

Imam Bukhari His Life and Works

His Early Years

Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim al-Bukhari al-Jufi was born in 194 A.H. in the city of Bukhara.¹ His father Ismail was a well-respected scholar and was one of the students of Hammad ibn Zaid, and Imam Malik. Unfortunately, he died when his son Muhammad was quite young. He did, though, leave his son a good fortune such that he was able to spend most of his time in learning and did not have to worry about financial matters.

He began his studies at a very young age, studying the Qur'an and other essential topics, as was the practice of his day. But from his youth, he was especially attracted to the study of hadith. By the age of ten, he was reading the available works; by the age of sixteen, he had memorized the works of Waki and Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak and he was familiar with the opinions of the Iraqi jurists. According to Ibn Katheer, he could look at a book just once and memorize its contents.² In order to help him memorize the chains of the hadith; he used to research the narrators, discovering when exactly they lived, where they lived, who they studied from and so on. In this way, the names in the chains were no longer simply names of strangers, but became the names of people whom al-Bukhari was intimately familiar with. Abu Bakr al-Madini said, "I was in Naisaboor with Ishaq ibn Rahawaih and Muhammad ibn Ismail [al-Bukhari] was in the gathering. Ishaq passed by a hadith that mentioned Ata al-Kaikharani instead of a Companion. Ishaq said, 'O Abu Abdullah [al-Bukhari], what was Kaikharan?' He said, 'A city in Yemen. Muawiya sent a Companion to Yemen and Ata heard two hadith from him.' Ishaq said to him, 'It is as if you actually witnessed these people.'"

According to his own narrative, he began to attend the lectures of the local scholars around the age of ten. He attended al-Daakhili's lectures in Bukhara. One time he heard al-Daakhili read a hadith with the chain, "Sufyan from Abu al-Zubair from Ibrahim." He told the lecturer that that was a mistake. Obviously, al-Daakhili was taken by surprise by being refuted by such a youngster. Al-Bukhari stated that the correct chain was al-Zubair ibn Adi from Ibrahim because al-Zubair had never recorded hadith from Ibrahim. He told al-Daakhili to check his original if it was available to him. Al-Daakhili admitted his mistake. Al-Bukhari was eleven years of age when that incident took place.

¹ Most of this biographical information comes from Ahmad ibn Hajr's introduction to *Fath al-Bari*, Hady al-Sari (Riyadh: Dar al-Ifta), vol. 1, pp. 477-493. The interested reader may also consult Taqi al-Din al-Mudhari, *Al-Imam al-Bukhari: Imam al-Huffadh wa al-Muhadditheen* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1988); Abdul Ghani Abdul Khaliq, *Al-Imam al-Bukhari wa Sahihuhu* (Jedda: Dar al-Manara, 1985).

² Imad al-Din ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1985), vol. 11, p.25

At the age of sixteen he left Bukhara with his mother and brother to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah. After the pilgrimage, he stayed in Makkah and this became his first real journey in search of knowledge. This occurred after he had gained whatever knowledge he could in his homeland.

He stayed for some time in either Makkah or Madina. It was at this time that he began his writing career. In Makkah, he wrote his *Tarikh al-Kabeer* which is a biographical work concerning the narrators of hadith.

Concerning his travels, al-Bukhari himself once said, "I visited al-Sham [Syrian-Palestine region], Egypt and al-Jazira [between Syria, Iraq and Turkey] twice. Four times I went to Basra. I stayed in the Hijaz for six years. And I do not know how many times I visited Kufa and Baghdad along with the scholars of hadith."

It was in Baghdad that al-Bukhari met Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Ahmad ibn Hanbal was always very pleased with al-Bukhari and he was disappointed whenever he left Baghdad to return to Bukhara. Ahmad had great praise for the scholarship and exactitude of the somewhat younger al-Bukhari.¹

Al-Bukhari's Teachers

Al-Bukhari recorded hadith from 1,080 scholars. Ibn Hajar wrote that al-Bukhari's teachers are divided into five categories²:

The first category is those scholars who narrated hadith from the *Tabieen* (Followers, one generation removed from the Companions), these included Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Ansar who recorded hadith from Humaid al-Taweel, Makki ibn Ibrahim and Abu Asim al-Nabil both who heard from Yazid ibn Abu Ubaid, and Nuaim who heard hadith from al-Amash.

The second category of scholars is those people of the same generation as the first category but who did not have the fortune of receiving hadith from trustworthy Followers. This category includes the following of al-Bukhari's teachers: Adam ibn Abu Iyas, Saeed ibn Abu Maryam and Ayyub ibn Sulaiman ibn Bilal.

¹ At the same time, Ahmad's name may only be found twice in Sahih al-Bukhari. The reason for that, as Ibn Hajar explains, is that in al-Bukhari's early trips to Baghdad he was able to meet many of Ahmad's own teachers and get their hadith directly from them. In al-Bukhari's later trips to Baghdad, after Ahmad faced his inquisition, Ahmad was no longer occupied with narrating hadith and therefore al-Bukhari did not have the opportunity to receive many different hadith from him. That is why, in Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Bukhari often recorded hadith from Ali ibn al-Madini but not Ali's colleague Ahmad ibn Hanbal. See Ahmad ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari* (Riyadh: Dar al-Ifta), vol. 9, p. 132.

² Ibn Hajar, *Hady al-Sari*, p. 479.

The third category is the “intermediate” category. These scholars did not meet any of the Followers but they received hadith from the leading scholars of the generation immediately following that of the Followers. These teachers include Sulaiman ibn Harb, Qutaiba ibn Saeed, Ali ibn al-Madini, Yahya ibn Maeen, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ishaq ibn Rahawaih, Abu Bakr, and Uthman ibn Abu Shaiba and so on. Imam Muslim also met many of these scholars and recorded hadith from them.

The fourth category is really al-Bukhari’s colleagues in learning hadith although they started studying just prior to al-Bukhari. Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli, Abu Hatim al-Razi, Abd ibn Humaid and Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahim Saaqa would fall into this category. From these people, he used to record hadith that he did not hear directly from their teachers (who were also al-Bukhari’s teachers) or the hadith that he did not find with anybody else.

