CHAPTER- III

ARABIC LITERATURE DURING ABBASID PERIOD
Abbasid period is called the Golden Age of Islam. This period is usually dated from the middle of the 8th century to the middle of the 13th century. During this period Arabic language and literature reached its high water mark as the scholars and engineers from various faiths: Muslims, Christian, Jews, Hindus etc. contributed immensely. The Islamic world have seen enormously to the arts, literature, philosophy, sciences and technology both by preserving and building upon earlier traditions and by adding their own inventions and innovations. By help of the rulers the philosophers and poets, artists and scientists, princes and laborers, created a unique culture that has influenced societies on every continent. Scientific and intellectual achievements blossomed in thus Golden Age and passed on to Europe to be expanded upon in the European Renaissance. Now, I want point out about the development of Arabic language and literature during this age. At the very beginning I want stress light on poetry literature.

**Abu Nuwas:**

Abu Nuwas is one the five typical poets of Abbasid Era. His full name was Abu Nuwas al-Hasan bin Hani al-Hakari. He is popularly known as Abu Nuwas. He was born in Ahwaz, the capital of Khuzestan, by a
humble parent nearly the middle of the eighth century. He was a half Arab as his mother was from Persian family.

Abu Nuwas took his early education at Basra, the centre of knowledge. Then he moved to Kufa, where he studied poetry and philology under the guidance of the learned scholar Khalaf al-Ahmar, a man of the most abandoned character, which he took no pains to conceal. Abu Nuwas, by his flagrant immorality, drunkenness, and blasphemy, excited the Caliph’s anger to such a pitch that he often threatened the culprit with death, and actually imprisoned him on several occasions; but these fits of severity were brief. The poet survived both Harun and his son, Amin, who succeeded him in the Caliphate.

Undoubtedly Abu Nuwas is considered as one the greatest of poets of Arabic literature during the Abbasid period. Poetry was his livelihood so he was very conscious in composing poetry. His poetry collection Diwan Abu Nuwas contains poems in many different styles i.e. al-Madīh (panegyric verses, al-Hija (satiric verses), al-Thardia (songs or the chase), al-marsia (elegies) and al-Zuhdia (religious poems). But love and wine were the two motives by which his genius was most brilliantly inspired.
His al-Khamria (wine songs) is generally acknowledged to be incomparable.

The practices of Abu Nuwas were that he preached and hypocrisy at any rate cannot be laid to his charge. The moral and religious sentiments which appear in some of his poems are not mere cant but should rather be regarded as the utterance of sincere though transient emotion. Usually he felt and avowed that pleasure was the supreme business of his life. His religious scruples could not be permitted to stand in the way. He even urges others not to shrink from any excess, inasmuch as the Divine mercy is greater than all the sins of which a man is capable.

As a poet Abu Nuwas was successful. He tried his best to motivate the people towards justice and morality. For his wine verses he was acknowledged as al-Shair al-Khmari. Here we may quote from his wine verse:

ما زلت أستل روح الدن في لطف وانقى دمه من جوف مجروح

حتى انتيتيت ولي روحان في جسدي والدن منطرح جسما بلا روح

وقال أيضا
Another prominent poet of Abbasid period is Abul Atahiya. His original name is Ismail bin Qasim bin Suaid. His nick name is Abu Ishaq and his surname is Abul Atahiya. He was born in the Hijaz in 748 A.D in a respectable family of Banu Anaza. But he grew up at Kufa. He was a business minded boy. At the beginning he was pot businessman. He used made pots and carried them in his back and sold them nearby markets.

Although he was a businessman but he used to compose poetry from his childhood. Love poetry was his first preference. His poetry made him a name which led him to fall in love with Utba, a maid slave of caliph Mahdi and as a result he was imprisoned by the caliph. But did not give up composing poetry, he even composed poetry in jail.

