

Imam Bukhari (RA) Criticizes Imam Abu Hanifah (RA): An Analysis

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The claim is a matter of much bravery and courage because no such saying of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على can be presented which can back up this claim. This claim is but a result of jealousy, malice and enmity where whatever the heart desires is said. What can one call this if not a result of malice?

Hafidh Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Abi Rawaad رحمة الله على spoke the truth with sagacity which was noted down by Ibn Hajar Makki رحمة الله على in Khayraatul Hisaan pg.35:

"Hafidh Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz Ibn Abi Rawaad said that whosoever loves Imam **Abu Hanifah** is a **Sunni** and whoever has malice in his heart for him does Bid'ah. It is stated in a narration that Imam **Abu Hanifah** is between us and the people of the past. Thus whosoever loves him is from the People of **Sunnah** and whosoever has malice against him is from the People of Innovation."

Some Ghair Muqallideen lead astray the common layman by saying that Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على has written in his book Kitab al-Dhu'afaa:

"(Imam Abu Hanifah) was Murjee and people adopted silence from narrating from him."

In reply to this I say that firstly the book al-Dhu'afaa by Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على, published in Agra Allahabad, does not contain any such sentence. The same is not found in Adab al-Mufrad, Juzul Qira'ah and Khalqul 'Ibad either. Even if it is taken to be true, the reply is that Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على had enmity of mathhab towards Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله على which is apparent in the writings of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على. Thus this jarh cannot be accepted on the basis of enmity of mathhab. That is why Thahabi, Ibn Hajar, Wasiuddin Khizaji and others رحمة الله على did not give any importance to this Jarh and did not even mention it by considering it "به عباى لا".

Secondly, regarding the saying that Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله على was a Murjee, the meaning has to be established. If by Murjee those were referred on whom be Allah's Curse, then this is absolutely wrong because it is stated in **Fiqh al-Akbar**:

"We do not say like the Murjeeah that it is for certain that our good deeds are accepted and sins are forgiven. We say that whosoever does good deeds with all the right conditions, provided he does not make them void and dies in the state of Iman, then **Allah** will not let go his good deeds to waste and will reward him accordingly by accepting his deeds."

It is stated in Khayrat al-Hisaan, pg 73, it is stated:

"The Commentator of al-Muwaqif mentions that Ghisaan Murjee used to say things so that it would seem that Imam **Abu Hanifah** was a Murjee and he used to include Imam **Abu Hanifah** in the Murjeeah sect. Ghisaan deliberately accused Imam **Abu Hanifah** to legitimize his mathhab.

Shehristani, in al-Mlal wal Nihal, has said that it is astonishing how Ghisaan used to attribute the teachings of his Murjeeah sect to Imam **Abu Hanifah** and would call him a Murjeeah. He has lied."

And if by Murjeeah it is meant Murjeeah Marhoomah then all of Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah is included in it. It is mentioned in al-Tamheed of Abu Shakoor Salimi:

"There are two types of Murjeeah. One is Murjeeah Marhoomah and it is the Companions of Rasulullah ﷺ. The second is Murjeeah Mal'oonah and these are those who say that sins do not matter and there is no punishment for them. 'Uthman bin Abi Laila once wrote a letter to Imam **Abu Hanifah** asking if he is from the Murjeeah. Imam **Abu Hanifah** replied that there are two types of Murjeeah. One is Murjeeah Mal'oonah and I am not from them. The other is Murjeeah Marhoomah and I am from them. In fact, the Anbiya عليهم السلام were also the same. Do you not know the saying of 'Isa السلام هي على, 'If You (Allah) punish them, they are Your slaves after all, but if You forgive them, You are the Mighty, the Wise.'

Thus it is learnt that Imam Bukhari's الله رحمة هي على saying regarding people not accepting the **Hadith** and opinion of Imam **Abu Hanifah** الله رحمة هي على is absolutely false and baseless.

Thirdly, in 'Uqud al-Jawahir al-Manifa, the book of Hafidh Mosuli, al-Du'afah is quoted to state:

"Yahya bin Ma'een has said, 'I have not found anyone superior to Waqi' and he used to give fatwa on the qawl of **Abu Hanifah** and would memorize all his Ahadith. He heard a lot of Ahadith from Abu Hanifah.'"

And it is stated in Manaqib Kurdi, pg 100:

"Sa'eed bin Yahya bin Humayri Wasti was an Imam and Hafidh of **Hadith** from Wasta. He has narrated from Imam **Abu Hanifah** and has acquired knowledge from him. He used to say that Imam **Abu Hanifah** is an ocean of knowledge."

And in the same Manaqib on pg 19 it is stated:

“Abdullah bin Yazeed al-Muqri Makki heard 900 **Hadith** from Imam Abu Hanifah.”

