



Biography of Ḥarb bin Ismā'īl al-Kirmānī

He is Ḥarb bin Ismā'īl bin Khalaf al-Ḥanzalī al-Kirmānī, Abū Muḥammad.²⁷ His specific year of birth is not known with certainty save that al-Zahabī mentions he reach ninety years of age. Thus, his birth was around the end of the second century hijrah and Fāyiz bin Aḥmad who published Ḥarb's *Masā'il* states 190H as the year in which he was born.²⁸ His tribal affiliation the same as Ishāq bin Rāhūyah who is also Ḥanzalī. The Ḥanzalah tribe descends from Tamīm bin Murr. As for his residential ascription, it is to a region in Nīsābūr known as Murabba'ah al-Kirmāniyyah from which al-Kirmānī is derived. Nīsābūr lies in North Eastern Irān towards the border with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan to the East by 200 kilometres.

Imām al-Zahabī writes, "The Imām, 'Allāmah, Abū Muḥammad Ḥarb bin Ismā'īl al-Kirmānī, the jurist, student of Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. He travelled and sought knowledge, taking from Abū al-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī, Abū Bakr al-Ḥumaydī, Abū 'Ubayd, Sa'īd bin Manṣūr, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ishāq bin Rāhūyah. And [those] who narrated from him [include] al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad al-Kirmānī,

²⁷ Biographical information for Ḥarb bin Ismā'īl al-Kirmānī has been summarized from Fāyiz bin Aḥmad's publication of *Masā'il Ḥarb* and its sources include Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah (1/145), Tārīkh Dimashq (12/309), Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā (13/244), Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffādh (2/613), Shadharāt al-Dhahab (2/176), al-Madkhal of Ibn Badrān (p. 412), al-Inṣāf of al-Mardāwī (30/408, 419) and others.

²⁸ *Masā'il Ḥarb* (1/7).

resident of Ṭurtūs, ‘Abdullāh bin Ishāq al-Nahāwandī, ‘Abdullāh bin Ya‘qūb al-Kirmānī, his companion Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl and others. Al-Khallāl Isaid, ‘He was an honourable [lofty] man, al-Marrūdhī encouraged me to travel to him.’ I [al-Zahabī] say: The Māsā’il of Ḥarb is one of the most precious of the books of the Ḥanbalīs. It is a large [work] comprising two volumes. The date of his death has been determined by ‘Abd al-Bāqī bin Qānī to be in the year 280H. I say: He was granted a long life and reached close to ninety years. And I do not know of anything objectionable about him, may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him.”²⁹

His Journeys for Knowledge and His Shaykhs

Ḥarb travelled to Irāq in 213H in his early twenties and then to Makkah in 219H while he was still less than thirty years of age, unlike some of his peers such as Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Imām al-Bukhārī who embarked upon writing ḥadīth at a much earlier age.³⁰ As a result of this he lost out on acquiring knowledge from a group of shaykhs that his peers took from. However, there were a small number of shaykhs which are considered - upon the classification of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in Taqrīb al-Taḥdhīb - to be from the ninth level which comprises those who were the youngest from the followers of the Tābi‘īn. Abū Bakr al-Khallāl mentioned some of them and they are: Abū al-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 227H), Sulaymān bin Ḥarb (d. 224H). Others include Sa‘īd bin Sulaymān an-Nashīṭī (d. 225H), ‘Abdullāh bin Sawwār al-‘Anbarī, ‘Ubaydallāh bin Mūsā al-‘Absī al-Kūfī (d. 213H), and he is the earliest of his shaykhs to die. Also ‘Alī bin Yazīd al-Ṣuddāī al-Akfānī al-Kūfī, ‘Amr bin Marzūq al-Bāhīlī al-Baṣrī (d. 224H), ‘Abd al-Salām bin Muṭahhar bin Husām al-Azdī al-Baṣrī (d. 224H), Hudbah bin Khālīd al-Qaysī al-Baṣrī and Yaḥyā bin ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī al-Kūfī (d. 228H).

As for his shaykhs in Khurasān from whom he took knowledge, they include Ishāq bin Rāhūyah (d. 238H), Aḥmad bin al-Azhar al-Nīsābūrī (d. 263H), Aḥmad bin Sa‘īd bin Ibrāhīm al-Ribāṭī al-Marwazī

²⁹ Refer to al-Siyar (13/245).

³⁰ Abū Ḥātim sought and wrote ḥadīth at the age of fourteen and al-Bukhārī at the age of ten.

(d. 246H), Aḥmad bin Saʿīd bin Ṣakhr al-Dārimī al-Sarkhasī (d. 253H), Aḥmad bin Naṣr bin Ziyād al-Nīsabūrī (d. 245H), ʿAmr bin Zarārah bin Wāqid al-Nīsabūrī (d. 238H), Muḥammad bin Rāfiʿ al-Nīsabūrī (d. 245H), Muḥammad bin Naṣr al-Nīsabūrī known as al-Farrāʾ, Muḥammad bin Yaḥyā al-Dhuhlī al-Nīsabūrī (d. 252H) and Yaʿqūb bin Sufyān al-Fārsī al-Fasawī (d. 277H).

