

# A General Analysis Of Ali Al-Qari's Scholarly Legacy

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**Abstract.** This article presents a general analysis of the scholarly legacy of Ali al-Qari, a distinguished Islamic scholar of the 11th century AH. Renowned for his prolific authorship across diverse disciplines, Ali al-Qari made lasting contributions to Hadith studies, jurisprudence, theology (kalam), Qur‘anic sciences, Sufism, and Arabic literature. The article highlights the breadth and accessibility of his works, particularly his method of writing clear and comprehensible commentaries that made complex texts understandable to a wider audience. Special attention is given to his major works such as *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, *Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, and *Irshad al-Sari*, which are still widely read and used in Islamic institutions today. His firm defense of the Hanafi school and his respectful yet critical engagement with differing scholarly opinions are also explored. Ultimately, the article underscores the enduring relevance of Ali al-Qari's intellectual legacy for contemporary Islamic scholarship.

**Keywords:** Ali al-Qari, Islamic scholarship, Hadith commentary, Hanafi school, Fiqh, Kalam, Qur‘anic studies, *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, *Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, Islamic intellectual heritage.

Ali al-Qari was considered a scholar with mastery in many fields and authored a large number of scholarly works. These include the sciences of **Hadith studies**, **Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh)**, **Qur‘anic recitation (qira‘at)**, **Islamic theology (kalam)**, **Sufism**, **history, translation, and literary criticism**.

The scholar gained fame for the **abundance of his works**, which are written in a **unique, rare style** and encompass **elegant and meaningful reflections**. According to sources, the number of his works reaches **125**, consisting of **multi-volume books, numerous pages, and treatises**.<sup>1</sup>

The scholar's distinctive style in composing compilations lies in his enrichment of each chapter with valuable information and scholarly discussions. His works are clear and comprehensible to all, written in a manner rarely found in the works of most scholars, and completely free of ambiguous expressions.

It is evident that Ali al-Qari was not only a master of Islamic sciences, but also actively practiced calligraphy. Shaykh Muhammad Tahir ibn Abdulkadir al-Kurdi, in his book "Tarikh al-Khatt al-‘Arabi wa Adabihi" ("The History and Etiquette of Arabic Calligraphy"), wrote:

“Ali al-Qari was an expert calligrapher in the Naskh, Nasta‘liq, and Thuluth scripts, and he won many competitions. He learned the art of calligraphy from Shaykh Hamidullah al-Amassi, a student of al-Mar‘ashi. After completing his handwritten copies of the Qur‘an and the *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, he would sell them and use the proceeds to cover his annual expenses”<sup>2</sup>.

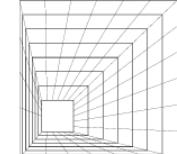
According to al-Shawkani in his work *al-Badr al-Tāli‘*, Ali al-Qari was a mujaddid (renewer) and mujtahid (independent jurist) who emerged at the beginning of the 11th Hijri century<sup>3</sup>.

The renowned jurist **Husayn ibn Muhammad Sa‘id ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Makki al-**

<sup>1</sup> Ali al-Qari. *Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih*. – Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1994. Vol. 1. – P. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ali al-Qari. *Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih*. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1966. Vol. 1. – P. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad al-Muhibbi. *Khulasat al-Athar fi A‘yan al-Qarn al-Hadi ‘Ashar*. Manuscript preserved at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. № 8130. – P. 20.



**Hanafi** writes in his work: “**Ali ibn Sultan Muhammad al-Qari** was one of the greatest scholars of his time, a renowned alim who combined both rational and transmitted sciences. He was a profound commentator who explained views related to the **Qur'an** and **Hadith sciences** with sound reasoning and clarity”<sup>4</sup>.

Ali al-Qari acquired knowledge from many prominent scholars in **Mecca** and, through his tireless scholarly efforts, rose to become a distinguished scholar himself. At that time, in **Mecca** and across the **Arabian Peninsula**, the **Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali madhhabs** were more widely followed. Some adherents of these schools—especially the Shafi'is – would belittle the **school of Imam Abu Hanifa**, claiming that it was based solely on **personal opinion (ra'y)**. A few even went so far as to **criticize Abu Hanifa himself**, accusing him of lacking expertise in the **science of Hadith**.

As a committed follower of the **Hanafi school**, **Ali al-Qari** attained such a high level of scholarly authority that he was able to **challenge the misconceptions** of those who, following certain madhhab imams, held **incorrect views** about Abu Hanifa. He wrote **sharp rebuttals**, **defended the dignity** of Abu Hanifa, and stood up for the **Hanafi madhhab**, which at times was on the verge of being denied or marginalized. He fulfilled this role successfully.

Moreover, he **opposed Imam Malik's view** regarding letting the **hands hang down** during prayer, showing his critical engagement with jurisprudential opinions<sup>5</sup>.

