CHAPTER ONE

LIFE OF MUHAMMAD BIN AL-HASAN
AL-SHAYBANI

Name and Surname
Lineage and Origin
Birth and Growth
Qualities and Character
Academic Position
Name and Surname:

His name is Muhammad bin al-Hasan b. Farqad. He is a Shaybani\(^{(1)}\) by his clientship (wila). According to another report which is not so strong his name is Muhammad bin al-Hasan b. Ubaidullah bin Marwan.\(^{(2)}\)

Lineage and Origin:

His Kunniyah is Abu Abdullah.\(^{(3)}\)

His lineage is Shaybani as Abdul Qadir bin Tahir al-Tamimi al-Baghkadi has described in his book al-Tahsil fi Usul al-Fiqh and Jalaluddin al-Suyuti has verified it in his book entitled Jazil al-Mawahib fi Ikhtilaf al-Mazahib. Most of the scholars have written that he was Shaybani on account of his clientship not due to lineage.\(^{(4)}\)

Abu Jafar al-Tahawi has narrated that Muhammad bin al-Hasan originally belongs to a village near al-Ramlah in Palestine. He, then, shifted to Kufah. Ibn Sa'd has claimed in his al-Tabaqat al-Kubra that the origin of Muhammad bin al-Hasan was from al-Jazirah and his father was amongst the soldiers of Syria. He then came to Wasit and Muhammad was born there in 132 A.H./\(^{(5)}\)

Birth and Growth:

Muhammad was born in 132 A.H./ as Zahabi has quoted from the early Historians and biographers.\(^{(6)}\)
That Ibn Abdul Barr in his al-Intiya\(^{(7)}\) and Ibn Khallikan in his Wafayat al-A'yan,\(^{(8)}\) on the other hand claimed that, Muhammad ws born in 135 A.H. is quite wrong. Al-Khatib in his Tarikh Baghdad has written that Muhammad bin al-Hasan originally belonged to Harasta a famous village in the District of Damascus. His father came to Iraq and Muhammad was born in Wasit and grew up in Kufah.\(^{(9)}\).

The correct version perhaps is that his origin was from al-Jazirah—belonging to the tribe of Banu Shayban of the region of Rabiah. His father, then joined the army of Syria and became prosperous. His family resided some time in Harasta in Damascus and some time in a village of Palestine. Both the regions were situated in Syria. From there they shifted to Kufah. During the stay of his parents in Wasit in Iraq, due to some official assignments, Muhammad was born. They shifted to Kufah later on. Here he grew up.\(^{(10)}\) He was nourished in a luxurious atmosphere\(^{(11)}\).

There is no information about the family of Muhammad. However, he was called Abu Abdullah and it meant he had at least one son.
Qualities and Character:

Muhammad bin al-Hasan was a fat man but of vivacious and healthy structure and might, intelligent and wise, sharpminded and discreet. He possessed a strong memory and great courage. He was noble-natured and popular among his contemporaries. (12)

Imam Shafii used to say: I have never seen a fat man who is so vivacious and charming except Muhammad bin al-Hasan. I did not find anyone more eloquent than he was. When I heard him reciting the Holy Quran I found him as the Quran was revealed in his language. Daud Tai used to say: If Muhammad bin al-Hasan were alive, he would have obtained great repute. (13)

Muhammad was a noble soul endowed good manners and etiquettes and expressing them throughout his life. Imam Shafii said: Except Muhammad bin al-Hasan I found every person frowning and showing unhappiness whenever asked about any problem. (14) He used to describe: I never found any other person wisey, more intelligent, more pious more God-fearing, more soft speaker and eloquent than Muhammad bin al-Hasan. (15) Imam Abu Hafs is said have remarked that (16) whoever
looks at Muhammad bin al-Hasan, he surely would know that Muhammad was created for knowledge. Despite all his great qualities he was distinguished by kindness, great control over his tongue and composed nature. He was man of love and affection, of profound knowledge and understanding and of good manners and strong reasoning.

