

## A Word about the Work of Abū Ḥanīfa “al- Fikh al- absat”

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**Abstract:** This article provides information about the work "al-Fiqh al-absat" which is attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa, one of the eponymous representatives of traditional (Sunnism) Islam. On the one hand, Western Islamic scholars, modern oriental scholars, and on the other hand, among the majority of medieval Eastern Muslim scholars, have debated whether this work belongs to Abū Ḥanīfa or not. Several manuscripts of "Al-Fiqh al-absat" and narrators of the work have been studied. The essence of the themes presented in the work is illuminated. Argument methods are revealed by the author of the work.

**Key words:** fiqh, absat, predestination (qadar), desire (mashi`at), disbelief (kufr), faith (‘īmān).

### Introduction

Famous scholars, as well as ulemas who have made a worthy contribution to the development of the science of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), consider Abū Ḥanīfa a great teacher and mention him with deep respect. Many research centers and Islamic institutes are regularly engaged in the study, including the popularization of the rich scientific heritage of the eponym of the Ḥanafī school among the masses. Although most ordinary Muslims know Abū Ḥanīfa as a famous theologian-jurist, the scientific heritage attributed to him and which has survived to this day mainly relates to the science of dogmatic theology (‘ilmu -l- ‘aqaid).

### Material and method

There are disagreements between Islamic scholars of the West and the East (the Muslim world) regarding the works on dogmatic theology attributed to Abu Hanifa. Even among Muslim scholars themselves, there are contradictions regarding the attribution of certain works to the founder of the Ḥanafī school. The predominant part of the ulema " Ahlu -s-Sunnah", and in particular the Ḥanafīs, claim that 5 dogmatic works belong to Abu Hanifa: "al- Fiqh al- akbar ", "al- Fiqh al- absat ", " Wasiyya Imam Abū Ḥanīfa, "al-‘Alim wa -l- muta`alim ", " Risala Abi Hanifa `ila ‘Uthmān Batti." All of the above works have been studied and commentaries have been written on significant of them. Although an explanation was written for the work “al- Fiqh al- absat” by Muḥammad Zāhid Kausari (1296/1878-1371/1952), the methods of presentation of the work and the arguments given in it remained not fully illuminated. The article attempts to fill this small gap.

The lexical meaning of “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” is as follows: fiqkh – فِقْهٌ (from the verb فَقَّهَ “to understand”, “to know”) - this is understanding, or knowledge; the word - اَبْسَطَ (from the verb بَسَطَ “to expound at length”, “to explain”) - is in the form of superiority and means “detailed”, “thorough”. In terms of terminology, fiqh is Sharia knowledge of practical legal decisions, obtained on the basis of their detailed evidence. [ 7:T. 32: 193 ] in the Qur'an of Fikhe is said in the 122-yat of the “ at-Tauba ” surah: **الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْفِتْنِ أُولَئِكَ يَحْمِلُونَ كِفْلَهُمْ أَثْقَالًا** feat Iodield ول irmulebed opinoredف iclesك bed Hlf Photographedال bed ipe doesn'tر لا ail.Ru feathق ail.RuPف S Photolemp#ال ugeال inderف inedقndsaröss ىookupsظ - mpickets No.faceulemp - Braing/Branding Do not go camping everyone together. Why not send a detachment from each group so that they can study the religion and admonish the people when they return to them? Perhaps they will be careful. [ 12: ] The Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) says the following about fiqh : □ " - “Allah brings to understanding the religion of the one for whom

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*he wishes good*" (Bukhari-71). [6 :8 ] And Abu Hanifa, explaining what fiqh is, said: " Fiqh is a person's knowledge of what is useful and harmful to him." [ 2:T. 2:12 ]

The title of the work "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " ( الفقه الأيسر ) was translated into Russian by Farid Salman as "The simplest knowledge" within the framework of the anthology "Canonical works of the Greatest Imam Abū Ḥanīfa on doctrine", [ 10:71 ] where the root of the word أَبْسَطَ most likely taken from the verb بَسَطَ "to be simple", "uncomplicated". Although it is possible to translate the work "al -Fiqhu -l- absat " as "The simplest knowledge", it would be more appropriate as "Detailed knowledge", due to the fact that this work attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa is many times larger in volume than " al -Fiqhu -l- akbar " and covers in more depth certain issues of doctrine discussed in it.