The fifth category is those people who were younger in stature or age than al-Bukhari whom he recorded from due to some benefit in their narrations. This category includes Abdullah ibn Hammad al-Amali and Abdullah ibn Abu al-Aas al-Khawarizmi. By narrating from those scholars, al-Bukhari was applying the statement of Waki; “A person does not become a real scholar until he records from those older than him, those of the same age and those younger than him.” In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, there is one hadith from al-Bukhari’s student al-Tirmidhi (who is famous for his own collection of *Sunan*). Al-Tirmidhi was very proud of this fact and he boasted about it.

Those who learned from al-Bukhari include al-Tirmidhi (of *Sunan* fame), al-Nisai (of *Sunan* fame), Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (of *Sahih* fame), ibn Khuzaima (of *Sahih* fame), Abu Zara al-Razi (an expert in *illah*) and Abu Hatim al-Razi (the author of *al-Jarh wa al-Tadeel*).

Al Bukhari’s Scholarship

From the time of his youth, al-Bukhari demonstrated an amazing memory and encyclopedic mastery of hadith.

Hashid ibn Ismail and others narrated that al-Bukhari used to attend hadith lectures with them but he never recorded anything. The others chided him for wasting his time. After fifteen days, al-Bukhari proceeded to read all of those hadith from memory. At that time, they knew that he had not wasted his time and they also realized al-Bukhari’s scholastic ability. It was his habit to memorize the hadith and then to record it later. He said, “Perhaps I hear a hadith in Basra and record it in al-Sham. Or I hear it in al-Sham and record it in Egypt.”

One time a scholar by the name of al-Faryabi (d.212 A.H.) narrated a hadith with the following chain to his students: Sufyan from Abu Urwa from Abu al-Khitab from Abu Hamza. Al-Faryabi was testing his students by committing *tadlis al-shuyukh*.¹ The students had no clue as to who these narrators were until al-Bukhari correctly identified them for the students.

On a number of occasions his colleagues tested al-Bukhari. In Samarqand, four hundred students of hadith gathered for seven days trying to stump al-Bukhari. They would mix the chains of the hadith with different hadith in an attempt to confuse al-Bukhari but he was never daunted. One of al-Bukhari's most famous examinations came in Baghdad. Al-Bukhari was still young at that time but his reputation had preceded him. The people of Baghdad were very anxious to meet this young and gifted scholar of hadith. The scholars of Baghdad, though, had prepared to test al-Bukhari as soon as he arrived. They met with al-Bukhari and began to read hadith to him. Each scholar, they were ten in number, read ten hadith to al-Bukhari and yet after every hadith the scholar read, al-Bukhari was forced to reply, "I do not know [that hadith]." Those in the audience who were unaware of what was going on began to look at each other and doubt this young scholar's ability. After the ten scholars were finished, al-Bukhari reread all one hundred hadith but he read them correctly. The scholars had mixed the hadith with the wrong chains. Al-Bukhari stated all of the hadith with the correct chains. Commenting on this incident Ibn Hajar stated, "It is not surprising that al-Bukhari corrected their [intentional] mistakes since he was a scholar of hadith. What is more amazing than his knowing the mistakes is that he was able to recant the hadith back to them in order after hearing them just once."

By the time al-Bukhari reached Basra, the scholars of the town were looking forward to his arrival. They asked him to narrate hadith to them. Thousands of scholars gathered to hear al-Bukhari lecture. He began by saying, "O people of Basra, I am a young man and you have asked me to narrate to you. I will narrate to you hadith that you will benefit from [although they are hadith] from the people of your town." His statement surprised the people. He began to lecture, "Haddathana Abdullah ibn Uthman al-Utqi who said: Akhbarana my father from Shuba from Mansur and others from Slim ibn Abu al-Jad from Anas who narrated that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, a person loves his people...' You do not have that hadith from Mansur [who was from Basra]. You have it from people from other than Mansur." And the whole lecture was of that nature.

¹ This is where he hides the identities of the narrators by giving them names that most people do not know them by.

Scholars' Statements Concerning Al-Bukhari

Al-Bukhari received the praise and admiration of almost all of the scholars of his time and afterwards. Ibn Hajr once wrote, "If we were to open the door [to recording] the words of praise for him from those who came after his time, the pages would be exhausted... It is an ocean that no seashore can contain."

From his contemporaries, the following statements are noteworthy: His colleague and scholar of hadith, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, "Khurasan has never produced anyone like Muhammad ibn Ismail [al-Bukhari]." Al-Bukhari once said about himself that he never discounted himself in front of anyone save his teacher Ali ibn al-Madini. When this was told to Ali ibn al-Madini, he stated, "Disregard his statement. Al-Bukhari never saw anyone who was similar to himself." And his student Imam Muslim, famous for his own collection of Sahih, stated, "No one could be mad with you except an envious person. I bear witness that there is no one in the world similar to you." Imam Muslim once came to al-Bukhari and kissed him between his eyes and said, "Allow me to kiss your feet, o teacher of teachers, master of the scholars of hadith, and doctor of defects in hadith." Ibn Khuzaima said, "There is no one under the skies more knowledgeable in hadith than Muhammad ibn Ismail." Abu Amr al-Khifaf al-Naisaboori stated, "I have never seen anyone like him. He is more knowledgeable in hadith than Ahmad and Ishaq (ibn Rahawaih) and others by twenty degrees. Upon anyone who says anything about him one thousand curses." He also said, "If he enters the door and I am narrating hadith, I am filled with fear of him."

Fadlak al-Razi was asked which scholar was greater, al-Bukhari or Abu Zara. He replied that he had traveled with al-Bukhari and changed his travel plans in order to stay with him. He said, "All the time I was trying to narrate some hadith that he did not know, but I was not able to do so. As for Abu Zarah, I can recite several hadith that he does not know, although no one can deny his excellence as a scholar of hadith, especially since he was the teacher of al-Tirmidhi, ibn Majah, and al-Nisai."

The science of illah (spotting hidden defects) in hadith is considered one of the most difficult sciences to master. It is stated that very few of the scholars of hadith ever really mastered it. It is agreed upon that al-Bukhari, though, is one of those who did master this science. Al-Tirmidhi said, "I have never seen anyone more knowledgeable concerning illah and narrators than al-Bukhari." He even admitted that much of the information that he included in his work on illal came from al-Bukhari.

Al-Bukhari's Character

Al-Bukhari was known to be a very pious person. He did not care for the pleasures of this world. He would give a lot in charity and would eat very little. He was also willing to sacrifice for the sake of hadith. He once stated that he went to visit Adam ibn Abu Iyas and his money was late in arriving. He was forced to eat grass until someone whom he did not know gave him a pouch full of money.

