



# ĠAZĀLĪ, ABŪ ḤĀMED MOḤAMMAD II. THE EḤYĀ' 'OLUM AL-DĪN.

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## ii. THE EḤYĀ' OLŪM AL-DĪN

Rightly regarded as the greatest work of Abū Ḥāmed Ġazālī (450-505/1058-1111), *Eḥyā' olūm al-dīn* was written after his abandonment of his professorship in Baghdad in 488/1095, while he was devoting himself to the study and practice of Sufism (*taṣawwof*). A brief description of it would be to say that it is an attempt to show how the life of a Sufi can be based on the duties prescribed by Islamic holy law (*šarī'a*). In this way it was opposing the tendency, found in some Sufi circles, of neglecting duties incumbent on ordinary Muslims. The work was composed in Arabic. Another work of the same author, *Kīmīā-ye sa'ādat* is mainly an abbreviated Persian version of the *Eḥyā'*, though there are some relatively slight differences. The *Eḥyā'* is divided into four quarters and each quarter (*rob'*) into ten books, while each book (*ketāb*) is variously divided according to the subject matter. The four quarters are: (1) Religious duties (*'ebādāt*), (2) Social duties (*'ādāt*), (3) What leads to damnation (*mohlekāt*), (4) What leads to salvation (*monjāt*).

I. *Religious duties ('ebādāt)*. 1. Knowledge (*'elm*). This book discusses many aspects of knowledge, but it is probably best understood as an apologia for Ġazālī's own preference for the life of a Sufi over that of a professor of



jurisprudence. For Muslims the primary form of *'elm* was usually knowledge of God and his commands and purposes as prophets had received them by revelation. This might be described as “wisdom” and is contrasted with “instrumental knowledge;” the former is knowledge enabling man to live a good life and to attain to the joy of paradise, whereas the latter (which includes the sciences of nature) gives man control over objects. Within the knowledge of divine things, however, a distinction must be made. The Arabic word *'olamā'* (men of knowledge), often translated as “scholars” or “jurists” had come to be applied especially to those versed in the legal aspects of the *šarī'a*. Though they were concerned with divine things, Ġazālī felt that many of them were using their knowledge to further their own careers. He therefore contrasted worldly-minded and materialistic *'olamā'* with those he called *'olamā' al-ākera* (men of knowledge of the world to come). He tries to define exactly how far religious knowledge is profitable and how far harmful.

2. The Doctrines of the creed (*qawā'ed al-'aqā'ed*). The first section is a much fuller exposition of the two assertions of the *šahāda* (profession of faith): There is no deity but God; Moḥammad is the Messenger of God. Section two deals with the stages or degrees of faith, beginning with learning by heart the doctrines of the creed, and then considers how far it is profitable to engage in dialectical argument (*jadāl*) and theological discussion (*kalām*). Section three reproduces an earlier work by Ġazālī, *al-Resāla al-qodsīya*, which is a statement of the doctrines of the creed in forty propositions: ten each on God's essence and unity, his attributes, his actions, and points of eschatology and political order. Section four deals with the distinction and relation between faith (*īmān*) and submission to God (*eslām*).

3. Mysteries of purity (*asrār al-ṭahāra*). After distinguishing external (or ritual) purity from the purity of the members from sin, the purity of the heart, and the purity of the inmost thoughts, Ġazālī describes in detail all that is involved in ritual purity, including the lesser ablution (*wozū'*), complete ablution (*ḡosl*), and the treatment of hair and nails.

4. Mysteries of ritual worship or prayer (*asrār al-ṣalāt*). After a chapter of quotations from the Qur'ān and Hadith on the merits of various aspects of the worship, the detailed legal requirements of it are explained fully. Then Ġazālī goes on to speak of the inner attributes that should be cultivated, humility and recollectedness (or presence of the heart). This is the central point in his fusion of Sufism with the religious duties of all Muslims. Other chapters are devoted to recommendations for those acting as imam or leader at the worship, to the



Friday worship, and to the supererogatory acts of worship, for those who want to do more than merely fulfill the minimum requirements.

