

# EARLY ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

SUFI, QUR'AN, MI`RAJ, POETIC AND THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

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# *Rabī'a: Her Words and Life in 'Attar's Memorial of the Friends of God*

(TRANSLATED BY PAUL LOSENSKY  
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## INTRODUCTION

One day some friends-of-God saw Rabī'a running along with fire in one hand and water in the other. "Lady of the next world, where are you going and what does this mean?"

Rabī'a replied: "I am going to burn paradise and douse hell-fire, so that both veils may be lifted from those on the quest and they will become sincere of purpose. God's servants will learn to see him without hope for reward or fear of punishment. As it is now, if you took away hope for reward and fear of punishment, no one would worship or obey."<sup>2</sup>

*The most famous Sufi woman, Rābī'a al-'Adawīyya (d. 185/801), also known as Rābī'a of Baṣra, is mentioned only briefly in the earliest accounts of Sufi saints. The fullest account of her life and sayings appears in the Persian text Memorial of the Friends of God by the Sufi writer and poet of Nishapur, Farīdu d-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. ca. 627/1230). The Memorial consists of*

accounts of the lives and sayings of seventy-five Sufi masters. Because the accounts show a consistent hagiographic framework, and because in the case of Rabi'a we have few other sources against which to measure 'Attar's accounts of Rabi'a, the historicity of many Rabi'a legends, and even of Rabi'a herself, has been an object of scholarly questioning.<sup>3</sup> Questions remain concerning to what extent 'Attar's account reflected an already strong oral tradition about Rabi'a, and to what extent her important place in Sufi understanding is due to 'Attar's representation of her. The concern in this section, as with the sections on Bistami, Hallaj, and Junayd, is not to try to resolve questions of biography and historicity, but to explore the meaning of the figure's biography and sayings for the Sufi tradition.

'Attar begins with an immediate and dramatic highlighting of the gender issue. Some might ask how a woman could be included in the ranks of Sufi masters, called, at the time, the "ranks of men" (*ṣaff riḡāl*) according to 'Attar. This question generates responses from a number of historical, social, and mystical perspectives. 'Attar appeals to historical precedent: the formative role of 'A'isha, a wife of the prophet Muhammad, in later Islamic tradition. 'A'isha, because of her massive influence on hadith, was called "the author of two thirds of the faith." He also appeals to the tradition according to which Maryam, the mother of 'Isa (Jesus), will be the first among the "ranks of men" at the final resurrection. He then makes a more abstract appeal to the principle that the deity regards only a person's inner intention, not the outward form. He ends with a justification based on a mystical notion of unity. The *qawm* (folk, Sufis) are "one," and in oneness (*tawḥīd*), there are no individuals, and thus what room is there for man or woman, you and I, just as in prophecy there is no room for class distinctions of "noble" and "common."

Throughout the discussion of gender, an ironic twist is given to the stereotype of the "weak woman." Rabi'a refers to herself and is referred to as weak-woman (*ḡa'īfa*). She also is called a "weak *ṭir-zāne*," which can be translated as a "weak old woman," but which also can imply, within the contexts set up by the anecdotes, a certain role as master or teacher (the Persian *ṭir* is the equivalent to the Arabic *shaykh*). Throughout 'Attar's account, this "weak" creature is shown commanding and criticizing the leading secular and religious leaders of her time, referring to the feared angels of judgment (Munkir and Nakir who tear the soul from the human and throw it to its fate) as "those two young gentlemen," and most interestingly, criticizing the Almighty itself for sending such angels to ask her about her faith. Perhaps most illustrative of the character of this weak creature is the story in which three great *shaykhs* come to visit her. Each is afraid to speak,

saying, "You say something." Finally, they do speak, and in typical fashion, Rabi'a exposes and demolishes the spiritual pretensions hidden within their words.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to a play on weakness and strength, the gender issue also generates a supple investigation of issues of veiling and unveiling, private and public. 'Attar's opening chapter on Rabi'a begins by referring to her, among other things, as "veiled by sincerity." Her status as a freedwoman, a former slave, allows her prerogatives—such as refusing marriage—unavailable to most women. Indeed, in one account, when someone proposes marriage to her, she refers the question to her master, the divine beloved (who in this metaphor is figured as masculine), thus sending the issue of gender into a wicked spin; to marry her is in some sense to marry her master, because of the implication of mystical union.

A large number of anecdotes consist of verbal jousts among Rabi'a and several famous early Sufis, including Ḥasan of Baṣra and Ibrāhīm Adham. In comparison with her, these great men of the age are shown as still held down by affectation and egoism.<sup>5</sup> Of special interest in these stories is her relationship with the deity. Her absolute devotion is often related directly to her intimate and unaffected conversations, in which she calls on the deity with confidence and even with familiarity. Here Rabi'a's role as a former slave, mendicant, and yet personal confidant of the deity bears comparison with the biblical Hagar, a slave who was rejected and exiled by Abraham after the birth of Isaac, but to whom the deity spoke directly in the desert—one of the few cases in which the deity directly speaks to human beings in the Hebrew Bible.

In one story, when Rabi'a is lost in the desert, she sends away a group of men who offer to help her, and then engages in an intimate dialogue with the deity. The more profound dimensions of the private-versus-public theme are revealed here. If she is alone in the desert, how does the narrator come to know of the conversation? If her telling of the conversation to someone else is implicitly assumed, it seems to be in tension with the emphasis on the confidentiality of her relationship with the divine. A similar tension exists in the earlier story in which her owner sees her entreating God one night, with a lamp suspended without a cord above her head, illuminating the entire house. Again, a private, intimate moment is made public. Once the owner sees this, he calls Rabi'a in and gives her freedom. Exemplifying this contradiction of private made public are the intimate entreaties or supplications (*munājāt*) attributed to Rabi'a, several of which are listed at the end of the account.

