

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله وكفى والصلاة والسلام على نبيه المصطفى
وعلى آله وصحبه نجوم الهدى وقادة التقى أما بعد

أصاأء الءمع ءارا للمآقى	♡	مصاأ لم ینفس للءناق
وروح الفضل قد بلع التراقى	♡	فروض العلم بعد الزهو ذاو
على شیعنا ذى الءود والشفاق	♡	فیا أهل العرب والعجم فابكوا
له بالانفراء على اتفاق	♡	على الءبر الذى شهدء قروم
ءءء عن ءیره ذات انفلاق	♡	ومن فءءء له قءما علوم

رحمه الله رحمة واسعة Sb Muhaddithul Asr, Sheikh Yunus

On Tuesday the 11th of July, at approximately 09:00AM IST, Scholars and students of Hadith throughout the world, especially those of India, UK, Arabia and Canada were shocked with the news of the passing of Sheikhul Hadeeth Mawlana Muhammad Yunus Jawnpuri. Since then, many scholars and students have written small comprehensive obituaries on the life of Sheikh and their memories and experiences with him, hence I did not feel the need to write. However, upon the insistence of some close colleagues I decided to pen down some memories. Firstly, to serve as some sort of written remembrance for Sheikh and secondly so others can get some sort of insight as to what Sheikh was like. I do not want to focus on the biography of Sheikh, rather my memories with him. Everything mentioned in this piece is what I have witnessed and heard myself in my two years with Sheikh unless stated otherwise.

My first time seeing Sheikh

In 2011, we had been studying the Usool of Hadith as part of the fourth year of the Alimiyyah course. At the end of that academic year, Sheikh blessed the UK

with his presence and I attended his speech in Jamiatul Ilm wal Huda, Blackburn on the 11th of July. As soon as Sheikh sat on the stage he said Salam and began to cry, saying:

“Bacho, me Shuhrat ka Admi nahi hu. Na Mujhe Shuhrat Pasand he. Me to Sadha Talib e Ilm hu. Talib Ilmana Bayan karta hu. Yehi mera Bas Saara Sarmaya he. Awr Jo Kuch mere Dars ki kashti he wo isi ke Gird ghumti he.”

“O Children, I am not a man of fame, nor do I like fame. I am a simple student of knowledge. My speeches are at the level of students. This is the extent of my belongings and my life-earnings. And the ship of my lessons revolves/floats around this.”

He then delivered the rest of his speech in which he mainly spoke about the Usool of Hadith. I left this Speech awe-struck and full of love for Sheikh.

وفي حديث علي رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ الطويل في وصف رسول الله ﷺ "ومن خالطه معرفة أحبه" (رواه الترمذي في الشمائل)

This reminded me of one of the attributes of the Prophet ﷺ that anyone who came in close contact with Him ﷺ, and experienced his excellent character, was smitten with the love of his excellent attributes. Such was Sheikh. After completing my studies, I decided that I would spend at least a year in Saharanpur with Sheikh.

Trip to Saharanpur

In August 2015, I made the journey to Saharanpur arriving in the early morning. I went to visit Sheikh around 11 a.m. Sheikh was sat reading Fathul Bari and MI Haroon Lakhi of London was there with his laptop doing Sheikh’s work. I was told by Mawlana Ashraf (Sheikh’s tailor and khaadim) to come in about half an hour. I waited outside the room and then went in. Upon hearing I was from Blackburn, Sheikh straight away asked regarding his Muta’alliqeen (close ones). Sheikh enquired about Mufti Abdus Samad sb, Mufti Shabbir sb and Qari Zubayr sb who at the time was ill. Sheikh asked regarding his illness to which I said his legs have swollen up. I couldn’t remember the word in Urdu so I said in broken Urdu “Peyr Bara ho Gaya!” Sheikh then chuckled and said “Tu to Budhoo hei.” Around the same time, Haji Arshad and his brother Haji Wajahat had arrived from Meerut with their cohort; they usually visited Shaikh once a month bringing food. Sheikh ordered me to eat that day with them.

After Sheikh returned from Hajj, my visits became more frequent. One day, Sheikh had just come back from the bathroom and Hashim (his Khadim) needed help lifting Sheikh off the wheelchair. I was the only one there and helped Sheikh. Sheikh then sat down and said *“Ye kawn Bengali he?”* to which I said *“Hadhrat mei Bengali nahi hu. Me Gujurati Hu!”* Sheikh then smiled and asked me my name and what I am doing here to which I said *“Meira Iradah Takhasus ka tha Leykin Asatitha ne ye Mashwera diya ke aap ke saath Rahu taake Istifada ho Jaye awr Islaah ho jaye”* As soon as I said this Sheikh was very happy and repeatedly said *“BarakAllah. MashaAllah”*. Sheikh’s habit would be that he would ask anyone if they were Hafith to which he would say

“Eyk Para Roz Nafil Me Parho. Aasan Shakal Ye He Ke Sunan Me Parhe. Baaqi Nafil Me. Pehle To Mushkil Hoga Phir Jab Aadat Ban Jayegee Tab Asan Lagey Ga.”

