



Glimpses from the life of a shaykh in the
Qādiriyyah Riḍawīyyah Ḥaṭṭāriyyah spiritual chain

The Sainly Aphorisms of Sarī al-Saqatī

- A pious elder's advice
- The son taken away by soldiers
- A thousand voluntary units of salah
- The saintly aphorisms of Sarī al-Saqatī

Presented by

Majlis Al-Madīna-tul-'Ilmiyyah

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The Sainly Aphorisms of Sarī al-Saqāṭī

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The Sainly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

An English translation of *Irshādāt-i-Hazrat Sari Saqāṭī*



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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
أَتَابَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Du‘ ā for reading this book

Read the following *du‘ ā* (supplication) before you study a religious book or an Islamic lesson; you will remember whatever you study إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَاَنْشُرْ
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Translation

O Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ! Open the doors of knowledge and wisdom for us and have mercy on us! O the One Who is the most glorious and honourable! (*al-Mustatraf*, vol. 1, pp. 40)

Note:

Recite *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ once before and after the *du‘ ā*.

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The Sainly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
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The Sainly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

Dua of Attar

O Lord of al-Mustafa! Whoever reads or listens to the 19 page booklet, *The Sainly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī*, save them from an evil end! Grant them, their parents and all their family forgiveness without accountability!

أَمِينَ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The excellence of reciting *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ

Sayyiduna Abū al-Muẓaffar Muhammad b. ‘Abdullāh Khayyām al-Samarqandī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ narrates:

One day, I forgot my way. Then I saw a person beckoning me over to himself. “Come with me”, he said, so I did as requested. I realised this may be Prophet Khidr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Upon my querying, he confirmed his name to be Khidr.

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

Another pious figure was accompanying him. I asked about their name and was told, “This is Ilyās (عليه السلام).”

“May Allah bless you both!”, I exclaimed, “Have you met the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ?” They both replied in the positive. I requested, “Kindly relate to me something you heard from him, so I may narrate it from you.”

They said, “We heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying, ‘He who recites *ṣalāt* upon me, his heart is purified from hypocrisy the way a cloth is purified with water. Whoever recites صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ opens for himself seventy doors of mercy.’”¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

A pious elder’s advice

The renowned saint, Sarī al-Saqāṭī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ said:

I made dua to Allah Almighty for forty years to show me one of his saints, as I yearned to gaze upon someone who truly loved the Divine.

In the mountains of Lukām, I once saw many unwell people gathered, and I asked why they were there. They replied, “Once a month, a pious man of Allah

¹ *Al-Qawl al-Badī*, p. 277; *Jadhb al-Qulūb*, p. 235

comes here. He prays for the sick like us and they regain their health immediately. Today is the day he comes. He should be here any moment now.”

We were engaged in this discussion when a man with an illuminated countenance approached us. He recited something over all the ailing people, and they were all cured. As he turned to leave, I approached and said, “O pious servant of Allah Almighty! Please stay for a while. I wish to speak to you.”

He looked at me and declared, “O Sarī al-Saqāṭī! Do not turn to anyone except Allah Almighty. Remain immersed in His remembrance. Do not place your hope in anyone else, lest you are not accepted in His court. Ensure you do not turn your attention to anyone else.”

Saying this much, he walked back in the direction he came.¹

May the mercy of Allah Almighty be upon them, and may we be forgiven without accountability for their sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاہِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ
صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ 'Uyūn al-Hikāyāt, p. 201

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sarī al-Saqāṭī

O devotees of the saints! This pious person gave Sarī al-Saqāṭī amazing words of advice.

An introduction

Shaykh al-Islam, Abū al-Ḥasan Sarī b. Mughallis al-Saqāṭī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was a murīd of Shaykh Ma'rūf al-Karkhī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, and the teacher of Imam Junayd al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, as well as the latter's uncle.¹

Profession

Initially he sold *saqaṭ*, i.e., small items.² This is the reason behind him being named Saqāṭī. It is related he would purchase items and sell them, taking a profit of only half a dinar on every ten dinars. If someone gave him more than this, he would not accept it.

The son taken away by soldiers

The neighbour of Sarī al-Saqāṭī once came to him and pleaded, "Soldiers apprehended my son last night and may harm him. Please help me or send someone with me who can help resolve this!" The saint then stood and offered salah with profound humility and concentration.

¹ *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1, p. 246

² *Ibid*

After a long time passed, the neighbour exclaimed, “Please hurry, lest the ruler imprisons my son!” However, he unshakably continued his salah, and said after finishing, “O servant of Allah Almighty! I am resolving your problem.”

