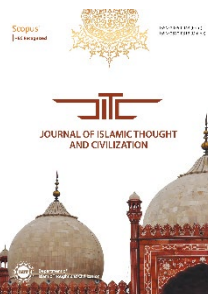
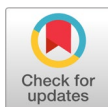


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Abu Hanifa: Architect of Islamic Moderatism in Contemporary Contexts

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Abstract

This article examines the idea of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) in the teachings of Imam Abu Hanifa, highlighting its significance for contemporary Islamic thought and life. It encourages a moderate approach to the religious practices, social relations and political activism highlighting tolerance and moral conduct while avoiding extremes. Based on Qur'anic and Hadith sources it confers the role of the Muslim community as *ummatah wasatan*, promoting harmony and moderation in all aspects of life. The formation of the Hanafi madhhab by Abu Hanifa exemplifies his efficient method, centered on the Qur'an and *Sunnah* which allows for ease in legal pronouncements to accommodate changing circumstances. The paper analyzes how his idea of moderation responds to contemporary issues, such as social justice, human rights and governing in Islamic terms. It also demonstrates how *wasatiyyah* promotes equity, fairness and social harmony, helping to encourage the wider acceptance of Islam across different cultural and religious traditions. By examining the continuing relevance of Abu Hanifa's ideas, the book contributes to an understanding of how classical jurisprudence shapes discussions of ethics, law and the good society in Muslim communities today. The results highlight the relevance of *wasatiyyah* as a legal and ethical directive in contemporary Islamic scholarly discourse and practice.

Keywords: Abu Hanifa, *wasatiyyah*, madhhab, *fiqh*, moderation, human rights, contemporary Islam

Introduction

Abu Hanifa (699–767) was a pivotal figure during the key period that saw the transition from Umayyad to Abbasid rule, an era of change that marked his legal and theological frame of mind. Being founder of the Hanafi school, Abu Hanifa, emphasized human reason and human interpretation over tradition. His approach not only inspired legal theory, it also instilled in his students a spirit of intellectual curiosity that would grow into extensive conceptual systematizations to deal with the issues facing today's Muslim societies.¹ His emphasis on rationality enables modern jurists to resolve complex legal dilemmas arising from globalization and cultural diversity, ensuring that his ideals continue to be relevant in the new century.²

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¹Raziya Matibaeva, "Rol Imama Abu Hanifi kak uchitelyz I nastavnika," [The Role of Imam Abu Hanifa as a Teacher and Mentor] *Hikmet* 2, no. 2 (2024): 21, <https://doi.org/10.47526/3007-8598-2024.2-06>.

²Mustafa Selim Yılmaz, "Dinamik bir ilmi anlayışın inşası açısından niçin Ebu Hanifeden başlanılmalı?" [Why to Start with Abu Hanifah for Building a Dynamic Comprehensive Evaluation

The jurisprudential approach of Abu Hanifa, termed the *Istihsan* (which includes Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, consensus of the *Sahabah* and *qiyas*) formed a cornerstone for development of the Hanafi madhab. The reliance on *qiyas* facilitated the formulation of solutions to novel circumstances that are not explicitly addressed in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*, thereby ensuring extensive dissemination of the *madhab* and its capacity to provide counsel on numerous *fiqh* issues. Abu Hanifa's all-encompassing methodology, which integrates tradition and reason, rendered his school one of the most significant within the realm of Islamic law.³ In the theological discussions, Abu Hanifa adopted a centrist stance, endeavoring to maintain equilibrium between rational interpretation of religious doctrines and fidelity to traditional beliefs.⁴

Abu Hanifa's principle of *irja'* – which opposed the *Khawarij* notion and the contemporary trend of declaring individuals as disbelievers – has faced criticism. Some scholars have superficially accused him of being a *Murji'ah*. This critique traces back to a narration in Imam Malik's *Al-Muwatta*, where, when asked about the term *ad-dawla al-'udla* – referring to diseases beyond the capability of physicians to treat – it was said: “This is the view of Abu Hanifa and his students.” However, the famous Andalusian scholar al-Baji categorically stated that this narration is not authentic.⁵ Another indication is that the *Murji'ah* interpretation associated with innovation (*bid'ah*) emerged only with Abu Salat al-Samman (d. 152/769). Prior to this, the concept of *irja'* or *Murji'ah* was generally understood positively as part of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* tradition.⁶

Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), in his critique of the *Murji'ah*, emphasized that faith (*iman*) cannot be reduced merely to affirmation by the heart and profession by the tongue, but must also necessarily include righteous deeds. In his view, separating faith from action undermines the holistic nature of religion. From this perspective, he regarded Abu Hanifa's definition of faith as “affirmation in the heart and confession by the tongue” as bearing *Murji'ah* tendencies. Nevertheless, the majority of scholars underline that Abu Hanifa's conception of *irja'* should not be equated with the extreme positions of the *Murji'ah*; rather, it reflects a moderate stance intended to avoid hastily declaring Muslims as unbelievers.

Hanafis exercise prudence in matters related to *takfir*. They emphasize that the outward expressions of faith, including the recitation of the *shahada* and adherence to the fundamental pillars of Islam, should serve as the foundation for recognizing an individual as a Muslim. This methodology has significantly contributed to the dissemination of Islam, particularly within regions characterized by religious plurality.⁷ Imam Abu Hanifa became a leading exponent of moderate thinking in Islam through his notion of *wasatiyyah*. This is the principle of justice, moderated balance and renunciation

of the Knowledge?] *TSBS Proceedings Journal*, no. 1 (August 2021): 54–57, <https://doi.org/10.55709/TSBSBildirilerDergisi.1.13>.

