CHAPTER—IV

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The assassination of Hazrat Ali, (R.A.) the forth Caliph of Islam in 661 A.D., caused to led the establishment of Umayya dynasty in Arabia who; ruled over approximately one century until the Abbasid came in power in 749 A.D. During this period, the capital of Islamic empire was shifted from Medina to Damascus and the center of Arabic poetry also transmitted itself from Medina to Iraq, Syria and Hijaj due to the migration of well reputed poets to the newly conquered provinces. The Umayyad Caliphs were the great patrons of learning, and lovers of poetry, music and dance. The poets enjoyed immense pleasure and hospitality, generosity and freedom in their courts and received monthly salary to maintain their livelihood.

Islam had brought a moral revolution in the pagan life of the Arabs. The root of tradition of Arabic poetry laid down by Pre-Islamic poets continued to grow in Umayyad and in later periods with an addition in the theme to suit the contemporary culture emerged in the urge of time. The systematic study on Qur’an and Tradition of Prophet gave birth to some theologians and Jurists like Hassan al-Basri and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 742, A.D.) are famous. Under the Umayyad, Mecca, Medina, Basra and Hijaj became the centre of learning and civilization. Abu-l-Aswad al-Du’ali (d. 688, A.D.) is the founder of Arabic grammar and lexicon. Khalil bin Ahmed (d. 786, A.D.) is the first who completed the Arabic dictionary al-Kitab al-Ayn and his pupil Sibawayh (d. 793A.D.) composed the first systematic text book on Arabic grammar, known by the honorific title al-Kitab.

During this period, the Arab changed the way of life from nomadic to a mature refined urban pattern. They led a luxury life and loved dance, music, and enjoyed every amusement in life incorporating anti-Islamic element too. In respect of poetry, which was closely associated with music and this resulted to produce a new branch of lyrical poetry wholly devoted to the subject of love and romance. Thus, Mecca and Medina became the wealthy cities for romance, which the orthodox and ascetic Muslims could not tolerate and soon they became hostile against the poets and the rulers. The ruling classes, who were inclined towards wealth and luxury life, and
whom considered to be the religious head, deviated from the life style assigned by Prophet as well as first Caliph of Islam, for which the devout Muslims highly shocked. Perhaps, they had nothing to say against the ruling class except silence. Therefore, the devout Muslims inclined towards ascetic life for self purification and they avoid worldliness and engaged themselves in search of reality by their own relationship with God. Though, there is no monkish in Islam, however, the religion of Islam is not without ascetic feature. Multiple description of the terror of Judgment Day contains in the Qur'an, which impulse the early Muslims towards asceticism. Tamim al-Dari, one of the companions of Prophet used to pass the whole night repeating a single verse of the Qur'an. Most of the rulers of Umayyad dynasty outraged the principles of shari‘a and failed to perform the religious rites upon which the Islamic empire is founded. Consequently, there appeared a number of individual ascetics who strictly observed the law of shari‘a and penetrated into the inner reality of the shari‘a and thus extinguished spiritual thirsty. They started to imitate the Christian hermits who discovered the Doctrine of asceticism and chose poverty as a way to develop close relationship with God. Perhaps, the converted Muslims who were highly inspired with the simplest and ideal life style of Prophet and rightly guided Caliphs became hostile against the Umayyad ruler. As a result, there arose two fold Sufi Movement in order to guard the nation from the shackle of oppressed ruler and to protect their own self from worldliness.

