CAPTER- ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EARLY PHASE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM: AHL-E-ḤADITH PERSPECTIVE

The meaning of Islam

Islam is an Arabic word and denotes submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah. The word Islam derived from ʿAslama meaning to ‘resign oneself’. “The true religion with Allah is Islam” (3:18), The Qur’ān which signify not only peace, salvation, resignation of the will of men to Allah but also a striving after righteousness. Islam is the final form of religion and the Qur’ān is the book of guidance revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); those who profess the religion of Islam are called Muslims.

Islam is a universal religion and enjoins belief in one Allah, the Angels, the Books of Allah, and all the Prophets and in the day of resurrection. Islam was not a new religion revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but a continuation of the religious principles established by other Prophets of Allah. It is an inclusive religion which contains within itself all religions which went before it. Islam is also a living and potent force in the modern community of nations.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “He only believes in one Allah, the Angels, the Books of Allah, all the Prophets, the unity of Allah, who believes in the brotherhood of man”. “Islam has welded high and low rich and poor, white and black into one fraternity”. In Islam there is no complex of superiority and inferiority.

The birth of religion is not a new phenomenon, instead every nation and civilization witnessed a noble messenger from Allah and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent down as a blessing and guidance to this Ummah with new code of law known as ‘Shari’ah’. The beginning of the seventh century has been justly regarded as the epoch of disintegration—national, social and religious. No period in the history of mankind was as dark as the time when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon) appeared. All the old religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism had lost their authenticity. Although of late appearance, the re-rise of Islam which is simple, robust and vigorous, far surpassed the religions of Syria and Egypt Christian, which were in a stagnating condition and steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism.
Faith, Action & Realization

In order to be a true ‘Muslim’ three things are necessary: Faith, Action and realization: faith in Allah and His Prophets action in accordance with that faith, and the realization of one’s relation to Allah as a result of action and obedience. Faith which is described in the Qur’ān, the Holy book of Islam, as Iman consists in believing that Allah alone is worthy of worship and that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is the messenger of Allah, and in bearing witness to the above statement. This implies:\(^4\)

1) True existence is that of Allah alone; man and the entire creation exist only because Allah wills them to exist.

2) As there cannot be two sources of creation, as Allah alone is the creator, everything comes from Him and goes back to Him; hence the entire creation including man is the manifestation of Allah’s power and glory and hence of His qualities or attributes.

3) The relation between man and Allah is that of a servant and the master. As man owes his very existence to Allah, to worship anything else is to commit the gravest of sins.

4) The above three aspects of Faith in Allah are realized by man only when he responds to the message of Allah and this is possible when man believes in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the messenger of Allah.

5) As a messenger he is the last and the greatest, about whom all the early messengers have predicted and who thus completes the Process of revelation.

6) He is therefore the perfect Ideal for mankind, the perfect servant of Allah and hence the most complete and the ideally balanced manifestation of the attributes of Allah.

7) To believe in him is to believe in all the other Prophets of Allah.

8) To believe in him is also to believe that the Qur’ān contains all the revelations sent to mankind through him, that these revelations provide guidance to us and that we should worship Allah by following these revelations according to the method prescribed for us by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and
hence in accordance with his sayings, doings deeds and tacit approval known as Sunnah and Hadith.

9) To believe in him is also to believe in the carriers of this message, the angels, who are described in the Qur’an as functionaries. Action, described in Arabic by the word A’māl, is the manifestation in actuality how far we are true servants of Allah. As action needs rules and regulations according to which we organise our individual and social behaviour, the revelations and the actual physical embodiment of these revelation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide both the basis and the structure of the law of human conduct, known as Shari’ah. Besides Imān (faith) which provides the central pillar that sustains the whole structure, the five pillars in the five corners are: to make faith in one Allah Prayer, Fasting, Zakat, and Hajj.5

All these five intimately tied up with all other aspects of man’s individual and social behaviour. By following them and there by living a life of complete dedication to the Will of Allah, a man becomes a true Muslim.

Muslim is one whose outlook on life is permeated with this consciousness. He is committed to the values of life given by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. He tries to live according to the guidance given by Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and he strives to promote the message of Islam through his word and action. This striving is known as Jihad which means ‘striving and a struggle in the path of Allah’. It consists in exerting one’s self to the utmost in order to personally follow the teachings of Islam and to work for their establishment in society. Jihad has been described in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah as the natural corollary of these pillars of Islam (Faith). Commitment to Allah involves commitment to sacrifice one’s time, energy and wealth to promote the right cause. It may be necessary at times to give one’s life in order to preserve truth. Jihad implies readiness to give whatever one has, including his life, for the sake of Allah.6

This striving in the path of Allah with Imān (faith) as the guiding light and the scheme of ‘A’mal (action) as the system and structure has the following implications:

1) Man is accountable to Allah for all that he does. Allah will Judge him on the last day of Judgement and send him either to Heaven, a stage of existence
which leads to further blessings, or to Hell, a stage of suffering and punishment.

2) This implies that man’s life does not end with his death in this world. He has life after death.

3) Therefore all human action should be organised in such manner that he may not suffer in life after death.

4) This organization of action in this world implies the organization of all facets of human existence, individual and collective, hence educational, economic, political and social. Shari‘ah provides the guidelines, the rules of external conduct.

5) This means man is free in his will, choice and action.

Realization of man’s relation to Allah is a spiritual aspect known in Arabic as ‘iḥsān’, which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explained in the following way: You should worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for He sees you though you do not see him’ (Bukhari and Muslim). It means that all action should be performed with Allah in your vision. If that is not possible always you must realize that Allah is seeing you. This realization is regarded as the basis of true devotion. It signifies that man has identified his will with the Will of Allah and has brought it, at least as far as he is concerned, completely in tune with the Divine Will. Man comes nearest to Allah by excelling in this process of identification man’s will with the Divine Will. This enables him to develop the divine spark within him and to illuminate his entire being with that. The most complete example of the realization is that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Though constant remembrance of Allah, through Man’s Love of Allah and the Muhammad (peace be upon him), through obedience to the commandments of Allah and His messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him), and through constant struggle to promote good and forbid evil man may attain nearness to Allah. This realization is the basis of Piety. This piety is the source of righteousness which is regarded by Islam as the core of Just action. Persons who, through Imān, A’māl and iḥsān become living symbols of truth represent the reform movement established by the Muhammad (peace be upon him) to reconstruct human life and bring it in accord with Divine Guidance. Such persons constantly remind the rest of Mankind of the true significance of Man’s submission to the will of Allah. And
a society which realises these values in its collective life would be the ideal society which Islam wants to establish for the ultimate welfare (Falah) of Man.⁷

**Life of Prophet (peace be upon him): A brief survey**

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in Makkah. In the Aăm’l fil or the year of the elephant, about 571 C.E. when Abrahah invaded Makkah with the evil intent of demolishing Ka’aba (so that people may turn to the sanctum built by him down south in Yemen). That mean through the great event of am-al fil Allah had intended to honour his beloved Prophet and his sanctified house.⁸

On the ninth Rabi’‘l Awwal, (22nd April, 571 C.E.) the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in Makkah in a very respectable and highly connected family in the Quraish.⁹ In the third century C.E., Fihr a descendant of Hazrat Ismāil became prominent as a merchant and came to be known as Quraish a merchant. The name stuck, and after him all his descendants came to be known as Quraish.

Qusai, a descendant of fihr, made himself the master of Makkah. In the fifth century C.E., he renovated the Ka’aba, and setup a colony of the Quraish in the immediate neighbourhood of the sacred precincts of the Holy Ka’aba.

Qusai was succeeded by ‘Abd Manaf, who was in turn succeeded by Hashim. Hashim died young, and was succeeded by his brother Al-Muttalib. Al- Muttalib was succeeded by his nephew Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim.

The father of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was Abdullah and grandfather was Abdul Muttalib. The mother of the Prophet Muhammad was Amina. Her father was Wahab, the chief of the Zohri clan of Yathrib (Madinah). Abdullah died at Yathrib, few months after his marriage, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a posthumous child. Abdul Muttalib named his grandson “Muhammad (peace be upon him)” His mother called him “Ahmad”. Muhammad (peace be upon him) lost his father six months before his birth, and he lost his mother when he was hardly six years old.

The young Muhammad (peace be upon him) now became the responsibility of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib. He showered on him the love affection and takes good care of his wellbeing. Abdul Muttalib also died when Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was nine years old. On the death of Abdul Muttalib, the guardianship of Muhammad (peace be upon him) was transferred to his uncle Abu
Ṭālib. Abu Ṭālib was a real brother of Abdullah, the father of the Holy Prophet peace be upon him.

At the age of twelve Muhammad(peace be upon him) accompanied his uncle Abu Ṭālib on a journey to Syria with a trading caravan. At Basra, a town in Syria, a Christian monk Bahira foretold that the young boy Muhammad(peace be upon him) was destined to be a Prophet. He asked Abu Ṭālib to take good care of him.

As Muhammad(peace be upon him) grew up he began to look at the things around him with concern. The society in which he lived was corrupt in every sphere of life. The whole of Arabia was busy in pleasing false gods, over 360 idols were lodged in the Ka'aba. Prophet came to free the world from the darkness of ignorance and started his mission at the age of forty and with the help of Allah he carved a just, balanced and fair society out of nothing.