³Ravil I. Gaynutdin, and Ruslan I. Baishev, “Hanafitskiy mazhab: istoriya stanovleniya, klassifikatsiya i obzor osnovnykh istochnikov,” [Hanafi Mazhab: The History of Formation, Classification, and Review of the Main Sources], *Islam in the Modern World* 18, no. 4 (2023): 27–42, <https://doi.org/10.22311/2074-1529-2022-18-4-27-42>.

⁴Suud Sarim Karimullah, and Arif Sugitanata, “The Hanafi School of Islamic Law Literature: A Historical Account,” *Journal of Islamic History and Manuscript* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jihm.v2i1.7788>.

⁵Abul-Velid el-Baci, *Muntaqa [Selected]*, (Encyclopedia of Islam), 300.

⁶Ismail Hakkı Izmirli, *Yeni İlmî Kelam [New Science of Kalam]* (Ankara, 2013), 125.

⁷Brahim Charafi, *Le takfir et le takfirisme Les origines et les conséquences [Takfir and Takfirism: The Origins and Consequences]* *Science and Knowledge Horizons Journal* 4, no. 01 (2024): 19–38, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13825385>.

of extremes in all states of existence. Abu Hanifa's moderation was clear in his jurisprudence as well as in his manner.⁸

The paper focuses on the contributions of Imam Abu Hanifa to Islamic law and influence on modern Islamic intellectualism. More specifically, it explores how his approaches and methodologies, originated by the spirit of justice, moderation and tolerance, shaped theories within the Islamic law. It will also study how intellectually rigorous approach of Abu Hanifa has enabled scholars to respond to modern challenges such as social justice and human rights based on Islamic law. In considering these dimensions this article emphasizes the relevance of Abu Hanifa's teachings to fostering a culture of tolerance and understanding among different Muslim communities today, as well as its function in safeguarding the Islamic religion against radicalism and extremism. The findings of this study will be a significant resource for researchers, and students who aspiring to understand the impact of Imam Abu Hanifa in propagating moderate Islam. Besides, this study, for the most part, deals with the 'Abbāsīd era whilst taking account of the effect of the Hanafi School in Central Asia which limits its chronological and geographical frames.

2. Research Methods

The study applies a diverse range of research techniques to explore Imam Abu Hanifa's intellectual impact on Islamic law and theology. It researches a prevailing historical milieu of Imam Abu Hanifah's period from the socio-political aspects. This will be useful for understanding how his views were shaped by the prevailing environment of his period, especially development of the Hanafi madhab. The distinct approach utilized in this study is analysis of how those laws are derived from primary sources: Holy Qur'ān, sunnah and treatises attributed to Abu Hanifa. There are continuing academic disputes about what exactly to 'include' among those works attributed to Abu Hanifa. Notably, the authenticity of works such as *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* and *al-Alim wa al-Muta'allim* has been widely discussed among scholars whether they are originally written by Imam Abu Hanifa. Ignoring these controversies risks creating one-sided perception of his legal and theological visions. It should also be mentioned that the Hanafi madhhab began to be systematized further and developed significantly, after Abu Hanifa's death with the contributions of his core disciples, Abu Yusuf (731-798) and Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 805AD). Hence, this article acknowledges the importance of confronting the source-critical issues connected with the writings attributed to Abu Hanifa as well as situating his thought in a broader historical context. This method allows for deep analysis of his legal reasoning and *qiyas* in addressing new *fiqh* issues. Through thematic analysis, important themes such as *wasatiyyah* and tolerance are identified in the teachings of Abu Hanifa. It helps in synthesizing various aspects of his thought and their implications for current matters such as social justice and women's rights. In the historical method, the research focused first on Abu Hanifa's classical works, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* and *al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, as well as later Hanafi commentaries that had transmitted and interpreted his doctrines. The method of comparison was applied by contrasting Abu Hanifa's doctrines concerning *imān*, *qiyas* and *ijtihād* against other major schools, namely Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali madhabs as well as against the criticisms of Ibn Taymiyya. To guarantee objectivity we presented both convergent and divergent views in a balanced manner without discussing their controversies.

3. Results and Discussion

Wasat, or *wasatiyya*, represents a core concept of Islamic meaning moderation. The foundation of this idea is rooted deep in the Qur'ān and Hadīth, where the Muslim *umma* (community) is mentioned as "middle nation," understood as free from any form of extremism. *Wasat* encompasses

⁸Meirison Meirison, and Testru Hendra, "Supporting Factors for the Spread of the Hanafi School throughout the World," *Muqaranah* 6, no. 2 (2022): 85–98, <https://doi.org/10.19109/muqaranah.v6i2.14193>.

more than avoiding the extremes; it creates balance between worldly and spiritual endeavors, both personal social.⁹

Moderation as a principle in the perspective of these laws refers to “middle way” ordained by Allah for Muslim ummah. Qur’ānic verse, “We have made you a middle nation,”¹⁰ indicate three fundamental categories of moderation – justice, kindness and honesty. Moderation in Islam requires a centrism that avoids extremes and adopts middle paths. It is responding in a moderate, just and wise manner, both by speech and conduct which are based on the teachings of the Prophet. The spirit of this principle is to follow the middle way as exemplified by prophet Muhammad and avoid all forms of extremes.¹¹

expands the notion of moderation as a Qur’ānic imperative in achieving justice, tolerance and rationality.¹² Similarly, Azyumardi Azra analyzes the moderation debate in Southeast Asia,¹³ Ahmad Moussalli discusses moderate versus radical trends in Islamic political thought in the broader context.¹⁴ Examining these concepts will give a more holistic view of moderation that places the legacy of Abu Hanifa in broader intellectual and contemporary scholarly spectrum.

