



## The Life of Imam Abu Hanifa and The History and Development of Fiqh

### Part 1, The Life of Imam Abu Hanifa:

Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān ibn Thābit b. Zū‘ā ibn Marzubān was born in the year 80 AH/699 AD and died in the year 150 AH/767 AD. He was a Sunni Muslim theologian and Islamic scholar and jurist. He also is the founder of the Sunni Hanafi school of thought in jurisprudence, which has remained the most widely followed school of thought in Islam. In theology and creed, Imam Abu Hanifa’s theological school and opinions on Islamic Creed later developed into the Maturidi School of Sunni Islamic Creed. He is known as Imam al-A‘zam (The Greatest Imam), and Siraj al-a‘imma (The Lamp of the Imams). He was born to a Muslim family in Kufa, a city in Greater Khorasan and was of Persian descent according to the soundest opinion. Imam Abu Hanifa had a son named Hammad, and a grandson named Isma‘il.

Abu Hanifa’s father was a merchant and so when Abu Hanifa was young, he became a silk trader and eventually became moderately wealthy. Abu Hanifa memorized the Qur’an at a young age. In the early stages of his youth, Abu Hanifa was interested in theological debates and debates regarding creed, however, later on he focused on legal studies and jurisprudence. He studied under the great Imam, Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman for about 18 years before Hammad’s demise, after being recommended by Al Sha’bi to do so due to Al Sha’bi seeing promise in the young Abu Hanifa. At the time, Hammad was perhaps one of the greatest scholars and no doubt the most noted Iraqi jurist. After Hammad had passed, Abu Hanifa became his successor. He also studied under the great Meccan scholar ‘Ata, and the great Imam, Ja’far Al-Sadiq, Imam Muhammad Al Baqir, and others. Imam Abu Hanifa was the only founder out of the 4 founders of the 4 canonical schools of thought in Sunni Islam who was a tabi‘ee, meaning he met the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). There are differences amongst the scholars on how many companions he met, some say he met with 4 companions of the Prophet Muhammad at a young age, Al Dhahabi states he met with 7 companions, etc. but it is almost unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of Tarikh and Hadith that he at least met Anas ibn Malik and perhaps had learned some ahadith from him. Al Hafiz ibn Hajar Al Haythami mentions in his *Al Khayrat Al Hisan* that he met 17 companions. It has come in narrations that he met Ali ibn Abi Talib in Makkah when he went to make Hajj with his father at a young age, in which the

great companion Ali (R.A) had made du'a for the young Abu Hanifa. The scholars mention that this may be the reason Imam Abu Hanifa's school was, and still is the most recognized and popular amongst the Muslims. Reports say that when he was 16, he went to Hajj with his father and encountered Abdullah Ibn Al-Harith, a companion of The Holy Prophet, and transmitted a number of narrations from him. Among them, the famous saying of The Prophet, "The person who gets deep knowledge in The Religion of Allah, Allah relieves all of his worldly concerns, and he gains providence from sources he cannot imagine." One day Abu Hanifa visited his teacher and renowned Muhaddith, Imam Al A'mash and a man came to A'mash and asked a question, A'mash then told Imam Abu Hanifa to answer, to which he did, A'mash then asked from where he had gotten this response from and Abu Hanifa stated "from a hadith you narrated", A'mash being so amazed by Abu Hanifa's response to the questioner, he said, "The Fuqaha (Scholars of Jurisprudence) are doctors, and we (Scholars of Traditions) are but pharmacists.". Some examples of Imam Abu Hanifa's amazing mannerisms and decorum is of what has been related to us from Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Abi Bushairy, in which he states that Imam Abu Hanifa said, "After Hammad died, after every prayer I would supplicate for him and for his father." He also stated that he would never spread his legs in the direction of Hammad's home when resting. He would also never knock on the door of Hammad, rather he would instead wait for Hammad to exit his house. Abu Hanifa's teachings were closely aligned with that of the great Faqih and Sahaba, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, as well as The Fourth Rightly Guided Caliph Ali as his chain of transmissions especially when it came to jurisprudence stemmed from them due to the change of the capital of the Islamic Caliphate to Kufa.