The Arabs knew of no government. Each tribe led its own independent life in its own way. There were acute rivalries and bitter jealousies among the tribes. Small issues will led to the war of centuries. Tribal feuds were spread over generations, exacting heavy toll of life. The Arabs were, however, proud of their poetry, their language, and their eloquence. In their arrogance they regarded themselves as the epitome of wisdom, and dubbed the rest of mankind as "'Ajam", (the dumb and speechless). They were steeped in superstitions and freely resorted to the reading of omens the drawing of lots, and other scandalous practices. Sorcery and consultation of the oracles were the order of the day.

The Arabs were also addicted to drinking, gambling lewdness, promiscuity, and moral depravity. Women were treated as chattels and could be bought and sold at will. Poets sang of moral depravities with sense of pride. When a man died, his son inherited his step mothers along with his other property, and could marry them. The birth of a daughter was regarded as a matter of shame and disgrace. Most girls were strangled or buried alive on birth. Slavery was common and the master enjoys power of life and death over the slaves. Usury was the order of the day, and the moneyed Classes exploited the poor and those in need. It was the age of "Ignorance" in which evil predominated, and righteousness, virtue and piety were held at naught.

The then the future Prophet Muhammad(upon him peace be) felt dissatisfied with the things around him and he struck a different line of action by leading a
virtuous and righteous life. He was the very soul of honesty. He was very strict in fulfilling his promises. He was confederate, thoughtful, and sweet of disposition, forbearing, noble hearted and a man of principles. He led a serious life, and did not take part in the frivolities that characterised the Makkah society of the day.

At the early stage of manhood, Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to be known as “Al-Amin” (the trusted) on account of his moral virtues and marvellous character. He became an active member of the *Hilful Fuḍul* which was a peace committee, the object of this committee was to establish cordiality among the different tribes in Makkah and to help in the redress of the grievances of the aggrieved persons. On the occasion of the annual Pilgrimage Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to supply water to the Pilgrims, and looked after their comfort. Young Muhammad (on him peace be up) was very keen to help those in distress.

It is said that when Muhammad (peace be upon him) grew up, he followed the profession of a merchant. He entered into partnership with other persons, and travelled with trade caravans to Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere. In trade his transactions were always fair. He was careful in the fulfilment of contracts and very strict in the maintenance of accounts.

Khadija, a rich Quraish lady, appointed Muhammad (peace be upon him) as manager of her mercantile caravan to Syria. Maisarah, a slave of Khadija, accompanied Muhammad (peace be upon him) on the occasion. Maisarah was struck by the unusual phenomenon of clouds sheltering Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the heat of the Sun. Muhammad (peace be upon him) managed the affairs with great skill and honesty, and as a consequence the business of the lady prospered a good deal. Khadija was very much impressed with the person and character of Muhammad (peace be upon him). She listened with great interest to the accounts of slave Maisarah as to how miraculous things happened during the course of journey and how Muhammad (peace be upon him) enjoyed the umbrella of clouds, throughout the journey.

It is true to say that Khadija had a dream wherein she saw the moon descending in her house. Her cousin, Waraqa bin Naufal, a religious scholar of eminence interpreted this dream to signify that she would marry a person who would be the Prophet of Allah.
It said that, Qutaila a sister of Waraqa, told Khadija as to how twenty five years ago she had coveted to marry Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib because of the luminosity of his forehead, and how such luminosity had disappeared when he married Amina and she became pregnant after the consummation of marriage. Qutaila said that Muhammad(peace be upon him) was the person when she had coveted to conceive as he was to be the prophet of Allah.

All these things motivated Khadija to sent a marriage proposal to Muḥammad (peace be upon him). At the time of marriage she was forty years old, but had all the charms of an Arab beauty. Khadija sent her trusted maid toMuhammad (peace upon him) (peace be to sound him on the subject. The negotiations bore fruit, Prophet Muḥammad(be peace upon him) and Khadija were duly married. At the time of marriage Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) was only twenty five years old, while Khadija was forty years old. Inspite of the difference of age marriage proved very happy, a matter of the union of hearts. Khadija looked after Muḥammad (peace be upon him with the devotion of a loving wife. Muḥammad(peace be upon him) managed her business with great skill. The business flourished a good deal and heavy profits were corned. In spite of the wealth at his disposal after the marriage Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) led a simple life, shunning luxury and spending a great part of his money in affording relief to those in distress.

Qasim, Tahir and Tayyib, three sons and Zainab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulsum and Fatima, four daughters were to Muḥammad(peace be upon him) and Khadija. All the sons died in infancy.

1. **Muhammad (peace be upon him) as Prophet of Allah**

Muhammad (peace upon him) often retired to a cave in Hira outside Makkah, and there in solitary retreat he would meditate and pray to Allah seeking enlightenment. One day in 610 C. E. when Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) was praying in the cave, something unusual came to pass. The angel Jebriel confronted Muhammad (peace be upon him) and commanded him to recite in the name of Allah. This signified that Allah had commissioned Muhammad (peace be on him) as His Prophet, and he was to communicate the message of Islam to mankind. It was a unique and the highest honour for a human being from Allah and he was Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the the best human being among the humankind. That was a turning point in history when a man
of exemplary character was chosen as an intermediary between Allah and mankind. It was only the unique person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to whom Allah had granted revelation and authority and to whom he demanded the obedience of the believer.

The Potent of Character

The holy Prophet (peace be upon him) launches the call for Islam single handed. He faced his people all alone. The Quraish, in the very beginning realised that the Prophet’s call for Islam was going to change the structure of society. The moral values of society, rules of trade and commerce Standards of political and social leadership were changing with the emergence of Islamic movement. The Kalima “There is no God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) is the Prophet of Allah”, as expected the call for Islam met with early resistance and opposition. With the progress of the Islamic movement its opposition grew stronger in intensity. It was the toughest of opposition ever faced by Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him). The holly Prophet, with the blessing of Allah had three most effective revolutionary weapons at his disposal which shattered the opposition- The portent character, the Qurʾān and the potent expression. The first and the most effective revolutionary weapons was the character of holy Prophet (peace be upon him), the record of 40 years of his life amidst his enemies at Makkah.10

This was the pattern of Prophet (peace be upon him) preaching in the light of Qurʾān. On being assigned the office of Prophethood, he was constantly calling people for submission to Allah. The Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) entertained no fear while preaching and continued his mission irrespective of the results. The call given by Prophet (peace be upon him) was strengthen by the purity of his character was spotless in all aspects. The Prophet was ordained to fight wickedness with goodness and nobility. The holy Prophet (peace be upon him) converted his enemy into friends.11

Establishment of justice and peace

Justice and righteousness of the battlefield and waging war with the objective of establishing peace was never the criterion of any nation and ruler. The holy Prophet treated war as a means of establishing peace and uphold principle of justice and kindness even at the battle front. The Qurʾān has justified war as long as there is evil and wickedness. But there is no justification of war when evil has been eradicated and
law and order restored. The holy Prophet (peace be upon him) used to incorporate these Islamic principles in his various letters to the heads of states urging them to embrace Islam.

1. Embrace Islam because it was only Islam which provide guarantee to justice and peace.

2. Pay the levy and accept submission (so that people may get an opportunity of understanding Islam and the path of righteousness in order to attain peace and justice)

3. Get ready for war (so that hindrance between your subjects and Islam be removed, and by this removal of their tyrant ruler they may benefit from the blessing of Islam). 12

The Black Stone Dispute and Its Amicable Settlement

The judgement in the sacred black stone dispute is a master piece of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Wisdom and nobility. He enjoyed a high reputation among the citizens of Makkah for his truthfulness, honesty, integrity and impartiality. He was immensely respected for his wisdom and foresight. Quraish were engaged in the repair and renovation of that holy Ka’aba. Ka’aba itself was being rebuilt. When the walls were raised 4 feet height a dispute arose about putting the sacred black stone (Hajre Aswad) in the Proper place. It soon assumed the dimensions of conflict. All Arabs held the black stone in special reverence. Every tribe wanted to have the honour of placing the holy stone in the Proper context. They were even ready for bloodshed over this issue each tribe tried to establish its right for this honour. Ummayya bin Mogheera advised the elders to leave this issue to Allah and to make any person who first enter the holy shrine from a particular gate as the arbitrator. All of a sudden the holy Prophet (peace be upon him) entered from that gate. People proclaimed in joy, “This is Muḥammad(peace be upon him)the trustworthy we will agree to his decision”.

After hearing the case, the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) ordered for a sheet of cloth and it was brought to him, then the Prophet spread the cloth and he put the sacred stone on it. Then he summoned the elders of different tribes and asked them to carry the sheet to the place where the stone was to be affixed. On reaching there the holy Prophet (him peace be upon) lifted it and fixed the holy black
stone in its proper place. It was a manifestation of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wisdom and strategy even prior to his announcement of Prophethood. This confidence in the Prophet (peace be upon him) attracted many noble hearted men to the Islamic movement.\textsuperscript{13}

**The Origin of Ḥadith & Sunnah**

The Holy Qur’ān is the fundamental or basic source of Islamic jurisprudence. Next is the importance and authority comes Sunnah and Ḥadith. Ḥadith itself derives its authority and legal validity from Holy Qur’ān. Ḥadith a saying conveyed to man either through hearing or revelation. Ḥadith the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Sunnah literally means a way or rule or manner of acting or mode of life. In its Islamic legal terminology, Sunnah indicates the doings, deeds and tacit approval of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

It is the saying of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), an action or practice of his or a Taqrir (Tacit approval), his silent approval of the action or practice of another. The Holy Qur’ān generally deals with the broad principles or essential of religion, going into detail in very rare cases. The details were generally supplied by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) himself.