Both the movements arose out of sentiment, which draws on account of the cruel behave done by Muawiyah and Yazid against the Alids and deprived them from their legitimate right of succession. One movement started by Abdullah bin Maimun al-Qaddah (d. 875, A.D.) and another movement began with Salman-i-Farsi and Uwais al-Qarni. Both the movements started with the same issue as stated above. But there is a vast difference in the aims and objectives of the two, though the methods pursued by their adherents were almost the same. The object of the movement started by Abdullah was political, for he wanted to destroy the Arab supremacy, while the traditional Movement associated with the name of Salman and Uwais was essentially based on love and devotion to God. Abdullah gave religious colour to his propaganda with a definite aim to overthrow the ruling race and to establish the rule of another nation, while Salman and Uwais taught the esoteric knowledge of Prophet and esoteric meaning
of the Qur'an, which may truly be called the school of Muslim saints. The two movements developed in the same line with variation of objects, but it did not continue for a long time. Abdullah's movement begin to die out after a few centuries and the other movement started by Salman and Uwais continued to progress; whose torch bearer became Hassan al-Basri. Though, mystical poetry in Arabic literature continued from Pre-Islamic period, perhaps obtained its importance from esoteric movement of Hassan al-Basri.

Mystics of this period expressed the mystical experiences in the form of sayings as well as poetry. They emphasized to preach the religion through poetry more than sermons. The love theme found its main expression in Sufi poetry, in which the relation between God and man and the person searching for His love were symbolically ascribed. Early Sufi poets in Arabic, expressed the soul's deep yearning for union with the Beloved; the ultimate Reality. Later on, Sufi poets used the symbols of wine (God's intoxicating love), the wine cup (the Sufi's heart), and the cup bearer (the spiritual guide) in their poetry. The wine house is the religion of love and it is compared to the religion of law symbolized by the Mosque. Rabia al-Adawiya (d. 801, A.D.) introduced the theme of Divine Love in Sufi poetry. She yearned only for love of God not for hope of reward (Paradise) or fear of punishment (Hell). There are many Sufi poets of this period, who yearned for love relationship with God that would led them to an intimate experience of God and finally to a total union with Him. Some mystics as well as mystic poets of this period are discussed in below:

The pioneer of ascetic Movement Hasan Ibn Abi al-Hasan Yasar Abu Sai'd al-Basri (642-728, A. D.) is the transmitter of the esoteric knowledge of Prophet and four rightly guided caliphs to the next generation of Sufis, was born in Medina and settled in Basra. He was the son of a slave captured in Maisan who afterwards became a client of the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) secretary Zayd bin Thabit. He was renowned for his puritanical piety and exceptional eloquence. The motto of his teaching was the rejection of the world and its perishable things. He was not satisfied with merely external acts of devotion. "A grain of genuine piety", he declared, "is better than a thousand fold weight of fasting and prayer". Hassan's asceticism did not entail the total abandonment of the social life. One the contrary, Hasan functioned as the moral conscience of the state and fearlessly criticized the abuse of the power of Umayyad ruler
when they transgressed the orbit of Islamic morality. He did not support the revolutionists who tried to overthrow the irreligious politicians; rather, he tried to change their mentality through persuasion. He knew that, it is easy to overcome permanently upon anyone by striking on his heart rather than striking on his head. He gave subtle directions relating to the science of practical religion (‘Ilm al mua’malat).

Hassan was not simply an ascetic, but also a prominent Jurist; who instructed Qatada in Tafsir, ‘Amr Ibn Obayd in kalam and Ibn Ishaq in grammar. Moreover, he is the source of many important ideas. The notion of love is much associated with him as that of fear. He is transmitter of an important Hadith-e-Qudsi bearing on the theme of love between God and His servant. Reciprocal love between God and soul is the major thesis of Hasan. The following mystical sayings are attributed to Hasan:

1. He was asked, “What is Islam, and who is a Muslim?”
   Hasan replied, “Islam is in the book and Muslim is in the tomb”.
2. The end of the world and beginning of the life to come is in the tomb.
3. Whosoever recognizes God considers the world as his enemy and he, who loves the world, turns into enemy of God.