With respect to speaking about others, al-Bukhari was very careful. He once stated, "I have not backbitten anyone since I learned that backbiting is forbidden." He was soft when it came to the terms he used in jarh or the "discrediting of narrators". He would not call others liars or words similar to that. The most he would say about somebody is that the person's narration is to be avoided. He stated that if he says that about somebody, it means that it is not allowed to narrate that person's hadith.

He demonstrated his honesty and dedication to hadith on many occasions. Uthmani mentions the following incident, "Bukhari was very careful in respect of his works and loaned them only to the people he could trust. Once a person happened to mention a hadith that gave rise to the suspicion of tadlis upon al-Bukhari, which is he had concealed one weak link in the transmitted chain. Bukhari replied that, in order to obviate such suspicion, he had relinquished more than ten thousand hadith reported by a particular [scholar of hadith]."¹ He also recorded the following incident;

During his studentship al-Bukhari had to sail in a boat on a river. He had a thousand ashrafis (golden coins) in his possession. He was joined by someone who also boarded the boat and met him reverentially, and gradually developed cordial relations so that al-Bukhari happened to mention to him about the money he had with him. One morning the man began to raise hue and cry, saying that his bag containing one thousand ashrafis was missing. The passengers began to be searched and al-Bukhari, appraising the situation, threw the bag into the river. The Imam's belongings were also searched but the money could not be found... When the journey was over the man asked al-Bukhari about the bag of money. Al-Bukhari replied that he had thrown it away into the river. When the man asked him why he thought it necessary to jettison it into the river and sustain such a big loss, al-Bukhari said, "All my life I have spent in collecting and compiling the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and my integrity has assumed proverbial proportions. How could I afford to lose the far greater wealth that I have acquired against my life's blood by acquiring the taint of a theft?"²

¹ Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani, *Fadl al-Bari: Commentary on the Sahih al-Bukhari* (Karachi: Idarah Ulum-I-Shariyyah), p. 79.

² Ibid, p. 79.

One time he was cheated out of 25,000 dirhams. He was told that he should go to the governor of the area to have the dispute settled. He replied, "If I do that for a worldly purpose, the governor might request a legal ruling from me on a religious matter, and I am not going to barter away my faith for money and the Hereafter for this world." The person finally agreed to pay al-Bukhari ten dirhams a month as payment for the 25,000 dirhams that he took.

On another occasion al-Bukhari had received some gifts. A trader came to him and offered him 5,000 dirhams for them. He said that he would think about it and give him the answer on the following day. He made up his mind to sell the goods to that trader. Before telling that trader his decision, another trader came and offered him 10,000 dirhams for the same goods. Al-Bukhari declined the offer stating that he had already made the intention to sell it to the first trader and he did not wish to go against what he had intended in his heart.

The Fiqh of Al-Bukhari

Some narrators of hadith were known for simply passing on hadith without having any idea as to the meaning of the hadith they disseminate. Such was not the case with al-Bukhari (and most, if not all, of the early scholars of hadith). Besides being a premier scholar of hadith, he was also known as a great jurist. His contemporaries praised his knowledge of fiqh. Naeem ibn Hammad al-Khuzai called him the faqih (jurist) of this nation. And Bandar (Muhammad ibn Bishr) said that he was the most knowledgeable in fiqh of his time.¹ In Fadl al-Bari, it states, "Abu Musab has claimed that Bukhari enjoys a rank higher than Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in jurisprudence. One of his pupils, when he heard this statement, could not but express his amazement. Abu Musab's rejoinder to this was: 'Why do you express your surprise over this? I should go rather further and say that, if you compare al-Bukhari and Malik, you would find theme bearing considerable resemblance.'"² Al-Bukhari himself stated that he did not begin to narrate hadith until he had studied the books of the ahl al-ra'i (or the jurists of, in particular, Iraq).

In fact, his al-Jami al-Sahih is not simply a collection of authentic hadith but is also a classic work of fiqh. It is for this reason that al-Bukhari did not record the entire hadith each time he mentions a particular hadith. It was his practice (though not always) to record only that portion of the hadith that was relevant to the chapter. This is why he repeats many hadith throughout his work (many times without mentioning their chains)

Al-Bukhari's fiqh is clearly seen in his Chapter Titles (tarajim) of Sahih. In those chapter titles, he states fiqh conclusions that he derived from the hadith and verses of the Qur'an of the chapter. This is what led Abdul Rauf to write:

¹ Abdul Khaliq, p. 137

² Uthmani, vol. 1, p. 92. It is not stated who wrote the introductory portion on the life of Imam al-Bukhari.

Readers of Sahih with a deep insight will realize that the author had two objectives of writing his book – not one. On the one hand, being himself a great scholar and a leading jurist in his own right, al-Bukhari sought to make his work a rich fountain of knowledge in all areas of the Islamic religion. Apparently he used the tarajim [chapter headings] as a convenient and relevant place for expounding his own views or the opinions of others that he supported and wanted to advocate.³

In many cases, his chapter titles or fiqh conclusions can be easily derived from the hadith but in other cases his chapter titles demonstrate a keen perception and true scholarship of fiqh. These chapter titles have been the topic of study for a number of scholars, since they show both the fiqh and fiqh methodology of Imam al-Bukhari. There have been at least nine books written solely on the chapter titles,⁴ not to mention the discussion of these chapter titles in the different commentaries on Sahih al-Bukhari.

Unfortunately, in the later years, there was a great deal of envy and competition between some jurists and some scholars of hadith. Some of these jurists began to attack al-Bukhari and belittle his knowledge of fiqh. Indeed the following story was fabricated concerning a supposed ruling from al-Bukhari. They claim that he gave a ruling that the infant who drinks milk from a sheep will be forever “forbidden” with respect to that sheep, that is, he can never marry that sheep and all of the bonds of kinship will apply to them. There is no truth to that story and it is obvious that it was fabricated simply to show that al-Bukhari, the scholar of hadith, was completely ignorant when it came to matters of fiqh. It seems that the people who made such attacks on al-Bukhari had neither seen nor read Sahih al-Bukhari or at least, they did not understand it.