5. The mysteries of almsgiving (*asrār al-zakāt*). This book follows a similar pattern to the previous one. First a statement is given of the precise rules of the *šarī'a* for the *zakāt* (legal alms) on various classes of property: herds of animals, grain, dates and other agricultural products, precious metals, articles of commerce, mines, etc. Then the inner significance of alms is expounded, especially the need to see almsgiving as a duty towards God and to look upon the recipient of alms as helping the giver to fulfill this duty. The inner attitude of the recipient is also discussed. Finally there is mention of the excellence of almsgiving that is supererogatory or non-obligatory (*šadaqāt al-taṭawwo*).

6. The mysteries of fasting (*asrār al-ṣawm*). There is first a statement of the precise rules for the fast of Ramaṣān, including practices commonly observed though not strictly obligatory. Then comes consideration of inner attitudes, and a distinction is drawn between the fasting of ordinary people, that of the elite, and that of the elite of the elite. Supererogatory fasts are also mentioned.

7. The mysteries of the pilgrimage (*asrār al-ḥajj*). The rules concerning the pilgrimage to Mecca (*ḥajj*) and the lesser pilgrimage (*ʿomra*) are explained in detail. The appropriate “internal acts” are also described.

8. The recitation of the Qurʾān (*ādāb telāwat al-Qorʾān*). The recitation of the Qurʾān is meritorious. There are certain external rules for it, and also appropriate inner thoughts and attitudes. Though some Muslims insist that one must always follow traditional interpretations, no such interpretations exhaust the meaning of the verses, and there is a place for personal exegesis.

9. The remembrance of God and intercessory prayer (*al-adkār waʾl-daʾāwāt*). The remembrance of God is commanded in many passages of the Qurʾān and Hadith. The Arabic word *dekr* means both “remembrance” and “mention” and so is applied to Sufi assemblies for the remembrance of God. This is achieved in part, both individually and communally, by repeating the name of God or phrases such as “Glory to God!” (*šobḥān Allāh*). *Doʿāʾ*, intercessory prayer, is also commended in the Qurʾān and Hadith. Examples are given of *doʿāʾ* attributed to Moḥammad and other persons.

10. Devotions by day and night (*tartīb al-awrād wa tafṣil ehyāʾ al-layl*). The first chapter speaks of the seven divisions of the day and four (or five) of the night



and describes the appropriate activity of the pious Muslim during each. This varies according to his station in life. The second speaks of the merit of rising by night for devotions and gives practical counsels.

II. *Social duties (ādāt)*. 1. Good customs in eating and drinking (*ādāb al-akl*). Many of the points mentioned in this book belong to what westerners would call social etiquette, but Ġazālī brings out certain religious aspects, especially when a man is eating alone. He also speaks of the excellence of hospitality and similar matters.

2. Marriage (*ādāb al-nekāḥ*). The first chapter is a discussion of the reasons for and against marriage, enumerating the advantages (such as having descendants) and the disadvantages (such as incurring heavy financial burdens). Ġazālī concludes that it depends on an individual's circumstances whether marriage or celibacy is better for him. (This is contrary to the standard Muslim view, but is in accord with Ġazālī's own practice of celibacy after his retirement from Baghdad). The remaining two chapters deal with legal points and practical counsels.

3. Good customs in acquiring wealth and gaining a living (*ādāb al-kasb wa'l-ma'āš*). Working for a living in this world is a means towards the world to come. A man should not be so engrossed in gaining a living that he neglects useful work. Practical details are given about buying and selling, avoiding usury and the like. Some of the points mentioned are legal requirements, others go far beyond the legal minimum. Advice is given on the choice of occupation.

4. Lawful and unlawful (*al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām*). This book is concerned with *wara'*, the pious avoidance of and abstinence from what is unlawful. In Ġazālī's time some men asserted that it was almost impossible to gain things lawfully, but Ġazālī held that in general the lawful and the unlawful are obvious, but that there are a number of doubtful cases. He then gives detailed casuistic rules for doubtful matters. Other chapters deal with the disposal of unlawful gains and with rules for relations with princes who are themselves unjust or may gain wealth unlawfully.

5. Friendship, brotherhood, and other social relationships (*ādāb al-olfa wa'l-oḵūwa wa'l-ṣoḥba*). To live in friendly relations with God is a great good and is blessed by God. Brotherhood (or friendship) in God is to be distinguished from brotherhood with a worldly basis. In the former, someone is loved with a view



to an other-worldly end (e.g., the love of a pupil for his religious teacher; or a man may be filled with love for God and love others for God's sake). There may also be hate for God's sake, e.g. of those who disobey God. Chapter two sets out an ideal of mutual conduct between friends, and chapter three an ideal of conduct towards every Muslim, towards neighbors, towards close relatives, and towards slaves.