The familiarities Rabi'a takes with the deity are dramatically illustrated in the story of the Ka'ba coming to meet her when she is lost in the desert on her way to making the ḥajj, and her casual statement that she is interested in the lord of the Ka'ba, so what could the Ka'ba itself have to offer her. At one point she says to the deity: "You come to me, right here!"—a highly unusual way for a Sufi to address the deity. The deity responds by reminding her what happened when Musa asked for a vision: One atom's worth of divine manifestation fell on the mountain and it shattered into forty pieces. Here we have a powerful dynamic between the dialogical and the visual. Rabi'a has a very intimate, oral, and aural relationship with the deity through her munajat. She speaks at times with utter devotion; at other times with surprising casualness—taking literally and to its logical extreme her references to the deity and the deity's references to her as "friend" or "beloved" (dost). This intimacy is held in balance with the cosmic sense of awe, evoked particularly in the visual imagery of the annihilation of the mountain in the Moses-vision story.

The stories revolve around a cluster of basic themes of mystical practice: tawakkul (the absolute trust-in-God); riḍā (complete acceptance of the lot willed for one by the deity to the point of refusing prayer as petition, since one's own will has been merged with that of the divine will);<sup>6</sup> faqr (absolute poverty, including—as was seen in the earlier essay by as-Sarrāj—the paradoxical poverty that is so great one gives up one's own possession of the state of poverty itself). The central Islamic doctrine of affirmation of unity (tawḥīd) is given its Sufi moral and relational emphasis: Unity for Rabi'a means that there is only one object of desire, of interest, of concern—the divine beloved—and in such an absolute relational tawḥīd, Rabi'a declared even love for Muhammad or hatred for Satan to be distractions. This unified center of her being leads to a life of utter intensity, dramatized throughout the anecdotes as a living as if each moment were the last moment of her life.

At the center of this cluster of interrelated themes is ṣidq (sincerity). It is her sincerity that is the touchstone in Rabi'a's encounters with the other religious leaders, the buzurgān (great men, important personages) of her time. The sincerity is dramatized in the story from the biographer Aflaki cited above on Rabi'a's announced intent to burn paradise and douse hell-fire so that no one will serve the deity except out of sincere love, stripped of desire for reward and fear of punishment. 'Attar offers a number of stories with a similar message.

## ◆ ◆ ◆ RĀBĪ'A AL-'ADAWĪYA<sup>7</sup>

1. Veiled with a special veil, veiled with the veil of sincerity, burned up in love and longing, enamored of proximity and immolation, lost in love-union,<sup>8</sup> deputy of Maryam the pure, accepted among men, Rabi'a 'Adawīya—the mercy of God Most High upon her.

If anyone asks why her memorial is placed among the ranks of men, we reply that the chief of the prophets—peace and blessing upon him—declares: *God does not regard your forms*. It is not a matter of form, but of right intention. If it is right to derive two-thirds of religion from 'A'isha Ṣādiqah—God be pleased with her—then it is also right to derive benefit from one of his maidservants. When a woman is a man on the path of the lord Most High, she cannot be called woman.<sup>9</sup>

2. Thus it is that 'Abbāsah Tūsī said, "When on the morrow on the plain of resurrection they call out, 'O men,' the first person to step into the ranks of men will be Maryam." When Ḥasan Baṣrī would not hold a meeting unless a certain person were present, then certainly that person's memorial can be entered in the ranks of men.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, when it comes to the truth [*ḥaqīqat*], where this folk is, there is no one—all are unity. In unity, how can your existence or mine remain, much less "man" or "woman"? As Abū 'Alī Fārmadī, God's mercy upon him, says, "Prophecy is the essence of might and sublimity. Noble or common do not enter into it." Thus, being God's friend is also exactly like this. This is especially so for Rabi'a, who in her age had no equal in proper behavior or mystical knowledge. She was esteemed by the great people of the age and was a decisive proof for those who lived in her time.

3. It is related that on the night she was born, there was no lamp in her father's house, nor a drop of oil to anoint her navel, nor so much as a piece of cloth to swaddle her in. Her father had three daughters, and Rabi'a was the fourth. And so they called her Rabi'a, meaning "the fourth one."

So his wife said to him, "Go to neighbor so-and-so and ask for a lamp's worth of oil."

Rabi'a's father had sworn not to ask any creature for anything. He got up, went to that neighbor's door, and returned, saying, "They were asleep."

He fell asleep grieving. He saw the Prophet—peace and blessing upon

him—in a dream. He said, "Don't be sad. This daughter is a noble lady who will intercede before him for seventy thousand of my community."<sup>11</sup> He went on to say, "Go to 'Isa Rādan, the emir of Basra, and say, 'This last Friday, you forgot how you call upon my blessings a hundred times each night and four hundred times on Friday. In atonement, give me four hundred gold dinars.'"

When he awoke in tears in the morning, Rabi'a's father wrote this dream down on a piece of paper and took it to the palace of 'Isa Rādan. He gave it to someone to deliver. When the Emir examined it, he commanded that ten thousand dirhams be given in alms, in gratitude that the Prophet—peace and blessing upon him—had remembered him. And he ordered that four hundred dinars be given to Rabi'a's father and said, "Tell him, 'I want you to come in, so I may pay my respects to you. But I do not consider it right that one like you, delivering the message of the Prophet—peace and blessing upon him—should come to visit me. I myself will come and sweep the dust on your doorstep with my beard. By God, if you ever happen to need anything, let me know.'"

So Rabi'a's father took that gold and spent it.

4. When Rabi'a grew older, her mother and father died. A great famine occurred in Basra. The sisters were separated, and Rabi'a fell into the hands of a wicked man who sold her for a few dirhams. That master ordered her to work long and hard.

One day on the street, she fled from the indignity. She fell and broke her hand. She put her face on the ground and said, "I am a stranger without mother or father. I am a captive and my hand is broken. None of this saddens me. All I need is for you to be pleased with me, to know whether you are pleased with me or not."

She heard a voice say, "Do not be sad. Tomorrow a grandeur will be yours such that the closest of the heavenly company will take pride in you."

5. So Rabi'a went to the house. She fasted continuously and prayed all night, remaining on her feet until daybreak. One night, her master started from sleep. He heard a voice. He looked and saw Rabi'a prostrate in prayer, saying, "O my God, you know that the desire of my heart is in accord with your command and that the light of my eye is in service to your court. If the matter were in my hands, I would not rest a moment from serving you. But you have put me in the hands of this creature. Because of this, I came late to serve you."

