

# SUMMER IMMERSION HADITH MASTERS



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## SESSION 5

### Ahmad ibn Hanbal Background

- He was a scholar of hadith, fiqh, and aqeedah
- Full name: Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal Al-Dhuhli
  - He is more commonly known as Ahmad ibn Hanbal
  - He is known by his grandfather because he was a well-known governor
  - Hanbal helped bring the Abbasid khilafa into power
  - Ahmad's father passed away when he was very young in jihad
- Ahmad was raised by his mother Safiyya
- He has pure Arabic lineage
  - Both of his parents were from the clan of Shayban
- His father, Muhammad, was very diligent and pious
- His mother, Safiyya, was from a family of generosity and hospitality'
- Two of Ahmad's uncles lived near them

## Early Education and Hadith

- He learned how to read and write at an early age
  - He became known for his good writing
- He had great mastery of the Arabic language
- His fiqh teacher, Imam Shafi, told his students: “Ahmad is an Imam in language”
  - He would often praise Imam Ahmad
- When he was fourteen, he starting pursuing the knowledge of hadith
  - He learned from Imam Abu Hanifa’s student Abu Yusuf first
- His next teacher was Hushaym ibn Bashir
  - He was a great scholar
- He started with his teachers in Baghdad, then he moved to Kufa

## His Dutifulness to His Mother

- Imam Ahmad was known for his obedience and excellence to his mother
- Once, when the Tigris River overflowed, all of the youth went to swim and have fun
  - Imam Ahmad didn’t move because his mother told him not to cross the river
- When he left for Kufa, he had nothing with him
  - The first night, he used a brick as a pillow
  - He got a high fever that night and he realized it was because he hadn’t sought his mother’s permission to leave
  - He got her permission and then went back

## Later Travels

- After Kufa, he went to Basra and then Mecca
  - He benefited from Sufyan ibn Uyayna and Imam Shafi
- Later on, he went for Hajj with his friend Yahya ibn Maeen (who was a great scholar of hadith)
  - He made the intention to learn hadith from Imam Abdul Razzaq As Sanani (a scholar from Yemen)
  - As they were doing tawaf, he happened to meet up with Imam Abdul Razzaq
  - Yahya ibn Maeen set a meeting for the next day with Abdul Razzaq
  - Imam Ahmad didn't approve of it and decided to take a separate trip to Yemen later to meet with Imam Abdul Razzaq
    - He didn't want to merge the intention for Hajj with the intention to meet Imam Abdul Razzaq
- By the time he had met Abdul Razzaq in Mecca, Abdul Razzaq was already aware of Imam Ahmad and his excellence in scholarship
  - When Imam Ahmad reached Yemen, he went to Imam Abdul Razzaq and wrote hadith for him
  - During this time, he ran out of food
  - He decided to look for work
  - The students of hadith starting flocking to him realizing he was in Yemen
- One night, someone broke in and had stolen his clothes
  - The students of hadith came to him the next day to learn, but Imam Ahmad didn't go out of the house because he had no other clothes
  - When the students realized that was why he didn't come out, they offered him clothes, but he refused

- They offered a loan, but he still refused
- Imam Ahmad agreed to write down hadith for them and take wage for dictating, then he earned enough money behind the door of his house
  - Then he sent someone to buy him clothes
- He didn't want to be indebted to anyone
- He had two famous sons - Salih and Abdullah
  - His sons narrated many ahadith from him
  - Imam Ahmad had a record of one million ahadith that he narrated
  - He told his students to always have hadith in front of them when they narrated to avoid mistakes

## Musnad Imam Ahmad

- A musnad is a book of hadith that is compiled and organized based on the sahaba through whom the ahadith were narrated
- He had the rough draft of this book for a while, and he kept refining it
- He passed away before the work could be finalized (from folders to one complete book)
  - His son Abdullah made sure it was compiled and put together after his death
- It is a very big and comprehensive collection

## Fiqh

- Imam Ahmad rented a shop for income
- He never spoke about his pure Arab descent
  - He didn't care to boast about it
- Imam Ahmad spent a lot of time with Imam Shafi after Imam Shafi moved to Iraq
- There were two camps in the world of fiqh:

- Those who took hadith and just implemented them (this was Imam Ahmad's inclination)
- Those who derived fiqh rulings from hadith for different scenarios
- The two camps of fiqh didn't agree at all
- Then, Imam Shafi was able to merge the two camps
- Imam Shafi took fiqh from Imam Malik as well as a student of Imam Abu Hanifa
  - He had a rich background
- The approach of Imam Shafi appealed to Imam Ahmad, upon which he derived his own methodology
- Imam Ahmad discouraged people from writing down his fatwas, but people did so anyways
- In matters of daily dealings, Imam Ahmad was lenient
- The codification of his fiqh happened centuries after his death
  - Imam Abu Hanifa, on the other hand, laid down his principles during his own lifetime along with a diverse council of scholars
  - Each imam had their own approach to fiqh
- His knowledge of fiqh came from Imam Shafi

## **Trials and Difficulties**

- There was a popular claim of the Mutazilites (the Rationalists) that the Quran was a creation of Allah rather than His speech (which is an attribute of Allah)
  - The Quran can't be created because it is perfect and free from tampering
- Harun Al-Rashid was very staunch in his aqeedah
  - His son, Mamun Al-Rashid was an academic and was interested in new literature that came outside of the Muslim community

- Mamun Al-Rashid facilitated learning from the Greek and Roman scholars
  - Despite flaws in aqeedah, he allowed certain speakers to become close advisors
  - Mamun fell into this ideology
    - He believed the Quran was created
  - He made it the official doctrine
    - Whoever refused was at risk of torture and death
- Some accepted the ideology to save their lives
  - The people who persisted in the Sunni belief were arrested
- Imam Ahmad was jailed and constantly beaten until he would lose consciousness every day
  - At each strike, he declared the Quran to be the speech of Allah, not created
  - They tried to get him to change his view, because the people accepted his statement, but Imam Ahmad refused
  - The persecution didn't work on Imam Ahmad
  - The people persisted too
  - He took the position of standing up for the truth regardless of the consequences
  - If he had given in, everyone would give in
- A hadith of the Prophet (SAW) said: In every generation, the most upright people will carry this knowledge. In carrying this knowledge, they will protect the deen from the alternations of extremists, the innovated thinkings of the people of batil, and the interpretations of the ignorant
- Imam Ahmad's body was torn and tattered after his release (under many conditions)
  - One scar on his back didn't heal
    - The doctors didn't understand why
  - Imam Ahmad went to the jail to see a criminal who had been very beaten

- He understood that a portion of flesh had been infected and was rotting inside
- Eventually he died of his injuries
  - Thousands of people attended his janazah

