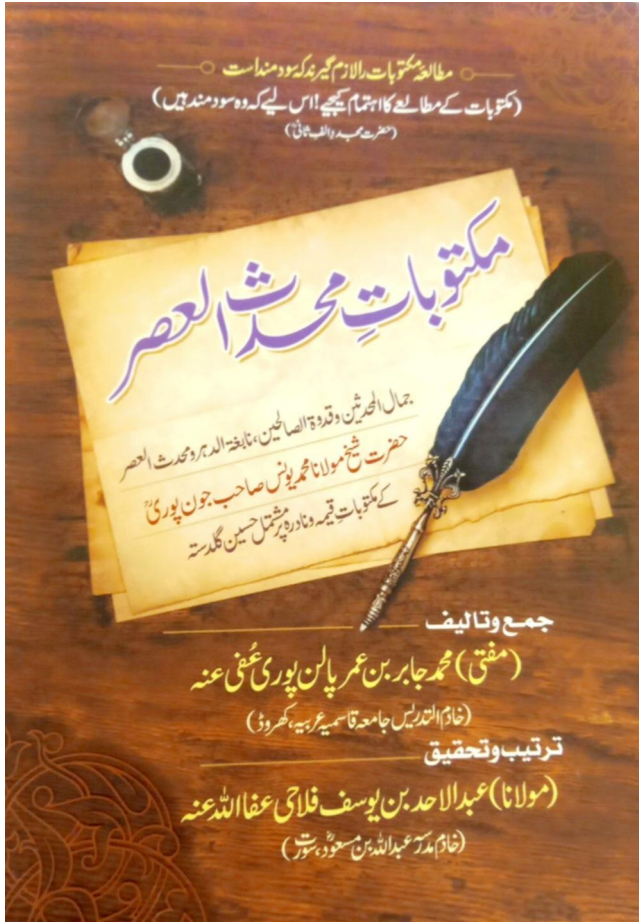


مکتوبات محدث العصر

(The letters of the expert of Ḥadīth of the era)

On 30th December 2023, we travelled to Blackburn to meet some ‘Ulamā’ and visit some Dārul ‘Ulūm. After Zuhrah ṣalāh, we were invited to our dear and respected friend, Muftī Dr. Yūsuf Shabbir ḥafīzahullāh’s house where we had food and a fruitful discussion about a number of issues related to ‘ilm and da’wah. When leaving Muftī Shabbir’s house, he honoured me, as his usual practice, by giving me a number of books. One of them was titled ‘Maktūbāt Muḥaddith al-Aṣr’ (The Letters of The Expert of Ḥadīth of The Era) which is an Urdu collection of Shaykh Muḥammad Yūnus Jaunpūrī raḥimahullāh’s letters which were exchanged between him and his teachers, senior ‘Ulamā’, colleagues and students. Upon my return from the journey, I started reading the book and highlighting the important and interesting information from several different letters. Thereafter, I shared that information with our Bukhārī year students at Madani Madrasah, London. One student (M. Ali) made notes of those beneficial points and these are now presented to the readers below. However, we avoided adding our reflections or comments to allow the readers to reflect, ponder and take lessons.

(Mahfuz Ahmad)



Name of the book: Maktūbāt Muḥaddith al-Aṣr

Compiler: Muftī Muḥammad Jābir b. ‘Umar Pālanpūrī

Editor: Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Aḥad b. Yūsuf Falāḥī

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Notes:

- ❖ Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā advised Shaykh Yūnus that one should always follow the footsteps of the Akābir to the best of their ability, focusing on the inner self more than the outer (p. 44).
- ❖ In a letter to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā, Shaykh Yūnus says that today's *Ghayr Muqallidin* (those who object following an Imām of a *madhhab*) actually follow the opinions of Ibn al-Qayyim RH on many issues (p. 47).
- ❖ Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā received a complaint that Shaykh Yūnus was going beyond 12 pm for his lessons, so Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā sent him a letter mentioning that the students nowadays are unable to continue learning past the lesson time as they find it difficult to concentrate and it may bore them. Therefore, it is better to finish the lesson on time (p. 58).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus wrote to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā that he was finding some elements of *Taşawwuf* difficult to maintain. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Zakariyyā responded by stating that *Taşawwuf* is based on the ḥadīth of *iḥsān*:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ

Therefore, one should maintain practising upon the sunnah and through that, one will climb the status of *Taşawwuf* InshāAllāh (p. 66).

