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Imam Abu Hanifah and his prayer

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If you really want to see the drama that how the brief prayer of the great Imam is as mentioned by Imam Ghazzali read the following incident: A renowned Sunni scholar, Allamah Abul Aali Abdul Malik bin Abdullah Al-Jawzi who is famous by the title of ‘Imam Al-Haramain’ (Imam of the two sanctuaries), has completely exposed the Great Imam in his famous journal, *Mugheethul khalqa fi Ikhtiyaarul Haq*. After writing the passage about Prayer quoted in *Mankhool* by Imam Ghazzali, he writes the following incident:

“It is reported that King Mahmud Subuktagin was a follower of Hanafi religion. He was very fond of the science of traditions and all his companions used to listen to traditions from teachers and he himself also listened. Whenever he used to question about traditions, mostly he used to find them in accordance with Shafei religion. (Hence) he became inclined to the Shafei religion. He gathered Shafei and Hanafi jurists in Merv to debate and prove which of the two religions was better. Finally, it was decided that both the parties perform two units of prayers each according to their religion so that the King observes their prayer and decides which was a better faith. Qifaal Maroozi stood up from Shafeis and after absolute purification and fulfilling the conditions of dress and everything, prayed with all acts, recommendations, etiquettes and obligations. This was such a prayer that Shafeis would not have approved anything lesser.

Then a two-unit prayer approved by Abu Hanifah was performed. A tanned skin of dog was worn and one-fourth of its part was made even more impure. Ablution was performed by the date wine. Since this was done in an open and hot region, flies started swarming and ablution was also performed in the reverse order. Then he faced the Qibla and recited ‘Takbiratul Ihram’ (Allaho Akbar) in Persian without performing any intention. Then a Persian translation of a verse was recited i.e. ‘Du Barge Sabz’ (two green leaves). After that, two prostrations were pecked (on the earth) like a cock without genuflection (Ruku). There was no time gap between the two prostrations. After reciting Tashahud, he released flatulence at the end of prayer without reciting salutations and said, “O King! This is the prayer of Abu Hanifah.” The king said, “If this prayer is not (proved to be) of Abu Hanifah I would kill you because no religious person can approve such a prayer.”

(But) Hanafis denied that it was prescribed thus by Abu Hanifah. Then the books of Iraqis (Hanafis) were procured. The King ordered a Christian Persian teacher to read the acts of both religions. The prayer performed by Qifal was found according to the religion of Abu Hanifah. Hence the King left the religion of Abu Hanifah and became a Shafei. And if this prayer be presented before even an ignorant person, he would not be ready to accept it.”^{[1](#)}

This incident is also quoted on the authority of Mughisul Khalq in *Ikhtisarul Afham* and also *Wafaiyatul Ayan Tarikh Ibn Khallikan*.^{[2](#)}

This Qifal Maroozi is the great Imam, Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Abdullah Al-Maroozi, who was a mystic Shaykh of Khorasan. Ibn Jamata in *Tabqaat Fuqaha* and Imam Yafai in his history have written about him:

“Neither was there a greater jurist in his time nor would there be any after him. We used to say that it is an angel in a human form.”

Imam Yafai has also mentioned the year of this incident in his history that: “This incident took place in 410 A.H.”

Possibly the Rizwan editor would also say like the courtiers of King Mahmud Ghaznavi, “All these are accusations on the great Imam (r.a.) and he never approved such prayer.” Therefore, I present the sources of these strange rules of prayer as follows:

First fundamental – Permission to pray in a dog skin

The following law is present in the book of Hanafi jurisprudence, *Hidaya*:^{[3](#)}

“Every tanned skin is pure: It is permissible to pray in it and ablution with a vessel made of it is correct provided that it is not the skin of a pig or a human being.”

It clearly proves that one can perform prayers wearing any skin except that of human or pig and water stored in a water-bag made out of it can be used for ablution. It may be skin of dog, monkey or a bear.

