

Who is Hisham?

Hisham is one of the best scholars and authorities of Islam. He was famous for his knowledge and virtue among the learned men of his time. He was a genius and a gifted improviser and due to his good sense of taste and capability he used to be victorious over all of his rivals in debate and speech; the champion who was never defeated, the man whose tongue was sharper than a sword. Indeed, he is recognized as one of the greatest champions and the most distinguished supporters of Wilayah (trusteeship). It was Hisham who originally put the topics of Imamate and Wilayah (trusteeship) forward on the basis of wisdom and logic; and he proved himself to be fully competent for this task.

Abu Muhammad or Abul Hakam Hisham ibn Hakam Kendi

Although most of the writers have written his name as Hisham ibn Hakam and they know him as the son of "Hakam", an inhabitant of Kufa, in some of the books written by modern writers,^{[1](#)} the name of his father has been mentioned as Yazid. According to this source Hisham had a brother who was one of the Hadith relaters.

His brother had two sons and one daughter; and one of those two sons was very famous in the field of rhetoric. Most of the writers have mentioned Kufa as Hisham's birthplace; so he is known as Hisham ibn Hakam from Kufa. Some mention Baghdad and a few name Waset, near Basra as his birth place. Perhaps this mistake occurred because Hisham passed his early life in Waset and a part of his life in Baghdad.

There is a dispute regarding his descent also. Some have mentioned him as "Maula Bani-Kandah"^{[2](#)} or "Maula Bani Shayban".^{[3](#)} As the term "Maula" was used for non-Arabs, so it means that he did not belong to an Arab race. Some think him to be descended from Bani-Khazaya^{[4](#)} – the largest Arab tribe. Then there would be no doubt that he belongs to an Arab race.

The exact year of the birth of Hisham is also not written in any book, but we understand from different sources that he was born in Kufa,^{[5](#)} the centre of Iraqi's Shi'as, in the beginning of the second century of Hijra. He passed a part of his childhood in Waset and grew up there. Afterwards he lived a few years in Baghdad in the Karkh area where he was conducting some business.

The Business Activities of Hisham

It is clear by studying the biography of Hisham that he not only acquired knowledge, fought for the cause of religion and conducted campaigns and debates against the infidels and unbelievers in Wilayah (trusteeship), but also he was active in the business of selling fabrics. As Hisham himself states: One day while he was busy selling the Saberi⁶ fabric under a shaded tree, the seventh Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a) happened to ride by. He turned his face to me and said, "O Hisham, selling something in the shadows is similar to cheating, and cheating is unlawful in Islam."⁷

¹. Hisham ibn Hakam– written by: Ahmad Safai, P. 14.

². "Rejal"– by Abu 'Amr Kashi

³. "One of the Mawalis of Bani Sheiban, and inhabitant of Baghdad". Al– Fehrist Ibn Nadim.

⁴. "Hisham ibn al–Hakam" by Abdullah Na'mah, quoted from – Ketab – Ta'sis al– Shia by Sayyid Sadr.

⁵. Hisham ibn Hakam – by Ahmad Safai, pg. 10.

⁶. A Kind of delicate and costly silk which was woven in those days in Sabur, Persia, and it was very difficult to distinguish the complete characteristics of that cloth in darkness and shadow.

⁷. Al Fehrist of Ibn Nadim Hassan, a poet during the time of the Prophet (s) whose odes including "Ghadirieh", are famous.