- ❖ When Shaykh Yūnus was unwell, Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangohi (d. 1417/1996) advised that he should recite the following āyah from Sūrah al-Baqarah:

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادْرَأَتْكُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ٧٢

one thousand and one times, blow those words into salt, and use that salt for everything as a method of *Ruqyah* (p. 109).

- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus wrote to ‘Allāmah Sayyid Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwī (d. 1420/1999) confirming that he had received the gift which he had sent and is planning to buy books of Ḥadīth with it so that it can be better utilised (p. 114).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus wrote to Qārī Ṣiddīq Aḥmad Bandawī (d. 1418/1997) saying, “I feel as though I have been afflicted by *siḥr*.” Qārī Ṣāḥib gave him the same prescription as Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangohi mentioned above. The only difference is that Qārī Ṣāḥib said that the āyah should be recited one thousand times and if he is unable to, he should get someone else to recite it for him (p. 166).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus wrote to Mawlānā Dr. Taqī Uddīn Nadwī mentioning that the Bukhārī year of *dars niẓāmī* plays a great role in creating passion and desire for the study of Ḥadīth amongst the students. Shaykh Yūnus then praised the work of Mawlānā Dr. Taqī Uddīn Nadwī on *Al-Ta’līq al-Mumajjad* which is a sharḥ of *Muwatta’ Muḥammad* by Imām ‘Abdul Ḥayy Laknawī. Shaykh Yūnus highlighted that he added beneficial footnotes and, in addition to that, he did a critical analysis of some narrators which may not have been

possible for Imām ‘Abdul Ḥayy Laknawī to do due to the lack of resources during his time (p. 199).

- ❖ In a letter exchanged in 1991, Shaykh Yūnus described Saddam Ḥussain as someone who is influenced by zindīqs and portrayed him as a great *ẓālim* who was destroying Muslim lands with the support of the US (p. 200). This highlights the association and connection that Shaykh kept with the current affairs such that he was well-informed with the states and situations around the globe, especially the Islamic world, even though he was a dedicated personality for Ḥadīth studies.
- ❖ Mawlānā Aḥmadullah Bijnūrī wrote to Shaykh Yūnus in 1392/1972 informing him to add what Kawtharī said regarding the Hadith of (ثَمَانِيَةُ أَوْعَالٍ) in the footnote of *Badhl al-Majhūd* but to not include Kawtharī’s name as the scholars of Saudi may not appreciate his contribution (p. 230).
- ❖ Mufti Shabbīr (Senior Ḥadīth lecturer at Dārul ‘Ulūm, Blackburn) informed his teacher, Shaykh Yūnus, that he had been given the post of teaching *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. Shaykh Yūnus suggested that he utilise the following *Ḥashiyāt* of *Jalalayn*: *Ḥashiyat al-Jumal* and *Ḥashiyat al-Ṣāwī*, and that it is worth purchasing them if he did not have them (p. 283).
- ❖ Mufti Shabbir informed Shaykh that he had been given the post of teaching Sharḥ Ma‘ānī al-Āthār. Shaykh observed that even though this book is in regards to Ḥadīth, it is actually a book on Ḥanafī fiqh and provides evidence for their fiqh. If one takes a look at Imām Muḥammad’s *Muwaṭṭa’*, *Kitāb al-Āthār* and *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah*, they will notice that Imām Taḥāwī followed the method of the fuqahā’ in quoting Ḥadīths. They will also realise that the origin of most of his works are Imām Muḥammad’s books. He adds that Shāh Waliullāh, in *Ithāf al-Nabīh*, included the *Muwaṭṭa’* of Imām Mālik and *Muwaṭṭa’* of Imām Muḥammad as a part of fiqh books as opposed to Ḥadīth books. Shaykh said that those books suited Mufti Shabbir as he is a Mufti. Because Shaykh delves into the study of Ḥadīth, he also encouraged Mufti Shabbir to purchase one of the *al-Kutub al-Sittah* as opposed to these books (p. 288).
- ❖ Mufti Shabbir perhaps asked Shaykh if there was any basis to the *khatm al-Bukhārī* for certain events, such as when people became sick or were in need of rain. Shaykh Yūnus replied that he was not entirely sure when this practice of *khatm al-Bukhārī* to avert difficulties had started. When one looks into the lives of ‘Ulamā’, it seems to be an ancient practice. He quotes:
 - ‘Allāmah Qaṣṭallānī: Shaykh Abū Muḥammad b. Abū Jamrah said this practice was passed down from generation to generation. He passed away in 675 AH (1276 CE) and therefore, this proves that this was a well practised and true account.

- Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372) said in his kitāb *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* that the ‘Ulamā’ used the recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* as a *waṣīlah* to make du‘ā’ for rain.
- In the beginning of *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, Mullā ‘Alī Qārī (d. 1014/1605) mentioned that Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn quoted his uncle - Sayyid Aṣīl al-Dīn (d. 884/1479) - as explaining that whenever they would read *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* from cover to cover, it would help them achieve their needs, thereby proving that the practice could be traced back to even to the eighth and ninth centuries.
- Muḥammad b. ‘Allān (d. 1057/1647) has a book called *Dalīl al-Fāliḥīn* in which he mentions that *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* was not recited in any state of difficulty except that the hardship was alleviated.
- ‘Allāmah ‘Abdul Ḥaqq Dehlawī (d. 1052/1642) mentioned a similar point in his sharḥ of *Mishkāṭ* titled *Ashī‘āt al-Lama‘āt*.

Shaykh Yūnus then commented that the *khatm al-Bukhārī* has been a common practice for the last eight centuries (pp. 331-4).

- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus made du‘ā’ that Allāh attaches Muftī Shabbir to the Sciences of Ḥadīth. There are two types of *munāsabah* (attachment): *Fiṭrī Munāsabah* (natural attachment) and *Kasbī Munāsabah* (attachment acquired through different means). Shaykh Yūnus says that this can be achieved through reading books of Ḥadīth constantly (p. 335).
- ❖ Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad Palanpūrī asked Shaykh Yūnus whether there was any basis for the common practice of honouring guests by standing on either side of them in two rows to welcome them. Shaykh Yūnus replied by saying, “I do not know of any Ḥadīth. However, in *Tahdhīb al-Āthār* of Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī rh, I found an incident where he mentioned, ‘Whilst we were in maktab, we used to wait on both sides of the road and Muhallab b. Abū Ṣufrah would pass by as would his sons and we would stand there to show honour to him.’” Shaykh Yūnus mentions that Imām Ibn Jarīr added this under the chapter ‘*Standing to welcome the guest*’ highlighting that there is nothing wrong with doing so (p. 373).
- ❖ In response to a question, Shaykh Yūnus says that the methods used and the number of dhikr recited have been prescribed by spiritual mentors to train the seekers to build a habit of doing dhikr of Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, these methods should not be considered as *bid‘ah* (p. 403).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus states that the purpose of *Ijtimā‘ī* (collective) dhikr is as a motivation and training so that people feel motivated to engage in dhikr when they are alone. He explains the stance that *Ijtimā‘ī* (collective) dhikr is no different to a maktab teacher instructing his students to repeat after him in order to learn a Sūrah (p. 404).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus mentions, in response to a query about collective du‘ā’, that it can be done occasionally but people should ensure they are not creating a habit out of it (p. 417).

- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus states that making du‘ā’ upon completion of Sūrah Yāsīn can be done, but it should not be made mandatory as this will be considered *bid‘ah* (p. 448).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus advised Mawlānā Jābir to utilise his time during the holidays of Madrasah so that he may progress in attaining more knowledge as a teacher of Madrasah (p. 466).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus mentioned that it is fine to wear a *ta‘wīdh* and place it wherever appropriate, demonstrating that he does not consider it *bid‘ah* (p. 474).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus advised an individual who was going for Ḥajj to keep the following books with him and become familiar with their content before leaving for Ḥajj: *Mu‘allim al-Ḥujjāj* and *Faḍā’il-e-Ḥajj* (p. 485).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus advised some of his *murīd* (seekers of guidance) as a spiritual mentor that it is perfectly fine to do *dhikr sirrī* when one is suffering from a headache instead of doing *dhikr jahrī* (p. 504).
- ❖ An individual once complained about his relationship with his wife. Shaykh Yūnus recommended that he recite the following āyah:

فَالْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ

 and blow on his wife in a manner that she does not realise (p. 510).
- ❖ Shaykh Yūnus advised his student to look after his health and ensure that he did not sleep for less than six hours per day (p. 545). From this, one can understand how thoughtful Shaykh Yūnus was as well as his excellent attention to detail (of his students in this case).