Through his extensive knowledge and great brilliance as an Islamic Scholar, Imam Abu Hanifa had reached the level of Ijtihad (independent reasoning), and thus he became a Mujtahid. Imam Abu Hanifa's teachings were very well-received and sought after, especially by the people of Kufa, making him the leader of what we now know as the Hanafi Madh'ab. His way of deduction when it came to Islamic Law and his principles of Fiqh deferred from the traditional way at the time, before Abu Hanifa's time, doctrines had been formulated mainly in response to actual problems, whereas he attempted to solve problems that might arise in the future. By the introduction of this method, the area of law was considerably enlarged. Because of this enlargement of the bounds of law and because of Abu Hanifa's somewhat rationalist orientation and his reserve about traditions that were not highly authenticated, his school was sometimes referred to as the school of ra'y (intellect), as opposed to that of Hadith (authoritative tradition), due to the fact he sometimes preferred using qiyas (analogical reasoning) over hadith, especially if the chain of the narration were extremely weak. The development of analogical reason and the scope and boundaries by which it may be used is recognized by the majority of Muslim jurists, but its establishment as a legal tool is the result of the Hanafi school. While it was likely used by some of his teachers, Abu Hanifa is regarded by modern scholarship as the first to formally adopt and institute analogical reason as a part of Islamic law. Due to this, Imam Abu Hanifa and his school were criticized and denounced by some, but there is no doubt that the Imam was an Imam of his time and showed amazing prowess in his respective fields, and that his school is a valid school of thought in Islam. Those who criticize the school and Imam Abu Hanifa should know of the statement of Nu'man, in which he stated, "Relieving oneself in the Masjid is better than using Qiyas in some cases.". Also,

in the Hanafi School, da'eef hadith (weak narrations) are considered before the use of analogical reasoning. So, it can be concluded that the Imam never used qiyas without great reason to do so.

Ibn Mubarak was asked who was more knowledgeable, Imam Malik or Imam Abu Hanifa, to which he replied "Abu Hanifa". Imam Abu Hanifa was a simple man, and he lived a simple life, but he would remain clean and presentable, and was also fond of perfumes and scents. He would pray voluntary prayers often, therefore one of his nicknames given to him were Al-Watad, meaning the one firm on faith. Abu Yusuf said about him that he would complete The Quran every night in one raka' of involuntary prayer. He also related that once he was walking with Abu Hanifa at night when a man said about Abu Hanifa, that, "This is Abu Hanifa, he does not sleep at night." To which Abu Hanifa replied, "What I do not do should not be discussed.", showing the immense humility of the Imam. It has been reported that Abu Hanifa would pray the Fajr prayers with the ablution of the Isha prayers. Abu Hanifa's wife said that he would not place his head on the pillow at night, in summer he would take a siesta between Zuhr and Asr, and during winter in between Maghrib and Isha, although it is disliked to sleep after maghrib, one could say this was a specific practice of Abu Hanifa's due to his immense striving in the religion and ascetism from the world. Abu Juwaidiya related that during his 6 months stay with Abu Hanifa, he did not see Abu Hanifa sleep. A man said that he heard Abu Hanifa recite the entire Quran in one raka' of prayer as the man was sitting in the masjid contently listening to the recitation of the Quran. Kharija ibn Mus'ab related that only four imams are known to have completed the whole Quran in one raka' of prayer, two of which were companions, and the latter two being among the successors. They are: Imam Uthman ibn Affan, Imam Tamim Al Dari, Imam Sa'id ibn Jubair, and Imam Abu Hanifa. Imam Abu Hanifa would occasionally complete the Qur'an sixty times throughout Ramadan, once in the day and once in the night. Qasim ibn Ma'n related to us that once Abu Hanifa was reciting the verses "Indeed, the wicked are entrenched in misguidance, and are bound for blazes. On the Day they will be dragged into the Fire on their faces, they will be told, "Taste the touch of Hell." And cried until the morning. Abu Hanifa was once told by a man to "fear Allah". To which his face had morphed into one of distraught to which he replied, "May Allah reward you with goodness."