However, these bold stances brought **many challenges** upon the scholar. **Al-Shawkani**, speaking about **Ali al-Qari's courage** in this regard, stated: “*This position of his is further proof of his elevated status, for the duty of a mujtahid is to present the true evidence in controversial matters and to sincerely express his own opinion—clearly stating whether earlier scholars were correct or mistaken in their judgments*”<sup>6</sup>.

When we examine Ali al-Qari's scholarly work and contributions, it becomes evident that he devoted much of his intellectual energy to writing commentaries on earlier texts. He approached the Arabic language and its literature with profound respect, composing all of his works in classical Arabic. His writings cover a wide array of disciplines, and it is noteworthy that the number of his works exceeds one hundred.

The scholar authored works in numerous fields, including Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Hadith, Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), Qur'anic recitation (qira'at), principles of jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh), theology (kalam), Sufism, history, biographical literature (tabaqat), Arabic literature, linguistics, and many others.

What distinguishes his works is their refinement, usefulness, clarity, and their simple and accessible language. In his commentaries, Ali al-Qari had a distinctive method: he would explain complex phrases in a straightforward manner, making them understandable to readers. Moreover, he would analyze and assess various opinions regarding the pillars of Islam, and determine their accuracy using Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, interpreted through the principles of Hanafi usul al-fiqh<sup>7</sup>.

As previously mentioned, **Ali al-Qari's works are numerous and diverse in subject matter**. Below, we present a selection of some of his most notable writings:

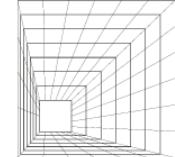
1. "Sharh al-Mishkat" or "Mirqat al-Mafatih" – This is a commentary written by Ali al-Qari on al-Khatib al-Tabrizi's famous Hadith compilation "Mishkat al-Masabih", and it

<sup>4</sup> Husayn ibn Muhammad Sa'id 'Abd al-Ghani al-Makki al-Hanafi. Irshad al-Sari ila Manasik al-'Ali al-Qari. Al-Maktaba al-Shamilah. – P. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Ali al-Qari. Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1966. Vol. 1. – P. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Shawkani. Al-Badr al-Tali'. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1909. – P. 90.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Shawkani. Al-Badr al-Tali'. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1909. – P. 89.



is considered one of Ali al-Qari's most prominent works. The commentary consists of eleven volumes. We will discuss this work in more detail later.

2. "Sharh of al-Fiqh al-Akbar by Ali ibn Sultan Muhammad al-Qari al-Hanafi" – This is a theological commentary written by Ali al-Qari on the treatise al-Fiqh al-Akbar, which is attributed to Imam al-A'zam Abu Hanifa an-Nu'man ibn Thabit al-Kufi (d. 150 AH / 767 CE). Ali al-Qari's commentary stands out for its distinctive approach and the breadth of its theological discussions. Manuscript and printed copies of Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar by Ali al-Qari are preserved in the Manuscript Fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. For example, a version published in 1905 in Egypt by Mustafa al-Babi is cataloged under No. 12317; additional copies printed by Ahmad Naji in 1905 in Egypt are preserved under Nos. 8349, 8552, and 10125. What is most pleasing is that this important work by Ali al-Qari was translated into Uzbek in 2012<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, Ali ibn Sultan Muhammad al-Qari authored several other renowned works, no less famous than the ones previously mentioned. These include:

3. "Irshad al-Sari" – A work devoted to the rituals and rulings of Hajj, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam<sup>9</sup>.

4. "As-Simar al-Janiyya fi Asma' al-Hanafiyya" – A book that documents and highlights the scholarly contributions of scholars belonging to the Hanafi school<sup>10</sup>.

5. "Nuzhat al-Khatir al-Fatir fi Tarjamat al-Sayyid Abdul Qadir" – A biographical work focusing on the life and legacy of one of the most celebrated and accomplished Sufi sheikhs in the Islamic world, Abdul Qadir al-Gilani.

6. "Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya" – A commentary on the famous Forty Hadith collection compiled by Imam al-Nawawi.<sup>11</sup>

7. "Sharh al-Burda" – A commentary on the renowned poetic ode "Qasidat al-Burda".<sup>12</sup>

8. "Sharh an-Niqayah" – A commentary on the work "Mukhtasar al-Wiqayah", in which the scholar refutes incorrect views held by adherents of other madhhabs regarding the Hanafi school, and substantiates all legal rulings with evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith.<sup>13</sup>

9. "Tazyin al-Ibara fi Tahsin al-Ishara" and "at-Tadhin li at-Tazyin" – Both works deal with matters related to the Tashahhud (testification in prayer)<sup>14</sup>.

