FOUR LETTERS OF ŞAYH ḤASAN AL-ʿAṬṬĀR TO ŞAYH ṬAḤİR AL-ḤUSAYNĪ OF JERUSALEM

BY

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Abstract

Şayh Hasan al-ʿAṭṭār, a young ṭālim of al-Azhar, left Egypt for the Ottoman-Turkish lands in 1803. He stayed there for seven years before moving to Damascus in 1810 where he stayed for the next three and a half years. In late 1813 he joined the Hağg caravan to Mecca. On his way back he went to Jerusalem where he enjoyed the hospitality of its ḥanafī muftī Şayh Ṭāhir al-Husainī whom he apparently befriended while the latter was studying at al-Azhar. From Jerusalem he returned to Egypt in the spring of 1814.

The four letters sent by ʿAṭṭār to Şayh Ṭāhir shed a light on his movements and mood of thought at that time, and on the relations between ʿulamāʾ of al-Azhar and those of Jerusalem and the cultural interests of the latter. Two of the letters are of special importance because they give us a first-hand account of his way back to Cairo and of the personal hardships which he encountered after his resettlement there. Moreover, he referred in them to the books which he started to teach and to the great interest they aroused among the Azharite students. In short, these rare letters show a side of ʿAṭṭār's life unknown to scholars and help us to understand the condition of the ʿulamāʾ under Muḥammad Alī.

It is not the intention of this paper to present a biography of Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār, but only to introduce him to the reader and especially to refer to the circumstances which led him to write these four rare letters found lately in Jerusalem. These letters help us to trace his movements


2 The first letter was found in the archives of the Department of the Revival of the Islamic Heritage in the Directorate of the Aṣqāf in East Jerusalem. The three others were found in a private collection of documents kept by the ʿUsainī of Jerusalem. My thanks are due to Advocate Ṣaʿīd al-Ḥusainī of Jerusalem and to Dr. Hamad Yusuf,
just before he returned to Cairo in the spring of 1814 after eleven years of distancing himself from Egypt for unclear reason.

Hasan ibn Muhammad al-‘Āṭṭār was a well known Egyptian ‘ālim in the early decades of the nineteenth century who served in the last four years of his life as Ṣayḫ of al-Azhar (1831-1835), the highest post an Egyptian member of the ‘ulamā’ corps would aspire to. ‘Āṭṭār’s family came originally from the Maghrib but he was born in Egypt. He carried the family name of ‘Āṭṭār after the occupation of his father who owned a drugstore in Cairo.³

As a young and bright ‘ālim, ‘Āṭṭār was already teaching in al-Azhar when Napoleon led a French army into Egypt in the summer of 1798. Like many other ‘ulamā’, he at first fled from Cairo to al-Ṣa’īd, but later returned and entered into relations with French scholars who accompanied the expedition. “He was learning from them the arts practiced in their country and teaching them Arabic”⁴ recalled his son decades later.

However as it is well known the French were forced, three years later, to leave the country, (they left Cairo in June-July and Alexandria in September 1801).⁵ But, for some reason, ‘Āṭṭār left Egypt in March 1803 and went to “al-Bilād al-Rūmiyya” (meaning the Ottoman-Turkish lands). In an introduction to a book of his he claimed that he “escaped” from Egypt as a result of the French occupation.⁶ But on a further look we find it difficult to accept this claim without some doubts.

First of all, as stated, while the French were in Egypt he forged relations with them like some other ‘ulamā’. Apparently none of the other ‘ulamā’ left the country except him. Secondly, he himself stated that he was in Damietta “at the end of Di al-Qi’da 1217”/[late March, 1803], on his way to Ottoman-Turkey.⁷ Obviously, he continued to

the Director of the Department of the Revival of the Islamic Heritage for allowing me to have photocopies of these letters, Dr. ‘Ādil Manna’ published in his article “Cultural Relations Between Egyptian and Jerusalem ‘Ulamā’ in the Early Nineteenth Century” pp. 139-152 in Asian and African Studies vol. 17 (1983), a fifth letter of ‘Āṭṭār to Ṣayḥ Ṭāhir (see p. 152). It is undated but from the contents it is obvious that it was sent from Cairo after the return of ‘Āṭṭār.

³ Mubāarak, IV,38; Peter Gran, Islamic Roots of Capitalism, Egypt 1760-1840, (Austin, 1979), p. 78.
⁴ Mubāarak, IV,38.
⁶ Hasan al-Āṭṭār, Ḥašiya ʿalā Šarh al-Azharīyya, (Cairo, A.H. 1291/[1874]), p. 2.
⁷ Ibid. and p. 160.
live in Egypt for more than a year and a half after the evacuation of the French. There is no evidence that during this time, he personally suffered of hardships that made his life intolerable in Egypt and found himself forced to “escape” to another country. In other words, what took him to “al-Bilād al-Rūmiyya” is obscure to us. He left no explanation at all, and as far as it is known, none of his friends and contemporaries referred to the reason of his departure.

