

Imam Zufar Ibn al-Hudhayl

Summarized from Shaikh Zahid Al Kawthari's *Lamhatun Nazr Fi Siratil Imam Zufar*

By Maulana Muaz Billoo

Born in the year 110 AH¹ in the city of Asbahan, Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl ؓ is celebrated for being among the early *fuqaha* (Islamic jurists) and for being among Imam Abu Hanifah's ؓ greatest students.

The cause which led to Imam Zufar's studying under Abu Hanifah was that initially, Imam Zufar was from among the scholars of Hadith. One day, a legal issue was presented before him and his companions regarding which they were unsure about the answer. So he came to Abu Hanifah and asked him about the legal issue. Imam Abu Hanifah responded, so Imam Zufar asked, "What is your proof for this?" Abu Hanifah responded, "Due to such Hadith, and such a *qiyas* (comparison) from this angle." Thereafter Abu Hanifah said to Zufar, "if the issue was such then what will be the answer then?" Zufar noted that he was more unsure about this second issue than he was about the first one. Abu Hanifah said, "The answer will be such, due to such reason." Then Abu Hanifah presented a third legal issue before Zufar, and went on to answer that issue while clarifying the proofs and reasoning behind that answer.

Zufar said, "I returned to my companions and I asked them about these issues. They were more blind than me, so I informed them regarding the answers, and clarified for them the proofs for those answers. They asked, 'Where have you acquired this from?' I responded, 'From Abu Hanifah.' Thus, I became the leader of the *halaqah* (circle of knowledge) because of three legal issues."

Thereafter he went on to study fiqh under Abu Hanifah for twenty years, and became one of his ten great students who would codify books (of fiqh) with Abu Hanifah. The other nine were: Abu Yusuf, Asad ibn 'Amr Al Bajali, 'Afiyah Al Awdiyy, Dawud At Ta'iyy, Al Qasim ibn Ma'n Al Mas'udiyy, Ali ibn Mushir², Yahya ibn Zarakiyya ibn Abi Za'idah, Hibban ibn Ali Al 'Anaziyy, Mandal ibn Ali Al 'Anaziyy.³

Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah said, "I asked my father (Uthman)⁴, and my uncle Abu Bakr⁵ about Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl. They both said that he Zufar was from those who had the deepest understanding of Islam of his time. My father said, 'Abu Nu'aym, Al Fadl ibn Dukayn⁶, would praise Zufar by saying, 'He was a noble *faqih* (jurist).'"⁷

'Amr ibn Sulaiman Al 'Attar said, "I used to be in Kufa attending the gatherings of Abu Hanifah. When Zufar got married, Abu Hanifah attended. Zufar requested Abu Hanifah to speak. Abu Hanifah delivered a sermon, and in his sermon he mentioned, "This is Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl; he is an Imam from the Imams of the Muslims. He is a sign from the signs of the religion with respect to his nobility and his knowledge." When he

¹ *Siyar A'lam An Nubalaa*

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³ أخبار أبي حنيفة وأصحابه للصيرى

⁴ Abul Hasan Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Shaybah Ibrahim Al 'Absiyy (b. 156, d. 239). He was one of the *Thiqat* (reliable narrators of Hadith) and *Huffadh* (Hadith masters).

⁵ Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Shaybah Ibrahim Al 'Absiyy (b.159, d. 235). The Great *Hafidh*, and the author of *Al Musannaf*.

⁶ Al Mulaa'iy Al Kufiyy (b. 130, d.218/219), he was reliable, strong, a Hadith master. He was from the shuyookh of Al Bukhari and Muslim, and his narrations can be found throughout the books of Hadith.

⁷ أخبار أبي حنيفة وأصحابه للصيرى

mentioned his qualities and praised him, some members of Zufar's family said, "We would not like for anyone other than Abu Hanifah to speak." However, other members of his family disliked this and remarked, "The noblemen of your family are in attendance and yet you ask Abu Hanifah to speak?!" So Zufar replied to them, "Even if my father was in attendance I would have preferred Abu Hanifah (to speak) over him."⁸

Muhammad Zahid Al Kawthari said quoting this story, "Abu Hanifah's aforementioned praise (of Zufar) is sufficient for one to recognize Zufar's status."⁹

Malih ibn Waki' said that he heard his father saying, "Zufar was very pious, excellent in *qiyas* (analogy); he would write little but he would memorize whatever he wrote."

Yahya ibn Ma'in said that he heard Abu Nu'aym (Al Fadl ibn Dukayn) saying, "Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl was from the best of the people."

Ibn Abdil Barr said, "Zufar was a man of intelligence, religion, understanding, and piety. He was *thiqah* (reliable) in hadith."

Adh Dhahabi said, "Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl Al 'Anbariyy: He was one of the *fuqaha* (jurists) and *zuhad* (ascetics). He was truthful, and many had declared him reliable, such as (Yahya) ibn Ma'in.

In his *Lamhat An Nazar Fi Sirat Al Imam Zufar*, Muhammad Zahid Al Kawthari quotes from Abu Sa'd As Sam'ani's *Al Ansaab* that Zufar had transmitted Imam Abu Hanifah's *Kitab Al Athar*.¹⁰

The names of some of his shuyookh include:

1. Sulaiman ibn Mahran Al A'mash (d. 147/148)
2. Yahya ibn Sa'eed Al Ansari (d. 145)
3. Ayyub As Sakhtiyani (d. 131)
4. Muhammad ibn Ishaq (d. 150)
5. Zakariyya ibn Abi Za'idah (d. 148)

The names of some of his students include:

1. Abdullah ibn Al Mubarak (d. 181)
2. Waki' ibn Al Jarrah (d. 197)
3. Muhammad ibn Abdullah al Ansari (d. 215)
4. Ad Dahhak ibn Makhlad (d. 212/213)
5. Abu Nu'aym Al Fadl ibn Dukayn

Imam Zufar ibn Al Hudhayl passed away in the year 158 in the city of Al Basrah (present day Iraq).

⁸ أخبار أبي حنيفة وأصحابه للصبيري، الانتقاء لابن عبد البر، ذيل المذيل لابن جرير الطبري، فضائل أبي حنيفة وأخباره لابن أبي العوام

⁹ لمحات النظر في سيرة الامام زفر، ص ١٦

¹⁰ لمحات النظر في سيرة الامام زفر، ص ٣٠