The chief characteristic of Abul Atahiya’s poetry is to use simple expressions. His verses are the admonitions on the instability of the things
of this world. On this account he is the ancestor of that long series of hortatory works which flourish more especially in Persian literature. He avoided all studied forms of expression, so that he might be understood by the populace.

Abul Atahiya was famous for deepness of ocean, lightness of meaning, simplicity of words. He shows more meaning in a small sentence. He composed all kinds of verses. His satires are rhetorical. Here is a example of his satire:

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\begin{align*}
\text{فَضِعَّ مَا كَانَتُ حَلْيَتُ} & \quad \text{بِهِ سَيْفٍ خَلَةٌ} \\
\text{إِذَا لَمْ تَكُ قَتَّالًا?} & \quad \text{وَمَا تَسْنَعُ بِالسَّيْفِ} \\
\text{وَلَوْ مَدَى إِلَى أَذْنِي} & \quad \text{فَكِيَّةَ لَمْ أَنْتَ} \\
\text{وَقَدْ أَصْبَحْتُ بَطَالًا} & \quad \text{أَرَى قُومُكَ أَبْطَالًا}
\end{align*}
\]

**Mutanabbi:**

Mutanabbi was one of the greatest poets of Arabic literature. His original name is Abu Tayyib Ahmad bin Hussain but he popularly known as al-Mutanabbi. He was born and brought up at Kufa. His father was a water-carrier of Kufa. He took his education at Damascus and Syria. By his
own capability he owed the singular knowledge and mastery of Arabic poems. From his childhood Mutanabbi was very much ambitious so he claimed himself as a prophet for which he is said as al-Mutanabbi (The false Prophet). And as a result he was thrown into prison by the governor of Hims. After releasing from the prison he wandered to and fro chanting the praises of all and sundry, until fortune guided him to the court of Saifud Dawla of Aleppo. For nine years (948-957 A.D.) he stood high in the favour of that cultured prince, whose virtues he celebrated in a series of splendid eulogies, and with whom he lived as an intimate friend and comrade in arms.

Mutanabbi was sincerely attached to his generous master, and this feeling inspired a purer and loftier strain than we find in the fulsome panegyrics which he afterwards addressed to the negro Kafur. He seems to have been occasionally in disgrace, but Saifud Dawla could deny nothing to a poet who paid him such magnificent compliments. Nor was he deterred by any false modesty from praising himself: he was fully conscious of his power and, like Arabian bards in general, he bragged about it. Although the verbal legerdemain which is so conspicuous in his poetry cannot be reproduced in another language, the lines translated below may be taken as a favourable and sufficiently characteristic specimen of his style.
As a successful poet Mutanabbi capitalized his poems in form and meaning. One feature of the poems of Mutanabbi is to praise the contemporary society and morality. His poems connected with human life. He is allowed to be a master of that proverbial philosophy in which Orientals delight and which is characteristic of the modern school beginning with Abul Atahiya, though some of the ancients had already cultivated it with success.

Mutanabbi was the poet of meaning. He mingled between the poems and the philosophy as we may find in verse:

شئنا تتيمه عين ولا جيد
يا سافي اخمر في كروسكـا
أ صخرة أنا؟ مالي لا تغيرني
وجدتها وحبيب النفس مفقود

Life philosophy is one the main vehicle of Mutanabbi’s verses. He composed:

