

'Urafa' of the Fourth/Tenth Century

1. Abu Bakr al-Shibli

A pupil and disciple of Junayd of Baghdad and one who had met al-Hallaj, al-Shibli is one of the famous mystics. He was originally from Khurasan. In the book *Rawdat al-jannat*, and in other biographies, many mystical poems and sayings have been recorded of him.

Khawajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari has said: "The first person to speak in symbols was Dhu al-Nun of Egypt. Then came Junayd and he systematized this science, extended it, and wrote books on it. Al-Shibli, in his turn, took it to the pulpit." Al-Shibli; died in 334/846 at the age of 87.

2. Abu 'Ali al-Rudbari

He traced his descent to Nushirwan and the Sasanids, and was a disciple of Junayd. He studied jurisprudence under Abu al-'Abbas ibn Shurayh, and literature under Tha'lab. Due to his versatile knowledge, he was called the 'collector of the Law, the Way, and the Reality' (*jami' al-Shari'ah wa al-Tariqah wa al-Haqiqah*). He died in 322/934.

3. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj al-Tusi

Abu Nasr al-Sarraj is the author of the book *al-Luma'*, one of the principal, ancient and reliable texts of *irfan* and sufism. Many of the shaykhs of the sufi orders were his direct or indirect pupils. He passed away in 378/988 in Tus.

4. Abu Fadl ibn al-Hasan al-Sarakhsi

He was the pupil and disciple of Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, and the teacher of Abu Sa'id ibn Abi al-Khayr. He was a mystic of great fame. He died in 400/1009.

5. Abu 'Abd Allah al-Rudbari

He was the son of Abu 'Ali al-Rudbari's sister. He is counted as one of the mystics of Damascus and Syria. He died in 369/979.

6. Abu Talib al-Makki

The fame of Abu Talib al-Makki rests largely on the book he authored on *'irfan* and sufism, *Qut al-qulub*. This book is one of the principal and earliest texts of *'irfan* and sufism. He passed away in 385/995 or 386/996.

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