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CHAPTER TWO

SOCRATIC AND STOIC PRELUDES

I. AL-KINDĪ (D. CA. 866) AND THE IDEAL OF *APATHEIA*

The Mu^ctazilah, as we have seen, were the first genuine ethical thinkers of Islam, but although their system of ethics was grounded in the Koran and the Traditions, their debt to Greek philosophy was considerable. Thus their preoccupation with internal coherence, as shown by their attempt to bring the data of revelation (*sam^c*) into harmony with the postulates of natural reason (*‘aql*), their vindication of the rationality of God’s ways, and their profound sense of the inseparability of obligation (*taklīf*) from human responsibility, grounded in turn in human freedom; and, finally, their concern with the determination of the nature and grounds of right and wrong are unmistakable bequests of Greek rationalism.

Philosophical, ethical writers start likewise from the imperative of internal coherence, but, as our analysis will show, their fundamental presuppositions are essentially Greek, i.e. Platonic, Aristotelian or Stoic. The Koran and Traditions are not altogether ignored, but to the extent they are brought into the discussion at all, it is often for the purpose of literary embellishment or dialectical reinforcement only. The impression one gains from reading ethical, philosophical literature in Islam is that ethics, according to its exponents, is an autonomous enquiry which revelation can confirm, but whose principles and precepts are valid in their own right and independently of such confirmation.

It is not without significance that the first philosophical writer in Islam, Abū Ya^cqūb al-Kindī (d. ca. 866) was in sympathy with Mu^ctazilite theology.¹ An encyclopedic writer, he did not neglect the subject of ethics altogether, although like so many Islamic philosophers, his contribution to ethics was comparatively meager. He is reported by the classical bibliographers to have written a number of ethical treatises reflecting a profound interest in Socratic thought. Thus in addition to a treatise on *Ethics*, and more than one treatise on politics, he is credited with a work on *Paving*

¹ See M. Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 68f. Cf. A.L. Ivry, *Al-Kindī’s Metaphysics*, Albany, 1974, especially Chapters One and Three. These two chapters give a resumé of the information now available on al-Kindī’s life and his Mu^ctazilite sympathies, or lack of them.

the *Way to Virtue*, and another one on *Exhortation to Virtue*, as well as an extant tract on the *Art of Dispelling Sorrows*. Of his Socratic writings, a tract on the *Excellence of Socrates*, a *Dialogue between Socrates and Aeschines* and another between Socrates and the Harraneans are given.² The only extant Socratic work is a short collection of *Socratic Utterances* (*Alfāz Suqrāt*), in which the moral personalities of Socrates and Diogenes the Cynic are inadvertently fused, and the resultant hybrid is represented as a model of asceticism and other worldliness.³

In the *Art of Dispelling Sorrows*, which became a recurrent theme in the writings of his successors, including al-Rāzī (d. ca. 925), Miskawayh (d. 1030) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), the same Stoic, Cynic ideal of moral fortitude and *apatheia* is set out in eloquent terms. This tract starts with an account of the causes of sorrow, defined by al-Kindī as “a disease of the soul resulting from the loss of what is cherished, or the failure to attain what is sought after.”⁴ Now in this world of generation and corruption in which nothing endures, argues this author, no one can escape his share of sorrow or tribulation; the wish to cling permanently to the material possessions that one happens to own temporarily is a vain one, since it amounts to wishing that the perishable goods of this world should become imperishable or the temporary permanent. Accordingly, we should strive to avoid unnecessary sorrow by cultivating the habit of contentment (*qanāʿah*) and recognize, as observation clearly shows, that the “sensual objects of desire or aversion are not something necessary by nature, but rather by habit and frequent use.”⁵ The reasonable person will accustom himself to enjoy those temporary possessions that come his way and not pine over the loss of those which he has missed.

The antidote of “the disease of sorrow” then does not consist in drugs, potions or branding by iron, but rather in moral fortitude and resignation, whose cultivation should proceed gradually and methodically, until the habit has become fully ingrained in the soul.

Of the simple ‘remedies’ that may be prescribed in this connection is the consideration of the nature of sorrow as something brought about either by our actions or those of others. In the first case, our duty is to refrain from doing what is the occasion of grief; in the second, to consider whether it is in our power to avert it or not. If in our power, then our duty

² See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, Cairo, N.D., 377.

