāt Al-Hisān Fī Manāqib Al-Imām Al-A'zam Abī Hanīfah Al-Nu'mān", (Lubnān, Beirūt: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyat, ed. 1, 1983 AD), P. 42.

الدواوين بأناس من الرواة ربما كانت تضع أحاديثهم لولا عنايتهم بها، لأنه لا يستغني
من بعدهم عن دواوينهم في أحاديث هؤلاء دون هؤلاء³⁸.

“The apparent meaning of their religion and trustworthiness is that this is in terms of the fact that they used to see the Hadîth of these people as safe from being lost, due to the large number of their companions who narrate them, in east and west; and the great concern of the compilers of collections for people among the narrators, whose Hadiths might have been lost had it not been for their care for them, because after them, it is not dispensed with their books in their Hadiths without them.”

Conclusion

The contributions of Imām Abu Hanifah in transmitting and promoting authentic Prophetic Hadiths have undoubtedly been proven by his legacy, and many of his other followers have preserved the heritage of Imām Abu Hanifah through their intellectual and religious works. Based on the discussion, let me mention only a few of them who were associated with him and sincere in promoting his legacy, lessons, rulings, and hadiths as per his *Maslak*: Imām Zufar bin Huzail, Imām Yahyā bin Sa'id Al Qattan, Imām Yahya bin Zakariya, Muhaddith Abdullah bin Mubārak, Imām Wakee bin Al Jarrāh Imām Dawod Al Tā'i, etc. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Imām Abu Hanifah derived Shari'ah rulings from the first compilation of Prophetic Hadîth, and his reliance on Hadith and Athar is clear from his lessons, Shari'i provisions and works. Indeed, he is one of those who narrated a large number of Prophetic Hadiths.

³⁸ Al Ĥāzimī, Abū Bakar Moḥammad bin Mūsā, *Sūratul Ayimmati Khamāsah*, Taḥqīq: Moḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Maktabat al-Azhariyyah Lil-Turāth. P 60.

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