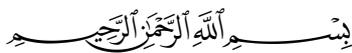


## Anecdotes from My Time With Muhaddihul Asr, Hazrat Shaykh Muhammad Yunus Jawnpuri Rahimahullah



I am not from those who can be considered a close associate of Hazrat Shaykh Muhammad Yunus rahimahullah, but as sunnah dictates, everyone who knew him would think they are receiving his special attention.

As a student of Alim studies at Darul Uloom Bury, I was blessed with seeing and hearing from great scholars. I believe in 1999 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Alimiyyah student, Hazrat Muhaddithul Asr visited the Darul Uloom. I recall trying my hardest to do some khidmah and wishing for an opportunity to serve him. It was indeed very difficult to do so.

However, that year in Ramadhan, I travelled for Umrah with the Darul Uloom group of teachers and students. Hazrat Shaykh had also arrived for Umrah. My respected teacher, Hazrat Mawlana Abdurrahim Sahib would be at the service of Hazrat Shaykh, and I would in turn listen to Mawlana Abdur Rahim Sahib's Quran in Haram Sharif.

On one occasion in the mataf, Mawlana Abdurrahim Sahib wanted to rest and asked me to sit next to Hazrat Shaykh in his place and attend to his needs. This was my first personal meeting with Hazrat Shaykh.

During that journey, I was blessed to be in the khidmah of Hazrat Shaykh throughout Ramadhan, Eid and beyond. A few hours before I'tikaf was about to start, we were in Masjid Nabawi. Hazrat Shaykh was about to start I'tikaf. I was sitting in the Masjid when a person came to me and said that Hazrat Shaykh is calling me. I presented myself to Hazrat Shaykh, who asked me to perform I'tikaf with him. I happily agreed. Hazrat Shaykh then dismissed all the other people. Throughout the I'tikaf period, I would individually take care of Hazrat Shaykh for istinja, wudhu, to the rawdah area etc. I would bring his suhoor and iftaar, awaken him for tahajjud, press and massage his legs and feet, save his place in riyadhul jannah and so forth. During those days, Hazrat Shaykh would walk with the aid of a stick in one hand and holding my shoulder or hand with the other hand. Many people would come to serve Hazrat Shaykh including scholars and Arab brothers. He would politely refuse their services and say that I have Irfan to do this.

I would collect Hazrat Shaykh's Suhoor from Hazrat Mawlana Umerjee Rahimahullah's hotel room and sneak it into the Masjid for Hazrat Shaykh. I would hold the food in both my hands and wrap myself in a large shawl in a way that the food cannot be noticed, to ensure I am not turned away at the Masjid doors because of the food. When Hazrat Shaykh would see me sneaking the suhoor in, he would laugh and say 'Yeh baraa hakeem hey' (he is a wise person).

Following this journey, Alhumdulillah, I was fortunate to have accompanied Hazrat Shaykh during other travels also.

### **His Suhoor & Iftaar**

From what I recall, Hazrat Shaykh would only eat approximately half an omelette for suhoor and half a sandwich for iftar. He would tell me to eat with him quickly, passing his food to me. He was very wary of people looking at food lest their looking may be a cause of nazar (evil eye). For the same reason, Hazrat Shaykh would ask me to sit in a way so as to block the view of others whilst he was eating.

### **His Recital of the Qur'an**

I would stay in haramayn shareefayn with Hazrat from morning till after Esha. Hazrat Shaykh would be engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an all day long. In my limited knowledge of Hazrat Shaykh, during those days, recitation was his predominant action in the Masjid.

I recall very clearly that very frequently Hazrat Shaykh would be weeping whilst reciting, and would hide his blessed face behind the mushaf, probably out of humbleness.

### **His Health, Sabr, Shukr & Resilience**

Hazrat suffered from constant ill health, yet he never gave up in his pursuit of ilm, amal, taqwa, taharah etc. He was thankful to Allah even during the hardest of times.

On one occasion (maybe in 2000 or 2001) I travelled for Hajj. I was walking in Al-Masjid Al-Haram with my younger brother Hafiz Rizwan when I spotted Hazrat Shaykh sitting in the Ottoman extension area of the Masjid. I rushed to meet Hazrat Shaykh and took my brother with me. Hazrat was very pleased to see me and instructed me to sit with him.

After sometime, Hazrat became very ill and turned around to call me. I went forward. Hazrat said something to the effect, 'I am feeling the effects of black magic which so and so person did to me. Bring me some tea Irfan.' At that moment, a number of seniors said to Hazrat, 'Shall we get the tea for you?' Hazrat became slightly displeased and told them to sit down and said, 'Irfan is a hakeem (wise person), he knows how to bring tea for me.' I rushed to Bayt al-Doughnut (outside the old Bab al-Umrah gate) and bought tea for Hazrat as I would normally do. I asked the shop keeper to wrap the tea in foil and put a lid on the cup. On a previous occasion, I noticed Hazrat Shaykh was intrigued by a small plastic tea stirring spoon. I asked the shop keeper to give me a handful of such spoons. When I returned to the Masjid, I unpacked the tea for Hazrat and served it to him. On drinking the tea, Allah caused Hazrat to feel better. Spontaneously, Hazrat looked at me and gave me a duaa which I can never forget, 'Allah aap ko ilm e naafi' ataa farmaye' (Allah grant you beneficial knowledge).

