

# Abu Hanifah and the Transmission of Traditions

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# Abu Hanifah and the Transmission of Traditions

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## Abstract

As the founder of the Hanafi school of fiqh, Abu Hanifah is known more as a jurist than a transmitter of traditions (*muhaddith*). He is often depicted as a scholar who did not give great importance to tradition (*hadith*) and used analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) instead. However, Abu Hanifah not only accepted traditions like all other jurists as a source for deriving religious rulings, but was actually known to have transmitted them as well.

In addition to the Sunni books of traditions, there are many Shia books which have recorded narrations transmitted by him. This article examines the role that Abu Hanifah played in transmitting traditions and provides examples of a few of these narrations that are recorded in both the Sunni and Shia books of traditions.

**Keywords:** Abu Hanifah, *hadith*, transmitting traditions, *'ilm al-rijal*, scholars of traditions, books of traditions, Islamic jurists.

## Abu Hanifah's Role in the Transmission of Traditions

Transmitting traditions (*ahadith*) was an honour that many struggled to achieve and Abu Hanifah was amongst those who had a deep desire to learn the words of the Noble Prophet (s). Despite his love for Prophetic traditions and the work of transmitting them, it is said that he refrained from spending the entirety of his time in this field.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, there are presently many traditions where Abu Hanifah is mentioned in the chain of narration. The question is, since Abu Hanifah is counted amongst the *Tabi'in* (those who came after the companions of the Prophet) was he able to narrate directly from the companions of the Prophet (s)? This is a matter of dispute amongst the scholars.

Some believe that although Imam Abu Hanifah was able to meet during his lifetime a few companions of the Messenger of Allah (s), it is not clear that he directly narrated traditions from them.<sup>2</sup> ‘Allamah Ibn ‘Abidin writes in this regard:

Some people have stated that Abu Hanifah met with eight companions, listened to their narrations of traditions and transmitted them. This is false because if these traditions were with the grand Imam, Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Ibn Mubarak, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, and others would have transmitted them for the honour, or at least due to a competitive nature since these types of traditions are merits of honour for the transmitters.<sup>3</sup>

Others, however, have taken the opposite point of view: not only did Abu Hanifah meet seven or eight companions of the Messenger of Allah (s), but he also transmitted a tradition from each one of them.<sup>4</sup> In order to substantiate their claim, this group presents specific instances where Abu Hanifah narrates directly from the companions of the Prophet (s). The following traditions are examples of this:

1. Abu Hanifah narrates from Anas ibn Malik, who narrates from the Prophet (s): Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman.
2. Abu Hanifah narrates from Jabir who states that an Ansar came to the Prophet (s) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have not been given a child and I do not have a child.’ The Prophet said, ‘Where are you in regards to seeking forgiveness abundantly and giving charity often? It is through this that Allah grants one a child.’ The man then increased his charity and increased his seeking of forgiveness.
3. Abu Hanifah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Juz’ Zubaydi, who narrates from the Prophet (s): Allah will grant ambition and sustenance without measure for the one who ponders deeply about religion.
4. ... Abu Hanifah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Awfi, who narrates from the Prophet (s): Anyone who builds a mosque—even if his contribution is little (lit. *the scratching of a bird*)—Allah will build a house in paradise for him.
5. ... Abu Hanifah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Anis, who narrates from the Prophet (s): The love of something will make one blind and deaf.
6. ... Abu Hanifah narrates from Wathilah ibn al-Asqa’, who narrates from the Prophet (s): Call that which you doubt about to what you do not doubt about.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that the chains of narrations of these traditions show that Abu Hanifah directly narrated from the companions of the Prophet (s), it is still conceivable to say that he did not hear these tradition from the companions themselves. Rather, it was due to the trust that he had for the intermediary transmitter that he refrained from mentioning his name and narrated directly from the companions. It will be proven that amongst the categories of traditions, there are many incompletely transmitted traditions which have many similarities with these types of traditions.

