

Chapter – 37

Imam al-Bukhari

(810 - 870 AD)

His name is Muhammad and his Kunniya is Abu 'Abdullah. His father's name is Ismail bin Ibrahim. He was born in 194AH/810AD. Since he belonged to the city of Bukhara (today's Uzbekistan), Imam became famous with al-Bukhari. He owned a medium height with lean body. In his childhood he loosed both eyesights so her mother became very depressed. She was praying for him and one day she saw a dream in which the Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah gave her glad tiding that by the grace Allah his son's eyes will be recovered and he will now be able to see. When she woke up in the morning, she found her son is really looking well with his eyes.

His father was a Muhaddith. That is why Imam al-Bukhari got inherited with the subject of Hadith in his blood. He was ten years old when he used to listen to a hadith in his school and remember it by heart. After completing his education, he received vast knowledge from various scholars of the city councils, one of them was Hazrat Dakhli. One day, Dakhli was teaching hadith and he presented some of the Hadith's words as follows:

سُفْيَانُ عَنْ أَبِي الزُّبَيْرِ عَنْ اِبْرَاهِيمَ

Hearing them, Imam al-Bukhari pointed out to them that the complete words of this hadith are as below:

سُفْيَانُ عَنْ أَبِي الزُّبَيْرِ بْنِ عَدِيِّ عَنْ اِبْرَاهِيمَ

When the research was done, the Imam was found correct. In this way, gradually he achieved a place of his own. Imam al-Bukhari was only eighteen years old when he reached Makkah for further education and then he went to Madinah. In his young age he also authored two books, named *Qazaya al-Sabah* and *Asma ar-Rijal*.

Imam Bukhari's memory was unusually sharp. Hamid bin Ismail narrates that "Bukhari used to go to the hadith teachers without having a pen to write; so we said to him, "What benefit do you have with these sittings while you will later forget it?" This objection also continued from every corner. Finally, one day he became upset on us and said, "Bring everything you have written and fight against my memory." By that time, some 15,000 hadiths in total were written. Imam al-Bukhari started reading from his memory, he remembered it so well that we corrected our mistakes".

One day it was mentioned in the meeting of Ishaq bin Rahwiya that, "Would it not be good if a collection of true hadiths could be arranged so that people could follow it without hesitation?" So, on the same day, Imam Muhammad al-Bukhari's heart determined that he would work on creating a collection that would be completely free from errors. By that time he had some 0.6 million hadiths collected. From these, he began to thoroughly research for the correct Hadiths and select them for his collection. He wrote only that Hadith which was most correct and abandoned the rest. In addition, it was his usual routine to first take bath and then pray two Rakats for the writing of hadith, then pray to Allah that no one should find any mistake in his work. Finally, after 16 years of hard work, he not only sat in the Prophet Mosque but also at the site of Riyadh-ul-Jannah, and compiled his own book, called "*Sahih al-Bukhari*". Everyone accepts it as very authoritative book as well.

Imam Bukhari's father was a rich person so he too did not lack wealth. But he always lived his life with simplicity. Trade was his profession. In it, he always been very careful to practice business transactions on principles. He was having very simple nature. One of his employees Mohammed Ibn Hatim said: "When Imam Bukhari prepared an inn in Bukhara, his simplicity was that he would bring on bricks himself and also provide us a hand in building its walls." Moreover, Mohammed Ibn Hatim says that when we used to go on a journey and Imam Bukhari awoke at night, he would never wake us up for his deeds. When I find out and asked him why you don't wake me up, he said in response, "*You need more sleep than me because you are young.*"

He died in 256AH/870AD in Khartang, an adjoining village of Samarkand. He was not only a great scholar, but also a perfect personality in respect to the piety. Imam al-Bukhari unquestionably did a very important and a very huge task in order to provide Muslims all about the practical life of the Noble Prophet.