There can be no greater testimony to the influence of *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*) in the Islamic tradition than the number of epitomes al-Ghazālī's masterpiece has inspired. Al-Ghazālī wrote three of them himself: *Kīmyā-yi saʿādat* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*) in Persian, which he describes as a middle-length (*wasīṭ*) treatment of the “science of the path to the hereafter,” the subject of the *Iḥyāʾ*; *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*The Book of Forty*), published as a section of *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān* (*Jewels of the Qurʾān*), which he describes as a concise treatment (*wajīz*);1 and *Lubāb al-Iḥyāʾ* (*The Kernels of the Revival*).2 Badawī points to 26 other epitomes of the work.3 Even critics of *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* saw in it a model for appropriation: al-Ghazālī's Andalusi contemporary Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 520/1126), who writes of having met al-Ghazālī personally, detested the book and approved of its being burned in Cordoba in 503/1109. But he himself wrote a version of the *Iḥyāʾ* that, as he put it, corrected its mistakes.4 The appeal of *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* extended to the Shiite community, one of whose scholars, al-Muḥsin Fāyḍ al-Kāshānī

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1 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, 1:5. Here al-Ghazālī describes *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* as a “comprehensive” (*basīṭ*) treatment of “the science of the path to the hereafter.”

2 Until recently, the *Lubāb* was assumed to be by Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, but Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī’s Philosophical Theology*, 62, has argued convincingly that it is by Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad.


(d. 1090/1679), wrote a Shiite epitome in the 17th century.\(^5\) It even extended beyond the boundaries of the Muslim community: the 7th/13th century Syriac Ethicon of Gregory Barhebreus (d. 685/1286) is recognized as being a Christian re-working of *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.\(^6\)

This tradition continues to our day. Michael Cook notes two modern epitomes,\(^7\) and this article will consider a further contemporary example: *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn fi-l-qarn al-wāḥid wa-l-ʿishrīn* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences in the 21st Century*), published in 2004 by the Lebanese scholar of Sufism Suʿād al-Ḥakīm (Souad Hakim). Examining this specific instance of an *Iḥyāʾ* adaptation will allow us to explore the phenomenon of epitomizing *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, and also raise broader questions of the reception of ideas. We will look at Suʿād al-Ḥakīm’s motives for writing an adaptation of the *Iḥyāʾ* rather than simply either referring her audience to al-Ghazālī’s original or producing an exposition of her ideas in a wholly original work. We will also look at the kinds of liberties she took with al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyāʾ* in writing her own version to understand her agenda more deeply and to explore the kinds of constraints imposed on an author by adapting an earlier work. We will conclude by asking what is it about the *Iḥyāʾ* in particular that makes it such an appealing source of imitation and adaptation, and how the answer to that question may change through the generations as changing currents in Muslim societies and discourses engender new readings of al-Ghazālī and his *Revival*.

**Suʿād al-Ḥakīm and Her Aims in Producing an Epitome of the *Iḥyāʾ***

Suʿād al-Ḥakīm is a professor of Sufism at the Lebanese University in Beirut and is herself a practicing Sufi.\(^8\) Much of her work to date has been on Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240), including *al-Muʿjam al-ṣūfī*, a 1300–page

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5 Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍāʾ fī tahdhīb al-Iḥyāʾ*. Fayḍ al-Kāshānī regretted that al-Ghazālī wrote *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* before what he purports to have been his conversion to Shiism. See Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, 283, n. 219 and 454, n. 185. See also Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī’s Philosophical Theology*, 293, n. 38.

6 Barhebraeus, *Ethicon: Mémra I*. On this work and its debt to al-Ghazālī, see Teule, “La vie dans le monde: perspectives chrétiennes et influences musulmanes.” My thanks to Hidemi Takehashi for informing me of Barhebraeus’ adaptation of al-Ghazālī and sending me references to these works. See also Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, appendix 2, pp. 600–3.

7 Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, 507, n. 8; 57, n. 155. For a discussion of other epitomes, see ibid., 451–52.