³ See M. Fakhry, “Al-Kindī wa-Suqrāt,” in: *Al-Abhāth*, XVI (1963), 23–34.

⁴ See R. al-Hilāh li-Dafʿ al-Ahzān, ed. H. Ritter and R. Walzer (Uno scritto morale inedito di al-Kindī) in: *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, VI, 8, Rome, 1938, 31. The theme was later taken over by Avicenna; cf. Helmut Gätje, “Avicenna als Seelenarzt,” in: *Avicenna Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta, 1956, 225–228.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

is clearly to do so; if not, it is foolish to grieve at the prospect of the calamity we dread before it has hit us. Instead we should continue to hope that it might be averted somehow, and to recognize that in any case its advent is not within our control. Should it nonetheless come to pass, we should do our utmost to bear the calamity with fortitude.⁶

A 'subtle device' to which we may resort in this regard is to recall how the occasions of our past sorrows and those of others have all disappeared and were gradually forgotten.

Another device is to recall that everything we have missed or lost has been missed or lost by many others before us, and that they have all in the end resigned themselves to its loss.

A third device is to recall that "to wish not to be visited by calamity is to wish that we did not exist at all." For calamities are the concomitants of the corruptibility of all existing entities, so that were there no corruption there would be no existing entities. To wish that there be no calamities then is to wish that there be no generation or corruption. However, generation and corruption exist by nature, and to "wish that what exists by nature did not exist is to wish the impossible." Now whoever wishes the impossible must surely be denied his wish and thereby be reduced to a condition of wretchedness. But, for this wretchedness brought about by his own ignorance of the nature of the possible and the impossible, he is entirely to blame.⁷

As to material possessions, whose loss is the occasion of so much sorrow, we should recall that no one of us has an exclusive title to their ownership, insofar as they are the common lot of all mankind. He who grieves at their loss is either envious or niggardly, since he resents giving them up. They are, moreover, given to us on loan by God, their real owner, to whom the right belongs to withdraw them whenever He wishes. To grieve at their loss, then, is a sign of thanklessness for the privilege of having been accorded their use for a while.⁸ It follows that on no account should we grieve at the loss of material possessions, for to grieve without cause is the essence of ignorance or folly. When Socrates was asked: How was it he never grieved? He replied, "Because I have never owned anything the loss of which could cause me to grieve."⁹

Considering the transience of human existence and the vanity of material possessions, grief at the change of our estate or the loss of our

⁶ *Ibid.*, 35f. Cf. Epictetus, *The Encheiridion*, I.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 39. Cf. Epictetus, *The Encheiridion*, XI.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 40. Two slight variations on this alleged Socratic maxim are given in al-Kindī's 'selections' from the statements of Socrates. See "al-Kindī wa-Suqrāt," in: *Al-Abhāth*, XVI (1963), 23–34.

possessions is the height of folly. Such change or loss is part of the constant permutations of existence in this world of generation and corruption, in which nothing is worthy of our attachment or our sorrow. The only genuine cause of grief is estrangement from our "true abode" in the intelligible world, in which no calamity, privation or loss is ever visited upon us.¹⁰

A major cause of sorrow that continually preys on our mind is the fear of death, but this fear is entirely irrational. For man, being the "living, rational, dying being," it follows that, far from being a grievous evil, death is "the fulfillment of our nature." To wish then that there be no death is to wish that there be no man, or that our nature be entirely transmuted, which is irrational.¹¹ To fear the natural and inevitable is equally irrational. The fear of death, which is grounded in the ignorance of the nature of things in this world of generation and corruption, is indeed an evil, from which reason alone can rid us.