“Recite one Juz everyday in your Nafil prayers. The easiest way is to recite in Sunnahs and complete in Nafil prayers. First it will be hard but when the habit is made, it will become easy.”

During that time Hadhrat Mufti Shabbir sb and Bhai Shoaib were there. Sheikh would repeatedly inquire regarding them, whether they had eaten, had tea etc. This was one of the habits of Sheikh, he would always receive his guests and go out of his way to host them. At that time Sheikh had received the newly published book, *“Riyadhul Mutallimeen”* of Ibn-us-Sunni. He would spend his mornings reading and thus adding notes to his Bukhari.

Sheikh’s daily routine

During these last two years, Sheikh would be awake around Tahajjud time and would have the habit of praying Tahajjud. Sheikh would start his Tasbeehat after Tahajjud if he could not sleep. After Fajr, Sheikh would complete his Dhikr and Duas silently. Many of Sheikh’s disciples would sit in another part of Sheikh’s room completing their own Dhikr. Sheikh would say to them *“Aap Lowg apney Dhikr karo, Mei apna Dhikr karta hun.”* Sheikh would then have some breakfast and would start working on his commentary of Sahih al Bukhari. At about 10:30 /11:00 a.m., Sheikh would stop work and would sit with guests.

After lunch, Sheikh would then rest, pray Dhuhr Salah, followed by recitation of Qur’aan and begin his Mutaala’ah for his lesson. During this time, Sheikh would

be so engrossed in Bukhari that people would enter the room, sit and shortly leave, however due to Shaikh being heavily engrossed in his book, he would not even notice. Before going for lesson, Sheikh would be beautified and perfumed just as a groom is on his wedding day. Sheikh would be made to sit on the wheelchair. One would be putting on his glasses, another would be putting Itr on, another putting socks on. When leaving the room, Sheikh would wait for the door to be locked. His رعب (Awe) was such that students on the other side of the corridor (some 100 metres) away would peep out from their rooms, see Sheikh on the wheelchair then quickly go back inside.

After lesson, Sheikh would retire back to his room for Asr. There would be a big queue to get inside the compound and even more in the room. Shaikh would also receive guests after Asr, hence many visitors would also be present. After Asr, Sheikh would complete his Dhikr and would sometimes share some words of wisdom. This last year, Ml Luay (the grand-nephew of Ml Abdul Hafiz Makki رحمه الله) would attend daily. Sheikh would ask him regarding the health of “Bhai Talha” (Son of Hadhrat Sheikh Mawlana Zakariyya رحمه الله)

The Majlis would finish approximately half an hour before the Adhan of Magrib was called; Shaikh would perform wudhu in preparation of Salah and recite the daily evening Adhkaar at this time until Adhan. After Maghrib, Sheikh would pray Awwabeen and then continue with Kitab work till Isha. After Shashmahi (the Mid-year exams) Sheikh would teach after Maghrib. After Isha, Sheikh would complete his Sunan, Nawafil and Witr and would then eat and then sleep.

On the blessed days of Jum’ah, Sheikh would rest from 10AM-11.30AM, bathe and get ready for Jum’ah and proceed to the Masjid one/one and a half hours before Jum’ah Salah. Sheikh would always be one of the first people there. He would continuously engage himself in long Nawafil right until the second Athan would be given.

4 months after, in December 2015, my father suddenly passed away. After informing Sheikh, he made dua. As I left the room and reached the bottom of the stairs, Sheikh called me, made further Dua and requested me to pass his Salams on to Mufti Shabbir sb, Mufti Abdus Samad sb and Qari Zubair Sb.

I returned to Saharanpur in February 2016 and met Sheikh before Isha Salah. At that time Fared al Baji of Tunisia was in the process of reading Bukhari to

Sheikh. Sheikh said to me *"Isha ke baad Sabaq hoga, Aghar thaka huwa nahi ho to Hadhiri dena."*

After my father passed away, the amount of Shafqat, Muhabbat, love, compassion, concern and consideration I saw from Sheikh was surreal. He would always mention to any guests that came about my Fathers sudden passing and request them to make Dua. When asking about me he would always say *"Hamara Muhammad Kaha he?"* He would always ask whether I have eaten properly. Once my Mother requested me to ask Sheikh to make Dua for my Father. Sheikh said *"Jab Bhee Mujhe Yaad Ata He Me Unke Liye Dua Karta Hu."*

That same year in May, me and Ml Abrar were leaving to go back home. Sheikh kept expressing his thankfulness and gratefulness for us and mentioned to Moulana Yusuf Tankarwi (Sheikhul Hadith of Tadkeshwar) that He is wishing we come back. In particular he praised Ml Abrar for sacrificing nearly 3 years of his own life in serving Sheikh. May Allah accept the Khidmah that Ml Abrar did.

Sheikh blessed me and my family with his presence when he visited Blackburn that year and came to my house. Sh Muhammad b Nasir al Ajmi of Kuwait and Sh Khalid al Siba'i of Morocco were also present. During food, Sh Ajmi kept making light humour whilst asking Sheikh questions regarding Bukhari. When the desserts were served, Sh Ajmi said:

"إن في البطن خلوة لا تملأها إلا حلوة!"

to which Sheikh chuckled, then made Dua.