Sufis of Islam always spread the smell of humanity for purification of moral behavior in order to build a perfect human society. So, they are strict observer of morality taught by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). In the sociological point of view, they may be called social engineer. According to Sufis, Sinful act of human being does not harm to the creator, rather it is harmful to the doer of the crime for himself. A single sin may be a cause of repentance for whole life and it may compose in a melody—

Sin of a single moment,
Gives pleasure for the moment.
Pleasure of single moment
Give punishment for whole life.
But single drop of tear,
Blows in fear of God,
May placed him in paradise.

Hassan taught the lesson of humanity for modification of morals of the Umayyad rulers. He knew that moral reformation is especially necessary for the leading
person of the society for building a perfect and ideal society. His teaching had a special significance for the then society, because the spirit of barbarism itself asserted in the holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Hijjaj again. Majority of the people during Umayyad period were inclined towards worldliness and were deviating from the prescribed path of holy Prophet. He tried to reform them through his ascetic teachings in the form of poetry alleging the phantom character of human life, as he says in a lyrical poem—

كل حي سيموت
حركات سوف تفني
وكلام ليس يحلو
ابن ذاك الجبروت

كنت مطويعاً على النطق
فما هذا السيموت

Every living being certainly will die; nothing in the world is permanent.
Physical existence will be ruined and then it will be successively disappeared.

The speech, that is not pleasing to listening, but there is taciturnity after it.
O the bewildered one say me, where is that omnipotent?
You are ‘being’ by its very nature of order, so whether it is silent?

Here, Hassan expresses his ascetic experiences saying that universe and its living creatures are temporary and phantom and nothing is permanent in this world except the most powerful God. Perhaps, Allah has created death before creation of living being (خلق الموت والحياة) and thus death is whip of man for drawing near to God for judgment. Hassan points out in his poem that his teaching was seemed to be soar by the people who; drowned in the material pleasure. Hassan states like the other mystics that since the creature is the very ‘being’ of the command of God ‘Be’, so He is not distance from His creation. He induces the people; especially the Sufi communities to realize the God through ones own self. It is evident in the above quoted poem that his mystical poem is deep enough to be called mystical as he emphasized that self is the prime source through which God may be known (من عرف نفسه عرف ربه).

Hassan was severing ascetic. He used to weep for whole night in the remembrance of God. His mysticism is highly praised by common folk even orthodox section of Islam also. He became the chief transmitter of the esoteric teaching of the holy Prophet to the next generation of Sufis. Though, his aim of teaching was not total
abandonment of world, but he highly shocked for the Sufis who became the traveler of esoteric path leaving behind motherland, houses as well as family members for sake of preaching the true spirit of the religion of Islam, as he says in a lyric—

اصبحت أوطانهم من
بعدهم وهي خيوت
ولا حي يصوت
لا سميع يقه القول
وبرت منهم قبور
و خانت منهم بيوت
لم تذر عليهم نحوس الدهر
إذا حانت بخوت
خدمت تلك المساعي
و انقضت تلك النعوت
بطل سوف يفوت
ايتا الدنيا خيال
ليس للإنسان فيها
غير تقوى القدوت

Their homeland became hidden after their departure
Neither listener understood the speech nor the living being uttered,
Tombs were become prosperous with their blessing and houses were vacated from them.
Auspicious moment did not scattered from them when they approached with fraternity,
I calm down those endeavourers and demolished those praise,
Certainly the world is false dream and immediately it will be destroyed,
There is nothing for man except the powerful Lord.