The same ideal of *apatheia* and renunciation of the world is reflected in al-Kindī's 'selections' from *Alfāz Sugrāt*, which have been preserved in a solitary MS. and in which, as we have already noted, the personality of Socrates merges with that of Diogenes the Cynic. The theme of death and the irrational fear thereof is underscored, and Socrates is reported as admonishing his disciples in these words: "Take no heed of death, for its bitterness lies in the fear thereof." Or again: "Take no heed of death, or else you will perish, but let your souls die and then you will live." For "he who lets his soul die a voluntary death, will find in natural death his true life."¹² The captive of death can only be released through philosophy (*ḥikmah*). This obvious allusion to the Socratic definition of philosophy in Plato's *Phaedo* as the art of pursuing death and dying has played an important role in the history of Islamic ethics and mysticism.

II. AL-RĀZĪ (D. CA. 925) AND THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL WAY'

The most eloquent statement of the Socratic ideal of the 'philosophical' life (*sīrah*) is to be found in the writings of the great physician and author,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹² See my article in *Al-Abḥāth*, 16 (1963), 33. In his treatise *On Definitions*, al-Kindī gives the following definition of philosophy, without mentioning Socrates by name: "They defined it (i.e. philosophy) as preoccupation (*ʿināyah*) with death, death being for them of two types: natural, which is the renunciation by the soul of the use of the body, the second is the extirpation of the passions. This is the death which they intended, since the extirpation of the passions is the road to virtue." See [al] *Rasāʾil al-Falsafiyya*, ed. M. ʿA.H. Abū Rīda, Cairo, 1950-'53, I, 172. For the history of this Socratic-Platonic concept, see F. Rosenthal, "On the Knowledge of Plato's Philosophy in the Islamic World," in: *Islamic Culture*, XIV (1940), 409.

Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. ca. 925). That al-Rāzī should be regarded as the outstanding Platonist of Islam, in the fields of metaphysics and cosmology, should be considered as established.¹³ I wish to reinforce this thesis here by underscoring the chief features of his ethical Platonism, illustrated by his unqualified admiration for Plato, “the chief of the philosophers and their master”, as well as his deference for Socrates’ mode of life set out in a tract entitled the ‘philosophical way’ and elsewhere.¹⁴ In this treatise, al-Rāzī distinguishes between an earlier and a later phase in the development of the Socratic mode of life, characterized respectively by an otherworldly and a this-worldly spirit—, a distinction reminiscent in some respects of the Socratic portraits drawn respectively by Plato and Xenophon, and adding a further dimension to the already very complex ‘Socratic problem’ of present-day scholarship.

The substance of al-Rāzī’s ethics, however, is embodied in one of his best known treatises, the *Spiritual Physic* (*al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī*), one of the few philosophical works of al-Rāzī to survive in full. This treatise opens with the discussion of a theme which not only the philosophers, but even the theologians, Traditionists and Ṣūfīs, have placed at the center of their ethical concerns, *viz.* the pre-eminence of reason, God’s greatest gift to man, which is not only the faculty that distinguishes man from the beasts, or the power which has enabled him to understand the world around and harness its natural forces, but also the ruling principle in the soul, whose supremacy ensures the suppression of desire and the reformation of character.¹⁵

The psychological framework of the ‘*spiritual physic*’ is undoubtedly Platonic: the trichotomy of the soul and the onslaught on hedonism are expressed in emphatic Platonic terms. Plato, according to al-Rāzī, has distinguished between three souls: the rational or divine, the irascible or animal and the appetitive or vegetative.¹⁶ The last two have been fashioned, according to him, for the sake of the rational: the vegetative in

¹³ See my article, “A Tenth-Century Arabic Interpretation of Plato’s Cosmology,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, VI (1968), 15–22. No modern life of al-Rāzī exists, but P. Kraus has edited al-Bīrūnī’s inventory of his works. See P. Kraus, *Epître de Biruni*, Paris, 1936, and G.S.A. Ranking, “The Life and Works of Rhazes,” in: *Proceedings of XVII International Congress of Medicine*, London, 1914, Sect. 23. A new edition of al-Bīrūnī’s inventory of al-Rāzī’s works is by Mehdi Mohaghegh, Teheran 1366 A.H.

¹⁴ See al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil Falsafīyah*, ed. P. Kraus, Cairo, 1939, 99ff.