Those who narrated traditions from Abu Hanifah in order to prove that he directly transmitted traditions from the companions are often criticized by a segment of scholars in the field of Islamic sciences. According to these scholars: “There are liars in the chains of narrations of these traditions. Such traditions cannot be trusted.”<sup>6</sup> Of course, this group only questions the reliability of the chain of narration. It is possible that these traditions have also been transmitted through (other) correct chains of narration.

In order to come to a conclusion about and prove whether or not Abu Hanifah heard traditions directly from the companions, we will conduct a historical analysis of this issue. The following two matters must be distinguished: 1) whether or not Abu Hanifah heard traditions from the companions and 2) whether or not he transmitted traditions [with or without any intermediaries] from the companions. The reason that these two issues should be separated is because a comparison between the life of the companions and the birth of Abu Hanifah cannot be used to prove whether or not Abu Hanifah transmitted traditions from the companions. The possibility exists that Abu Hanifah did not directly hear traditions from the companions, but nonetheless narrated from them through an intermediary, whose name he does not mention due to the trust that he had for the transmitter.

Imam Abu Hanifah was born in the year 80 AH and passed away in the year 150 AH.<sup>7</sup> Since Malik ibn Anas passed away in the year 93 AH and since we know that he travelled to Kufah<sup>8</sup>, there is the possibility of Abu Hanifah narrating a tradition from him when he was 13 years old. However, keeping in mind that Abu Hanifah was working in the marketplace at that age and did not give much importance to knowledge, it is improbable (though not impossible) that he heard a tradition directly from Malik ibn Anas.

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah Ansari is introduced as a companion whom Abu Hanifah heard a tradition from. However, Jabir passed away in the year 78 AH which makes it impossible for Abu Hanifah to have heard a tradition from him since Abu Hanifah was not yet born at the time. ‘Abdullah ibn Anis passed away in the year 54 AH—26 years before Abu Hanifah was born. Hence, it is impossible that Abu Hanifah heard a tradition from him as well. It is also quite far-fetched for him to have heard traditions from the other companions since ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Awfi passed away in 87 AH, Wathilah ibn Asqa’ passed away in 83 AH, and ‘Abdullah ibn Juz’ passed away in 86 AH. It is far-fetched that a child of 3 to 7 years would be able to hear a tradition from a companion of the Prophet (s), memorize it, and transmit it years later. In conclusion, it must be said that although the possibility exists that Abu Hanifah transmitted traditions from the companions, it is very unlikely that he heard the tradition directly from any of the companions.

As mentioned above, there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars regarding whether or not Abu Hanifah heard traditions from the companions. However, his having heard traditions from the *Tabi’in* and transmitting them is unanimously agreed upon by all scholars. In fact, some scholars claim that Abu Hanifah received traditions from four thousand scholars and leaders of the *Tabi’in*.<sup>9</sup>

Of those whom Abu Hanifah narrated traditions from include the following: ‘Ata’ ibn Abi Rabah, Abu

Ishaq Sabi'i, Muharib ibn Dithar, Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman, Haytham ibn Habib Sawwaf, Qays ibn Muslim, Muhammad ibn Munkadir, Nafi' Mawla ibn 'Umar, Hisham ibn 'Urwah, Yazid al-Faqir, Samak ibn Harb, 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, 'Atiyah al-'Awfi, 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Rafi', 'Abd al-Karim Abumiyah, 'Amir Sha'bi.10

Not only did Abu Hanifah narrate traditions from others, but he also became an intermediary for other transmitters. Among the famous transmitters who have narrated traditions from Abu Hanifah include individuals such as: Hammad ibn Abu Hanifah, Ibrahim ibn Tahman, Ishaq ibn Yusuf al-Azraq, Asad ibn 'Amr al-Qadhi, Hasan ibn Ziyad al-Lu'lu'i, Hamzah al-Ziyat, Dawud Ta'i, Zafar, 'Abd al-Razzaq, Abu Na'im, Muhammad ibn Hasan Shaybani, Abu Yusuf al-Qadhi, Waki' ibn Jarrah, Hushaym ibn Bashir, Yahya ibn Nasr ibn Hajib, and 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak.11

In conclusion, there is no doubt that Abu Hanifah is counted amongst the transmitters of traditions. Although his specialty was jurisprudence, not only did he benefit from the science of traditions and transmitting them, but he also took a keen interest in this field as well.