Moreover, his whereabouts there are not clear. ‘Alī Mubārak who brings a short biography of ‘Aṭṭār which “certain people of note” drafted for the latter’s son, stated that he went to Ishkodra in Albania (Bilād al-Arna’ūt)\(^8\) meaning today’s Scutari or Shkoder. Prof. Fred De Jong who traced ‘Aṭṭār’s itinerary after he left Egypt, found confirmation to this claim in some of his writings,\(^9\) but he gave us no explanation what took him to Albania, what he did there or how long he stayed in Scutari. However, De Jong is of the belief that ‘Aṭṭār spent the two years between 1808-1810 in Istanbul or in a nearby township.\(^10\) Prof. Peter Gran, on the other hand, is of the opinion that ‘Aṭṭār stayed throughout this period in Üsküdâr, the Asiatic part of Istanbul\(^11\) formerly called Scutari. It is not the intention of this paper to solve the controversy especially that the four letters, the subject of this paper do not belong to this period but to the years after he left Istanbul.

At any rate, ‘Aṭṭār stayed in al-Bilād al-Rūmiyya seven years (1803-1810), after which, as it is known, he moved to Damascus which he reached in 2 Rabi‘ the 1st 1225/7 April 1810.\(^12\) But a month after his arrival to Damascus he left the city with the intention of visiting Jerusalem where, it seems, he had some friends and acquaintances.\(^13\) The ‘ulamā‘ of Jerusalem, after acquiring initial learning in the city at some of the schools attached to the Haram, used to follow up their studies at the Azhar Mosque in Cairo. Thus, some of them seem to have known ‘Aṭṭār from there or might have studied under him. One of these ‘ulamā‘ was Šayḥ Tāhir al-Ḥusaynī who served since 1809 as the Ḥanafi

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\(^8\) Mubārak, IV,38f.
\(^10\) Ibid. p. 109.
\(^11\) Gran, pp. 102ff. and pp. 191ff.
\(^12\) For the date of his arrival to Damascus see his Hašya’ ālā Šarḥ al-Azhariyya, p. 2; see also Abdulrassāzq al-Bitar, Hīyat al-Bāšār fī Tārīḫ al-Qarn al-Ṭāliṭ ‘Āṣar, 3 vols. (Damascus, 1961-1963), I,490; see also De Jong, p. 109.
\(^13\) Gran, p. 106; De Jong, p. 110.
Mufti of Jerusalem, and to whom the four above mentioned letters were addressed.¹⁴

What characterises these letters was that they were personal between two well-acquainted people. Written by ‘Aṭṭār’s own handwriting, they were sent in response to Šayḫ Tāhir’s correspondence to him, except the second letter as we shall see. ‘Aṭṭār arrived to Jerusalem in September 1810. D’Jong referred to this visit in his article, so did Gran. Apparently, he stayed there for a few months as a guest of Šayḫ Tāhir and his cousin Sayyid ‘Umar the Naqīb al-Aṣrāf. After he left the city, and in response to a letter from Šayḫ Tāhir, ‘Aṭṭār sent him a letter from Jaffa which carried the date 20 Dīl-Hīgga 1225 [16.1.1811] (Appendix 1). This letter provides a clue of the objective behind this visit. We learn from it that he regretted leaving Jerusalem. “I was extremely sorry to leave you [he wrote]... but as long as I am in Jaffa I shall keep you informed about myself”. However, it is perhaps possible to imply from this letter that ‘Aṭṭār was hesitant about his sojourn in Damascus. “It would have been better to have prolonged my stay in Jerusalem and to have reconsidered my situation... but as things (ʿumūr) are subject to predestination, there in no choice but to carry them out” he wrote without explaining. However, he added “some of my luggage reached me [to Jaffa] from Nablus and some of it remained in Damascus... I received a letter from Damascus that they are [safely kept] there until we send (somebody) to receive them [sic!]”. Following that he added “as to the question of the treatises (rasā’il) after achieving peace of mind and settling down we shall start studying them”. But he did not explain the nature of these treatises.

However, while he was still in Jaffa, Šayḫ Tāhir it seems asked him to borrow his book Hāšiya ʿala Šarḥ al-Azhariyya which is a book on grammar,¹⁵ in order to make a copy of it. He answered him that “we shall send (somebody) to Damascus to bring the books. Then I shall send it to you to copy it”. Then he asked Šayḫ Tāhir a favour and that was to try to buy from Šayḫ Mahmūd al-Muhtadi of Jerusalem a book on Šāfī‘i law entitled Šarḥ al-Manḥaj or to borrow it for him “until some of my books are brought from Cairo”, he added. Because “I do not have with me any books of the Šāfī‘i school [to which he belonged!], and if I am asked about a problem I need to revise and study.” As

¹⁵ This book was originally written by Ḥalīl ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Azhari (d. 905/1499).
we do not have the answer of Shayh Tahir it is not clear how he dealt with this matter.