¹⁵ See *Rasāʾil Falsafīyah*, 174.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28. For the identification of the Aristotelian trichotomy of human, animal and vegetative with the Platonic, see the article by P. Kraus, “K. al-Akhlāq li-Jālīnūs,” in: *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts* (Egyptian University), V (1937), 22, 26 and 35. Cf. Engl. trans. by J.N. Mattock in: *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, ed. S.M. Stern et al., 235–260.

order to enable the body, which is the instrument of the soul, to grow; the irascible in order to assist the rational in repressing the appetitive and prevent it from dominating that divine part, with which the ultimate emancipation of the soul from the body is bound up.¹⁷

According to al-Rāzī, Plato has taught that the more specific purpose of “spiritual therapy” or the art of “persuasion through arguments and demonstration”, as distinguished from “bodily therapy”, is the moderation (*taḍdīl*) of the three parts of the soul, whereby they are guarded against excess or defect. The defect of the vegetative soul is to refrain from nutrition, growth or reproduction, even to the extent required for the survival of the body; the excess is to indulge in pleasure inordinately. The defect of the irascible is to fail to curb the appetitive soul, whereas its excess is to be puffed up by pride and the lust for conquest, as illustrated by the case of Alexander the Great.¹⁸ The defect of the rational soul is to forego reflection on the marvels of this world, with a view to comprehending everything in it, especially the make-up of the body in which the soul is incarcerated and the destiny reserved for it after death. Its excess is to become so engrossed in reflection as to neglect altogether the body and its needs, resulting ultimately in melancholy and the disturbance of the humors. Plato believed, according to al-Rāzī, that the period assigned for the duration of the corruptible body is determined by the desire of the rational soul to prepare itself for life after death, by engaging in the contemplation of those intelligibles proper to it, and dissociating itself from the body and its pleasures. For it is only through this dissociation that the soul will be able to rejoin its abode in the intelligible world, and be restored to its original condition as a living and thinking entity, which is entirely free from corruption and pain.¹⁹

Only the ignorant and the unenlightened will dispute the wisdom of this Platonic-Socratic doctrine of the soul and its genuine vocation in this world, because of the firm hold that pleasure has taken upon their minds.

A good deal of al-Rāzī’s ‘spiritual physic’ is taken up with the analysis and repudiation of hedonism. He defines pleasure as the return of the agent to the original condition from which he has been barred by the cause of pain, or very simply as “return to nature”.²⁰ This definition which recurs in his writings and appears to have formed the subject of a separate treatise is presented as the “view of the physical philosophers”, although it clearly corresponds to the view of Plato as adumbrated in *Philebus*, 31D

¹⁷ See *Rasāʾil*, 28. Cf. *Phaedo*, 76C.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

and 42C and *Timaeus*, 64D, and is reported by Galen in his compendium of the last-mentioned dialogue extant only in Arabic.²¹

It is because of their ignorance of the genuine nature of pleasure that the incontinent yearn for never-ending enjoyment, little suspecting that the duration of the pleasureable condition is impossible, since it can only come in the wake of the condition preceding it, i.e. pain. Such people are thus obsessed with the futile wish for the unattainable, i.e. a pure and uninterrupted condition of constant pleasure, entirely free from pain.

Moreover, the hedonists should be castigated, not merely because they are ignorant of the true nature of pleasure, but also because they are slaves of their passion (*ʿishq*), to a degree which exceeds the condition of beasts in its infamy. Take sexual pleasure as an instance; unlike beasts, who are content to secure this pleasure only to the extent of relieving the pain of physical lust, incontinent lovers have turned the satisfaction of that pleasure into a fine art. Not only will they refuse to seek gratification from whatever quarter, they have compounded their slavishness by insisting on securing it from a single source. Moreover, in order to refine upon the amorous art, they have put their own reason, which is God's greatest gift, to the service of their lust, but without avail. For the more they yearn for satisfaction, the greater will they be afflicted with anxiety and frustration in the sequel.²² This satisfaction is attended by so much hardship, anguish and deprivation that it can never be proportionate to the effort expended in achieving it. The union which lovers yearn for is in the nature of things so short-lived that its pursuit can only be the cause of untold anguish. Even when lovers are spared the trials of separation as long as they live, they cannot ultimately be spared the agony of parting consequent upon death. If this is the way of all passion, then the reasonable man (*ʿāqil*), rather than live in anxious apprehension of this painful outcome, will not allow himself to be ensnared by it in the first place.²³