Not only this, one can also make a prayer mat out of dog skin. The following wordings are present in *Fatawa Qazi Khan*.^{[4](#)}

“Natiqi has given the verdict of Muhammad bin Hasan, a student of Imam Abu Hanifah that if someone prays on a skin of a slaughtered dog or wolf, his prayer is correct.”

This was a favor bestowed by a student and successor of the great Imam. Now read a saying of another student, Imam Abu Yusuf that there is no need of tanning the dog skin, it is enough to just slaughter it. Also the skin of pig would become pure even though ‘the great Imam’ says that it is impure:

“But impure things are filth like excreta, urine, wine, excreta of dog, flesh of pig, all of its parts, flesh of prohibited animals provided that they are not slaughtered after reciting Bismillah (In the name of Allah). However if they are slaughtered after saying Bismillah, it is permissible to pray in their flesh and untanned skin. Except the skin of pig that (even) if it is slaughtered after saying Bismillah, it is impure. And if its skin is tanned, according to the narrations of our companions, it would not be pure. The common elders also believe this (but) it is narrated from Abu Yusuf that it would become pure and its trade will also be permitted.”⁵ It is a fact that dog is not impure according to the great Imam. It is written in brief in Bombay edition on Pg. 28 as follows:

“It should be known that dog was not an ‘absolute impurity’ according to ‘the great Imam’ Thus it could be sold and its guarantee is also there. A prayer mat and vessels can be made out of its skin. If it is taken out of a well alive, neither the well would become impure nor clothes due to its spraying of water provided that its mouth has not touched the water; nor its bite, unless its saliva is visible. Prayer carrying a dog (in one’s arms) is not void, however big the dog may be.”

In brief, there is no harm in performing prayers on a prayer-mat of dog skin, wearing dog skin, performing ablution with water from a dog skin water-bag, while carrying a dog in one’s arms or having it on one’s shoulders. God be praised!

Second fundamental – Performing prayers after making one-fourth of the dress impure

This law is found in every book of Hanafi jurisprudence. Read the following sources:

- 1) And if there is a slight impurity, like urine of animals whose meat is lawful, prayer is permissible even if that impurity covers one-fourth of the dress. This (command) is narrated from Abu Hanifah.⁶
- 2) The impurity of less than one-fourth dress and body can be ignored.⁷

That is, along with clothes even if one-fourth body remains impure then also there is no harm.

- 3) Second type is of slight impurity. If it covers less than one-fourth of dress it can be ignored. As mentioned in the text of many books of jurisprudence.⁸

Third fundamental – Ablution with date wine

Read the following sources for this:

- 1) “If a person has nothing except date wine for performing ablution, according to Abu Hanifah, he could use it.”⁹
- 2) “According to Abu Hanifah, if date wine is available, one should perform ablution it and not choose to

perform Tayammum (ablution with mud, sand or stone etc).[10](#)

3) “Even if he gets dirty and detestable water he should perform ablution with date wine. If doubtful water, date wine and mud are available then according to Abu Hanifah, one should perform ablution with date wine.”[11](#)

As if the command: ‘if you do not find water do Tayammum over mud’ needed some correction and date wine is purer than doubtful water and mud. The cause of such laws was that according to the great Imam, Abu Hanifah, date wine is not only pure, but also lawful; may it produce excitement or it becomes more intoxicating. This law is present on Pg. 16 of *Hidaya*.

4) If (grape juice) is boiled, according to Abu Hanifah, ablution can be done with it because according to him, it is lawful to drink it.

This proof implies that not only date wine, but also every thing, which is lawful to drink, can be used for performing ablution.