Hassan al-Basri narrates in the above poem that after the death of Prophet, there arouse a particular sect of Sufi community who; preached esoteric knowledge of Prophet for ideal benefit to the mankind. They imitated the style of Christian monk and used to wear woolen garment and chose to live an individual life, leaving behind motherland, homes, family members and they spent a hermit life in the forest and caves of the hills for their spiritual satisfaction in order to become ideal model for mankind. Perhaps, the above quoted poem was composed in reference to the esoteric mission of Abdullah bin Maimun al-Qaddah who; tried to derive political benefit to overthrow the Arab supremacy under the colour of esoteric movement. So, the ascetics of that period could not understand the clemency of al-Qaddah. But Hassan al-Basri enabled to extinguish his evil will and ensured the sacred mission of esoteric knowledge from being corrupted it and guarded the interest of Sufi community from the political colour. Therefore, Hassan al-Basri being the torch bearer of the sacred mission of esoteric
knowledge continued to promulgate its significance for the next generation of Sufis. Hassan created awareness of the phantom nature of the universe among the people through his practical functioning. He taught that, this world is a false dream and it will immediately be destroyed like the disappearing of false dream in sleep. So, he provides awareness that the world and its perishable things are not beneficial for mankind and only the virtuous act, morality and fear of God will be avail in the Day of Judgment.

Another Sufi master of this period is Habib al-Ajami (d. 737-38, A.D.) who; was a disciple of Hasan al-Basri. At first, he was a usurer and he committed all sorts of wickedness. Later on, repentance seized to him of his doings so seriously that he began to learn from Hasan something of the theory and practice of religion. His native tongue was parsî but he recited the holy Qur’an correctly. Within a few days he could speak Arabic fluently.

There is not found mystical poetry composed by Habib Ajami. It does not mean that he never composed mystical poetry. Perhaps, it does not preserve or lapses from the memory of preservers. Nevertheless, his mystical teachings and sayings are the central idea for the mystical ode of his pupils. Habib Ajami said:

1. God protects them Himself who cast their burden on Lord.
2. Envy and love of the world must depart from the heart of the true seeker.\(^{10}\)

Resignation (سجد) and renunciation (زهد) are the basic conditions of a mystic life and the above quoted sayings are the suggestions for living a purest life without any worldly barrier.

Another mystic poet of this period, Malik bin Dinar (d. 745, A.D.), was the son of a Persian slave from sejastan (kabol) and he became disciple of Hassan al-Basri. He is reliable traditionalist, transmitted from such early authorities as Anas Ibn Malik and Ibn Sirin. He expressed the esoteric knowledge through poetry, which he learned from his master Hassan. His poetical fragments are suitable in diction, like Pre-Islamic lyrical form. The theme of his poetry is purely mystical. The esoteric and intellectual interpretation inspired by Prophetic Tradition saying that every Qur’anic verse has four meanings\(^{11}\) are quite in the line of mysticism, which he tried to fabricate in his poetry. His poetry contains the knowledge of Divine Love and Divine Illumination which reflect in the heart of every mystic through which he can ascent towards the Reality. The Divine Illumination may be termed as the ladder reaching to Ultimate Reality or it
is a power to realize the one’s own self which automatically gives the knowledge of
God. Therefore, grace of God may fall in the heart of mystic, thereby he acquires the
illumination (baraqā) and the illumination creates a visionary world, in which mystic
roams with agitated love and feels intimacy of God, as Malik bin Dinar expressed in the
following verse:11

ان عرفائى ذى الجلال لعز و ضياء و بهجة و سرور
و على العارفين أيضا بهاء و عليهم من المحبة نور
فهنيا لنا عرفك اللهي هو والده دهر مسروب

The gnosis of the glorified is Honor, Light, Delight and Joy.
The Gnostics, too are enshrouded with beauty
The light of love falls on them.
Happy is he who knows Thee, oh God!
By God such a man is joyful throughout the life.12

The above quoted verses of Malik bin Dinar are substantive proof of
mystical principles of Divine Love and doctrine of gnosis. Whenever a Gnostic realizes
God, then every mercy and love of God reveals in his heart through manifestation of the
attributes of God and then it is all sources of joy and pleasure for the mystic who
renounced the worldly pleasure. It is a misunderstanding that Gnosticism is borrowed
from the foreign element in Islamic Sufism. Knowledge of God and His love are the
very gist of the teachings of Qur’an, which contains quite a number of verses on the
theme of love between God and man and there are many Prophetic Traditions to the
same effect too.13