In Khayrat al-Hisaan, pg 23, it is stated:

“Ibn al-Mubarak said, ‘He (Abu Hanifah) used to be the one with most knowledge in Fiqh, and I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable than him in Fiqh. . . . And he is the most knowledgeable amongst them (Imam **Malik** and Sufyan) and better Muhaqqiq and Mudaqqiq.’”

“Abu Yusuf al-Thawri says, ‘I follow Imam **Abu Hanifah** in majority of issues.’”

“Yahya bin Sa’eed Qattan says, ‘We have not heard an opinion better than that of Imam **Abu Hanifah** and thus we give fatwa on his qawl.’”

“Ibn al-Mubarak says, ‘I have seen Mus’ir ask questions and benefit from the study circles of Imam Abu Hanifah.’”

In Khayrat al-Hisaan, pg 26, it is stated by Ibn Jarir **رحمة الله على**:

“The second chapter is regarding those who acquired **Hadith** and **Fiqh** from **Abu Hanifah** and to assess their number is impossible.”

“This is the reason why some ‘Ulema state that amongst the A’immah of Islam, no one has as many students as Imam Abu Hanifah.”

Look at this with justice and without any bias. Waqi’, Ibn Yahya al-Wasti, Ibn al-Mubarak, Sufyan al-Thawri, Mus’ir bin Kudam, Yahya bin Sa’eed al-Qattan and others have spoken so highly about the **Fiqh** and Opinion of Imam **Abu Hanifah** **رحمة الله على**. Thousands have acquired **Hadith** and **Fiqh** from **Abu Hanifah** **رحمة الله على** and have become famous by his blessing in the world.

As is seen in Manaqib al-Kurdari and Manqib Mawafiq of Ibn Ahmad al-Makki.

Despite of this, Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله على** says,

“ثأى حد و رأيه عن سكتوا”

If this is not out of malice due to Mathhab then what is it?

Fourthly, If, according to Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله على**, a narrator should be left and nothing should be taken from him if he is a Murjee, then due to what reason did Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله على** include in his Sahih Bukhari Ahadith from the deviant sects like Murjeeah, Nasibiyah, Kharijiyah, Shi’a, Jahmiyah, Qadariyah and others. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in Muqaddamah Fath al-Bari, has written this in

detail name by name. Over here we will mention the total number of people from four of these deviant sects. Murjeeah 31; Shi'a 2; Qadariyah 28; Nasibiyah 5.

Then according to the standards of Ghair Muqallideen, does Sahih Bukhari not become the weakest of all books?

Now that the topic of the narrators of Bukhari has been touched, it is only appropriate to talk about some of these narrators. The world knows that Sahih Bukhari has been accepted as 'Asahhul Kutub' unanimously (which means that as a collection it has collectively more sahih ahadith; this does not mean that each and every **Hadith** of Bukhari is most authentic when compared to other ahadith found in different collections). It is without any doubt that Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على has put in a lot of effort in it which is worthy of much praise. May **Allah** (swt) accept his effort.

However, it has many narrators on whom different types of Jarh have been done. Examples are given below:

- (a) Kathhab: Extreme liar
- (b) Yakthibul Hadith: Lies in matters of Hadith
- (c) Yasriqul Hadith: Steals Hadith
- (d) Yadha'ul Hadith: Invents Hadith

It is seen that the highest form of Jarh is also included. Fathul Bari and Meezanul I'tidaal can be referred for more details. They list more than 100 such narrators.

Despite these Jarh, Imam Bukhari did not consider these narrators among those from whom **Hadith** should not be taken. Instead, he accepted Ahadith from them. And despite this, other Muhadditheen did not deny Sahih Bukhari to be Asahhul Kutub.

Then what is the reason apart from Mathhabi malice that Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على did not take from Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله على although no Jarh can be done on him according to the principles of this science?

Thus when this malice is established by clear evidence then what weight can the Jarh of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على have in regards to Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله على.

Fifthly, if the **Hadith** of narrators, on whom Imam Bukhari رحمة الله على has done Jarh, is to be rejected then there are many such narrators taken by Imams Muslim, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and others رحمة الله على who should be rejected according to this rule. But Muhadditheen did not consider such narrators as rejected.

Then why should Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله عليه be rejected due to the Jarh of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه?

In 'Kitab al-Dhu'afa', Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه has said that Ovais Qarni's sanad is doubtful (نظر اسناده ىف) and this Jarh, according to the rules of Bukhari, is a serious one. However, Ovais Qarni cannot be considered to be Majruh.

