

Rabi'a al-adawiyya



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Rabi'a al-Adawiyya is recognised as the first female Saint of Islam due to her major role in the early maturation of Islam, specifically, the expansion of Sufism. It was she who focused on a rigorous asceticism that required complete abandonment of one's worldly pleasures in order to detach one from the fear of hell and enter the passionate love and devotion for God. Her belief in this notion "Muhabbah" (Divine Love) and her dismissal of materialism became a strong prestige throughout her teachings and poetry.

Additionally, her incomparability from the traditional female ideology of the time period challenged the specific roles of gender as delineated by Islam. It later became widely accepted within the Sufi movement that women had gained a greater role within the religion due to Rabi'a's actions and influences. The Sufis are not an ethnic or religious group, but a mystical movement that is found all over the Islamic world and that still has a deep influence on the varied populations of the Middle East. Sufism searches for a direct mystical knowledge of God and of his Love.

Its goal was to progress beyond mere intellectual knowledge to a mystical (existential) experience that submerged man in the infinity of God. Sufism had an important part in the formation of Muslim societies as it educated the masses and met their felt needs, giving spiritual meaning to their lives and channeling their emotions. The goal of the Sufis is to reach a strong amalgamation with Allah (their god) through love and true faith. 'Mahabba' or Love as it is known, is a noble state that God has bestowed as a quality belonging to the creation, through this love, he has touched that who seeks him.

Rabi'a al Adawiya, believed that God's love is at the core of the universe and that we need to feel that love in all we do. Walking through the streets she was seen carrying a bucket of water in one hand and a burning candle in the other. When asked why, she said: " I want to set fire to heaven with this flame and put out the fire of hell with this water so that people will cease to worship GOD for fear of hell or for temptation of heaven"(stated in myclasses notes). With the divine love that she felt towards her God, she obviously felt the comfortability that she would be able to change the fates of men, meaning that with the bucket and he torch of fire she would extinguish the burning flames of hell and light the way to heaven. Her prayers became widely used among Sufism today and is one of the way that her prayer had contributed to Islam. In particular an excerpt of her poem " My Greatest Need is You" is an example of how she was able to bring forth this personal connection when she states " O Allah I can't live in this world/Without remembering you" Through this example, the poetry of Rabi'a was highly important as it allowed the individual to identify with her teachings on a more personal, thus portraying the ultimate significance she had on the religion itself.

Rabi'a's use of simple language and the very prominent concept of Heaven and Hell in Islam are extremely helpful in understanding the focus of her work. She uses a very simple structure and does not hide her meaning behind metaphors. Overall, her work is short, but sweet and succinct.

Rabi'a's goal as a Sufi was to give up worldly want, remove the fear of hell and the desire of Heaven all for the love of God. The main idea in both of her

poems is that God is all one needs. This idea is presented in selection 47.

Give the goods of this world to Your enemies

Give the treasures of Paradise to Your friends- But as for me- You are all I need (Upton, 47, lines 5-7). These lines communicate Rabi'a's beliefs plainly. Worldly possessions are what keeps one's spirit limited to this earth, and thus cannot achieve oneness with God. The person is too caught up with material things to gain the ideal closeness with God. Paradise is something ordinary believers are after, seeing that as the end, but in reality the love of God is what they should be seeking. Her unambiguous writing style makes these ideas available to everyone.

These ideas advocated by Rabi'a are not necessarily esoteric, but things that all believers should know and follow. (stated by Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya's Poetry: A Tool of Communication. The Writing on the Wall) The first Sufis were ascetics meaning the self disciplined themselves and meditated on the Day of Judgement. They were called " those who always weep" and " those who see this world as a hut of sorrows. " They kept the external rules of Shari'a, but at the same time developed their own mystical ideas and techniques.

As Sufism isn't a variant of Islam, it is a part of Islam by a way of approaching the entire religion as a whole. As Cambridge professor Margaret Smith explains, Rabi'a began her ascetic life in a small desert cell near Basra, where she lost herself in prayer and went straight to God for teaching. (By Kathleen Jenks, Ph. D.) Rabi'a was In the branch of sufism that is known as Divine Love, from several ways of practising the religion. Within the Sufi

traditions, the recognition of this truth has encouraged the spiritual maturation of women in a way that has not always been possible.

As the mystical side of Islam developed, it was Rabi'a, who first expressed the relationship with the divine in a language that refers to God as the Beloved. Rabi'a was the first human being to speak of the realities of Sufism with a language that anyone could understand. Though she experienced many difficulties in her early years, Rabi'a's starting point was neither a fear nor desire, but only love. The influence that Rabi'a had to the adherents of Islam was her concept of divine love and for one to become completely unselfish in order to amalgamate with Allah.

With the reward being "his garden" but instead she makes mention that she only chooses his love and to become one with him. Rabi'a al-Adawiyya played a vital role in the development of the Islamic religion as a whole as she selflessly and utterly amalgamated solely to Allah. Her way of ascetic and simple lifestyle became a guide of Muhammad's message: to live simple with the focus on Allah rather than luxury. This teaching is reflected through the ascetic ethics of Islam, where they believed they could attain a spiritual connection with God while still alive through secluded prayer and utter devotion and true faith.

Her devotion to Allah was reinforced through her practice of Salat; one of the five pillars, a religious ritual that is undertaken by adherents five times a day. Likewise this obedience was again established by her refusal of several marriages. Being single, Rabi'a caused concern for some Muslims, as Islam places much emphasis on family as the key block in society. When asked why

she did not marry, Rabia replied “ The marriage knot can only tie one who exists. Where is existence here? I am not my own I am his and under his command. You must ask permission from him. Reaffirming her commitment to God, stating that no man shall come between her and her faith. The faith that Rabi'a had together with her absolute amenability to Allah, the adherents of Islam can clearly depict a lifestyle that will structure their lives in a positive manner in order to reach a spiritual enlightenment. The influence of Rabi'a towards the religion not only affected its system by her being a women, but it showed the possibility of God being present through love instead of commands, allowing the religion to grow and for the Sufi movement to germinate in the hearts of its adherents.