As this conversation took place, the neighbour’s servant maid came and revealed, “Your son has returned home!” The lady was overjoyed, and she left whilst making dua for Sarī al-Saqāṭī.¹

May the mercy of Allah Almighty be upon them, and may we be forgiven without accountability for their sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَوْمِيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Forgiveness for all

A man who participated in Sarī al-Saqāṭī’s funeral salah saw him in a dream and asked, مَا فَعَلَ اللهُ بِكَ

“How did Allah Almighty treat you?”

He replied, “Allah forgave me and those who participated in my funeral.”

¹ *Uyūn al-Hikāyāt*, p. 164

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

“Dear shaykh!” the man said, “I too participated in your funeral.”

Sarī al-Saqāṭī opened a piece of paper and looked inside, yet the man’s name was not there. The man insisted he was present, however. When the saint looked again, he found the man’s name in the margin.¹

A thousand voluntary units of salah

He had a covering in his shop. Behind this cloth, he would offer one thousand voluntary units of salah daily.²

There is an excellent lesson in this story for employers and employees who waste their spare time in gossiping and misusing their phones. Some of them not only miss salah in congregation, but the entire salah altogether.

Save the precious moments of your life from being wasted in purposeless pursuits. Your free time is valuable, so ensure it is spent in reciting as much *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet and other litanies as possible.

If you wish to remain silent, there are forms of silence which can earn you reward. For example, thinking about matters of Islamic knowledge, reflecting upon one’s death, contemplating

¹ *Tārīkh Damishq*, vol. 20, p. 198

² *Tazkirah-tul-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 246

the solitude of the grave and pondering upon the terrors of the Day of Judgement. Like this, time will not be wasted, and each breath will be considered an act of worship.

May Allah Almighty have mercy upon the great saint Sarī al-Saqāṭī, and may we be forgiven without accountability for his sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاةِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

The saints of Allah present mankind with many pearls of wisdom through their sermons. These esteemed personalities certainly played a major role in spreading the teachings of Islam to all corners of the world. Sometimes, they would go to people to rectify, train, educate and help them. At other times, people would come to them to take blessings from their company and listen to their statements.

Their statements are summarised comprisals of Quranic verses, prophetic hadith and their own life experiences. Their words harbour such efficacy, that upon hearing them, those who are negligent of salah become punctual in it, the heedless are awoken, the ignorant gain knowledge, transgressors acquire piety and non-Muslims accept Islam.

The Sainly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

Concerning the potent impact of words said by the saints, Sayyiduna Farīd al-Dīn Mas‘ūd Ganj Shakar رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ explained, “If a person does not find an accomplished spiritual guide, he should read the books of the *ahl al-sulūk* (the saints) and act according to them.”¹

The grand-shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states in his counsel to Amīr Ḥasan ‘Alā’ Sanjarī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, “One should study the books and statements of spiritual masters, which they wrote concerning spiritual wayfaring.”²

Sayyiduna Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' also states:

When I became spiritually affiliated with Shaykh al-Islām Farīd al-Dīn, I made intention to write down everything I heard from him. I did this, and upon returning to my lodgings, I would record them in a book. I then informed him of this. After that, whenever he wished to relate something, he would call for me. If I was delayed in arriving, he would repeat it.³

The saint Sarī al-Saqāṭī would also grant his murids and those around various pearls of knowledge. Here are just a few of his saintly aphorisms.

¹ *Rāhat al-Qulūb*, p. 15

² *Fawā'id al-Fawad*, p. 49

³ *Fawā'id al-Fawad*, p. 49

The saintly aphorisms of Sarī al-Saqāṭī

1) Whoever loves Allah Almighty is alive (his remembrance will always remain in people's hearts). Whoever loves the world, is disgraced.¹

2) The foolish person spends his morning and evening in lowly activities, whilst the intelligent person searches for his own faults.²

3) Some methods for the one who works for the Hereafter: Becoming beloved to Allah Almighty through voluntary salah, attaching one's heart to the Quran, staying steadfast upon Allah's commands and prioritising them, being humble knowing that Allah Almighty is watching, devoting full effort to pleasing Him, being pleased with a small amount of provision, and satisfaction with anonymity.³

4) Whoever possesses these five is brave to a great extent: unwavering steadfastness in acting upon Allah's commands, striving in which there is no forgetfulness, wakefulness without negligence, focussing upon Allah Almighty in solitude and public whilst avoiding ostentation, and preparation for death alongside reflecting upon it.⁴

¹ *Mukāshafat al-Qulūb*, p. 264

² *Ibid*

³ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 121, entry 14703

⁴ *Ibid* entry 14702

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

5) I know a path leading straight to Paradise. (When asked what path this was, he replied:) Perform acts of worship and do nothing but them until this becomes the only action you do.¹

6) He who is distant from Allah Almighty due to two matters is truly distant, and he who is close to Allah Almighty due to four matters is truly close. The two matters by which one becomes distant from Allah Almighty are to abandon obligations and engage in voluntary deeds 'in their place' and outward actions the heart does not attest to.