6. Life in seclusion (*ādāb al-'ozla*). There are different options about the respective merits of life in seclusion (or retreat) and life in the world among men. The arguments from the Qur'ān and Hadith are not conclusive, and it is necessary to look at the advantages and disadvantages of each form of life. Seclusion enables a man to devote himself more completely to the remembrance and worship of God and to grow in knowledge of him. It also makes it easier for a man to avoid various sins. Life in the world, however, enables a man to grow in knowledge, to be useful to others, to enjoy the society of others, and to acquire certain social virtues.

7. Good customs during travel (*ādāb al-safar*). Travel may be for various purposes, some worldly, some religious (such as pilgrimage); some travel is unlawful, some meritorious. Some practical points are mentioned. A second chapter deals with legal matters, such as permitted modifications in ablutions and times of worship, and the determination of the *qebla* and the exact hours of prayer.

8. Good customs in hearing music and in ecstasy (*ādāb al-samā' wa'l-wajd*). Ġazālī holds that music is a means to discover what is really in a man's heart. Some authorities, such as Mālek b. Anas, said that listening to music was forbidden, but Ġazālī argues that it is lawful in general, but may be unlawful incidentally. He enumerates seven types of occasion where music is permitted. The last is where a man loves God and seeks to come near to him; in this case music leads to mystical "states" (*aḥwāl*) and ecstasy (*wajd*). These states and ecstasy are further described, and practical counsels are given to those who listen to music in religious assemblies with a view to attaining to ecstasy.

9. The duty of commanding good and forbidding evil (*al-amr be'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-monkar*). This is an important principle of the Islamic religion, mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadith, but in Ġazālī's view it is imperfectly understood and is neglected in practice. The *moḥtaseb*, the person censuring, should be a mature Muslim known for his uprightness (*'adāla*) and capable of censuring effectively. The matter censured should be something generally



disapproved of, present, and obvious. There are degrees of censure, beginning with informing the person censured and exhorting him and, in extreme cases, going on to the use of armed force. A list is given of reprehensible acts. With regard to rulers, it is lawful to inform them that an act is disapproved and to exhort them to give it up; but Ġazālī regrets that in his day men are not prepared to go further and risk martyrdom.

10. The life and character of the Prophet (*ādāb al-ma'īša wa aklāq al-nobūwa*). This book is restricted to social matters. Among the qualities of character enumerated and illustrated are generosity, patience, courage, gentleness, chasteness of speech and clothing, magnanimity. Many facts demonstrate the Prophet's sincerity.

III. *What leads to damnation (al-mohlekāt)*. 1. Explanation of the mysteries of the heart (*šarḥ 'ajā'eb al-qalb*). Man differs from other creatures in that he is capable of having knowledge of God, and this comes to him by his heart (*qalb*). Knowledge of the heart is of the highest importance for the Sufī. *Qalb* denotes both the physical organ and a subtle spiritual faculty (*laṭīfa rūḥānīya*). This last is also called *rūḥ* (spirit) and *nafs* (self, soul). *Rūḥ* may also mean a delicate physical body, and *nafs* may also refer to the desire and anger against which man has to struggle. The "soul at rest" (*moṭma'enna*) is that which has overcome the passions; the "blaming soul" (*lawwāma*) is that which is engaged in struggle; the "soul commanding evil" (*ammāra be'l-sū'*) is obeying the passions and the devil. *'Aql* (reason) may mean either knowledge or that which knows, namely the heart. The heart may be said to have armies (limbs, organs, senses, etc.) through which it carries on the struggle; but it is distinguished from animals by knowledge (*'elm*) and will (*erāda*). Four types of attribute may be distinguished in the heart; the predatorial (*sabo'īya*), connected with anger; the bestial (*bahīmīya*), connected with desire; the magisterial or spiritual (*rabbānīya*), connected with leadership and knowledge; and the diabolical (*šayṭānīya*), through which evil and vice are possible. These can be represented by a dog, a pig, a wise man, and a demon. The different kinds of knowledge are then discussed, and the difference between ordinary knowledge and that acquired by divine inspiration (*elhām*). Then the action of the devil on the heart is explained, and the nature of man's responsibility for his actions.