Sheikh's Personal life

Sheikh was born on the 2nd of October 1937, in Jownpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. Sheikh's mother passed away when he was 5. Sheikh was looked after by his maternal Grandmother. Sheikh would always remember her affection and compassion towards him. Sheikh would mention that his Father wanted him to work on a farm, due to their poverty. However, it was only through the mercy of Allah that he was able to study.

Sheikh's father passed away in 1987. Sheikh had one brother who passed away in 1995. Sheikh left behind 8 nephews and 3 nieces. Sheikh did not marry in his life. I have heard him say many times, that this was due to illnesses at the time

of marriage. Sheikh would often say that if his Mother was alive, she would have got him married.

Sheikh's love for Sunnah

Sheikh was a living example of how one can live his life according to Sunnah. If one opened the books of Hadith and Shamail, they would find examples of that in Sheikh's life.

Once Sheikh was ill. When water was brought to him he was about to take a sip when he suddenly got up. After drinking water, he said that I thought I will drink this water leaning, I am ill and of old age, then I remembered the Prophet ﷺ saying

"لا أكل متكئا" (رواه البخاري)

Sheikh would repeatedly ask for olive oil for massaging and would say, the Prophet ﷺ said

"كلوا الزيت وادهنوا به فإنه من شجرة مباركة" (رواه الترمذي)

Sheikh repeatedly would mention his love for Vinegar, Corn-Roti, Honey, Figs etc saying these foods are from the Sunnah.

Sheikh would always wear garments starting from the right and removing garments starting from the left. Once before sleeping, Sheikh said that remove my socks after 30 minutes. Lying down, in the dark I started taking the right one out first. Sheikh shook his right foot indicating that it's the wrong one.

Sheikh would always have a habit of bathing on the day of Jum'ah, using Itr, cutting nails, preceding to the the masjid early, exclaiming that all are from the Sunnah.

Sheikh would stress following the Sunnah regularly, saying "Whoever acts upon the Sunnah, he does not need to worry about his Dunya and Akhirah. Allah looks after him." Sheikh would also say "In following the complete Sunnah is one's complete success in both worlds."

Sheikh would stress the recital of Masnoon (Sunnah) Duas and would say "There is more Barakah (blessings) in them"

Sheikh would often say “Only in the (following of) the Sunnah is full Barakah (blessings.)

Sheikh and Hadith

To describe in words Sheikh’s attachment and love for Hadith is near impossible. For Sheikh himself used to say, “I cannot describe how much attachment I have with the Ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ.”

Before Sheikh would teach Hadith, he would always perform ablution (Wudhu) and apply Itr, saying it is the practise of Hadith scholars. If during lesson the need to perform Wudhu again would arise, Sheikh would pause the lesson and perform Wudhu.

If during lesson Sheikh became aware of students talking/not concentrating, Sheikh would become displeased and irate due to the disrespect shown to the Ahadith.

Whenever a newly published book of Hadith was brought to Sheikh, he would become cheerful, happy and excited, raring to read the book. When the Dar al-Ta’seel print of Musnad Ishaq ibn Rahuyah was bought to Sheikh, he kissed it multiple times. Right away Sheikh said, “*Dekh! Hadith – e – Niyyat us mei hei?*” When it was found, Sheikh made a note of it in his Yawaqit.

MI Thawban ibn MI Salman (of Saharanpur) narrated to me that Sheikh became ill a couple of years ago. Sheikh was made to lie on a bed and he was in a coma-like state. One teacher there mentioned a Hadith to Sheikh. When Sheikh came out of the coma-like state the first words he mentioned were;

غريب عن نافع

“(The hadith you mentioned) is Ghareeb (individually) narrated from Nafi”

Sheikh also used to mention “I have reached a stage, where upon reading a Hadith, I will know whether it is Sahih or Dhaeef.” Sheikh attributed this to Allah’s Ma’rifat.

Sheikh lived for and loved teaching and reading Ahadith. It was one thing he could not live without. When Sheikh became ill in 2016 it was advised that he take rest and not exert himself in Mutala. Sheikh said “Is (kutub) ke beghayr mera koi kaam nahi”

Many times when Ahadith were read to Sheikh, he would cry out of love for the Prophet ﷺ. Particularly when incidents about the early life of the Prophet ﷺ, the afflictions, poverty and troubles the Prophet ﷺ experienced. In particular I remember Sheikh crying whenever Anas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ's hadith would be mentioned-

عن أنس بن مالك رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وكان تبع النبي ﷺ وخدمه وصحبه أن أبا بكر كان يصلي لهم في وجع النبي ﷺ الذي توفي فيه، حتى إذا كان يوم الاثنين وهم صفوف في الصلاة، فكشف النبي ﷺ ستر الحجره ينظر إلينا وهو قائم كأن وجهه ورقة مصحف، ثم تبسم يضحك، فهمنا أن نفتن من الفرح برؤية النبي ﷺ، فنكص أبو بكر على عقبيه ليصل الصف، وظن أن النبي ﷺ خارج إلى الصلاة «فأشار إلينا النبي ﷺ أن أتموا صلاتكم وأرخى الستر فتوفي من يومه، (رواه البخاري)

Sheikh used to mention that when he was younger, he read a quote of Shah Ismail Shahid in Taqwiyatul Iman that whatever Hadith is Sahih (authentic) and not abrogated, then this is my personal action. Sheikh says, when he read this he thought to himself that this is my action too. Sheikh says when he read this he was only between 12-13 years of age.

