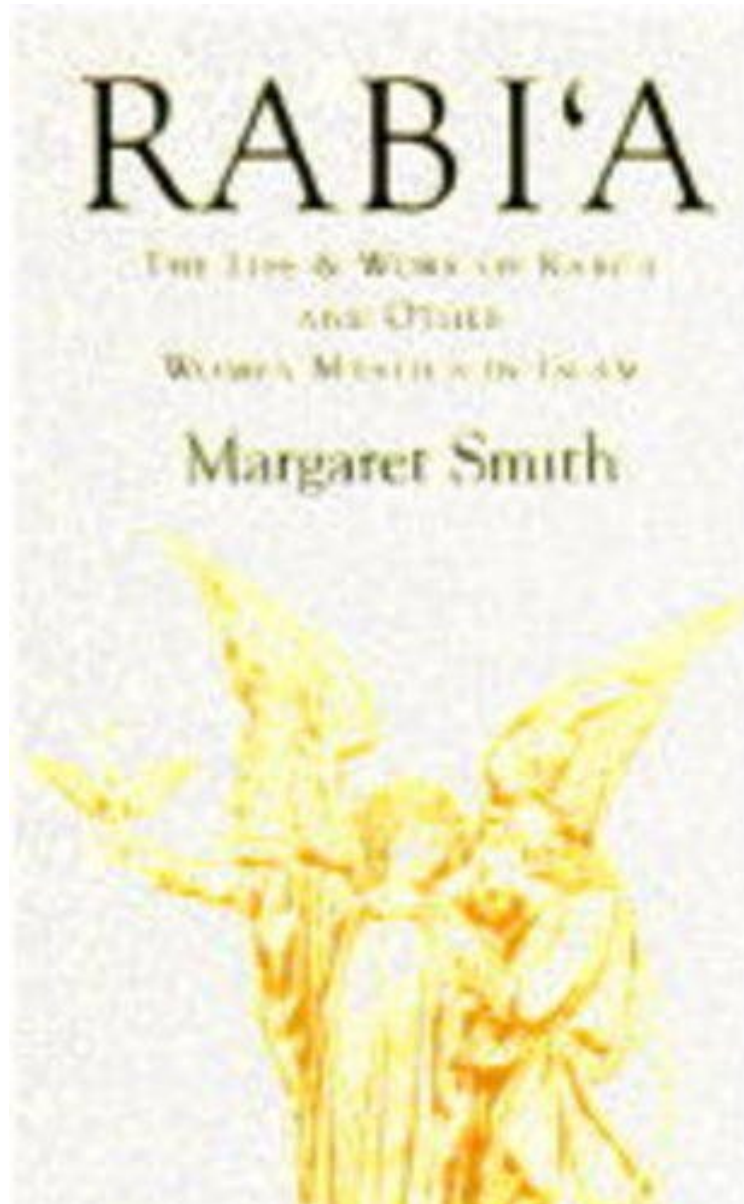


[Library ebook] Rabi'A

## Rabi'A

*Smith*

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**Smith : Rabi'A** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rabi'A:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Relatively good, brief summary of the life of Rabi'a. By Muhammad (mfm@heartcaremw.com) This book, in general, is a well researched publication. It is nice to see intelligent works on

Islam and specifically on the historical importance of women in Islam. Often, Islam is perceived as misogynistic. This work helps dispel many of these stereotypes. The one exception I do take with the book is the author's continual effort to introduce Christian concepts or comparisons into the subject at hand. One gets the distinct feeling that the author is trying to imply that Sufism was founded on Christian principles. It is almost as if the author is trying to justify Christian concepts despite her most profoundly Islamic subject of Sufism. While there are many similarities between Christianity and Islam (any Muslim would be the first to acknowledge this as a simple recognition of basic Islamic teaching), the fact is that Sufism evolved out of strict Islamic foundations and independently of Christian doctrine. The continued interruptions of her text by analogies or comparisons distracts rather than adds to the work. Otherwise, I found her history of Rabi'a very informative and have added her text to my collection of Islamic history.<sup>5</sup> of 7 people found the following review helpful. Filled with many factual errors and inconsistencies  
By A Customer  
This work fails miserably in its attempt to disguise its distinctly un-Islamic bent under the guise of a scholarly work. The only informative part of this book is the brief and, necessarily so, incomplete history of Rabi'a herself. The author continually interrupts her thesis with unnecessary references to Christian theology. It is almost as if she is trying to prove the one superior to the other. She also indirectly is implying that Sufism has some kind of basis in Christian theology, which any historian of Sufism knows is a gross simplification. In fact, most historians have concluded just the opposite ... that Sufism influenced Christian mysticism heavily. Finally, Ms. Smith's final chapters on women mystics in Islam is patently offensive. Here her true anti-Islamic feelings are revealed in her gross distortions of the sayings of the Prophet and her deliberate mis-representations of Islamic law and Hadith literature. She idolizes pagan Arabian womanhood and implies that Islam took away their freedom. Unless she has discovered something new, this flies in the face of every single historian of the times who has concluded just the opposite. That it was Islam that first gave women any rights at all. One need only compare the rights of women in Christian lands of the time to realize this truth. Curiously, the author fails to reconcile her criticism of Islam with her open admiration for Rabi'a. Did the author somehow forget that this woman was a pious Muslim throughout her life? A woman as brilliant as she was would hardly have accepted the Islamic doctrine if she had found it to be as misogynistic as Ms. Smith implies. Overall, a poor attempt to disguise Islam bashing in scholarly guise.

The Life and Work of Rabi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam. The women saints...certainly represent the greatest height to which Muslim womanhood has attained, and in the reverence accorded them by Muslim men and the example which they offer to Muslim women lies a real hope for the attainment of a high standard, religious and social, for Muslim women of today. So writes Margaret Smith in this fascinating and scholarly work on Rabi'a of Basra, the early Muslim saint and true mystic who died in the year 801. A complete biography of this woman of unique personality did not appear until Dr Smith, a distinguished scholar of Sufism, published this authoritative account of her life and teachings. Discussing the place of Rabi'a in Islamic tradition, Dr Smith also offers a survey of the female saints and mystics of the Muslim world, providing an unusual insight into women's impressive contribution to the rich heritage of Islam.