The four matters by which one draws close to Allah Almighty are holding fast to His court, continually striving in worship, being patient upon difficulties and refraining from publicising one's wrongdoings.²

7) Allah Almighty grants the sweetness of His dhikr and a distaste for Satanic whispers to whoever implores Him consistently.³

8) Five things are most superior: Crying over sins, rectifying flaws, obeying He who knows the unseen, removing rust from the heart, and not allowing desires to dominate you.⁴

¹ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 121, entry 14715

² *Ibid*, entry 14722

³ *Ibid*, entry 14734

⁴ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 128, entry 14749

9) Five things are such that their existence in the heart prevents establishment of anything else. These are: Fear of Allah Almighty alone, hope in Allah Almighty alone, love of Allah Almighty alone, being modest before Allah Almighty alone and having love for Allah Almighty alone.¹

10) Imam Junayd al-Baghdādī relates:

Sayyiduna Sarī al-Saqāṭī said, “I have seen benefit manifest ‘by carrying out acts of worship’ in the night’s darkness.” He would ask me questions whenever he wished to convey good. He once asked, “What is gratitude?” I replied, “Not to use a bounty to carry out disobedience.” He explained, “You have stated an excellent thing and given an admirable answer.”²

11) Patience entails one becoming like the earth, which carries both mountains and mankind without considering it a burden or calamity. Rather, it considers this a blessing and gift from its Lord.³

¹ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ*, vol. 10, p. 128, entry 14749

² *Ibid*, p. 123, entry 14717

³ *Ibid*, p. 124, entry 14723

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāfi

12) Do not do anything for the sake of people or leave or open anything for their sake. (Imam Junayd al-Baghdādi says this means all of one's actions should be for Allah's sake.)¹

13) I am astounded by someone who spends morning and evening seeking benefit, but never does anything to benefit his carnal-self (*nafs*).²

14) Preoccupation with 'amending' the carnal-self diverts one's attention from people.³

15) Your greatest strength is to overcome your carnal-self. The one who cannot reform himself cannot reform others.

16) He who obeys those above him, shall find those below him obeying him.

17) Do not sever ties with your brother over suspicions, and keep him pleased. The sign of knowing Allah Almighty is to fulfil His rights, and to prioritise them over yourself as much as possible.⁴

¹ *Ibid*, p. 130, entry 14758

² *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 122, entry 14706

³ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 122, entry 14709

⁴ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 128, entry 14749

18) A person is not deserving of praise until he gives preference to his religion over his desires, and he is not ruined until he gives preference to his desires over his religion.¹

19) The world is frivolous except for five matters: Bread which fills the stomach, water which quenches thirst, clothing which covers nakedness, a home in which a person resides, and sacred knowledge which one utilises.²

20) Abstinence (*zuhd*) is to despise this world whilst not demanding anything from creation.

21) Do not incline towards the world, as the rope from Allah Almighty will be severed. Do not tread arrogantly upon the earth, as it will soon become your grave.³

22) Someone who wastes the days of his life in procrastination is deceived, as well as he who dreams of the stations of the righteous 'but makes no attempt to gain them'.⁴

23) A person's faith is incomplete until three attributes are found in him: When angered, his anger does not prevent him from 'speaking' the truth; when pleased, his happiness does

¹ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 129, entry 14750

² *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 123, entry 14719

³ *Ibid*, p. 125, entry 14728

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 122, entry 14710

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

not cause him to sin; when capable of doing so, he still does not usurp the wealth of others.¹

24) There are ten stations for the one who fears Allah: Consistent sadness, being overcome with sadness, fear which leaves one restless, crying to a great extent, spending days and nights in anxiety, fleeing from places of relaxation, profound levels of uneasiness, fear stemming from one's heart, life becoming languid, then finally to hide one's melancholy and preserve it.²

25) If only I received the entirety of the world's sorrow so that all people could be free from it.

