

The Sufi Teachings of Dhu'l-Nun

By Mohammed Rustom

Abu'l-Fayd Thawban b. Ibrahim Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri was born in the upper Egyptian district of Akhmim (the famous Panopolis of late antiquity) in approximately 175/791. He is believed to have died in 245/859 or 248/861.¹ Early sources indicate that Dhu'l-Nun was of Nubian stock, his father being a Nubian freedman of the Quraysh tribe.² Not unlike a number of other key figures of early Sufism, Dhu'l-Nun's teachings have attracted relatively little scholarly attention, especially in English.³ This is somewhat surprising, since he is one of the most important figures in the history of Sufism, and is considered to be the first Sufi to have spoken theoretically about gnosis (*ma'rifa*) and the stations (*maqamat*) and states (*abwal*).

What follows is a thematic presentation of over sixty of Dhu'l-Nun's sayings, which have been culled and translated from the following

¹ 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, *Tabaqat al-sufiyya*, ed. Nur al-Din Shurayba (Aleppo, 1982), 16.

² Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri, *al-Risalat al-Qusbayriyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Karim 'Ata' (Damascus, 2000), 57.

³ Two recent exceptions are Paul Losensky, "Translator's Introduction," in Farid al-Din 'Attar, *Memorial of God's Friends*, trans. Paul Losensky (New York, 2009), 24-32 ('Attar's (d. ca. 617/1220) account of Dhu'l-Nun's life and teachings is to be found on pp. 164-187); Reza Shah-Kazemi, "The Notion and Significance of *Ma'rifa* in Sufism," *Islamic Studies* 13/2 (2002): 155-181 (this piece discusses several of Dhu'l-Nun's statements). Ibn 'Arabi's (d. 638/1240) book on Dhu'l-Nun is available in French as *La vie merveilleuse de Dhû-l-Nûn l'Égyptien*, trans. Roger Deladrière (Paris, 1988). Amongst writings in non-European languages, the late Javad Nurbakhsh's Persian book on Dhu'l-Nun is a useful repository of his teachings, extracted from a wide variety of classical Persian and Arabic Sufi texts. See Nurbakhsh, *Dhu'l-Nun Misri: az mashabir-i danishmandan wa sufiyan-i misr* (London, 1999).

well-known Arabic Sufi texts dating from the 4th/10th to the 6th/12th centuries: the *Qut al-qulub* of Makki (d. 386/966), the *Luma'* of Sarraj (d. 378/988), the *Ta'arruf* of Kalabadhi (d. ca. 380/990), the anonymous *'Ilm al-qulub* often wrongly attributed to Makki,⁴ the *Tabaqat* of Sulami (d. 412/1021), the *Risala* of Qushayri (d. 465/1072), and the *Ihya'* of Ghazali (d. 505/1111).⁵ At this stage, it is difficult to make any concrete judgements about Dhu'l-Nun's Sufi doctrine, since doing so would require a detailed study of such things as his connection to the wisdom traditions preceding Islam,⁶ the controversies surrounding his life,⁷ and the many alchemical texts,⁸ poems, prayers, sermons, letters, and commentaries on Qur'anic verses attributed to him.⁹ But the pithy statements offered below, dealing as they do with several themes fundamental to Sufism, can be said to highlight some key aspects of Dhu'l-Nun's Sufi teachings.¹⁰



⁴ Nasrollah Pourjavady shows that this book is by an unknown author from the 5th/11th century. See Pourjavady, "Bazmandaha-yi *Kitab al-isbara wa'l-ibara*-yi Abu Sa'd-i Khargushi dar kitab-i *'Ilm al-qulub*," *Ma'arif* 15/3 (1999): 34–41.

⁵ For a discussion of these and other important books in the earlier history of Sufism, see Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh, 2007), 83–113.