Abu Hanifa represented two traits that are essential in the sphere of politics and government. He was firm in points of faith and doctrine, yet exceedingly tolerant in political and social matters.¹⁵ This balance is reflected especially with regard to matters that are commonly mentioned as the justification for religious extremism and fanaticism— *takfīr* (excommunication), *bid’ah* (innovation) and *īāghūū* (even false authorities). The Hanafi madhab offers the moderate approach in this aspect. In the works, attributed to Abu Hanifa, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, it is stated: “We do not call a believer an unbeliever unless (we have) clear evidence that he disbelieved.”¹⁶ Furthermore, principle of distinguishing between innovation (*bid’ah*) that serves the *Sunnah* and destructive innovation is emphasized, by designating the former as *hasan bid’ah* (commendable innovation) and upholding the view that “not everything absent in the Prophet’s era is necessarily an innovation.”¹⁷ The

⁹Umar Kustiadi, “Harmonization of Wahbah Zuhayli’s Philosophy of Wasaf Meaning in Tafsir al-Munir: Schleiermacher Hermeneutics Analysis,” *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* 6, no. 2 (2024): 145–166, <https://doi.org/10.20871/tjsq.v6i2.333>.

¹⁰Al-Baqarah 2:143.

¹¹Hasse Jubba, Jaffary Awang, Zuly Qodir, Hannani and Mustaqim Pabbajah, “The Contestation between Conservative and Moderate Muslims in Promoting Islamic Moderatism in Indonesia,” *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 2116162, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2116162>.

¹²Muhammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur’anic Principle of Wasatiyyah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹³Azyumardi Azra, *Transformasi Politik Islam: Radikalisme, Khilafatisme, dan Demokrasi* [Transformation of Islamic Politics: Radicalism, Khilafatism and Democracy], (CBE. 2016).

¹⁴Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy, and the Islamic State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 250

¹⁵D.V. Mukhetdinov, “Vklad Abu Hanify v obnovenie obshchestvennogo poriyadka,” [Abu Hanifa’s Contribution to the Renewal of Social Order], *Minbar- Islamic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2023): 99–116, <https://doi.org/10.31162/2618-9569-2023-16-1-99-116>.

¹⁶Ali Qari, *Al-Fiqh ul-Akbar* (Qadimi Kutub Khana), 311.

¹⁷Abu al-Ushr al-Pazdawi, *Uṣul* (Er-Riyad: Fakhr al-Din Sayyid Muḥammad Qanit, 2001), 270.

commitment to preventing armed conflict and disorder,¹⁸ which often lead to mass bloodshed, has likewise contributed to the struggle against extremism.¹⁹

3.1. Features of Abu Hanifa's Methodology

In terms of methodology, the Hanafi School adheres to the principles established by the *fuqaha*, in contrast to other schools that align with the *mutakallimun*. While the Hanafi *madhhab* emphasizes an inductive approach, wherein practical application is of paramount importance, other schools prioritize deduction, placing theoretical considerations at the forefront. Whereas the Hanafis conduct textual analysis with regard to their ultimate objectives (*maqasid* and *maslaha*), other schools predominantly concentrate on the explicit meaning of individual texts, adhering strictly to a textualist methodology. The incorporation of '*urf*' facilitates the adaptation of Islamic principles to local contexts, thereby circumventing the imposition of extraneous values and preserving a balance between tradition and modernity. The jurisprudential methodologies of Abu Hanifa – characterized by flexibility, pragmatism, and a real-life awareness of the socio-cultural context – are, therefore, highly valuable tools for addressing modern-day legal issues.²⁰

Abu Hanifa was known for his extensive use of *qiyas* (analogy) in legal reasoning, arguing that when no explicit ruling was available in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*, reasoning by analogy was necessary to uphold the objectives of *Sharī'ah*. This methodology, however, attracted criticism. For example, al-Awza'i (707–774 CE) criticized Abu Hanifa's frequent reliance on *qiyas*, advocating instead for a stricter adherence to transmitted reports (hadīth). Likewise, Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855 CE) emphasized Hadīth as the primary source of law and accepted analogy only in very limited circumstances.²¹

These warnings come from the critics of the analogical method who claim that over-emphasis on analogy could render the interpretative process too subjective to be described as the pursuit of divine intent as reflected in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, amid fears that it could encourage legal fragmentation endangering the unity of Islamic law.²² In response to such criticism, Abu Hanifa's followers claimed that the use of *qiyas* was necessary to address unique problems that were not explicitly discussed in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* particularly as the Islamic empire expanded and the social landscape evolved. They emphasized that Abu Hanifa perceived analogy as a mechanism that enables the general tenets of Islam to be applied to specific circumstances while remaining true to the essence of the *Sharī'ah*.²³

3.2. Qur'ān and *Sunnah* as a Source of moderation for Abu Hanifa

The cornerstone of moderation is an unwavering commitment to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*,

¹⁸Ibn Abidin, *Radd al-Muḥtar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 1987), 4:262.

¹⁹Abu Yusuf Yaqub ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari, *Kitab al-Kharaj* (Beirut: Dar al-Marifa, 1979), 124.