## Result

Western Semitologist Arend Jan Wensink claims that the text "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " is authentic. A. Wensink notes: "We have another document containing valuable instructions, namely " Fiqhu -l- absat ". It is based on Abu Hanifa's answers to questions about dogma posed to him by his student Abu Mut'i Balkhi ... Thus, it has been proven that " Fiqh Akbar I" (according to a semitologist, this is " Wasiyya Imam Abi Hanifa"), although not compiled by Abu Hanifa, is based on the authentic sayings of the master..." [ 14:123 ] According to A. Wensink , although these works are attributed to Abu Hanifa, in fact they may belong to students of the eponym.

The German orientalist Karl Brockelmann in his work " Tarihu -t- turasi -l- arabi " mentioned that there are no reliable books attributed to Abu Hanifa, but it is known that several works are attributed to him. Looking through " Tariha -t- turasi -l- Arabi ", it can be noted that Brockelman was mistaken on some issues and recorded the works "al- Fiqhu -l- akbar " and "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " in four different books. [ 11:T. 3:237-240 ]

Some researchers of the Muslim world (East) believe that "al -Fiqhu -l- akbar " and "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " are one book told in two chains, and do not make a distinction between them. Most scholars write about "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " in their works: Ibn Nadim - Fihrist ; Abdulkahir Baghdadi - al- Farq Bayna -l- firak and Usulu -d-din; Abu Mansur Isfira'ini - at-Tabsir fi-d-din; Ali ibn Muḥammad Bazdawi - Usul Bazdawi ; Ibn Taymiyya - Majmu -l- fatawa ; Ibn Qayyum - Ijtima`u -l- juyushi -l- islamiya ; Zahabi - Mushtabih ; Ibn Abul'izz - Sharhu -l- aqidati -t- Tahaviyya ; Ismail Baghdadi - Hidayatu -l- arifin ; Haji Khalifa - Kashfu - z- zunun ; Mahmud Shukri Alusi - Gayatu -l- amani . In fact, this work was originally called "al- Fiqhu -l- akbar ", according to the narration of Abu Mut'i Balkhi , and later, due to its larger volume, it was renamed "al- Fiqhu -l- absat ".

If we follow the history of the naming path, initially "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " was indeed called "al- Fiqhu -l- akbar" until the 17th century. This can be learned from the fact that Abu-l- Muin Nasafi died in 508/1114, and Badriddin Aini in 855/1451, both scholars, based on the work attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa "al- Fikhu -l- akbar ", note in their works ( " Tabsiratu -l- adilla fi usulu -d- din", " Umdatul -l- Kari Sharkh Sahihi -l-Bukhari) that the sentence: "Every believer will definitely enter hell" is found in the treatise narrated by Abu Mut'i Balkhi and it was called "al- Fiqhu -l- akbar " until the 15th century . [ 4:38; 3:T. 1:107 ] Kamaluddin Bayazi (1044/1634-1098/1687) in his work " Isharatu -l-maram" first mentioned the work narrated by Abu Muti Balkhi as "al- Fiqhu -l- absat ". [ 9:7,11 ]

## Analysis

Information about handwritten copies of "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " is given in Fuad Sezgin's book " Tarihu -t- turosi -l- arabi " and cities such as London, Cairo and Istanbul are noted there. [ 13:T. 4:41-42 ] It is appropriate when analyzing "al- Fiqhu -l- absat " to rely on 2 well-known manuscripts, where the chains of transmitters reach Abu Hanifa. One of them is a manuscript under inventory number 215, which is stored in the library of Egypt "Daru-l- kutubi -l- Misriyya ", and the other is under inventory number 80/234, which is stored in the library of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia "Sheikh Arif Hikmat ".

In the chain of the manuscript stored in the Daru-l- kutubi - Misriyya library before Abū Ḥanīfa there are such Ḥanafī scholars as: Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Kasani; Abu Bakr Alauddin Muḥammad ibn Ahmad Samarkandi ; Abul Muin Maimun ibn Muḥammad Makhul Nasafi ; Abu



Abdullah Hassan ibn Ali Kashgari; Abu Malik Nasr ibn Nasr Khatali ; Ali ibn Hasan ibn Muḥammad Ghazal; Abul Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad Farisi ; Nusayr ibn Yahya; Abu Muti Hakam ibn Abdullah Balkhi.