As to those "ignorant people" who dispute this view of the philosophers, contending that love is one of the noble pursuits of which poets and even prophets, noblemen and kings have partaken, they should be deterred from their folly and reminded that genuine nobility does not consist in romantic adventures, but rather in "pursuing obscure and distant matters, rarefied and subtle sciences, the eliciting of complex and recondite subjects, and the production of useful and profitable arts." In

²¹ See Walzer and Kraus, *Galen's Compendium Timaei Platonis*, London, 1951, 19. The same view of pleasure is attributed to Galen himself in al-ʿĀmirī's *Kitāb al-Saʿādah wa'l-Isʿād*, 49.

²² *Rasāʾil*, 39.

²³ *Ibid.* 41.

short, true nobility consists in the “perfection of reason and wisdom,” as illustrated by the case of the Greeks, the most refined and sagacious of mankind, “who gave less attention to romantic love than any other people in the world.”²⁴

Moreover, those misguided advocates of romanticism err in other ways. They identify intellectual refinement with grammatical, poetic and rhetorical accomplishments, and these have nothing to do with genuine wisdom. The true sage (*ḥakīm*), according to the philosophers, is “one who has mastered the conditions and rules of demonstration (*burhān*) and attained the highest degree of mathematical, physical and metaphysical knowledge attainable by man.”²⁵

Among the other vices which afflict the soul and turn it away from its genuine goal, al-Rāzī lists arrogance, envy, anger, falsehood, miserliness, gluttony, drunkenness, erotic passion, frivolity, avarice, worldly ambition and the fear of death. All these vices which prey upon the mind and disturb it are “affections of passion”, and result from the failure of the concupiscent and irascible powers to be dominated and regulated by reason, which is man’s genuine master and the source of his eventual liberation from the body.

Passion (*hawā*) conduces to anguish (*ghamm*) whenever reason is allowed to represent to itself as grievous or painful the loss of the suitable or desirable, and is therefore a “rational affection” that can cause the soul untold suffering and perturbation. It should therefore be combated in whatever way possible. Two ways are recommended by al-Rāzī, one preventive and the other palliative. Passion should be resisted before it afflicts the soul, but once it has afflicted it, it can be countered or repressed in three ways:

- a. By considering that those who are most susceptible to the onset of anxiety are those whose cares are numerous and varied. The fewer our cares then, the more impervious we are to anxiety.
- b. By resigning ourselves to the loss of what we cherish as unavoidable. He who has trained himself to accept loss or bereavement, will have steeled himself in advance against disaster.
- c. If, however, we are unable to follow either course because of our weakness or passionate nature, the only recourse open to us is to avoid being enthralled by a single care or a single object of love, and to seek several such objects, so that the loss of one object will be offset by the retention of the rest.²⁶

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 42f.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

The most effective antidote to anxiety, as al-Kindī has also argued, is the realization that nothing in this world of generation and corruption is ever permanent, and that loss and bereavement are inevitable consequences of the endless cycle of coming to be and passing away. Rather than grieve at the loss of what he can only possess for a while, the reasonable man will regard its temporary possession as a welcome boon for which he should be thankful. "Were he to wish that it endure forever, he would be yearning for what cannot be attained, and he who yearns for what cannot be attained brings upon himself his own grief and allows his passion to get the better of his reason."²⁷

Sometimes, the loss of what is not essential, instead of being attended by grief, is compensated for by the acquisition of an alternative which restores to the soul its original condition of contendedness. The reasonable man will always remind himself of that constant alternation of disaster and relief, pleasure and pain, which ensures that no one condition will ever remain unchanged. He will also keep constantly in mind the fact that none of his fellowmen is ever immune to hardship, but so many of them are "partners in adversity" from whom he should learn the art of consolation.