## **Abu Hanifah according to the Scholars of Traditions**

The scholars of *'ilm al-rijal* (the science studying the transmitters of traditions) have contradictory remarks regarding Abu Hanifah. It seems that Khatib Baghdadi, the author of *Tarikh Baghdad*, had some sort of enmity for Abu Hanifah since many traditions which imply a weakness in Abu Hanifah can be found in his book. For instance, Khatib narrates from Ibn Mubarak stating that Abu Hanifah was "an orphan in traditions" (implying that he did not benefit from knowledge and traditions). On the other hand, however, this same Ibn Mubarak has many positive remarks regarding the reliability and justice of Abu Hanifah with regards to traditions and there are many comments of praise for him.12 Because of this discrepancy, separating the contradictory traditions and determining the correct ones from the invalid ones is a very difficult process.

Some scholars of *'ilm al-rijal* made decisive decisions about the station of Abu Hanifah as a transmitter of traditions. It is stated that Nisa'i, the author of one of the six *Sunan* of the Ahl al-Sunnah, considered Abu Hanifah weak in traditions. Ibn 'Uday and a number of other scholars of traditions followed Nisa'i in this case.13 There are other scholars of traditions such as Muslim ibn Hajjaj, Yahya ibn Mu'in, and Qays ibn Rabi' in *Tarikh Baghdad* who narrated traditions which, according to them, place Abu Hanifah in the fold of weak transmitters—or even in the fold of transmitters who should be dismissed.14 In other books of history, as well, traditions are found which point to Abu Hanifah being among the weak transmitters of traditions.15

Abu Hanifah transmitted many traditions from the *Tabi'in* and the generation after the *Tabi'in*. But, can he really be counted amongst the weak transmitters of traditions? It is definitely not the case that he took the transmission of traditions lightly—this was due to his piety, his efforts to refrain from attributing false traditions to the Prophet (s), and the strong attention that he gave to the prophetic tradition: "A place in

the fire is prepared for whoever intentionally lies about me.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, it cannot be claimed that he was not careful enough with regards to transmitting traditions such that he be considered amongst the weak transmitters or in the fold of those transmitters who should be dismissed.

To explain the reservation that some scholars of *‘ilm al-rijal* had with regards to Abu Hanifah as a transmitter of traditions, one must investigate the criteria and principles that such scholars stipulated for themselves. After all, it must not be forgotten that Abu Hanifah occasionally resorted to *qiyas* (analogical reasoning) in order to derive religious rulings—since he did not accept many traditions because of the extreme precaution that he took and strict criteria that he established for himself with regards to traditions—and hence, this had a huge effect on the creation of such thoughts regarding Abu Hanifah.

‘Allamah Shi’rani states: “Abu Hanifah did not narrate traditions from anyone except the *Tabi’in* who were famous for their justice and truthfulness. All of the narrators who he narrated from were trustworthy people; none of them were accused of lying.”<sup>17</sup> Despite some of the comments made by scholars in *Tarikh Baghdad*, *Sayr a’lam al-nubla’*, and other books regarding the weakness of Abu Hanifah in the transmission of traditions, there are other reports which are mentioned confirming him and testifying to his truthfulness in the transmission of traditions.<sup>18</sup>

For instance, it has been narrated that Yahya ibn Mu’in said: “Abu Hanifah is trustworthy in the transmission of traditions. He refrained from transmitting a tradition until he memorized it with precision.”<sup>19</sup> In other traditions from Yahya ibn Mu’in, he describes Abu Hanifah in the following words: “trustworthy, trustworthy,”<sup>20</sup> “trustworthy without problem,”<sup>21</sup> “He was, by Allah, too pious to lie,”<sup>22</sup> and “truthful, truthful in traditions and jurisprudence.”<sup>23</sup> These have been used to confirm him and praise him in the science of traditions; they testify to his truthfulness and trustworthiness.