⁶ For Dhu'l-Nun's connection to the Empedoclean and Hermetic traditions, see Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford, 1995), 389–390. Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani's (d. 430/1038) famous hagiographic work, the *Hilyat al-awliya'* (Cairo, 1932–1938), 9:339, clearly indicates that Dhu'l-Nun knew how to read Syriac (*suryaniyya*). Syriac is a dialect of Late Aramaic, which explains why Aramaic is also called "syriani/yya." Thanks go to Professor Amir Harrak for clarification on this point.

⁷ For the standard account, see Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden, 2000), 39–40.

⁸ For the alchemical treatises attributed to Dhu'l-Nun, see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967), 1:643–644. See also Kingsley, *Ancient*, 389–390.

⁹ The single most extensive early source for Dhu'l-Nun's sayings, poems, prayers, letters, and sermons is Isfahani, *Hilyat*, 9:331–395, 10:3. I have avoided drawing upon this text here since it deserves its own separate study. The main source for Dhu'l-Nun's comments on verses of the Qur'an appears to be Sulami's *Haqa'iq al-tafsir*, ed. Sayyid 'Umran (Beirut, 2001).

¹⁰ It should be noted that, except in instances where they form an essential part of what Dhu'l-Nun has to say, I have deleted the standard formulae which introduce his statements, such as "I heard Dhu'l-Nun say...", or "Someone asked Dhu'l-Nun to comment upon..."

Truthfulness and Sincerity

“Truthfulness [*sidq*] is God’s sword on His earth—it is placed upon nothing except that it cuts through it.”¹¹

“Sincerity [*ikhlas*] is that which is free from being corrupted by the enemy [i.e., Satan].”¹²

When Dhu'l-Nun was imprisoned, he did not eat or drink for days. One of the female slaves whom he knew came to the prison with some food, saying, “This is lawful [*halal*].” But he did not eat it. When she repeated herself, he replied, “This food is lawful, but it has come to me through an unlawful means, so I will not eat it.” “How is that?,” she asked. Dhu'l-Nun answered, “It has come to me from the hand of the prison keeper, who is an oppressor, so I will not eat it.”¹³

Wisdom and Gnosis

“While on one of my journeys I came across a large rock upon which was written [the words], ‘Turn me over, and take a lesson.’ So I turned it over and [the following] was written upon it: ‘How can you seek to know¹⁴ what you do not know, while you do not practice what you do know?’ So I said to myself, ‘Take this as a word of wisdom’.”¹⁵

“Whatever eyes can see relates to knowledge [*ilm*], and whatever hearts can know relates to certainty [*yaqin*].”¹⁶

“I embarked on three journeys. On the first journey I came across sciences understood by the common folk [*amm*] and the elect [*khas*]. On the second journey I came across sciences understood by the elect, but

¹¹ Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, *Kitab al-luma'*, ed. Kamil Mustafa al-Hindawi (Beirut, 2001), 198. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 181; Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 23.

¹² Sarraj, *Luma'*, 199. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 182.

¹³ Abu Talib al-Makki, *Qut al-qulub*, ed. Basil 'Uyun al-Sud (Beirut, 1997), 2:484. See also Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya'ulum al-din* (Beirut, n.d.), 2:69, 170, 188.

¹⁴ Lit., “a knowledge,” and reading *ilm* for *'alim*.

¹⁵ Makki [Anon.], *Ilm al-qulub* (Cairo, 1968), 55.

¹⁶ Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi, *al-Ta'arruf li-madbbah abl al-tasawwuf*, ed. Mahmud Amin al-Nawawi (Cairo, 1969), 123. Cf. Kalabadhi, *The Doctrine of the Sufis*, trans. A. J. Arberry (Cambridge, 1935), 104. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 182.

not the common folk. And on the third journey I came across sciences understood by neither the common folk nor the elect.”¹⁷

“The renunciants [*zubbahd*], namely the poor amongst the gnostics [*fuyqara' al-'arifin*], are the kings of the afterlife.”¹⁸

“There is a punishment for everything, and the gnostic's [*'arif*] punishment is his being cut off from the invocation [*dhikr*] of God.”¹⁹