Another Sufi saint and mystic of Islam Ibrahim bin Adham bin Mansur bin
Yazeed bin Jabir al-Ajly al-Tamimi (d.776, A.D.) was a prince of Balkh. He met some
of the companions of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and narrated hadith after them. He
could fluently speak in classical Arabic language. He inherited a fortune and lived as a
neglecting king until he met an old man, who told him: “Ibrahim, you were not created
for leisure, fear Allah, and prepare yourself for death” as stated in the Holy Qur’an:
الحسينتم انما خلقتم عبادا و أنتم اليها لا ترجون
did ya then think we had created you in jest and
that ya would not be brought back to us for judgment? sura al-Mu’min).

From that day Ibrahim being repented gave up the throne and became a
sincere Muslim following the path of Tasawwuf. He renounced the worldly pleasure and
chose a poverty life. Junyad al-Baghdadi, the peacock of Islam said, "Ibrahim is the key to mystical knowledge". First Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddiq (R.A.) prayed to God for plenty of wealth so that he may renounce them voluntarily. Voluntary renunciation draws nearer to God than compulsory renunciation. The poverty life of Ibrahim bin Adham is an example of his true mystical life which he enjoyed joyfully in remembrance of God. The taste of his poverty life expressed singing the following verse of Hazrat Ali (R.A.):

> اللهم بحريش الملح أكلها النمن ثمرة تحتي يدنور
> The morsel which I eat with coarsely grounded Salt is more delicious than the fruit filled with wasps.\(^\text{14}\)

The pre-condition of mystical life is poverty, which induces to self purification and helps to realize the secrets of Divine attributes. Ibrahim bin Adham exchanged his princely state for the life of a poor laborer and obtained highest satisfaction. Generally, every rich person desires to live in a hut of a poor man in the time of distress even for a single moment, when he realizes that the world and its every pleasure is only phantom and perishable and every one will have to present before the Real One in the day of Judgment by testing the dose of death. But the rarest of the rare people in this world may turn these feelings into practice. Ibrahim bin Adham is the only example that he voluntarily renounced the world and left the princely state, realizing the secret of universe and preferred a lonely life. He was motivated by Divine Love which he expressed eloquently in the following beautiful poem:

> هجرت الخلق طرا فهواك و ايتمت الخيال لكى اراك
> ولوقطعت اريبا ثم اريبا لما حن الفواب الى سواك

> For thy Love I have separated myself from all creatures,
> I have orphaned my children to look at Thee,
> Although I be cut to pieces
> My heart will not cherish anything other than Thee.\(^\text{15}\)

Mystical poetry contains a large section on the theme of poverty composed by various mystic poets. It has been earlier discussed that the most of the mystic poets are first, Sufi saints or mystics and philosophers and then they are poets. As the traditional mode of expression of literary attributes was poetry, which attracted the attention more eloquently than any other mode of expression and therefore, mystics of
Islam also taught the religious principles and its reality through the poetry making it more sonorous, lively, splendor and eloquent. This mode of expression is easily stained in the heart of listeners and compelled them to think into the deepest limit of understanding.

Poverty develops the spiritual power and guards the soul like an angel and do not allow anybody to reside with him save God. Bishar Ibn al Harith al-Hafl (d. 841, A.D.) also composed in the same idea of Ibrahim bin Adham giving preference the poverty. When he saw one of his fellow travelers shivering in cold for lack of cloths, he exclaimed:

 Passing the nights in shabby cloths,
And sleeping under the canopy of grief and distress,
Is preferable; and save me from the peoples’ remark,
That, I sought from riches a generous hand.
You consented to this, they say, content is wealth I plead,
And not excess of flocks or silver coins.
In distress or in prosperity, I resign to God’s will.
I tread on no path other than the blazed one.16