Sixthly, if Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه relied on his own Jarh, then he would not have narrated from narrators on whom he has done Jarh. There are many such narrators in Bukhari whom Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه has declared Majruh. Such narrators are listed below:

1. Usayd bin Zayd al-Jalal – Imam Dhahabi رحمة الله عليه has mentioned in al-Meezan, "It is strange that Imam Bukhari has taken narrations from this narrator in his Sahih and has also mentioned him in al-Dhu'afa."

2. 'Ayub bin 'Aa'id – Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه has mentioned in his book al-Dhu'afa, "He used to prefer the beliefs of Murjееeah despite being truthful.

3. Thabit bin **Muhammad** – Imam Dhahabi رحمة الله عليه has stated, "Although Imam Bukhari has narrated from this narrator, he has included him in his al-Dhu'afa."

4. Zuhayr bin **Muhammad** – Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه has said in his al-Dhu'afa, "People of Shaam have narrated Munkaraat from him."

5. Ziyad bin Rasigh – Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه said his sanad is doubtful as is also found in al-Meezan.

6. 'Ataa Ibn Maimoona – Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه mentioned in his al-Dhu'afa, "He used to like the beliefs of Qadariyyah." And it is mentioned in the Muqaddama of Fathul Bari that many narrators were inclined towards Qadariyyah e.g. Hams bin Minhala. Imam Dhahabi رحمة الله عليه has said that he has been accused of being a Qadariyyah and he has Munkar **Hadith** and that is why Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه has included him in al-Dhu'afa.

Look at this from an unbiased perspective. If Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه trusted his own Jarh, then why did he narrate from these people? When Imam Bukhari himself does not trust his own Jarh, then it is strange that the Muqallideen of Bukhari trust his Jarh and call Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله عليه weak in Hadith.

Seventhly, if near those who object, the Jarh of Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه, despite being inaccurate and against 'usuls, is valid in the case of Imam **Abu Hanifah** رحمة الله عليه, then why would Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه not be Majruh and rejected? Is Jarh on Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه not established by A'imma of Hadith? Of course they are. Some of them are listed below:

1. Imam Thehli رحمه الله تعالى, the teacher of Imam Bukhari رحمه الله تعالى, has done serious Jarh on him. In Tabqat al-Shafi'iyyah, Vol.12, pg 12, it is stated, "Imam Thehli said, 'He who visits the study circle of Imam Bukhari should not come to us as people of Baghdad have written to us that Imam Bukhari does kalam in the case of the words of the Qur'an (being created or uncreated) and we told him not to do so. However, he did not listen. Thus do not go to him.'"

Note that not only did Imam Thehli رحمه الله تعالى tell people not to visit Imam Bukhari رحمه الله تعالى but also said that he is an innovator who thinks that the words of the Qur'an, coming out of his mouth are words of the creation. Neither should anyone sit with him nor talk to him.

This warning of Imam Thehli رحمه الله تعالى had such a huge impact on people that many stopped meeting Imam Bukhari.

In Tarikh Ibn Khalkaan, Vol.2 pg 123, it is stated, "When a difference arose between Imam Bukhari and Muhammad bin Yahya regarding the words of the Qur'an, he stopped people from going to Bukhari. So much so that Imam Bukhari was compelled to migrate from Nishapur and, apart from Imam Muslim, many people boycotted him."

2. Imam Muslim رحمه الله تعالى, despite his closeness to Imam Bukhari, has not narrated a single Hadith from him in his Sahih Muslim. In fact, in the discussion of "an'ana" Hadith, he has referred to Imam Bukhari رحمه الله تعالى with the word "asawna" (which means he opposes him in this matter) and has severely criticized him. For reference see Muslim Vol. 1, pg 21.

3. Abu Thur'ah and Abu Hatim رحمه الله تعالى هماي have not taken from Imam Bukhari رحمه الله تعالى either. In Tabqaat al-Shafi'iyyah, Vol.1 pg 190, it is mentioned, "Abu Thur'ah and Abu Hatim have left Imam Bukhari because of the difference in the case of the Words of the Qur'an."

In Meezanul I'tidaal it is stated, ". . . Abu Thur'ah and Abu Hatim did not narrate from the Imam Bukhari, the student of 'Ali Ibn al-Madini, because of the dispute regarding the Words of the Qur'an."

And Abdur Rahman Ibn Abi Hatim رحمه الله تعالى says, "Abu Thur'ah left Imam Bukhari due to this reason."

4. Ibn Mundah رحمه الله تعالى has categorized Imam Bukhari رحمه الله تعالى amongst the Mudalliseen (such a narrator who conceals the name of his Shaykh or the Shaykh of his Shaykh) in Shurutul A'immah. Thus he stated, "Bukhari has narrated in his books in these ways: 'I said to fulan (an unnamed person)' which is permitted, and 'Fulan has said this,' and this is Tadlees."