As is evident, we are faced with numerous contradictory remarks about Abu Hanifah’s transmission of traditions. It is unclear which ones should be accepted and which should be rejected. However, since it is clear that Abu Hanifah was a pious man, it is difficult to conceive of him within the fold of weak transmitters of traditions or in the fold of those transmitters who must be dismissed.

‘Weakness’ can be explained in two ways: first, what is meant by being a ‘weak transmitter’ of traditions is that one takes the transmission lightly—i.e., he transmits it without giving importance to the subject-matter or the chain of narration. In other words, he does not consider important the criteria that the scholars of traditions establish in order to prevent traditions from being distorted. Abu Hanifah cannot be described in this way, and he is innocent of any such accusations of this type of weakness against him. Moreover, ‘Allamah ‘Abd al-Birr states, “Those who considered Abu Hanifah to be trustworthy and testified to his trustworthiness are much greater in number than those who spoke ill of him.”<sup>24</sup>

If, on the other hand, what is meant by ‘weakness’ in the transmission of traditions is that the person did not transmit an extensive number of traditions, then in that sense, Abu Hanifah would be considered ‘weak’. Since Abu Hanifah spent much of his time setting up jurisprudential sessions and deriving

jurisprudential rulings from the traditions, he did not have much time to transmit traditions. Due to the great amount of precaution that he practiced with regards to traditions, and keeping in mind the environment that he lived in where many traditions were fabricated, he made it a point to transmit traditions on very few occasions.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Abu Hanifah was not in the fold of the weak transmitters of traditions (using the term as defined in the science of traditions). It is possible that some of the *ahl al-hadith* (those who believed in the principality of the traditions) attributed this characteristic on him because of the dispute between them and the *ahl al-ra'i* (those who allowed for opinion and analogical reasoning), so that his character would be questioned.<sup>25</sup> The existence of contradictory opinions about Abu Hanifah, which have been attributed to a number of scholars within *'ilm al-rijal*, is supporting evidence for this claim.<sup>26</sup> A number of Hanafi scholars have tried to defend the founder of their school by criticizing and examining the traditions which led to Abu Hanifah being considered weak and many books have been written on this issue including Ibn Muzafar's *al-Radd 'ala al-khatib*.

## Transmission of Traditions by Abu Hanifah found in Shia Books of Traditions

Imam Abu Hanifah lived towards the end of the first century after the *hijrah* and during the beginning of the second century which made him a contemporary of Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir ('a). He had a love for the Prophet's (s) family and would sometimes sit in their intellectual discussions and debates. There are traditions in *Musnad* by Imam Abu Hanifah which are narrated from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq ('a).<sup>27</sup> These traditions depict a friendly relationship between Abu Hanifah and the two Imams ('a).

Some believed him to be a Shia because of the support that he gave to Zayd ibn 'Ali, a member of the Messenger of Allah's household, in his uprising against the government of the time and the enormous amount of love that he had for this family. However, it is quite clear that Abu Hanifah was known as an Ahl al-Sunnah *mujtahid* (religious authority) and even today, his *madhhab* has the most followers in the world from amongst the *madhahib* of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Moreover, the Shia *madhhab* is critiqued in the book *Fiqh al-akbar*, which is attributed to him, and in *al-'Alim wa al-muta'allim*. Nevertheless, there are still traditions in the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifah where he narrates from Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir ('a). The following are just two examples:

1. Abu Yusuf narrates from Abu Hanifah, who narrates from Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali (al-Baqir) regarding the Prophet (s): He prayed from the end of the time of the night prayers until the morning prayers. During this time he performed eight *raka'at* (cycles of prayer) and three *raka'at* of *witr*. Then he performed the two *raka'at* of the morning prayer.<sup>28</sup>
2. Abu Yusuf narrates from Abu Hanifah, who narrates from Ja'far ibn Muhammad (al-Sadiq), who states that Ibn 'Umar said: A man came and said, "I performed all of the rites except *tawaf* and then I

came unto my family...”<sup>29</sup>

There are many of these examples in the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifah, the *al-Àthar* of Imam Muhammad, and the *al-Àthar* by Abu Yusuf. These show that there was a close relationship between the two Imams (al-Sadiq and al-Baqir) and Abu Hanifah. It is because of this that some scholars have raised doubts regarding some of the negative comments attributed to Abu Hanifah in respect to Imam Sadiq and Baqir (‘a).