**Compilation of Ḥadith in the life time of Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him)

The collection of Ḥadith, there is controversy of opinions that whether the Ḥadith were written down in the life of Prophet (peace be upon him) or not. However there is evidence that Ḥadith were written in the life of Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had given his approval for writing them. But what he had strictly instructed was that, it should not be mixed with Qur’ān. Al-Tirmidhi reports, “One day an Ansar (man from Madinah) came to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and said to that he had a weak memory and he forgets quickly, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructive discourses. The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) reply take the help of your right hand (that is write down). A large number of Muḥadithūn like Al- Tirmidhi, Abu Da’uood etc. narrated that Abdullah Ibn Amar Ibn Al-Aas, a young Makkah had habit of writing all that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say. One day his comrades rebuked him, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a human being his kind self sometime be happy and satisfied at other time
annoyed and that it was not desirable that one should note indiscriminately that he uttered. Abdullah went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him that is it allowed to pen down every word you say, he said, he replied ‘yes’. Abdullah narrates that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said of course; by God: “nothing that comes out of this mouth is ever a lie”. Abdullah gave his compilation the name of Sahifah – Sadiqah (the book of truth).14

**Completion of Tradition in the Period of Orthodox Caliphs and Collection of Other Companions**

The four orthodox Caliphs took great pains to see that only the correct tradition is narrated. The narrator was asked to swear that he was speaking the truth. Among the judges and traditionalists of this period where the four Caliphs that is Haḍrat Abu Bakr, Haḍrat Umar, Haḍrat Uthman and Haḍrat ‘Ali and the following prominent companions of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him)

1. Abu Hurairah a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) has narrated about 5300 traditions.
2. Ḥafṣa, Wife of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) and daughter of Umar, the second Caliph, has narrated about 16 traditions.
3. Aisha wife of Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) was one most learned lady of the Quraish tribe, she was also an authentic traditionalist. Tradition describes to her by the narrators number 2, 200.
4. Safiya, Wife of Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) had narrated 10 traditions.
5. Umm Salma, wife of Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) has narrated 378 traditions.
6. Abdullah, son of Umar has narrated 1, 500 traditions.15

**Ḥadith - a subject of keen interest**

The Ḥadith in this sense that is the report of the sayings and doings of Muḥammad(peace be upon him) has been a subject of keen interest among the Muslims since the very life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. They had accepted him as their sole guide and Prophet (peace be on him). They had completely identified themselves with him in his struggle against the Quraish and the other tribes. With his future and with the future of the faith revealed to him was bound up their
own future. All his actions served them as a president (Sunnah); every word falling from his lips was law of them and all his actions where virtuous in their eyes which they wanted to follow as faithfully as they could.

The Ḥadith in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has been subjected to keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslims throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to present times. Some of them wrote down what he said in Sahifas which were later on read by them to their student and which were preserved in their families and also by the follower (Tabiun). After the death Prophet (peace be upon him), when his companions spread in various countries some of them as well as their follower undertook long arduous journeys, courted poverty and penury in order to collect them together.\textsuperscript{16}

As a matter of fact, it is said there have been a common practice among the friends of Muḥammad (be upon him peace) that whenever any two of them met, one of them enquired from other whether any Ḥadith (The news of the sayings and the doings of the Prophet) is discussed or said by the Prophet\textsuperscript{17}.t

After the death of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) the importance of Ḥadith grew greater and greater. The life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his discourses and utterances, his actions, his salient approval and even his passive conduct, constituted next to the Qur’ān and the second most important source of law for the young Muslim Empire. Muḥammad (peace be upon him) himself attached good deal of importance of the knowledge of his own Ḥadith. He asked his followers to acquire knowledge and teach it to other and explain knowledge. He included in it the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. The course of study prescribed by him to the Ashab al- Suffa include the Qur’ān, the Sunnah and the art writing. The Ḥadith originated in the early life of the Prophet (peace be on him) of Islam then spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam throughout the vast Muslim dominions. The Muslim armies which conquered Syria Palestine, Egypt and Persia included a large number of the companions of Muḥammad (peace be upon him), who carried his Ḥadith wherever they went. The message of Sunnah and the Qur’ān had been arrived in India before its conquest by the Muslims before the end of the first century.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{THE KINDS OF ḤADITH}
A) All the sayings and utterances of Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) “Qawl”,

B) The actions and daily practices of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) ‘F’al’

C) The tacit approval on the part of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) of acts done and practices carried on by his followers “Iqrar”.

**Ḥadith can be classified from Several Points of View.**

Irrespective of their origin they are divided into two: (1) Ḥadith -i-kudsi and (2) Ḥadith -i-Nabvi.

The Ḥadith -i-Kudsi is the sayings of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) under divine inspiration,

The Ḥadith -i-Nabvi is his sayings from his own-uninspired judgement. Both kinds have force of law.¹⁹

**The Ḥadith Collections**

Shafii’s assurances that the corporate body of Ḥadith experts possessed between them the entire corpus of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) proceeded to publish the collection of Aḥadith. A number of great collections were now completed. Two techniques were adopted, resulting in two type of collection. One type was arranged ‘according to the men’. The Ḥadith traced from different major past personalities formed the individual section of a collection which was then, in consequence called a Musnad. It was only the unique person of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) to whom Allah had granted revelation and authority and to whom he demanded the obedience of the believer.²⁰

Ḥaḍrat Umar after the death of Muḥammad(peace be upon him) intended to collect the Ḥadith with the help of his sincere friends, he devoted much time and paid sincere consideration regarding the writing of Aḥadith. But at the first instance, he had to give up the idea of writing Aḥadith due to fear of the Qur’ān, the paramount source of Islamic law being neglected by the Muslim world and Ḥadith might have got more attraction. ²¹

The earliest completion of such recorded tradition supported in each instance by a chain of authorities tracing it back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the
first biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) by Ibn Ishāq. Then followed Imam Malik’s famous hand book on *Muw’atta* based on the same Principle on *Sanad* and *Matn*. Thereafter, followed Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal’s work, *Musand* giving all the tradition attributed to one companion and then going to another.

“The Ahadith have elaborated and fixed the academic and practical meaning of the Qur’ānic āyāt (verses) from every angle. The Ḥadith have explained the principles relating to all branches of human life in such a miraculous manner that no room has been left for any fraud to resort to his fraudulent methods. The Aḥadith of Prophet (peace be upon him) have provided the Ummah with guidance in detail for every aspect of life which will arise until the day of qiyaṣmah be it faith or practice, free will of fatalism, obedience to government or speaking up against oppression and injustice. Thus noble Qur’ān has designated this Ummat as the “*Ummat –i waṣṭ*” of “*balanced nation*”.

Imam Shafī’i established the Sunnah as a basis of Islam second in important only to the holy Qur’ān. The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is an integral as well as dispensable part of Islam, in addition to the Qur’ān. Verily Allah says

“You have indeed in the messenger of Allah a good example for him who looks forward to Allah and the last day, and remembers Allah much”.

The Recognised Collections of Ḥadith on the “*Muṣannaf*” pattern are the collections of:

1. Al- Bukhari (d. 870 C.E.)
2. Muslim (d. 875 C.E.)
3. Abu Daud (d. 888 C.E.)
4. Al-Tirmizi (d. 892 C.E.)
5. Ibn Maja (d. 886 C.E.)
6. Al-Nasai (d. 915 C.E.)

These books are known as *Al-Kutub Al- Sittah* or the “*Six Sahihs*”. The Collections of Al-Bukhari and Muslim rank high and are known as “*Al-Sahihain*” i.e. authentic and authoritative. The best known collection on the ‘*Musand*’ pattern is the Collection of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855 C.E.).

27
Siḥah Sittah (The Six Sound Collections)

All Muslims do have firm faith on the Siḥah Sittah. The Qurʾān and Ḥadith are the primary sources of guidance for the Muslims. Siḥah Sittah (most authentic six books of Aḥadith are called Siḥah Sittah, Sihah means true and authentic and Sittah means six in Arabic) is to be seen from the two angles, one is from the angle of teaching and the other is from the angle of authenticity of Aḥadith. The compilers of these compilations have dealt with these books according to their own understandings. Imam Bukhari has kept in view mainly the method of extraction of masail (Istimbat), as is evident from the heading of the chapter of the book called Tarajim-e-Abwaab. It is quite famous saying among the scholars of Ḥadith that the whole earning of Imam Bukhari is his Tarajim.

Saḥiḥ Muslim of Imam Muslim has its own syntax and methodology as per asnād (narrators), while as Imam Abu Dawood has classified his compilation on the basis of content on which the aimah of fiqḥ have based their fatwa, called mustadlat. Imam Tirmidhi’s main aim is to describe the madahib (different school of fiqḥ). Imam Nasai’s classified his compilation according to the shan-i nazul of Aḥadith and Ibn Maja wants to mention the less popular Ḥadith.25

Aḥadith is not only explanation of the Qurʾān but also second to the Qurʾān regarding the teachings of Islam. The last four are more popularly known by the name of Sunan. “The Qurʾān is the foundational head of Muslim law and absolute and final authority in all cases. It is admitted by all the jurists that Sunnah completes the Qurʾān and the Aḥadith as two factor outwardly equal in importance to fix the rulers of religious life”. There was no such collection during the life time of Prophet (peace be upon him). Later various circumstances necessitated the collection of Aḥadith from different traditionalists so that the people of all concerns might get benefit of all the Aḥadith. The two most important religious institutions of Islam are salah and zakah, but no direct injunctions regarding these two basic principles were available in the Qurʾān but were unveiled by the sayings of Prophet (peace be upon him).26

Sahih Bukhari

Imam Bukhari, whose full name is Abu Abdallah Muḥammad bin Ismail Al-Bukhari, was born at Bukhara in 194 A.H./810 C.E. His father was the disciple of the
famous Hammad Ibn Zaid and Malik Ibn Anas. His father died when he was a mere boy. He was brought up under the care of his mother in his native town, Bukhara. He started to study Aḥadith when he was only 11 years old and by the time that he was 16 had acquired a high reputation for his knowledge thereof.