In 763, al-Mansur, the Abbasid caliph offered Abu Hanifa the post of Chief Judge of the State, but he declined the offer, choosing to remain independent. His illustrious student, Abu Yusuf was later appointed Qadi Al-Qudat (Chief Judge of the State) by the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. In his reply to al-Mansur, Abu Hanifa 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 Abu Hanifa of lying. "If I am lying," Abu Hanifa 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 Abu Hanifa arrested, locked in prison, and tortured. He was never fed nor cared for. Even there, the jurist continued to teach those who were permitted to come to him. On 15 Rajab 150 AH (August 15, 767 AD), Abu Hanifa died in prison. The cause of his death is not clear, as some say that Abu Hanifa issued a legal opinion for bearing arms against Al-Mansur, and the latter had him poisoned. If this report is true, then the great Imam would have died a shahid (martyr), for in Islamic Law, death by poisoning fits the criteria as martyrdom in Islam. 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 20 days people went on performing funeral prayer for him. Later, after many years, the Abū Hanifa Mosque was built in the Adhamiyah neighbourhood of Baghdad. Abū Hanifa also supported the cause of Zayd ibn Ali and Ibrahim al Qamar both Alid Zaidi Imams. The tomb of Abū Hanifa and the tomb of Abdul Qadir Gilani were destroyed by Shah Ismail of Safavi empire in 1508. In 1533, Ottomans conquered Baghdad and rebuilt the tomb of Abū Hanifa and other Sunni sites. It can now be visited in Baghdad, at Abu Hanifa Mosque, which is built around the tomb of the great Imam.

Yusuf ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Mizzi listed 97 hadith scholars who were his students. Most of them were famous hadith scholars, and their narrated hadiths were compiled in the Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and other famous books of hadith. Imām Badr al-Din al-Ayni included another 260 students who studied Hadith and Fiqh from Abu Hanifa. His most famous students include Imām Abu Yusuf, who served as the first chief justice in the Muslim world. Another famous student was Imām Muhammad al-Shaybani, who was the teacher of the founder of the Shafi'i school of Imām Al-Shafi'i, and Imam Zuffar ibn Al Hudhayl, the refiner and imam of Qiyas (analogical reasoning), and the one who disliked using istihsan in his approach. Some other well-known students of Imam Abu Hanifa were Abdullah ibn Mubarak, Fudhayl ibn Iyad, Wakee' ibn Jarrah, Aafiyah ibn Yazeed, and others.

References: Most of this information can be found in Imam Al Dhahabi's *Manaqib Al-Imam Abu Hanifa wa Sahibayhi Abu Yusuf wa Muhammad ibn al-Hasan*, and Ibn Hajar Al Haythami's *Al Khayrat Al Hisan Jawaahir Al Bayan fi Manaqib Imam Al A'zam Abu Hanifa Al Nu'man*

### The History and Development of Fiqh:

The history and development of Usul-al-Fiqh and Fiqh in general passed through four primary eras: The Era of the Prophet, The Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, The Era of the Companions, and elder Successors and, and The Era of Codification. This era begins with Muḥammad ﷺ being appointed as the last and final messenger, thirteen years before the migration to Madinah, and ends with his leaving this world in the 11th year after migration. This era is considered to be the most important time in the development of Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh simply because this was the era of divine revelation. Divine legislation, the law as revealed by Allah ﷻ and explained by His Messenger ﷺ was completed during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. The foundation of Fiqh throughout history has always been and will always be revelation, which is made up of both the Qur'ān and Sunnah. There were only two sources of law or legislation: the Quran and the Sunnah. Later on, the scholars began to codify and explain the legislations of the Quran and The Sunnah due to discrepancies in the general public's knowledge, customs, traditions, cultures, languages, regions, etc. This was done in order to make it easier upon the Ummah to correctly follow the rulings that He ordained. One may ask if this leads to division, dispute, and different factions or if the established positions of one school of thought is wrong compared to others, etc. but this is not the case, Imam Malik says "Differences of opinion is mercy." And the famous hadith of Banu Qurayzah says different as