Once I knew Hazrat was feeling better, I presented the plastic spoons to him. He was very pleased and I believe he said he would take them back to India.

## **Taharah (Purity)**

Hazrat Shaykh was very cautious to ensure his body and clothes were pure and free from even the slightest impurity. When I first started taking Hazrat to the toilet and for ablution in the blessed cities of Makkah and Madinah, Hazrat admonished me severely on a few occasions for not keeping Hazrat's clothes far enough from the ground even though his garment would not touch the ground.

At the time of ablution, Hazrat would make me wash the foot of his walking stick and would do so himself on some occasions.

## **Love for Sunnah**

On one occasion I removed Hazrat's right foot first from his shalwar. Hazrat became so angry that I was close to tears for causing him distress out of my stupidity. At seeing Hazrat's displeasure, I apologised and moved away to a distance. After some time, Hazrat called me, smiled and said to others something like, 'Irfan naraz hogaya' (Irfan is displeased).

I once requested Hazrat to do tahneek as he was at the airport departing from the UK. He asked me, 'Has the child been born yet?' I said, 'no'. He took the date out of his blessed mouth, returned it to me and said, 'Tahneek is sunnah after the child is born and not before.'

## **Humility**

The following year, as soon as Hazrat arrived and I met him, he was very displeased with me. I wondered why. Hazrat had only just landed. Then I realised that during my final meeting with Hazrat the year before, I had requested tahneek in a way which contradicted the sunnah. This is why Hazrat is displeased. I was very sad at this. On Hazrat's departure from the UK, my brother Hafiz Rizwan was with Hazrat at the airport. Hafiz Rizwan phoned me to say, 'I am in the lounge area with Hazrat, would you like to speak with him?' I spoke to Hazrat and said, 'Hazrat, I have caused you a lot of distress with my actions and stupidity, please forgive me.' The greatest Muhaddith of our time, who had every right to be angry with me, responded in a manner which can only be manifested by someone of his status, he replied in a soft tone, 'You have not caused me any distress. Please forgive me as I have shouted at you a lot.' My eyes filled up with tears when I heard this and I replied, 'Hazrat, your shouting at me is my good fortune.'

## **Love for Knowledge**

Once in Masjid Nabawi during I'tikaf, I had put Hazrat to sleep after Fajr and went out for some need. Some Arab brothers gave me a book regarding Aqeedah. When I returned to Hazrat, his eyes opened. He saw the book in my hand and immediately asked, 'What is this?' I told him that it was given to me. I then gave the book to Hazrat. He sat up and began to read it. He put the book down only after he had read it entirely from cover to cover.

## **Generosity**

Every day after Asr, in the mataf Hazrat would distribute money to the poor and the beggars. He would even gift money, dates and other things to those who he had affection towards. All this when Hazrat himself was in dire need of basic day-to-day necessities.

## **Respect for Senior Scholars**

Once my brother Hafiz Rizwan and I were in Hazrat Shaykh's presence in Al-Masjid al-Haram when Hazrat asked me to stand him up. Hazrat then said, 'let's go.' Whilst holding a walking stick and taking support from my shoulder and hand, Hazrat took Hafiz Rizwan and I out of the Masjid, through a number of small roads and alleyways until we arrived at an old house. There was a long queue from beyond the door of the house leading up to a bed where I could

see a very aged person lying down. People were meeting the person. Hazrat stood at the back of the queue and we stood with him. When the aged man saw Hazrat, in a strong tone, he asked the people in the queue to move away and make way for Hazrat. Hazrat very humbly, head towards the ground, walked up to the person with us, shook his hands and said, 'Hazrat, duao ki guzarish/darkhwast' (request for supplications). We also met the person. As we walked away supporting Hazrat, he said this was Hazrat Mawlana Abrarul Haq Sahib Hardowi, the last khalifah of Hazrat Thanwi rahimahumullah.

### **Care and Love for Others**

Hazrat's concern for his associates was mainly for their hereafter. His admonishing, guidance, humour etc. was always for the purpose of making the hereafter better for us. He never ever did anything for any worldly gain.

### **Final Word**

Hazrat Shaykh's demise was unbearable for all those who knew him and even those who had only heard of him. He leaves behind his methods, knowledge and fond memories inscribed upon the heart. Such a sincere person, a true human being, a wali of Allah.

May Allah grant our Hazrat Shaykh the best of rewards and join us with him in Jannah. Ameen.

Irfan Sidyot

London, UK

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