Imam Bukhari’s intensive travels took him through large part of the Muslim world and he visited all the important centres of Islamic learning staying everywhere as long as his pursuit of Aḥadith demanded, meeting the traditionalists and learned alof from them. They had related and communicated to him their own knowledge. He performed Hajj with his mother and brother Ahmad and stayed at Hijaz for six years for the study when he reached the age of 18 he completed the book Fadayal Sahaba wa al Tabieen, which he wrote on moonlights while sitting by the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him).27

Imam Bukhari then sought to meet the great scholars of the Aḥadith in various Muslim countries and for this purpose he travelled to Basra for four or five years and in Al-Hijaz for six years; He travelled to Egypt twice and many times to Kufa and Baghdad. He frequently held discussions with Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal (died July 855) who is said to have been so highly impressed with his abilities that he urged him strongly to stay in Baghdad and relinquish Khurasan as his usual abode.

During all these extensive travels Imam Bukhari had one aim to gather all the possible knowledge and learning to make the greatest possible collections of saying of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him). His book Al-Jami Al-Sahih was the first written record of Islam of genuine Ḥadith of the Muḥammad (be apeace ace). He never accepted a Ḥadith as genuine, unless he knew all there was to know about the life and death of these persons, and after that he checked up the accuracy of Ḥadith by reference to the surrounding circumstances and to other reports by other friends and companions of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him). His master Imam Abu Bakar Ibn khuzaimah once said to him, “there is no one on the face of the earth who know Aḥadith more than the Ahadith than Imam Muḥammad(peace be upon him) Ibn Ismail (Al-Bukhari)”. His colleague Abdullah Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Darimi said to him, “I have seen and listed to the scholars of the Hijaz, Iraq, Damascus but I came across no one who possessed more learning than Imam Muhammad Ibn Ismail.”
The most important of these works in the Sahih which is commonly known as Sahih al-Bukhari. The genuineness and accuracy of which had been established beyond the slightest doubt were recorded. It was read out to 90,000 students by the author himself, and it has made his name immortal. It is considered by almost all the traditionalists as the most reliable book in ḥadith literature, and has been considered by the Muslims generally as an authority next only to the Qur’ān. 28

He was not content only merely recording the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him). He sought to deduce from them moral or justice principle and also to point out their applications and significance in the field of Fiqh (jurisprudence). The Sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad(peace be upon him) was classified in this book according to the subject matter and were grouped together in such a way as to illustrate a particular juristic point.

As we have already seen Imam Bukhari main object was to collect together the genuine traditions only. The number of the suspended and corroborative traditions in this book is about 1725. Imam Bukhari, however, wanted not only to collect together what he considered to be genuine traditions, but also to impress their imports upon the mind of his readers, and to show them what legal inferences could be drawn from these traditions. Every chapter has a holding which serves as a key to the contents of the various traditions included in it.29

According to the Sunnites the collection of Imam Bukhari is regarded as the most correct and authentic book after the holy Qur’ān. Hence Sahih Bukhari is the more critical of all. He applied all the rules to test the authenticity of every Ḥadith. He died at Samarqand in 869 C.E. at the age of fifty-nine.

**Imam Muslim**

Muslim Abdul Hassan Muslim al-Nishapur better known as Imam Muslim, he was born at Nishapur in 817 C.E. He belongs to the Quraish tribe of the Arabs, an off-shoot of the great clan of Rabia. His tribe took more or less important part of the history of Islam since the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). His father Hajjaj al-Quraish was a traditionalist of the great repute and that having learnt and excelled in the various branches of Arabic literature at an early age, he took to the special study of Ḥadith. In the pursuit of this subject he travelled widely and visited all the important centres of learning in Iraq, Hijaz, Egypt, Syria and Baghdad in pursuit of
knowledge and for the collection of Ḥadith. He devoted his whole life in the pursuit
and study of Ḥadith.

The most important of works in his Saḥīh which has been regarded in certain
respects as the best work on the subject. In order to compile this book, Muslim
examined 300,000 traditions out of which he picked up only 4000 about the
genuineness of which the traditionist were unanimous and included them in his Saḥīh
from the stand point of classification, arrangement of the subject matter and the
authenticity of Isnād the Saḥīh of the Muslim is peerless. The Saḥīh of Bukhari and
that of Muslim together are known as Sahihain or the two reliable books. Imam
Muslim died at Nishapur in 874 at the age of 57.

**Imam Abu Da’ud Al- Sijistani**

One of the most important Sunan work is that of Abu Da’ud Sulaiman b. al-As
hath who examined 500,000 traditions and picked up 4,800 of them for his book on
which he laboured for 20 years. Abu Da’ud Sulaiman was born at Sistan in 202 A.H
(818 C.E.). Abu Da’ud received his elementary education probably in his native city.
When he was 10 years of age, he joined a school in Nishapur. He visited Kufa in 224
and from there he started on his journey in search of knowledge in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, and Egypt. He travelled all the important cities of
Aḥadith studies and collected wherever it was found. He was contemporary of Imam
Bukhari. He wrote many books on Islam and Muslim law. But most important work is
the Sunan. It is the third authentic work on Aḥadith. According to Imam Ghazzali the
Sunan of Abu Da’ud alone is sufficient for a mujtahid or jurist.

**Imam Tirmizi**

Abu Isa Muhammad b. Isa al- Tirmidhi was born at Tirmiz in Transoxiana in
831 C.E. He was a great traditionalist. He travelled a good deal in order to learn
traditions, visited the various centres of Islamic learning in Arabia, Mesopotamia,
Persia, and Khurasan and associated with the eminent traditionists of his time e.g. Al-
Bukhari, Al-Muslim, Abu Da’ud and others. He died at Tirmidh in 279/892. His Jami
al-Sahih is one of the six canonical collections of AḤadith. He collected 500,000
AḤadith out of which he selected about 1,600 for his Sunan. He also wrote Kitāb -ul-
Shamayd on the life of Prophet (peace be upon him).
Tirmidhi’s Jami has been recognized as one of the most important work in Ḥadith literature and has been unanimously included in the six canonical collections of Aḥadith.

**Imam Ibn Maja**

Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yazid al-Maja (generally known as Ibn Maja which was the title of his father and grandfather). He was born in Iran in 209 A.H 809 C.E. He visited the important centres of learning in Iraq, Basra, Kufa, Syria, Egypt, Ray and Hijaz in quest of Ahadith. He collected a large number of Ḥadith which he recorded in his Sunan. He was a great writer and wrote a commentary on the holy Qur’ān and a book on history. He compiled several works in Ahadith of which the most important is the Sunan. In this work, Ibn Maja collected together 4000 traditions in 32 books in 1500 chapters. He also said that the number of the weak traditions in the book was not large (more than 30). He died in 886 C.E.

**Al-Nasai**

Another important Sunan work is that compiled by Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shoib al-Nasai was born in Nasa (Khurasan) in 215 A.H. 831C.E. He was a pupil of Qutaibah bin said Balkhi. He travelled all the important centres of Aḥadith and spared on pains in collecting authentic Aḥadith. The Sunan of Nasai contains 4,482 Aḥadith arranged under 15 heads sub-divided into 1,744 chapters. He died at Makkah in 303 A.H at the age of 88.  

**The Four Sunni Imams: Ahl al-Ḥadith Perspective**

1. **Imam Abu Hanifa (80 A.H-150 A.H)**

The first Imam of the Sunni Muslims and best known by his Kunyah of Abu Hanifa, Numan b. Thabit b. Zutā. Who was of Ajami (non-Arab) origin, as the etymology of the last two names suggests and is generally accepted. There are however different theories about his origin and how he came to Arabia. Imam Abu Hanifa was born in 80 A.H.

Nothing is known about Thabit except that he was a trader. His first son was born when he was forty years old and he named him Numan to which fame added in the fullness of time the title of Imam-e-Azam, the great Imam. The strictest in this
matter were the Scholars of Kufa. They never admitted anybody below the age of 20 to a Ḥadith School.32

Some Hanafis have gone beyond claiming that Abu Hanifa saw some companions and have claimed that he actually heard traditions from them. It is surprising that even ‘Aini’, commentator on the Hidayah has supported this erroneous claim. Some people are of the opinion that Imam Abu Hanifa had heard them from the companions and then after examining them in the light of the principle of Ahadith, has proved that they are not authentic. Debate on matter of Ahadith is complicated exercise. The Imam’s childhood fell in a time of troubles. Hajjaj b. Yusuf was then the governor of Iraq under the Caliph Abd-al-Malik and oppression was the order of the day.