The theme of the above quoted verses have variegated with the quality of poverty in sorrowful language rhyming with ‘ق’ of the last letters, which is an example of rhythmic sound appealing to heart. The poet do not leave anything of the rules of poetry framed under the light of lyrical odes in order to make it more resonance and awe-inspiring to the reader. The above quoted verses have pointed out the ingredients of Sufi path which must be followed by every Sufi for attainment of their highest goal. The essentials of Sufi path are repentance, poverty, realization, love, knowledge and so on. The act of repentance made a man to feel himself sinless like the iron purifies after placing in fireplace. The act of poverty is to bring attention in the act of devotion. Thus, his poetry contains the rich theme of mysticism.
Sufi saint and mystic poet *Abd al-wahid Ibn Zayd* (d. 793, A.D.), the founder of Zaydiyya order was a pupil of *Malik bin Dinar*. He well versed in Arabic mystical poetry interpreting the thought of *Hassan al-Basri*. The solitary state of Human soul is universal will. So, everyone in this world comes alone and must go alone from this world leaving behind the material things and family members. Every man in this world is like a traveler (سالك) and bound to return to its original abode. During the course of this journey, there are multiple ways appearing before every person and the option to choose the right path leading to original abode is in the will of every individual. The poet *Abd al-Wahid Ibn Zayad* supposes to say that the only way to leading the Truth or Reality is the way of solitary, which he expressed in the following verses—

الطرق شتى و طرق الحق مفردة  
والسالكون طريق الحق أفراد

لا يعرفون ولا تسلكون مقاصدهم  
فهم على مهل يمرون قصد

والناس في غزنة عما يراد بهم  
فجلهم عن سبيل الحق رقاد

Diverse are the ways, the way of truth is solitary,  
And those who tread it are isolated (from the world).  
They are unknown, their aims remain unpursued,  
They walk slowly and with care.  
The people neglect what is expected of them.\textsuperscript{17}

The above quoted verses of *Abd al-Wahid* are valuable piece of literary art. It's elegant expression, subtle combination of words, universal feelings and striking use of rhetorical figures which, bears an ample testimony of his highest literary artistic perfection. The theme of the above quoted verse has the close affinity of the sayings of Prophet: The right and the left are both ways of error, and the straight path is the middle way.\textsuperscript{18}

The female Sufi saint as well as mystic poetess *Rabi'a al-Basri* (717-801 A.D.) belongs to a tribe of *Qayas bin Adi* and was born in a poor family of Basra. She was fourth child in the family. Therefore, her name was put *Rabi'a al-Adawiyya* or *al-Qaysiyya* or *al-Basriyya*. She became orphan at her childhood. A famine occurred in Basra and the sisters were scattered. One day, she was walking abroad; a robber caught her and sold her into slavery for a price of six *dirhams* to *al-'Atiq*. She was discharging duty of her master sincerely in the day time and invoked in prayer of God at night. One night her master awoke from sleep and looked down through a window of the house and...
saw that Rabi'a was worshiping God saying, “O my Lord, Thou knowest that the desire of my heart is to obey Thee, and that the light of my eye is in the service of Thy court. If the matter rested with me, I should not cease for one hour from Thy service, but Thou hast made me subject to a creature”. The master saw a light in the house hanging above her head without any rope and the whole house was illuminated by the rays from that light. Being astonished her master, released her from the life of slavery next day. She left the house and journeyed into the desert. Afterwards she obtained for herself a cell where she engaged in devotional worship. Like many saints, she did not learn from a teacher or Sufi master. She directly turned to God by love and devotion. She was the first female Sufi and mystic poetess in the history of Sufism.