As mentioned earlier, some writers have considered Abu Hanifah to be a Shia scholar of traditions. An example is Shahrastani who lists Abu Hanifah amongst the Shia scholars and authors.<sup>30</sup> Of course, this may seem far-fetched since there is no historical evidence to show that Abu Hanifah was a Shia. Nevertheless, it is understandable why Shahrastani and others considered Abu Hanifah to be a Shia scholar of traditions. Not only did he have a friendly relationship with Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (‘a), but he also had a special liking for the family of the Prophet (s). This alone, however, could not have been the sole reasons on why he was considered a Shia by such scholars—Abu Hanifah’s transmission of traditions from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (‘a) must also have played a part in the formation of such a thought.

Although the principles mentioned above are agreed upon, it is better to search the Shia books of traditions in order to evaluate his role. Even though Imam Abu Hanifah is severely criticized and even cursed in some Shia books of traditions—and has been described as an opinionist and a person who follows his vain desires<sup>31</sup>—his name, however, is found in the chains of narrations of Shia traditions. What is interesting is that in three of the four main compendiums of Shia narrations as well as some other Shia books of traditions, there are various traditions that have been transmitted through Abu Hanifah.<sup>32</sup>

Some may argue that perhaps the ‘Abu Hanifah’ that appears in the Shia chains of narrations refers to someone else with the same name. However, by closely examining the chains of narration of these traditions, it becomes clear that, although there are other people in chains of narration under the name ‘Abu Hanifah’, in many of these traditions Abu Hanifah’s complete name—i.e., Nu’mān ibn Thābit—is clearly mentioned. This dismisses such a doubt.<sup>33</sup> On the whole, therefore, one can state that Abu Hanifah appears in the chains of narrations of some Shia books of traditions, often with his full name—Abu Hanifah Nu’mān ibn Thābit—clearly mentioned.<sup>34</sup> It is perhaps because of this that some individuals considered him to be a Shia scholar of traditions.

Incidentally, Shaykh Tusi, a Shia scholar, counted Abu Hanifah to be amongst the companions of Imam Sadiq (‘a).<sup>35</sup> Najashi, who is one of the greatest Shia scholars of *‘ilm al-rijal* considers a transmitter by the name of Abu Hanifah to be trustworthy.<sup>36</sup> Of course, the possibility exists that who Najashi meant by Abu Hanifah was not Nu’mān ibn Thābit.

Despite the fact that Abu Hanifah was an Ahl al-Sunnah scholar and despite the fact that he transmitted

many traditions which are accepted by the Ahl al-Sunnah, the number of traditions in the Shia books of narrations transmitted by Abu Hanifah are worthy of attention. The following are examples of Shia traditions in which Abu Hanifah is mentioned in the chain of narration:

1. Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali al-Basri narrates from 'Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Bandar, who narrates from Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Tusi, who narrates from his father, who narrates from 'Ali ibn Hasharm, who narrates from al-Fadhl ibn Musa, who narrates from Abu Hanifah Nu'man ibn Thabit, who narrates from Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman, who narrates from Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, who narrates from 'Abdullah ibn 'Utaybah, who narrates from Zayd ibn Thabit, who states: the Messenger of Allah (s) said, "O Zayd, have you married?" I said, "No ... "37
2. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim narrates from his father, who narrates from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Nasr, who narrates from Isma'il ibn Abu Hanifah, who narrates from Abu Hanifah: I asked Abu 'Abdullah (a), "How is it that a murder needs only two witnesses whereas adultery needs four witnesses?"38
3. 'Ali ibn Hammad al-Baghdadi has transmitted to us from Bashr ibn Ghiyath al-Marisi, who stated that Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim narrated from Abu Hanifah, who narrated from 'Abd al-Rahman al-Salmani, who narrated from Khanish ibn al-Mu'tamar, who narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) who stated: the Messenger of Allah called for me ... 39
4. 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Qasani narrates from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, who narrates from Sulyman ibn Dawud, who narrates from al-Nu'man ibn 'Abd al-Salam, who narrates from Abu Hanifah: I asked Abu 'Abdullah (a) about a man who commits fornication with a corpse. He (a) stated, "There is no punishment for him."40
5. Zararah and Abu Hanifah narrate from Abi Bakr ibn Hazam: A man performed wudu', wiped the soles of his feet, and entered the mosque."41
6. Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Mahbub narrates from 'Ali ibn Muhammad, who narrates from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, who narrates from Sulayman ibn Dawud, who narrates from al-Nu'man, who narrates from 'Abd al-Salam, who narrates from Abu Hanifah, who states: I asked Abu 'Abdullah (a) about whether crying in prayer breaks the prayer ... 42