At any rate, Aṭṭār returned in May 1811 to Damascus and spent the following two years and a half there occupying himself in writing and teaching. Among his students there we know of Shayh Ḥasan al-Bīṭār and Shayh Muhammad al-Aṭṭār. The first studied fiqh and legal sciences, and the second medicine and science, both of whom became well known ṣulamā’ in the city afterwards. Finally, in the Hağg season of 1228/November-December 1813, which was the first season to take place after the restoration of Hijaz from the Wahhabis by the forces of Muhammad Alī, he traveled to Hijaz to perform the pilgrimage.

Among the letters that we have, there is a short one that carried no date or place in which Aṭṭār asked Shayh Tahir to send him a trustworthy muleteer to carry his books and bring them to Jerusalem (Appendix 2). As he wrote “I have some books which I would like to send to you for safe keeping” and asked him to “keep this (matter) a secret between you and me ...”. It is suggested that he sent this letter from Damascus in late summer 1813 in preparation for his return to Egypt. This also explains his next move. After he performed the Hağg, instead of returning to Egypt directly with the Egyptian caravan, he returned with the Syrian caravan. At Ma’an, in south Jordan, he left the caravan and went to Jerusalem to where he arrived in early spring 1814 apparently to collect his books and luggage. We know of his arrival to Jerusalem at about this time from Aṭṭār’s biography in Mubaharak. It is stated there that while he was in Jerusalem his host, Sayyid Umar, was restored to the post of Naqib al-Ashraf after he had been temporarily out of office. The shari‘i court records of Jerusalem confirm that Umar was reinstated on 9 Rabiat 1, 1229/[1 March, 1814]. At any rate Aṭṭār’s sojourn in Jerusalem did not last long. Late in March, 1814, he left the city back to Egypt via Hebron, Sinai, and Suez, though until 21 Rabiat II/[12.4.1814] he did not reach Cairo yet. We know of this date from a letter which his friend the historian

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16 De Jong, p. 110.
17 Gran, p. 107; Bīṭār, Ḥiyāt al-Baṣar, I.463ff.
18 Gran, p. 107; Taimūr, pp. 222ff.
19 See al-Gabarī, IV,179; Ahmad ibn Zainī Dahlan, Ḥulāsāt al-Kalām fi Bayān ‘Umarā’ al-Balad al-Harrām, 2nd ed. (Beirut, n.d.) p. 328; On his performing the Hajj in the 1228 season see Gran, p. 107, citing Aṭṭār’s commentary on Anākī. (This ms. was not available to me when writing this article.)
20 Mubaharak, IV,39; see also Taimūr, p. 21.
21 See Ṣarī Court of Jerusalem, Record no. 297, fol. 89.
Abdulrahmān al-Ḡabartī sent from Cairo to Sayḥ Tāhir that carried this date urging him among other things to put pressure upon Sayḥ Hasan to speed up his return which meant that Ḡabartī was aware of the expected return of ʿAṯṭār. (A photocopy of this letter is brought as Appendix 5.)

We learn of the itinerary of ʿAṯṭār and the time of his arrival to Cairo from a letter which he sent from there to Jerusalem dated 3 Raḡāb 1229/[21.6.1814]. (Appendix 3). From the contents of the letter we learn that it was sent several weeks after his arrival to Cairo which should have taken place after the 12th of April (the date of Ḡabartī’s letter) and before the end of May, 1814.

What prompted him to write this letter was that his friends in Jerusalem did not hear from him for several weeks after his departure. Worried, they forwarded a letter to Cairo inquiring about him. He answered them “assuring you of my safe arrival”. Describing his way back, he added that he traveled from Hebron to Suez in twelve days without saying how or with whom. After resting for seven days in Suez he proceeded to Cairo which he reached in the third day. Thus the whole trip took over three weeks.

We learn from this letter additional things. Sayḥ Tāhir it seems asked him to buy on his behalf two manuscripts from Sayḥ ʿAbdulrahmān al-Ḡabartī for a price which it seems, he fixed to him. ʿAṯṭār answered “referring to . . . the matter of al-Bahr22 and al-Muhīṭ Sayḥ ʿAbdulrahmān rejected the price which you have offered. I have even offered him seven hundred [qurūṣ] but he insisted on not less than a thousand. The two books [stated Ḡabartī] consist of seven large volumes. Al-Bahr alone due to its [good] condition and beautiful handwriting and to the marks of distinguished people and their remarks written on its margin, would bring five hundred qurūṣ if a [willing] buyer is found. But the desire [for books] diminished or even disappeared [ended Ḡabartī]. However [continued ʿAṯṭār] we have been trying until now to convince him to accept seven hundred”, but he puts me off daily, “it is not possible for him because of the severe calamities and others are found in”.