Some of the attacks on al-Bukhari, such as the one quoted above, came from the Hanafis because they felt that al-Bukhari showed some disrespect to Abu Hanifa. Al-Bukhari did refute Abu Hanifa on a number of occasions in his Sahih. But he would never mention Abu Hanifa by name. Whenever he refuted one of Abu Hanifa’s opinions, he would always preface the discussion by saying, “Some people say...” instead of saying, “Abu Hanifa says...” He did this either out of respect to Abu Hanifa, thereby not refuting him directly, or to show that Abu Hanifa was not isolated in the opinions that he held and that al-Bukhari refuted. The following passage from Fadl al-Bari, written by a Hanafi, is quite perceptive:

In the Jami al-Sahih, al-Bukhari has criticized Imam Abu Hanifah at different places, particularly in the Kitab al-Hiyal (The Book of Stratagems)¹ and the Kitab al-Ikrah (The Book of Indictment)². It is likewise true that there was some intellectual disputation between the famous Hanafite of his time, Abu Hafs Kabir and al-Bukhari, but it would be questioning al-Bukhari’s intellectual integrity to hold it to be at the heart of these criticisms. What probably is nearer the truth is that al-Bukhari has criticized the Hanafite approach as it reached him on the basis of nothing but what he thought was the best. For us, both the Imams are worthy of respect.³

³ Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, Imam al-Bukhari and Al-Sahih (Washington, D.C.: The Islamic Center, n.d.), p. 16.

⁴ Al-Mudhahiri, pp. 131-134 lists them.

Some of Al-Bukhari's Fiqh Opinions

Abdul Khaliq is of the opinion that the chapter titles in the Sahih are not all indicative of al-Bukhari's first priority to collect together the most authentic hadith even if he felt that those hadith have been made conditional, particularized, or abrogated by other hadith or rulings.⁴ Abdul Khaliq's thesis is questionable though as al-Bukhari was free to write any chapter heading he wished. If he recorded a chapter title or hadith that he only partially agreed with, he could have easily noted that point in the chapter title by writing, "The proof that such and such was valid but was later abrogated [or particularized]," or something of that nature. For example, in one chapter heading he wrote, "While urinating or defecating, never face the Qibla except when you are screened by a building or a wall or something like that." It is clear from this chapter heading that al-Bukhari felt free to state particularizations or state certain conditions for specific hadith. This goes against Abdul Khaliq's thesis. Hence, one has to conclude that al-Bukhari's chapter headings do convey his fiqh opinions unless there is some strong proof to believe otherwise. (Allah knows best.)

Abdul Khaliq lists some of al-Bukhari's fiqh opinions that may be derived from his chapter headings. Here are some examples: (1) It is not obligatory for a couple to make ghusl (the complete washing after sexual intercourse) simply due to contact of the genitals, although it is better to do so. (2) It is permissible to recite the Qur'an in the bathroom. (3) Water does not become impure if something falls into it unless the impurity changes its color or taste, regardless of the amount of the water. (4) It is permissible for men to sleep in the mosques and for women to do so also if they have a tent set up for them. (5) It is permissible to delay the prayer for specific necessities, such as fighting or protecting one's self from the enemy. (6) It is acceptable to perform the qunut (the saying of supplications) before or after the ruku (bowing) in prayer.⁶

As-Subki gave an example of al-Bukhari's clever reasoning in fiqh. According to al-Bukhari, it is permissible for a man to see a woman that he might marry; his evidence is the hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was presented his wife in a dream and he uncovered her face and saw that it was Aisha. Al-Bukhari did not mention exactly how that could be a proof for his position but Taqi al-Din al-Subki understood him and stated that the proof was that what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did either while awake or asleep (such as his dreams which were also inspirations) are both hujja or proofs from a legal theory point of view.¹

¹ Translated by Khan as the "Book of Tricks"

² Translated by Khan as the "Book of Coercion"

³ Uthmani, vol. 1, p. 90.

⁴ Abdul Khaliq, p. 145.

⁵ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, trans. Sahih al-Bukhari (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1976), vol. 1, p. 106

⁶ Abdul Khaliq, pp. 146-7.

Was al-Bukhari a Mujtahid?

There is no question that al-Bukhari was a Mujtahid in the field of hadith but there is some question whether al-Bukhari was a Mujtahid in the field of fiqh. According to Abdul Khaliq, the early scholars did not discuss this question with respect to al-Bukhari. Some of the later scholars, such as al-Qasimi and Tahir al-Jazairi, call him an “absolute Mujtahid” (Mujtahid mutlaq). Abdul Khaliq hesitates in calling him such although he also states that al-Bukhari may have more than a mujtahid of a specific school of fiqh.²

Al-Bukhari did not write a work of *usul al-fiqh* or legal theory (although he did touch on a few points related to *usul al-fiqh* in his *Sahih*) nor does it seem that people took him as the leader of a new school of fiqh. For example, it was al-Tirmidhi’s custom to record the opinions of the different jurists yet he only quoted al-Bukhari’s fiqh opinion once. Furthermore, many of the early scholars of hadith were so engrossed in the narration and compilation of hadith that they did not have the time to also try to disseminate principles of legal theory or jurisprudence and, therefore, some of them followed the leading Imams of fiqh of their time.

For these reasons, scholars have tried to determine what school of fiqh Imam al-Bukhari belonged to. Due to al-Bukhari’s fame and reputation, different scholars have claimed him for their own school of fiqh. For example, ibn al-Qayyim and Abu Yala include him as one of the followers of Ahmad; some even said that he was a Hanafi since he was a student of ibn Rahawaih.³ The most popular opinion of the later scholars, who were the ones who discussed this question, is that he was a Shafi. Al-Subki and Sadiq Hassan Khan both consider him a Shafi.⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 147.

² Abdul Khaliq, p. 142. For a discussion of the different types of mujtahid, see Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo, “Ibn Taymiyya: Mujahid, Mujtahid and Mujaddid II,” *Al-Basheer* (Vol. 3, No. 4, Nov.-Dec 1989), pp. 20-21.

³ Uthmani, p. 90.

⁴ Al-Mudhahiri, p. 55.

And in Fath al-Bari, ibn Hajr, who was also a Shafi, wrote that in matters of language, al-Bukhari followed the scholars in that field (Abu Ubaid, al-Nadhir ibn Shameel and al-Farra) while in matters of fiqh he mostly followed al-Shafi and Abu Ubaid. Of course, this might have been because he studied under many of the companions of al-Shafi, including al-Zafrani, Abu Thaur, al-Karabisi and al-Humaidi. In Fadl al-Bari, it states, "Then on many a problem, he has supported Imam Abu Hanifah against Imam Shafi. He has, thus, recorded differences with both the Hanafite and Shafiite schools, and, like an independent-minded person who does not leave premises unquestioned, he was not bound by a single madhhab [school of fiqh] but had his own interpretive approach."