Her master looked and saw a lantern hanging suspended over Rabi'a's head without a chain and the whole room filled with light. He arose, saying to himself, "She cannot be kept in servitude." So he said to Rabi'a, "I free you. If you wish to stay here, we are entirely at your service. If not, go wherever you have a mind to." Rabi'a asked leave to go, departed, and immersed herself in devotions.

They say she used to perform one thousand *rak'as* of prayer a day. From time to time, she went to Hasan Basri's meetings. One group says that she fell into being a musician, repented again, and dwelled in a ruin. Afterward, she retired to a meditation cell and worshiped there awhile.

6. Later, she resolved to make the *hajj* and went into the desert. She had a donkey upon which she loaded her belongings. But in the middle of the desert, it died. The people in the caravan said, "We'll carry your things." She said, "I have not come this far by putting my trust [*taravaku*] in you. Go on ahead."

The caravan departed. Rabi'a said, "My God, do kings treat a helpless woman this way? You invited me to your house, then killed my donkey in the middle of the journey, and left me alone in the desert."

The donkey immediately got up. Rabi'a loaded it and went on. The narrator of this report said that sometime later he saw that little donkey being sold.

7. While Rabi'a was on her way to Mecca, she was left helpless in the desert for several days. She said, "My God, I am sore at heart. Where will I go? I am a clod of earth, and that house is a rock. I must have you."

The real Most High addressed her heart without intermediary: "O Rabi'a, you wash in the blood of eighteen thousand worlds. Don't you see that when Moses—peace be upon him—desired a vision, we cast a few motes of self-manifestation upon the mountain and it shattered into forty pieces!"

8. It is related that she was going to Mecca another time. In the middle of the desert, she saw that the Ka'ba had come out to welcome her. Rabi'a said, "I need the lord of the house. What am I to do with the house? Its power means nothing to me. What delight is there in the Ka'ba's beauty? What I need to welcome me is the one who said '*Whoever approaches me by a hand's span, I will approach by an arm's span.*'"<sup>12</sup> Why should I look at the Ka'ba?"

9. It is related that Ibrāhīm Adham—God have mercy upon him—traveled fourteen years to reach Mecca. He said, "Others have crossed this desert with their feet. I will cross it with my eyes!" He would perform two *rak'as* of prayer and take one step. When he reached Mecca, he did not see the house. He said, "What's happened? Could something be wrong with my eyes?"

A voice said, "There's nothing wrong with your eyes! The Ka'ba has gone to welcome a weak woman who is on her way here." Ibrahim roared with jealousy, "Who could this be?" As soon as he saw Rabi'a coming, walking with a cane, the Ka'ba was back in place.

Ibrahim said, "O Rabi'a, what a commotion and fuss you've stirred up in the world!"

She said, "It's you who've stirred up this commotion, tarrying for fourteen years to reach the house!"

Ibrahim said, "Yes, indeed, for fourteen years I traversed the desert in prayer [*namāz*]!"

Rabi'a said, "You traversed it in prayer, I in longing [*niyāz*]."

10. Then she performed the *ḥajj* and wept bitterly, saying, "O my God, you promised good things both for performing the *ḥajj* and for enduring catastrophe. Now, if my *ḥajj* is not acceptable, this is a great catastrophe. Where is the reward for my catastrophe?"

11. Then she came to Basra, staying until the following year. She said, "If last year the Ka'ba came to welcome me, this year I will go to welcome the Ka'ba." When the time came, so shaykh Abū'Alī Fārmadī relates, she set out into the desert and crawled for seven years until she arrived at 'Arafāt.<sup>13</sup> A voice called out, "O claimant, what quest has led you here? If you want me to manifest myself just once, you will melt on the spot!"

She said, "O lord of might, Rabi'a does not have the means to attain that station. I only wish for a drop of poverty."

The voice called out, "O Rabi'a, poverty is the drought year of our wrath, which we have placed in people's path. When no more than a hair's width remains before they arrive in the presence of union with us, then the matter is turned about and union is changed into separation. You are still within the seventy veils of your life. Until you come out from under all of these, take a step on our path, and pass these seventy stations, you cannot speak of our poverty. If not, behold!"

Rabi'a looked and saw a sea of blood suspended in the air. A voice called out, "This is the blood of our lovers who came seeking union with us. They

alighted at the first way-station, so no trace or sign of them appears anywhere in the two worlds."

Rabi'a said, "O lord of power, show me one characteristic of their estate." Immediately they appeared, making apologies to her. A voice spoke, "Their first station is to crawl for seven years to come on our path to pay homage to a clod of earth. When they near that clod, they themselves cause the road to be closed before them."

Rabi'a was afflicted and said, "O Lord, you do not allow me into your house. Nor will you let me stay in my house in Basra. Either leave me in my house in Basra, or bring me to your house in Mecca. At first, I did not bow to the house—I wanted you. Now I am not even worthy of your house."<sup>14</sup>

She said this and returned. She came back to Basra and retired to a place of meditation.

12. It is related that two religious dignitaries came to pay their respects to her. They were hungry and said to one another, "We'll eat any food that she brings, for it will be ritually pure [*ḥalāl*]." Rabi'a had two loaves of bread and set them before her guests. Suddenly a beggar cried out. Rabi'a took the bread from them and gave it to the beggar.

They were dumbfounded, but immediately a serving girl came, carrying an armful of warm bread, and said, "The lady of the house has sent these." Rabi'a counted: There were eighteen loaves. "You've made a mistake," she said, "Take them back."

"There's no mistake," the girl said.

"You've made a mistake. Take them back."

She took them back and told the story to her mistress. She added two more loaves and sent them back. Rabi'a counted: There were twenty. She took them and set them before her guests. They ate them and marveled. So they said to her, "What's the secret behind this?"

She said, "When you came, I knew that you were hungry. I said to myself, 'How can I put two loaves before two great men?' When the beggar came, I gave them to him and prayed, saying, 'O my God, you have said, 'For each thing given, I will return ten-fold.' Certain of this, I have given away two loaves to please you, so that you would give back ten-fold.' When she brought eighteen, I knew that there'd been some filching or that they'd not been meant for me. I sent them back to make up twenty altogether."

