

The Socio-Political Environment of Abu Hanifa's Time and the Role of Imam Azam in It

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Abstract: This article explores the socio-political environment during Abu Hanifa's lifetime and his stance toward political authority. It highlights his refusal to accept official positions, his respect for the Prophet's descendants, and his major contributions to Islamic jurisprudence. Abu Hanifa's legacy continues through the widespread Hanafi school of thought today. In particular, Abu Hanifa was offered the position of seal by Yazid ibn Umar during the Umayyad era and the position of judge in Baghdad by Caliph Abu Ja'far during the Abbasid era, but he declined the offers. The article also highlights the specific aspects of Abu Hanifa's relationship with the judges of that era.

Keywords: Abu Hanifa, politics, Umayyads, Abbasids, fiqh, justice, Islam, independence, Hanafi, Imam Azam.

Introduction. In the 8th-9th centuries, several sciences such as tafsir, kalam, hadith, and jurisprudence were formed in the Abbasid state. Scholars who lived during this period were not limited to scientific activities within their own fields, but also participated in the socio-political processes of that time. This situation can also be seen when studying the life of Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit ibn Zutih al-Kufi (80-150/699-767), known as Imam al-A'zam. The year of birth of the famous jurist Abu Hanifa is most often mentioned as 80 AH/699 AD. All sources state that he was born during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan (685-705).

Main part. There is no doubt that Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit was born during the time of the Companions. Many hadith scholars and historians have noted that he met several Companions. Although there are different opinions about the companions he met, all sources report that he met the famous companion Anas ibn Malik. However, some have said that he was not a Tabi'i, but a Tabi' Tabi'i. This is due to the fact that the exact date of Abu Hanifa's birth is not known. Shamsiddin az-Dhahabi refuted the claims of those who say Tabi' Tabi'i and tried to prove that he was a Tabi'i [1:168].

Although it is said that the number of Abu Hanifa's teachers reached 4 thousand, he received his basic knowledge from Hammad ibn Abu Sulayman al-Kufi. He went to his teacher at the age of 22 and became a disciple for 18 years. After his teacher's death, he began to issue fatwas in his place at the age of 40. Among his teachers were the companions, Tabi'in, and Tabi' Tabi'in.

The era in which Abu Hanifa lived included complex political processes, during which representatives of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties ruled the caliphate. Nu'man ibn Thabit (may Allah have mercy on him) was invited to serve in government positions during both dynasties, but due to his sincerity and piety, he did not want to work in the proposed positions. Also, the attitude of the representatives of the dynasty or their representatives to the noble and respected people played an important role in determining Abu Hanifa's attitude towards them.

Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) did not like the Umayyads because of their harsh attitude towards the descendants of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This situation is also evident when Abu Hanifa sympathized with the rebellion of Zayd ibn Ali (695-740). Zayd ibn Ali, a descendant of Husayn ibn Ali (626-680), rebelled against Umayyad rule in 739. He wrote letters to prominent figures of his time, asking for their help. When Zayd ibn Ali wrote a letter asking Abu Hanifa to help him, Imam Azam sent him ten thousand dirhams, saying that he would support Zayd ibn Ali financially [4:31]. Of course, this shows Imam Azam's respect for the descendants of the Prophet. Abu Hanifa used to treat the governors' administration based on the same criteria. In 747, the governor of Iraq, Yazid ibn Umar ibn Hubaira, involved some of the jurists in state affairs. Among them were scholars such as Ibn Abi Laila (695-765), Abdullah ibn Shabruma (d. 761), and Dawud ibn Abu Hind (d. 757). Yazid ibn Umar also sent an envoy to Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) and asked him to serve as a seal. However, Abu Hanifa did not accept this. The governor threatened him with a beating if he did not accept the offer. However, he did not accept the offer. When people asked Abu Hanifa why he did not accept the governor's offer, he said: "How can I accept his offer? He has written a decree to execute people and asks me to approve it. Therefore, I will not accept this offer." Despite all the difficulties, Abu Hanifa did not want to be a seal. After that, Yazid ibn left him alone. Abu Hanifa escaped from custody with the help of a prison guard and went to Mecca. Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) lived in Mecca for 748-754, where he studied hadith and jurisprudence. He returned to Kufa during the reign of Abu Ja'far Mansur (755-775) [3:357].