Indeed the situation in Cairo seems to have been extremely hard for the people in general and for the ‘ulamāʾ in particular, which moved

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22 The full title is al-Bahr al-Raʾiʿ q Sath Kanz al-Daqīʿiq. But the original title is Kanz al-Daqīʿiq by ʿAbdullah ibn Ahmad al-Nasafi (d. 710/1310) in Hanafi law. al-Bahr however was a commentary on Nasafi’s book by the famous Egyptian jurist Zain al-ʿAbidin ibn Nugʿaim (d. 970/1563).
Gabarti to sell his own books to provide for his living. Atār referred once more in his letter to the hardships he encountered at the time. As you might have worried about me . . . in such a time in which the plague has spread out, and high prices prevail . . . and (due to) other things, there is no way or possibility (to write). Again, due to the prevailing conditions I keep to my home and do not leave it except when I go to teach my lesson at al-Azhar mosque, soon after which, I return home and stay there . . . nowadays rest is in solitude (Appendix 3).

Such conditions indicate perhaps the diminished status of the ‘ulamā’ under Muhammad ‘Ali. Barely a month before the return of Atār, as Gabarti told us, Muhammad ‘Ali sent orders from Mecca, (where he was spending some time after that his army restored it from the Wahhabi), to the Kethuda in Cairo “to expropriate all Ilizām lands . . . and to abolish the right of usufruct of the Multazīms”. This measure affected the ‘ulamā’ of Azhar badly as the leading ‘ulamā’ were deriving their income from farming taxes of agricultural domains (ilizām). Instead they were offered an annual pension from the treasury which meant that they lost their independent and apparently considerable income and turned dependent on the Paşa which led Gabarti to add that “the dog of oppression had shown his teeth and no one [dared to] . . . oppose or stand for him.”

At al-Azhar Atār stated in his letter that he was “busy reading the commentary of Šayḥ al-Islam [meaning Zakariyya al-Anṣāri] on Isāyū”.

“Many people attended [he said] which forced me to pay greater attention to the book . . . (and) to write a glossary on it . . .”

The fourth letter though undated was evidently sent from Cairo over a year after Atār resettled there. Again it was sent to his friend Šayḥ Tahir of Jerusalem in response to the latter’s correspondence. Atār

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23 For the hard economic conditions in Cairo at the time of our discussion cf. Gabarti, IV, 156-7, 231, 239 — استمرار فتاء الأئمّة في كل شيء، وخاصة في الأمور بسبب الإحصائيات، والموسوعات التي تزود على كل شيء."

24 Ibid. IV, 203, 217.


26 Gabarti, IV, 203-4.

27 Isāyū is a book in logic written by ʿAṭhīr al-Dīn al- Ḥabbārī (d. c. 700/1300-01) and commented upon by Zakariyya al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1519).

28 See Ḥaṣīyat al-ʿAṭṭār ‘ala Šayḥ ʿAṭīf al-Islām Zakariyya al-Anṣārī ‘ala Matn Isāyū līl Ḥabbārī, (Cairo, 1327/1908); see Gran, p. 201, no. 30.
apologized for the delay in answering and excused himself due to the fact that he was overly busy. But he gave other excuses which shed a light on his private life at the time and his teaching. It is perhaps worth giving extracts from this letter in full.

"When I returned to Cairo, [wrote ʿAttār], I became busy reading some books, and I married a wife with all the money that I had had, selling in addition many things. When she came to live with me... I had to work very hard to provide a living as my situation and the prevailing conditions are not unknown to you. I have no means to undertake except teaching which does not sell nowadays... consequently I encountered many hardships. She stayed with me one year before she passed away during labour. I was in much grief for her departure and remained afterwards restless for sometime as if out of my senses.

At the beginning of... the academic year at al-Azhar, I began teaching “al-Ḥāṭib” in the morning and continued “Ṣaḥḥ al-ʿAqāʾid” in the afternoon and when I finished it I started to teach (the commentary of) al-Quṭb on “al-Ṣamsīyya”.

These are... hard books that require the greatest devotion... I was preoccupied with that even from private concerns... thus my failure to write to you, is not by God, out of boredom or ill-remembrance of friendship or because of alienation... I rely on your excellent friendship and ample forgiveness, and on your forbearance.