Sheikhs Lessons, Ilm and Memory

Sheikh taught Bukhari from 1967-2017 (Exactly 50 Years) and Muslim from 1966-2014.

Whenever Sheikh noticed even the slightest disrespect from Students, he would immediately discipline the student. Sheikh would constantly say "*Thori Harkat Karo awr Mehnat. Adab Sikho Bacho. Usi sei Ilm mei Barkat Ati hei*"

Sheikh would never teach without Mutala. Sheikh mentioned that once he taught 6 Hours continuously. From Morning to Afternoon, and spent equal amount of time in Mutala. He quoted that the first person to do this was Allamah Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri, due to his extraordinary memory.

When one would sit in lessons, they would become acquainted with scholars from the past. Sheikh would quote extensively from previous luminaries, their names and teknonyms, what they said and where they said it. I saw that Sheikh would teach mostly from his memory without deficiency. He would have his eyes closed for most part of the lesson, but would quote full passages as though

he had the book in front of him. Many a times, before quoting, Sheikh would pause then go on to quote a full passage.

Sheikh's knowledge specifically in Hadith and Bukhari, was incredible. As Dr Akram Nadwi has written: "I haven't seen anyone commentate on Ahadith, Asaneed, Abwaab & Tarajim of Sahih Bukhari after Ibn Hajar than Sheikh Yunus." MI. Taqi ul Din Nadwi mentioned that "When Sheikh says 'Qultu' (I say), then be prepared to read what Ibn Taymiyah, Dhahabi, Ibn Hajar and others have not said. His 'Qultu' is the most prestigious gift a student can receive, I become ecstatic when hearing it." This is indeed one of the amazing features of Nibraas.

MI Nurul Hasan Rashid Kandhelwi mentioned to me many times that once MI Ali Miya asked Sheikh Zakariyya regarding a certain Hadith and where it can be found. Sheikh Zakariyya replied "MI Yunus ko Pooch Lo" (Ask MI Yunus.) Sheikh then answered the question, referencing extensively where the Hadith can be found. Months later, MI Ali Miya came to Saharanpur and immediately started asking "MI Yunus kaha he?" Sheikh came dressed in a torn Lunghi and Qamees and entered the room. MI Ali Miya said "Me to MI Yunus ko dhoondh raha hu!" This was the start of a lifelong connection between MI Ali Miya and Sheikh. MI Ali Miya granted Sheikh Ijazah in Hadith and used to refer/rely to Sheikh for many questions in the field of Hadith.

Sheikh's own teacher, Sheikh Zakariyya used to rely on Sheikh for queries on Ahadith and Fiqh, as mentioned in al-Yawaqit. Once Sheikh Zakariyya mentioned that a certain Hadith cannot be found in Musnad e Ahmad. Sheikh was adamant that it can in fact be found. It was winter, and after Isha, Sheikh sat in his room with the 6 Volume edition of Musnad, a small lamp and his elbows resting on two pieces of brick/wood. Sheikh spent the whole winter night in finding the Hadith. It was only until Abdul Azeem (the Muadhin) came and informed Sheikh that Iqamah for Fajr Salah is taking place, that Sheikh realised the whole night has come and gone. Sheikh found the Hadith and informed Sheikh Zakariyya.

Sheikh would say that the Asaneed (chains of narrations) he has taken from his teachers and the knowledge he has attained is from the reading of books. In particular Sheikh would mention that he has acquired the science of Hadith from Sheikhul Islam, Allamatul Anam, Ibn Taymiyah, Hafidh Dhahabi, Hafidh Ibn Kathir, Hafidh Ibn al-Qayyim, Hafidh Ibn Rajab, Hafidh Ibn Abdul Hadi, Hafidh Zayla'ee and Hafidh Ibn Hajar.

Sheikh would also mention extensively; Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Hazm and Sheikh al-Muwaffaq ibn Qudamah Al Maqdisi mentioning that he has benefitted extensively from Al-Muhalla and Al-Mughni. ¹

Whenever anyone would come to Sheikh regarding even Fiqhi matters, Sheikh would quote different Mathahib from the top of his head. In lessons, Sheikh was known for mentioning the views of different Ulama. Not just sticking to the 4 Imams but the Math'hab of Abu Thawr, Sufyan Thawri, Dawud Thahiri, Ibn Hazm etc.

In March this year, Sheikh was working on Kitabul Hajj of Nibras. Sheikh was dictating saying

قد ذكره جابر في حديثه الطويل الذي سماه بعض الأئمة المنسك الصغير

Sheikh immediately said that he remembered al-Thahabi naming Jabir رضي الله عنه's long Hadith in Muslim as المنسك الصغير in al-Siyar or al-Tathkirah. Whilst looking for it, Sheikh then confirmed that it was in al-Tathkirah. After it was found Sheikh became really happy and mentioned after decades he still remembered.