نصيحك في حياتك من حبيب
نصيحك في منامك من خيال
Another notable poet of Abbasid period is Abul Ala al-Ma’arri. He was a philosopher and man of letters. His original name is Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman al-Tanukhi. He who was born at Ma’arratul-Nu’man, a Syrian town in 973 A.D. Ma’arratul-Numan was situated about twenty miles south of Aleppo on the caravan road to Damascus. He was attacked by small-pox while he was a small kid resulting in partial and eventually in complete blindness. But this calamity, fatal as it might seem to literary ambition, was repaired if not entirely made good by his stupendous powers of memory. He took his early education at home under the guidance of his father. His father was a man of some culture and a meritorious poet. He moved to Aleppo, the centre of humanities. Though it was no longer boast of brilliant array of poets and scholars it attracted thither in the palm days of Saif al-Dawla.
Abul Ala al-Ma’arri entered upon the career of a professional encomiast, to which he seems at first to have inclined. He declares in the preface to his Saqtul Zand that he never eulogized any one with the hope of gaining a reward, but only for the sake of practicing his skill. Then he moved to Wanderjahre, where he spent the next fifteen years of his life. At that time there were no income source for except a small pension of thirty dinars that he got for lecturing on Arabic poetry, antiquities, and philology. And these are the subjects to which his youthful studies had been chiefly devoted. During this period his reputation was steadily increasing, and at last he thought of trying his fortune in Baghdad, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind had the fullest scope and the highest encouragement.

Abul Ala al-Ma’arri is a firm monotheist, but his belief in God amounted to little beyond a passion that all things are governed by inexorable Fate, whose mysteries none may fathom and from whose omnipotence there is no escape. He denies the Resurrection of the dead.

There are many passages to the same effect, showing that Abul Ala al-Ma’arri regarded a sin and universal annihilation as the best hope for
humanity. He acted in accordance with his opinions. And for this cause he never married.

Hating the present life and weary of its burdens, yet seeing I no happier prospect than that of return to non-existence, Abul Ala al-Ma’arri can scarcely have disguised from himself what he might shrink openly to avow — that he was at heart, not indeed an atheist, but wholly incredulous of any Divine revelation.

Abul Ala al-Ma’arri composed on every kind of poems. Luzumiyat, his poetry collection, is consisted of elegy, eulogy and other religious as well as philosophical verses. His elegies are the finest of Arabic poetry. He says:

صحب فأبين القبور من عهد عاد!  
خيف الوطن ما أظن أديم الـ  
وقيبه بنا وإن بعد العـenden  
لا أختيالا على رفات العباد  

Religion is one of component of the poetry of Abul Ala al-Ma’arri. He says on religion:
Ibn Al-Mu’taz:

Poetry is a passion of the Arabs. Many of the rulers of Arabia were the fond of Arabic poetry. Ibn Mu’taz is one of the examples of such poets. The original name of Ibn Mu’taz is Abul Abbas Abdullah bin al-Mu’taz, i.e. he is the son of Abbasid Caliph Al-Mut’az (861-908).

Ibn Mu’taz was born and brought up in royal patronage. He was a lover of culture and music. He took his early education from the great scholars of Abbasid court. He was brilliant in memory, sharp in tactic and simple in nature. On his nature he composed:
His poetries can be compared the poetry of Abu Nuwas. His verses contain no imitation of the ancient styles. He wrote charming little occasional poems, full of aristocratic grace. Besides this, he took an interest in literature. He was the author of the first great Arabic work on rhetoric Kitabul Badi’. His verses are marked by lucidity and ease of style. He formulated the rule for healthy rhetoric in the following dictum.

Ibn Mu’taz’s poetries are simple in words, easy in hemistich, purer in style, clean in emotion, astonishing in imaginary and pictorial in sympathy. His poetry collection Diwan ibn Mu’taz was published from Cairo in two volumes. Encouraging the readers in the main vehicle of his poetry as he composed:

كَنْ جَاهِلَأَوْ فَتِجَالِلَ تَفَزُّ
لَلَحْلِ فِي ذَٰلِكَ الْذَّهْرِ جَاهِ ل عَرِيض

وَالْعَقْلِ مَحْرُومٍ بَرِىْ مَا يَرِي
كَمَا تَرِىُ الْوَارِثِ عِينَ الْمَرْيَض

وَقَالَ أَيْضًا عَنِ الْذَّهْرِ:

أَقَنَالَ هُمُّ بِصَرْفِ عَقَرٍ
وَأَتَرَكَ الْذَّهْرَ فَمَا شَاءَ كَانَا
Tughra’i:

Abu Isma’il al-Hussain bin Ali is popularly known as Tughra’i. Tughra’I signifies the calligrapher who traces this sign is in reality the State. He derived the title by which he is generally known from the royal signature tughra. It was his duty to invite all state papers over the initial Bismillah. He was from Persian origin and he was born at Isphahan in 1061 A.D. He was a multi-faced personality as he was a poet, a physician, a man of learning, and a statesman.