2. Moral education (*rīāzat al-nafs wa tahdīb al-aklāq wa 'alājat amrāz al-qalb*). The diseases of the heart are more serious than those of the body, since they lead to an evil and vicious character, and it is important to know how to cure



them. In a good man there are four basic virtues: wisdom, courage, moderation, justice (*ḥekma, šajā'a, 'effa, 'adl*). In this Ġazālī is in the Platonic tradition, and he also speaks of the Aristotelian conception of virtue as a mean. A virtue such as generosity can be gradually acquired by making oneself perform generous acts. The diseases of the soul are due to following desires, and the cure is to renounce the desires. Finally there are descriptions of the moral training of children and of Sufi disciples.

3. The subjugation of the two desires (*kasr al-šahwatayn*). The two desires are those of the belly and genitals. With regard to the first it should be realized that hunger has several advantages over satiety. The practice of abstinence can be gradually increased; but the man who is abstinent to an excessive degree becomes liable to fall into faults. The desire for sexual intercourse is beneficial in that its pleasure gives man an analogy for the pleasures of paradise and that it perpetuates mankind. In respect of this there can be excess (especially infatuation, *'ešq*, for a single person) and also deficiency; only moderation in accord with reason and revelation is praiseworthy. It is better in general for a Sufi disciple (*morīd*) not to marry; but if he falls into sin, even only through his eyes, he should marry.

4. Faults of the tongue (*āfāt al-lesān*). After quotations about the dangers of the tongue and the excellence of silence, twenty defects are mentioned in order of increasing seriousness: speaking about what does not concern one; speaking too much; engaging in useless topics; disputing and arguing (unfairly); opposing others in hostile fashion; speaking with affectation; indecent talk; cursing; singing and reciting poetry; pleasantries; mocking and making fun of others; divulging secrets; making promises falsely; telling lies (but lies are sometimes permissible); speaking behind people's back (discussed at great length); tale-bearing; being double-tongued; praising others unwisely; using words carelessly especially in respect of God and his attributes; ordinary men's questioning about theological subtleties.

5. The condemnation of anger, hatred, and envy (*ḍamm al-ḡaḏab wa'l-ḥeqd wa'l-ḥasad*). Anger is created in men by God in order that they may repel evils which would destroy or harm them. There is a just mean in respect of anger, and this is praiseworthy; but both excess and deficiency are blamed. Suggestions are given for the control of anger in different cases. Magnanimity is praiseworthy. When anger cannot be expressed it produces hatred, which is entirely blameworthy and leads to other evils. Instead of hating one should pardon wrongs done to one and show compassion. Envy proceeds from hatred



and is in respect of benefits God has bestowed on other men. Suggestions are given for overcoming it.

6. The condemnation of this world (*damm al-donyā*). This world is like a woman who attracts men by her beauty and then kills them. Sayings are quoted of Moḥammad, Jesus, and others condemning love of the world. It is important to know what things to avoid in the world and what not to avoid. The just mean here is to take the world for the sake of religion, not for its own sake.

7. The condemnation of avarice and of love of wealth (*damm al-boql wa dāmm ḥobb al-māl*). Wealth and material possessions are both blamed and praised in the Qur'ān and Hadith. Wealth may enable a man to perform his religious duties better, to help others, and to perform services to the community (such as building mosques and hospitals). Poverty is to be praised, provided it is accompanied by contentment and not by cupidity and covetousness of what others have. To avoid these faults one should be content with what is strictly necessary to maintain life, should rely on God's promise, and should be aware of the danger of great wealth. Opposed to avarice is generosity. The highest degree of generosity is to give away what one has need of.

8. The condemnation of (love of) fame and of hypocrisy (*damm al-jāh wa'l-rīā'*). Love of fame is like love of wealth; the latter is concerned with worldly goods, the former with gaining control of men's hearts. The man who praises another is his slave. Love of fame is countered by knowledge of the transience of worldly glory and by seeking renown only in the eyes of God, not of men. The pious man hates praise from men. Hypocrisy is essentially the seeking of fame and renown by religious practices (*'ebādāt*), though there are also other forms of hypocrisy which are not blameworthy, such as desiring to appear well in people's eyes. Hypocrisy can be practiced by one's body, dress, language, acts, and personal relationships. It may be open or hidden, even from the man himself. This unconscious hypocrisy is greatly feared by the virtuous. To avoid hypocrisy a man must take no pleasure in being praised and feel no pain at being blamed; he must also be aware of the dangers during religious practices and turn away from them.