well. There is the famous ḥadīth of Banū Qurayzah. The Prophet ﷺ told his Companions, “Do not pray ‘aṣr prayer until you reach Banū Qurayzah [a village near Madīnah].” A group of them were delayed on the way and the time for ‘aṣr prayer was almost finished. Some of them decided not to pray until they arrived, taking the Prophet’s words literally. Others from the group insisted: “We will pray. The Prophet ﷺ didn’t mean that we should skip the prayer.” After they arrived, they informed the Prophet what had happened, and he didn’t criticize either of them for what they did.

The era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs started after the Prophet ﷺ left this world in the year 11 A.H. and lasted for about 30 years, until 40 A.H. As mentioned earlier, divine revelation was complete during the time of the Prophet ﷺ in the form of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, and they served as the primary sources for the legal judgments and rulings of the jurists among the Companions. The primary sources then became 4: Qur’an, Sunnah, Ijma’ (Consensus), and Qiyas/Ijtihad (Personal Opinion/Rationale). As Muslim society progressed and expanded, the companions faced situations and problems that they did not face during the time of the Prophet ﷺ and it was necessary for them to determine the legal rulings for them. The jurists (fuqaha’) amongst the companions took on the responsibility of determining the rulings of these new issues and occurrences, using their skills of reason in the light of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Their methodology was straight forward and built upon the methodology that the Prophet ﷺ approved for Mu‘ādh (ra) when he sent him to Yemen. If something new came up they would first look to the Qur’ān. If they could not find the ruling in the Qur’ān they would turn to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. If they could not find the ruling in the aḥādīth then they would gather the companions and try to reach a collective decision. If no collective decision were reached, the jurist companion would give their own opinion. Whenever there is ijtiḥād it is natural for there to be disagreements. Another jurist will either agree with the conclusion or disagree with it. It should not be surprising that there were differences of opinion amongst the companions (ra), but their differences were few and rare. There are about 130 Companions, both male and female, who were known to have given fatwā. There were seven who gave more fatāwā than others: ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abdullāhibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Ā’ishah, Zaid ibn Thābit, ‘Abdullāhibn ‘Abbās and 7) ‘Abdullāhibn ‘Umar (ra). Then there were others who gave less such as Abū Bakr, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (ra).

The Era of The Younger Companions and The Successors (Tabi’een) began after the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, around the year 41 A.H and lasted until the beginning of the second century A.H., right before the fall of the Umayyad Dynasty. Legislation during this time period was very similar to what it was during the time of the Companions (ra). Meaning, the methodology of the Companions (ra) and their students, the Tābi‘ūn (r), in deriving legal rulings was very similar. They would first look to the Qur’ān, then the Sunnah, then Ijmā’ and lastly Qiyās.

During this time period Muslim society progressed and expanded even more bringing about many unprecedented issues and cases that needed to have legal rulings. With the growth and expansion of Islamic lands there was a need for individuals to go to these new places to teach people their new religion.

During and after the time of ‘Uthmān (ra) many of the jurists amongst the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ were sent to different parts of the Islamic world as teachers and judges. There were six major centers of the Islamic world:

Makkah: ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās (ra)

Madinah: ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (ra), Mujāhid ibn Jabr (r), ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (r), and Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān (r).

Kufa: ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (ra), ‘Alqamah al-Nakha‘ī (r), al-Aswad ibn Yazīd (r) and Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī (r).

Basra: Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (ra), Anas ibn Mālik (ra), Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (r).

Sham: Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal (ra), ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit (ra), Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī (r) and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r).

Misr: ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ.