Tughra’i is considered as one of the greatest poets of Abbasid period. He started composing poetry when he was a small boy. His verses are simple, clear and digestible. His rhymes are praiseworthy. He used selected words for his poem. His collection of poems Diwanu Tughra’i is highly admirable. There is a long poem which he composed in the praise of King Sayeed bin Malik. His outstanding poem Lamiyyat al-Ajam (ode of Non-Arabs), was written in opposition of Lamiyyat al-Arab of Shanfara, the celebrated and brigand poet of pre-Islamic Age.
Lamiyyat al-Ajam is one of the finest poems of Arabic literature. After the success of this poem, the Seljuk Sultan Mas’ud appointed him as his minister. When Mas’ud was defeated in the Battle of Hamadhan by his brother Mahmud, Tughra’i was thrown into the prison and put him to death by Sumairami, the commander in chief of King Mahmud. The Oriental scholars Peacock and Julius have exercised their skill in a Latin translation of Tughra’i’s Lamiyya.

The poetry of Tughra’i is consisted of rhyme and recognized words. Most of his poetries are of wisdom and proudest as he says:

حب السلامَة يثَّي هَم صاحبَه
في الأرض أو سلما في الجو فأتَّزَل
ودع غمار العلا للمقدمين هَلَى
والعز تحت رسيم الأينق الذَّلَل

وقال وقد رزق مولودا على كبر:

أقر عيني ولكن زاد في فكري
سبع وخمسون ولو مرت على حجر

لبنان تأثيرها في صفحة الحجر
Muti bin Ayas:

Nobody can deny the contribution of Muti bin Ayas to development of classical Arabic as well as Abbasid Arabic poetry. He belonged to Palestine as his family originated from Palestine. His father Ayas was a follower of Hajjaj in al-Yusuf and him in subdue the pretenders. Muti bin Ayas served for Caliph Walid bin Yazid. He was accepted as a royal poet. He enjoyed a peaceful and happy life near the caliph. Moreover, he was regarded as the best poet of the Abbasid period.

His verses were very loose. One day he told a woman she was just as fit as the Caliph Al-Mahdi to mount the preacher’s pulpit, which caused the sovereign to laugh most heartily.

As a poet Muti bin Ayas was very successful. Most of his poetries are composed on praise of the Umayyad as well Abbasid caliphs. He has a long and experimental poetry. Where he praises the caliph:
حبذا عيشنا الذي زال عنا
حبذا ذاك حين لا حبذا ذا
أين هذا من ذاك سقيا لهذاك
ولنا نقول سقيا لهذا
زاد هذا الزمان عسرا وشراء
عندنا إذ أحلنا بغضدذاذا
بلدة عمطر التراب على النا
س كما تمطر السماء الزذاذا
Prose Literature during the Abbasid Period:

Maqama:

Maqama (Rhymed prose) is one of the distinguished literary developments during the Abbasid period. The Quran, the main treasurer of Arabic language and literature, is on its kind. It is the masterpiece, fallen out of fashion before the days of Islam and was utterly neglected when a recrudescence of this style occurred in the form of sermons, epistolary art, and poetic compositions, which have grown famous under the name of Maqama.

