

5994 - Who was Raabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah?

the question

Could you give me a summary of the life of the Muslim Saint Rabi'aa Al-Adawiya and her miracles? Was she a good Muslim at her early years? Why did she become an ascetic?

Detailed answer

Raabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah was an ascetic and humble worshipper, as al-Dhahabi said in al-Siyar (8/241). Abu Sa'eed ibn al-A'raabi reported that he said:

With regard to Raabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah, people transmitted a great deal of wisdom from her. Sufyaan, Shu'bah and others reported about her accounts which prove that what was said about her believing in incarnation and promoting promiscuity is not true.

Al-Dhahabi said: this is an exaggeration and ignorance. Perhaps those who attribute that to her are themselves promiscuous and believers in incarnation, and are using her to support their own kufr, just as they misuse the hadeeth "I will be hisearing with which he hears."

There are no reports of miracles etc. on the part of Raabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah; there are only the reports of her words of asceticism and wisdom, such as when she said to Sufyaan al-Thawri: "You are only a few days, and when one day passes a part of you has gone. Soon, when a part of you have gone all of you will have gone. You know about this, so act upon it."

Another example of the things she said is: "I seek forgiveness from Allaah for the lack of my sincerity when I say, I seek the forgiveness of Allaah."

'Abdah bint Abi Shawwaal, who was one of the best female slaves of Allaah and who used to serve Raabi'ah, said: "Raabi'ah used to pray all night long, and just before dawn, she would take a short nap until dawn came. When she awoke with a start, I would hear her say in a terrified manner, 'O my soul, how long will you sleep? How long will you nap? Soon you will sleep a sleep from which you will not wake until the Day of Resurrection.'"

She ['Abdah] said: this was her habit all her life, until she died.

It was said that she lived for eighty years and died in the year 180 AH.