



MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies

Journal website: <https://maqolat.com/>

ISSN : 2985-5829 (Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v4i1.218>

Vol. 4, No. 1 (2026)

pp. 39-45

Research Article

Sharafuddin Yunīni's Role in the Transmission of Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: A Critical Analysis of his Methodology and Contribution

Muhammed Nishad PT

Degree Scholar, Sheikh Fared Auliya Da'wa College, Odamala, India;

nishad214412@gmail.com 



Copyright © 2026 by Authors, Published by MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies. This is an open access article under the CC BY License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Received : October 25, 2025

Revised : November 13, 2025

Accepted : December 07, 2025

Available online : January 26, 2026

How to Cite: Nishad, M. (2026). Sharafuddin Yunīni's Role in the Transmission of Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: A Critical Analysis of his Methodology and Contribution. *MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 39-45. <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v4i1.218>

Abstract. The appearance of al-Dajjāl and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā is an integral part of the Islamic belief system according to the Last Day. Many debates have arisen around this topic generating arguments and counter arguments among the scholars of Islam. Naturally, there are two parties holding their opinions and providing scholarly evidences to support the stand. This study focuses on the Mushkilah Aḥādīth on the appearance of appearance of al-Dajjāl and the descent of Masīḥ Īsā, analysing the standpoints of both proponents and opponents. It attempts to critically reveal the strength and weakness of each submission. And the researcher reaches into conclusion based on the analytical study of Mushkilah Aḥādīth.

Keywords: Appearance of al-Dajjāl, Descent of Masīḥ, Mushkillah Ahadith, ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Authenticity.

INTRODUCTION

In studying Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 AH) meticulously traced nine main ways the book spread from Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Firabrī (d. 320 AH), who first transmitted it from its author, Imam al-Bukhārī. These transmission paths grew as time went on, forming a strong network crucial for keeping this important collection of ḥadīth reliable and true¹. The invention of the printing press made it possible to create many exact copies of a book easily, something that wasn't possible before. Still, different versions of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī naturally varied in small details due to how people studied, remembered, understood, attended sessions, and wrote things down. In the 7th century AH, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī, a respected scholar from the Levant, worked hard to compare these different versions and create the most accurate version of the book².

The legendary audition of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Damascus around the year 666 AH headed by the renowned Ḥadīth scholar, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (d. 701 AH), with the aid of the linguist, Ibn Mālik (d. 672 AH), in a gathering of scholars who utilized critically acclaimed manuscripts of the Ṣaḥīḥ for cross-referencing is an awe-inspiring episode of literature preservation in human history. Al-Yūnīnī's role in latter-day scholarship on the Ṣaḥīḥ by collating the variants of its major recensions into one manuscript cannot be overemphasized. Starting with al-Yūnīnī's biography, this article will explore this phenomenal project on the Ṣaḥīḥ. Three folios from manuscripts related to the Yūnīniyyah have been appended for the purpose of illustration.

Biography of Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini

Born in 621 AH, Abu al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din belonged to a family of scholars from a small village in the Baalbek region called Yunini, earning him the title of Yunini. The political landscape during Yunini's lifetime was turbulent, with the rise of the Crusades in the west and Mongol invasions of Muslim lands in the east. His father was the Hanbali jurist and hadith scholar Taqī al-Dīn al-Yunini (died 658 AH), and his brother was the famous writer Qutb al-Dīn al-Yunini (died 726 AH). Not surprisingly, his academic growth is impressive. From an early age he often attended academic conferences and had the privilege of studying with more than 70 professors. In pursuit of learning, he continued to visit centers of learning such as Damascus and Egypt, where he studied with Ibn al-Salah (d. 643 AH) and al-Mundhiri (d. 656 AH)¹.

Needless to say, his reputation in the field of hadith attracted many students to his circle of learning. Among his long list of disciples were Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH), al-Qasim al-Barzali (d. 739 AH), and Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH). Without exception, his biographers have only good things to say about him. Safadi (d. 764 AH) describes him as "incomparable," and al-Dhahabi calls him "a master of scholars." Although his works consisted only of hadith collections of mashyakha and marfu, his main contribution to the university was his excellent work

¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 1, pp. 5-7

² A Timeless Tale of Erudition: al-Yūnīnī and his Proverbial Manuscript of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī By Muntasir Zaman

on Sahih al-Bukhari. He consulted the book several times throughout the year and read it 11 times.