The development of fiqh and legislation and its expansion during this era can be attributed to three main factors:

1) Widening of the scope and application of fiqh and increase of disagreements

The scope of fiqh expands and grows with the occurrence of new events, incidents, and circumstances and these constantly change depending on the time and place. In addition to that Islam had spread to foreign lands that had their own unique customs, traditions, societal, and economic practices. Every jurist takes into consideration the circumstances and society they live in when giving rulings as long as it does not go against the Sharī‘ah. 1) Spreading out of the Fuqaha 2) Difficult to establish Ijma’ 3) Every city learned fiqh from its Faqih.

2) Spreading of the Narration of Hadith

During the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the Rightly Guided Caliphs the narration of aḥādīth was limited because there was not a great need for it. As the companions (ra) spread across the Muslim world so too did the narration of aḥādīth. Not every Companion was equal when it came to aḥādīth, some had memorized more than others. Some had heard more than others and some narrated more than others. The increase in narration of hadith had a huge influence on fiqh. Narrations were being used more often to derive and establish rulings.

3) The emergence of the Traditionalists and the Rationalists

As mentioned earlier, the jurists amongst the Companions (ra) can be divided into two broad categories; those who were extremely hesitant in doing their own ijtihād and expressing their own personal opinion so used it sparingly and those who would do their own ijtihād whenever the need would arise. The first group feared contradicting the letter of the Qur'ān and Sunnah so they were hesitant in going beyond what the text said.

During this time period both of these tendencies became more defined and their methodologies started to become more refined. This led to the emergence of two informal schools of legal thought or methodology, the Rationalists (Ahl al-Ra'y) and the Traditionalists (Ahl al-Ḥadīth). There were differences between them concerning source methodology and issues of case law. Both of these schools had their origins in the approaches of the Companions (ra), but it was during this time that their differences in matters of fiqh became clear. Slowly, people started grouping themselves on the basis of their differences in deriving legal rulings from their sources.

Historians write that the Traditionalist school was a continuation of those Companions whose fear of contradicting the letter of the Qur'ān and Sunnah made them circumspect to the point where they very rarely went beyond the text itself. For example, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (ra) and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (ra). The Traditionalist school became widespread in the ḥijāz and specifically Madīnah. It can be said that the Traditionalist School organically developed and evolved into the School of Madīnah, which then developed into the School of Imām Mālik. One of the reasons why it became widespread in Madīnah is because of the abundance of aḥādīth and familiarity with the fatāwā of a number of Companions.

The leading scholar of this camp was al-Imām Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab (r) (94). There were seven successors who are considered to be the seven jurists of Madinah who carried on the teachings of the Companions from that area: 1) 'Urwah ibn Zubair (94) 2) Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab (94) 3) al-Qasim ibn Muḥammad (94) 4) Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith (94) 5) 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abdillah ibn 'Utbah ibn Mas'ūd (98) 6) Khārijah ibn Zaid (99) and 7) Sulaymān ibn Yasār (107). They were known as the Seven Jurists (al-Fuqahā' al-Sab'ah). As mentioned above their methodology and approach continues to evolve and develop culminating in the School of Imām Mālik (r).

The Rationalist school was an extension of the school of 'Umar and 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (ra), who were the most wide ranging in their use of ijtihād. 'Alqamah ibn Qays al-Nakha'ī (62) was influenced by them, the uncle and teacher of Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, who taught Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān, who was the teacher of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (r). The rationalist school gained popularity in Iraq and organically developed into what is known as the School of Kūfah. The School of Kūfah was the foundation for the School of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (r).

The jurists in this camp felt that legal interpretations should not be limited to the letter of the texts but also the spirit. They felt it was their responsibility to uncover the higher meanings and wisdoms behind the laws and to make connections between them. The reason why this

methodology became popular in Iraq is because of the number of Companions who were influenced by ‘Umar (ra).

Both of these informal schools agreed on the importance and status of aḥādīth within the framework of Islamic Law and accepted that it was the most important source of law after the Qur’ān. At the same time, the traditionalists also agreed with the rationalists on the need for having recourse to reason and ijtihād for those issues that were not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’ān and ḥadīth.

