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Stories and Sayings of Jahtu Ahwahn

Introduction

Like the Roman Catholic Saint Teresa of Ávila and mystics of other religions, Sufi mystics celebrate the direct experience of God. They are associated with Islam but Muslims consider Sufism to be outside the sphere of Islam. One Sufi scholar contends the Sufi philosophy is universal in nature, with roots predating the rise of Islam and the other modern-day religions, except perhaps for Buddhism and Jainism.

Sufi stories are thought provoking, amusing and sometimes outright hilarious. Examples may be found on various websites, including <http://www.zahuri.org/Sufistories.html>. I don't pretend my stories and sayings reach the spiritual level or timeless quality of Sufi tales but I had fun emulating them.

I hope you enjoy *Stories and Sayings of Jahtu Ahwahn*.

JJA



Stories and Sayings of Jahtu Ahwahn

Affliction

Jahtu Ahwahn was talking with a man and asked him what he did for a living. The man said he was a theologian, whereupon Jahtu Ahwahn replied, “Oh! Then I’ll pray for your recovery!”



The Student

A young man approached Jahtu Ahwahn and asked to be his student. Jahtu Ahwahn said, “I’m not a teacher! Go away.” But the young man continued to ask. Jahtu Ahwahn said, “Your Teacher is *within*! Just *listen*!” Still the young man asked to be Jahtu Ahwahn’s student. Finally Jahtu Ahwahn said, “Very well. We will start with a quiz: What is *not* God?” The young man happily thanked Jahtu Ahwahn and left pondering the answer to the quiz.

A year later when Jahtu Ahwahn was at a market buying food, he saw the young man for a second time and asked him, “Well?” The young man answered, “I’m still thinking!”



The Would-be Leader

An ambitious man asked Jahtu Ahwahn how to become a great leader. Jahtu Ahwahn counseled, “Serve others!” Disappointed, the man left and never returned.



The Beautiful Woman

Jahtu Ahwahn asked a beautiful wealthy woman he knew why she didn’t wear cosmetics, jewelry and fine clothes. She replied, “Oh, I’m too busy following The Path to bother with such things!”



The Widow

A widow complained to Jahtu Ahwahn she could not find another suitable husband among the men she knew. He told her, “First things first! The Lover of your soul is *within*. Start *there*.”





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How to Meditate

A young woman asked Jahtu Ahwahn, “What is a good way to meditate?” He replied, “Observe your breathing and do that *only*.” The woman left to follow his advice.

When next he saw her, Jahtu Ahwahn asked, “So, how goes your meditation practice?” She replied, “At first it was very difficult but after some practice I *became* my breathing and after even more practice I *disappeared*. I don’t know *where* I went!” Jahtu Ahwahn smiled, “You are doing *very well indeed!*”



The Road to the Holy City

As Jahtu Ahwahn was going down the road, he greeted an old woman he passed, “Isn’t walking on the road to the Holy City inspiring?” The startled woman responded, “I don’t know about *inspiring*, sir, I’m on my way to the market to buy some eggs for breakfast.” Jahtu Ahwahn answered, “Oh, *yes!* Thank you!”



The Ego

A young man told Jahtu Ahwahn, “My friend’s guru says the ego is our enemy. He says the ego must be done away with.” Jahtu Ahwahn replied, “Tell your friend to ask the guru just how he would be able to teach his followers if he himself had no ego.”



How to Attain Enlightenment

An earnest seeker went to Jahtu Ahwahn and declared, “I desire enlightenment above all else, above my family and friends, above my money and holdings, even above my life! How can I attain enlightenment?” Jahtu Ahwahn counseled him, “Give up all your desires, including your desire for enlightenment, and replace your earnest inquiry with choiceless awareness. Then see what happens.”



In Praise of a Guru

The young woman, Annapatupa, was extolling the virtues of her guru to Jahtu Ahwahn. She ended with a starry-eyed exclamation, “Isn’t he just *wonderful!*” “Yes, indeed,” Jahtu Ahwahn agreed, “apparently his only stumbling block is that he is proud of his humility.”