Once Sheikh was looking for a book. After sometime it could not be found. Sheikh said "Tell me what book you are taking out." Before I could finish reading the title, Sheikh finished it off for me, also saying the author's name and print. What was more surprising was that Sheikh did the same for the full pile of books (around 15-20.) MI Ghufuran of Nadwa narrated to me that, in 2011, he was by Sheikh looking for a book. Since it could not be found, Sheikh said to them, "put your hand on any book and tell me what book it is". After doing so, Sheikh mentioned the names of all the books on that pile, in order!

¹ وهذا كما قال عز الدين بن عبد السلام سلطان العلماء ما رأيت في كتب الإسلام مثل المحلى لابن حزم والمغني للشيخ موفق (ذكر ذلك ابن رجب في الذيل ٢٩٤/٣ قال: وقرأت بخط الحافظ الديلمي قال: سمعت الشيخ علاء الدين المقدسي - قلت: وقد أجاز لي المقدسي هذا - قال: سمعت شيخنا أبا العباس ابن تيمية - قال الذهبي: وأظنني سمعت من شيخنا ابن تيمية - يقول: قال لي الشيخ الدين عبد الرحمن بن إبراهيم القزازي: كان الشيخ عز الدين بن عبد السلام شيخنا يرسلني أستعير له المحلى والمجلي من ابن عربي، وقال: قال الشيخ عز الدين: ما رأيت في كتب الإسلام في العلم مثل المحلى والمجلي، وكتاب المغنى للشيخ موفق الدين بن قدامة في جودتها وتحقيق ما فيها ونقل عن ابن عبد السلام أيضا أنه قال: لم تطب نفسي بالفتيا حتى صار عندي نسخة المغنى)

Sheikh said *“Mujhko to itna Malka tha Kitab Chuney ka, Raat ki Andheri me Utha, Eisa Chuta, Ha Ye Tirmithi he, Ha Ye Nasai he, Ha Ye Fulan he. Waha kaha Bhatti thi. Leykin sab kuch Maloom hota.”*

I had such a skill in touching books; that I would wake up in the middle of the night. Just by touching a book I'd be able to say which book it was. This is Tirmithi. This is Nasai. This is such a book. There were no lights in them days but I would be able to tell everything.

Sheikh would often say that I still remember the dot in which the lesson ended in *“Panj Ganj.”* Sheikh would constantly quote incidents in his past with impeccable, pristine detail. Even childhood incidents would be narrated with perfection. Sheikh would mention the Takhreej of Ahadith off the top of his head, difference in wording and what later scholars have said regarding the Hadith. The miracle in Sheikh's memory was that, even at 80+, his memory was impeccable. To say Sheikh had a photographic memory would not be an understatement.

Sheikh would rarely talk about his knowledge or academic stature. I observed Sheikh recall events with precise quotes, words, areas, people who were there with such precise detail as if he was witnessing it before his eyes. Sheikh mentioned to Mufti Taqi sb that in the Science of Hadith I don't think there is any book which I haven't read.

Sheikh would often pause and say, *“How do I know this?”* or *“Why did I do this?”* as if he is asking a question. Sheikh would then elaborate further. Sheikh would mention incidents in the past in his own Jaunpuri dialect (E.g. *“Kya Hoy Ghawa”* instead of *“Kya Ho Ghaya”*) and would then translate into Urdu.

Sheikh's Tahqeeq on different topics is such that even the research of students nowadays, with the assistance of Shamilah, the internet and the books that are available to them, cannot even shadow.

Sheikh left behind 2 volumes of Nibraas al-Sari (Sharh on Sahih al Bukhari, 1 vol unpublished). Ml Ayyub sb of Leicester also published many of Sheikh's answers to different queries along with other topics regarding Sahih al Bukhari, Sahih Muslim etc. in 4 volumes called *“Al Yawaaqit.”* Sheikh also left behind countless handwritten footnotes on Fathul Bari, Sahih Muslim, Tirmithi, Bathlul Majhood, al Isabah and many other books.

Sheikh acting on Azeemah (Eminence) and not Rukhsah (Lenience)

Sheikh's actions would always be on the precautionary opinion. Ml Yusuf Shabbir sb has mentioned many such incidents². In October 2016, Sheikh was very ill. It was said to him to do Jama' (join between two prayers) as per the opinion of Imam Ahmad. Sheikh's eyes lit up and said "*Ham Waqt par hi Namaz parhein ghey. Mei itna Tasahul Pasand nahi hu.*" I heard Sheikh often saying, that one should abstain from acts which are Makrooh (disliked) in other Mathahib, albeit not being Makrooh in one's own Math'hab.

Sheikh also disliked Fitnah (turmoil) and advised to stay away from this. Sheikh, in his last visit to the UK, advised teachers and Madaris to avoid Fitnah. This was also his last advice to senior teachers of Mazahirul Uloom.

Sheikh's personality

If one reads the Seerah of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ and wants to look at a recent example, they need to look no further than Sheikh. Sheikh was a man of compassion, affection, love, care, empathy, mercy, forbearance, kindness and soft-heartedness. If Sheikh got the slightest doubt that he has upset someone, he would, without delay, make that person happy by giving him some food etc.