²⁰Abdullah Demir, "Different Interpretations of Abu Hanifa: The Hanafi Jurists and the Hanafi Theologians." *Journal of Religious Inquiries* 1, no. 2 (December 2018): 259–79, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3354421>.

²¹Adil Salahi, "Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal," *Muslim Heritage*, December 30, 2004, <https://muslimheritage.com/imam-ahmad-ibn-hanbal/>.

²²Adi Abdullah Muslim, "The Defense of Hadith Scholars against Ahl al-Ra'y Madhhab (Study of Thought Shaikh 'Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 27, no. 1 (2019): 62–73, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v27i1.4594>.

²³Ilyas Aliyevich Ganiev, "Metodologiya i metody fetvotvorchestva v khanafitskom mazhabe," [Methodology and Methods of Fatwa-Making in the Hanafi Madhhab] *Islam in the Modern World* 20, no. 3 (2025): 111–30, <https://doi.org/10.22311/2074-1529-2024-20-3-111-130>.

coupled with the repudiation of innovations (*bid'ah*). Abu Hanifa particularly underscored the significance of adhering to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, as well as the perils associated with *bid'ah*. His methodology involved initially seeking solutions within the Qur'ān, subsequently in the *Sunnah*, and finally in the utterances of the Companions of the Prophet. Abu Hanifa considered it unlawful to give personal opinion contradicting the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* or consensus of the Companions. Abu Hanifa advised his disciple, Sammati during his travel to Basra to demonstrate gentle character, well manners and tolerance to the people, and adopting an open-minded culture.²⁴ Abu Hanifa advised his disciple Sammati during his travel to Basra to be kind, patient, tolerant with people and have open-minded worldview. He insisted that it is morally obligatory that we be merciful toward all men even if they are evil—punishing them only when they persist in their sin but always forgiving those who have sinned; being kind to even the ungrateful and trying most of all to develop closeness and amicability.²⁵ As a great orator and authority on law, he inveighed against violence, seeing those who took up arms against others as the people of Hell. He was aware that violence engenders more violence, and argued for compassion for even those committing acts of violence. His views emphasize that paying back kindness instead of resenting ill-will, and aiming towards peace and harmony rather than engaging in violence are the best ways to prevent conflict from growing.

3.3. Shaping Moderation

Abu Hanifa's definition of faith was particularly inclusive, even embracing oppressors and transgressors, to the extent their adherence to Qur'ān and sunnah made them believers and members of the Muslim ummah despite having been disestablished as infidels within other theological schools.²⁶

Abu Hanifa characterized the believer as one who confesses and testifies to faith, even if he does not carry out its duties because of ignorance or issues classified as disbelief. He not only did not excommunicate sinful believers, claiming them to be apostates; but also criticized who hastily decided fate of his fellow Muslims, leaving such matters to Allah in the hereinafter.²⁷ During the time of Abū Ḥanīfā, a great dissension had sparked between various theological groups – *Khawārij*, *Ahl al-Hadīth* and *Murji'a* with respect to ideas like *īmān* (faith), *kufr* (disbelief) and acts in whole do not belong to faith. The Khawarij held that *īmān* implies a commitment to deeds, and that anyone who committed a major sin would not be regarded as an infidel. In contrast, the *Murji'ah* separated faith from actions, arguing that if faith in God could not increase then a sinner cannot be labeled an infidel. While the *Murji'ah* preached tolerance towards wrongdoers, the *Ahl al-Hadīth* stressed that faith is a result of actions derived from an individual's choice. *Murji'ah* on the other hand, separated faith from actions, arguing that if faith does not increase nor devoid, hence a sinful may not be considered as infidel. Therefore, with the fundamental differences in the understanding of religion

²⁴Noor Mohammad Osmani, and Iftekhhar Jamil Fuad, "Imam Abu Hanifa on the Hadith of the Prophet and Its Authority," *al-Burhan Journal of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies* 8, no. 2 (2024): 105–123, <https://doi.org/10.31436/alburhn.v8i2.355>.

²⁵Mohd Anuar Mamat, Mohd Manawi Mohd Akib, and Basri Husin, "Prinsip-Prinsip Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah: Pengenalan dan Terjemahan Melayu Wasiyyah Imam Abu Hanifah," [Principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah: Introduction and Malay Translation of the Will of Imam Abu Hanifah] *Afkar: Journal of Islamic Creed and Thought* (2014): 1–36, <https://ajba.um.edu.my/index.php/afkar/article/view/5681>.

²⁶Dad Mohammad Nazir, "Imam Abu Hanifa and Issue of Irjaa," *Diwan International Scientific and Research Journal* 6, no. 1 (2025): 7–32, <https://doi.org/10.69892/diwan.2025.92>.

