

Revivers: Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal

The Life, the Struggle, the Legacy

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- The 4 imams had extraordinary capabilities to accomplish monumental tasks
- They were humans who accomplished heroic things

His time, city, circumstances events before he was born

- Born in the city of Baghdad and during that time it was the center of knowledge, and they had the advanced science, trade area, hospitals etc. Also, the city had many scholars of different experiences; extremely spiritual, rigid and philosophers.

History of the area:

- During his time the Abbasid dynasty was in place and was under the control of Al-Mansur (one of the kings in this area). However, it was politically unstable. Then next king, Al-Mahdi came after him and during his time there were lots of extremists. When the third king, Al-Rashid was in charge, he suppressed all this.
- After when Al-Ma'mun took over, who was the son of Al-Rashid, he forced people to follow their beliefs in the mu'tazilites (is a school of Islamic theology based on reason and rational though). There was a religious oppression taking over. During the war Al-Ma'mun requested help of the Persian and when his brother, Al-Mu'tasim became leader he requested help from the Turks. Thus, after some time the Turks and the Persians took over later on.
- The king Al-Ma'mun followed the sect of mu'tazilites, who believed the the Quran was a creation Allah but was not the speech of Allah. Creation by essence are different as they have faults. If we have to believe that it is a creation, then it has defects that we to change about it then we can change the rulings of Islam then we don't have to follow it anymore
- The mu'tazilites; came from people who used intellect and logic; which they used to explain everything even the religion. They wanted to defend the deen against the people who were against the deen. But then they started putting logic above the sunnah and Quran- they didn't control it- to the extent that it became a sect in Islam. The royalties supported them as they were called defenders of Islam
- A lot of the scholars faced a lot of prosecution- most of them accepted this belief system and 2 scholars at the time did not believe this, Mahmoud who died before he was jailed and Imam Ahmad who stood his ground against the king. He was the defender of the sunnah. All people liked him but he was put in house arrest. The people just continued following him and loving him more then they stopped whipping.
- During his time; there was a political turmoil was taking place. There was all debates taking place (in secular and religion)

Birth and Death:

- He was born in the year 164 after hijra. During the times of the students of the companions, the time was close of the time of the prophet (SAW).
- His father was involved in the army and he passed away. Imam Ahmad did not know his father; either he died before or after he was born.

Growing up:

- His mother was the main motivator for him. She would wake up before fajr to warm up the water for him. Then she would walk him to the Masjid. She also choose the teachers for him when he was still young. Everything he achieved was due to his mother.
- He lived a life of poverty and as an orphan. However, Imam Ahmad was known for manners and etiquette.
- As growing up he starts to study. He faced lots of struggles achieving knowledge due to his life circumstances. He had to travel for knowledge; his passion was to become a scholar. He did not have the money, the people would offer him money but he never accept it due to his integrity. Instead he would ask to work to earn the money.
 - Derived Lessons: he valued knowledge and he struggled to acquire it. Ask yourself, how much have you have sacrificed to gain it. He strove and struggled for this deen.
- He is considered to be among the first person to compile hadith from different regions and put it one volume. He traveled to Iraq, Mecca, Madinah and Syria to get the hadith.
- He focused on hadith; he was still 150 yrs from the life of the prophet. He spent his time collecting only hadith.
- At the end of his life he knew 1 million hadiths (different chains of transmission of the same hadith, he memorized all of them).
- He not only memorized them, he also implemented the hadith in his life.

His life as a student

- He met different scholar, he met Imam Al-shafi'i and fell in love with him; they learned from one another.
- The imams did not differ, fight or cause separation between one another. They were struggling to get religious opinions for others to follow. However, it is the followers that messed up their madhab
- Learn to accept that opinions were just opinions but the scholars all lived together and coexists in this deen. The division came in their name but they never wanted the Ummah to be divided.

When he became a teacher

- No less than 5000 people came to his lectures, he was loved by the people
- Only 500 would be taking notes to learn from the hadith and the fiqh. The rest were there to learn from his manners and etiquettes.

What made him so special; qualities of him

- He was extremely sincerity.
- When he would mention his own opinion on a hadith, he would hate it when they write down his opinion. He only wanted his students to write the hadith. He did not like it to be about himself. However, the students did not listens because his opinions were too valuable not to be recorded.
- Never involved in debate, it is where the fame and the glory comes from. He advised the people the more u debate with people the more decayed the deen will become.
- He also would teach his children the hadiths just like he would teach his students. He organized 2 halaqahs, one for the masses and the other for Saleh and Abdullah (his children) and close students- he encouraged them to memorize the hadith
- Integrity, never took charity, he lived in poverty and worked for his living.
- He was always close to Allah. He did not make it about the people; it was never about him becoming popular.

His Death:

- 241 he passed away. His funeral was followed by 300,000 people, the entire city of Baghdad attended his funeral.
- 30,000 hadiths were collected from him.

Q &A:

What opinions do we follow?

- The scholars say that you follow the scholars who are around you. You follow the opinions of the scholars close to you.
- Have any questions, ask the imam in the community
- Do not look for answers on websites because that is not how Islam was spread.

References:

1- Book- The Four Imams: http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B008VEUG3I?ie=UTF8&redirectFromSS=1&pc_redir=T1&noEncodingTag=1&robot_redir=1

2) Lecture series by Sh Mohammed Al Shareef - Under the Shade of Scrolls