Ibn Nubata (946-984), a preacher at the court of Saifud Dawla of Aleppo, was a prominent Maqama writer. He was born at Mayyafariq, Mesopotamia and died in his native town. He is called as the Khatib (the preacher. Large number sermons of Ibn Nubata are devoted to the duty of prosecuting the Holy War. They were intended to stir the courage of the populace, and excite it to support the prince, to whose perpetual struggle with the Roman troops of Byzantium reference has been already made.
The most famous of these sermons is one known as the Sermon of the Dream. It was composed during a dream in which the preacher believed he had seen the Prophet in person. This has been translated and published by Mc Guckin de Slane, in the Journal Asiatique for 1840. As for Ibn Nubata the poet, he wandered from country to country, reciting poems extolling their greatness to the various princes and great lords on whom he happened. A curious incident, related by Ibn Khallikan, befell him. He was taking a siesta one day in the vestibule of his house, when a man lately arrived from the East came to inquire whether he was author of the lines:

“He who does not die by the sword will die in some other fashion. The manner may be different, but the misfortune never changes”. And before the end of that same day, a native of Tahart in Algeria appeared and put the same query. What greatly surprised Ibn Nubata was that the fame of this stanza should have simultaneously reached the eastern and western extremities of the Moslem World.

**Badi uz Zaman al-Hamdani:**

Badiuz Zaman al-Hamdani was one of the greatest writers of Maqamat. He was born and brought up at Hamadhan. But he left his native town Hamadhan in 990 and travelled through the countries stayed at
Nishapur, where he met al-Khwarizmi, an older and better known man than himself and finally he settled down at Ghaza, in Afghanistan and to have died at Herat, aged forty, in the year 1008. He was buried prematurely, while he put down in a state of lethargy. His screams were heard in the night, and the tomb was opened, but he was found to have died of terror, with his hand clutching his beard.

Badiuz Zaman al-Hamdhani is considered as one of the outstanding scholars of classical Arabic literature. He started writing literary output when he was a young man. His memory was so phenomenal that he could recite four or five pages of a book correctly after having read only once. Moreover, he could repeat any poem without any hesitation after hearing only once. He composed with the same ease, either in prose or verse, and improvised at will upon any subject he was given. Any poem put into his hand he could at once read in prose, and vice-versa. Yet more astonishing, he would sometimes answer a question addressed to him, writing his answer backwards, from what should have been its last line. He translated Persian verse into Arabic poetry in the same rapid fashion.

Badiuz Zaman al-Hamdhani started writing Maqama when he was at Nishapur. He is the first who introduced hero and reciter in Arabic
literature. He introduced Abu1 Fath al-Iskandari as the hero of his Maqama. His maqamas are the true example of anecdotes which disclosed about mendicants and other topics. His maqamas are, in fact, tales, the Aryan origin of which is at once evident. They are rather short, but written in a brilliant and difficult style. The words of his maqamas are, for the most part, the rarest in the Arabic dictionary. The fictitious hero is a chevalier industries, who passes himself off now as a Nabatean, now as an Arab, then as a Christian. But to Hamadhani belongs the credit of having been the first to create a new form of literature, by making a quantity of short stories of the comic adventures of beggars and rogues, painted in the most brilliant colours by a learned author, thoroughly acquainted with the homonymy of the Arab tongue. The masterpiece in this particular style was to be the celebrated Lectures of Hariri, which appeared at a later date. The Berlin Museum has preserved a lecture in the same style, and written at the same period.

Al-Hariri:
Al-Hariri is considered as one of the most famous Maqama writers of Arabia. Moreover, he is considered as the honour of writing the most brilliant literary work in rhymed prose. His original name is Abu Muhammad Qasim al-Hariri. In Arabic literature he is popularly known as al-Hariri. He was the author of the famous Lectures taken place in various places of the Arabia. He was born and brought up at Basra. His forefathers were the leading personalities of Mashan, a small detrimental village concealed in the palm groves near the great profitable city. His country’s property ensured him an profits which permitted him to lead an independent life and allocate himself with a quiet mind to his studies on linguistics and literature.