**Academic Stature:**

The academic stature of Muhammad bin al-Hasan was very high so far narrations, opinions and writings on the subjects of the lawful and the unlawful was concerned. His contemporaries held him in high esteem. Al-Zahabi said: the craftsmanship in the field of jurisprudence in Iraq after Abu Yusuf was transferred to Muhammad. The scholars learned jurisprudence from him. He composed a large number of books and he was one of the wisest men of the world.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was asked: Where from have you learnt these complex discourses of Figh? he replied: From the books of Muhammad bin al-Hasan.

Imam Shafii said: I have obtained a camel load of knowledge from Muhammad bin al-Hasan and it all came, through my listening to him.
He used to say: I have never seen a person who was more knowledgeable about the Book of Allah than Muhammad bin al-Hasan, as if it was revealed to him. It all means that Shafii had great respect for him.

Isa bin Aban was asked: Who is more expert in jurisprudence, Abu Yusuf or Muhammad? he responded: Take their books into consideration. By that he meant that Muhammad was more skilled in jurisprudence. Muhammad used to sit in the Mosque of Kufah for delivering discourses when he was only twenty year old.\footnote{21}

As for his stature in the field of critical analysis and discussion of holy traditions is concerned, it is reported by Hanbal bin Ishaque: I have heard Ahmad bin Hanbal saying, 'Abu Yusuf was a great scholar of the traditions, while Abu Hanifah and Muhammad had different opinion about the reports.\footnote{22}

Al-Darqutni said: To me Muhammad is not suitable to be rejected. Al-Nasai said: Traditions selected by him are less authentic. Imam Shafii has on the contrary based his arguments and deducted issues on account of his narrated traditions. It is also reported that Muhammad was a highly intelligent man, a wise personality, a competent leader and a constant reciter of the Holy Quan.\footnote{23}
Imam Shafii has admired that no person has spoken with wisdom and confidence like Muhammad bin al-Hasan.\(^{(24)}\) There is another testimony of Imam Shafi in his favour who used to say: I have been in company with Muhammad for ten years, I carried his utterances as much as a camel could carry. Had he talked as per his own understanding and wisdom we could not have understood him. He used to speak according to our standard and level of comprehension.\(^{(25)}\)

It is quoted from Imam Shafii that a person asked him about a problem and he replied in his way. The person responded that the jurists had different opinions. Imam Shafii replied. "Had you ever seen any jurist except Muhammad. He used to satisfy the eye and heart both. I have never seen a fat man so much intelligent."\(^{(26)}\)

Muhammad bin Sama'ah narrates: Isa bin Aban bin Sadaqah al-Katib used to pray with us. I often invited him to attend the circle of Muhammad bin al-Hasan to which he responded saying that the people they are opposed to us. One day he prayed with us Salat al-Fajr, on the day of the circle of Muhammad. I did not leave him until he attended the circle. When Muhammad concluded his discourse speech I
introduced him: This is the son of your brother Aban bin Sadaqah al-Katib. I invited him to attend your circle and he used to refuse by responding that you are opposing them in the matters of traditions. Muhammad bin al-Hasan replied "Do not make up your mind unless you listen to me directly whether I am opposing any holy tradition". Isa then asked him about twenty five traditions. Muhammad answered and provided the details about the traditions which had been abrogated and superseded by others with full evidences and proofs. When we stood up Isa turned towards me and said, "There was a big wall between me and the light. Now it disappeared". Consequently he attended Imam Muhammad till he graduated. (27)

Notes and References:


(2) Al-Zahabi, Manaqib Abu Haneefah wa Sahibayh, p. 50; Al-Khauthari, Bulugh al-Amani fi Seerah Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Shaybani, p. 4.


(15) Ibid.

(16) Ibid.

(17) Al-Saymari, Op.cit., p. 120.


(22) Al-Zahabi, Op.cit., p. 58, The conditions and terms for accepting the traditions as authentic are different to Mujtahid scholars.
If a condition is acceptable to any scholar, it may be rejected to others and every scholar of Fiqh and Hadith takes accounts of all these matters. It may not be, then a strong criticism.

(26) Ibid, p. 156.