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Finding Peace

Pooj Jerwahn was sincerely—and loudly—lamenting conditions in the world, “There is no peace! There is such violence! Everywhere people attack others whose religions and cultures are different than their own. . . people show no tolerance towards one another. . . I’m overwhelmed! What can *I*, one person, do about *all this*?” Jahtu Ahwahn told him, “You can start by making peace with your brother-in-law.” “Oh, yeah. . . ,” Pooj sighed.



The Guru’s Wisdom

Annapatupa was trying to understand one of her guru’s teachings, “All knowledge is One. There is only one question but it is irrelevant because it has no answer. There is but one answer yet it has no question. Everything can be known except One Thing and that One Thing is Everything.” She asked Jahtu Ahwahn what it meant. He shrugged, “I don’t know. It sounds like nonsense to me!”



The Boyfriend

A young woman complained to Jahtu Ahwahn about her erstwhile boyfriend, “He made *promises*! He told me he would love me *forever*! He said we were going to make a life together, a future! But now I’m all alone!” Jahtu Ahwahn sighed, “Well, my friend, Love happens only in the Now. It can’t be resurrected from the past or preserved like peach jam for the future. See if you can just *be present*, then watch what happens.”



Virtues

Pooj Jerwahn asked Jahtu Ahwahn to tell him about the virtues of love, courage and honesty. Jahtu Ahwahn paused then answered, “Love is being Who-You-Are. Courage is doing the necessary thing in spite of uproars outside of you and inside of you. Honesty is being a true mirror, reflecting everything without distortion, retaining nothing. All three require being in the Now and, therefore, all three are timeless.”



Teachers

Annapatupa asked Jahtu Ahwahn who had been *his* teacher. Jahtu Ahwahn answered, “There is no one from whom I cannot learn.”





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The Birthday Gift

Annapatupa visited Jahtu Ahwahn to get some advice. She wanted to give her boyfriend an exceptional birthday gift but was at a loss, “He has lots of great clothes and a nice apartment with everything he seems to want or need. I can’t think of anything really special to give him for his birthday.” Jahtu Ahwahn suggested, “Give him your undivided attention. That is the *real* gift of love.”



I Am an Eagle

If I say ‘I am an eagle,’ no one would believe me, many would think I am crazy but some who secretly believe it is possible for a man to also be an eagle would be angry. If I say ‘I am a clerk,’ few would have reason to doubt me, fewer still would be angry, and fewer yet would think I am crazy. It’s best to say nothing at all about who I am. *Jahtu Ahwahn*



Climbing the Holy Mountain

I thought I was having a rough climb, a real struggle ascending the Holy Mountain, but I discovered I am just stumbling around in the foothills like a deranged man! *Jahtu Ahwahn*



Growing Up

Pooj Jerwahn was talking with some neighborhood children as Jahtu Ahwahn was walking by. Pooj asked a boy, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The boy said, “*Me!*” But Pooj said, “No, no, what do you want to *be?*” Jahtu Ahwahn interrupted, “The boy answered rightly! Think of another question!”



Listening

Whether your many inner voices are discordant or in concert, listen for the One Voice that speaks only through your silence. *Jahtu Ahwahn*



The Feast

Several families and friends had gathered for a feast and day of thanksgiving. Among them was a minister well-known for his longwinded and convoluted prayers. The host of the gathering took Jahtu Ahwahn aside and whispered, “I’m going to ask you to lead us in prayer.” When the time came for the prayer, Jahtu Ahwahn lifted his hands and



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offered, “Thank you! *Thank you! Thank you!* Amen.” After that, Jahtu Ahwahn was looked upon more favorably by those present, except for the minister.



Pride

Pooj Jerwahn asked Jahtu Ahwahn about pride. Jahtu Ahwahn told him, “Pride is trying to *do* something when all that is needed is to love God.”