13. It is related that one night she was praying in her cell. She fell asleep. A reed<sup>15</sup> pierced her eye, but in such a way that in her total rapture and absorption, her utter devotion, she was unaware of it. A thief entered and

picked up her chadur. As he was about to carry it off, he could not see the way. He put it back and realized how to get out. He picked the chadur back up and again could not see the way. Seven times this happened. A voice came from the corner of the cell: "Man, don't trouble yourself! For several years now, she has entrusted herself to us. Iblis doesn't have the gall to come around her. How could a thief have the gall to come around her chadur? Don't trouble yourself, imposter. If one friend is sleeping, another is awake."

14. It is related that one day, when Rabi'a had not eaten for several days, her serving girl was preparing a soup from lard. She needed onions and said, "I'll get some from the neighbors."

"It's been forty years," Rabi'a said, "since I made a covenant with the Lord mighty and glorious not to ask for anything from any other than him. Say, 'Onions we'll do without.'"

Immediately, a bird swooped down from the sky and dropped several onions, already peeled, into her pot. Rabi'a said, "I'm not safe from being tricked." She gave up the soup and ate plain bread.

15. It is related that one day Rabi'a had gone up on a mountain. Wild goats and gazelles<sup>16</sup> gathered around, gazing upon her. Suddenly, Hasan Basri appeared. All the animals shied away. When Hasan saw that, he was perplexed and said, "Rabi'a, why do they shy away from me when they were so intimate with you?"

Rabi'a said, "What did you eat today?"

"Soup."

"You ate their lard. How would they not shy away from you?"

16. It is related that one time Rabi'a happened to pass by Hasan's house. He was sitting on the roof of his meditation cell, weeping so much that water was dripping from the rain spouts. Several drops landed on Rabi'a. She searched to find out where this water was coming from. When she realized what was happening, she said, "Hasan, if this weeping is from the foolish whims of the self [*nafs*], hold back your tears, lest a sea well up within you, such a sea that when you seek your heart there, you will not find it 'Except before a most powerful king [54:5].'"<sup>17</sup>

17. These words were hard for Hasan to take, but he said nothing. One day he saw Rabi'a on the banks of the Euphrates. Hasan threw his prayer

rug on the water and said, "Rabi'a, come here! Let's perform two *rak'as* of prayer."

Rabi'a said, "Master, if you're going to display the goods of the afterworld in the market of this world, you must do what others of your species are incapable of doing."<sup>18</sup>

Then Rabi'a threw her prayer rug into the air and said, "Hasan, come here, where you will be hidden from the people's gaze."<sup>19</sup>

Then she wished to win him over again. She said, "Master, what you did, a fish can do, and what I did, a fly can do. The real business is beyond both."

18. It is related that Hasan Basri said, "I was with Rabi'a for one full day and night. We discussed the way and the truth [*ṭarīqat wa ḥaqīqat*] in such a way that the thought 'I am a man' never crossed my mind, nor did 'I am a woman' ever cross hers. In the end when I arose, I considered myself a pauper and her a devotee."

19. It is related that one evening Hasan went with some friends to visit Rabi'a. Rabi'a had no lantern, and they needed one. Rabi'a blew on her fingertips—they blazed like a lantern until daybreak.

If someone asks, "What was this like?" we answer, "Just like the hand of Moses, peace upon him."<sup>20</sup>

If they should say, "He was a prophet," we would respond, "Whoever follows a prophet has a portion of those wonders [*karāmāt*]. If the prophet performs miracles [*mu'jizāt*], the friend of God performs wonders by the blessings of following the prophet. As the prophet declares, 'Whoever returns a farthing of what is forbidden has attained a degree of prophecy,' that is, anyone who gives back to the enemy Satan a penny of what is forbidden achieves a degree of prophecy."

He also said, "The true dream is a quarter share of prophecy."

20. It is related that Rabi'a once sent Hasan three things: a piece of wax, a needle, and a hair. She said, "Like the wax, give light to the world as you yourself burn. Like the needle, be naked and work continually. When you have achieved these two things, be like the hair, so your work will not be in vain."

21. It is related that Hasan said to Rabi'a, "Would you like to take a husband?"

She said, "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."

"O Rabi'a," he said, "by what means did you attain this degree?"

"By losing in him everything I'd attained."

"How do you know him?"

"You know the how. We know the no-how."<sup>21</sup>

22. It is related that one day Hasan came to her cell and said, "Say a word to me about that knowledge that, untaught and unheard, came down to your heart without the intermediary of any creature."

She said, "I spun some skeins of yarn to sell and earn a bit of food. I sold it for two pieces of silver. I took one in one hand and one in the other. I was afraid that if I took both in one hand, they would join forces and lead me from the path. My victory today was this."

23. They said to Rabi'a, "Hasan says that if he is deprived of the vision of the real for one moment in paradise, he will weep and moan so much that all the people of paradise will take pity on him."

She said, "This is a good thing to say. But if in this world he neglects remembering the real for one moment, and the very same anguish and weeping and lamentation appears, then it is a sign that the same thing will happen in the afterworld. Otherwise, it will not be so."

24. They said, "Why don't you take a husband?"

She said, "I am dismayed with care over three things. If you free me of these cares, I'll take a husband. First, at the moment of death, will my faith be sound or not? Second, will they put the book of my deeds in my right hand or not?<sup>22</sup> Third, which group will I be in on that hour when they lead a group to the right to paradise and a group to the left to hell?"

They said, "We don't know."

She said, "With such anguish before me, how can I be concerned with taking a husband?"

25. They said, "Where do you come from?"

She said, "From that world."

"Where are you going?"

"To that world."

"What are you doing in this world?"

"Grieving."

"Why?"

"I eat the bread of this world and do the work of that."

"Such a sweet tongue!" they said. "You are fit to be an abbess."

"I am abbess of myself. Whatever is within me, I do not bring out. Whatever is outside me, I do not let in. If anyone enters and leaves, it has nothing to do with me. I watch over my heart, not mud and clay."

26. They said, "Do you love the presence of majesty?"

She said, "I do."

They said, "Do you hate Satan?"

She said, "Out of love of the compassionate, I have no occasion for hatred toward Satan. I saw the Prophet in a dream. He said, 'Rabi'a, do you love me?' I said, 'O Prophet of God, who is there that doesn't love you? But love of the real has so pervaded me that there is no place in my heart for love or hatred of another.'"