His literary outputs are collected in *maqamat-i-Hariri* i.e. collection of Lectures. He excelled his predecessor in wealth of fancy, and in his vocabulary, which is even more skillfull for study. Like his predecessor, he brings a fictitious hero on the scene, a vagabond, nursed on literature, called Abu Zaid Saruji, whom he meets in the most extraordinary situations. The name is not altogether imaginary. Hariri’s son has explained the circumstances under which it was adopted. A stranger of poverty-stricken appearance, but who articulated himself in graceful language. Abu Zaid’s daughter had been carried into captivity and he himself, stripped of
everything he possessed, was fain to live on public charity. But the prosperity of the style is even more magnificent than the fragile web which connects the fifty stories of which this collection consists.

Silvestre de Sacy, the great Oriental scholar, has published the Arabic text of al-Hariri’s work, with a preface and commentary of his own, also written in Arabic. This is not the least feat performed by this master mind.
Development of Theological Literature during the Abbasid Period:

One of the most distinguished developments taken place during the Abbasid Period is Theological literature. Theological literature has a great importance for the growth and development of Islamic Thought and Culture. In this regard I want to highlight some of the prominent figures of theological literature during the Abbasid period.

Imam Malik (R):

Imam Malik (R) is considered as one of the earliest theologitians of Islam. His collection and codification of Islamic law has historically been one of the most important, and challenging tasks that the Muslim community has ever seen in Islamic History. He was one of the giants of Islamic law in the 8th century. His original name is Malik bin Anas. He came into the action when the Muslim community desperately needed for Fiqh and Hadith. His legacy is manifested in his continued influence throughout the Muslim world, both through his own works and the works of those he helped for the guidene on a path of scholarship and Islamic devotion.
His early life and education:

Imam Malik (R) was born at Madinah, the city of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in 711 A.D. his birth is taken place seventy nine years after the death of the Prophet of Islam. His family and his forefathers were originated from Yemen. His grandfather moved to Madinah during the reign of Umar I and settled there down. His grandfather and his father studied on Islamic religion. So, young Malik was brought up in an environment of Islamic scholarship. He took his early learning from his father and uncle.

Nafi, Imam Malik’s uncle, was an eminent scholar of Islamic Theology and Hadith Literature. He narrated Hadith, the Prophetic Tradition from Hazrat Aisha, Hazrat Abu Hurairah and Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar, who were the noted for their vast knowledge on Hadith Literature. Imam Malik (R) was mastered in Hadith, Tafsir and Islamic Fiqh.

Imam Malik (R) held his classes in the Mosque of the Prophet at Madinah. The most unique characteristic of Imam Malik’s methodology in Fiqh was his reliance on the practices of the people of Madinah as a source
of law. In the study of Fiqh, there are numerous sources that are used to
derive laws. The first and second most important sources are always the
Quran and Sunnah. After these two, the great scholars of Fiqh differed on
the next most important source of law. Imam Malik believed that the
practices of the people of Madinah should be seen as an important source.
It had been spared the political and social upheaval that much of the rest of
the Muslim world dealt with. The people living in the city had been taught
Islam by their relatives who had been Companions of the Prophet of Islam
or students of the companions of the prophet. He thus reasoned that if all of
the people of Madinah practiced a particular action and it did not contradict
the Quran and Sunnah. Then it can be taken as a source of law. He is
unique among the four great imams of Fiqh in this opinion.

In order to study the Fiqh and the Hadith, Imam Malik compiled a
book namely al-Muwatta (The Approved). This was the first book that
attempted to compile only sound and reliable sayings of Prophet
Muhammad of Islam into one book. Imam Malik said that he showed his
book to seventy scholars in Madinah, who all approved it, thus he gave it
the name al-Muwatta (The Approved).
Al-Muwatta was a landmark book in the history of Islam and Arabic language and literature. It helped to establish Hadith, particularly the judging of chains of narrations for the Hadith. Imam Malik was so careful in selection of Hadith that it has been placed on the same level to the Hadith compilations of Imams Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Imam Shafi’i (R) even stated that there is no book on the earth, after the Quran that is more authentic than *al-Muwatta*.