Many such traditions can be found in the Shia books of traditions. Although people such as Muhammad ibn Yahya are given the nickname 'Abu Hanifah' and are mentioned as such in Shia chains of narration,<sup>43</sup> it is easy to differentiate between Imam Abu Hanifah and other people who have been given this nickname. This is because either Abu Hanifah's full name (i.e., Nu'man ibn Thabit) appears in the chain or there are other contextual clues (for example, other transmitters who are connected to him) which assist in determining the individual intended. For instance, in the third tradition, although the complete name of Abu Hanifah is not mentioned in the chain of narration, the existence of people such as Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim, who was a special student of Abu Hanifah, clearly points to the fact that the 'Abu Hanifah' that is intended is Nu'man ibn Thabit. Also, it is known that Abu Yusuf did not

have any relationship with the other Abu Hanifah.

We also have many traditions in the Shia corpus of traditions praising Imam Sadiq (a) and his high intellectual station which have been transmitted by Abu Hanifah. These compose some of the important traditions in the Shia corpus.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that Abu Hanifah as well as some of his associates are mentioned within the chains of narrations in the Shia books of traditions seems to suggest that they were considered trustworthy by some of the Shia scholars, in the sense that they were satisfied with transmitting and recording their traditions and believed them to be reliable links going back to the Imam. Below are two examples of traditions where not only Abu Hanifah, but Ibrahim ibn Nakhi'i, one of Abu Hanifah's leaders, Hammad ibn Sulayman, his teacher, and Abu Yusuf, one of his famous students, are mentioned:

1. Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali al-Basri narrates from 'Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Bandar, who narrates from Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Tusi, who narrates from his father, who narrates from 'Ali ibn Hasharm, who narrates from al-Fadhl ibn Musa, who narrates from Abu Hanifah al-Nu'man ibn Thabit, who narrates from Hammad ibn Sulayman who narrates from Ibrahim ibn al-Nakhi'i, who narrates from 'Abdullah ibn 'Utaybah, who narrates from Zayd ibn Thabit, who said: the Messenger of Allah (s) asked me, "Have you married?" I said, "No ..."<sup>45</sup>

2. In *Muntakhab al-basa'ir*, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim narrates from Abu Hanifah, who narrates from 'Abd al-Rahman al-Salmani, who narrates from Jaysh ibn al-Mu'tamar, who narrates from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), who said: ...<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, it can be said that Abu Hanifah was considered one of the transmitters of traditions. Despite the fact that some Ahl al-Sunnah scholars of traditions considered him weak there are many other Ahl al-Sunnah scholars who considered him trustworthy and accepted his traditions. And despite the fact that some Shia scholars of traditions rejected him, there are many other Shia scholars of traditions who accepted his traditions. Therefore, although Abu Hanifah may not be considered a 'transmitter' per say in its proper technical definition, there is no doubt that he did indeed transmit many traditions that are found in both Sunni and Shia books of traditions.

