

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

THE LEGEND SERIES



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SESSION 1

Importance of Learning About Scholars

- The lives of these scholars are well documented and should be studied so that we can be inspired.
- Allah SWT spoke to the Prophet SAW through the Quran and He gave him (SAW) the stories of those before him so that he could be inspired.
- Allah SWT stated in Surah Yusuf:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ

Certainly in the stories of the bygone people there is a lesson for people of understanding. (12:111)

- The story of Prophet Yusuf AS was revealed to the Prophet SAW during the Year of Sorrow which was one of the hardest times on him.
 - It was sent as a support and encouragement to the Prophet SAW.
- Imam Abu Hanifa stated: The stories of the righteous people and their great qualities are more enjoyable than studying the great laws of fiqh because in studying their lives, it gives us comfort.

EDUCATION | PRESERVATION | APPLICATION

Abu Hanifa

- He is the founder of the Hanafi school of thought.
- He was born in Kufa in the year 80 AH and he passed away in 150 AH.
- His forefathers were from Persia.
 - He was the greatest Non-Arab scholar that has come to this world.
 - This shows how far knowledge had traveled in such a short period of time.
 - Within the first century after the Prophet's SAW time, knowledge had been transferred into the hands of Non-Arabs.
 - Most of the community leaders were Non-Arab.
- People said that he had a daughter named Hanifa which is why he was called Abu Hanifa.
- He would recite the Quran day and night.
- His greatest sheikh and teacher was Hammad bin Sulaiman.
 - Imam Abu Hanifa stayed with this teacher for about 40 years until the teacher passed away.
 - Abu Hanifa stated that he had been a student of Hammad for 10 years and he began to think that he had enough knowledge to start his own circle to teach. As he was thinking about this, one of his teacher's relatives passed away.

- His teacher, Hammad, had to go to Basra, where his relative passed away, to help them distribute the inheritance, so he asked Abu Hanifa to take over his position while he was gone. Abu Hanifa took over his gathering and he was asked 60 different questions by the people while the teacher was traveling. Abu Hanifa answered the questions to the best of his ability and when Hammad returned Abu Hanifa told him the questions that were asked and the answers which he gave. Hammad agreed with 40 out of the 60 answers which Abu Hanifa gave. Abu Hanifa stated that he had not ever heard any of the 60 questions before so the answers that he gave were purely from Allah. After this Abu Hanifa decided to stay with his teacher for another 18 years.
- He traveled across the world to learn from other people.
 - He learned from several Tabi's, as well as some companions of the Prophet SAW.
 - Scholars say that he met Anas ibn Maalik RA.
 - This would mean that Abu Hanifa is considered a Tabi'.
- One Tabi' stated that Abu Hanifa was the brain of knowledge.
 - People would ask him about things when they disagreed upon them.

- One person asked Imam Maalik if he had ever met Abu Hanifa. Imam Maalik stated that Abu Hanifa was so smart that if he was to come and look at a wooden pillar, he would be able to prove that it was made of gold if he wanted to.
 - This means that if Abu Hanifa wanted to prove that someone was the opposite of what it actually was, he was so intelligent and he debated so well that he could do it.
- Imam Maalik and Abu Hanifa met in Madinah and spoke from Isha time until Fajr.

The Generosity of Abu Hanifa

- While he was a teacher, he was able to affect his students greatly.
 - Imam Abu Yusuf was one of his students. He said that in his childhood he would work because his family was very poor. He would go learn from Abu Hanifa and one day his father told him, “do not try to sit with Abu Hanifa because you are poor. The bread that Abu Hanifa eats is fine and cooked and you need food and money.” Abu Yusuf said that he did not go to Abu Hanifa’s class for several days after this. One day he returned to the class and Abu Hanifa asked him why he had not been attending the class. Abu Yusuf stated, “I have been busy making money for my family and fulfilling my father’s command.” Then Abu Yusuf sat in the gathering.