Imam Malik’s work was as powerful as a book of Fiqh that the caliph Harun al-Rashid, demanded that it be mass printed and made the official book of Fiqh for the Abbasid Empire. But Imam Malik refused this proposal because he knew that no interpretation is perfect and all encompassing.

**Imam Bukhari (R):**

Another notable Islamic theologitans was Imam Bukhari (R). his original name was Abu Abdullah Muḥammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughirah bin Bardizbah al-Jufi al-Bukhari. He was born on 19th July, 810 and died on September 870 at Bukhara, a district of Uzbekistan. Imam Bukhari was a Persian Islamic Scholar who authored the Hadith collection of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. It is considered as one of the most authentic Hadith
compilations during the Abbasid period. He was also authored the book *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*.

Ismail ibn Ibrahim, the father of Imam Bukhari, a scholar of Hadith, and he was a student and associate of Imam Malik. Bukhari’s great-grandfather, al-Mughirah, settled in Bukhara after accepting Islam at the hands of Bukhara’s governor, Yaman al-Jufi. As was the custom, he became a mawla of Yaman, and his family continued to carry the surname *al-Jufi*. According to most scholars and historians of Islamic theology and Arabic language and literature, Al-Mughirah’s father, Bardizbah, is the earliest ancestor of al-Bukhari.

**His education and collection of Hadith:**

Imam Bukhari took his early education at his native place and he began studying Hadith in the year 205 A.H. He memorized the works of Abdullah bin al-Mubaarak while he was still a child. He was raised by his mother because his father died when he was an infant. He traveled with his mother and brother in the year 210 after having heard the narrations of his region. He began authoring books and narrating Hadith in a tenderly age.

At age of sixteen, Imam Bukhari went to Mecca to perform Hajj along with his brother and widowed mother. In order to increase his
knowledge on Hadith he travelled around country and visited the important centres of Islamic learning and exchanged information on hadith with other notable scholars of Hadith. It is said that he heard from over 1,000 men, and learned over 600,000 traditions during his journey.

After his long journey of sixteen years Imam Bukhari returned to Bukhara, and there drew up his *al-Jami al-Sahih*, a collection of 7,275 tested traditions, approved in chapters so as to have enough money bases for a complete system of jurisprudence without the use of speculative law.

His book is highly regarded among the Sunni Muslims, and considered as the most authentic collection of Prophet Traditions, even ahead of *al-Muwatta* of Imam. Most Sunni scholars consider it second only to the Quran in terms of authenticity.

**His works on Hadith:**

Two of Bukhari’s hadith works have survived till today, they are *al-Adab al-mufrad* and *al-Jami’ al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min umūr Rasūl Allāh wa sunnanihi wa ayyāmihi* also known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

**Sahih Al-Bukhari:**
Imam Bukhari traveled widely throughout the Abbasid empire from the age of 16. During this travel he collected many traditions which he thought of trustworthy. He collected over 300,000 Hadith but he included only 2,602 traditions in his *Sahih*. When he saw the earlier works on Hadith and conveyed them, he found them in their presentation. So, he considered correct and good, and that many of them included weak Hadith. This aroused his interest in compiling hadith whose authenticity was away from hesitation.

This book covers almost all aspects of life in providing proper guidance to Islam i.e. the method of performing prayers and other actions of adoration directly from the prophet of Islamic. Imam Bukhari finished his work around 846, and spent the last twenty-four years of his life visiting other cities and teaching the student on the Hadith.