5) And the following wordings are present in the book *Zafarul Mubeen* that:[12](#)

The ‘great Imam’ says that Nabidh (date wine), even if it is boiled and becomes intoxicating, is not prohibited. This law of his is contrary to all scholars. Imam Nawawi writes in *Sharh Sahih Muslim*:

“Scholars have a difference of opinion about one who drinks any other intoxicating drink except grape wine. Imam Shafei, Malik, Ahmad and majority of scholars say that it is unlawful. He would be lashed for it as lashing is given for one who drinks grape wine. A person, who drinks grape wine, be he believes in its permission or its prohibition. And Abu Hanifah has said that it is not unlawful and a person who drinks it, should not be penalized.”[13](#)

The above-mentioned text of *Sharh Sahih Muslim* is quoted from *Sahih Muslim* printed at Matba Ansari.[14](#) Now, the Rizwan editor can easily forget the worldly sorrows through date wine and thank God after performing ablution with it while being completely intoxicated. He can thank God for the numerous bounties created by Him in this world.

Fourth fundamental – Non-obligation of intention in ablution etc.

Read the following narrations for this:

1) “The intention of purification is recommended for a person performing ablution...According to us, it is recommended to perform intention in ablution and it is obligatory according to Shafeis.”[15](#)

2) “It is recommended for one who gets up from sleep to wash his hands upto wrists before putting them in the vessel. He should say Bismillah (In the name of Allah) in the beginning, brush the teeth, rinse the mouth, rinsing nose with water, performing intention (of ablution) and performing all these in order, as

stated in Holy Quran. All this is recommended. [16](#)

3) A proof of non-obligation of intention of ablution is written by the writer of *Sharh Waqayah* also as follows:

“As in other purifications, for example, purification of clothes and place because there is no condition of intention in it.” [17](#)

In short, intention is not obligatory. Similarly, the Imam Abu Hanifah does not consider intention obligatory in fasting and prayers also, as described by Imam Ghazzali above.

Fifth fundamental –Sequence not obligatory in ablution

1) We have just now discussed the wordings of *Sharh Waqayah* that the order of ablution mentioned in Holy Quran is only recommended.

2) It is mentioned in *Hidaya* as follows:

“According to us, sequence is recommended in ablution and it is obligatory according to Shafeis.” [18](#)

3) The recommendations of ablution are mentioned in *Niyyatul Musalli* [19](#) as, ‘Intention and sequence’ of ablution are also recommended. Following wordings are written on its margin:

“The sequence mentioned in the verse of ablution is recommended and not obligatory because ‘and’ is used as a conjunction here. There is no argument in it for sequence.” [20](#)

Therefore, Qifal Maroozi had performed the ablution in the reverse order because sequence was not obligatory. Thus leaving it would not have any effect on ablution. It is only recommended. Hence, the Rizwan editor should wash his feet first, then wipe the head and neck, after that, wash hands and then his face or do as he likes.

Sixth fundamental – Reciting Takbiratul Ihram (Allaho Akbar) and Praying in any language other than Arabic

Read the following sources for this:

1) “If someone starts (i.e. says Takbiratul Ihram) in Persian or recites Quranic chapters in Persian (translation) or says ‘Bismillah’ in Persian at the time of slaughtering, even if he can say in Arabic perfectly, then also it is sufficient.” [21](#)

2) “If a person recites Quranic chapters in Persian or from Torah or Bible his prayer is not void; if he recites only stories (from Torah or Bible) it would be void. But if there is a mention of Allah, prayer is not

void.”[22](#)

Well, the recitation of abrogated books has also been permitted while the Messenger of Allah (S) used to restrain his companions reading them otherwise also.

Although, only Persian language is mentioned in the above statements, it is just by way of example, otherwise one can pray in any language.

3) The following wordings are mentioned on Pg. 64 of *Durre Mukhtar*:

“Only Burooi has confined it to Persian, otherwise all other scholars consider prayer lawful in any language.”