9. The condemnation of pride and complacency (*damm al-kebr wa'l-'ojb*). Pride may be expressed in one's gait, clothing, etc.; but this is rather *takabbor* (proud bearing). Properly speaking, pride is a trait of the soul. It consists in regarding oneself as superior to others in some respect, sometimes even as superior to



the prophets and to God himself. The opposite is humility (*tawāzoʻ*). Pride may be in respect of one's learning, religious practices, birth, physical beauty and strength, wealth, or the number of one's following. Pride may be combated and humility acquired by reflecting on man's weakness and dependence on God, and then by special considerations according to the basis of one's pride. True humility is a just mean. Complacency (or self-satisfaction) consists in thinking highly of one's learning or achievements or wealth, not as gifts from God but as one's own. It leads to pride and a failure to be aware of one's sins. Since complacency is due to ignorance, its cure is through the relevant knowledge.

10. The condemnation of delusion (*ḍamm al-ḡarūr*). Delusion is a form of ignorance, where the deluded man believes and regards a thing to be different from what it really is and where this false belief coincides with his desires. For example, an unbeliever may hold that certainty is better than doubt and that this world and its pleasures are certain and the world to come doubtful, and so prefer this world to the world to come. Other examples are given, and then there is a detailed account of the forms of delusion or self-deception to which four classes of men are liable: men of learning (*ahl al-ʻilm*), experts in religious practices (*arbāb al-ʻebāda wa'l-ʻamal*), would-be Sufis (*motaṣawwefa*), and wealthy men (*arbāb al-amwāl*).

IV. *What leads to salvation (al-monjīāt)*. 1. Repentance (*tawba*). Repentance consists of: (a) the knowledge that sins are harmful and are a veil between man and God, his beloved; (b) the state of being penitent (*nadm*); and (c) the appropriate act, e.g., the decision not to repeat the sin. Repentance is a religious duty in all its parts, to be performed without delay, and by all who seek to come close to God. Sins arise from the four attributes (or instincts) of the heart (mentioned in II/1) and may be in respect to either God or men. They may also be classified as small (*ṣaḡīr*) or great (*kabīr*). Small sins may become great in various ways, e.g., by perseverance in them. Men may draw near to perfection in repentance to a greater or lesser extent; this is in respect to the depth of their repentance and their continuing to be influenced by it. Since sin is like a disease, the physicians of religion, i.e., the prophets and learned men, should endeavor to bring to repentance those who persist in sin.

2. Patience and gratitude (*al-ṣabr wa al-ṣokr*). Patience is a station (*maqām*) or stage (*manzel*) in the religious life, and like all stations is characterized by (a) knowledge (*maʻāref*), which leads to (b) states (*aḥwāl*), which lead to (c) activity (*aʻmāl*). There are two kinds of patience. One is of the body and consists in



enduring pain and suffering. One is of the soul and consists either in enduring natural desires (without sinning)—and this is continence (*'effa*)—or in enduring what one does not want; and this has various names, such as courage and self-control. Gratitude includes the knowledge that all good things are from God, together with a feeling of joy, not merely because of the thing itself nor of the fact that it is an expression of God's love, but because it enables one to serve him. This feeling leads to appropriate acts. There are many types of good gift (*ne'ma*). Patience is concerned with the trials sent by God and gratitude with his gifts. Absolutely, patience is more meritorious but there are many grades of both patience and gratitude.

3. Fear and hope (*al-ḵawf wa'l-rajā'*). Hope is a station (*maqām*) when a man is established in it, and is a state (*ḥāl*) when it is only for a time. Hope leads to activity, in contrast to its opposite, despair (*ya's*). Hope may be increased by certain practices and considerations. Fear of eternal punishment is more effective than hope in the case of most men. Fear also leads to activity. During a man's life, fear is preferable since it leads to an avoidance of sin; but at the time of death, hope is preferable. Higher than the fear of Hell is the fear of God himself and of separation from him.