It is said that, Imam Abu Hanifa took no interest at all in Ḥadith and kalām, whereas the fact is that in these disciplines he has an undeniable high standing. In all the disciplines the Imam decided to specialise in Fiqh, because it seemed to him to cater to the needs of the common people, different narrators seem to have put different kinds of gloss upon this simple probability. 33

Abu Hanifa had about the same time started to teach Ḥadith, also about which we shall have something to say in detail later on, yet he regularly attended Hammad’s lectures. He felt that it would not be possible for him to do the kind of original work he wanted to do in Fiqh without full knowledge of Ḥadith. At that period the teaching of Ḥadith was going on vigorously in all Islamic countries and everywhere authorities and narrations were being recorded. The companions, ten thousand in number had spread far and wide, and become the nucleus of great system of authorities and narrations. People flocked to him from far and near, eager to hear first-hand accounts of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and get authentic answers to questions of law exercising their minds. In this way a large body of Tabiin, who were called disciples of the companions had come into existence with its ramifications in all the Islamic countries. 34

Kufa, Imam Abu Hanifa’s place of birth and residence was in the vanguard of this expansion of Islamic learning. Many Muslim scholars are of the opinion that there was practically no Muhaddith at Kufa at whose feet Abu Hanifa did not sit to learn.
traditions. But on the other hand, Abu’l Mahasin Shafii, giving a list of Abu Hanifa’s Aḥadith teachers, says that ninety-three of them belonged to Kufa.

The 2nd city where Abu Hanifa received his education in Aḥadith was Basra, a rich treasure –house of Aḥadith because of the presence of Hasan al-Basri, Shu’bah and Qatadah. 35

Although Imam Abu Hanifa had acquired the status of Mujtahid (a final authority) during Hammad’s life time at a comparatively early age. He was around forty years old at the time of Hammad’s death. Yet his sincere regard for his teacher did not permit him to establish a school of his own while the teacher was still alive.36

There are three books attributed to Abu Hanifa namely Fiqh al-Akbar, Al-Alim wa’l-Mutaallim and Musanad. All books are lost or destroyed and not available.

Imam Abu Hanifa was very much attracted to kalām in the early part of his education career. Towards the close of the periods of companions many new sects arose. Mabad al-Juhani introduces the doctrine of Qadr. Wasil b. Ata, who was a great scholar of Arabic literature and kalām and a disciple of Hasan Basri, laid the foundation of Itizal (Mu’tazila). Jaham b. Safwan founded the Jahmiyya sect.37

The Imam does not deny that faith can increase or decrease qualitatively, but it can increase or decrease quantitatively and this is a corollary of this assertion that works are not part of faith. The Imam also maintains that faith does not vary in content and that in respect of believe all Muslims are equal. The articles of faith are same for all of them. The companions and common Muslims alike believe in divine unity and Prophethood. If there is any difference between them it is in the intensity of their belief. The Imam described this while replying to “Uthman Batti” in these words. “The dwellers of heaven and earth have the same religion”.

Imam Abu Hanifa was not well versed in Aḥadith. The fact nevertheless remains that he is not commonly known as Muḥaddith. Imam Abu Hanifa enjoys no eminence in Aḥadith is quite understandable he has no work on that subject to his credit. Imam Malik and Imam Shafii are not known as Muhaddithin and then their works on Aḥadith have not gained anything like popularity enjoyed by the six Sihah. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is better known in Aḥadith than these three. 38
It is generally said that the accepted rule of Fiqh had been collected by Imam Abu Hanifa’s time that existed for the most part in the shape of oral traditions and had not been systematised into regular discipline.  

When Imam Abu Hanifa felt the effect of prison he bent down in Prayer and died (Rajab 150) in that posture. First funeral prayer was performed attended by fifty thousand people. But people still kept coming so the prayer held for six times over and it was not till sunset that the burial took place. The Imam while dying had expressed the wish to be buried in the graveyard at Khaizran.  

Imam Abu Hanifa studied Ahadith, collected Ahadith and also preserved Ahadith. Regarding the exact number of collection of Ahadith is a matter of controversy. Muslim scholars are of the opinion that nearing one hundred Ahadith was under his possession, remaining Ahadith which he collected were burnt or destroyed because of authenticity. It proved that Imam Abu Hanifa had great respect for Ahadith and was very careful regarding the collection of Ahadith.  

We therefore, of the opinion that Imam Abu Hanifa was very keen interest on both the basic sources of Islamic law e.g., The Qur’añ and Ahadith. Hence, Imam Abu Hanifa should be treated as Ahle-Hadith in general sense and definitely Ahl-e-Ray in particular. In Ahl-e- Hadith perspective Imam Abu Hanifa was Ahl-e- Hadith as well as Ahl-e-Ray.  

**Imam Malik Ibn Anas (93 A.H-179 A.H or 713.C.E-795 C.E)**

His full name is Abu ‘Abd Allah Malik Ibn Anas. He was born at Madinah in the year 93 A.H(713 A.D).He belonged to the Humair, who are included in the Banu Taim Ibn Murra (Taim Quraish).He was not only a great traditionalist but a jurist who founded a school of jurisprudence, which is known after his name as Maliki school of Islamic Jurisprudence. He learnt Ḥadith from Abdur Rehman Ibn Hurmuz, Nafi Ibn Zakwan and Yahya Ibn Sayed. He studied Fiqh with the celebrated jurists of Madinah, Rabia Ibn Farrukh (died 132 A.H) who cultivated Ra’y in Madinah; hence he is called Rabiat-al-Ray.  

Imam Malik started giving discourses on fiqh and Ḥadith when he got permission from his Shuyukh of Ḥadith and jurisprudence. He used to give cermons in the Mosque of the Prophet (peace be upon him) (Masjid-e-Nabvi). scholars & people gathered around him to learn Fiqh and Ḥadith and to get solutions of legal
problems. His book, the *Muw’atta*, though comparatively small collections of Ḥadīth and limited only to Ḥadīth and practices of the people of Madīnah is the first work of its kind, and one of the most authoritative, Mansur came to know about this, he requested Imam Malik to visit Iraq. When Mansur came for Pilgrimage (Hajj) he visited and met Imam Malik and showed great honour. He spent his 50 years of life in the study of jurisprudence and Ḥadīth and died at the age of 85 in the year 179 Islamic Era in Madīnah and buried in al-Baki. After his death his disciples continued to work on the same line and spread the doctrines of the School in many countries of the world.

Imam Malik was a great jurist as well as traditionalist. His first source was, essentially the Holy Qur’ān and then come the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Among traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he preferred the traditions which were collected and narrated by the traditionist of Madinah. Her sources of law are Qur’ān̅, Hadith, sunnah and Ijma. Finally, the last two sources of law for him were *Qiyās* and *Istislah*. He did not rely much on *Qiyās* like Imam Abu Hanifa. This was the procedure adopted by Imam Malik in deciding legal problems.  

The Malikis recognise the validity of Ijma of the Companions (Sahaba) and the successors (Tabai) residing at Madina without reference to the opinion of others.

Imam Malik says that sacred learning if not confined to Madīnah but was mostly to be found there, meaning during the time of the companions and their successors and that special sanctity attached to that sacred city, as it was the place where the Prophet (peace be upon him) took refuge and carried out the mission of Islam. This is also true that men, learned in the Qur’ān, the Ḥadith and the law dispersed to all parts of Arabia, some during the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) life time and others after his death.

Madinah was the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Consequently all Madinites were companions and devotes of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They had opportunity to be very close to the Prophet (peace be upon him), every word and every action of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was recorded in the hearts of the people with the result that true Islamic spirit is reflected in their deeds and practices.

Malikis recognise the authority of Ijma not merely in the matters of law and religion but also in other matter such as organisation of army, preparations for war.
and in other matters of administration of the state. Ijma, no doubt, was of the supreme authority and hence is characterised as law where as Ijma of other places may be of local nature and comparatively of lesser authority. Therefore, Imam Malik preferred and gave more importance to such Ijma of superior authority. 43

Qiyās is defined by Malikis as “The account of deduction with the original text in respect of the Illat or effective cause of its law”. In principle all the three Imams, Abu Hanifa, Malik and Imam Shafii accepted Qiyās or analogical deduction. An analogical deduction may be founded according to the Malikis on the law established either by a text of the Qur’ān or Ḥadith, or by a unanimous decision of the learned and according to some Shafiis and Hanbalis it may also be based on another analogical deduction.

Imam Malik established the Sunnah or living tradition in favour of his doctrine, adds systematic reasoning because one wishes to understand and concludes the Sunnah is proof enough, but one also wants to know the reason, and this is found in the principle of Raʾy. Malikis reasoning is inspired by material consideration by Practical expediency-

On the whole, Malik’s contribution to legal reasoning is his success in steering a middle course through the opinions of the other Scholars.44

Imam Malik propounded a doctrine somewhat similar to juristic equity or preference. He would allow a deduction of law to be based on general considerations of the public good (Masalihu’l Mursala waʾl-Istislah)

In the School of Imam Malik subjective element in Raʾy has been recognised as legitimate, it is called Istislah (consideration) of what is beneficial or expedient.

There is no great distinction between the principle of Istihsan of Imam Abu Hanifa & the Maliki doctrine of public good as the aim of both is to reduce the rigidity of law in the interest of public good or welfare, which is the basic aim of Islamic legislation Malik used traditions more copiously and took refuge in opinion less frequently without opinion, he could not have built his system; but for him it was not so much a primary principle as a means of escape. One principle of great freedom he did derive from it and lay down with clearance it is the conception of the public advantage (Istislah) when a rule would work general injury it is to be set aside even in the teeth of a valid analogy. It is nearly the same as the preference of Abu Hanifa. The
technical term *Istislah*, chosen by Malik to express his idea, was probably intended to distinguish it from that of Abu Hanifa, also to suggest in the public advantage (*Maṣlaha*) a more valid basis than the mere preference of the legist.