It is obvious that Tadlees is a greater defect when compared to weak memory as

it is a voluntary act and there is fraud and deception in it. That is why Shamsi has said, "Tadlees is **Haram** near the A'imma." (Muqaddama Usul al-Shaykh al-Muhaddith al-Dehalawi `alal Mishkat, pg 2)

Please note, Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله عليه** has narrated about 30 Ahadith from Imam Thehli **رحمة الله عليه** but has not mentioned the name with which he was famous because of the strict aggression between Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله عليه** and Imam Thehli **رحمة الله عليه**. In **Tareekh** Ibn Khalqan vol.2 pg 134, it is stated, "Imam Bukhari narrated from Imam Thehli in 30 places and has not mentioned his name anywhere. He should have said, 'Muhammad bin Yahya Thehli narrated to me' but instead said 'Muhammad narrated to me.' And in some places he has mentioned him as **Muhammad** bin 'Abdullah' ('Abdullah was the name of his grandfather) and in some places he attributed it to his great grandfather."

5. Darqutni and Hakim **رحمة الله عليهم** have said that Imam Bukhari's **رحمة الله عليه** narrating **Hadith** from Ishaq bin **Muhammad** bin Ismail has been considered to be something with defect. In Muqaddama Fathul Bari pg 451 it is stated, "Darqutni and Hakim said that there is an allegation on Bukhari in narration of Hadith."

Darqutni and Hakim **رحمة الله عليهم** mean that Ishaq bin **Muhammad** has been considered trustworthy by Bukhari whereas he is weak. He could not differentiate between Thiqah and Da'eef. And Isma'il **رحمة الله عليه** has shown astonishment that Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله عليه** considers the Munqata' narration of Abu Salih Juhani as Sahih but considers Mutassil as Da'eef.

It is written in Muqaddama Fathul Bari pg 483, "Ismail accused Bukhari and was surprised that why does Bukhari consider the Ahadith of Abu Salih Juhani as evidence when it is not Mutassil."

He added, "It is more astonishing that Bukhari considers Munqata' **Hadith** as authority and Mutassil as Da'eef."

6. Thahabi **رحمة الله عليه** has also shown bewilderment on some of his works. He writes in the biography of Usayd bin Zayd al-Jamal, "It is astonishing that Bukhari considers him to be Da'eef yet narrates from him."

What can one say about the memory of a person who considers a narrator as weak and yet narrates from him in Asahhul Kutub!

Those who object should do some justice. If Imam **Abu Hanifah** **رحمة الله عليه** is weak due to the Jarh of Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله عليه** then why would Imam Bukhari **رحمة الله عليه** not be Majruh on the basis of the Jarh of Ibn Mundah **رحمة الله عليه** and Thehli **رحمة الله عليه**?

7. By the yardstick used by those who object (on Imam **Abu Hanifah** **رحمة الله عليه** is weak), Imam Bukhari himself is proven to be Majruh. Thus what effect can the Jarh of a Majruh have on Imam **Abu Hanifah** **رحمة الله عليه**?

It is sad that Ghair Muqallideen attack Imam **Abu Hanifah** الله مترح هي عل due to mere jealousy and do not realize that they live in glass houses.

If Imam **Abu Hanifah** الله رحمة هي عل will be called Da'eef, then all the Muhaditheen of the world will become Da'eef and rejected in matters of Hadith.

Note: It should be clear that these Jarh have been noted down just to answer the opponents. This is just how Mawlana Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz **Muhaddith** Dehlawi, in his book "Tohfa" has adopted an offensive position (as opposed to defensive) against Shi'a. Otherwise, in truth, our Aqeedah is that Imam **Abu Hanifah** الله رحمة هي عل and Imam Bukhari الله رحمة هي عل are trustworthy, truthful, just, with strong memory and devout worshippers (of Allah). None of them is Majruh. And **Hadith** narrated by them is accepted. The reasons due to which we do not accept the Jarh on Imam Bukhari الله رحمة هي عل are the same due to which we do not accept the Jarh on Imam **Abu Hanifah** الله رحمة هي عل.

رَحِيمٌ رَّؤُوفٌ إِنَّكَ رَبَّنَا آمَنُوا لِلَّذِينَ غَلَا قُلُوبُنَا فِي تَجَعُّلٍ وَلَا بِالْإِيمَانِ بِفَوَاسِدِ الَّذِينَ وَلِيَخْوَانِنَا لَنَا اغْفِرْ رَبَّنَا

[The above material is an excerpt from the book, 'Imam Abu Hanifah par Ai'terazaat kay Jawaabaat' (Responding to the Objections against Imam Abu Hanifah) pg 41-54]

<http://www.peopleofsunnah.com/history/pp/109-abuhanifahallegation.html>