4) The following description is found in *Fatawa Alamgiri*:[23](#)

“It is permissible to recite the Takbir (Allaho Akbar) in Persian as mentioned in books of jurisprudence, even if one can say it perfectly in Arabic. However, if one can correctly say it in Arabic it is detestable (Makruh) to say it in Persian. According to the saying of Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, if one can recite in Arabic it is unlawful to recite in Persian. It is quoted in *Muheet* in a similar manner. There is same difference of opinion about all recitations of Prayer including Tashahud, Qunut Dua, Tasbeehaat, Ruku and Sujud (i.e. difference of opinion is not restricted to only ‘Takbiratul Ihraam’[24](#)) and (this permission is not only for Persian language but) permissibility exists for all non-Arabic languages like Turkish, Hamite, Jashi and Nabatean. It is mentioned in the same way in *Fatawa Qazi Khan*.”

Now, what is the fault of the poor Ataturk that he started prayer in Turkish? Or why are thorough followers of Hanafi law of Pakistan criticized if they prayed in Urdu?

Seventh fundamental – Sufficiency of reciting a small verse in Prayer

Now read its sources:

1) “Abu Hanifah and a small group have said that Surah Fatiha is not obligatory but (only) a Quranic verse is obligatory.”[25](#)

2) “Recitation is one of the obligations of prayer and this obligation can be fulfilled by a single brief verse according to Abu Hanifah. It is quoted in *Muheet* and *Khulasah* in the same way and it is correct as mentioned in *Tatarkhaniya*.”[26](#)

Hence, Qifal Maroozi sufficed with the Persian translation of ‘Mudhaa Mataan’ and fulfilled the obligation by saying ‘Du barge sabz’ (two green leaves). However, there was no need to waste time in a single verse also. According to Abu Hanifah, a single word ‘Thumma’ (then) or its translation is enough.

3) “However, according to Abu Hanifah, the obligatory volume of recitation is a verse even if it is a small one like the saying of Allah, ‘Thumma’.

Eighth fundamental – Non-obligation of calmness while bowing and prostrating and pecking like a crow in prostration

Read the sources on it:

1) “As for standing upright, it is not obligatory and similarly for sitting between two prostrations (is not obligatory) and calmness is (not obligatory) between bowing and prostration. (This) verdict is of Abu Hanifah and Muhammad.”[27](#)

Obviously, if calmness is not obligatory in bowing and standing upright after bowing is also not obligatory then a person can go for prostration on the way to bowing. Thus, there was no gap between bowing and prostration as done by Qifaal Maroozi.

Similarly, if it is not obligatory to sit between two prostrations nor there is a need of calmness in prostrations, what is left other than pecking twice like a crow. Qifaal did the same.

2) Also read one more source:

“People are unanimous that according to Abu Hanifah and Muhammad, it is not obligatory to stand upright after bowing. Similarly it is not obligatory to be calm while sitting.”[28](#)

Also know it that it is enough to prostrate on one’s nose instead of forehead.

“According to Abu Hanifah, it is enough to prostrate on one’s nose without any reason also.”[29](#)

Not only this, but one can also prostrate on the back of another person who is praying.

“It is permissible to prostrate on the back of a person who is himself involved in prayers.”[30](#)

God be praised! What a beautiful scene it would be if for prostration a person mounts the back of another person who is praying. However, imagination is necessary for this.

Ninth fundamental – Passing flatulence is sufficient instead of salutations

This virtuous deed is permitted by the ‘great Imam’ because his leader, ‘Prince of believers’, Amir Muawiyah had fulfilled this virtuous obligation openly after sitting on the pulpit of the Prophet (S). But anyway, read some of its sources:

“If a person does ‘Hadath’³¹ (passes flatulence etc.) purposely after Tashahud and does an act contrary to Prayer, his prayer shall be complete.”³²

That is, it is not necessary to only pass flatulence in order to complete the prayer after Tashahud but he can even urinate or excrete, jump and do all those acts, which are contrary to prayer, provided that all these are done intentionally. If they occur unintentionally, there is a risk of the prayer being void.