On Friday, 5 Ramadan 701 AH, al-Yunini was physically assaulted by a psychotic after entering the local library, and eventually died a few days later at the age of 80. He lived his last days surrounded by books; al-Yunini's life is the embodiment of the famous saying: "Acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave"³.

Al-Yunini's Project on Sahih al-Bukhari

Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini's project on Sahih al-Bukhari stands as a monumental effort in Islamic scholarship, particularly in the field of Hadith studies. Undertaken in Damascus around 666 AH, this project aimed to compile and refine various investigations of Sahih al-Bukhari into a meticulously accurate manuscript. Assisted by the renowned philologist Ibn Malik and a gathering of scholars, al-Yunini meticulously compared multiple manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari, selecting one as the original text while noting variations from other sources with meticulous symbols and annotations. This method ensured clarity and accuracy in preserving the words and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Around the year 666 AH in Damascus, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī convened a series of 71 sessions with scholars to meticulously prepare a critically evaluated manuscript of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī¹. In this endeavor, al-Yūnīnī acquired five significant manuscripts (nuskhahs) of the Ṣaḥīḥ, designating one as the foundational "mother-text" and indicating variations in the others using specific symbols. Al-Yūnīnī adhered strictly to the mother-text, refraining from altering its main text even if he considered an alternative variant more accurate. Instead, he annotated these variants in the margins, clearly marking them as potentially more precise.

The mother-text was based on 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī's manuscript which relied on Abū al-Waqt's manuscript as a primary source and included other textual variations, served as the basis for subsequent copies. Up until the 9th century, al-Maqdisī's manuscript held significant authority among scholars in the Levant, as evidenced by endorsements from figures like al-Mundhirī, al-Dhahabī, and al-'Alā'ī. Al-Yūnīnī commissioned Ibn Zayd, a skilled calligrapher renowned for his precise script, to produce a copy of this manuscript specifically for comparative analysis. Additional manuscripts were then employed to document variations in the text⁴.

Following manuscripts were then utilized to note variants:

1. A copy of the transmission of Abū al-Waqt.
2. A copy of the transmission of Abū Dharr al-Harawī.
3. A copy of the transmission of al-Aṣīlī.
4. A copy of the transmission of Ibn 'Asākir.
5. A copy of the transmission of Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī⁵.

³ A Scientific Story That Has Been Immortalized by Time: Al-Yunini and His Famous Manuscript of Sahih Al- Bukhari

⁴ A Timeless Tale of Erudition: al-Yūnīnī and his Proverbial Manuscript of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī By Muntasir Zaman

⁵ Al-Yunini and the Transmission of Sahih al-Bukhari by Maulana Dr. Zeeshan Chaudri

Yūnīnī carefully gathered different versions of the text and pointed out where each manuscript differed, using a clear system to show which words or sentences were present or absent in each version¹.

Role of Ibn Malik in the Project

During Yūnīnī's extensive work, Ibn Mālīk, a distinguished Andalusian linguist born in 600 AH, played a crucial role. Yūnīnī convened seventy-one gatherings in 666 AH, where Ibn Mālīk, along with other notable scholars, actively participated in the transmission sessions. Ibn Mālīk's unique expertise and contributions were integral to the meticulous scrutiny and accurate transmission of the texts discussed during these gatherings. Ibn Mālīk explained, "Whenever they came across a complicated passage, I explained what I deemed correct and vowelized it based on my knowledge of Arabic." Passages that required detailed grammatical exegesis were addressed in a separate treatise titled "Shawāhid al-Tawḍīḥ wa al-Taṣḥīḥ li Mushkilāt al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ".

Upon examining Shawāhid al-Tawḍīḥ and Ibn Mālīk's marginal notes in al-Yūnīnī's manuscript, it becomes evident that Ibn Mālīk focused on vowelizing and explaining complex passages in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. He did not amend perceived grammatical errors but provided explanations for passages that appeared to defy conventional grammar rules, yet were authenticated in transmission. Moreover, he clarified passages that adhered to grammatical norms, discussed disagreements among grammarians, and used certain passages to explain concepts not adequately covered in other texts⁶.