And in the chain of transmitters of the manuscript stored in the Sheikh Arif Hikmat library such as: Hussein ibn Muḥammad ibn Hasan Mimi Basri; Jamaluddin Muḥammad Tahir ibn Burhaniddin Ibrahim Qurani ; Khairiddin ibn Ahmad Ramla; Muḥammad ibn Sirajiddin Hanouti ; Sirojiddin Hanouti ; Muhibbuddin Muḥammad ibn Jarbash or Sherbash ; Abul Khair Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Rumi; Majd Abul Fath Muḥammad Hariri; Kawvamiddin Amir Katib ibn Amir Umar Atkani ; Hisamiddin Hussein ibn Ali ibn Hajjaj Signaki ; Hafizuddin Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Nasr Bukhari; Shamsulaimma Muḥammad ibn Abdusattar ibn Muḥammad Qardari ; Burkhaniddin Abul Hasan Ali ibn Abu Bakr Marginani ; Ziyavuddin Muḥammad ibn Hussein ibn Nasir Narsuhi ; Alauddin Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ahmad Samarkandi ; Saifulhak Abul Muin Maimun ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Makhul Nasafi ; Abu Abdullah Hussein ibn Hussein Kashgari, nicknamed Fazl ; Abu Malik Nasran ibn Nasr Khatali ; Abul Hussein Ali ibn Hussein Ghazali; Abul Hussein Ali ibn Ahmad Farisi ; Nusayr ibn Yahya Balkhi ; Abu Muti Hakam ibn Abdullah Balkhi . What is noteworthy is that in the second manuscript, among the transmitters there is the author of the famous book “ Hidayah ” on Ḥanafī fiqh (jurisprudence).

The work “al- Fiqh al- absat ” is written in Arabic. As for the date of its composition, we can say that this is the period after the death of Abu Hanifa, which means 150/767. This work is larger in volume than “al- Fiqh al- akbar ” and, according to the manuscript of “Sheikh Arif Hikmat ”, is 10 sheets (from 12 b to 22 a ), which is commensurate with 20 pages, but unlike it, it is written in the style question and answer between the student as well as the teacher.

There is a noticeable repetition of certain themes in some parts of the work, but this may be due to the fact that the author has refocused attention on these issues and feels the need to re-emphasize them. The above hadiths need to be studied for their authenticity, from the point of view of the chain and text. Ḥanafī opponents criticize the transmitters of the work "al- Fiqh al- absata " and focus more on the narrator of the work, Abu Muti Balkhi . This criticism can be divided into two parts: the weakness of Abu Muti Balkhi in transmitting hadith, which is a conclusion drawn from the sayings of Ibn Ma'in, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ibn Adi ; Abu Muti Balkhi was accused by Abu Dawud, Abu Hatim Razi and Ibn Hibban of Jahmism , Murjism , lying and hatred towards the people of the Sunnah. [ 1:67 ]

To this criticism , the Ḥanafīs responded that even if these shortcomings were considered completely reliable, they did not harm the narrative of Abu Hanifa's work. Because Abu Muti is considered one of the greatest jurists and imams among the Ḥanafīs . And the fact that Muhaddith scholars make him weak cannot affect the level of his reliability, from the Ḥanafī point of view , just like Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Imam Bukhari considered Abū Ḥanīfa to be weak. Moreover, there is a difference between the narration of a hadith and the narration of a book. It is very difficult to misquote or lie about something that a teacher has explained over the years. Moreover, if this happened, the rest of the students would have to deny it and defend their teacher. The fact that others did not deny this work and the community accepted it as the work of Abū Ḥanīfa shows that al- Fiqh al- absat is a book belonging to Imam A'zam . Regarding another accusation regarding the fact that Abu Muti Balkhi Jahmit , Murjiite , a liar and a hater of the people of the Sunnah, and the same views were also put forward in relation to Abu Hanifa. For Ḥanafīs, such criticism and doubts do not matter.

As for the text of the transmitters, it begins with the words: ... *وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى* Morehet If quite *الْأَمْرُ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِيمَانُ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ بِاللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ بِاللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقُّ بِاللَّهِ* ail.Ru... - “Once I asked“ once I asked “once I asked Abu Hanif an- Nu'mana ibn Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, about what is the greatest knowledge (al- Fiqh al-Akbar)? He said: “The greatest knowledge is that you do not accuse a person of unbelief for the sin that he committed and do not consider him to have left the bosom of faith.” The work ends after citing the 34th verse of Surah “Garden” as an argument, in the chapter “The True Essence and Status of Faith” with the words: ... *يَدِينَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ*. All rights reserved... - the greatest knowledge of Abu Hanifa, may God have mercy on him, ended in the narration of Abu Muti Balkhi , may Allah bless and peace our master Muḥammad, his family and all his companions.