I have sent you the commentary of “al-Nuḥba” and its glossary... the first is a present, but you return the glossary after copying it as it has not yet been copied in Cairo. Concerning the glossary on the “Samarqaṇdiyya”, I shall send it later... because after I have finished it I endowed it. When your messenger came... [to take it] the students detained it... Concerning the glossary of “al-Manār”, I have not found it being sold at all... Concerning the glossary of “al-Durr”, it is not found except by ordering it to be copied... (and) copyists are scarce and if found, they are all distorters [of text]... after returning to Cairo I wrote a glossary on the commentary on “Īṣāqī” but it is still unfinished, I shall send it to you after I finish it, along with the glossary of al-“Samarqaṇdiyya”.

At the end he thanked him for a present of Soap which he sent him, and which the Husaini family of Jerusalem were used to present

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29 Al-ʿAqāʾid al-ʿAqūdiyya was originally written by ʿAḏud al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Īǧī (d. 756/1355).
30 al-Ṣamsīyya or as it is called: al-Risāla al-Ṣamsīyya fi al-Fawā'id al-Mantuqīyya. This is a book on logic written by ʿUmar ibn ʿAli al-Qazwīnī (d. 693/1294). It was commented upon by Quṭb al-Dīn Mahmūd al-Rāzī (d. 766/1364). This commentary is known as al-Risāla al-Quṭbīyya Ṣaḥḥ al-Ṣamsīyya.
31 Ḥāṣīyat al-ʿAttār ʿalā Matn al-Nuḥba fi Usūl al-Ḥadīth [Ms.]
32 Ḥāṣīyat al-ʿAttār ʿalā al-Samarqaṇdiyya fi ʿIbn al-Bayān, (Cairo, A.H. 1309), the original was written by Abī al-Layṯ Naṣr al-Samarqandi (d. 375/985).
to their friends and to state dignitaries from a factory of Soap which they owned in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{33}

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Several issues justify the publication of these letters. First, it was not a normal practice at the time that an Egyptian ʿālīm leaves Egypt and spends eleven years away for unclear reason. What took ʿAṭṭār to al-Bilād al-Rūmiyya and where did he stay there? And what has he done throughout these years, and how he secured his living? All these questions remain unanswered until new material of him is uncovered. Such material could be his correspondence with his friends in Egypt such as Ḥāfṣiyya Ṭāhirī with whom he seems to have kept contacts as it was referred to.\textsuperscript{34} Secondly, we learn from these letters of his close friendship with Ṣayḥ Ṭāhir, the then nāṣiḥ muftī of Jerusalem and apparently of other ulamāʾ of the city. We learn also of the interest of these ulamāʾ to own major books in Islamic studies, which was a sign of the cultural standards they enjoyed. It was also an example of the amount which the learned were ready to pay for acquiring manuscripts on various Islamic subjects just few decades before commercial printing presses started to turn out Arabic printed books. Such prices posed a limit on cultural life and confined it to the educated elite who had access to reading material. It was moreover a sign for the status which an owner or donator of a manuscript or a book, enjoyed. Finally, this paper comes to correct certain inaccuracies about ʿAṭṭār especially concerning the year of his return. M. ʿAbdulğani Hasan and Peter Gran stated in their books that ʿAṭṭār returned to Egypt in 1815 without providing evidence for such a claim.\textsuperscript{35} On the other hand, ʿAṭṭār himself stated that his travel ʿsiyāḥa lasted ten years and “I returned to Egypt in 1228 . . .”\textsuperscript{36} He is evidently not right as it has been shown in this paper without doubt that he returned in 1229/1814, thus his trip extended eleven years.

\textsuperscript{33} The Husainī family of Jerusalem used to send such gifts to friends and state dignitaries in Istanbul; see my article “The Husainis, the Rise of a Notable Family in 18th Century Palestine”, in D. Kushner (ed.) Palestine in the late Ottoman Period, (Jerusalem & Leiden, 1986), pp. 93-108, see esp. p. 105.

\textsuperscript{34} Appendix, 5.

\textsuperscript{35} Abdulğani Hasan, p. 21; Gran, pp. 78, 103, 106, 123 etc.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE LETTERS

(Appendix One)

I

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate
And praise be to God alone and God’s prayer upon the seal
of the Prophets

After presenting many greetings... to our brother in God the accom-
plished ālim... Ṭāhir Afandi. May God join me with him in the most
joyful times and the most honoured places. O Sir, I have received your
letter that reveals your true friendship and heals the sick hearts by
reading it. May God reward you on my behalf. Concerning what
you have stated of your great longing for us I have O Sir a much
greater one [towards you]. Hearts are an equitable witness for friendship.

It would have been better to have delayed my departure from
Jerusalem and reconsidered my situation until God guided me what to
do. But because matters are predestined and there is no choice but to
carry them out, precaution does not help against predestination. The
matter is [left] for God.

Some of my luggage reached me from Nablus and some remained
in Damascus. I have received a letter from Damascus that it is there
until I send somebody to receive it. I then felt reassured.