10. He also authored several Hadith collections under the title "Arba'in Hadith", including: "Arba'in al-Hadith fi Fada'il al-Qur'an" – Forty hadiths on the virtues of the Qur'an, "Arba'in al-Hadith fi Tarkib La Ilaha Illa Allah" – Forty hadiths on the phrase 'La ilaha illa Allah', "Arba'in al-Hadith fi Qira'at al-Basmala fi Awwal Surah Bara'ah" – Forty hadiths on reciting 'Bismillahir Rahmani Rahim' before Surah al-Tawbah. These collections

<sup>8</sup> Pardaev A. I'tiqod Durdonalari [Gems of Belief]. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2012. P. –383.

<sup>9</sup> Ali al-Qari. Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1966. Vol. 1. – P. 85.

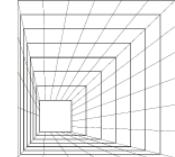
<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 90.



comprise forty Prophetic traditions on each of the above-mentioned themes, transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.<sup>15</sup>

Ali al-Qari, in his commitment to making rare scholarly works accessible and understandable to the general public, wrote numerous commentaries and reflections across a wide range of fields. These works were aimed at clarifying complex texts and presenting them in a more approachable and practical manner. Among his notable contributions are: Sharh Sulasiyyat al-Bukhari – A commentary on the narrations with three transmitters in Sahih al-Bukhari, An-Namus Hashiyat al-Jalalayn – Marginal notes on the famous tafsir *Jalalayn*, Tadhkirat al-Mawdu‘at – A work identifying and analyzing fabricated hadiths, Sharh Qasidat at-Tawhid – Commentary on a poem about the Oneness of God, Ar-Radd ‘ala Ibn al-‘Arabi – Refutation of the views of Ibn ‘Arabi, Sharh Mukhtasar al-Manar – Commentary on a famous work in usul al-fiqh, Tawdih al-Mabani, Mushkilat al-Muwatta’ – Addressing complex issues in the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, Sharh ash-Shifa’ – Commentary on *Ash-Shifa* by Qadi ‘Iyad, Sharh al-Hisn Al-Asmar fi al-Fiqh, Sharhayn al-‘Ilm – Two commentaries on the science of knowledge, Sharh ash-Shama’il – Commentary on the *Shama’il* of Imam al-Tirmidhi, Ta‘liq ‘ala Adab as-Suhrawardi – Annotations on *Adab al-Muridin* by Abu Hafs as-Suhrawardi, Tazyin al-Ibara fi Tahsin al-Ishara, Mas’alat al-Ishara bis-Sabbaba – On the legal ruling of pointing with the index finger during tashahhud, Risalat fi al-Hajj Abi Bakr Kana fi Dhul-Hijjah – A treatise on Abu Bakr’s Hajj in the month of Dhul-Hijjah, Risalat fi Hukm Sabb ash-Shaykhayn wa Ghayrihim min as-Sahabah – On the ruling of insulting the two Shaykhs (Abu Bakr and Umar) and other Companions, Risala fi Hubb al-Hirrah min al-Iman – A treatise on the love for cats as a part of faith, Jam‘ al-Wasa’il fi Sharh al-Masa’il, Al-Hizb al-A‘zam – A renowned collection of supplications, Al-Masnu‘ fi Ma‘rifat al-Mawdu‘ fi al-Hadith – On recognizing fabricated Hadiths, Kashf al-Khidr ‘an Amr al-Khidr – On the story and status of al-Khidr, Bahjat al-Insan fi Subhat al-Haywan – A treatise on animals and their significance, Al-Ibtida’ fi al-Iqtida’, Fara’id al-Qaland ...and many other treatises and commentaries, reflecting his vast and diverse scholarly legacy<sup>16</sup>.

The hadith scholar Sayyid Siddiq Hasan al-Kanūji states:

“I possess several of Ali al-Qari’s books on fiqh and hadith studies. The fact that his works are written with such exceptional mastery and deep scholarly investigation is a clear indication of his meticulousness and profound dedication to research”<sup>17</sup>. Ali al-Qari authored many other books and treatises beyond those already mentioned. A large portion of these works have reached us and have been published. They are widely read and cherished by Muslims. In fact, some of his books are still used as textbooks in various Islamic universities to this day.

The profound knowledge and the depth of thought that Abu al-Hasan (Ali al-Qari) embodied in his works have continued to benefit generations long after his time. Today, his scholarly legacy serves as an excellent source of research and inspiration for young scholars and students of knowledge.

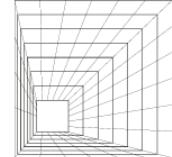
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<sup>15</sup> Ali al-Qari. *Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih*. – Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1966. Vol. 1. – P. 91.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 33.



3. Muhammad al-Muhibbi. *Khulasat al-Athar fi A'yan al-Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashar*. Manuscript preserved at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. № 8130.
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