The Madhhab of the Ahl al-Hadith

Perhaps the strongest argument can be made for al-Bukhari being a member and one of the leading scholars of the ahl al-hadith ("People of Hadith") school of fiqh but since this madhhab, like many of the other early schools of fiqh, was lost to obscurity and never received the attention it deserved from the scholars, it is neglected by most later scholars when they discuss the madhhab of early scholars like al-Bukhari. Recently, Dr. Abdul Majeed Abdul Majeed has written a work showing that the madhhab and most of the major scholars of hadith of the time of al-Bukhari can be considered members of that madhhab. Unfortunately, the later scholars of hadith did not possess the same insight into fiqh as the earlier scholars of hadith so this independent madhhab and way of approaching fiqh problems began to die. All that is left of it is the conclusions of its early leaders who, according to Abdul Majeed, were Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241), Ishaq ibn Rahawaih (d. 238), al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, al-Nasai, ibn Majah, al-Darimi and ibn Abu Shaiba.¹

Abdul Majeed shows that al-Bukhari, in particular, was following this particular madhhab and it was based on the principles of this school of fiqh that he refuted the ahl al-ra'i ("people of opinion") like Abu Hanifa and others. Here are two examples of the opinions of ahl al-ra'i that al-Bukhari attempted to refute in his Sahih.²

According to Abu Hanifa, khamr ("wine" or "alcohol") is only what has been derived from grapes and concerning which both a small or large amount is forbidden. If intoxicating beverages come from sources other than grapes, the small amount that is not intoxicating is not forbidden while the large amount that is intoxicating is forbidden. Al-Bukhari included a number of chapters intended to refute this opinion, showing that the word khamr applies to all intoxicating beverages and, hence, a small or large amount of all those beverages are forbidden. The following are his chapter titles concerning this matter: "Alcoholic drinks may be prepared from grapes and other things," "Liquor prepared from honey," "Alcoholic drink is that drink which disturbs the mind," "To drink date syrup as long as it does not intoxicate."³

¹ Abdul Majeed Abdul Majeed, *Al-Ijtihad al-Fiqhiya Ind Ashab al-Hadith* (1979), p. 641.

² Abdul Majeed, pp. 577-580; also see pp. 598-640.

³ See Khan, trans., vol. 7, pp. 340, 342, 344 and 349.

According to Abu Hanifa, the Friday prayer is only to be held in cities and not in small villages. To refute this view, al-Bukhari included a chapter entitled, "Offering Friday prayer in villages and towns."¹

In fact, it seems that al-Bukhari included an entire "Book" in the Sahih, the Book of Tricks, just to refute the errant views of ahl al-ra'i on that topic. In that book he uses the expression, "Some people say" fourteen times. Furthermore, all of the hadith he presented in that "Book" can be found elsewhere in the Sahih; that is, the Book was not added because of a relevant hadith, since there were no new hadith, but only to refute some fiqh opinions that al-Bukhari objected to.²

The Major Characteristics of Al-Bukhari's Madhhab

Since al-Bukhari's school of fiqh, madhhab ahl al-hadith, is only scantily discussed in the literature it will be discussed in some detail here.³ Abdul Majeed describes three major characteristics of al-Bukhari's madhhab.

Their Position Toward Transmitted Reports⁴

This school of fiqh was somewhat unique with respect to its stance vis-à-vis the reports coming from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him) as well as the Companions and Followers. Under this minor heading there are three characteristics:

(a) The scholars of this school would prefer not to give an opinion on matters in which there were no texts or reports. That is, this group strongly stressed reliance on texts (meaning revelation in the Qur'an and Sunnah and the opinions of the earliest scholars

¹ Khan, trans. Vol. 2, p. 7. Note that al-Bukhari has less criticism of ahl al-ra'i than his teacher ibn Abu Shaiba. This is because some of ibn Abu Shaiba's criticisms are unfounded and al-Bukhari supported the opinions of Abu Hanifa in those cases. Abdul Majeed concludes that al-Bukhari was more influenced by his teacher ibn Rahawaih than his teacher ibn Abu Shaiba. Abdul Majeed, p. 580.

² Abdul Majeed, p. 598 and p. 614.

³ In fact, the only work that discusses the madhhab in detail is Abdul Majeed's obscure work; it is obscure in the sense that it mentions no publishing company or city. It seems to be a Ph.D. dissertation. The author would like to express his thanks to Br. Abdul Aziz al-Zaum for lending him his copy of this book.

⁴ Abdul Majeed, pp. 284-331.

of the Companions and Followers) to such an extent that they would prefer not to give an opinion if they could not find a clear answer in a related text. This is why they would often answer the question "I don't know". They inherited this behavior from the early scholars who used not to speak on any issue without knowledge. In their opinion, knowledge is equivalent to transmitted reports and if someone holds an opinion that is not based on transmitted reports then his opinion is not based on knowledge. This approach points to the person's great fear of Allah as well as lack of fear of the people who might consider him stupid for responding, "I don't know." But, as the Companion Abu al-Darda said, "To say 'I don't know' is one half of the knowledge." Abdul Majeed, though, points out an extremely negative effect that this approach has: when the ahl al-hadith continually answered "I don't know" o a number of questions, it drove the people to ask others who would give answers on the basis of their opinions. Hence, the ahl al-hadith drove the people to the ahl al-ra'i due to their fear of answering any question without certain knowledge or texts to back them up.

(b) The scholars of this school also showed a great dislike for hypothetical discussions. Al-Bukhari has a chapter entitled, "What is disliked concerning asking too many questions and discussing things that do not concern a person. And Allah says, 'Do not ask about something that if it were to be made known to you, it would harm you.'"

(c) And these scholars also showed a dislike for recording the opinions of the jurists without the accompanying texts that are the proofs for those positions. The foundation of fiqh is the Qur'an and the Sunnah and not people's opinions. Therefore, to record the opinions without the foundations for the opinions is an approach that is lacking. Furthermore, the reader of the opinion must be able to verify for himself that the conclusion a scholar derived from a text is actually warranted in the text itself. Ibn Hanbal considered it an innovation to record the opinions of scholars only without the accompanying proofs. This idea they also took from the Companions, like Zaid ibn Thabit who disliked having his personal opinions recorded.