It happened that he[!] urged and insisted and implored me con-
cerning the matter which you are aware of, while I refuted him and
put him off. But when I saw that the matter is divinely ordained and
it is better to accept fate willingly than to challenge it, I surrendered
to the will of God and agreed. [Thus] the problem and its proceeding
were finished on Friday. I think that after a few days the result of the
measurement will come out. But the matter is ambiguous and the sit-
uation of the place is known to you, Sir.

I was extremely sorry to leave you and I blamed myself [for that].
Then I surrendered and obeyed fate. [I depend on] God the exalted
to make the end better. Concerning the matter of the treatises, after
achieving peace of mind and settling down, I shall start studying them.
Concerning the commentary of al-Azhariyya I shall send somebody to
Damascus to bring me the books and I shall send it to you for copy-
ing. As long as I am in Jaffa I shall, by the will of God, keep you
informed about myself, as it is said: when we are apart and away let us associate in memory if we do not meet.

There is a matter... which I would like to put before you. The poor [meaning himself] has no ṣafūtī books with him and in case he is asked about certain problems he needs them to revise and study inorder to recall some of these questions. It happened that I have seen at the [mansion of the] distinguished Șayḥ Mahmud al-Muhtadî a commentary on al-Manḥaq. I felt embarrassed [then] to ask him to sell it to me. He has told me that he bought it for eighteen piasters. O Sir, do you find it proper to ask the above mentioned to sell it to me [so that] I can make use of it and invoke blessings upon him because I need it. If he responds (favourably), inform me of the price he asks for and I shall send it to him then he sends the book. [Please] urge him to do that even if he endows it upon me and I shall pay him the price for the present. Or otherwise to lend it to me until some of my books arrive from Egypt. In short I have delegated you to deal with this matter, and you may act as you deem fit. What motivated me is [the fact] that I do not have any book of our madhhab with me at all. You are well aware that my situation nowadays makes revision and studying imperative. We have to trust in God alone.

[Please] convey my greetings to Sayyid Șasan... [?] and to Sayyid Șasan Kamāl and to Sayyid Muḥammad al-ʿAttār and to all those who seek refuge with you. Greetings to the Imām the illustrious Șayḥ al-Yaʿqūbī and solicit his blessings for me. If God wills, I shall keep up my correspondence with him after I settle down and feel assured. Do not forget to send me your good wishes and keep up your correspondence because it is equal to half a meeting. May you keep well.

The humble Șasan al-ʿAttār,
20 Dilḫīgga, 1225/[16.1.1811].

Sayyid ʿAbdullah the Muftī sends you his regards. He is presently in Jaffa. [My dear] Sir by God would you be so kind and obtain for me the commentary of al-Manḥaq from Șayḥ Mahmud al-Muhtadî whatever the condition is. Keep contact by correspondence.

[On the back of the sheet] Praise be to God. Upon arrival in Jerusalem to be handed over to the most distinguished Imām Tāhir Afandī, the Muftī in al-Quds al-Šarīf.
(Appendix Two)

II

The peace of God the exalted and His mercy and blessings and His best greetings. We single out with these the honourable, the dearest, the distinguished and the learned Tahir Afandi may God preserve him, Amen.

Before this (correspondence) I sent you a letter informing you that I received your letter. I told you moreover that I had previously sent you two letters which hopefully have reached you.

My request to you Sir, is that I have some books that I would like to send them to you to be deposited with you in trust on my behalf. Let this be a secret between you and me that should not be disclosed to others. The books should be kept at your house. If you kindly agree to that, please send me a trustworthy muleteer whom you should urge to be careful and provide him with a letter addressed to me to hand over the books to him. This is a favour I ask from you. If you find it a burden or if you suspect anything please let me know. I shall try then to look somewhere else. I enjoin you Sir to send me a detailed letter very soon explaining the situation fully. Greetings to all our friends and long life to you.

(signed) The humble Hasan al-‘Attar.
[undated]

[On the back of the sheet] to be handed to Mufti Afandi in Jerusalem.
(Appendix Three)

III

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.

From the humble servant Ḥasan al-‘Atţār to the (most distinguished) . . . our dear friend Ṭāhir Afandi may God prolong his life . . . and bring us together in the most honoured place and in the happiest of times.