The *Istislah* as a Principle of public utility is sound one, only thing is that in its application, strict care must be taken so that it may not exceed the limit and must be within the ambit of the textual law of Islam-one striking example of a decision of Imam Malik regarding lost husband, he decided keeping in view of the welfare of the society and the wife that she could marry after a lapse of 4 years.45

Imam Malik’s great work is the *Kitāb -al-Muw’atta* (paved way). It is the oldest corpus jurist of the Sunni branch of Islamic jurisprudence that has survived from the early period of *fiqh*. Imam Malik’s Muw’atta represents a codification of the *fiqh* as it developed in the Hijaz in its theological centre Madina. Its object is to give a survey of law and justice, ritual and practice of religion according to the Ijma of Islam in Madinah, Malik desired to help this interest on the basis of the practice in the Ḫijaz and to codify and systematise the customary law of Madīnah. The Muw’atta represent the transition from the simple *fiqh* of the earliest period to the pure science of Ḫadith of the later period.

Imam Malik was not alone among his contemporaries in the composition of the *Muw’atta*; al-Madjashun (died 164) is said to have dealt with the consensus of the learned of the Madīnah without quoting the pertinent traditions and works quite in the style of Muw’atta are recorded by several Madīnah scholars of the same time, but nothing of them has survived to us. The success of the Muw’atta is due to the fact that it always takes an average view or adopt middle course on disputed points.

Imam Malik’s Muw’atta got so much respect and fame that every scholar felt proud to refer it. The Abbasid Caliph like Harun al Rashid, Amin and Ma’mun consulted it. No book in Ḫadith got such fame and no other work in authority can be compared with Muw’atta. Therefore, Imam Shafii aptly remarked that “Beneath the sky, on the earth, no book after holy Qur’ān is so authentic like *Muw’atta*”.

Imam Malik had based his *fiqh* on the traditions or *Aḥadith* whether it may be *Musnad* or *Mursil*, Abu Bakr stated that in *Muw’atta* the total number of Mulasil (connected) Aḥadith are 1720 and among them 600 *Muwqoof* and 275 are the qual of *Tabayeen* (Sayings of Tabayeen).46
1. His greatest contribution is his book Muw’atta. Regarding the importance of this book, we have already mentioned that Imam Shafii remarked,” Beneath the sky on the earth, no book after holy Qur’an is more authentic than Muw’atta-e-Imam Malik”

2. Imam Malik was great traditionalist as well as a jurist of high rank. He studied fiqh under the great jurist Rabia Ibn Farrukh known as Rabiat-al-Ray and others. Even his teachers admitted and appreciated his proficiency and great ability in fiqh and Ahadith. He was a great Muhaddith. Imam Shafii said, “He was like a shining star in the sky of knowledge”. Imam Bukhari said that his chain of transmission of Ahadith was more perfect and authentic.

Imam Malik was a pious man devoted his whole life for the progress and development of Islamic legal learning. He supported Nafees Zakia Alvi by his fatwa against the Abbasi Caliph Mansur. As a great Scholar of Islamic learning he got respect from public as well as rulers. It is said that Harun Rasheed used to visit to hear Muw’atta and gave great respect to him.

Imam Malik had written a book on fiqh and Ahadith which had already been dealt in detail. Now the works of his disciples and other scholars on Maliki Fiqh are mentioned below as Imam Malik had not himself codified his principles of law. In fact this is the work of his learned disciples who preserved the master’s legal learning for posterity.

1. Al-Mudawwana al-Kubra of Shanun
2. Kitáb al wasa-e-wa’al Shurut
3. Kitáb al Jami Muḥammad(peace be upon him) Ibn Shanun
4. Kitáb al Mabsut by Qadi Ismail Ishaq
5. Kitáb Ahkam al-Qur’àn
6. Kitáb Adab-al-Qadat
7. Kitáb Usul

Imam Shafii-(150 A.H-204 A.H. OR 767 C.E. 820 C.E.)

His full name is Abu ‘Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Idris Ash-shafii, the founder of Shafii School of Islamic jurisprudence, was born in 150 A.H. (767 C.E.) in Ghazza
(Palestine). He belonged to the tribe of Quraish; he was a Hashmi and thus, remotely connected with the Prophet Muhammad (peace on him be up). He related to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from paternal as well as from maternal side. His father died when he was only two years old and was brought up in very humble circumstances by his mother in the sacred city of Makkah. In Makkah, he studied Hadith and fiqh with Muslim Ibn Khalid Zindji (died 180 A.H.) And Sufiyan Ibn Aina (died 198 A.H.). He memorised holy Qur’ān and Muw’atta at the age of 10 years when he was about 20 years he went to Madīnah to Malik Ibn Anas, studied Fiqh under him. In the period of Caliph Harun Rashid he took an appointment in Yemen and was charged as a prisoner with other Alids to Caliph Harun al Rashid to Rakk (803 C.E.) He was pardoned and then became intimate with the celebrated Hanafi jurist, Muhammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al Shaiban and studied fiqh under him. In this way he got mastery in Hanafi Jurisprudence as well as Maliki. He went to Egypt via Harran and Syria that he went to Baghdad set up successfully as a teacher there developed a School of jurisprudence influenced by both Hanafi and Maliki fiqh. There he attached to Governor of Egypt. Abbas Ibn Musa came to Egypt on Shawwal 28,198 A.H (June 21,814 A.D.) as a result of disturbances there, he left Egypt and went to Makkah, from where he returned in 200 A.H. (815/816 C.E.) to Egypt and remained there till his death in 204 A.H. He died on the last day of Rajab 204 A.H. (20th January 820 C.E.) in Fustat and was buried at the foot of the Mukattam in the vault of Banu Abd al-Hakam.48

**Imam Shafii as a Jurist**

Imam Shafii based his doctrine on the Holy Qur’ān. He says “Qur’ān is the basis of legal knowledge”. The Qur’ān serves the double purpose of supplying raw material for legislation, as the basic source of law, and an inspiring ideal for the Scholar who aimed at shaping his system of law in harmony with that model. In Risala Imam Shafii had given 220 Quranic citations either as specific rules of law or as examples for formulating principles of law.

Next to the Qur’ān, Shafii stressed on the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Sunnah. He was upholder of traditions and got the title of Nasirus Sunnat. But he adopted middle course in following traditions, between Imam Abu Hanifa, who leaned more on passages in the Qur’ān and his own deductive opinion, and Imam Malik who leaned more on traditions, usages and practices of Madīnah.
The Qur’ān does not contradict the traditions, but the traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) explain the Qur’ān. He made extensive use of the Aḥadith collected from different centres; Sunnah is established only by tradition going back to the Prophet (peace be upon him), not by practice or consensus.

Imam Shafii was strong supporter of the doctrine of Ijma by Ijma (consensus) Shafii does not mean merely the agreement of a few scholars of a certain town or locality but the consensus of the majority of leading jurists in Muslim lands. He in fact universalized the institution of Ijma and made a doctrine for all people of all ages. He allowed greater scope of Ijma (consensus of opinion) putting a more liberal and workable interpretation on the well-known diction of the Prophet (peace uponb him).

According to Imam Shafii, Ijma may be based on a text of the Qur’ān or of Aḥadith or an analogy. The Shafii accepted the authority of Ijma not only in religion but also in temporal matters such as organisation of the army, preparations for war and other questions of administration of the state.49

Imam Shafii was the first jurist who laid down regular rules for Qiyās or analogical deduction. The fourth doctrine on which Shafii based his doctrine after Ijma is Qiyās or analogical deduction. Shafii’s define Qiyās as “the accord of a known thing with a known thing by reason of the equality of the one with the other in the respect of the effective cause of its law”.

Qiyās is a variety of Ijtihād (personal reasoning) and Qiyās (analogy) at greater length than consensus, because he tried to limit the use of personal reasoning, in the wide and unrestricted sense. The position of Al-Shafii seems to have been that the reason for a command was to be considered in drawing an analogy, but that there must be some clear guidance in the text itself, pointing to reason.50

Works of Imam Shafii and Shafii School of Thought

1. *Kitāb al-Rashīd Fi ʿusul al Fiqh.*

41
This is the first book on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence written by Imam Shafii which is universally known as Kiṭāb-al-Rashid Fi ‘usul al Fiqh, often abridged as Kiṭāb-al-Risala.

2. Kiṭāb al Umm.

The present components of the umm are writings quoted by al’Baihaqi as separate works; Kiṭāb al Ijma Kiṭāb al Ibtal al-Istihsan, Kiṭāb al Bayan al Fard, Kiṭāb al-Sifat al Amr wal’l-Nahy. Kiṭāb al Ikhtilaf al Iraqians i.e., The Kiṭāb al Ikhtilaf al-Ḥadith TheKiṭāb al-Mabsut fil Fiqh

3. There has also survived a profession of faith by Shafii entitled Kiṭāb -al-Shafii

4. Kiṭāb al Fiqh al Akbar

5. Buwaiti had written the following books
   a. Mukthasar Kabir
   b. Mukhtasar Saghir
   c. Kiṭāb al Saghir


The Shafii school of thought is immediately followed by Egypt later on by other countries. It is still predominant in South Arabia, Bahrain, Malay, Archipelago, the former German East Africa and some parts of Central Asia and even in South India and Pakistan many Muslims are followers of this school.