#### 2.4: The Era of the Mujtahid Imams and Codification

This era started in the beginning of the second century A.H. and lasted till about the middle of the 4th century A.H. During this time period Fiqh as a discipline went through expansive growth and refinement. It flourished and developed into an independent discipline. This was the era of expert jurists, the great mujtahids, who laid down the foundations of their respective schools of thought. Every school of thought in reality is a juristic methodology of approaching the Qur’ān and Sunnah and extracting rules from them. This was also the era of the great scholars of ḥadīth. Both the study of fiqh and ḥadīth were codified and became disciplines that were taught and studied. Books were compiled and written. Because of all this advancement in the field of Islamic Studies this era is known as the Golden Era of Fiqh, the Era of Codification, and the Era of the Mujtahidūn.

This expansive growth and development can be attributed to a number of different factors:

1) The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs gave a lot of care and importance to fiqh and fuqahā’.

The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs were fond of jurists and would consult them fairly often. For example, the Caliph Rashīd had asked Imām Abū Yūsuf (r), the famous student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (r), to establish a system of laws for the financial affairs of the state. In response he wrote his famous book al-Kharaj. The Caliph Maṣṣūr tried to convince Imām Mālīk (r) to make his Muwaṭṭa’ the official book of law for the Caliphate as did Hārūn al-Rashīd after him. This care and importance from the government level allowed the jurists to flourish.

2) The expansiveness of the Muslim State

Muslim rule stretched all the way from Spain to China. This added a lot of richness to fiqh. Each area faced its own unique circumstances, issues, conditions, and culture that played a role in the development and advancement of Fiqh.

3) The work of the great Mujtahid Imāms; Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālīk, Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, and Imām Aḥmad (r).

4) The codification of Ḥadīth



By this time a number of the most famous collections of ḥadīth had been compiled and authored. One of the earlier works is the Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik (r). This era marked a new phase in the development and documentation of ḥadīth. One of the most distinctive features of this period was to separate the aḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ from the sayings of the Companions and Successors. The ḥadīth compilers of this era on the whole observed the principles of Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth that had already gained recognition and the methodological guidelines that were developed. This was the era in which Ḥadīth Studies flourished and books on different disciplines were written.

It was in the second half of this century that the six most famous and well-recognized books of ḥadīth were compiled: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Sunan ibn Mājah, and Sunan al-Nasā'ī. These books make up the six canonical books of ḥadīth known as al-Ṣiḥaḥ al-Sittah (The Six Authentic Books) or al-Kutub al-Sittah (The Six Books).

Through the tireless effort of the luminaries of the first three centuries of Islam, the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ was gathered, analyzed, organized, codified, and preserved for future generations. Many of these works have been passed on from generation to generation and are still read, studied, explained, and commented on in seminaries and universities throughout the world.

#### 5) The emergence of the formal legal schools of thought.

As mentioned earlier, the School of Abū Ḥānīfah emerged from the School of Kūfah, and the School of Imām Mālik (r) was born out of the School of Madīnah. Imām al-Shāfi'ī (r) was influenced heavily by both schools, being a student of both Imām Mālik (r) and Imām Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (r), one of the foremost students of Abū Ḥanīfah (r). He then developed his own methodology and framework for deriving Fiqh from its sources. As a matter of fact, the first person to write a book on Uṣūl al-Fiqh is Imām al-Shāfi'ī (r). That is why he is considered to be the father of Uṣūl al-Fiqh. The School of Imām Aḥmad (r) was born from the School of Ḥadīth or the Traditionalists.

Each school of thought produced its own jurists who would then produce works that served as the basis of future works within the same school. Each school specified its methodology for interpreting texts and deriving legal rulings from them. Each school developed an independent set of principles and methodology that it used to derive legal rulings from the Quran, Sunnah, Ijmā', and Qiyās. Because of several factors four schools of thought gained widespread acceptance and prominence: Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī. It is through the tireless efforts of these amazing jurists that Fiqh was codified, organized, and preserved for future generations. Many of these works have been passed on from generation to generation and are still read, studied, explained, and commented on till this day.