After greetings . . . your letter reached me delivered by Sayyid Mustafa . . . I read it and it gave me much pleasure. It included two messages, the first was sent to me by Sayyīh ‘Abdulrahmān [al-Ǧabarī]. The second was from you to him. In regard to what you told us that I have not sent you any message after I left Jerusalem, I assure you, Sir, that upon my arrival at Suez, I sent you a letter by means of a beduin. He may have neglected [to deliver it]. I sent it enclosed in a message [addressed] to Sayyīh Isma‘īl al-Muḥtasib and I sent it to al-Ḥalil (Hebron) with the beduins. However, I apologize to you for not taking the initiative to write you from Cairo because, Sir, I arrived at Cairo very weak from the hardships that I suffered especially between the time of my arrival at Suez until I settled in Cairo, the account of which is too long [to state]. And when I arrived to Cairo, I was occupied for days in meeting my friends and the Sayḥs of the learned as it is the custom for those arriving from their travels. After that I became busy reading the commentary of Sayḥ al-Islām on Isāqūṭī. Many people attended which required paying prolonged attention to the book to the extent that I have started writing a glossary on it which I write lesson by lesson, and if God wills, it will be completed in good time.

Moreover, the honourable Naqib [of al-Āṣrāf] told me orally of a request from Sayḥ ‘Abdulrahmān al-Ǧabarī. I passed on the message to him and asked for an answer and I urge him every day for that, but until now he has given me no answer concerning the desired object, excusing himself by [referring to] the calamities of the time. O Sir, the conditions of our parts are not unknown to you. Indeed an onlooker is not equal to a hearer. I accepted his excuse. He however puts me off daily until he finds free time but it has not been available to him because of the appalling hardships he and others are found in. May God be gracious with us and with the Muslims.

It was my intention after receiving Sayḥ ‘Abdulrahmān’s answer to write to you a letter which includes the [needed] information. But when
I received your letter I hastened to write you this letter assuring you of my safety and telling you briefly about my situation. I travelled from al-Ḥalil (Hebron) to Suez in twelve days, stayed in Suez seven days and then travelled to Cairo which I reached on the third day from Suez. Following that, thanks be to God, I met all my friends all of whom are well and in good health. But due to the prevailing conditions I keep to my home and do not leave it except for going out to give my lesson at the al-Azhar Mosque, and soon after this I return to my home and stay there. This is my life; comfort nowadays is in solitude. [Indeed] your name is ever alive on my tongue and your image is present in my heart. Had I been able to write you morning and evening I would have done so. But two matters hinder me from doing it. Firstly, travellers are not always available, and secondly, which is more difficult, are the prevailing conditions, the account of which is too long [to state]. All that I can say is: There is no power and no strength save in God the Exalted and the Almighty.

Concerning what you mentioned of the matter of al-Bahr and al-Muḥīṭ and the price which you offered [for them], Sayḥ ʿAbdūralḥāmān did not agree to that. I even offered him seven hundred [qurūṣ] but he insisted on not less than a thousand. The two books consist of seven large volumes. Al-Bahr alone due to its [good] condition and beautiful handwriting and the marginal notations made by distinguished people would bring five hundred qurūṣ if a [willing] buyer is found. But the desire [for books] is diminished nowadays or has even disappeared. However, we have been trying until now to convince Sayḥ ʿAbdūralḥāmān to accept seven hundred. He will send you a letter in his own handwriting after this date if God wills, explaining the condition of the books and other things. I shall moreover send you and the Naqīb a long letter in which I shall state the answer to his request when Sayḥ ʿAbdūralḥāmān gives his. I have written the present letter in haste because its bearer told me that he is leaving right away. He asked me to recommend him [to you] but you do not need such a thing, for your house is open to every stranger. May God keep your quarters prosperous. As to the letter of Sayḥ Tuʿā’ilab, I have sent it to him and he promised me to send his answer. I have conveyed your greetings to each of whom you mentioned and all [of them] send you their regards especially Sayḥ ʿAbdūralḥāmān whose longing [for you] is many times more than mine because I keep praising you on every occasion. He sends you his deepest apology concerning the books. He would have sent them to you free of charge but for the hardships of the time and
the present circumstances. There is no difference between you and him, and if God wills a satisfactory answer will reach you from me and from him later on at the hands of Sayyid Muṣṭafa. This letter, however, is not more than a supplement. It is on the whole useful as you might have worried about me because of not writing especially at such a time in which the plague and high prices have spread like fire and [because] of other things that there is no space or possibility to state, may God give [us] relief and benevolence.

Many greetings from me to the Naqīb Afandî and Raḡib Afandî and Śākir Afandî and [to] Sayḥ Ḥasan Abulhudā and to Ġarullah and Śayḥ ʿAbdulwahhāb and to his son Śidi Ḥalîl and to the son of Śayḥ Budair and to everybody who asks about me and to everyone in your pleasant quarters and to Śayḥ ʿAbduralrahîm al-Mauṣūlî if he is still alive. [Moreover], Sayyid Muḥammad al-Tuhāmî has died stricken by the plague about twenty days after my arrival at Cairo. May God have mercy upon him. The news of the death of Sayyid Ḥasan Kamāl, may God have mercy upon him, had broken us and crushed our endurance. He was one of the dearest friends to me and to you and was extremely refined and gentle. And he was one of the extraordinary persons in Jerusalem and [among] the most distinguished. Rare are the creatures like him. May God have mercy upon him once again. The news of his death distressed me. We belong to God and to Him we return. May God compensate you graciously and give you the best of consolations and patience for his demise.