27. They asked her about love. She said, "Love came down from eternity [azal] and passed over to eternity [abad]. It found no one in eighteen thousand worlds to take a single drink of it. It arrived at last to the real, and of him this expression remains: He loves them and they love him."

They said, "Do you see the one you worship?"

She said, "If I did not see, I would not worship."

28. It is related that Rabi'a was always weeping. "Why do you weep so much?" they said.

She said, "I'm afraid of being cut off, for I've grown accustomed to him. No voice must cry out at the moment of death, 'You are not worthy of us!'"<sup>23</sup>

29. They asked, "When is a servant of God contented?"

She said, "When he is as thankful for tribulation as he is for bliss."

They asked, "If a sinner repents, does he accept him or not?"

She said, "How can he repent, unless the Lord gives him repentance and accepts him? Until he gives him repentance, he cannot repent."

30. She said, "O Sons of Adam, from the eye, there is no way-station to the real. From the tongue, there is no path to him. Hearing is the highway of complainers. Hand and foot dwell in perplexity. The matter falls to the heart. Strive to acquire a wakeful heart. When the heart is awake, it has no need for a friend. In other words, the wakeful heart is one that has lost itself

in the real. When someone is lost, what is he to do with a friend? Extinction in God [*fanā*] is here."

31. She said, "Asking for mercy with the tongue is the business of liars." She said, "When we repent ourselves, we need the repentance of another."

She said, "If patience were a man, he would be generous."

She said, "The fruit of gnosis is turning to the mighty and glorious Lord."

She said, "The gnostic is one who asks the real for a heart. When he gives him a heart, he immediately gives it back to the mighty and glorious lord, so it will be protected in his grasp and hidden from creatures in his veil."

32. Ṣāliḥ Murī, God's mercy upon him, often used to say, "Whoever knocks at a door will have it opened in the end."

Once Rabi'a was present. She said, "How long will you say, 'He will open it again?' When did he close it that he will open it again?"

Ṣāliḥ said, "Amazing! An ignorant man and a wise weak woman."

33. One day Rabi'a saw a man saying, "O sorrow!"

She said, "Say it this way: O without sorrow! For if you *were* sorrowful, you wouldn't have the gall to breathe."

34. It is related that once someone had tied a bandage on his head. She said, "Why have you tied the bandage on your head?"

He said, "My head hurts."

She said, "How old are you?"

"Thirty."

"In these thirty years, have you been mostly healthy or sick?"

"Healthy."

"Have you ever, in these thirty years, tied on the bandage of gratitude? Now because you have a single headache, you tie on the bandage of complaint."

35. It is related that she gave someone four dinars, saying "Get a blanket for me."

"Black or white?"

She immediately took back the dinars, threw them in the Tigris, and

said, "Because of an unpurchased blanket, division has come into view: Must it be black or white?"

36. It is related that in the springtime she entered a house and did not come out. Her serving girl said, "O mistress, come outside and see the effects of the creation!"

She said, "You come in for once and see the creator! Witnessing the creator has preoccupied me from gazing on the creation."

37. Once a group came to visit Rabi'a. They saw her cutting up a piece of meat with her teeth. They said, "Don't you have a knife?"

She said, "For fear of being cut off, I've never had a knife."

38. It is related that once she did not break her fast for seven days and nights without sleep. On the eighth night, hunger overcame her. Her soul [*nafs*] cried out, "How long will you torment me?" Suddenly, someone knocked at the door, bringing a bowl of food. She took it and set it down to bring the lantern. The cat came in and spilled the food.

She said, "I will go and bring a jug of water and break my fast." When she left, the lantern went out. When she was about to drink the water, the jug fell from her hand and broke. Rabi'a let out a sigh that might have burned down the house. She said, "O my God, why is it that you are making me so helpless?"

She heard a voice say, "Beware, O Rabi'a! If you wish, I will bestow the bliss of the world upon you, but I will remove the grief for me from your heart. The bliss of the world and grief for me cannot be joined in one heart. O Rabi'a, you desire one thing, and we another. Our desire and yours cannot be joined in one heart."

She said, "When I heard this address, I so detached my heart from the world and cut short my hopes that for thirty years now I have performed each prayer as though it were my last and I were praying the prayer of farewell. I made myself so independent of creatures, so cut off, that when day broke, for fear that creatures would preoccupy me, I prayed, 'O Lord, so preoccupy me with yourself that no one will preoccupy me from you.'"

39. It is related that she lamented continually. People said, "There's no apparent reason for it. What's the cause of her lament?"

She said, "I have a sickness within my breast that physicians have proved unable to cure. The salve for our wound is union with him. I excuse myself for this lamentation with the possibility of reaching my goal tomorrow."

row in the hereafter. Although I am not among those racked with pain, still I liken myself to them. Anything less than this is impossible."

40. It is related that a group of important people came to Rabi'a. Rabi'a asked one of them, "Why do you worship the Lord?"

He said, "The seven levels of hell have a majestic power, and everyone must pass through them, distressed by fear and dread."

Another said, "The degrees of paradise contain an excellent way-station, wherein much repose is promised."

Rabi'a said, "It is an evil servant who worships his Lord out of fear or out of desire for reward."

So they said, "Why do you worship the Lord? Have you no desire?" She said, "'The neighbor, then the house.'<sup>24</sup> Isn't it everything to me that I have been commanded to worship him? If there were no heaven or hell, then it wouldn't be necessary to worship him! Wouldn't he deserve to be worshiped without intermediary?"

41. It is related that an important man came to visit her. He saw her clothes in tatters. He said, "There are many people who would look after you if you would just give the word."

Rabi'a said, "I am ashamed to ask for things of this world from someone who has them on loan."

That important man said, "Behold the lofty aspiration of this weak woman! He has brought her to such a height that she refuses to occupy her time with making requests."

42. It is related that a group came to Rabi'a to put her to the test. They said, "All the virtues have been dispersed among men. The crown of nobility [*muruvvat*] has been placed upon the heads of men, and the belt of magnanimity has been tied around their waists. Prophecy has never descended upon any woman. What can you boast of?"

Rabi'a said, "Everything you said is true. But egoism, egotism, self-worship, and (79:24) 'I am your highest lord' have not welled up in any woman.<sup>25</sup> And no woman has ever been a pederast."