Imam Shafii, who rejected Istihsan, accepted Istidlal as source of law. In Shafii’s view, Istidlal is the name for a distinct method of juristic ratiocination not falling within the scope for interpretation or analogy.51

**Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal** (164A.H-241A.H)

Imām Abū ‘Abdullah Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ḥanbal, commonly known as Ibn Ḥanbal was the founder of the Ḥanbalī School of Islamic jurisprudence. Imām Ibn Ḥanbal was born at Baghdad on Rabī al-Awwal 164 A.H (November-780 C.E.)
He belonged to the family of Shaibān. He studied under different scholars and made extensive travels to learn Ahadīth and Fiqh. In his early age he studied Fiqh under Imām Abū Yūsuf and heard Ahadīth from Hishām and Sufyān Ibn Aina and other traditionists (Muhaddithīn). His inclination of mind was towards the study of Ahadīth; therefore he made a very extensive study of Ahadīth and went to Makkah and Yemen and many other cities of Islamic learning. After he returned home, he took lessons from Imām Shafi‘ī in Fiqh and Fiqh al-Usūl (810-813 C.E.). His religious turn of mind was increased and law unalterably determined by the old traditional views. He had the opportunity to exemplify them when under Caliphs Al-Māmun, Al-Mu‘tasim and Al-Wāthiq (833-849 C.E.), the Mutazilite definition of dogmas was raised to a state creed and painful proceedings were introduced against acknowledged theologians who would not reserve without professing the doctrine of the creation of the Holy Qur‘ān.52

At the age of fifteen, he embarked on journeys to different countries to meet various scholars. During his stay in Baghdad, there were two competing schools: Madrasa al-Āthār (the school focusing on texts) and Madrasa al-Rā‘i wal-Qiyās (the school based on opinion and analogy), and Ibn Ḥanbal favoured the former.

Although like other scholars, he too relocated to Ḥijāz, however he was not as well-known as the leaders of the other schools of jurisprudence because mostly considered him to be a Muḥaddith (narrator of Ḥadīth) instead of a genuine Faqīh (jurist). Ibn Ḥanbal was a strong advocate of the Abbasid government and when al-Mutawakil came to power in 232 A.H., he tortured the Alāwiyyīn and fiercely opposed the school of Ahl al-Bayt, but he paid Ibn Ḥanbal a handsome salary of 4,000 dirhams, and invited him to Samarra to obtain blessings from his presence. Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥanbal wrote his famous work Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal under the reign of Al-Mutawakil and passed away while al-Mutawakil was still in power. His case was similar to that of Imām al-Mālik, whose ideas were also propagated by the Abbasid caliphate, and the Abbasids promoted both of their schools of jurisprudence.

The Ḥanbalī School is the fourth orthodox school of law within Sunni Islam. It derives its decrees from the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah, which it places above all forms of consensus, opinion or inference. The school accepts as authoritative an opinion given by a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him), provided there is no
disagreement with another Companion. In the case of such disagreement, the opinions of the Companion nearest to that of the Qurʾān or the Sunnah will prevail.\textsuperscript{53}

The Ḥanbalī school of legal thought was the last of the four major schools of thought to formulate its principles, and built upon the scholarship of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. There were many periods in history when the Ḥanbalis numbered a handful, although today the school seems to be making resurgence. From amongst the long line of Ḥanbalī scholars Muwaffaq-al-Dīn ʿAbdullah Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qudāma Al-Maqdisī is amongst the most famous with his scholastic contributions making an impact on schools other than his own, not only in Fiqh but also in ʿAqīdah. Having grown up in a religious family devoted to learning, he along with relatives would travel to Baghdad to seek knowledge already having benefitted from the scholars of Damascus (his own city) having moved there from Palestine. The Ḥanbalī scholar ʿʿAbdul Qādir Ibn Badran discussed the juristic contributions of Ibn Qudāma stating that he wrote four major books in Fiqh which served as a curriculum, the first one (Al-ʿUmdah) suitable for the absolute beginner and the last one (Al-Mughnī) qualifying the student as a jurist. Many Ḥanbalī scholars past and present have attached great importance to Ibn Qudāma’s A-ʿUmdah due to its scholastic value, clear layout, simple language, and providence of basic evidences from the Qurʾān and Sunnah. He says in his introduction, “I have abridged this book of fiqh as much as I can and shortened it merely to one opinion of the school so that it will serve as a primer for the reader. Thus, he will not be confused as to what is correct because of differing reports and narrations. Some of my (Muslim) brothers asked me to summarise it so as to make it simple for the teachers and to facilitate its memorisation for students...”

The ease by which the student can encompass all of the major topics of Fiqh is facilitated by Ibn Qudāma’s method of writing the manual. The chapters begin with a Ḥadīth (prophetic tradition) related from the authentic compilations and Ibn Qudāma’s discussion is drawn out of that Ḥadīth – a method which instils within the reader the importance of Ḥadīth as well as encouraging him/her to study the prophetic traditions. It was for reasons such as that many of the great luminaries from amongst the Ḥanbalī school paid attention to this brief primer. Ibn Taymiyyah undertook its explanation which provides an extremely beneficial analysis of the primer although he did not complete it. However, that which he did complete is extremely beneficial for
the student, its depth is realised by the fact that reaching the chapter of pilgrimage took him four volumes! It has been printed by Dār Ibn Taymiyyah (Cairo) and Al Maktab Al Dhāhiriyyah (Damascus).

The most well-known explanation of the primer is Al-Uddah Sharḥ al-ʻUmdah by the Faqīh (jurist) and Muhaddith (traditionalist) ʻAbdul Raḥmān Ibn ʻAbdul Raḥmān Al Maqdisī. His explanation is a detailed exposition of the Ḥanbalī school of thought crammed with evidences from the Qurʾān and Sunnah. Although Al-ʻUmdah provides only one position in regards to a legal issue, Al-Uddah at many junctures quotes up to three opinions found within the school whilst occasionally mentioning the opinions of the other Imāms, although, this is not an oft occurrence. Some scholars state that Al-Uddah is, arguably, an abridged form of Ibn Qudāma’s Al-Kāfī (the third book in his curriculum) but written as an explanation to Al-ʻUmdah.

Al-ʻUmdah also has a few contemporary explanations such as that written by ʻAbdullah Ibn ʻAbdul ‘Azīz Al-Jibrīn, and due to its simplicity, it seems to be more of an appropriate starting point for the beginner than Al-Uddah. Such is also the case with Ḥāshiyah ʻAlā al-ʻUmdah Al-Fiqh by Shaykh ʻAbdullah ʻAlī Bassām which provides explanatory notes on that accompany of Al-ʻUmdah.

Al-ʻUmdah, being a brief primer in Ḥanbalī Fiqh is extremely beneficial for those beginning a new course of study as well as those wanting to go over the basics. The manual consists of short chapters which are very much understandable, and the brevity of the primer leaves the reader thirsty for more. The issues covered within the respective chapters are core points to note, but the intriguing way in which they are presented leaves the reader with deeper questions as if the discussion at hand was intended not only to inform the reader of the legal issue, but to invoke questions deeper into the topic.54

Ibn Ḥanbal’s school is based on five main sources; the texts of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, the Fatwas of the Companions (Ṣaḥāba), if there was nothing to contradict them, the saying (s) of certain of the Companion(s) when these were consistent with the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, Daʿīf and Mursal traditions and finally, reasoning by analogy (Qiyās) whenever it was necessary. During his time there were many conflicting problems faced by the ʻUlamā‘ about the different interpretations given by them. He was much more orthodox in his principles, and this is the reason
why throughout history, Ḥanbalism had to fight its way out against many powerful opponents belonging to different schools whose principles it opposed. Sometimes its antagonists united to oppose it. 55

Ibn Ḥanbal did not himself wrote a jurist methodology (Usūl al-Fiqh) and the famous works of his school cannot be said to be strictly in accordance with his thought. His doctrine, as can be found out from the Masā’il, is more elementary compared to the latter elaborations, but it has a distinction of setting out the first principles of the methodology of the school. The school of Ibn Ḥanbal spread rapidly up to fourteenth century. In Iran the followers of this school were found all over, in Syria and Palestine this school was started in the eleventh century by ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Shirāzī. Later on the great Ḥanbalite Ibn Taymiyyah, who belonged to Syria, strengthened it there. But after the death of Ibn Taymiyyah Ḥanbalism was on the decline. On the eve, the Turks took the reins of Islam in their hands, all the four schools were officially represented by their Qādis in all Islamic centres. The advent of the Turks dealt a severe blow to Ḥanbalism and it was gradually on the decline till the eighteenth century C.E. when all of a sudden a new and vigorous wave appeared in it in the form of Ibn ‘‘Abdul Wahhāb’s movement which showed traces of the effects of Ibn Taymiyyah’s exertion.56 Today the school is officially recognized as authoritative in Saudi Arabia and areas within the Persian Gulf

The later history of the school has been characterized by fluctuations in their fortunes. Ḥanbali scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d.1350) did display more tolerance to other views than their predecessors and were instrumental in making the teachings of Ḥanbalī more generally accessible.57

**Contribution of Disciples of Imām Ibn Ḥanbal and other Scholars of Ḥanbalī School:**

The Ḥanbalites, who represent now the most spare-Islamic Madhhab, were till the 8\(^{th}\) (14\(^{th}\)) century much more widely spread in the countries of Islam viz Persia; in Isfahan, Rai, Shahrazur and other places, where their religious course seems to have been characterized by extravagancies of various kinds.
In Syria, Palestine, where the Ḥanbalite Madhab was introduced in the 5th (12th) century by ‘Abd al- Wāhid al-Shīrāzī, it was represented there, till 9th century A.H. and (16th) century C.E. It was also in this space of time that the appearance of Taqī al-dīn Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328C.E.) took up a new fight for the Ḥanbalite theology. Refutation of the rationalistic explanation of the holy Qurʿān and traditions- Tāwil- rejection of all innovations, as for instance visiting the tombs, venerating the saints etc. By his fall the prestige of Ḥanbalism suffered considerable loss, until the establishment of Turkish predominance in Muslim world when all the four Schools, thus also the Ḥanbalite one, were represented officially by a Qāḍī in all Islamic centres.