- Once it was over, Abu Hanifa called him up and he gave him a bag which had 100 gold coins in it. He told him to take this money and use it for his family and to come to his class. Abu Hanifa told him that when this money was finished he must ask him for more. Abu Yusuf said that he was always shy to ask for more money but Abu Hanifa had an idea of when the money would finish and he would always give him more.
 - Some scholars said that Abu Hanifa sponsored him for 29 years while others said it was 17 years.
- Imam Abu Hanifa was also a great business man.
 - He sold silk.
 - He inherited this business from his parents.
 - This business made him very wealthy.
- One day, Abu Hanifa was doing business with a person. He was selling the man a big pile of clothing and he told him that there may be a piece in the pile which has a slight flaw in it. Abu Hanifa then told him that when he goes to sell it he must be sure to inform the buyer that there may be a flaw in one of the pieces. The man went and sold the cloth and forgot to tell the person that there was a fault. He came back to Abu Hanifa and told him that he forgot to inform the man about the flaw. Abu Hanifa was very stressed when he heard this. As a result he donated the value of his entire business to charity just out of fear that on the Day of Judgement, Allah SWT would ask him about why he cheated someone in business.

- This is just one example of the amount of taqwa that Abu Hanifa had.
- He would always give clothing and food to his students who did not have.
- It was said about Abu Hanifa that for every dollar that he would spend on himself, he would donate the same amount to charity.
 - This means that half of his wealth was spent in charity.

The Piety of Abu Hanifa

- It was said about Abu Hanifa that he was a person who had immense fear of God.
- He was a person who was constantly in thought.
- He did not get into the conversations of people in depth.
- He would recite the Quran in his prayer from Isha until Fajr.
 - People would call him a pillar from how long he would stand in salah.
- He passed away in sajdah.
- One of the criticisms against Abu Hanifa is that he did not narrate many ahadith.
 - People criticised him for this because in order to answer people's questions, a scholar would have to be knowledgeable in both Quran and hadith. People who were knowledgeable in only one or the other were still considered scholars but they would not be considered as capable of answering people's questions.

- Many of the great companions would also be afraid to narrate the hadith of the Prophet SAW because they were afraid that there would be a flaw in the narration.
 - After narrating a hadith they would often end it with “or how the Prophet SAW said it” to make sure that the person understood that this may be slightly different.
- Ibn Abbas said to a group of people who began to question religion: There are groups of people who are very knowledgeable and they are silent out of the fear of Allah not because they are less knowledgeable or they are mute. The only reason they are quite on certain matters is because they are afraid that it may cause division. These are the scholars.
- Imam Shafi stated that when it comes to knowledge, people are dependent on Abu Hanifa because he was such a great scholar.
- It was said that he would never sleep at night. He would only sleep for a few hours during the afternoon.
- One scholar said that he was a student of Abu Hanifa for 6 months and he never saw him pray Fajr except with the wudu of Isha. He would finish the Quran every night.
- One of the children of Abu Hanifa said that as long as he knew Abu Hanifa, he had never seen him lay down on his bed at night. In the summer he would sleep between Duhur and Asr and in the winter he would sleep between Maghrib and Isha.

- When Abu Hanifa reached the following ayah he would spend hours crying and making dua.

فَمَنْ لِّلّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَّوَقِنَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ

Then Allah graced us with His favour and saved us from the chastisement of the scorching wind. (52:27)

The Late Life of Abu Hanifa

- He was very vocal when it came to politics.
- The king wanted to make Abu Hanifa the judge but Abu Hanifa refused the role because the judge at that time would be pressured to say things that were contrary to the teachings of the Prophet SAW just to appease the government.
 - He continued to refuse this role and because of this he was imprisoned and tortured.
- All of the great scholars were imprisoned and tortured during their lives.
 - This is a sign of truth.
 - People with the truth do not give up the truth when under the pressure of powerful people.
- Imam Shafi said: I have traveled the world and I have not seen a work that was one like Abu Hanifa. I did not find an example like Abu Hanifa in the East or the West or in the middle of Kufa (the central place for knowledge at that time).

- Abu al-Hasan An-Nadawi said that if there are 2 qualities in an individual, the world would be forced to fall on their knees and accept their authority of knowledge. These qualities are:
 - They are intellectually very capable and smart
 - This refers to academic knowledge as well as social knowledge of the people around them.
 - They are highly spiritual people.
 - This spirituality is backed up by sincerity which is the only way their work will be accepted by Allah SWT.
- Both of these qualities were embodied by Imam Abu Hanifa.