A man from Dhu'l-Nun's circle asked, “O teacher, why is it that wisdom [*bikma*] has a sweetness which brings about delight when it is uttered by the sages?” He replied, “It is because of its proximity to the Highest King, glorified and exalted is He!”²⁰

“Whatever you conceive with your imagination [*wabm*], God is other than that.”²¹

“Wisdom will not dwell inside a [person whose] stomach is filled with food.”²²

Dhu'l-Nun was asked, “How did you come to know your Lord? He replied, ‘I would not think of disobeying God and [at the same time] remember His majesty, except that I would be ashamed before it.’”²³

“I came to know my Lord through my Lord. Had it not been for my Lord, I would not have known my Lord.”²⁴

¹⁷ Makki [Anon.], *‘Ilm*, 85–86.

¹⁸ Qushayri, *Risala*, 476. Cf. Qushayri, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, trans. Alexander Knysch (Reading, 2007), 323; John Renard, *Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism: Foundations of Islamic Mystical Theology* (New York, 2004), 291. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 179.

¹⁹ Qushayri, *Risala*, 476. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 323; Renard, *Knowledge*, 291. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 177.

²⁰ Makki [Anon.], *‘Ilm*, 46.

²¹ Qushayri, *Risala*, 40. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 7. See also Qushayri, *Risala*, 455; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 29, 311. Owing to an ambiguity in the text (which is confirmed by Sarraj's gloss on the same passage to be found at *Luma'*, 311), I have only provided the last part of what is a slightly longer passage. It is also interesting to note that in Shi'ism, a version of the maxim translated here is often attributed to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765). See Ibn Babuyah, *al-Tawbid* (Najaf, 1966), 42.

²² Qushayri, *Risala*, 58. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 175.

²³ Kalabadi, *Ta'arruf* 82. Cf. Kalabadi, *Doctrine*, 56; Renard, *Knowledge*, 104–5. See also Qushayri, *Risala*, 475; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 99.

²⁴ Qushayri, *Risala*, 475. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 323; Renard, *Knowledge*, 290–291. See also Kalabadi, *Ta'arruf*, 82; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 99.

“I came to know God through God, and I came to know what was other than God through the Messenger of God.”²⁵

“The best request made by the truthful is for the key to the hearts of the gnostics.”²⁶

“Each day the gnostic is more fearful, for each hour he is closer.”²⁷

“Certainty is a caller to shortened hopes, shortened hopes call to renunciation, renunciation gives rise to wisdom, and wisdom gives rise to contemplation over end-affairs.”²⁸

“It is incumbent upon the gnostic that the light of his gnosis not put out the light of his piety [*wara*], that he not believe that inner knowledge abolishes for him [the need to follow] outward legal injunctions, and that the many charismatic gifts [*karama*]²⁹ [given to him] by God not incite him to rend the veils of what God has forbidden.”³⁰

“When the gnostic seeks out his livelihood, he is nothing.”³¹

Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Jawhari said, “I heard Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri relate that after a man had come to him and said, ‘Pray to God for me,’ he replied, ‘If, on account of sincere *taubid*³² you have been aided with knowledge of the unseen, then how many an answered supplication has already preceded you! But if you have not [been aided with knowledge of the unseen], then calling out will not save the one who is drowning’.”³³

“[The first step taken by the gnostic] is bewilderment, then poverty, then union, and then bewilderment again.”³⁴

²⁵ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 99. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Ta'arruf*, 82. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 184; Qushayri, *Risala*, 475.

²⁶ Makki, *Qut*, 1:277.

²⁷ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 26. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 178; Makki [Anon.], *Ilm*, 290.

²⁸ Qushayri, *Risala*, 289. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 182.

²⁹ In rendering *karama* as “charismatic gift,” I follow William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, 1989), 148.

³⁰ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 383. Cf. Renard, *Knowledge*, 89, 292. See also Qushayri, *Risala*, 477; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 37.