Śayḥ ʿAbduralrahmān sends you many greetings and to the Naqīb and to Śayḥ ʿAbdulwahhāb. To all those who sent him their regards he sends his best greetings. The aforementioned is truthful in his friendship and affection for you, though distantly, due to what he hears of my laudation of you. May God prolong your life and keep your quarters prosperous, Amen.

[Dated]: the 3rd of Raḡab, 1229/[21.6.1814].

[On the back of the sheet]

Upon arrival at Jerusalem, if God wills, to be handed to the most learned ālim Ṭāhir Afandî, the Muftî, may God the Exalted preserve him.
IV

In the Name of God the Merciful and the Compassionate.

From the humble servant Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār to the distinguished and learned Imām . . . our friend . . . al-Sayyid Ṭāhir Afandī may God bring us together in the Holy Land and maintain our friendship which is based on the purity of hearts.

After greetings . . . It is obligatory for this humble servant to maintain his correspondence [with you] always. Your blame of him in your letters is justified. All that I can say Sir, is that I am negligent. May you extend to me your indulgence and true love. In fact there are certain things, a part of which I will state here, that could serve as an apology for me. When I reached Cairo I became occupied in reading some books. Moreover, I have married a wife with all the money I had, selling in addition many things. When she came to live with me I had to work hard to secure a living as my situation and the prevailing conditions are not unknown to you. I have no means to provide a living except teaching which is an unsaleable commodity nowadays, especially if added to it [my] indolence and unwillingness to associate with people. As you know I have by nature a tendency for solitude. Consequently, I encountered many hardships. She stayed with me for one year before passing away during labour. I was in grief for her departure and remained afterwards restless for sometime as if out of my senses.

Then, at the beginning of the year, I mean the academic year at al-Azhar, I began teaching al-Hattāb in the morning, and continued Ṣaḥḥ al-ʿAqāʾid following the afternoon [prayer], and when I finished it I started to teach [the commentary of] al-Qūṭb ʿalā al-Ṣamsīyya. These are difficult and hard books that require the greatest devotion. Accordingly, my time became restricted due to [extensive] reading. God knows, I was so preoccupied, that I had no time even for private concerns such as shaving my head or having a bath at the Hammam. However, these matters should not delay correspondence. But this poor creature, because of his distress is unable to bear light engagements not to mention heavy ones. Thus my failure to write to you is not God knows, out of boredom or ill-remembered friendship or because of alienation. However, I rely on your true friendship and ample forgiveness, and on your great forbearance.
I have received [several] letters from you and it is true I did not respond to some of them. God knows this is because of slackening in my nature, or forgetfulness or preoccupation or other things that hinder. I must ask for your pardon which hopefully [will be given].

I have sent you the commentary of al-Nuhba and its glossary. Concerning the first, it is a present for you, but you should return the glossary after copying it as it has not been copied in Cairo yet. Concerning the glossary of the Samarqandiyya, I shall send it later because after I finished it I endowed it. When your messenger came I wanted to send it [with him] but the students withheld it. If God wills, when I have free time I shall write you another copy and send it. Concerning the glossary of al-Manâr I have not found it sold at all since I settled in Cairo. In case I find it I shall buy it for you. Concerning the glossary of al-Durr, it is not available except by ordering a transcription and this requires a long time because copyists are scarce and if found they are all distorters [of text]. You actually do not need it as the books that you have are sufficient. Its author added nothing of his own. He copied mostly from al-Bahr and other books and you have the originals. I have given him your message and told him to comment on the fâtuwa and send the answer, but he claimed that this needs some free time, perhaps after three months. I have thus informed you.

God knows, Sir, I always wish to visit you but the concerns of life hinder me. Perhaps God will facilitate this [one day]. That is all I have to tell. In short, after you finish writing the glossary of al-Nuhba send it back at the hands of Sayyid Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Nabi. The soap has arrived. May God bless you. And so, after I reached Cairo, I wrote a glossary on the commentary on Isâğûṭ but it is still not completely finished till the end. After I finish it, I shall send it to you, if God wills, along with the glossary of al-Samarqandiyya. I am writing nowadays [a glossary] on the commentary of al-Qutb. I ask you to pray for [God's] help. Do not withhold your good news from me. As to my condition the bearer of this letter will inform you in detail.

My greetings to the Naqīb Afandī, to Raǧib and Sākir and to all the friends each one by his name lest I forget.

My friend Sayḥ ‘Abdullâhîmân al-Ǧâbarti sends you his best regards and so do the ‘ulamâ? . This was written in haste, so please accept my apologies.

(undated and unsigned).