Somewhat of a Literal Approach to Fiqh.¹

What is meant by the literal or dhahiri approach to fiqh is “not going beyond the literal meanings of the words stated by the Lawgiver, [that is,] without studying its cause and purpose and without making a consideration of the circumstances and environment surrounding the wording at the time of its revelation.”²

But this does not mean that the ahl al-hadith were like the later Dhahiri school of fiqh. What is implied here is that the ahl al-hadith would usually take a dhahiri (literal) approach to texts but this was not always the case. That is, in cases in which it is obvious that something beyond the wording is meant, they would apply the non-literal meaning of the revelation also. This is similar to the case of the Companion ibn Umar who definitely had a literal leaning but who at times would go beyond the literal meanings of the words to the intent of the law. This is in opposition to the famous Dhahiri madhhab of ibn Hazm who went strictly by the literal meaning of the text and would never go beyond it.³ But according to Abdul Majeed, every Dhahiri is from ahl al-hadith but not vice-versa.⁴

An example of the ahl al-hadith sticking to the literal wording of a text may be found in their handling of the expiation for the breaking of the fast of Ramadhan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to make the expiation by freeing a slave, and if not possible by fasting two consecutive months and if not possible by feeding sixty poor people. According to al-Shafi, Ahmad and the other scholars of ahl al-hadith the expiation mentioned in this hadith is only to be made by the person who breaks his fast by sexual intercourse and does not concern the one who breaks his fast by either eating or drinking. When Ahmad was asked about someone who broke his fast by eating, he said that such an expiation for them is not mentioned in the hadith so how can one say that it is obligatory upon them.⁵

¹ Ibid, pp. 332-409.

² Ibid, p 335.

³ An example of Ibn Hazm's extremism is the case of urinating in stagnant water. According to ibn Hazm, it is forbidden to urinate in a pool of stagnant water as that is clearly stated in the hadith but it is permitted, according to his literal reasoning, to urinate in a bowl and to then throw that urine from the bowl into stagnant water as, in that case, the person did not literally urinate in a pool of stagnant water. Many other examples of this type of reasoning could be given. Strangely enough, when it comes to matters of aqida, he takes a completely different approach. This is what led Shaikh Abdul Aziz ibn Baz to say about him, “He was very strict in matters that requires one to be loose, and he was very loose in matters that require one to be strict.”

⁴ Ibid., p. 245. Ishaq ibn Rahawaih differed with the other ahl al-hadith on this question.

⁵ See Abdul Majeed, pp. 410-452.

A More Ethical Approach to Fiqh.¹

Their approach to fiqh is not just based on words and forms but they were very concerned with individuals' intentions and they also related the action to its results and the purposes of the religion itself. On this point, they clearly stand distinct from the Shafis and Hanafis.

They are perhaps the only school of fiqh that kept in mind that the religion is not a set of laws but religion is something to reform humans and take them closer, by both their actions and intentions, to their Lord. They kept in mind that this world is not the end of one's life; the life to come is the real life. In this matter they truly reflected the approach of the early scholars of Islam who did not distinguish or compartmentalize life into fiqh, aqida, iman and so on. To them, all of these were one of the same and the goal of each of them, to please Allah, was one. It was the fiqh of the ahl al-hadith that most stressed this ethical aspect of the law. This tenor can be noted to their methodology of deriving rules, their manner of discussion of specific fiqh topics and their way of viewing deeds (by considering both the internal and external aspects of the deed).²

With respect to deriving rules, they were very careful not to say anything unless they were certain about it. In general, they would not explicitly state that something was permissible (halal) or forbidden (haram) but would prefer to use some terms that simply show approval or disapproval of specific acts. This approach clearly distinguishes them from both the Dhahiri school of ibn Hazm and the ahl-ra'i ("People of Opinion") approach. This approach is very clear in the rulings of al-Darimi and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Many times Ahmad would not give a clear answer to a question out of fear that he might say something is permissible in Allah's sight while it is actually not so. In fact, according to ibn al-Qayyim, sometimes Ahmad would say something like, "I dislike it but do not say that it is haram (forbidden)," even though the action was indeed forbidden in his opinion. Ibn al-Qayyim says that examples of this nature from Imam Ahmad are too many to count.³ They took this approach out of fear of Allah and God-consciousness realizing that there is a direct relationship between fiqh or deeds and one's relationship to Allah.⁴

¹ See Abdul Majeed, pp. 410-452.

² Note that this goes against the reputation that the people of hadith usually possess – sticklers to the external aspects of the law only; the real situation of the early scholars of hadith was very much different from their reputation.

³ See Shams al-Din ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilam al-Muwaqieen* (Beirut: Dar al-Jeel, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 44-46. This shows the importance of knowing a scholar's terminology before can make any conclusion from his statements.

⁴ Abdul Majeed, p. 421.

Their unique approach can also be seen in how they discuss the different fiqh topics. For example, with respect to zakat, they go well beyond what is usually mentioned in the books of fiqh. Both the other jurists and the ahl al-hadith mention the following points concerning zakat: proofs that it is obligatory, obligation to fight those who refuse to pay it, the amount and types of wealth upon which it is to be paid and the amount of the *nisabs*.¹

But the scholars of ahl al-hadith also mention the reports that make the payment of zakat beloved to the person and that give him the incentive to pay the zakat properly and timely with the proper intention. They also record the reports that intimidate the person from being stingy in giving for the sake of Allah. In fact, their writings go beyond that to encouraging the person to give voluntarily to the point that it becomes part of his nature to give freely for the sake of Allah and to benefit others. And the ahl al-hadith stress that whatever is given must be given for the sake of Allah and not for the sake of reputation or show.²

Concerning the importance of intention in deeds, Abdul Rahman ibn Mahdi, al-Bukhari's teacher, once said, "If I were to write a book on different fiqh topics, I would place the hadith of Umar ibn al-Khattab, that actions are based on intentions, in every chapter."³ Without proper intention, the deed is worth nothing even if it is performed exactly as described in the books of fiqh.

The overriding importance of intention is why al-Bukhari began his Sahih with the hadith of Umar ibn al-Khattab. Furthermore, on this point, they make no distinction between the ritual acts of worship and other deeds, such as business transactions. All of them revolve around intention and it is intention that will make them effective and legal or not so. For any act to be proper and rewarding for the individual it must be correct according to the shariah and it must be done with the proper intention.

