

Memories of Ustadh Abdus Shakur

Shaykh Yunus Saharanpuri was the first Shaykh I met overseas. That was in 2002 when I journeyed to India with the intention to study Hanafi Fiqh. Honesty without exaggeration, he was the only person I met in my studies that I couldn't look directly eye to eye with. Whenever he looked at me, my head automatically dropped and my head sunk.

One of the things I can't explain until this day is that I randomly popped up in his Madrasah in India out of the blue and he was the first person I saw sitting down early in the morning before class. So imagine this foreign black guy nobody knows (me) walks in and just sits beside him with my head down waiting for him to speak. For this to suddenly happen out in place like Saharanpur is far from normal. Plus you don't just roll up on Shaykhul Hadith like that. (But excuse me, I was new, pretty much a fresh convert, and I had no clue what I was doing.) Meanwhile, I could see that I was way out of my boundary because it looked like people in the Madrasah (students) got really tense and they were waiting for any indication from him that there is a problem. Surprisingly, Shaykh Yunus was extremely calm and relaxed like he already knew me from the second I walked in the door.

He finally looked up at me with a smile, his glance made me automatically look towards the floor. He asked me what can I do for you (in Arabic). I replied in the little Arabic I knew "I want to learn knowledge". He smiled and pushed a Qurān on a stand towards me and said "read". I got extremely nervous and so I started reading Al-Fatihah with "al-hamdulillah..." He smiled and reminded me to say "authubillah..."

Now I had not spoken ANY English nor did he know where I came from. Plus we had now only sat for about 3 minutes. He then called a young Indian boy over and whispered in his ear. Then the boy (who spoke English) told me to come with him. He said Shaykh Yunus said I must show you around nicely and take care of you. Then the boy asked, are you a convert? I was a bit shocked who he would even guess or assume that, and answered yes. He told me this is why Shaykh likes you and was so easy with you even from the minute you walked in the door in spite of being such a stranger.

The only thing I can conclude is that it was either kashf or farasah because Shaykh Yunus read me in less than 5 minutes from the second I walked in the door. This is one of the experiences I can't forget. At the time I honestly had no clue who he was. I was just a wandering convert looking for somewhere to study and he was the eldest person I saw. It wasn't until 2011 when I moved to South Africa did I find out who he was!

May Allāh flood his grave with mercy.