The Sincere Seeker

A young and dedicated student of guru Pandamanchapman, Leroy Pratt by name, told Jahtu Ahwahn, “My teacher says only *sincere* seekers find enlightenment. Guru Pandamanchapman says I must be *very* persistent and *always* attentive and also *very* humble, seeking with all my heart. I *really try hard* to be these things.” Jahtu Ahwahn gently put his hand on the young man’s shoulder, drew him close and whispered in his ear, “Leroy, give up *seeking*, take up *finding*.”

When Leroy next saw Jahtu Ahwahn he reported, “When I told Pandamanchapman what you told me he said you are rude and crude and to be ignored!”

“Ah,” Jahtu Ahwahn sighed, raising his eyebrows, “Well then,” he continued softly, “ask your teacher *where* enlightenment is *always* to be found.” The student hurried away with the question for his teacher.

The earnest young student soon returned and breathlessly told Jahtu Ahwahn, “Pandamanchapman sends his apology.” Jahtu Ahwahn smiled, “Ah, well, thank you, Leroy, but what was his *answer*?”

“Within.”



Giving and Receiving

Ask of others only what they are able to give without resentment—and only what you need. Give to others what they are able to receive with dignity and what they have *really* asked for—and what you *really* have to give them. This requires being attuned to both Self and Other and, of course, paying attention. *Jahtu Ahwahn*





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Praying

Jahtu Ahwahn went to visit Poojamin N. Jerwahn, who was known to be a devout man, if slightly eccentric. When he arrived, Jahtu found his friend with ice packs on his knees, “Pooj! What happened to your knees?”

“Well,” Pooj explained, “I like to pray on my knees. I know you don’t *have* to kneel to pray but I was raised that way and I prefer it.”

“So, you’ve been doing *a lot* of praying! What have you been praying for?” his visitor asked.

“I’ve been praying for world peace. . .”

Jahtu Ahwahn nodded, “Me, too.”

“. . . and for my mother-in-law’s happiness,” Pooj finished.

“So!” Jahtu Ahwahn exclaimed, “You have at last come to terms with your mother-in-law!”

Pooj shook his head, “No. She has gone to live with my brother-in-law and his wife and I pray she will be so happy there she won’t come back to live with me and my wife!”

“Hmm, well, which of the two issues kept you on your knees the longest?” Jahtu Ahwahn asked.

Pooj sniffed, “I’d rather not say.”



The Successful Marriage

Chuck and Christa Barkakian, a loving couple known for having a great marriage, were celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary. When Jahtu Ahwahn asked them to tell the secret of their success, they both answered at once. Christa said, “Mutual respect!” while Chuck said, “Separate vacations!” They looked at each other with wide eyes and then started laughing. In unison they said, “And a sense of humor!”



The Benefit of Meditation

Richmond Fordice was a man well beyond middle age. He was, in fact, what some called a greybeard but he was keen on learning new things, despite his advancing age. He had just completed a series of three workshops on meditation and reported to his friend, Jahtu Ahwahn, his predicament, “Jahtu, I know this meditation stuff is good for you but a lot of



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the time when I sit to meditate I fall asleep! What can I do about *that*? Has that happened to you?”

Jahtu Ahwahn nodded, “Yes, and when it happens I just enjoy my nap!”



The Guru's New Life

Poojamin Jerwahn was visiting with Jahtu Ahwahn, “Jahtu, did you hear about guru Pandamanchapman? He quit teaching! He refuses to hear any news of the world and is living alone like a hermit! He just takes long walks and feeds the wild birds. Can you imagine living like *that*!”

“Yeah, it sounds great. . . ,” Jahtu Ahwahn sighed.



The Secret of Life

Defiance can be energizing and bring out surprising strength but it is in *consent* we find the secret to this lifetime on Earth.

Jahtu Ahwahn



End