His Trials

Near the end of his life, al-Bukhari had decided to move to Naisaboor. By this time, obviously, he was a well-known scholar. All the people of Naisaboor came to greet him; some even setting up tents outside of Naisaboor was Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli. Al-Dhuhli was also anxious to meet al-Bukhari and encouraged the people to give him a good greeting.

¹ Minimum below which one does not have to pay zakat.

² See, for example, Khan, trans., Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 2, pp. 271-338. Al-Ghazali was greatly praised for his work Ihya Ulum al-Din because he pointed out the spiritual aspects of the fiqh deeds. Actually, he was just reviving the understanding of the early generations of Islam and the ahl al-hadith.

³ Quoted in Abdul Majeed, p. 424.

But things changed drastically after al-Bukhari had spent some time there. Al-Dhuhli and the other scholars of Naisaboor's popularity were greatly reduced while al-Bukhari's lectures were always full. Finally, they conspired against al-Bukhari by claiming that he believed that a "person's wording of the Qur'an is created." Someone went to al-Bukhari's lectures to confront him on this matter. When al-Bukhari was asked about the matter, he declined to answer but the questioner insisted. Eventually, al-Bukhari answered by saying, "The Qur'an is the speech of Allah and is not created. But the actions of the slaves are created. And to ask about such matters is an innovation." The person immediately misinterpreted al-Bukhari's position and stated that al-Bukhari said that the wording of the Qur'an is created. Al-Dhuhli took this opportunity to oppose al-Bukhari and stated that no one should sit in al-Bukhari's lectures anymore since he is an innovator. Everyone except Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj and Ahmad ibn Salama listened to al-Dhuhli and left al-Bukhari. When these two left al-Dhuhli's lecture, al-Dhuhli finally declared, "That person should not be allowed to live in this land." Al-Dhuhli's influence was great and al-Bukhari took this as a warning that he must leave Naisaboor. Al-Bukhari stated that he had no desire of fame or fortune or power in Naisaboor and that it was just envy that led his expulsion from that city.

Due to this incident, Imam Muslim refused to record any of the hadith that he had heard from al-Dhuhli. In fact, he sent all of his books from al-Dhuhli back to him. Al-Bukhari had a different approach. He knew that al-Dhuhli was wrong but at the same time he knew him to be an honest person and a trustworthy narrator and, therefore, he recorded some of al-Dhuhli's hadith in his Sahih. But he did not record them with the name Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli but he just called him Muhammad. He did this, some say, so people would not think that he admitted to the accusations of al-Dhuhli.¹ (Unfortunately, both Abu Hatim al-Razi and Abu Zarah al-Razi were affected by the propaganda against Imam al-Bukhari and they stopped narrating his hadith.²)

Al-Bukhari left Naisaboor to go to his home of Bukhara. Again he was greeted with a grand reception and he began to lecture there. But troubles soon began again in Bukhara. The governor of the area, Khalid ibn Ahmad al-Dhuhli³ wanted al-Bukhari to come to the governor's mansion and lecture privately to his children. Al-Bukhari refused saying that it would be unacceptable for him to lecture privately to some people only and not allow others to listen. He also told the governor's messenger, "Tell your master that I shall never humiliate knowledge, and shall never carry it to the doors of the people. If he needs me, let him come to my mosque or to my house."

¹ Uthmani, p. 97.

² Abdul Khaliq, p. 164.

³ Not to be confused with Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli whom al-Bukhari left in Naisaboor.

The governor became upset and began to rouse the people against al-Bukhari and he was finally expelled from Bukhara also.¹

After leaving Bukhara, al-Bukhari was then invited to Samarqand to lecture to the people there. When he reached a town called Khartank, he heard that there was some commotion in Samarqand and some of the people there did not want al-Bukhari to move there. At that time, al-Bukhari made what seems to be his farewell supplication, saying, "Oh Allah, your earth has become too straitened for me despite its vastness. I beseech you to call me to yourself." He received the news that the people of Samarqand had reconsidered and wanted him to come. Just as he was about to start his journey, he fell ill and finally died on the night of Eid al-Fitr, 256 A.H. He was buried the next day in Khartank.

Imam Al-Bukhari's Writings

Al-Bukhari had many writing besides the monumental Al-Jami al-Sahih. He wrote at least twenty-one works. Unfortunately, not all of them have survived to this day. His most important works include the following:

(1) Al-Jami' al-Sahih

The Name

The full title was called *al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasulillah wa Sunanihi wa Ayaamihi*. Al-Jami' meaning it comprised all of the hadith pertaining to various subjects (Creed, Legal Rulings, etc.). Al-Musnad meaning all of the hadith were mentioned with their corresponding chains of narration. Al-Sahih meaning the hadith fulfilled all of the conditions of authenticity. Al-Mukhtasar meaning he did not mention every single authentic hadith in this collection. He did so avoiding redundancy, and concentrating only on those that pertained to the fundamental understanding of the different issues relating to creed and legal matters. Min Umur Rasulillah meaning the affairs and circumstances in which these hadith were uttered. Wa Sunanihi meaning the legal judgments that these hadith entailed. Wa Ayaamihi meaning the biographical and military escapades of the Prophet.

¹ Al-Bukhari made a supplication, "O Allah, give to them, their children and their families what they had intended to do to me." Ibn Katheer describes how Allah answered this supplication in *Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*. Al-Nasafi, in *Kashf al-Asrar Sharh al-Manar*, states that the reason al-Bukhari was expelled from Bukhara was that he gave a ruling that the infant who drinks milk from a sheep will be forever "forbidden" with respect to that sheep, that is, he cannot marry it and on. As mentioned earlier, there is absolutely no truth to this story and it is simply another case of the jurists trying to attack the scholars of hadith for not being people of sound understanding. To make such a claim against al-Bukhari is even more ridiculous when one considers what a great jurist he also was. Unfortunately, this rivalry existed for

some time between the specialists in the two fields, fiqh and hadith, that mean so much to the Muslim nation. Concerning this story, see Abdul Khaliq, pp. 140-142.