In the 18th century, it appeared in a new, vigorous form, namely, in the movement of Muwāḥḥidūn (Unitarians) or Wahhabi movement.58

**Five schools of Islamic Jurisprudence**

Schools of thought (Madhāhib) are the paths people follow to the Holy Qurʿān and Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Obviously, these schools of thought were found considerably after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and, in fact, never took shape until the time of the Umayyad Caliphate. The common phrase Aḥl al-Sunnah Wal-Jamāʿah, for example, became prevalent during the third century Ḥijri. By the year 250 A.H., the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence were being popularized and patronized during the Abbasid Caliphate. The Shia School of thought, on the other hand, continued its growth and progress after Ḥadrat ‘Alī (R.A.) through his descendants who were connected to each other through a chain of narration and knowledge.

Today, the five schools of Islamic thought accepted by all Muslims are the Jaʿfarī, comprising 23% of the Muslims (Shia); the Ḥanafī, comprising 31%; the Mālikī, comprising 25%; the Shafiʿī, comprising 16%; and the Ḥanbalī, comprising 4% of the Muslims. The remaining small percentage follows minority schools such as the Zaydī and the Ismāʿīlī of Shia origin.59

**Al-Madhhab Imām Ibn Ḥanbal:**

Al-Madhhab Al-Ḥanbalī was the product of the Fiqh (rules and regulations) as taught by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. As in other Islamic schools of jurisprudence Aḥmad
Ibn Ḥanbal’s Fiqh deals with *Tawḥīd*, elements of *faith*, elements of *worship* (pillars of Islam), lawful and unlawful, ethics, dealing with other people (*Muʿāmalāt*).

Unlike other Sunni Schools, Al-Ḥanbali’s school has almost no use for *Qiyās* (analogy) or *Rāʿi* (personal opinion), to such an extent that they even prefer narration of weak Ḥadīth over *Qiyās* or *Rāʿi*. It emphasizes taking the Ḥadīth literally (blindly) to such an extent that they were called *Aṣḥāb Al-Ḥadīth*. Under Ibn Ḥanbal many students learned his *Fiqh* and became famous later on. Chiefly they were Al-Athram, Al-Marūzī, Al-Ḥarbī, ʿAbdullah Ibn Ḥanbal, and Ṣālih Ibn Ḥanbal. They were very active in teaching the Ḥanbalī Madhhab afterwards though this school never spread extensively.

Also like other Sunni *Madhāhab* unlike Shia, Ḥanbalism do not acknowledge the Imāmah of *Ahl al-Bayt*, though Ibn Ḥanbal was very supportive of *Ahl al-Bayt*. Ḥanbalī School began its ascendancy with the full patronage of Khalīfā Al-Mutawakil around 235 A.H., but it never became widely spread.

By the age of 50 Ibn Ḥanbal witnessed severe crushing measures by the Mu'tazila toward those who did not agree with their views that the *Qurʾān* was Makhlūq (created piecemeal by Allah) according to the need of the time. As'haab Al-Ḥadīth believed the opposite, that the *Qurʾān* was whole and part of Allah. As a result, suppression by the Mu'tazila fully supported by the Khalīfā (Al-Māmūn, Al-Mu'tasim, and Al-Wāthiq) continued for about 20 years. It was a brutal suppression of any intellectual who did not agree with their view, and As'haab Al-Ḥadīth became the culprits for decades. In 218 A.H. along with many others, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal was arrested and was to be executed by Khalīfā Al-Māmūn because he stuck to his own conviction and did not agree with the Mu'tazila point of view. It so happened that Al-Māmūn died on an expedition just before he was to give the verdict for the execution of Ibn Ḥanbal. The following Khalīfā, Al-Mu'tasim, had Ibn Ḥanbal in jail, interrogated him about his conviction, lashed him 38 times, but somehow he released him later from jail. The Khalīfā became lenient with Ibn Ḥanbal since it is said that Ibn Ḥanbal was able to circumvent direct confrontation.

As a result Ibn Ḥanbal's reputation skyrocketed with *Aṣḥāb Al-Ḥadīth* who shared his views. He became famous later on when Khalīfā Al-Mutawakil around 234 A.H. took up the cause of *Aṣḥāb Al-Ahadīth* against the Mu'tazila, in a move to
lure the general public to his side. Ibn Ḥanbal became the symbol of Aṣḥāb Al-Ḥadīth resistance to Mu'tazila orthodoxy.

While Khalīfa Al-Mutawakkil was the nemesis of Mu'tazila, he included the devotees of Ahl al-Bayt as archenemy too. A period of unparalleled persecution and killing began to take place, as a result of which the Mu'tazila intellectuals all but vanished. With the cooperation of Aṣḥāb Al-Ḥadīth a new phase of bloodshed began to take shape against any members or sympathizers of Ahl al-Bayt too. Al-Mutawakkil took them as a grave threat to his ruler ship, and he unleashed brutal and very harsh measures to anyone suspected of being loyal to Ahl al-Bayt. These measures were to such an extent, that against the Shia there unfolded the Nāṣibī, (people who earned their living by making perverted stories and pernicious poems in denouncing and damning the Shi'a). Despite this, Ibn Ḥanbal was brave and outspoken in support of Ahl al-Bayt. He was fearless and undaunted by the attitude of the Khalīfa or the people around. He even narrated more Ḥadīth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on behalf of Ahl al-Bayt than most of the Sīhāh al-Sittah, for such was his courage, virtue and nobility. And despite the fact that Al-Mutawakkil was supporting him with 4,000 dirham every month and the auspicious attention he was giving him, Ibn Ḥanbal was uncomfortable of the association with the Khalīfa, to the extent that he evaded and refrained from the bond. Ibn Ḥanbal would accept the gifts from the Khalīfa but would distribute them secretly to the poor.

Imam Ibn Ḥanbal was a highly learned scholar in Ḥadīth. He wrote the books of Manāsik, (the major and the minor), but his distinction goes more toward the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal . This book was not quite finished when Ibn Ḥanbal died at the age of 77, and the task of editing, reviewing, and completing it fell in the hands of his son ‘ Abdulla h. Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal contained 40,000 Aḥadīth, of which 10,000 were repetitions, and a good many others were weak. Ibn Ḥanbal claimed that he selected the Ḥadīth from among 750,000 circulating Aḥadīth at his time, the overwhelming majority of which were fake.60

Ibn Ḥanbal: Articulator of Classical Salafiyya:

Imam Ibn Ḥanbal, the founder of the fourth school of Sunni jurisprudence, was the major articulator of this trend. In his fight against the Mu'tazilah’s doctrine of the creation of the Qur’ān, he laid out the tenets that later shaped the Salafiyya.
Imam Ibn Ḥanbal’s thought focused on several principles. The first is the primacy of the revealed text over reason. Imam Ibn Ḥanbal saw no contradiction between reason and scripture. Unlike the Mutakallimūn (scholastic theologians) who subjected the revealed text to reason, he dismissed Ta’wīl (subjective or esoteric interpretation) of the texts and explained them in accordance with Arabic philology, Ḥadīth, and the understanding of the Prophet’s Companions and their successors. The second principle is the rejection of Kalām.

The Salafiyya considered the issues raised by the theological schools as Bid‘ah (innovation) and confirmed the orthodox view of these matters. The third is strict adherence to the Qur‘ān, the Sunnah, and the Consensus (Ijmā) of the pious ancestors. In line with the major Sunni school, Imam Ibn Ḥanbal held the Qur‘ān and the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be the authoritative sources for understanding the matters of religion, from which the principles of the Sharī‘ah are derived. He set strict guidelines for the use of Qiyās (analogical reasoning). Ibn Taymiyyah regarded him as a Mujtahid within the Ḥanbalī School, but as a result of changes in time and conditions, he departed from it in some respects: he rejected Taqlīd (adherence to tradition) and Ijmā and approved of the use of Qiyās and also maintained his own views on several jurisprudential issues.

Ibn Taymiyyah, a follower of the Ḥanbalī School, jurist, and theologian, contributed greatly to the evolution of the Salafiyya. He combated accretions and innovations in religious practices and belief, particularly those introduced by the Sufi orders.

Imam Ibn Ḥanbal’s works, the great collection of traditions known as “Musnad Ahmad” was actually compiled by his Son ‘Abdullah from his lectures and was amplified by supplements (Zawā’id). It consists of 28,000-29,000 traditions.

He was more a traditionist than a jurist. He died at Baghdad on the 31st July 855 C.E. It is said 800,000 men and 60,000 women attended his funeral. He was buried in Baghdad cemetery of martyrs in Harbiya Quarter.
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