



# **The Soul and a Loaf of Bread: The Teachings of Sheikh Abol-Hasan of Kharagan**

*Vraje Abramian*

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This book contains new translations of over 100 short statements of Sufic wisdom from Sheikh Abol-Hasan of Kharaqhan (died 1034), a "Sufis' Sufi." He is not known as well or as widely as some of the great Muslim saints from Khorasan-Attar, Rumi, or Bahaoddin Naqshband. But, this near anonymity was deliberate, according to the Sheikh's wish when he lived. Despite being a hidden saint, his spiritual affinity and grace are still very much acknowledged among the living Sufi circles across Iran and in the region. Even today, a steady stream of dervish pilgrims visits his tomb in Iran. His enduring presence is still potent among those whose aim in life is to attain higher knowledge and refinement of the heart. Sheikh Abol-Hasan Kharaqani said: ...whoever knocks on this door feed him and ask not of his faith for if he deserved a Soul from his Creator, he certainly deserves a loaf of bread from Abol-Hasan. In this collection, Sheikh Kharaqani's statements-collected and recorded centuries ago by his companions-have been rendered into English for the international reader. The contemplation of mystics' sayings, be it a thousand years later and in an "alien" language, is one way to cross paths with the truths they present. Time and place have no hold in the domain of the heart, from where these teachings originate. To best appreciate these secrets today, readers need a longing heart, earnestly seeking for the heritage that we humans, enmeshed in the grossness of material existence, so easily forget. ... whoever finds the Beloved, does not remain, those who find the Beloved, do not die... Mystics say that if the fog of mind (ego) lifts but for a split second, one experiences the presence directly and remembers that peace which "surpasseth all understanding." Those who go through this experience may become troubadours of the Divine and sing of the unspeakable glory they witness. Or, they may choose lives of quiet contemplation and service; Sheikh Abol-Hasan Kharaqani was one such character.

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