43. It is related that one day Rabi'a fell ill. She was asked about the cause of her illness. She said, "I looked into the garden, and my Lord reproved me. An inclination for paradise appeared on the horizon of my heart, and the friend punished me. This illness is because of that."

44. Hasan Basri visited her in her sickness. He said, "I saw a rich gentleman of Basra with a pouch of gold sitting and weeping on the doorstep of her cell. I said, 'Why are you weeping?' He said, 'Because of this devoted ascetic, dear to our age. Without her blessing, humankind will perish. I've brought something to take care of her, but I'm afraid she won't accept it. Intercede for me, and perhaps she will.'"

Hasan said, "I entered and delivered the message. Rabi'a looked at me from the corner of her eye and said, 'If he provides for someone who insults him, will he withhold daily bread from one whose soul seethes with love for him?'<sup>26</sup> As long as I've known him, I've turned my back on created things. How can I accept someone's money, not knowing whether it's lawful or not? Once I sewed up my torn shirt by the light of the Sultan's lantern. A turn of fate had sealed my heart. Until I tore it up again, my heart was not opened. Beg my pardon from the gentleman, so he won't put my heart in bondage.'"

45. 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Amir says, "With Sufyan Thawri, we paid a sick-call on Rabi'a. We couldn't speak for awe of her. They said to Sufyan, 'Say something.' He said, 'O Rabi'a, pray, so the real Most High will ease your pain.' Rabi'a said, 'O Sufyan, don't you know that the real Most High has willed my pain?' He said, 'Yes.' She said, 'You know this and still you tell me to request what is at odds with his will. It is not proper to be at odds with the friend.'"

"Then Sufyan said, 'Rabi'a, is there something you desire?' She said, 'Sufyan, you are a man of the people of knowledge. How can you talk this way? By the majesty of the Lord, for twelve years I have desired fresh dates, and you know there's no shortage of fresh dates in Basra. I still haven't eaten any. I am a servant, and what business does a servant have with desire? If I wish for something and my Lord does not, this is infidelity.'"

"Then Sufyan said, 'I can say nothing with regard to your situation. Say something with regard to mine.' She said, 'You are a good man, but isn't it the case that you love this world?' He said, 'How so?' She said, 'By reciting *hadiths*, meaning that this too is a sort of pomp. Sufyan said, 'I have been lax.' I, 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Amir, said, 'O Lord, be pleased with me!' Rabi'a said, 'Aren't you ashamed to seek the good pleasure of someone with whom you are not pleased?'"

46. Malik Dinār said, "I went to visit Rabi'a. I saw she had a broken pitcher that she used for ablutions and drinking water. Her reed mat was old and worn, and she had a brick to rest her head on. This hurt me to the core,

and I said, 'Rabi'a, I have wealthy friends. If you permit, I'll ask them for something for you.'

"She said, 'You've made an error. Do not I and they have the same provider?'

"I said, 'Of course.'

"She said, 'Has he forgotten the poor [*darūshān*] because of their poverty? Does he aid the wealthy because of their wealth?'

"I said, 'No.'

"She said, 'Since he knows my condition, why should I remind him? He wills it so. We in turn will whatever he wills.'"

47. It is related that Hasan Baṣrī, Mālik Dīnār, and Shaḡīq Balkhī, God Most High have mercy upon them, went to visit Rabi'a, God have mercy upon her. The conversation turned to the question of sincerity. Hasan said, "No one is sincere in his claim who is not patient under the blows of his master."

Rabi'a said, "This talk stinks of egoism."

Shaḡīq said, "No one is sincere in his claim who is not grateful for the blows of his master."

Rabi'a said, "We need something better than this."

Mālik Dīnār said, "No one is sincere in his claim who does not delight in the blows of his master."

Rabi'a said, "We need something better than this."

They said, "Now you speak."

Rabi'a said, "No one is sincere in his claim who does not forget the wound of the blow in the vision of his master. There's nothing strange in this. The women of Egypt did not perceive the wound of the blow while they viewed Joseph, peace be upon him. Why should it be strange if someone is like this while viewing the creator?"

48. It is related that one of the religious dignitaries of Basra came to visit Rabi'a, sat at her bedside, and began condemning the world. Rabi'a said, "You love the world dearly. If you didn't, you wouldn't remember it so much. The buyer's the one who disparages the goods. Were you free of the world, you'd not remember it for good or ill. You'll recall that 'whoever loves a thing, remembers it all the more.'"<sup>27</sup>

49. It is related that Hasan said, "I was with Rabi'a at the afternoon prayer. She was about to cook something. The meat was in the pot when we started talking. She said, 'This talk is better than putting the pot on to cook.' She left the pot as it was while we performed the evening prayer. She brought

dry bread and a jug of water so we could break our fast. She went over to the pot to pick it up. The pot was boiling through the power of the real Most High. Then she poured the food in a bowl, brought it over, and we ate some of the meat. It was a dish the likes of which we had never tasted. She said, 'Such a dish agrees with someone who's risen from prayer.'"

50. Sufyān Thawrī said, "One night I was with Rabi'a. She went to the mihrab and prayed until daybreak. I was praying in the other corner. At dawn she said, 'In thanks for our success, today we will fast.'"

She has the following devotional prayers.

### THE DEVOTIONS OF RABI'A ADAWIYA

51. "O Lord, if you send me to hell on the morrow of the resurrection, I will reveal a secret such that hell will flee from me, not to return for a thousand years."

52. "O my God, whatever share of this world you have given me, give it to your enemies, and whatever share of the next world you have given me, give it to your friends. You are enough for us."

53. "O Lord, if I worship you out of fear of hell, burn me in hell. If I worship you in the hope of paradise, forbid it to me. And if I worship you for your own sake, do not deprive me of your eternal beauty."

54. "O Lord, if tomorrow you put me in hell, I will cry out, 'You have befriended me. Is this how one treats friends?'" A voice called out, "Rabi'a, do not think ill of us. Be assured that we will bring you into the circle of our friends, so you may converse with us."

55. "O my God, my work and my desire, in all this world, is recollection of you and in the afterworld, meeting with you. This is what is mine—you do as you will."