After seeking knowledge from these shaykhs he devoted time to worship and purification of the soul which preoccupied him from travelling to seek knowledge and listening to ḥadīth. Hence, he only set out on travels during his mid-twenties. The sources of his biographical account do not relate all of the travels of Ḥarb except that they mention the three regions he travelled to which are Irāq, Shām and the Hijāz.

Then in Irāq he met most of his shaykhs and acquired the bulk of his knowledge from them and amongst them ʿAmr ibn Khālīd bin Farūkh al-Tamīmī al-Jazarī (d. 229H). He also met with Imām Aḥmad (d. 241H) and this was before the era of Imām Aḥmad’s trials pertaining to the Qurʾān. Ḥarb had heard much of the knowledge of Imām Aḥmad from his own shaykhs, having already memorized many of the issues before revising them with Imām Aḥmad.

He also travelled to Makkah at some time prior or during 219H whilst still in his late twenties. From the loftiest of his Shaykhs in Makkah include Saʿīd bin Manṣūr al-Khurasānī (resident of Makkah) and author of the Sunan, (d. 227H), ʿAbdullāh bin Zubayr al-Qurashī al-Humaydī (d. 220H) and Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad al-Maṭlabiyy al-Shāfiʿī (d. 237H), the nephew of Imām al-Shāfiʿī.

As for Shām, Ibn ʿAsākir relates from Abū Zurʿah al-Dimashqī (d. 281H) who said, “Two men from the nobles amongst the people came to us. The first of them and the most distinct of them is Yaʿqūb bin Sufyān al-Fasawī, the people of Irāq are incapable of seeing a man of his likes, and [he mentioned the second] Ḥarb bin Ismāʿīl al-Kirmānī, he is from those who wrote from me.”³¹ The specific date of

³¹ Tārīkh Dimashq (12/310) and al-Mizzī in Tahdhīb al-Kamāl (8/171).

his travel to Shām is not known however his companion during this journey was the Imām, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277H) who himself mentioned about Ḥarb, “My companion in Shām... my father - may Allāh show mercy to him - wrote from him in Damascus.”³² Abū Ḥātim set out on his journeys for knowledge in 213H travelling from Baḥrayn to Egypt, then to Ramlah, then to Damascus, then Antioch and Turtūs, then to Ḥimş and then Raqqah. Finally, he travelled to Irāq and what is apparent is that Ḥarb accompanied him in parts of his journey. In Ramlah, Ḥarb heard from ʿĪsā bin Muḥammad bin Ishāq al-Ramlī (d. 256H). In Damascus he had numerous shaykhs, from them were ʿAbbās bin al-Walīd ibn Şubh al-Sullamī (d. 248H), ʿAbadah bin ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Marwazī (d. 244H), ʿImrān bin Khālīd bin Yazīd al-Qurashī d. 244H), Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jaʿfī (d. 260H), Muḥammad bin al-Wazīr bin al-Ḥakam al-Sullamī (d. 250H), Hishām bin ʿAmmār al-Sullamī, the khaṭīb of the grand mosque in Damascus (d. 245H).

Then in the coastal region of Antioch³³ and Ṭurtūs and al-Miṣṣiyyah Ḥarb heard from a group of shaykhs and from them were ʿAbdullāh bin Khubayq al-Anṭāqī (d. 259H), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin Salām al-Baghdādī, resident of Ṭurtūs, ʿAbdullāh bin Muḥammad bin Yahyā al-Ṭurtūsī, Muḥammad bin Ādam bin Sulaymān al-Juhanī al-Maṣīṣī (d. 250H), Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm bin Muslim al-Ṭurtūsī (d. 273H), Muḥammad bin Sulaymān bin Ḥabīb al-Maṣīṣī, known as Bulwayn (d. 245H) and Nuṣayr bin al-Faraj al-Aslī al-Ṭurtūsī (d. 245H).

Then in Ḥimş he heard from another group of Shaykhs and they include ʿAbd al-Wahhāb bin al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn ʿAbān (d. 245H), ʿAmr bin ʿUthmān bin Saʿīd bin Kathīr al-Qurashī (d. 250H), ʿĪsā bin Sulaymān al-Qurashī, Muḥammad bin ʿAwf bin Sufyān al-Ṭāʿī (d. 272H), Muḥammad bin Muṣaffā bin Bahlūl al-Qurashī (d. 246H), al-Musayyib ibn Wāḍih al-Sullamī (d. 246H) and Yahyā bin ʿUthmān bin Saʿīd bin Kathīr al-Qurashī (d. 255H).