³¹ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 180.

³² I.e., the affirmation of God's oneness.

³³ Qushayri, *Risala*, 43–44. See also Sarraj, *Luma'*, 235.

³⁴ Kalabadhi, *Ta'arruf*, 163. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Doctrine*, 152; Renard, *Knowledge*, 108. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 186.

“The person most knowledgeable of God is the one most intense in bewilderment of Him.”³⁵

“The gnostic does not adhere to a single state—he only adheres to his Lord in every state.”³⁶

“The gnostic is a man who is with men, but separate from them.”³⁷

“The gnostic was here, and then departed.”³⁸

“Keeping the company of the gnostic is like keeping the company of God: having taken on the character traits of God, he puts up with you and is gentle towards you.”³⁹

“[The final outcome of the gnostic] is when he is just as he was where he was before he was.”⁴⁰

Humility, Poverty, Non-Attachment

“Whoever aspires to humility [*tawadu'*], let him turn his attention to God's greatness, for it melts [the soul] and makes it limpid. Whoever contemplates God's power, his own [sense of] power will depart, since all souls are poor when in awe of Him.”⁴¹

“Fear causes worry, and modesty [*baya'*] renders one silent.”⁴²

“Seek out your need with the tongue of poverty [*faqr*], not with the tongue of authority.”⁴³

³⁵ Qushayri, *Risala*, 474. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 322; Renard, *Knowledge*, 290. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 178.

³⁶ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 26. See also Makki [Anon.], *'Ilm*, 269.

³⁷ Kalabadhi, *Ta'arruf*, 166. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Doctrine*, 154; Renard, *Knowledge*, 111. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 177.

³⁸ Qushayri, *Risala*, 133. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Doctrine*, 153; Qushayri, *Epistle*, 78; Renard, *Knowledge*, 110; Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York, 1996), 104.

³⁹ Qushayri, *Risala*, 474. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 322; Renard, *Knowledge*, 289.

⁴⁰ Kalabadhi, *Ta'arruf*, 163. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Doctrine*, 152; Renard, *Knowledge*, 108. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 186.

⁴¹ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 183.

⁴² Makki, *Qut*, 1:176. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 180.

⁴³ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 24. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 180.

“The Sufi is the one who, when he talks, his speech elucidates realities [*baqa'iq*]; and if he is silent, his limbs speak on his behalf of severance from attachments [*'ala'iq*].”⁴⁴

“The man who is truly poor [*al-faqir al-sadiq*] is he who does not rely upon anything; rather, all things rely upon him.”⁴⁵

Repentance

“The repentance [*tawba*] of the common folk is from sins, while the repentance of the elect is from heedlessness [*ghafla*].”⁴⁶

Yusuf b. al-Husayn said, “One day I attended the gathering of Dhu'l-Nun, and Salim al-Maghribi came to him and said, ‘O Abu'l-Fayd! What was the cause of your repentance?’ He replied, ‘It is a strange matter—you will be unable to bear it.’ Salim replied, ‘I will not leave you until you tell me.’ So Dhu'l-Nun said, ‘I left Egypt for one of the villages. Along the way, I fell asleep in a certain desert. [When] I woke up, I was next to a blind bird who had fallen from her nest onto the ground. Then, the earth split open and two bowls appeared, one of which was gold and the other silver. Sesame seeds were in one of the bowls, and water was in the other. The bird began to eat and drink from them. So I exclaimed, ‘God suffices me! I have repented!’ And I stood at the door until God allowed me in’.”⁴⁷

“I have never seen anyone more ignorant than the doctor: he gives the drunkard medicine when he is intoxicated, but there is no cure to his intoxication until he returns to sobriety and is treated with repentance.”⁴⁸

“The sins of those brought near [*muqarrabun*] are the good deeds of the righteous [*abrar*].”⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 19. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 177.

⁴⁵ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 102. Cf. Renard, *Knowledge*, 95.