Anyway, the ‘great Imam’ of Sunnis has completed the prayers even though it became an ill treatment of Islam. Possibly, our reader would be surprised over such statements said by the latter Imam. Hence it is enough to say that the great Imam was a follower of ‘Murjiyyah’ religion. The Murjiyyah belief is that one can commit as many sins as possible after reciting the Kalimah (formula of faith). There would not be any punishment of even a single second. As if uttering the two testimonies (Kalimah Shahadatain) is a license to sin. Therefore the Great Imam allowed incest with even the women in the prohibited degree.

And hence, the Messenger of Allah (S) has said: “There would be two groups among my followers; not even one of them would be in accordance with Islam. One is Murjiyyah and other Qadriyyah.”

By the way, read the proofs of the great Imam being a Murjiyyah:

1) Abdul Qadir Jilani writes in one of his famous works, *Ghaneeyatut Taalibeen* after narrating this tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) that: “There would be seventy-three sects among my followers. Of which, only one would get salvation and others would go to hell.

Ten sects are the bases of these seventy-three sects viz. Ahlul Sunnat, Khawarij, Shia, Mutazila, Murjiyyah, Mushbiha, Jehmiyyah, Zimaaryah, Najariyyah, Kilabiyah...But Murjiyyah has twelve branches...so...so...so...(among them) is Hanafiyyah... Hanafiyyah are the followers of Abu Hanifah Numan bin Thabit who claims that faith is divine recognition and accepting what the Prophet has brought, as mentioned by Barhooqi in *Al-Shajarah*.”³³

2) Similarly, Allamah Ibn Qutaybah Dinawari has included not only Abu Hanifah but also his teachers and students in the list of Murjiyyah in his famous work, *Maarif* as follows:

“Here are the names of some Murjiyyahs: Ibrahim Lateemi...Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman (teacher of Abu Hanifah), Abu Hanifah...Abu Yusuf Sahibur Raai and Muhammad bin Hasan (students of Abu Hanifah).”

Now, you would like to find out the belief of Murjiyyah. Hence, read on the following passage which Allamah Ibn Jawzi, a famous Ahlul Sunnat scholar has quoted in his renowned work, *Talbees-e-Iblees* as follows:

3) “The Murjiyyah believe that if a person testifies the two principles of faith (Shahadatain) and commits all sorts of sins then also he would not enter hell. They have opposed those correct traditions, which have the mention of removal of monotheists from hell. Ibn Aqil said that the founder of the Murjiyyah, which is absolutely an apostate sect was a real hypocrite because the betterment of world is due to the

warning, frightening and belief in recompense. As it was not possible for Murjiyyah to deny God openly, as people would have started hating them, they washed away the benefits of the existence of God i.e. they demolished self accounting and observation of deeds and diplomacies of Islamic law. This is the worst group against Islam.”

As the belief of Murjiyyah is an offspring of atheism, there is no importance of traditions and the personality of the Prophet (S) in the heart of the Great Imam, neither he cared for the symbols of Islam.

4) “Khatib has narrated from the chains of Abu Ishaq that he used to say, ‘I used to go to Abu Hanifah and question him. I asked a question and he replied. I said that it was narrated from the Prophet (S) in that way (i.e. contrary to his reply). He replied: Forgive me about that narration. Then I asked another question. When he replied, I said that it was narrated from the Prophet (S) in another way. He said: (God forbid!) Erase this narration by the tail of a pig.’”[34](#)

Now read another narration:

5) “Abu Hanifah was asked about a person who says that he testifies that Ka’ba is true but doesn’t know that it is the same which is in Mecca or any other one. Abu Hanifah said that he would be a believer without any doubt. Similarly, he was asked about one who says that he testifies that Muhammad bin Abdullah (S) is a Prophet but does not know whether he is the same whose tomb is in Medina or someone else. Abu Hanifah replied that such a person is a believer without any doubt. Hamidi says that a person who says so is an infidel.”[35](#)

Not only this, but Abu Hanifah even considered the worship of his shoes a cause for salvation:

“It is narrated from a chain of narrators that Abu Hanifah said that if a person worships that shoe for nearness of God, I do not find any harm in it. It is narrated from Saeed that such a thing is infidelity.”[36](#)

Therefore, Allamah Khatib Baghdadi says:

6) “No child born in Islam was more damaging than Abu Hanifah.”[37](#)

And Khatib Baghdadi has mentioned such a belief of the ‘great Imam’ that one should not be surprised if even the Rizwan editor leaves him. He has quoted a saying of the ‘great Imam’ in the same book, *Tarikh Baghdad* whose abridged version is famous by the title of *Mukhtar-e-Mukhtasar Tarikh Baghdad* as follows:

7) “Indeed the faith of Abu Bakr Siddiq and Iblis is one.”

Thus is the real condition of the great leader of the Rizwan editor, Numan bin Thabit Abu Hanifah (r.a.) and Pakistan is full of his followers. The editor of Rizwan feigned ignorance on being informed about one of his laws of ‘Wrapping of silk’ and said, “What do we know who this Abu Hanifah is?” Hatred of one’s leaders on the exposure of their real conditions is a preface to the scene of the Day of Judgment, which

is mentioned in Quran as follows:

“When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder.”³⁸

Hoping that the Rizwan editor might be satisfied at last, I conclude the discussion.

- [1.](#) Kitab Mugheethul Khalq, Imamul Haramain with reference to Istisqaaul Afham, Vol. 2, Pg. 179
- [2.](#) Vol. 2, Pg. 86, Egypt
- [3.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 11
- [4.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 10, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow
- [5.](#) Niyyatul Musalla, Pg. 46, 47, Printed at Meerut
- [6.](#) Hidayah, Vol. 1, Pg. 28
- [7.](#) Durre Mukhtar, Pg. 44
- [8.](#) Fatawa Aalamgiri, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, Vol. 1, Pg. 44
- [9.](#) Niyyatul Musalla, Meerut Pg. 20
- [10.](#) Hidayah, Pg. 16
- [11.](#) Fatawa Aalamgiri, Vol. 1, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, Pg. 21
- [12.](#) Part 2, Muhammadi, Lahore Pg. 6
- [13.](#) Zafar Al-Mubeen, part 2, Pg. 6
- [14.](#) Vol. 2, Pg. 71
- [15.](#) Hidayah, Pg. 4
- [16.](#) Sharh Waqaayah, Pg. 6
- [17.](#) Sharh Waqaayah, Pg. 7
- [18.](#) Hidayah, Pg. 4
- [19.](#) Pg. 5
- [20.](#) Margin of Niyyatul Musalla, Pg. 5
- [21.](#) Hidayah, Vol. 1, Pg. 39
- [22.](#) Durre Mukhtar, Pg. 65
- [23.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 67, Nawal Kishor Press, Lucknow, India
- [24.](#) The first recitation of ‘Allaho Akbar’ (Allah is the Greatest) at the beginning of ritual prayer
- [25.](#) Sharh Sahih Muslim, Imam Nawawi Vol. 1, Ansari Press, Delhi Pg. 170
- [26.](#) Fatawa Alamgiri, Vol. 1, Pg. 68
- [27.](#) Hidayah, Vol. 1, Pg. 44
- [28.](#) Fatawa Alamgiri, Vol. 1, Pg. 70
- [29.](#) Sharh Waqaya, Pg. 44
- [30.](#) Fatawa Alamgiri, Pg. 69
- [31.](#) Any act that makes the ablution void
- [32.](#) Sharh Waqaayah, Pg. 52
- [33.](#) Ghaneeyatut Taalibeen
- [34.](#) Mukhtarul Mukhtasar Tarikh-e-Baghdad, Ibn Khatib
- [35.](#) Mukhtar Mukhtasar Tarikh Baghdad
- [36.](#) Mukhtar Mukhtasar Tarikh Baghdad
- [37.](#) Mukhtar Mukhtasar Tarikh Baghdad
- [38.](#) Surah Baqarah 2:166

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