It is necessary to mention that there are very few traditions—either two or four—transmitted by Abu Hanifah in the six main Ahl al-Sunnah books of traditions. However, there are many traditions transmitted by him mentioned in other Ahl al-Sunnah books such as the *Musnad* of Ibn Abi Shaybah, the *Musnad* of 'Abd al-Razzaq, the *al-Athar* of Abu Yusuf, the *al-Athar* of Imam Muhammad Shaybani, and the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifah. Tabarani has also narrated traditions transmitted by him. In fact, 'Abdullah ibn Dawud Kharibi states in this regard: "Muslims must pray for Abu Hanifah in all of their prayers because he protected jurisprudence and the *sunan*."<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, the reasons why there is doubt regarding whether or not Abu Hanifah falls in the category of transmitters of traditions in its proper technical definition include the following:

1) There is no book written by Abu Hanifah where he independently transmits traditions and differentiates between the valid and invalid ones. The only book that does exist is his *Musnad* but even there, it is not certain if it should be attributed to him.

2) There is no historical evidence to show that Abu Hanifah travelled with the sole purpose of searching for traditions in order to collect them and later on transmit them, or that even a portion of his life was spent in this endeavour.

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1. Iblagh, p. 44.

2. Ibn 'Abidin, 1988, v. 1, p. 149; Abu Zuhrah, p. 60.

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4. Ibn Muzaffar, p. 92; Ibn 'Abidin, p. 150; Iblagh, p. 52-53.

5. Iblagh, *ibid.*; also refer to Ibn Muzaffar, *ibid.*, and Suyuti, 1990, p. 25-28.

6. Ibn 'Abidin, p. 149; Abu Zuhrah, p. 60.

7. Ibn Sa'd, v. 6, p. 368; Ibn Kathir, 1997, v. 10, p. 76.

8. Dhahabi, 1998, v. 6, p. 391; Khatib, v. 13, p. 334.

9. Ibn 'Abidin, 1998, v. 1, p. 146.

10. Khatib, v. 13, p. 324; Dhahabi, p. 393-395; Ibn Kathir, p. 77.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Khatib, v. 13, p. 343-344.

13. Dhahabi, v. 5, p. 390.

14. Khatib, p. 450-451 and 422-430.

15. Ibn Sa'd, v. 6, p. 369; Hursawi, narrated from al-Âu'afa' wa al-Matrukin and Ibn Jawzi, v. 3, p. 163.

16. Bukhari, 104; Abu Dawud, 3166; Ibn Majah, 36; Ahmad, 1339; Darimi, 235.
17. Sha'rani, v. 1, p. 231.
18. Khatib, p. 449–450; Dhahabi, v. 6, p. 395.
19. Khatib, p.449.
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24. Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, p. 456.
25. Hursawi, p. 47.
26. Khatib, p. 450; Dhahabi, Ibid.
27. Pakatchi, 1372, v. 5, p. 386; Abu Zuhrah, p. 146.
28. Abu Zuhrah, p. 146 narrated from al-Athar and Abu Yusuf, p. 34.
29. Abu Zuhrah, p. 124.
30. Shahrstani, v. 1, p. 222–223.
31. Kulayni, v. 1, p. 57; Majlisi, v. 2, p. 305; Tabarsi, v. 2, p. 360.
32. Kitabchi, p. 403.
33. Hurr 'Amuli, v. 20, p. 35.
34. Majlisi, v. 14, p. 252; Saduq, p. 223, Hurr 'Amuli, v. 20, p. 35; Tusi, v. 1, p. 407.
35. Kitabchi, Ibid., narrated from Rijal Tusi, p. 325.
36. Refer to Rijal Hilli, p. 80 under Abu Hanifah.
37. Hurr 'Amuli, v.20, p. 35.
38. Kulayni, v. 7, p. 404; Tusi, v. 6, p. 277.
39. Saduq, p.223.
40. Hurr 'Amuli, v. 27, p. 409.
41. Ibid. and Nuri, v. 1, p. 409.
42. Tusi, v. 1, p. 408; Hurr 'Amuli, v. 7, p. 247.
43. Kulayni, v. 1, p. 453 and Majlisi, v. 15, p. 263.
44. Saduq, 1413, v. 2, p. 292.
45. Hurr 'Amuli, v. 2, p. 35.
46. Majlisi, v. 41, p. 252; Saduq, p. 223.
47. Suyuti, 1990, p. 103; Khatib, p. 344–345.

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