⁴⁶ Qushayri, *Risala*, 58. Cf. Kalabadi, *Doctrine*, 92; Qushayri, *Epistle*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 180; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 42.

⁴⁷ Qushayri, *Risala*, 58. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 165; Qushayri, *Risala*, 551.

⁴⁸ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 176.

⁴⁹ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 42. Cf. Sells, *Early*, 200. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 177.

Egoism

“Woe to you that you be a pretender to gnosis, or a renunciant by profession, or someone attached to his acts of worship.”⁵⁰

Dhu'l-Nun was asked, “What is the subtlest and gravest kind of veil?” He answered, “Acknowledging the self [*ru'yat al-nafs*] and its contrivance.”⁵¹

Someone asked Dhu'l-Nun to comment upon base people. He replied, “They are those who do not know the path to God and do not learn it.”⁵²

“I never became satiated except that I disobeyed God, or thought of doing so.”⁵³

“The audition [*sama'*] is a true inrush which rouses hearts for the Real. Whoever listens to it as is its due attains realization, and whoever listens to it for the sake of his ego commits heresy.”⁵⁴

Spiritual Companionship

“Keep the company of the one whose actions speak to you, not the one whose tongue speaks to you.”⁵⁵

“Keep the company of the one whose character speaks to you, not the one whose tongue speaks to you.”⁵⁶

“Keep the company of the one whose knowledge speaks to you, not the one whose tongue speaks to you.”⁵⁷

“There is no good for you in keeping the company of someone who likes to regard you as sinless.”⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 18.

⁵¹ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 18. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 175.

⁵² Qushayri, *Risala*, 58. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 20. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 185.

⁵³ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 3:219. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 174.

⁵⁴ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 240. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 181; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 293.

⁵⁵ Makki, *Qut*, 1:284, 1:311. Cf. Renard, *Knowledge*, 253.

⁵⁶ Makki, *Qut*, 1:284. Cf. Renard, *Knowledge*, 202. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 184; Makki [Anon.], *Ilm*, 39, 70-71.

⁵⁷ Makki, *Qut*, 1:311. See also Makki, *Qut* 1:284; Makki [Anon.], *Ilm*, 39, 70-71.

⁵⁸ Makki, *Qut*, 2:380. See also Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 2:269.

Dhu'l-Nun was speaking to his brethren about the science of *taubid* and gnosis, and a young boy asked him for some bread, [saying], "Where is it?" Dhu'l-Nun said [to his brethren], "Take him by the hand and go with him to the Sufis so that they may teach him etiquette [*adab*]." ⁵⁹

Patience, Trust, Contentment

"The person nearest to ingratitude [*kufr*] is the one who is needy and does not have patience." ⁶⁰

"Do not grieve over that which you lack, for it is a reminder for the existent servant. The nonexistent is that which cannot come to exist, and whose existence is impossible. So when you do not have something whose existence is possible, it is that which you lack, not that which is nonexistent." ⁶¹

"Trust in God [*tawakkul*] is to relinquish self-contrivance, and to be divested of one's power and strength." ⁶²

"Reflection is the key to worship, following lusts the sign of caprice, and severance from desires the sign of trust in God." ⁶³

"God says, 'Whoever is obedient to Me, I shall be a friend to him. So let him trust in Me and depend upon Me. By My greatness, if he were to ask Me to end his worldly concerns, I would do that for him'." ⁶⁴

"Contentment [*rida*'] is the heart's happiness with the passing of God's decree [*qada*']". ⁶⁵

"The believer's joy and delight is in solitude [*khalwa*], [when he is] intimately conversing [*munaja*] with his Lord." ⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Makki, *Qut*, 2:31.

⁶⁰ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 5:60.

⁶¹ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 291.

⁶² Sarraj, *Luma'*, 49. Cf. Sells, *Early*, 208. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 181.

⁶³ Sulami, *Tabqat*, 25. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 182, 185.

⁶⁴ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 19.

⁶⁵ Kalabadhi, *Ta'arruf*, 121. Cf. Kalabadhi, *Doctrine*, 103; Sells, *Early*, 210. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 182; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 50.