²⁷Ibid., 7–32.

and commands of God, the theology schools considerably varied on the essence of faith and its role in human actions.²⁸

It is important to consider Abu Hanifa's conception of faith and action historically. The political turmoil of the eighth century and the tensions between religious-political divisions played a role in these debates. The several other Islamic schools exerted a powerful influence the political map during those eras. The *Khawarij* declared the fourth caliph Ali an apostate and heretic, so that the state could exclude them from the political sphere as intolerant in their very nature and opposing the Muslim ruling power. The *Murji'ah* were condemned for being 'too tolerant' towards tyrants and justifying them to certain extent. Given the growing political tension and evolving chaos, the government was in need of legal flexibility but doctrinaire positions held by these madrasahs stood in opposition to this broader popular tendency.²⁹

In the time of the ruling caliph, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (714-775), he was offered a position as judge which he refused. Some of his contemporaries saw this refusal as political opposition, while others alleged that he was providing funds for the descendants of 'Ali. Nevertheless, in the historical sources there is no evidence that he advocated the rebellion against rulers or that he engaged in propaganda actions. Rather, his refusal is interpreted as his concern for the autonomy of academic expertise and Islamic knowledge, as well as a reluctance to be subject to influence from political officials. For example, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463/1071) narrates: when the ruler asked Abu Hanifa why he had refused to become a judge, he replied: 'If I accept then I will not be able to issue judgements with fairness and justice'. But if I do not judge right, you will not be pleased. However, if I do as you command, then I will be a rebellious servant against my Lord."³⁰ Likewise, Ibn Khallikan (d.1282), in his *Wafayat al-A'yan*, notes that Abu Hanifa refused the office because he feared being compelled by the rulers to commit injustice. As a result, he was imprisoned and beaten.³¹ Similarly, Ya'qub al-Fasawi (d. 277/890) in his *al-Ma'rifa wa al-Tarikh* affirms that Abu Hanifa's refusal stemmed from his unwillingness to allow religion to be subordinated to political authority.³² This historical stance, as well as contemporary interpretations, suggests a clear anticipation of the principle that religious affairs and political power should remain independent of one another.

If one were to categorize this figure as moderate, it would be appropriate to classify him as a *moderate Murji'i*, and his theoretical stance could be regarded as a form of "*moderate Irja'*." In his scholarly works – among them a treatise addressed to 'Uthman al-Batti – he repudiated allegations of excessive moderation and clarified his balanced perspectives. He referred to all adherents of Islam as *Ahl al-Qibla* and considered any individual who neglected a religious obligation to be a sinful

²⁸Busra Nur Hatipoglu Yakut, "Kelam İlminde Havatır Kavramının Yeri," [The Concept of Khawatir in Discipline of Kalâm], *Journal of Islamic Review* 12, no. 1 (2022): 187–216, <https://doi.org/10.26650/iuitd.2022.1023433>.

²⁹Salahaddin Bekki, and Enis Yalçın, "Bazi Fütüvvetnameler ve Şecerenameler Işığında Hz. Ali," [Hz. Ali in The Light of Futuwwatnamas and Genealogies], *Journal of Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Research*, no. 90 (2019): 25–46, <https://doi.org/10.34189/hbv.90.003>.

³⁰Abu İbrahim al-Fath b. Ali el-Bundari al-İsfahani, *Tarikh-e-Baghdad* (Daruz-Zehair, n.d.), 13: 333.

³¹Shamsad-Din Abul-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-Ayan* [The Obituaries of Eminent Men], (Paris, n.d.), 4:450, <https://archive.org/details/WafayatAl-ayantheObituariesOfEminentMenByIbnKhallikan/Vol4Of4WafayatAl-ayantheObituariesOfEminentMenByIbnKhallikan/page/n3/mode/2up>

³²Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Sufyān al-Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifah wa-t-Tārikh*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998), 783.

believer, rather than an unbeliever.³³ Analogously, Imam Abu Hanifa stated: “We do not deem a Muslim an infidel (*kāfir*) merely for committing a transgression, regardless of its severity, so long as he does not declare it lawful (Halal). We do not negate his status as a believer (*mu'min*); rather, we regard him as a genuine believer (*mu'min Haqiqi*). It is conceivable that one may remain a believer even while engaging in sinful conduct (*fasiq*), though he is not considered an unbeliever.”³⁴

The *takfīr* is extremely delicate and controversial issue in Islam. From the days of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib, the Khawarij and after them all extremist movements have used this as a weapon to label their opponent infidels. A moderate Muslim, by contrast, does not consider to be Kafir anyone who says “*La ilaha illa Allah*” (There is no god but God). This view separates between a sinful Muslim and non-Muslim, and encourages to be tolerant to a fellow brother. Thus, Abu Hanifa abstained from declaring Muslims infidel for committing sins, be it major or minor.³⁵

The principle of moderation plays a critical role in maintaining peace and unity among Muslim communities, especially at times when unity is threatened by the rise of the theological discords. In the absence of moderate doctrines and with the ascendancy of extremist ideologies such as those espoused by the *Khawarij*, the practice of *takfīr* among Muslims and the resulting schisms within their ranks would inevitably intensify. It is precisely moderate teachings, such as those advanced by Imam Abu Hanifa and his contemporaries, that possess the potential to reinforce balance and resilience within the Muslim community.

3.4. Reason as a background Abu Hanifa's Moderate Views in Religious Ruling

Following conquest of Iraq, a distinct Islamic legal school emerged that contrasted with the tradition prevalent in the Hijaz region. Unlike the Hijazi school, the Iraqi school accorded greater significance to reason (*'aql*) and analogy (*qiyas*), recognizing them as valid sources of *Sharī'ah* principles. The endorsement of analogy and the facilitation of *ijtihad* were of paramount importance, as they enabled the incorporation of a rational methodology into the Islamic legal framework and supported informed decision-making in socio-political matters.³⁶

In contrast to certain assertions, application of analogy within Iraqi legal school does not stand in opposition to the sacred texts; rather, it aligns with the Hadīth narrated by Abū Dawud and al-Tirmidhi, which stipulates that the use of analogy is permissible only in cases where no explicit legal ruling is found in the Qur'ān, the Hadīth, or pronouncements of the Prophet's Companions. Although Abu Hanifa's opponents also employed analogy, his methodology diverged in both the scope of its application and in the way he resolved conflicts between analogy and weaker forms of evidence, such as isolated reports (*khabar al-ahad*).³⁷ The Hanafī school posits that analogy (*qiyas*) requires an original ruling (*aṣl*) established in the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*, accompanied by a recognized similarity

³³Muhammad Said, “Rekontekstualisasi Pemikiran Islam dalam Manhaj Ushul Fiqh Hassan Hanafi,” [The Recontextualization of Islamic Thought in the Methodology of Ushul Fiqh According to Hassan Hanafi], *Muharrrik: Journal of Da'wah and Social Studies* 2, no. 01 (2019): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3544708>.