26) If people were as compassionate to themselves as they are to their children, they would find happiness in their outcomes.³

27) Save yourself from a situation in which your praise is widespread and your faults are hidden.⁴

28) Sayyiduna Sarī al-Saqāṭī once said to Imam Junayd al-Baghdādī, "I know a short path that can lead you to Paradise. Neither take nor ask from anyone nor should you possess anything to give to anyone."⁵

¹ *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, vol. 6, p. 320, *hadith* 8329

² *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 121, *entry* 14704

³ *Ibid*, p. 122, *entry* 14707

⁴ *Ibid*, *entry* 14713

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 123, *entry* 14716

29) Four matters elevate a person: knowledge, decorum, chastity, and trustworthiness.¹

30) He who claims to have inward knowledge yet contravenes outward commands (of Islamic law), is a wrongdoer.²

31) Those who have proximity to Allah Almighty have hearts which always remain concerned about divine decree, whereas the general body of pious people have hearts concerned of their endings. The latter say, “How will our ending be?”, and the former say, “We do not know what judgement Allah Almighty may have made concerning us.”³

32) Maintain sincerity in your actions until they become sincere. This is more difficult than action itself, and saving actions once they are sincere is just as difficult.⁴

33) Protecting actions from that which destroys them is more difficult than performing them.⁵

34) Make friends, but do not take them as confidants. Save yourself from evil acquaintances and remain wary of your friend the same way you are wary of your enemy.⁶

¹ *Ibid*, entry 14720

² *Ibid*, p. 125, entry 14726

³ *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 125, entry 14730

⁴ *Ibid*, entry 14732

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 126, entry 14733

⁶ *Ibid*, entry 14735

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

35) He who procrastinates about pious deeds will have immense regret on the Day of Judgement.¹

36) The shaykh was asked, “What do those who remain hungry gain from their hunger?”

He replied, “What do those who fill their stomachs gain from filling them? The hungry gain wisdom from their hunger, whilst those who eat to their fill have indigestion!”²

37) Three matters are from the character of the pious: fulfilling obligations, avoiding forbidden acts, and abstaining from heedlessness.

38) Three qualities found in the righteous lead to Allah Almighty being pleased with a person: seeking forgiveness abundantly, humility and profuse charity.³

39) Whoever does not value bounties has them taken from him without him even realising. The one for whom calamities are lightened (due to continued patience) gathers reward.⁴

40) Consign your neediness to Allah Almighty; He shall liberate you from people.⁵

¹ *Ibid*, entry 14737

² *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 126, entry 14740

³ *Ibid*, p. 127, entry 14743

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 128, entry 14746

⁵ *Ibid*, entry 14747

41) Character and manners translate your intellect, whilst your tongue translates you heart. Your face is the mirror of your heart, because whatever is hidden in the heart becomes visible upon the face.¹

42) Hearts are of three types. The first are those which are sturdy and immovable like mountains. The second are those which are like date palm trees, whose roots are firmly planted in the earth, yet wind causes them to sway. Finally, you have hearts which are like feathers, thrown here and there by the wind.²

43) The best sustenance is that which is protected from five matters: sin when earning it, humiliation by begging for it, deception in one's profession, earnings derived from sinful instruments and infringement of people's rights.³

44) Only someone who avoids doubtful matters has strength to save himself from his (evil) desires.⁴

45) Whoever mentions me in a bad light, I have forgiven him. Yet, I will not forgive someone who deliberately says something against me whilst knowing I did not do it.⁵

¹ *Ibid*, entry 14748

² *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 128, entry 14749

³ *Ibid*, entry 14749

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 129, entry 14754

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 130, entry 14759

The Saintly Aphorisms of Sari al-Saqāṭī

46) Few are those whose statements and actions bear no contradiction.¹

47) Someone who does not value blessings will experience a decline he shall not even realise.²

48) Modesty and love come to the door of the heart. If they find abstinence and piety in it, they stay, otherwise they leave.³

49) Intelligent is he who understands the secrets of the Quran and reflects upon them.⁴

50) Whoever projects himself amongst creation contrary to his reality, falls in the sight of Allah Almighty.⁵

51) Strong is he who overcomes his carnal-self.⁶

52) Powerful is he who subdues his anger.⁷

53) There are three causes of abstaining from sin: fear of Hellfire, longing for Paradise and modesty before Allah Almighty.⁸

¹ *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 252

² *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 252

³ *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 252

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Sharīf al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 512

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 253

54) The whole world becomes obedient to the one who is obedient to Allah Almighty.¹

55) Rather than causing people harm, good character is to be patient upon the harm received from them.²

56) A person attains ascendancy by giving preference to worship over his desires.³

57) As Sayyiduna Sarī al-Saqāṭī was passing away, he advised Imam Junayd al-Baghdādi by saying, “Whilst residing amongst creation, do not become heedless of the Creator.”⁴

¹ *Ibid*, p. 252

² *Ibid*

³ *Tazkirah-tul-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 252

⁴ *Tazkirah-tul-Awliyā*, vol. 1, p. 254

Consign your neediness to Allah Almighty; He shall liberate you from people. (*Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 128, entry 14747)

He who procrastinates concerning pious deeds will have great regret on the Day of Judgement. (*Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 10, p. 126, entry 14737)

He who is obedient to Allah Almighty, the whole world becomes obedient to him. (*Tazkirah-tul-Awliyā'*, vol. 1, p. 252)



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