⁶⁶ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 2:328.

Al-Jariri said, “I have been informed that it was said to Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri at the time of his death, ‘Give us some parting advice.’ He replied, ‘Do not distract me, for I am marvelling at the beauties of His generosity!’”⁶⁷

“The Sufis are a folk who have preferred God over everything, so God has preferred them over everything.”⁶⁸

Love and Intimacy

“Sufi teachings revolve around four things: love [*bubb*] for the Majestic, hatred for the insignificant, following the revelation, and fear of change [for the worse] in [one’s spiritual] state.”⁶⁹

“‘Love’ is that you love what God loves, hate what He hates, do all that is good, and abandon all that distracts you from God. In matters concerning God, [love] is that you not fear the reproach of the reproacher—all the while being gentle towards the believers and harsh towards the unbelievers. And in matters of religion, [love] is that you follow the Messenger of God.”⁷⁰

“Amongst the signs of love for God is that one follows the beloved of God [i.e., the Prophet] in his character traits, actions, commands, and customs.”⁷¹

“Untainted, pure love for God is the casting aside of love [for other than God] from the heart and limbs so that there is no love in them [for other than God], and things are [done] through God and for God. That is love for God.”⁷²

Dhu'l-Nun went to visit one of his friends who was sick, and said to him, “He who is impatient with his affliction is not true in his love.”The

⁶⁷ Qushayri, *Risala*, 469. See also ‘Attar, *Memorial*, 187.

⁶⁸ Sarraj, *Luma’*, 27. See also ‘Attar, *Memorial*, 186; Qushayri, *Risala*, 431.

⁶⁹ Qushayri, *Risala*, 57. Cf. Qushayri, *Epistle*, 19–20.

⁷⁰ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 18. See also Qushayri, *Risala*, 57; Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 20.

⁷¹ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 21. See also ‘Attar, *Memorial*, 176; Qushayri, *Risala*, 57; Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 18.

⁷² Sarraj, *Luma’*, 55.

sick man replied, "He who does not find delight in his affliction is not true in his love."⁷³

Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri went to one of his friends who used to speak about love and saw him suffering from an affliction, so he said to him, "Whoever finds pain in his affliction does not love Him." The man replied, "I say that whoever does not enjoy his affliction does not love Him." Dhu'l-Nun responded, "And I say that whoever exalts himself because of his love [for God] does not love Him." Then the man said, "I seek God's forgiveness and repent to Him."⁷⁴

"Say to the one who claims to love God, 'Beware of debasing yourself for other than God'. "⁷⁵

"When God wants to quench the Sufis' thirst from the cup of love for Him, He gives them a taste of its delight and a lick of its sweetness."⁷⁶

"Intimacy [*uns*] is the lover's forthrightness with the Beloved."⁷⁷

"Intimacy with God comes from the heart's being pure for His sake, and solitude with God comes from detachment from everything other than Him."⁷⁸

"The lowest station of intimacy is for one to be thrown into the Fire while his concern for the one he hopes in not disappear."⁷⁹

"Fear of the Fire as compared to fear of separation from God [*firaq*] is like a raindrop in a fathomless ocean."⁸⁰

⁷³ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 186. Cf. Sells, *Early*, 206-207. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 173; Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 5:233; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 48.

⁷⁴ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 5:233. Cf. Sells, *Early*, 206-207. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 173; Sarraj, *Luma'*, 48, 186.

⁷⁵ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 5:260.

⁷⁶ Sarraj, *Luma'*, 318.

⁷⁷ Kalabadi, *Ta'arruf*, 127. Cf. Kalabadi, *Doctrine*, 108.

⁷⁸ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 19.

⁷⁹ Sulami, *Tabaqat*, 23. Cf. Kalabadi, *Doctrine*, 108. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 167, 182.

⁸⁰ Ghazali, *Ihya'*, 5:19. See also 'Attar, *Memorial*, 177.