During this period of twenty-four years, Imam Bukhari made minor revisions to his book, notably the chapter headings. Each version is named by its narrator. According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in his book Nukat, the number of hadiths in all versions is the same. The most famous one today is the version narrated by al-Firabri, a trusted student of Imam Bukhari.
Firabri is not the only transmitter of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. There were many others that narrated that book to later generations, such as Ibrahim bin Ma’qal Hammad bin Shaker, Mansur Burduzi and Husain Mahamili. There are many books that noted differences between these versions, the best known being *Fath al-Bari*.

**Imam Muslim(R):**

Another most prominent Islamic theologian is Imam Muslim (R). His original name is Abul Hussain Asakiruddin Muslim bin Hajjaj Al-Qushairi An-Naisaburi. He belonged to the Qushair tribe of Arabia. He was born in 819 at Nishapur, a well known place and centre of Arabic learning and a township of Iran. His parents were religious people and so he was brought up in a pious environment as he spent most of his time with a pious and righteous person. A distinguishing attribute of his excellent character is that he never indulged in backbiting, which is a common human shortcoming.

Imam Muslim travelled far and wide to collect the Prophetic traditions around the Arabian countries like Egypt, Iraq and Syria, and benefited from the prominent Hadith scholars of that time. By attending the lectures and classes of his teachers included Ishaq bin Rawaih, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Ubaidullah Al-Qawariri, Qutaibah bin Said, Abdullah bin
Maslamah, Harmalah bin Yahya and others he became a famous scholar of Islamic theology.

At Nishapur, he came into contact of Imam Bukhari. Seeing the vast knowledge and deep insight of him in the Hadith of the Prophet, Imam Muslim remained attached with him until the end of his life. He also attended the lectures of another scholar of Hadith, Muhammad bin Yahya al-Dhuhli, but when the difference of opinion arose between Imam Bukhari and Muhammad bin Yahya on the issue of the creation of the holy Qur’an, Imam Muslim favored Imam Bukhari and left the company of Muhammad bin Yahya.

Imam Muslim compiled many books and treatises on Hadith, the most important of his works is the compilation of the Hadith collection *Al-Jami As-Sahih*, which is famous by the name of *Sahih Muslim*. Some scholars of Hadith opined that in some respects it is the best and most authentic collection of Hadith collections. He laboriously collected 3,00,000 Traditions, but after a critical study on those traditions, he selected only 4,000 Traditions for his collection. Other contributions of Imam Muslim on the subject of Hadith are: *Al-Kitab Al-Musnad Al-Kabir*
Alar-Rijkl, Al-Jami‘Al-Kabir, Kitab-ul-Asma wal-Kuna, Kitab al-Ilal, Kitab al-Wahdan, etc.

Many students learned Hadith from Imam Muslim. Abu Hatim Razi, Musa bin Harun, Ahmad bin Salamah, Abu Isa Tirmidhi, Abu Bakr bin Khuzaimah, Abu Awanah and Hafiz Dhahbi were the most prominent of his students. Imam Muslim died at the age of fifty-seven in 875 and was buried at Nishapur.

Sahih Muslim:

The book Al-Musnadu Al-Sahihu bi Naklil Adli is well known as Sahih Muslim. It is one of the six major books on Hadith of the Sunni Muslims. It is the second most authentic Hadith collection after Sahih al-Bukhari, and is highly acclaimed by Sunni. It was collected by Imam Muslim.

Out of 300,000 traditions which Imam Muslim evaluated, approximately 4,000 were extracted for inclusion into his collection based on stringent reception criterion. Each report in his collection was checked and the veracity of the chain of reporters was painstakingly established. Sahih Muslim is divided into 43 books, containing a total of 7190 narrations. However, it is important to realize that Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj
never claimed to collect all authentic traditions as his goal was to collect only traditions that all Muslims should agree on about accuracy.

According to Munthiri, there are a total of 2,200 traditions in Sahih Muslim. According to Muhammad Amin, there are 1,400 authentic traditions that are reported in other books, mainly the six major books of Hadith collections.