In addition to the direct contribution of Sahih al-Bukhari to the clarity of the text and the correctness of the language, the contribution of Ibn Mālīk improved the state of the subject. By incorporating grammarians and hadith studies, he presented the ideal standards supported by the work of Islamic scholars of his time. Indeed, Ibn Mālīk's work on al-Yūnīnī's project based on Sahih al-Bukhari shows his commitment to maintaining the authenticity and integrity of Islamic literature, which greatly contributes to the legacy of scholars and enhances the field of Sahih al-Bukhari.

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini's project on Sahih al-Bukhari almost marks the end of scholars' quest to preserve and explain hadith traditions. Faced with historical and intellectual challenges, al-Yunini launched this work at a time marked by deep political upheaval and intellectual excitement in the Islamic world. In the seventh century, Damascus was a powerful center of Islamic learning, attracting scholars from all over the Islamic world. This period saw the end of the Crusades in the Levant and the rise of the Mongol Empire in the east, which had a major impact on Islamic society. While these geopolitical tensions often undermined traditional institutions of learning, they also spurred efforts to preserve and codify Islamic knowledge, including the Hadith texts.

⁶ Al-Qaṣṭallānī, Irshād al-Sārī, vol. 1, p 40

Sahih al-Bukhari, compiled by Imam Bukhari (d. 870 AD), is one of the most respected hadith collections in Sunni Islam. During al-Yunini's time, the spread of Islam and the oral transmission of hadith resulted in various texts and translations. The advent of the press made al-Yunini's project even more powerful since these texts had never been compared. Al-Yunini's method was to collect texts of Sahih al-Bukhari from various sources, examine them carefully, and select one of them as the original text. This process involved comparing and noting differences between manuscripts using special symbols to highlight the differences, ensuring clarity and accuracy in the final edition.

At the heart of al-Yunini's project was the participation of Ibn Malik (d. 672 AH), a famous linguist and grammarian from Al-Andalus. Ibn Malik's mastery of Arabic grammar and linguistic precision was instrumental in clarifying and resolving ambiguities in the hadith text. His explanations and interpretations are very insightful in the grammatical aspects of Sahih al-Bukhari, enhancing the scholar's understanding and interpretation. Al-Yunini's project modeled a scholarly approach to Hadith compilation and established standards of authenticity and textual integrity that influenced later generations of Islamic scholars. Thanks to his work, Sahih al-Bukhari remains a cornerstone of Islamic jurisprudence and a symbol of the true preservation of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Legacy and Impact

The contributions of Yunini to the field of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the realm of Sahih al-Bukhari, have been profound and transformative. His meticulous attention to authenticity and scholarly rigor has established a benchmark for the compilation, authentication, and dissemination of Hadith collections. The standardized version of Sahih al-Bukhari, meticulously curated by Yunini, has emerged as a fundamental pillar of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and ethical guidance, serving as a dependable source for legal decisions and religious teachings.

The contribution of Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini to Sahih al-Bukhari is a pivotal element in the field of Islamic scholarship, significantly influencing both the conservation and dissemination of Hadith literature. Born in the year 621 AH in Baalbek, Yunini came from a lineage of scholars deeply entrenched in the study of Islamic jurisprudence and Hadith. His educational journey, under the tutelage of over seventy distinguished scholars, including Ibn al-Salah and al-Mundhiri, laid the foundation for his lifelong dedication to scholarly pursuits. This thorough methodology was designed to reconcile discrepancies and establish a standardized text that would serve as a dependable source for Islamic jurisprudence and ethical guidance.

Yunini's approach involved selecting one primary manuscript and noting any variations from others using symbols, ensuring transparency and accuracy in his compilation. His efforts not only cemented Sahih al-Bukhari as a foundational collection of Hadith but also established a benchmark for scholarly diligence in manuscript studies and textual criticism within the realm of Islamic scholarship. The influence of Yunini's endeavors is felt throughout the annals of Islamic intellectual history. His standardized edition of Sahih al-Bukhari gained widespread acceptance

across the Muslim world, influencing educational curricula, legal interpretations (fiqh), and ethical standards derived from the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Scholars and students continue to examine Yunini's methodologies, underscoring his lasting legacy in the preservation and transmission of Islamic knowledge.

