

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين



Introduction to Hanafi Fiqh / Lesson 1 Overview

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Introduction to the Iraqi School of Fiqh

This lesson serves as an introductory survey of the **madhhab of Ahl al-‘Irāq** (مذهب أهل العراق), the Iraqi legal tradition, which later developed into what is known as the **Ḥanafī school of law**. Rather than emerging suddenly with Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رحمه الله), this school represents the culmination of **generations of scholarly transmission**, beginning with the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and continuing through successive layers of jurists and scholars.

A central objective of the lesson is to demonstrate that the Iraqi tradition was firmly rooted in **Qur’ān, Sunnah, fiqh, and ḥadīth**, and that its scholars were neither isolated from other regions nor deficient in prophetic knowledge. Instead, Kūfah became one of the most vibrant intellectual centers of early Islam.

The Spread of Knowledge Through the Companions

Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) notes that the **religion, fiqh, and knowledge of Islam spread through the Ummah primarily via specific Companions**, particularly:

- ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (عبد الله بن مسعود)
- Zayd ibn Thābit (زيد بن ثابت)
- ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (عبد الله بن عمر)
- ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (عبد الله بن عباس)

Three of these—Zayd ibn Thābit, Ibn ‘Umar, and Ibn ‘Abbās—belonged to **Ṣiḡhār al-Ṣaḥābah** (صغار الصحابة, “the younger Companions”). They accepted Islam at a young age and **outlived many senior Companions**, allowing them to dedicate decades to teaching students in masājid and scholarly circles.

In contrast, many senior Companions were heavily engaged in **statecraft, military leadership, and governance** during the formative years of the Islamic

polity. Although they were deeply knowledgeable, they often lacked the extended time necessary to establish long-term teaching circles.

Regional Transmission of Knowledge in the Early Ummah

Madīnah

The scholarly tradition of Madīnah was initially shaped by **Zayd ibn Thābit**, who was regarded as its foremost jurist. Later, ‘**Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar**’ absorbed Zayd’s fiqh and began issuing his own legal opinions. Early Medinan fatwā practice relied heavily upon **the legal judgments of Zayd ibn Thābit**.

Makkah

The scholarship of Makkah developed primarily through **the students of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās** (رضي الله عنهما), whose mastery of Qur’ānic exegesis and legal reasoning earned him the title *Ḥabr al-Ummah*.

Iraq

As for Iraq, Ibn al-Qayyim states explicitly:

وَأَمَّا أَهْلُ الْعِرَاقِ فَعِلْمُهُمْ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ

“And as for the people of Iraq, their knowledge comes from the students of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd.”

This statement forms the foundation for understanding the Iraqi legal tradition.

The Companions Who Established the Iraqi Tradition

The Establishment of Kūfah

Approximately **one thousand five hundred Companions** entered Kūfah, among them **around thirty veterans of Badr** (بدرين). Kūfah itself did not exist prior to Islam; it was founded by the Muslims as a **garrison city**, eventually becoming a center of learning.

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (سعد بن أبي وقاص) was the founder of Kūfah and its first governor under 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه). He was one of the 'Asharah al-Mubashsharah (العشرة المبشرون بالجنة) and was known for having supplications that were accepted by Allāh.

Though temporarily removed from office due to political circumstances, not personal fault, he later governed Kūfah again under 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه).

'Ammār ibn Yāsir and Ibn Mas'ūd

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent 'Ammār ibn Yāsir as governor and 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd as teacher to Kūfah, writing:

إِنِّي بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ عَمَارًا أَمِيرًا، وَعَبْدَ اللَّهِ مُعَلِّمًا وَوَزِيرًا

“These two are among the noblest of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh

”
صلی الله
عليه وسلم

This official endorsement underscores Ibn Mas'ūd's central scholarly role in Iraq.

The Scholarly Rank of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd was among the **earliest converts to Islam** and among the most knowledgeable Companions in Qur’ān and fiqh. He stated that he learned **seventy sūrahs directly from the mouth of the Prophet** ﷺ, without intermediary.

