

# A Lesson from Rabi'a

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Rabi'a is a 10th century Muslim mystic. She lived in Baghdad. She was famous for her mystical insights. People all over the Middle-East went to her to seek wisdom. On one occasion she was asked, "what is the first step to virtue, to patience, to happiness". While her audience was expecting something up there, she simply said "stop complaining".

Now, at face value, Rabi'a answer doesn't add up. What has complaint got to do with virtue? But on a deeper consideration, we may realize how complaint has so much to do with vices. When we complain, we more or less focus solely on problems and their consequences. Thus, we drown in them and become dead to the possibility of a solution.

The lesson here is not to be indifferent to the realities of our lives. But to look beyond them, or better put to rise above them. It means taking the focus off the problems and placing it on God, from whom, with whom we resolve the mystery of life. It's through the process of focusing on God that we cultivate virtues and experience happiness.

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