
Presented in the book is the second part or the second pillar (*rukn*) of Muḥammad al-Ġazālī's *Kimiyā-yi sa'adat* ("The Elixir of Happiness"), providing a complete description of the Shafi'iite customs in the 12th century, as well as some elements of customary law.

The book gives an account on standards of behaviour, consumption of food, earnings and trade, recognising the things allowed and things prohibited, governance, and many other issues concerning ethical norms of the Shafi'ites.

According to A. Khismatulin, the Persian text of *Kimiyā-yi sa'adat* is penned by al-Ġazālī himself and is a translation from Arabic of *Iḥyāʾ 'ulūm al-dīn* ("Resurrection of Religious Knowledge") by the same author. Judging by the text, *Kimiyā-yi sa'adat* is, indeed, a later work by al-Ġazālī having been translated into Persian by the Imam himself, from his earlier *Iḥyāʾ 'ulūm al-dīn*.

While examining the two versions, Khismatulin notes that the author's Persian renderings of some Arabic *loči* are given in a simplified form, as if al-Ġazālī was to re-examine something in the course of translation. On those occasions quoted are both the Arabic and the Persian parallels of the respective passages.

The book contains very informative and interesting speculations by Khismatulin on the scholarly thinking of some medieval Muslim authors. He suggests the following classification of the medieval writings: gathering (*jamʿ*), compilation (*ta'liʿ*), and composition (*tasnīf*). Also reviewed are comparisons within the mentioned classification of the works of the renowned authors, like al-Ġazālī, Beyhaqi, al-Šahristānī, al-Hujvīrī, and others.

When exploring the texts by al-Ġazālī, A. Khismatulin reveals the Imam's traditional manner of argumentation, viz.: designation of the subject (by title or explicatively); the canonical unit (quotations from the Qur'an, Hadiths, etc. on the relevant subjects); speculations, conclusions, and findings by the author; comparisons and illustrations (parables, examples, stories). A. Khismatulin points to al-Ġazālī's liberal approach to the material, whereby the Hadiths themselves may appear in a reduced form, may be substituted, or may even be combined, the text though retaining the substance of the prophetic judgment.
The second pillar of Kīmīyā-yi saʿādat includes 10 ‘Bases’, each constituting one chapter in the book: on etiquette of eating, ethics of marriage, etiquette of earnings and trade, search of what is allowed, ethics of dealing with people, reclusion, ethics of travelling, etiquette of samā’, etiquette of ruling the scruatable, and governance.

Base One illustrates the traditional prescriptions of what to do before the meal, during the meal and after the meal. Also described are the standards of behaviour. There are also detailed prescriptions on inviting and seeing off guests and serving the foods.

Base Two deals in detail with the issue of marriage, stating its advantages (numbering five) and disadvantages (numbering three). Also discussed are the types of marriage settlements, the etiquette of marriage, qualities of a woman and on the terms to be maintained with regard to a woman. Al-ʿAzalī describes five conditions of marriage noting over twenty characteristics that can rule out the marriage or make it a nullity. Also indicated are eight mandatory qualities of women and twelve rules of religious behaviour to be kept throughout the marriage. The terminal part of this section details standards of behaviour for a married woman.

Base Three suggests traditional prescriptions in the domain of earnings and trade.

Base Four deals with the future retribution for what is allowed and on the merits of its search, citing five degrees of discretion within the allowed and the forbidden, and instructing how to separate the allowed from the forbidden and how to learn about the forbidden.

Base Five deals with the rules of communication with people (relatives, neighbours, servants, friends, etc.), on goodwill and brotherhood for Allah’s sake, as well as on traditional standards of behaviour with brothers in faith.

Base Six presents six advantages and six disadvantages of reclusion.

Base Seven is on standards of behaviour when travelling (making a pilgrimage). Travelling is understood as both the inside (pilgrimage of the heart), and the outside (e.g., the Ḥajj).

Base Eight shows the etiquette of the samā’ and the vajd.

Base Nine is on commanding the scruatable and prohibiting the rejected.

The last, Tenth Base of the second rukn suggests ten principles to be followed by a rightful ruler.

Then come two appendices (A and B) quoting relevant materials from the compositions by al-ʿAzalī.