In summary, the meticulous compilation of Sahih al-Bukhari by Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini stands as a testament to his scholarly excellence and commitment to the preservation of the authenticity of Hadith literature. His legacy highlights the significant impact of rigorous scholarship on the development of Islamic thought and practice over the centuries. Moreover, Yunini's impact transcended academic boundaries, influencing cultural and religious practices within Muslim communities. The authoritative status of Sahih al-Bukhari, secured through Yunini's thorough compilation, has ensured its widespread acceptance and reverence among scholars and practitioners. The lasting influence of Yunini's work is evident in contemporary Islamic studies, where scholars utilize his methodologies and insights to deepen our comprehension of Hadith literature and Islamic jurisprudence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the meticulous compilation of Sahih al-Bukhari by Sharaf al-Din al-Yunini stands as a monumental achievement within the realm of Islamic scholarship, showcasing his unwavering commitment to the preservation of the authenticity and integrity of Hadith literature. Born into a family of scholars and educated under distinguished teachers, Yunini's rigorous methodology in Damascus during the 7th century AH established a benchmark for textual criticism and manuscript studies within the field of Islamic jurisprudence. His collaboration with scholars, notably Ibn Malik, ensured the clarity and accuracy of the compilation of Sahih al-Bukhari, thereby cementing its status as a foundational text in the realms of Islamic jurisprudence and ethical guidance.

The influence of Yunini's work transcends the boundaries of scholarly circles, impacting educational curricula, legal interpretations, and ethical standards across Muslim communities globally. His standardized edition of Sahih al-Bukhari remains a cornerstone of Islamic thought, serving as a dependable source for legal decisions and religious teachings derived from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The lasting impact of Yunini's endeavors highlights the importance of scholarly rigor and meticulousness in the preservation and dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

Furthermore, Yunini's comprehensive approach to the compilation of Hadith continues to inspire scholars of the present, who utilize his methodologies to enhance their understanding of Islamic traditions. By ensuring the authenticity of Sahih al-Bukhari, Yunini made a significant contribution to the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Islam, guaranteeing that future generations have access to the pristine teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. So, studies like this can encourage the upcoming scholars get more findings and preserving tradition and cultural marks of our ancestors in Hadith literature.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (2001). *The Meaning of the Holy Qūr'ān*. ISBN: 9780915957767, 0915957760.
- al-Baydawi, Abd Allah b. Umar. (1329H). *Anwar al-Tanzil wa-Asrar al-Ta'wil*. Beirut: Dar ai-Jil.
- al-Bukhārī, Muhammad ibn Ismā'il. (1997). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Riyadh: Dārussalam.
- at-Tabari, Abu Jafar Muhammad b. Jarir. (1324H). *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qūr'ān*, 30 parts bound in 12 volume Bulaq.
- Ibn Hajar. (1968). *Tadhib al-Tadhib*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.
- Ibn Kathir, Abu al-Fida Ismail. (1385H). *Tafsir al-Qūr'ān al-Azim*, volume 7, Beirut: Dar al-Andalus.
- Karnedi, Rozian, Suryadi Suryadi, and Muahammad Alfatih Suryadilaga. (2019). *The Polemic of Ahad Hadith Use in Interpreting the Death of Prophet Īsā According to Mahmud Syaltut and Siradjuddin Abbas*. Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman 23, no. 1: 105–116.
- Muhammad Asad. (2003). *The Message of The Quran*, The Book Foundation.
- Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjaj, Abūal-Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī. (2007). *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Riyadh, Dārussalam.
- Neal, R. (1991). *Christ in Islam and Christianity: The Representation of Jesus in the Qūr'ān and the Classical Muslim Commentaries*. London: Macmillan Press LTD.
- Seth, Maulana Rashid Ahmed Ali. (2003). *The Prophet Īsā (Jesus)*. Zakariya Islamic Academy.