The early mystic poets of Islam interpreted deep yearning of their souls in order to make it pure and clean. They avoided the sinful acts, worldly pleasure and fixed their attention in God. They acquired some necessary quality like satisfaction, piety, poverty, patience, resignation, and so on and they expressed the taste of these qualities through poetry. But Rabi'a al-Basri is the first and foremost mystic who introduced the theme of Divine Love in Arabic poetry. She lived in love to God and thereby she freed herself from other anxiety. Love is the only weapon to union with God, which is not covered by logic or intellect. Because, love is super logical; and it exposes reality in various forms in the emotional environment of the mind of lover. She did not serve God for fear of hell or for hope of paradise; rather she served God only for His love. As she recited eloquent lyrical verse alleging two kinds of love flaming in his heart—

أحبك حبين: حب الهوى
فما الذي هو حب الهوى
فما الذي انتست اهل له
فلكشفك للحب حتى أراك
فللا الحمد في ذا ولا ذاك
ولكن لك الحمد في ذا ولا ذاك

I have loved with two loves: A selfish love and a love worthy of Thee,
As for the love which is selfish, I am absorbed therein
In Your remembrance to the exclusion of others,
As for what which is worthy of Thee, therein Thou
Lift the veils that I may see Thee.
Yet there is no praise for me in this or that,
But the praise is for Thee, whether in that or this.
Abd al-Wahid bin Zayd prefers the word ‘Ishq’ and ‘shawq’ to express the Divine Love, whereas Rabi’a al-Basri uses the words ‘Mohabbat’ and ‘Hobb’. The above quoted verses imply the two kinds of love. One is selfish love which means the love for only God and excludes the others and another kind of love which is invoked by His beauty and Majesty and which is unveiled for her. The phenomenal world is doubled in nature having its opposite direction. There are being and non-being, good and evil, real and unreal etc. As for concerning the being, this is derived from Him, who is real and eternal existence. But so long the phenomenal states of being continue the element of non-being holds it back. Union with God is possible only after death of body. Nevertheless, it is possible in a certain scale in this phenomenal world too by love and devotion. So, love alone can win back to the soul of man its Divine source to reunion with the Ultimate Reality. Rabi’a’s contact with her beloved took place at deep night in a lonely environment wherein she used to talk amorous dialogue till the dawn prayer in the following manner longing for Divine Beloved:

‘O my joy and my wish and my support,
My Friend and my Sustainer and my Aim,
Thou art my Intimate; Thine longing is my provision,
Where it not for Thee, O my Life and Love,
I would not have wandered (lit. scattered) over the waste lands.
How many favors have been shown to me and how much have I Received,
Of gifts and blessings and assistance,
Thy love is now my Wish and Bliss,
And brightness to the eye of my thirsty heart.
I am bond to Thee throughout my life,
Love is the emotional feelings of heart which analysis it with every beauty of beloved. Language of love is unknown which could not be confined in writing. However, remember of beloved makes a stain in the heart which cannot be wiped out without union. Aspect of love appears in various forms whenever lover imagines and remembers relating to the attributes of beloved. The perfect love lies in the imagination of the attributes of beloved remaining separate from each other. On the other hand, bodily marriage lessens the thirst of love for beloved. On the contrary spiritual marriage gives highest pleasure and satisfaction even in the time of destitute and adversity.

Therefore, Rabi‘a denied all proposals for marriage saying that the contract for marriage is for those who have phenomenal existence and she had no such existence, as she said, “I have ceased to exist and have passed out of self. I exist in God and I am altogether His”.22 Refusing marriage proposal she sang—

My pleasure, o my brother in this solitude,
And my Love is with me always,
For His love I don’t have substitute
And His Love is my trial among creature.
Whatever His beauty I witness,
It is He who is my Mihrab towards Him lays my Qibla.
If I die of longing, and no hope is left,
Alas! For my distress among the people,
Alas! For my adversity
Physician of Heart, Thou who art all my hopes,
Be bountiful, Thy union heals my soul,
O my Toy and my Life eternal,
From Thou come my life and my ecstasy,
I have left all created beings and hope to be united
With 'Thou, for that are the extreme of my desire.²³

Here, the poetess says that religion of love is more sublime than any other
religion, which has no limit. Her love may rationalize by taking example of Udharite
poet like Majnum and Layla. Her doctrine of love in Sufi poetry literature became an
interesting theme for Sufi poets of next generation. Qur'an also declares love
relationship between man and God: if you want to love Allah then follow Prophet, and
He will love you. So love is universal will which is considered to be the intermediary
link between God and man. Therefore, Rabi'ā also existed by dint of love, lived in love
and submitted to love for reunion with beloved.

