

AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship

Translated from the *Iḥyā'* by
Muhtar Holland



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Transliteration Table

Consonants, Arabic

initial: unexpressed medial and final:

ء ' ʾ	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ḏ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع ʿ	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	ه h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short: َ a ِ i ُ u

long: َـ ā ِـ ī ُـ ū

diphthongs: َـِـ aw

 َـِـ ay

Foreword

'Except he who comes to God with a heart, pure and whole', says the Quran, no one shall receive the Inheritance of the Garden of Bliss, of the everlasting Life of happiness, near Allah, 'on the day when they are raised up, the day when neither riches nor children shall avail.' (al-Shu'arā', 26:85-9); the goal and the promise is not far, but only for him 'who turns often unto God and keeps Him always in heart; who fears, without seeing, the most Merciful, and comes with a penitent heart.' (Qāf, 50: 27-8) On the other hand, only those that 'in their hearts is disease' (al-Baqarah, 2:10) shall be denied this Inheritance; they have eyes which can see as far as the farthest galaxies and as deep as the heart of an atom, but they are unable to peep inside themselves for 'it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts within the breasts.' (al-Hajj, 22: 46) Who shall, therefore, not care to nurture the life in the heart – his inner world – as he lives his life in the world, in responding to his God?

Life has many dimensions, many layers, many phases. On the one hand, all of them should exist fused together, in continuing dynamic interaction with each other. For life is an integrated whole. It would be folly to so atomise and analyse life as to end up looking at it as through a microscope – seeing only one *dimension* at a time, magnified disproportionately; or with a telescope, resulting in simplistic reductionism. To employ tunnel vision is to live with an unbalanced concern for one aspect and a disregard of others. In all ages men have committed this folly, but perhaps never on the same scale as today. The consequences of this disproportion and imbalance are disastrous: disintegration of person and society, as one lives in one dimension alone, or in disregard of the wholeness of life.