³⁴Abū Ḥanifa, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar: Commentary of 'Alī al-Qārī*, trans. Yunus Vehbi Yavuz (Istanbul: White Thread Press, 2016), 62.

³⁵Khairulman Akbar Hutagalung, “Challenges of Religious Moderatism in the Context of Radicalism,” *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary* 2, no. 3 (2023): 840–53, <https://doi.org/10.38035/ijam.v2i3.424>.

³⁶Labeeb Ahmed Bsoul, “The Emergence of the Major Schools of Islamic Law (Madhhabs),” in *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Law*, ed. Khaled Abou El Fadl, Ahmad Atif Ahmad, and Said Fares Hassan (New York: Routledge, 2019), 141–55.

³⁷Ergin Burak, “A New Method of Istidlal in the Hanafi School: Intra-Madhhab Talfiq,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 2 (2022): 669–695, <https://doi.org/10.26650/iiuid.2022.1109679>.

(*munasabah*) that justifies extending the ruling to the new case. The new case must not be explicitly addressed in the Qur'ān or the Hadīth, and there must exist a causal connection (*'illah*) linking the original case to the new one. Once these criteria are fulfilled, the *mujtahid* proceeds to apply analogy.³⁸

Abu Hanifa prioritized logic for interpretation of *fiqh* issues and rejected any rulings contradicting the logic. He emphasized the need of reason (*aq'l*) for understanding the Qur'ān and Sunnah.³⁹ In this regard, he offered a principal of *istihsān* as a method legal preference derived from the reason. This can be used by Islamic jurists to abrogate one legal ruling in favor of another when the strict employment of *qiyās* (analogy) would lead to a harmful or unfair verdict. In this way, it provides us with an example of Abu Hanifa's readiness to use rational thinking to adjust legal norms in accordance with facts to the specific circumstances. In addition, his views on *ijmā'* (consensus) and *istiṣhāb* (the presumption of continuity) played a crucial role in maintaining *wasatiyya* in Islamic law.⁴⁰ Abu Hanifa's *ijmā'* (consensus) and *istiṣhāb* (presumption of continuity) also enabled shaping the *wasatiyyah*. He viewed scholarly uniformity as an authoritative legal source, since it indicates the common wisdom and wisdom of the Muslim ummah. Similarly, the doctrine of *istiḥsān* upheld existing legal rulings unless new evidence required modification and permitted reason-based judgment to solve issues where religious texts remained ambiguous.⁴¹ His approach united both faith and knowledge that provided wisdom to distinguish right from wrong, thereby paving the middle path for the Muslim ummah.

3.5. Imam Abu Hanifa's position towards Rulers – example of *wasatiyyah*

Religious groups permanently face two extremes: fundamentalism and a permissiveness. The first results in the social isolation, the second leads to loss of the religious identity. Reconciling these complexities is closely linked to curing the sources of political radicalism. Narrow sectarian exclusivity and blind submission must yield to a sense of civic and political engagement if we are to contain extremism. Here, Abu Hanifa defended an inclusive conception of faith: despite of magnitude of sin it committed an individual remains a believer for believing in Allah and His messenger.⁴²

The strategy of Abu Hanifa's pragmatism toward rulers was based on his principle of preserving the order in the society. Maintaining the social structure was more important, and therefore he urged Muslims to obey their rulers. His middle position with relation to authority played a role in the preservation of the unity and contributed to bringing stability for the Muslim *ummah*. His moderation

³⁸Shofa Auliya Fa'izah, "Praktik Rukun Qauli Dalam Salat Bagi Difabel Wicara Perspektif Abu Hanifah Dan Asy-Syafi'i," [The Practice of the Pillars of Compatibility in Prayer for People with Speech Impairments from the Perspective of Abu Hanifah and Ash-Syafi'i], 10, no. 2 (2022): 155, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-mazaahib.v10i2.2776>.

³⁹Ömer Yilmaz, "Within the Framework of the Discussion of the Regionality of Ancient Law Schools, Abu Yusuf's Work Titled Ikhtilafu Abi Hanifa Wa Ibn Abi Layla," *Akademic-Us* no. 15–16 (November 2024): 107–20, <https://doi.org/10.70971/akademikus.1568752>.

⁴⁰Harith Issa, "The Reality of the Istihsan According to Al Hanafia School," *Jordan Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2023): 151–179, <https://doi.org/10.59759/jjis.v19i2.22>.

⁴¹Miftahurrohmah Sarkun, "Athar Ta'Arud Manhaj al-Fikr Bayna Abu Hanifa Wa'l-Shafi'i 'an al-Istihsan Ansha'at al-Hadarat al-Islamiyyah," [The Impact of the Conflict in Intellectual Methodology between Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Shāfi'ī regarding istiḥsān on the Formation of Islamic Civilization], *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 51, no. 1 (2013): 217–246, <https://doi.org/10.14421/AJIS.2013.511.217-246>.