Sheikh would often make light-humour with his close ones. Many people misinterpreted Sheikh reprimanding others, assuming that it was due to malice and hatred. Sheikh would himself say that "*Meira Daantna to Muhabbat sei hota hei. Mei sirf Ussi ko Daantta hu Jiss sei Mujh ko Ta'aluq hei. Jiska mujh sei koi Ta'aluq nahi hei, Us ko Daantna mei kya Faidah?*"

"My reprimanding is out of love and care. I only reprimand the ones I care about and have a connection with. What benefit is there in reprimanding ones who have no connection/relation with me?"

Whenever Sheikh would tell me off or rebuke me, in lesson or outside, in privacy or openly, I would feel the sincerity, love and affection. When Sheikh would not tell me off for a couple of days, I would get worried that maybe I have displeased

² See obituary on Nawadir.org

Sheikh. Sheikhs telling-off would be only out of love. In this way, Sheikh would also rectify our faults.

As I am from Blackburn, Sheikh would often ask me regarding his close ones within the UK. In March 2016 a guest came from Kashmir. Sheikh remembered several names from Kashmir and asked him regarding them. When people would visit Sheikh, he would ask them where they are from. He would then request them to pass on his Salam to his close ones from that particular place. Sheikh was unique in that he would love people and maintain relations without any reason/agenda. I haven't seen anyone more loving and caring than Sheikh.

Sheikh would treat his Khuddam with amazing etiquette. Sheikh would himself eat less and would feed his Khuddam, constantly quoting the Hadith;

فأطعموهم مما تأكلون (رواه البخاري)

Sheikh would randomly give his Khuddam gifts. I remember once Sheikh called me and gave me 2000 Rupees, and told me to distribute it to the students that do Sheikhs work. If one of his Khuddam would fall ill, Sheikh would immediately order food/tea to be cooked and sent. Sheikh would then constantly ask regarding that person. If a Khadim would not attend to Sheikh (at a time when he usually does) Sheikh would ask regarding him, if he's ok etc.

When Sheikh's more elderly/respected students, those that had studied under him in earlier years/knew Sheikh for longer, would come, Sheikh would not forget about us. I used to pray Salah right next to Sheikh. In April 2017, one of Sheikh's most loved and respected students came and stood next to Sheikh for Salah. After Iqamah was read, Sheikh asked regarding me and ordered me to stand next to him. In Sheikh's journeys, he would always ask regarding certain people, where they are, whether they have eaten etc. Big, respected, well known scholars would come to see him, but Sheikh would be worried about his Khuddam. This was such a unique attribute almost unfindable in this era.

This reminded me of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ:-

يعطي كل جلسائه بنصيبه لا يحسب جلسيه أن أحدا أكرم عليه منه (رواه الترمذي في الشمائل عن علي رضي الله عنه)

Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fulfilled the rights of every person present. That means, whatever right was due in talking and showing

happiness, was fulfilled by him, so much so, that every person present would think that Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam is honouring me the most.

In this way, Sheikh was similar. He would fulfil the rights of every person present, and in this way, each person would think Sheikh likes me and is honouring me the most.

Sheikh would never forget anyone's favours on him. In December 2016 someone came to visit Sheikh after approximately 16 years. Sheikh asked him his name etc and fed him breakfast. After he went outside Sheikh whispered to me "*Us ka khyaal rakhna! Us ne meirey liye bahowt kaam kiya he*" (Take care of him! He has done a lot for me). In February 2017, Sheikh remembered Blackburn and started asking me regarding the Madrasah. Then he mentioned to me that the room he stays in is really simple yet comfortable. He also said to me "*Abdus Samad Bahowt Acha Meyzbaan He. Bhuka Pyaasa Nahi Rakhta*". In this way Sheikh would remember different peoples' favours.

Sheikh was extremely humble. Practically every individual whom Sheikh knew was well read/learned, Sheikh would request them repeatedly to check his works. In January 2017, Sheikh requested MI Aqil Sb to repeatedly check Nibraas.

Sheikh was the most moderate/balanced person I have ever seen³. Sheikh would have an unbiased/tolerant approach to everything.

Whenever I sat with Sheikh, all the problems that I would have, all the tiredness, fatigue etc would disappear. Sheikh's existence was enough. After Sheikh's passing, I constantly remember Sheikh reprimanding me. I think to myself that such a high, experienced scholar, a Wali of Allah, had this much love and compassion for us.

³ As it was said about Hafidh Abul Fadhl al-Maqidisi (507AH):

كان بعيداً من الفضول والتعصب (ذكره الذهبي في التاريخ ٩٢/١١ نقلاً عن شيوخه في تاريخهمذان)

"He abstained from frivolous or partisan talk"

Sheikh in Sulook and Tasawwuf

Whenever one sat with Sheikh he would mention incidents in his past, mentioning great scholars such as;

1. Mawlana As'adullah Rampuri, who Sheikh would mention by saying "Meiray Mushfiqo Muhsin, Hadhrat Aqdas Nazim Sb."
2. Sh Zakariyya Kandhalwi, who Sheikh would mention by saying "Hadhrat Sheikh." When Sheikh would mention him in lessons, Sheikh would say "Saabiq Sheikhul Hadeeth Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur, Hadhrat Sheikh"
3. Moulana Ziya al-Haq Faizabaadi who Sheikh would mention by saying "Mawlana." I heard Sheikh once call him "Imamud Dunya, Imam Bananey Wala", when mentioning how he taught Mawlana Haneef Jawnpuri.

