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'Urafa' of the Eighth/Fourteenth Century:

1. 'Ala' al-Dawlah Simnani:

He began as a secretarial official; then he gave up his post to enter the path of the *'urafa'*, giving up all his wealth in the way of God. He wrote many books, and held special beliefs in the field of theoretical *'irfan*, which are discussed in several important texts of *'irfan*. He passed away in 736/1335. Amongst his disciples was the well-known poet Khwajawi Kirmani, who describes him thus:

Whoever flourishes upon the path of 'Ali,

Like Khidr, finds the springs of life.

Getting relief from the whisperings of the Devil,

He becomes like 'Ala ' al-Dawlah Simnani.

2. 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani:

Of the scholars of the eighth century *'irfan*, 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani wrote commentaries on the *Fusus* of Ibn al- 'Arabi and the *Manazil al-sa'irin* of Khwajah 'Abd Allah. Both of these have been published and are referred to by scholars.

According to the author of *Rawdat al-Jannat*, in his account of Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji, 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani was eulogized by al-Shahid al-Thani. He and 'Ala' al-Dawlah Simnani had heated discussions on theoretical issues of *'irfan* that had been raised by Ibn al- 'Arabi. He passed away in the year 735/1334.

3. Khwajah Hafiz Shirazi:

Despite his world-wide fame, the details of Hafiz's life are not altogether clear. What is known is that he was a scholar, an *'arif,* a *hafiz* of the Quran and an exegete of the Book. He himself has repeatedly

indicated this in his verses:

I haven 't seen more beautiful lines than yours, Hafiz,

By the Quran that you have in your breast.

Your love shall cry out if you, like Hafiz,

Recite the Quran memoriter with all the fourteen readings.

Of the memorizers of the world none like me has gathered,

Subtleties of wisdom with Quranic delicacies.

In his poetry Hafiz speaks much of the *pir–e tariqat* (spiritual guide) and of the *murshid* (master), yet it is not clear who was the teacher and guide of Hafiz himself.

Hafiz's poetry attains to lofty mystical heights, and there are few people who are able to perceive his mystic subtleties. All the *'urafa'* who came after him admit that he had indeed practically covered the lofty stages of *'irfan*. Several important scholars have written commentaries on some of his verses. For example, a treatise was written by the well–known philosopher of the ninth century, Muhaqqiq Jalal al–Din Dawwani, on the following verse:

My teachersaid: the pen of creation was subject to no error,

Bravo the pure eyes that hide all defects. 1

Hafiz passed away in 791/1389.2

4. Shaykh Mahmud Shabistari:

He is the creator of the sublime mystic poem *Gulshan–e raz* (The Garden of Secrets). This poem is counted as one of the loftiest works of *'irfan*, and has immortalized the name of its author. Many commentaries have been written upon it, perhaps the best of which is that written by Shaykh Muhammad Lahiji, which has been published and is available. Shabistari passed away about the year 720/1320.

5. Sayyid Haydar Amuli:

One of the erudite mystics, Sayyid Haydar Amuli is the author of the book *Jami' al–'asrar* (Collector of the Secrets), which is a precise work on the theoretical *'irfan* of Ibn al–'Arabi. This book has lately been published. Another book by him is *Nass al–nusus*, which is a commentary on Ibn al–'Arabi's Fusus al–hikam.

He was a contemporary of the famous jurisprudent Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin al-Hilli, but the date of his death is not known.

6. 'Abd al-Karim Jilani:

He is the author of the well-known book *al-'Insan al-kamil* ('The Perfect Man'). The concept of the perfect man is a subject first raised in its theoretical form by Ibn al-'Arabi, and has ever since occupied an important place in Islamic *'irfan*. Ibn al-'Arabi's pupil and disciple, Sadr al-Din Qunawi, has discussed it fully in his *Miftah al-ghayb* and, as far as we know, at least two mystics have written whole books on the subject. One is 'Aziz al-Din Nasafi, a mystic of the latter half of the 7th/13th century, the other being 'Abd al-Karim Jilani. Jilani passed away in 805/1402 at the age of thirty- eight.

1. Can't find
2. Hafiz is the most beloved figure of Persian poetry in Iran

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