Having looked at what arguments are given in the work “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” to prove your views, you can make sure that it mainly uses arguments of giving ( naql ), such as: the Koran, Sunnah (hadith), ijma` (unanimous opinion) and the words of the Companions to illuminate issues of dogmatic theology. In 54 places, verses of the Koran were used as arguments from such surahs as: az- Zumar , al-Hajj, al- Baqarah , ar-Rum, al- Kahf , al - Muddasir , at-Takvir , an- Nisa , ash- Shuara , an- Nakhl , al- Anfal , al- Falak , al- Khujurat , al- Aali Imran, a- Ghafir , al- Fatir , al - Buruj , al-Shura, al- Ankabut , at-Tauba , at -Tur , al-Shams , Ta Ha, al- Maida , al- An'am , al- Anbiya , Yusuf , al-Fath, al- Ahzab , al-Juma, al- Furqan , al- Qamar , al- Waqe` , al - Fussilat , az- Zari'at , Yunus , Hud, al- A'raf , Sad. The treatise al- Fiqhu -l- absat contained fifteen hadiths used as evidence in various places. Most of these hadiths in the chain of transmission directly reach Abu Hanifa. In some places the meaning of hadiths is conveyed.

In addition to the above-mentioned types of argumentation, in “al- Fiqhu -l- absat” such methods of reasoning ( jadal - dialectics) were used as: a) refutation based on consideration of various assumptions ( السبر والتقسيم ); b) using the words of the opposing party as evidence against oneself ( القول بالموجب ); proving the impossible to another impossible ( المناقضة ).

In the work “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ”, in contrast to “al- Fiqhu -l- akbar ”, more specific religious issues are described in detail, and also refutations of heretical views are provided, from the point of view of tradition ( nakli ) and rational ( akli ) evidence .

Included in the introduction of the work are a total of 15 questions and answers between Abū Ḥanīfa and his student Abu Muti. First of all, Abu Hanifa, answering the question of what “al- Fiqhu -l- akbar ” is, i.e. creed, names the following main aspects of the belief of the Ahlu -s-Sunnah wa -l- Jama`a community , which distinguish it from non-traditional views: do not accuse anyone from the “ Ahlu -l- Qibla ” of unbelief (kufr) for committing great sins; call for doing what is approved and refraining from doing what is blameworthy; to realize what befell the slave should not have passed him by, and what passed by the slave should not have befallen him; not show hostility towards any of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (SAW); leave the decision between Uthman and Ali to Allah.

Then the main emphasis is on knowledge, where it is necessary to know the basics of religion and learn how to worship Allah Almighty. To do this, a person must study faith, Sharia, legal norms (al-Hudud ), Sunnah, and also know that disagreement between scientists is the mercy of Allah Almighty. After this, Abū Ḥanīfa began to answer the following questions: the definition and meaning of faith ( `īmān ); affirmation and negation; faith and action; something to believe in; not making a person an unbeliever for denying the external meanings of the verses due to their interpretation ( ta`wil ); question of ability ( istita`at ); the action ( kasb ) of the slave and the will ( irada ) of Allah.

After which, according to the manuscript, the work is divided into 5 chapters and covered as follows: 1) the chapter on predestination; 2-3) 2-chapters on desire ( mashi'at ); 4) a chapter on refuting those who accuse of unbelief for sins; 5) chapter on faith ( `īmān ).

The first chapter on predestination discusses 23 questions and answers, where Abū Ḥanīfa begins it with a hadith about recording 4 things related to predestination to a slave in the womb. Then the following questions are asked:

the question of the illegality of going against the community, using the principle of calling for “doing what is approved and refraining from doing what is blameworthy” ( Kharijite , Mu'tazilit ), is more aimed at shedding blood, allowing what is prohibited and taking possession of other people's property;

the question of calling to do what is approved and restraining from what is blameworthy, those groups that commit oppression and excess, and if this is not accepted, fight against them;

the question of not removing from the bosom of believers the “ Mahakkimits ”, who are the most extreme Kharijites ;

the question of not demanding revenge, revenge and punishment for those who came out against the community but stopped their actions;



the question of exclusion in faith ( 'īmān);  
the question that no one knows in advance where this or that slave will end up, in heaven or hell;  
the question that the faith ( 'īmān) of a believing slave is like the faith of an angel;  
the question that a non-believer will become a believer on the Day of Judgment, but this will not help him;  
the question that a slave who has committed a great sin is not an unbeliever;  
the question that one comes out of faith ( 'īmān) not by action, but by denying it;  
the question of purifying the place dedicated to Allah;  
the question that one who denies torment in the grave is a Jahmit ;  
the question of the permissibility of prayer for every pious and ungodly;  
the question of dividing the community into 73 groups, one of which is “ Sawadu -l- a`zam” , and the rest are innovationists .