Apart from these, Sheikh would quote with great reverence scholars from the past such as,

- Hadhrat Madani who Sheikh would say "Hadhrat to Imam the."
- Hadhrat Thanwi who Sheikh called Hadhrat Aqdas Thanwi.
- Hadhrat Raipuri referred to as "Imamul Arifeen"
- Shah Wasiyullah
- Mawlana Khaleel Ahmed Saharanpuri (who Sheikh would call "Barey Hadhrat" and "Fakhrul Muhaditheen")
- Mufti Muzaffar Husain.
- Moulana Athar (the brother of Mufti Muzaffar.) Sheikh would mention many incidents regarding him.

Sheikh would narrate incident after incident and would say that "Bachow Ye Qissay nahi he. Ye Ibrat he." That these are not stories rather incidents which have very important morals. When one would sit in these Majalis they would feel as if they are witnessing these incidents right in front of their eyes. Many of Sheikh's disciples would say that when we sit in Sheikh's room and he mentions these incidents, we can feel "Noor" emanating from Sheikh.

Sheikh would also extensively mention his childhood, how he spent it in poverty, his Mother dying at a young age, his Nani (Maternal Grandmother) looking after him. Sheikh mentioned that his Nani had immense love for him and looked after him a lot.

When someone would give Bay'ah to Sheikh, he would emphasise;

1. Following the Sunnah
2. Reciting Qur'an daily
3. Reciting Athkaar/Masnoon Duas daily

Sheikh's Zuhd (Asceticism) Piety and Charity

There are many incidents of Sheikh's Zuhd. To mention all would take days! I saw Sheikh would receive gifts from many people. Despite having the financial means to eat good food, Sheikh would regularly eat the Daal of Madrasah. Sheikh would always purchase the food. Peer Talha and Bhai Ajmal would also send food daily. At times when there weren't any Chappatis, Sheikh would suffice by drinking the Daal. Sheikh would always be considerate of us. He would always eat less to feed us.

Any money gifted to Sheikh would immediately be given to charity. Sheikh lived a life of abstinence and had no interest in the materials of this world. When one would come to see Sheikh and present gifts, he would be more interested in books. Many would gift expensive pens, clothes to Sheikh, but Sheikh had no concern for these things. Sheikh would often say "Mujhe In cheezey se kya faidah?"

In my two years, I saw Sheikh would give 5000 Rupees daily in charity. MI Yunus Randeria mentioned that In the last decade, Sheikh was probably the largest donor for both Mazahirul Uloom Jadid and Qadim. Sheikh would also gift many books (duplicate copies) to the libraries there.

Sheikh would sleep on the floor in Saharanpur. When Sheikh travelled to UK, a bed was available, yet Sheikh would choose to sleep on the floor. In Hajj and Umrah, Sheikh would stay in the Haram View apartments, yet would sleep on the floor. Sheikh had no love of this world inside his heart. Sheikh would often say "I have only lied three times in my life."

In Sheikh's last journey to Reunion, UK and for Umrah, Sheikh was gifted tens of thousands of pounds. However, Sheikh did not take even one penny back with him to India. Sheikh had no love, esteem or concern for money, expensive clothes and watches etc rather chose to live a humble life, full of simplicity. Mufti Shabbir sb mentioned that Sheikh's life was like the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Where

in the early years it was involuntary poverty, with voluntary poverty in the later years.

Sheikh would often raise his hands out of the blue, start crying and say “*Ey Allah, Maaf Farma. Ey Allah, Maaf Farma.*”

Final Lesson in Saharanpur

It was the practise of Sheikh that he would teach the last lesson of Sahih Bukhari on a Thursday morning (sometimes Wednesday Evening.) Thousands from nearby villages would attend. Sheikh would teach the last lesson, offer some advice, and request Sheikh Talha to make Dua. 2 years ago, Sheikh Talha was not present. Sheikh ordered a student to call Mawlana Salman Sb (Son – in – law of Hadhrat Sheikh Zakariyya) and said “*Ussi Khandaan se Dua Hogi*” “Dua will only be made from that family.” This year, Sheikh completed Bukhari on the 13th of April.

Musalsalaat of Shah Waliyullah رحمه الله would be read to Sheikh on Friday morning. The reading would start after Fajr. Students from Deoband and other villages would attend. The whole courtyard of Mazahir would be packed. Sheikh would pray Fajr Salah with his Khuddam in his room and then would be brought down. During the reading, just before reading المسلسل بالأسودين Sheikh would instruct Khudaam to distribute dates and water. After completion of the reading Sheikh would then sit and shake everyone’s hand in accordance to التسلسل بالمصاحفة. Students and guests would rush to do Musafah. To protect Sheikh from being hurt or injured by the enthusiasm, some students would stand and make sure everything is running systematically.