³² Al-Jarḥ wal-Taʿdīl (3/253).

³³ This lies on the coastal region of the Mediterranean in Southern-Turkey which meets with the most northern part of the coast of Syria.

Fāyiz Aḥmad devotes a lengthy chapter in his introduction to Masā'il Ḥarb and lists therein all of the shaykhs of Ḥarb bin Ismā'īl, reaching at least one-hundred and sixty-five in number, a large number of which are from the narrators of the six books of ḥadīth. There is no doubt that the abundance of shaykhs of a scholar are from the greatest of evidences and clear proofs for the vastness and copiousness of his knowledge.³⁴

His Students

From the most prominent of his students include:

Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin al-Ḥajjāj, Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 257H) and he is from the narrators of the Masā'il of Ḥarb from Imām Aḥmad. He was the foremost of the students of Imām Aḥmad and was the one who closed Aḥmad's eyes and washed his body after his death.

Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Ḥārūn, Abu Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311H), the Imām and the compiler and organizer of the knowledge of Imām Aḥmad, and a jurist and ḥāfidh, from the residents of Baghdād.

Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin Idrīs al-Rāzī, Abū Muḥammad bin Abī Ḥātim (d. 327H), he is an imām and the son of an imām, an ocean of knowledge who took from his father, Abū Ḥātim and also from Abū Zur'ah and authored works pertaining to narrators, refutation of the Jahmiyyah, a tafsīr based on the āthār and others.

ʿAbdullāh bin Ishāq bin Sayāmard, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Nahāwandī is mentioned by al-Ḥātib as one of the students of Ḥarb and describes him as a ḥāfidh, imām, thiqaḥ.³⁵ Also from his students was ʿAbdullāh bin Ya'qub bin Ishāq, Abū al-Qāsim al-Kirmānī. He was mentioned by Ibn ʿAsākir and al-Ḥātib as one of the students of Ḥarb.

³⁴ Refer to Masā'il Ḥarb (1/35 onwards).

³⁵ Refer to al-Siyar (15/247).

‘Umar bin al-Ḥusayn bin ‘Abdullāh, Abū al-Qāsim al-Khuraqī (d. 334H) who took knowledge from a group of the students of Imām Aḥmad including Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī, ‘Abdullāh and Ṣāliḥ, the two sons of Aḥmad and also Ḥarb himself.

Muḥammad bin Idrīs bin al-Mundhir al-Ḥanzalī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277H), he was from the associates and peers of Ḥarb and though he was senior and had precedence in knowledge, he took knowledge from Ḥarb. Abū Ḥātim is one of the illustrious imāms, from the trustworthy, firm, memorizers, from the oceans of knowledge. He travelled extensively and excelled in the Prophetic texts and their isnāds, he also authored a great deal, made criticism and appraisal of the narrators. Abū Ḥātim took knowledge from Ḥarb whilst he was in Damascus.³⁶

The Scholars’ Praise for Ḥarb

The statement of Abu Zur‘ah al-Rāzī which has preceded, “Two men from the nobles amongst the people came to us. The first of them and the most distinct of them is Ya‘qūb bin Sufyān al-Fasawī, the people of Irāq are incapable of seeing a man of his likes, and [he mentioned the second] Ḥarb bin Ismā‘īl al-Kirmānī, he is from those who wrote from me.”³⁷ Ibn Abī Ḥātim said, “Abū Muḥammad (Ḥarb) was the companion of my father in Shām, my father wrote from him in Damascus.”³⁸ Ibn Abī Ya‘lā said, citing Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, “He - Ḥarb - was the jurist of the land and the ruler had made him preside over judgement and other affairs in the land.”³⁹ Abū Bakr al-Khallāl said, “A honourable (lofty) man. Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī encouraged me to travel to him.”⁴⁰ Ibn al-Qayyim wrote in his Nūniyyah, “And look at Ḥarb and the consensus he cited. What an achievement from

³⁶ Refer to al-Siyar (13/247) and al-Ṭabaqāt (1/84).

³⁷ Tārīkh Dimashq (12/310), al-Mizzī in Tahdhīb al-Kamāl (8/171) and Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffādh (2/582).

³⁸ Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl (3/253).

³⁹ Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah (1/145).

⁴⁰ Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah (1/388).

this youth of Kirmān [through Allāh’s aid].”⁴¹ And al-Mardāwī wrote in al-Inṣāf, “Ḥarb is from the senior imāms of ḥadīth.”⁴²

His Death

After a life populated with much travelling for knowledge, he died in 280H. Ḥarb lived for ninety years as mentioned by al-Zahabī, “He was granted a long life and reached close to ninety years. And I do not know of anything objectionable about him, may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him.”⁴³

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⁴¹ Al-Kāfiyah al-Shāfiyah (p. 116).

⁴² Al-Inṣāf (2/523).

⁴³ Refer to al-Siyar (13/245).