In the chapter on desire ( mashi'at ), Abū Ḥanīfa focused on explaining the relationship between the actions ( qasb ) of a slave and the will of Allah. This chapter covers the following issues:

the question of Allah's gift to his slave of the will of desire;  
the question of the creation of deeds by Allah and the will of them by Him;  
the question of creation, command, will, approval and love of Allah;  
the question of the connection between reward and punishment for the acts of slaves and predestination.

The next chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter and is called “Another chapter on desire ( mashi'at ).” This chapter reveals differently the relationship between the will and action of a slave between the power of Allah, and also states that the punishment given for the act of a slave is not an injustice to him.

In the chapter on refuting those who accuse of unbelief for sins, the following questions are highlighted:

the question of refuting the one who pronounces disbelief (takfir) on a sinner;  
the question that sins are not unbelief (kufr);  
the question of exclusion in faith;  
the question of the creation of Heaven and Hell;  
the question that the attributes of Allah are not similar to the qualities of created things;  
the question of confirming the attributes of Allah;  
question about not commenting on ambiguous attributes.

The last chapter on faith ( 'īmān) covers the following issues:

the question of the location of faith ( 'īmān);  
the question of Allah's right over his slaves;  
the question of the pleasure and wrath of Allah;  
the question is that all things happen according to the will and according to the creation of them by Allah.

After a general acquaintance with the issues presented in the work, they can be reduced to the following topics:



Theme about faith ( `īmān);

Theme about the act of a slave;

The topic is about innovation;

The topic is about the accusation of unbelief;

The theme is about going against the ruler and the community;

The topic is about conviction regarding the Companions;

Theme about the attributes of Allah.

The main goal of writing “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” is to preserve the traditional creed of the Ahlu -s- Sunnah wa -l- Jama`a community and highlight the main aspects that distinguish it from non-traditional groups. Including, bringing a refutation of innovations in the beliefs of various non-traditional groups that existed during the time of Abu Hanifa. And also, an explanation of errors in the beliefs of non-traditional groups of the Muslim community in a short and simple form, based on the arguments of tradition ( nakli ) and reason ( akli ).

In the work, most of the refutations are given to the Mu'tazilites , Kharijites , Shiites, Qadarites , Murjiites , Jahmits and Mushabihits . Unlike the works of later Mutakalli scholars , the work contains a refutation of such views of the Mu'tazilites as: the Qadarite view on matters of predestination; in matters of the deeds of a slave; as well as in the matter of establishing the attributes of Allah. However, rebuttals to their other views are less common. The reason for this is that Mu'tazilism was not yet widespread and their position was not so strong during the time of Abu Hanifa. An explanation and commentary were written for “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ”. Ḥanafī scholar Muḥammad Zāhid Kausari wrote an explanation of al- Fiqh -l- absat as part of a study of several works of Abu Hanifa. [ 5 ]

A scholar from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Muḥammad Abdurahman Khamis, wrote a short commentary on two works of Abu Hanifa, one of which is “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ”. [8]

## Conclusion

Based on the above information, we can conclude that “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” is written in the form of questions and answers, in which Abū Ḥanīfa answers the questions asked by Abu Muti Balkhi . There is enough information in reliable sources that this work can be attributed to Abu Hanifa. Initially, this work was also called “al- Fiqhu -l- akbar” and by the 17th century it began to be called “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” to distinguish it from the first version “al- Fiqhu -l- akbar ”. Both an explanation and a commentary were written for the work. The sources indicate that there are about ten handwritten copies of the work and the chain of transmitters indicated in these copies also increases the level of reliability of the work. The critical views expressed regarding Abu Muti Balkhi do not affect the value of the work or the degree of the narrator. The work “al- Fiqhu -l- absat ” and similar works of Abū Ḥanīfa on dogmatic theology ( `ilmu -l- `aqaid ) were important for the spread of the views of the eponym on doctrine in the regions of Khorasan and Transoxiana.

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