⁴²Muhammad Al-Fayyad Rafiqi, and Abu Hanifah. "The Maintenance Obligations of a Poor Husband from the Perspective of Imam Abu Hanifa," 2, no. 2 (2025): 201–207, <https://doi.org/10.61132/akhlak.v2i2.663>.

and pragmatism to the rulers derived from his profound knowledge of the religion and political life. Prioritizing interest of the state he avoided challenging authority of the ruling power. His balanced political view prevented chaos, ensuring the unity and peace within the state.⁴³

This moderate approach of Imam Abu Hanifa can be seen in his stance in the *Khawarij* and the Abbasid rulers. Unlike the *Khawarij*, who used violence and physical force for settling disputes, he called for dialogue to tackle challenges, preventing the religious extremism in the society. Abu Hanifa analyzed the potential risks of uprisings and chaos that would emerge from revolts for the power. His relations with the Abbasid caliphs, especially Caliph al-Mansur, were marked by wisdom and pragmatism. Abu Hanifa carefully assessed the dangers of rebellion and civil upheaval that could be caused by strong resistance to the rulers. For instance, his declining of the judge's post from al-Mansur was not a principled dissent with authority per se, but refusal to support autocratic rule as well as unfailing adherence to personal integrity. The aforementioned incidents serve to illustrate the tireless pursuit of justice attributed to Abu Hanifa, his struggle for the unity of Islam and his reactionary approach based on moderate principles in responding to political life.

Abu Hanifa held a clear stance on uprising against tyrants. His position was based on the obligation to save Muslim lives and protect the political structure of the Islamic community from fragmentation. This view, held by Abu Hanifa, is consistent with prophetic traditions (*ahādīth*) warning against *fitna* and division into factions due to fighting the oppression. If they refused appeals then Abu Hanifa recommended the community to wage war against them, thus emphasizing unwavering adherence to justice as a matter of principle.⁴⁴ Thus, Abu Hanifa maintained a moderate approach as his legal rulings stemmed from the justice and compassion for the human being, specifically for Muslim ummah. According to the first principles expressed by Imam Abu Hanifa, the Hanafi School later maintained that praying behind any imam, just or unjust, is valid. This stance relies on the notion that obedience to the ruler is a religious duty, and disobedience is wrongdoing. Whoever opposes him is deemed to be a part of the *Khawarij* sect in every time and in every place.⁴⁵

Abu Hanifa permanently called for unity within the society and therefore sounded the alarm over the negative consequences of the political instability. He urged the individuals not to isolate themselves from the *ummah*, instead actively encouraged their participation in the social and political life of the state. He advocated moderate asceticism as pathway for spiritual growth, while understanding legitimate right to revolt against tyrants and oppressors. Abu Hanifa deemed a rebellion justified only if rebellions aim establishing a just society, and while he denounced any violent acts against the people, deeming them as transgression.⁴⁶

3.6 Abu Hanifa's scientific legacy and its contribution to solution of modern-day issues

Abu Hanifa's principle of co-existence with other faiths and cultures ensured harmony among all religious groups. According to his teachings the diversity is Allah's mercy and wisdom, and that respecting others beliefs is a key component of the prosperity. Abu Hanifa's *wasatyya* concept can serve as an antidote to religious fanaticism. In his academic research, Akimkhanov emphasizes the

⁴³Murat Akin, "Abu Hanifa's View of Equality in Faith and Its Reflection on Social Life," *Kader* 20, no. 1 (2022): 263–280, <https://doi.org/10.18317/kaderdergi.1084663>.

⁴⁴Ayşegül Şimşek, "Portrait of a Jurist between Obedience and Rebellion," *Al- 'Uşūr al-Wuṣṭā* 30 (2022): 556, <https://doi.org/10.52214/uw.v30i.9328>.

⁴⁵Mohammad Danaeefar, Ghorbanali Ganji, and Iraj Mir, "Tolerance Intra-Religious in Abu Hanifa's Political Thought," *Political Sociology of Iran* 3, no. 3 (2020): 700–715.

⁴⁶Pebriana Lubis, "Ulama and Umara in the Islamic Political System," *Al Qalam: Scientific Journal of Religion and Society* 16, no. 3 (2022): 993–1009.

restraint inherent to Hanafi doctrine as one of the most salient features of the Hanafi madhab, which leads its adherents away from radicalism.⁴⁷

Abu Hanifa's scientific legacy reflects moderation in addressing complex issues with practical solutions. For instance, he affirmed that women possessed the right to enter into marriage contracts independently, without a guardian's permission. Such approach granted widows and divorcees freedom in shaping their own lives. Furthermore, he promoted women's rights for education and economic activities to the extent so long it was consistent with Islamic teachings. His views greatly contributed to the empowerment of women with the Hanafi madhab. Abu Hanifa's juristic views recognized the women's independent control of property, since there was general consensus among Muslim scholarship regarding women's right to participate in economic life. By solving those issues and securing the women's legal status Abu Hanifa introduced a substantial contribution to the Islamic Family Law in his epoch. His decisions allowed women empowering options that they had been long deprived of and have since continued to make a mark on the moderate Islamic jurisprudence.⁴⁸