Muhammad Abu Zahra (1898-1974) in his book "Abu Hanifa, His Life and the Period He Lived" cites information that Abu Hanifa was in Kufa at the beginning of the caliphate of Abu Abbas, i.e. in 749, and that the founder of the Abbasids gathered scholars and took allegiance from them. Abu Hanifa was among the scholars and pledged allegiance to the caliphate of Abu Abbas. If Abu Hanifa was in Kufa at that time, he may have come from Mecca temporarily and returned to Mecca because the political conflicts had not yet subsided [2:35].

Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) did not like the Umayyad rule because of the treatment of the descendants of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, he supported the Abbasid rule. He returned to Kufa during the reign of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur and began to participate in the study circles. However, relations between Abu Hanifa and the Abbasid caliph deteriorated after the rebellion in Basra led by Ibrahim ibn Abdullah, a descendant of Ali ibn Abu Talib, during the reign of Abu Ja'far Mansur.

Hasan ibn Qahtaba, one of Abu Ja'far's generals, came to Abu Hanifa and expressed his regret for his past actions and his desire to repent. Hasan ibn Qahtaba had participated in the battles against the Umayyads and was sorry for what he had done at that time. Abu Hanifa repented to him and told him that his repentance would be accepted if he did not fight the Muslims again as before. Hasan ibn Qahtaba repented and promised not to do the same things as before. Soon after, a rebellion broke out in Basra under the leadership of Ibrahim ibn Abdullah. Abu Ja'far Mansur ordered Hasan ibn Qahtaba to suppress the rebellion. He went to Abu Hanifa and told him what had happened. Abu Hanifa told him: "If you keep your promise, you will be steadfast in your repentance, otherwise you will be guilty of the sins of your past actions." After that, Hasan ibn Qahtaba told the caliph that he could not go to fight the rebellion. The caliph was angry and transferred the case of the rebellion to another general. Then the caliph asked his personal men who had influenced Hasan ibn Qahtaba. They said that the general had been going to Abu Hanifa. Some historians cite that after this incident, the caliph offered Abu Hanifa the position of judge to test his loyalty, and that the relationship between Abu Hanifa and the caliph deteriorated. However, considering that the rebellion of Ibrahim ibn Abdullah was suppressed in 763 and Abu Hanifa died in 767, it can be seen that the events related to the position of judge took place later. Abu Hanifa's attitude towards the activities of the judges of his time also caused him to have more opponents. In particular, Abu Hanifa would announce if there were shortcomings in the fatwas given by the judges of Kufa. One day, the judge of Kufa, Ibn Abi Laila, sentenced a woman named Majnun. She had told a man, "You are the child of two adulterers." Ibn Abi Laila announced that a woman would be given two hadds. One for accusing a man of adultery against his father and the other for accusing his mother of adultery. The hadd was carried out in the mosque while the woman

was standing. When this news reached Abu Hanifa, he said that Ibn Abi Laila had made several mistakes. These were:

- The hadd was carried out in the mosque. Hadds should not be carried out in the mosque;
- The woman was made to stand during the punishment. Usually, hadds are carried out on women while they are sitting;
- Two hadds were imposed for insulting a man's father and mother. Even if a person insults a large group of people, one hadd is imposed;
- Two hadds were imposed at the same time. They should not have been imposed at the same time;
- Hadd should not have been imposed on a mad person;
- After that, some judges complained to the Caliph about Abu Hanifa.

Caliph Abu Ja'far offered Abu Hanifa the position of chief judge to oversee all the affairs of the judges. But Abu Hanifa rejected this offer. His very objection led to his punishment by the caliph. Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) was imprisoned and tortured for a while. Then, he was released from prison with the right to issue fatwas only. However, he did not issue fatwas on the issues that came to him. After that, he was imprisoned again. Later, he was released from prison and sentenced to house arrest. People were forbidden to come to him and issue fatwas. According to the most reliable narrations, Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) remained in this state until the end of his life, and he died in Baghdad in 767. Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him) had willed that his body be buried in a place called Khaizaran. He was taken there. It is said that the number of people who attended the funeral prayer was more than fifty thousand. Upon learning of Abu Hanifa's death, the caliph acknowledged his great piety and piety, lamenting, "Who will now excuse me for your life and death?" Abu Hanifa's path in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) was later developed by his disciples and became known as the Hanafi school of thought. Today, the majority of Muslims in the world practice religious practices according to the Hanafi school of thought.

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