He was also known as:

صَاحِبُ السَّوَاكِ وَالنَّعْلَيْنِ وَالْوَسَادِ

“The keeper of the siwāk, sandals, and pillow,”

reflecting his close personal service to the Prophet ﷺ.

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān famously said:

“The one who most resembles the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in guidance, conduct, judgment, and speech is ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd.”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in Kūfah

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) later relocated the **capital of the Caliphate to Kūfah**, further enriching its scholarly environment. He was among the earliest Muslims and one of the most capable judges of the Ummah.

When sent to Yemen as a judge, he expressed hesitation due to his youth, but the Prophet ﷺ supplicated:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ قَلْبَهُ وَثَبِّتْ لِسَانَهُ

After that, ‘Alī stated that he never doubted a legal judgment again.

The Kūfan Scholarly Circles

Kūfah became renowned for its **large teaching circles (ḥalaqāt)**. ‘Alī once remarked to Ibn Mas‘ūd:

“You have filled this city with knowledge and jurisprudence.”

The students of Ibn Mas‘ūd were known as “**the lamps of the masjid**” (قناديل المسجد).

Among the most important students was ‘**Alqamah ibn Qays al-Nakha‘ī** (علقة بن قيس). Ibn Mas‘ūd stated:

“There is nothing I know except that ‘Alqamah knows it.”

‘Alqamah so closely resembled Ibn Mas‘ūd in conduct and knowledge that scholars likened him to his teacher, just as Ibn Mas‘ūd resembled the Prophet

• صلى الله عليه وسلم •

Other prominent students included:

- al-Aswad ibn Yazīd
- Masrūq ibn al-Ajda‘
- ‘Ubaydah al-Salmānī
- Shurayḥ al-Qāḍī

Masrūq notably traveled extensively and studied with many Companions, later concluding that the knowledge of the Companions ultimately converged upon ‘**Alī and Ibn Mas‘ūd**.

Transmission of Qur'ānic Recitation in Kūfah

A key figure was **Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī**, who learned Qur'ān from 'Alī, 'Uthmān, Zayd ibn Thābit, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, and Ibn Mas'ūd. He taught Qur'ān in the Grand Mosque of Kūfah for **forty years**.

Through him, the **recitation of 'Āṣim**, transmitted today primarily via **Ḥafṣ**, spread to the Muslim world—making Kūfah central to global Qur'ānic transmission.

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī and the Maturation of Iraqi Fiqh

Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakha'ī grew up in a household of fiqh. His uncle al-Aswad and his relative 'Alqamah were direct students of Ibn Mas'ūd. He combined:

- The fiqh of Ibn Mas'ūd's students
- The ḥadīth expertise of Kūfan scholars

Al-A'mash stated that he never presented a ḥadīth to Ibrāhīm except that Ibrāhīm already knew it.

Balance Between Fiqh and Ḥadīth

While Iraqi scholars were particularly known for **legal reasoning**, this did not imply weakness in ḥadīth. Rather, fiqh dominated their discourse because of the **complex legal environment** of Iraq.

Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān and the Link to Abū Ḥanīfah

Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān was the leading jurist of Kūfah after Ibrāhīm. When asked who would succeed him, Ibrāhīm answered simply: “Ḥammād.”

Abū Ḥanīfah's Apprenticeship

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رحمه الله) studied under Ḥammād for **approximately seventeen to eighteen years**, remaining with him until his death. Only then did Abū Ḥanīfah assume the role of teaching.

This chain:

- Prophet ﷺ
- Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Alī
- Their students
- Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī
- Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān
- Abū Ḥanīfah

is regarded as the **golden chain of Iraqi fiqh**, with scholars at every level combining **ḥadīth and legal reasoning**.

Conclusion

This lesson demonstrates that the **Ḥanafī school** is deeply rooted in the scholarly legacy of the Companions, particularly **'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib**. The Iraqi tradition was not isolated, nor was it deficient in prophetic knowledge. Instead, it represented a **rich synthesis of Qur'ān, Sunnah, fiqh, and reasoned judgment**, transmitted through disciplined scholarly networks.

Understanding this historical development allows students to appreciate the Ḥanafī madhhab as a **carefully preserved and academically rigorous legal tradition**, rather than a product of individual opinion.