

SUMMER IMMERSION HADITH MASTERS



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SESSION 6

Imam Bukhari Background

- Born 194 AH in Bukhara; died 256 AH in Samarkand
- Full name: Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira al-Bukhari
- His father died when he was an infant
 - He was a scholar and pious
- He became blind when he was young without a specific cause or cure
 - His mother continuously made dua
 - One night she saw Ibrahim (AS) in her dream, who told her to check her son because his eyesight was restored due to her duas
 - He gained his sight back
- Imam Bukhari was from modern day Uzbekistan
 - Samarkand is the capital

Early Studies

- At the age of ten, Bukhari wanted to learn hadith
 - He memorized the works of Ibn Mubarak, Sufyan At-Thawri, and studied Hanafi fiqh
 - He went to the muhadditheen of his area
 - He became recognized for his excellent memory
- Imam Ad-Dakhili was one teacher
 - Bukhari once interrupted him while he was narrating a hadith to correct a mistake he made in the chain of narrators
- At sixteen, he went to Hajj with his older brother Ahmad and his mother
 - Ahmad went back to Bukhara and died shortly after
 - Bukhari stayed to study with the scholars of Hejaz and his mother stayed with him
- He began to compile books
 - One of the notable ones is At-Tarajim, which is a book of biographies of narrators
 - It had to do more with the status of the person as a narrator rather than their life story
 - He wrote it near the Rawdah in Medina
 - It had biographies of 13,798 people
 - He finished it in a short time

Travels

- He traveled to Iraq and Sham
 - Hijaz, Khurasan, Iraq, and Sham were the places he gathered most ahadith from
- Because he traveled so much, he got to meet teachers of his teachers
 - He gathered some hadith with just three narrators between him and the Prophet (SAW)

- Bukhari wouldn't write notes in classes
 - His classmates said that in one class, they asked why he was wasting his time not writing down ahadith
 - They would cover a thousand ahadith a day
 - They asked him this after sixteen days
 - Bukhari narrated all of the ahadith covered correctly without any notes
- One time in Baghdad, people tried to test his memory
 - They didn't think his memory was as good as they heard
 - They gathered ten muhadditheen
 - Each of them were given ten ahadith
 - The chains of narrations were scrambled up
 - They asked Bukhari to listen as they narrated the ahadith
 - After narrating each hadith, the muhaddith would ask Bukhari what he knew about it. Bukhari would reply to each one, "I don't know this hadith."
 - The crowd of people were shocked that he didn't know any of the one hundred hadith
 - After, Imam Bukhari turned to each muhaddith and said, "You narrated the hadith like this." Then he would say the hadith with the wrong sanad (chain). Then, he said, "here is the correct hadith." Then he narrated the correct one.
 - He did this for all one hundred ahadith to each of the ten muhadditheen
 - Afterwards, the people were amazed at his memory and didn't question it

Respect from Others

- Even his seniors respected him for his piety and knowledge
- Ishaq ibn Rahawayh (a great scholar and teacher of Imam Bukhari) said, "Oh seekers of hadith, learn from this man because Allah has given him something very special."

- Imam Muslim, a student of Imam Bukhari, testified to his high calibre
 - He would sit in front of Bukhari like a child despite being a great scholar himself
- One of his scribes stayed with him one night
 - He said, "I saw Imam Bukhari get up between fifteen to twenty times to write notes in his book"
 - The writer told him that he didn't have to do that every time, that the writer would do it for him
 - Imam Bukhari said, "you're a young man, I'd rather you get your sleep"
- One of his students was sitting in the masjid with him
 - A small speck of a straw flew onto his beard so the student removed it and was about to throw it
 - Imam Bukhari said to throw it outside, not in the masjid - despite it being a speck
- He was a gifted archer
 - He would hardly ever miss his target
 - He once accidentally hit a bridge and the wood cracked
 - He sought out the owner of the bridge, who forgave him immediately even upon Bukhari insisting he would compensate
- He was known for his asceticism

Sahih Bukhari

- He was very diligent when he wrote ahadith
 - He held himself to a very high standard
- He taught this book in his lifetime
- There were at least 90,000 people who heard Sahih Bukhari entirely from Bukhari himself
- He compiled this book to document his ijtihad

- To prove each point, many ahadith could be used, so ahadith are repeated in the book with different chains at times
- He was a mujtahid, he didn't use a madhab
- His conditions for documenting a hadith in this book were the strictest conditions
 - For example, he wouldn't document a chain of narrations until it was completely established that two narrators that interacted had actually met each other
 - Imam Muslim had very strict conditions but not as strict
- His chapter titles are very well thought-out
 - Each chapter proves a certain point
- Sahih Bukhari is the most complex of hadith books to understand
 - There are many subtleties for each placement of hadith
 - It is a book meant for experts to study - a lot of different sciences are needed to understand it

Trials

- He went to Nishapur and was welcomed by the people
- His teacher, Muhammad ibn Yahya Ad-Dhuhani
- People started flocking to his study circles
- People started asking him about the createdness of the Quran
 - Many people took his answer in the wrong way
 - Bukhari said, "my recitation is created, but the actual Quran is not created"
 - This statement was spread far and wide
 - Muhammad ibn Yahya heard about it and was upset. He said that no one should attend the gatherings of Imam Bukhari
- Another incident is that a governor asked to have an exclusive gathering of hadith for him. Imam Bukhari refused and said that everyone would sit in the same gathering of hadith
 - This also became widespread as gossip

- Imam Bukhari was compelled to leave to another city
 - Similar things happened in that city
 - Governors between cities communicated
- People left him thinking his aqeedah was incorrect
 - Only a handful of people stayed with him
 - Imam Muslim stayed with him
 - Imam Muslim was so upset that he refused to narrate any ahadith from Muhammad ibn Yahya
- There was a great cancel culture at the time
- There was entire movement against Imam Bukhari
 - He was humiliated publicly
- Imam Bukhari turned to Allah saying, “the world has become constrained, if my time is up, please call me back to You”
 - Shortly after, he became ill and died
- Through such trials, he reached a high status with Allah SWT
- Controversies that are created around a good person eventually fade away and people see them for who they were
- The hadith masters of that time attested to Imam Bukhari’s knowledge of hadith
 - He is the imam of muhadditheen
 - Ahadith do not have to meet Imam Bukhari’s conditions to be used, there are different levels of ahadith that can be used for different purposes
 - He has other books where he used weaker narrations for motivation, warnings, heart softening, etc.
- The muhadditheen weren’t just people who knew hadith, there was a lot that went into the study of hadith