56. And nightly she would say, "O Lord, make my heart present or accept my prayers without my heart."

57. When her death approached, important people were at her bedside. She said, "For the sake of God's prophets, arise and leave the room." They arose, went out, and closed the door. They heard a voice (89:27-29): "O soul now in peace, return to your Lord, well pleased and well pleasing."<sup>28</sup>

## RABI'A

Some time passed, and no voice was heard. When they entered, she had died. The religious dignitaries said, "Rabi'a came to this world and left for the afterworld, never having been arrogant with the real Most High, never wanting anything, never saying, 'Make me thus' or 'Do such-and-such.' "

58. It is related that she was seen in a dream. She was asked, "Tell us about Munkir and Nakir."<sup>29</sup>

She said, "When those young gentlemen came to me and said, 'Who is your Lord?' I said, 'Go back to the real and say, "Out of so many thousand creatures, you didn't forget an old woman? Out of all the world, I have only you. Do I ever forget you, so that you need to send someone to ask, 'Who is your Lord?' "

59. It is related that Muḥammad ibn Aslam Ṭūsī and Na'im Ṭarsūsī, God's mercy on them both, who gave water to thirty thousand people in the desert, were both present at Rabi'a's grave. They said, "You—who boasted that you would not bow your head to anyone in the two worlds—what state have you attained?"

A voice replied, "May what I have seen be to my good health!"

#### CHAPTER 4. RABĪʿA

1. Paul Losensky translated the text based on textual considerations discussed in note 7, below. The introduction and notes are by Michael Sells. Special gratitude is due to Birch Miles for the assistance, patience, and insight he offered during the preliminary work on this chapter.
2. Shams ad-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqib al-ʿArifīn* (Virtues of the Knowers), Vol. 1 Tehran: Dunyā-yi Kitāb, 1983), p. 396.

3. See Julian Baldick, "The Legend of Rabi'a of Basra: Christian Antecedents, Muslim Counterparts," *Religion* 20 (1990): 233–247.

4. Similarly in medieval Christendom, female mystics frequently engaged in a dialectic of the weak and the strong. Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179), who wielded major political influence, stated "I am a little, poor, feminine form" (*Ego paupercula feminea forma sum*). Marguerite Porete continually evoked a somewhat different dialectic, of having nothing and having all, in asserting a less accepted form of power. She challenged the inquisition and its backers in the papacy and the French monarchy for the right to author and publish her own work. She was burned at the stake in 1310. See M. Sells, "*The Pseudo-Woman and the Beguine Mystics*," ed. Bernard McGinn (*Essentialism*), in *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp. 114–146.

5. Hasan appears in sections 15–23 and 46. Ibrāhīm Adham appears in one of the more extended anecdotes (9). Other participants in these jousts include Mālik Dīnār (45, 46), 'Abd al-Wāhid 'Amir (44), Sufyān Thawrī (44, 49), Shaqīq Balkhī (46), Ṣāliḥ Murri (21, 31), Muḥammad ibn Aslam at-Tūst and Na'imī Ṭarṭūsī (57). For the spiritual joust or "boasting contest" (*muṣāḥaba, munāqara*) in Sufism, see Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), p. 39. In the anecdotes of Rabi'a, the irony of the spiritual joust is continually evoked: Each "combatant" tries to emphasize the notions of humility, denial of the ego-self (*nafī*), and of course however subtly, each statement itself can be viewed as a form of "return of the repressed" egoism.

6. This absolute annihilation of self-will, or merging of the human will with the divine will—to the point of rejecting any petition to the deity (see number 21, below)—was being articulated by 'Attar's contemporaries, the Beguine mystics, Mechthild of Magdeburg (d. ca. 1297), Hadewijch of Antwerp (fl. ca. 1240), Marguerite Porete (d. 1310), and by Meister Eckhart (d. ca. 1328). Porete is most emphatic in rejecting any self-will "to do anything for God or refrain from doing anything for God." See M. Sells, *Mystical Language of Unsayings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Chaps. 5–7.

7. There are four editions of the Persian text of 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-'Awliyā'*. The earliest of these was edited by Reynold A. Nicholson (2 vols. in 1; London: Luzac, 1905, Rabi'a, 1: 59–73). This text was extensively revised and its spelling modernized by Muḥammad Khān Qazvīnī (2 vols. in 1; Tehran: Kitābkhanah-i Markazī, 1336/1957, 1: 64–77). An entirely new edition was prepared in 1967 by Muḥammad Istislāmī (Tehran: Zavvār, pp. 72–88). The edition that is introduced by Nāṣir Hayyirī does not credit an editor, but appears to be based primarily on Istislāmī's edition (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Gulshā'i, 1361/1982, pp. 42–51).

This translation is based on the Istislāmī and Hayyirī editions; certain readings from Nicholson and Qazvīnī will be indicated in the notes. Without entering into the complexities of the manuscript transmission of this work, the Istislāmī edition appears preferable on literary grounds. It lacks most of the explanatory comments and elaborations found in Nicholson and Qazvīnī, resulting in a leaner, more laconic text that is closer to 'Attar's narrative style in verse.

To my knowledge, there are no complete translations into any Western language of this great work. Selections in English can be found in Farid al-Din 'Attar, *Muslim Saints and Mystics, Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-'Awliyā'* (Memorial of the Saints), trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Arkana, 1990; first published London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966). Arberry's version is selective, not only in the particular lives that he translated, but in the choice of texts from each life translated. As he points out in his introduction (pp. 16–17), he focuses on the "miracles" of each Godfriend, and excludes the sayings. Many sections of 'Attar's life of Rabi'a are translated or paraphrased in Margaret Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic & Her Fellow-Saints in Islām* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928, 1984). The Ougour text has been translated by A. Pavet de Courteille: "Farid-ud-Din 'Attar," *Le mémorial des saints* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1976). Short German selections from 'Attar, including six on Rabi'a, can be found in *Frühislamische Mystiker aus Fariduddin 'Attars "Heiligenbiographie"*, translated from the Nicholson text by Gisela Wente (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini Presse, 1984). Selections appear in the translation of Charles Upton: Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, *Doorkeeper of the Heart: Versions of Rabia* (Putney, Vt.: Threshold Books, 1988). Cf. Su'ād 'abd ar-Rāziq, *Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya: Bayn al-Ghinā' wa l-Baqā'* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1982). Numerous passages from 'Attar are translated in Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Women* (New York: Khanqahi-Nimatullahi Publications, 1983), pp. 25–73.