4. Poverty and asceticism (*al-faqr wa'l-zohd*). Every being is poor compared with God and is dependent on him, but poverty is here discussed in respect of wealth. There are several degrees: to avoid and hate wealth (this is asceticism); not to rejoice in having wealth, yet not to reject it; to prefer to have wealth yet to be content when one has none; to suffer from the absence of wealth. Poverty is more meritorious than wealth. To the poor certain good practices are recommended, and certain rules to be observed when seeking alms. Asceticism consists in renouncing things which are permitted. There are many kinds and degrees of asceticism. The highest degree is to renounce everything except God. The man who renounces everything in this world but seeks the joys of paradise is at a lower level. There is a detailed discussion of asceticism in respect of food, clothing, housing, marriage, money, and influence.

5. The oneness (of God) and confident trust (*al-tawḥīd wa'l-tawakkol*). Confident trust is a stage and station of those brought near to God (*moqarrabūn*). It is closely linked with *tawḥīd*, and this last is of four degrees. (The word *tawḥīd* is commonly translated "unity [of God]," but it properly means "making God one" or "asserting God's unity.") (1) A man may confess God's unity with his lips without believing in his heart. (2) A man may confess with the lips and believe in the heart, as do ordinary Muslims. (3) A man may,



by illumination from above, observe all things as coming from God the One. (4) A man may see in existence only one thing, God. Confident trust is linked with the third meaning. The nature of confident trust is further explained by giving detailed rules and considering particular cases.

6. Love, yearning, familiarity, and approval (*al-maḥabba wa'l-šawq wa'l-ons wa'l-rezā*). Love (for God) is the highest of the stations (*maqāmāt*) in the spiritual life; yearning, familiarity, and approval are its fruits. In general five kinds of love can be distinguished, and all of these find their highest degree in love for God. The most sublime pleasure is in knowledge (*ma'refa*) of God and contemplation of his face (*al-naẓar elā wajheh*). Yearning is the desire for something partly known and partly unknown; and so yearning for God is desire for a fuller knowledge of him. Familiarity is the joy experienced from nearness to the Beloved and contemplation of Him. Approval, that is, the approval or joyful acceptance of God's decrees, is also a fruit of love, and is itself a station. *Do'ā*, intercessory and petitionary prayer, is not contrary to approval.

7. Intention, single-mindedness, and sincerity (*al-nīya wa'l-eklāš wa'l-šedq*). According to Hadith, acts are judged by the intention of the agent. The relation of intention and act is fully discussed. Single-mindedness or purity of intention is usually restricted to the case where the motive is to draw near to God. There are degrees of single-mindedness, and it can be impaired in various ways, notably by ostentation (*re'ya*). Sincerity may be in respect of speech, intention, resolve, the accomplishment of one's resolve, works, and the stations of religion. Sincerity in the fullest sense has all these aspects.

8. Attentiveness and self-examination (*al-morāqaba wa'l-moḥāsaba*). This book is not fully described by the title. It consists of a description of the six stations (*maqāmāt*) which constitute perseverance or steadfastness (*morābaṭā*). (1) First is *mošārāṭa*, the statement of conditions; reason (*'aql*) is conceived as a merchant in partnership with the soul (*nafs*), who before commencing the undertaking states the conditions to which the soul is expected to conform. (2) Next is *morāqaba*, attentiveness, that is to God the Watcher (*raqīb*), as practiced by "those brought near" and "the men of the right hand." (3) Self-examination should be made at the end of each day to discover whether the balance of one's acts is a credit or debit. (4) Self-punishment (*mo'āqabat al-nafs*) follows. (5) Then comes *mojāhada* (engaging in spiritual struggle). (6) Finally there is reproach and reproof of one's self (*tawbīk al-nafs wa'l-mo'ātabatohā*).



9. Meditation (*tafakkor*). Meditation or contemplation is described as causing to be present in the heart two thoughts in such a way that from them a third thought arises. The subject of meditation may be either man, with his sins, duties, weaknesses, and strengths, or God with his names and attributes. Many natural phenomena may act as signs.

10. Remembrance of death and what follows it (*dekr al-mawt wa mā ba'dah*). It is good that death should be often in one's mind. Not to hope for a long life is meritorious; this includes acting at once and not postponing one's act. The pangs and anguish of death are worse for those who have cause to expect punishment in hell. Accounts are given of death-bed sayings of the Prophet and other Muslims. Seemly deportment at funerals is commended, and then follow descriptions of the experiences of the man between death and the Judgment, and in the world to come, culminating in the vision of God. The final word of the whole work is an assertion of the wideness of God's mercy in the hope that this will be a good augury for the writer.

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