This year, Sheikh sat for approximately 40 minutes shaking hands with every single person. MI Luay requested me to hint to Sheikh that it’s time to go but who had the courage to tell Sheikh? MI Luay (taking into consideration Sheikh’s health) finally told Sheikh “*Hadhrat, Ghari Aaghayi!*” (Hadhrat! The wheelchair has arrived.) Sheikh replied “*Mei sab sei Musafah Karun gha.*” (I will shake hands with everyone.) That same day I spoke to a teacher from Manakmaw (a village near Saharanpur) who would attend every Musalsalaat for the last 25 years. He mentioned to me that he has never seen Sheikh sit longer just to shake people’s hands.

That same day Sheikh started crying after Jumma Salah and said *“Kya Malum kitna awr din Baaqi hei. Maloom nahi Ramdhan ke baad toot ke maroon gha ya Allah eyk awr Saal inayat farmayein ghey.”*

Final moments

MI Abdul Rahim Sb has written an informative article on the final moment of Sheikh. When the news spread like fire, that Sheikh has passed away, many packed their bags and travelled to Saharanpur. The attendees of the funeral were estimated to be 750,000 – 1,000,000 people with residents suggesting it was the largest funeral the Saharanpur district has seen.

Sheikh would often relate the saying of Imam Ahmed:-

قولوا لأهل البدع: بيننا وبينكم الجنائز (سؤالات السلمي للدارقطني ص ٣٦١)

The main roads leading inside the city were cordoned off, with only Muslims travelling by foot allowed to enter. Hundreds of sandals/slippers were found the next morning. Non-Muslims living nearby were offering water, tea and snacks to attendees. The funeral prayers were led by Sheikh Talha (the son of Hadhrat Sheikh Zakariyya.) As per the wish and request of Sheikh, he was buried next to Hadhrat Nazim sb who Sheikh had immense love for.

Sheikh left behind 8 nephews, 3 nieces and hundreds of thousands of students. A week after Sheikh's passing, I went to his grave at 12AM and there were people there. A month later, a student told me that throughout the day there is always a group of people there. Such was the acceptance of Sheikh around the world.

During the last 2 years and in particular the months leading to Sheikh's passing, he would often say *“Bachow! Marney kei baad Tum Yaad Rakho Ghey? Panch, Das Rupiya roz Sadqah mei deina! Isaal – e – Sawab ki niyyat se. Jo bhi ho aap ke paas. Kabhi kabhi kuch Quran/Nawafil Parna.”*

“Children! Will you remember me after I die? Give 5/10 Rupees in Sadqah daily with the intention of Isaal – e – Sawab. (with) Whatever you have. Pray Quran/Nafil Salah even.”

I witnessed Sheikh many times crying and saying: “*Muhammad Marney key baad Yaad rakhein ghey? Agar Marney kei baad yaad rakhein ghey to ye he Muhabbat*”

“Muhammad will you remember me after death? If you remember me after my death, this is (real) love.”

After the passing away of Sheikh, many have written obituaries⁴ and many others have seen good dreams. Alhamdulillah this is a good sign⁵. Imam Nawawi states:-

“كل مسلم مات فألهم الله تعالى الناس أو معظمهم الثناء عليه كان ذلك دليلا على أنه من أهل الجنة” (المنهاج شرح

صحيح مسلم بن الحجاج ١٩/٧)

“Every Muslim that passes away, and people praise him, this is a sign he is from Jannah.”

Sheikh said in his last trip to the UK regarding Moulana Muhammad Didat “He is Allamatul Kutub (A master of books.) When he passes away, only then will people realise his worth” Ironically Sheikh passed away before him and only then have people realised Sheikh, his knowledge and the great legacy he left behind.

As I sit writing this, I think to myself that when am I ever going to find someone, who (like Sheikh) will reprimand me out of love? Who will love and maintain relations without any worldly motive or personal agenda? Who will look after and nurture us? Who will we go to for our questions/problems?

⁴ (<https://nawadir.org/2017/08/08/muhaddithul-asr-shaykh-muhammad-yunus-jownpuri-memories-publications-obituaries/>)

⁵ Ibn Abi Ya'la, ibn Asakir, Sibte ibnul Jawzi, Thahabi, ibn Kathir and others have all mentioned different incidents regarding pious saints, and that good dreams were seen regarding them. Thahabi also mentions regarding someone who passed away 300 years before him, that bad dreams were seen about him, after which he says (نسأل الله العفو) “We ask Allah for forgiveness.”

We have become orphans after the passing of our Sheikh. Oh Allah, grant Sheikh the highest abode in Jannatul Firdaws, with the Prophet ﷺ.

Mohammed ibn Faruq Sheth

Blackburn

06/09/17

15/12/38

وكل الذي دون الممات قليل	♡	لكل اجتماع من الخليلين فرقة
دليل على أن لا يدوم خليل	♡	وإن افتقادي واحدا بعد واحد
أحبة ليس في قلبي لهم بدل	♡	غابوا ولكنني ما زلت أحفظهم
أنا الوفي لهم حتى وإن رحلوا	♡	أنا المحب الذي بالعهد ملتزم