Repentance (tawba) is the first stage in the way to God. It is a correctional
science which changes the entire bestial phenomena into spiritual phenomena of human
being. It purifies the soul even for a moment and made a person to last long in obedient
to God. Like other saints of God, Rabi'ā had a deep sense of her sin and she needed for
repentance and forgiveness. She taught stages of repentance to her followers exclaiming
in the lively verses:

O Beloved of hearts, I have none like unto Thee,
Therefore, have piety this day on the sinner who comes to Thee
O my hope and my rest and my delight.²⁴

Hope and fear are the two pillars of faith which help the mystics reaching
towards the goal. Fear of hell or fear of separation and hope of paradise or hope of
living union with Him are depend upon the station of Sufis. Every mystic have their
special station which are not similar at all. Rabi'ā al-Basri feared only for separation
from her beloved. She did not fear for Hell, because this world is not less than Hell for
her. Her hope was only to live union with Him not for Paradise. As she recites—

O Allah! If I worship you for fear of hell, burn me in hell,
And if I worship you for hope of paradise, exclude me from paradise.
But if I worship you for your own sake,
Grudge me not your everlasting beauty."²⁵
Arabic mystical poems of *Rabi’a al-Basri* is not found in separate *diwan*. Her followers are preserved them in memory and recited in their needs in support of their mystical sayings. Nevertheless, her poems are quoted in many voluminous Sufi manuals written by the later mystic philosopher of Islam. The bulk of her poetry relates to her personal experience of mystical states which she derived from devotion. Majority of her verses relate to the Divine Love. A few poems are related to the elements of Sufism, like Poverty, Renunciation, Unification, Dependence, Repentance etc. Her language is sonorous, end rhymes provide musical sound and words are bombastic, style is delightful, vigorous and awe inspiring. She breathes a universal love through her poetry.

So, it may be assessed that the mystic poets of this period were first mystic then poet. *Rabi’a al-Basri* is the only exclusive poetess of this period. Mystics of this period taught the esoteric branch of knowledge through poetry, as the poetic culture dominated the Arabs approving a mode of eloquent expression which continues after the revelation of the Holy Qur’an also.

The mystic poets of this period made a way in presentation of the deep yearning of soul and analyzed the heart in various forms in search of Divine Love. They expressed in their poems, the delicacy of their deep feelings, their excessive love and repentance of sin, proud in poverty, sleeplessness night passed in remembrance of God, satisfaction in piety and morality, fear of hell or fear of separation from God etc.

Mystic poets are decent in fabricating the ideas of Divine Love into sweet melody which easily attracted the heart of common people. Combination of words, rhyme and rhetoric are so strong that may be compared with the poetry of *Muallaqat* poets. *Muallaqat* poets expressed the anguish of love of perishable feminine beauty through poetry, whereas the mystic poets expressed their spiritual flames in search of universal Divine Love.

Arabic mystical poetry of this period is a piece of valuable literary attributes that contributes to the development of Arabic literature in general and for spreading the mystical reality and esoteric knowledge of the religion of Islam in particular.
References:

3. Ibid, p.6
7. Ibid, p.11
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid, p. 13
12. Ibid, p.12
13. Ibid, p.12
17. Ibid., p. 16
18. http://www.spiritualfoundation.net/sayingsoftheprophet/
22. Ibid, p.22