Reason of Compilation

Imam al-Bukhari compiled this work due to the existing compilations of hadith in his time consisting of a mixture of authentic (sahih), good (hasan), and weak (da'eef) reports. So Imam al-Bukhari sought to compile a collection with only the most authentic reports included. His resolve was greatly strengthened by his teacher Ishaq ibn Rahawaih. Al-Bukhari stated regarding his teacher: "We were sitting with Ishaq ibn Rahawaih and he said 'If only you would collect a concise compilation of the authentic narrations.' Upon hearing this I developed a strong desire in my heart so I began compiling Al-Jami' al-Sahih. Muhammad ibn Sulaiman ibn al-Faaris said: "I heard al-Bukhari say: 'I saw the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in a dream, I was standing in front of him with a fan in my hand, and I was shooing the flies from around him. So I asked someone who was skilled in dream interpretation about this. He said 'You are deflecting away from him the lies, so thus he encouraged me to compile al-Jami' al-Sahih.

His Methodology

Imam al-Bukhari would only collect the hadith that met all of the conditions of authenticity. He categorized it in the same fashion of the scholars of fiqh, in that each chapter addressed different issues of fiqh. In many places he would entitle the chapters of the book with his opinion on a certain matter in fiqh. For example in the "Book of Salat" there is a chapter entitled "Chapter on the obligation of takbeeratu al-ihram". On different occasions Imam al-Bukhari would repeat, summarize, or mention a portion of the hadith. He did this for various reasons that dealt with the chain of narrators, for example sometimes you would have the same hadith being narrated by two different companions. On other occasions it was done to remove some doubt as to the reliability of the narrators in the chain. For example some narrators would narrate the text in full while others would narrate the text in a summarized manner. In other instances there might be an addition of a narrator in the chain, while the same narrator was left out of another chain, so he would mention both chains to resolve the seemingly conflicting chains and to clarify why the narrator was added in one chain and not the other. Another reason he did this was due to the text (matn) of the hadith itself. For example sometimes the hadith was very long so he split it up and placed parts of it in different chapters, but these hadith were never mentioned in their entirety. Sometimes the text was short, but there was more than one legal judgment resulting from it, in such instances the text was reiterated.

Commentaries on al-Jami' al-Sahih

Hajji al-Khalifah author of the book "Kashf al-Dhunun" stated: "There are eighty two commentaries on Sahih al-Bukhari." the most prominent of which are:

1. A'laam al-Sunan – by al-Khataabi
2. Sharh ibn Bataal – by ibn Bataal
3. Al-Khair al-Fadiah – by bin al-Teen al-Safaaqasir
4. Al-Kawkab al-Durari – by al-Karamaani
5. Al-Fath al-Bari – by Ibn Hajr
6. 'Umdah al-Qari – by al-'ini
7. Irshaad al-Shaari – Al-Asqalaani

Other Works

- (1) ***Al-Adab al-Mufrad***– This is a collection of hadith that are mostly concerned with the manners and ethics of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This work has been published a number of times and there are also some commentaries on it.
- (2) ***Al-Tarikh*** (“The History”) – These are a collection of biographies in the style of the scholars of hadith. Actually, al-Bukhari wrote three such works: *al-Kabeer* (“The Large”), *al-Sagheer* (“the small”) and *al-Ausat* (“the intermediate”). The most important of these is *al-Kabeer*.
- (2a) ***Al-Tarikh al-Kabeer*** – This is one of the first works that al-Bukhari compiled. He wrote it while in Madina. It contains biographical information on some 40,000 narrators. He said that for each narrator in the book he could reproduce an incident concerning his life but he did not do so as that would make the book too long. Al-Bukhari’s teacher Ishaq ibn Rahawaih praised the book immensely. In fact, it has been passed on to posterity and stands as one of the classic biographical works. Abu Ahmad al-Hakim stated that no compiler of any biographical work who came after al-Bukhari could do without referring to this work.¹ It has been published in eight volumes.
- (3) ***Asami al-Sahaba*** – Al-Bukhari was the first to compile an entire work solely on the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Perhaps this work laid the foundation for the works to come later on this topic.
- (4) ***Al-Musnad al-Kabeer*** – It is said that al-Bukhari wrote a work containing one hundred thousand hadith. From the title of this work, it seems that this would be it. Some of the later scholars have mentioned this work but it seems that it no longer exists today.
- (5) ***Kitab al-Kuni*** (“The Book of Patronyms”) – Many narrators were referred to as Abu Fulan (“Father of so and so”) and sometimes it is difficult to identify exactly whom the referred narrator is. This work by al-Bukhari is of monumental help in identifying such narrators. According to Abu Ahmad al-Hakim, Imam Muslim’s work on this same topic is almost simply a transcript of al-Bukhari’s work with the addition of only simple comments.¹ Later scholars, such as al-Nasai, al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi also wrote on this topic and benefited greatly from al-Bukhari’s work.
- (6) ***Khalq Afaal al-Ibad*** (“**The Creation of the Acts of the Slaves [of God]**”) – The early enemies of Islam were not able to drive the Muslims away from

Islam so they had to turn to trying to destroy Islam from within. They tried this first by casting doubts on the Qur'an by saying that it was created.² They denied the attribute of speech to Allah although it is clearly confirmed on a number of occasions in the Qur'an. Another group of people arose who denied qadr, saying that Allah did not know about something until that event actually occurred.³ This innovation began during the last days of the period of the Companions. After that there began a discussion of the actions of the humans – are they created by Allah or is the person of complete free will. Two extremes appeared, one claiming no role for human beings while the other claimed that humans created their own deeds themselves. Al-Bukhari wrote this book to address these three innovations and to confirm Allah's attribute of speech, confirm qadr and the knowledge of Allah of all things and confirm Allah's creating of the actions of the slave. This book was written during al-Bukhari's last years after he was accused by al-Dhuhli of being an innovator.

- (7) ***Kitab al-Ilal***– This is a work on the most difficult science of the sciences of hadith: the spotting of defects or mistakes in what look like sound hadith. Al-Bukhari, his teacher Ali ibn al-Madini and Abu Hatim al-Razi were all experts in this field.

With the exception of *Khalq Afaal al-Ibad*, all of the above works deal with hadith or hadith sciences but al-Bukhari also had some works on specific fiqh topics, such as the following: *Kitab al-Hibah* (“The Book of Endowments”), *Rafa al-Yadain* (“Raising of Both Hands [in the Prayer]”, a refutation of the Hanafis), *al-Qirat Khalf al-Imam* (“Reciting behind the Imam”), *Kitab al-Ashriba* (“The Book of Drinks”) and *Qadhaya al-Sahaba wa al-Tabieen* (“Judgments of the Companions and Followers,” this was his first work, written while he was eighteen years old). A tafsir of the Qur'an has also been ascribed to him but it was either part of the *Sahih* or it has been lost over time.