8. Nicholson-Qazvīnī: *gumshudab-i viṣāl*.

9. 'Attar's final position is ambiguous here. The various anecdotes validate his inclusion of a woman in what was called at the time the "ranks of [Sufi] men," but no theological statement is made about the status of women, such as the famous statement of Augustine that a woman in her sexual and procreative roles should be an object of contempt but insofar as she becomes "dewomanized" as it were and gender-neutral, she takes on the image of God. Such Augustinian theology led to the medieval Christian notion of the virago, the woman who by denying her sexual and procreative roles becomes manlike and thus can achieve saintliness. 'Attar engages in no such theologizing, and uses arguments that allow him to place Rabi'a in the ranks of men, leaving the issue of women as women open. Of course almost every anecdote concerning Rabi'a is a refutation of implied attitudes toward the "weak woman."

10. 'Attar includes this story in his earlier account of Hasan of Basra:

Hasan would hold meetings and speak once a week. Whenever he ascended the pulpit and found that Rabi'a was not present, he came back down. Once he was asked, "So many important and honored people are present, so what if an old woman's not here?"

"How can the drink that we have prepared for elephants be poured out for mice?" he replied.

Whenever the meeting heated up, when hearts were afire and eyes were swimming in tears, he would turn to Rabi'a and say, "O noble lady,

this is from the embers of your heart." In other words, "All this warmth is from one sigh from the depths of your being."

11. Seventy-thousand is a key number in Islamic cosmology. The most famous occurrence of it is in the depiction of the "house of life" (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr*), the celestial archetype of the Ka'ba, which Muhammad encounters at the culmination of his Mi'raj. Into that house of life, it is said, 70,000 angels enter each day, not to return until the end of time.

12. A hadith qudsi (transcendent hadith), that is, a hadith in which the speaker is Allah. Arabic: *idhā taqarraba l-'abdu ilayya shibrān, taqarrabtu ilayhi dhirā'an*. Among the many references, see *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Tawhīd, 50; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Dhikr, 2, 3, 20–22, Tawba, 1.

13. A station in the *ḥajj* pilgrimage, the scene of Muhammad's last sermon, and the place where all the pilgrims assemble and stand, as at the final day of judgment, saying "*labbayka*" (Here I am lord).

14. A series of reflexive pronouns make it difficult to know just who owns what house. I have followed Iṣṭislāmī's basic text while adopting Qazvīnī's distinction between *khvud* (referring, in this case, to God) and *khvāsh* (referring to Rabi'a). 15. Nicholson and Qazvīnī clarify where this "reed" came from by including *ḥaḍīr*, "reed mat."

16. Nicholson and Qazvīnī also include *gūrān*, "wild asses," in this list of animals.

17. 'Attar includes this incident in his account of Hasan of Basra:

It is related that one day Hasan had wept so much on the roof of his meditation cell that water had run out from the rain spouts and dripped on someone who asked, "Is this water ritually pure or not?" Hasan said, "No, go wash. This is the tears of a disobedient rebel."

18. Pavet de Courteille, "Farid-ud-Din 'Attar," has: "Maître, dit-elle, sont-ce les choses de cette terre que tu vas montrer aux gens de l'autre monde? Fais-nous voir une chose que le commun des mortels soit impuissant à exécuter" (p. 90).

Arberry's translation has: "Hasan," Rabi'a replied, "when you are showing off your spiritual goods in this worldly market, it should be things that your fellow-men are incapable of displaying" (p. 44; see note 7).

Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic*, has: "O Hasan, was it necessary to offer yourself in the bazaar of this world to the people of the next? . . . This is necessary for people of your kind, because of your weakness" (p. 35).

19. The Nicholson text and the Arberry translation reverse the point (see note 7). "Come up here, Hasan, where people can see us!" (Arberry translation, p. 45). The Iṣṭislāmī-Hayyirī and Pavet de Courteille's translation based on the Ouigour (p. 90) all have Rabi'a asking Hasan to come up where they cannot be seen, that is, to quit engaging in feats to show off in front of human beings, a motive that is rooted

in concealed self-display (*riyā'*). For the subtle problems of self-display, see Chapter 5 in this volume.

20. See the Qur'an 20:22 for the story of Moses' receiving "signs" of his prophetic mission, including the staff that becomes a snake, and of his hand, which turns white after he holds it to his breast. The "white hand" of Moses became a common, if enigmatic, allusion in Sufi writings.

21. This notion of the "without how" parallels in a significant way the "without how" and "without why" that was developed in Europe only a few decades later by the mystics Mechthild, Hadewijch, Porrete, and Eckhart.

22. The Qur'an refers to the moment of truth or day of judgment when those whose "book" (of deeds in their lifetime) is given to them. Those who are given the book in the right hand or who are led off to the right are those who are given the garden (*janna*). Those whose book is given into the left hand or are led off to the left are those who are given the fire (*nār*).

23. Earlier (see note 17, above) Rabi'a had berated Hasan's public weeping as a whim of the ego-self (*nafs*). The contrast between his weeping and hers, in 'Attar's story, resides in both the issues of public vs. private devotions (and the vice of *riyā'* or showing one's devotion), and in the incomplete quality of Hasan's weeping, a less-than-total immersion.

24. The neighbor, then the house: *al-jār thumma d-dār*. An Arabic proverb here used to emphasize that it is the person rather than the abode that is of primary importance, a point that recurs in a number of the Rabi'a stories in 'Attar.

25. "I am your highest lord": Pharaoh's claim to Moses as depicted in this Qur'anic passage becomes an epitome of human arrogance and self-delusion within the later Islamic tradition.

26. In Arabic: *ḥurū'a yarzuqu man yasubbuhū, fa lā yarzuqu man yubibbuhū*? The Persian translation of the Arabic moves from the terse syntax and vocabulary of the proverb ("If he provides for someone who insults him, will he withhold daily bread from someone who loves him?") to a more emotive language: "who seethes with love for him."

27. Another Arabic proverb: *man aḥabba shay'an akthara dhikrahū*.

28. Iṣṭislāmī-Hayyirī add the two following sentences from the Qur'an: "Enter among my servants, enter my garden."

29. Munkir and Nakir: The two fearsome angel-guardians of death in Islamic lore.