Abu Hanifa fervently advocated for equitable treatment of mawali Muslims, non-Arab converts who often confronted marginalization under oppressive Umayyad and Abbasid regimes. He considered both groups as deserving of having the privileges Arab Muslims enjoyed, and he also supported their political and legal fight against discrimination. In his judgments, or fatwas, he had always stood for the rights of these communities based on the principles of justice and fairness that he believed were integral to Islam.⁴⁹ Abu Hanifa's views of political unrest were nuanced or even paradoxical in some cases. Some sources claim he believed tyrants had some rights to impose order on society, while others report he supported active rebellion against tyranny in the name of justice. His role in opposition political activism against the Umayyad and Abbasid states itself indicates a commitment to the principle of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, the basis of Islamic moral thought.⁵⁰

4. Conclusion

This paper discusses the central role played by Imam Abu Hanifa in promoting the path of *wasatiyyah*. Considered one of the most important figures in moderateness, his Senior Legal School was established based on moderation as well. Modern comprehension about Abu Hanifa's thought would be based on the many aspects of his teachings and beliefs. His unwavering belief in the power of patience and non-violence was consistent with his commitment to peaceful coexistence and dialogue as ways to solve disputes. It was this approach that promoted peace and coexistence amongst the members of the Muslim brotherhood. Abu Hanifa added that faith is affirmation and statement with tongue, but Islam is complete submission in action and speech to the command of God. He rejected the idea of obligatory acts beyond human capacity and refused to declare apostates those who committed major sins as infidels, unless they justified them explicitly. Another distinguishing feature of his thought was that he admitted reason as a sound base for Islamic Jurisprudence and

⁴⁷Asqar Akimhanov, Adil Zhanenuly, Kudayberdi Bagasharov, and Samed Okan, "Evolution of Deoband School Worldview and Its Connection with Maturidi School," *Adam Alemi* 103, no. 1 (2025): 159–168, <https://doi.org/10.48010/aa.v103i1.546>.

⁴⁸Rahmadani, Gani Jumat, and Besse Tenriabeng Mursyid, "An Islamic Law Review on Women's Rights in Choosing a Life Partner," *Comparativa* 4, no. 2 (2024): 169–193, <https://doi.org/10.24239/comparativa.v4i2.144>.

⁴⁹İsa Doğan, "Abu Hanifa's Religious and Political Stance," *Ondokuz Mayıs University Journal of Divinity Faculty* 22, no. 22 (2006): 37–47, <https://doi.org/10.17120/OMUIFD.10497>.

⁵⁰Şimşek, "Portrait of a Jurist between Obedience and Rebellion," 554–72, <https://doi.org/10.52214/uw.v30i.9328>.

ijtihad. By stressing logic and reason, Abu Hanifa popularized a more versatile and adaptive form of sharia interpretation that could better respond to society needs and conditions.

The legacy of Abu Hanifa is universal, not simply in the realm of theory precision but also methodological. In Central Asia, the Hanafi ideology is an essential source of distinction between traditional Islam and radical interpretations. For instance, Kazakhstan efforts to stem religious extremism also describe themselves as based upon Hanafi doctrine in order to maintain social order. In South Asia, especially India, the *Islamic Fiqh Academy* seeks to deal with modern problems using classical principles of jurisprudence. Based on the Hanafi principles of *qiyās* (analogy), and *istihsān* (juristic preference) Academy delivers authoritative *fatwās* and opinions, which is a pristine example of the fact that Hanafi madhab still preserved its traditions shaping modern-day Islamic jurisprudence.

The similar methodology can be observed in Pakistan. There was a case, when a woman filed a complaint after being left by her husband (*khul'a*), and the national court used *qiyās* and *istihsān* principles to issue a religious ruling. This shows the living application of Hanafi legal reasoning as part of contemporary Islamic law practice. Besides, Muslim thinkers today still apply Abu Hanifa's use of *qiyās* and *istihsān* principles to raise issues of legal pluralism or negotiate the complicated relation between Islamic jurisprudence and modern-day world legal framework.

Abu Hanifa was a great proponent of the freedom of expression and open discussions or debates. His dedication to analytical process and dialogue created a dynamic where intellectual advancement and the creativity of religious thought could develop within Islamic scholarship. His forward-thinking took expression also in his attitude towards the women's freedom in the marriage, advocating their rights and seeking to achieve justice both in family and personal affairs. In conclusion, the contributions of Imam Abu Hanifa to *wasatiyyah* Islam are clear in his lasting beliefs and moderate as well as forward-thinking teachings.

The results of the research article suggest further studies in Abu Hanifa's rich and diverse scientific legacy in Islamic thought. The future research should scrutinize application of Abu Hanifa's heritage in addressing the critical issues of our era such as ensuring women's rights, promoting social justice and equality, tackling poverty in the Muslim world illustrating historical background and issuing practical recommendations. Comparative studies of the Hanafi doctrine with teachings of other Islam scholars or madhhabs could also underpin the nuances that characterize Abu Hanifa's moderation and its ongoing relevance to on the contemporary faith and governance debates. In a further illustration of the flexibility in Hanafi-*fiqh* methodology, this research has investigated some cases in which Hanafi jurists have faced certain social and political issues. Moreover, to understand the background of Abu Hanifa and his political context from an era, full understanding of moderate views has roots are also essential in discussing the current problems.

Authors' Contribution

Jolaman Bulan: Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft. **Tussipkhan Imammadi:** Conceptualization, Project administration. **Aiyimzhan Ryskiyeva:** Investigation. **Asset Kuranbek:** Resources

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The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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