Above all, he should reflect carefully upon the causes of his grief. If they are such as can be averted, then it is his duty to concentrate on eliminating them, instead of wasting away in grief at their consequences. If not, then he should simply banish the object of grief from his mind altogether, and refrain from allowing it to take a firm hold on him. Indeed, it is passion rather than reason which induces us to succumb to the unprofitable emotion of grief. However, "the truly reasonable man will not be induced by anything other than the dictates of his reason, and will not dwell on any subject which he is not at liberty to dwell upon, for a clear reason or justification. He will not follow his passion, be led by it or approach it in any other [than a rational] manner."²⁸ For it is the mark of reason not to dwell on anything which is futile or profitless.

Of the major affections which prey upon the mind and cause it undue anxiety is the fear of death. To combat it, the soul should be persuaded to believe that, upon death, it is destined to enter upon a higher and better estate than its present one. Although al-Rāzī regards this proposition as indubitable, it cannot be accepted without a long-drawn discourse and may, at any rate, remain unconvincing. It is necessary therefore to set it aside, and demonstrate the folly of the fear of death on the alternative 'naturalistic' assumption that the soul shall perish with the body.²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 68. Cf. A.J. Arberry, *The Spiritual Physick*, London, 1950, 72.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 69. Cf. Arberry, *op. cit.*, 74, and Epictetus, *Encheiridion*, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

From this standpoint, argues al-Rāzī in the manner of Epicurus in his famous letter to his disciple Menoeceus, man will not be touched or injured by death in the least. For injury or pain (*adha*) is a mode of sensation, and sensation belongs to the living so long as they live and are liable to injury. Therefore, the condition of death which is free from sensations of pain or injury is superior to the condition of life.³⁰

If it is objected that the living partake of certain pleasures of which they are deprived at death, it could be retorted that the dead will surely not be injured or otherwise affected by such privation. Moreover, pleasure which is regarded as an enviable object of desire or competition is not for reason anything other than “relief from pain”³¹ and only the ignorant will continue to covet it as a worthy object of desire. The dead, having been relieved from pain, are not therefore “in need of that relief, which, ensuing upon pain, is called pleasure.”³²

Furthermore, grief over what is inevitable is a form of folly. Now death is inevitable, and the feeling of grief which is attendant upon its fear is a form of folly too, whereas diverting the mind and turning it away from dwelling on it is a boon. Beasts in fact have an advantage in this respect over those who are afflicted with this fear, for they do not dwell in preconception on the prospect of death, as they do. Such dwelling increases our pain manifold. For “he who preconceives death and fears it dies with every act of preconception once, so that over a long period of time, he would have partaken of death many times.”³³

An argument is finally advanced to sway those who believe that death is a prelude to another life. For these, death will have no terror, so long as they comply with the dictates of the ‘true law’, which has promised the pious eternal bliss in the life-to-come. Should they be in doubt, their sole duty is to search for the Truth, and their efforts will probably be crowned with discovery. If not, as is rather unlikely, God is too merciful to demand what is intolerable.³⁴

Thus al-Rāzī lays upon the believer and the agnostic alike the same duty, to search for the Truth, embodied either in the sound religious law (*al-shariʿah*) which guarantees his survival after death, or in a ‘law of reason’ which asserts that his fear of annihilation is entirely baseless. The believer is further comforted by the Muʿtazilite maxim that surely the Almighty will not demand the intolerable from His servants. The same

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 93. Cf. Arberry, *Spiritual Physick*, 103 and Epicurus’ letter to Menoeceus, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, X, 122f. Cf. al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa’l-Niḥal*, II, 162.

³¹ See *supra*, 2f.

³² *Ibid.*, 95. Cf. Arberry, *Spiritual Physick*, 105.

³³ *Ibid.*, 95. Cf. Arberry, *op. cit.*, 106.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

thesis is reaffirmed in an already mentioned work entitled the *Philosophical Way* (*al-Sīrah al-Falsafiyyah*). Here he explicitly vindicates the reality of life after death, the superiority of the philosophical life and the absurdity of hedonism. “For the better estate for which we have been created (. . .) is not to indulge in bodily pleasures, but rather to acquire knowledge and practice justice, which are the two pathways of our transition from this world to a world beyond, in which there is no death and no suffering. Indeed, nature and passion frequently call us to prefer the present pleasure, whereas reason urges us to give up the present pleasures for the sake of those things which are far preferable to them.”³⁵

³⁵ See *Rasāʾil*, 101.