

Abu ‘Ali Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ya’qub (Miskawayh): Miskawayh’s Conception of the Soul

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the development of the soul (al-nafs) and the philosophical conception of it through the works of Miskawayh, an Islamic thinker and philosopher. Drawing from the primary ethical treatise, the Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq, the article delineates Miskawayh’s intellectual background and his contributions to the development of the soul. The article attempts to explore the soul from the epistemological, ontological and axiological dimensions, and provide an illustration of Miskawayh’s thoughts interwoven with the Aristotelian and Platonic perspectives. Significant to the development is Miskawayh’s view on the three faculties of the soul, i.e. the nutritive, spirited and rational, and the process of attaining supreme happiness through a perfected soul. The parallels between Miskawayh’s thoughts and contemporary psychology are also highlighted, demonstrating how several notions in his conception of the soul are present in areas such as personality and positive psychology. This article therefore aims to underscore the relevance of Miskawayh’s notion of the soul in contemporary discussions related to the shaping of one’s character, wellbeing, and ethical development.

Keywords: *Miskawayh, Development of the soul, Psychology, Supreme happiness*

INTRODUCTION

In understanding the conception of soul in the Muslim world, it is paramount to explore the contributions of Abu ‘Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ya’qub or also known as Miskawayh. Being known as an Islamic ethicist in the 11th century, Miskawayh had pioneered the fields of ethics and moral philosophy, emphasised the growth of the psychological well-being, as well as offered psycho-spiritual treatment methods of depression and anxiety. Most importantly, his contributions in the exploration of the nature of the soul as expressed in the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* has profoundly impacted the Arab and Islamic thought.

This article attempts to outline Miskawayh’s thoughts on the nature and development of the soul based on his work, the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*. The article begins by providing a brief account of Miskawayh’s background, as well as his prominent works and contributions. The article will next move into Miskawayh’s notion of the soul, by highlighting on the nature and development of it. In general, the aim of this article is to provide an overview of Miskwayh’s philosophical reflections on the conception of soul based on his own historical and philosophical terms.

BACKGROUND AND BIOGRAPHY

Abu 'Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub, or Miskawayh, was born in one of the most prominent periods of Islamic civilisation, also referred to as the "Golden Era" (Jamal al-Din, 2001). During the period, Miskawayh was regarded as one of the most prominent figures in the study of morality, history and theology of the Buwahid Persia (Siddiqui, 2001). Also known as Maskawayh, records have shown that he is often misperceived as Ibn Miskawayh. The title (*laqab*) Miskawayh is known to be his, and placing him as *Ibn*, or *son* of Miskawayh is incorrect as the *laqab* is not of his father's nor grandfather's (Omar, 2016). It is, therefore, more appropriate and thus rightful to address him as Miskawayh here.

Born in Rayy (in an area in Tehran today) around 320/932, Miskawayh spent a large portion of his life in the period of the Abbasid reign, which spanned from 132 to 656 AH (750-1258 AD). He flourished throughout the fourth century AH, together with the scientific environment, and his contributions had extended to approximately 20 years into the fifth century (Jamal al-Din, 2001), which is evident in his date of death on the 9th of Safar 421/16th February 1030 (Omar, 2016). During this era, Muslims were notable for their contribution to the many branches of knowledge.

Miskawayh was deeply attracted to Greek philosophy, whose books were heavily translated into Arabic during his era. Literature argued that his philosophical and ethical writings relied heavily on Greek sources (Abu Bakar, 1989; Leaman, 1998, Haque, 2004; Omar, 2003). The great Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato were among Miskawayh's major sources of reference. However, he was also receptive to other thinkers such as Pythagoras, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Bryson, and Porphyrius (Jamal al-Din, 1992). Understanding that Miskawayh was familiar with the Greek language, it was reported that he completed many of the Greek literature in its original form, except for a few including Aristotle's *The Virtues of the Soul* or also known as *Kitab Fada'il al-Nafs*. This source was translated by Abu 'Uthman al-Dimashqi, one of the most trusted translators mentioned by Miskawayh (Omar, 2003).

Also known as the first Muslim moralist, Miskawayh establishes his views (both secular and religious) based on the Platonic trichotomy of the soul and utilises Platonic's four cardinal virtues (i.e., justice, prudence, courage, and self-restraint) (Leaman, 2021). Together with Stoic and Aristotelian thoughts (Leaman, 2021), Miskawayh had employed the Platonic template and woven it within the Islamic tenets to produce works on Islamic ethics. Additionally, according to Wakelnig (2011), the Hierarchy of Being elaborated in the Neoplatonic teachings also became the framework for Miskawayh's worldview.

According to literature, Platonism has played an integral part in Miskawayh's ethical stand. To illustrate, Miskawayh's discussion on the soul and its fate after death, is considered as neo-Platonic (Fakhry, 1975). In the discussion of the soul, Miskawayh had maintained Plato's concept of duality of the soul and body. To elaborate, the view propagates that ethics should be used to learn about oneself in the Socratic way, i.e. the soul should be identified together with a man's essence. Additionally, according to Fakhry (1975), Miskawayh also focuses on the Platonic themes of immortality, as well as the trichotomy of the soul as a groundwork for his ethical worldview.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND NOTABLE WORKS

Like many other eminent scholars in the Islamic tradition, Miskawayh had also produced many writings in different bodies of literature, particularly history, philosophy, philosophical theology (Topkara, 2017), as well as psychology (Haq, 2004). Among the topics that was thoroughly explored by Miskawayh was the conception of the soul or *al-nafs*.

Also known as the first to author an ethico-philosophical treatise in the Islamic world, Miskawayh attempted to elaborate on the vices and virtues at a great length in the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* or The Refinement of Character (Marcotte, 2012). Heavily drawn from Greek philosophy and Islamic literature, according to Topkara (2017), the magnum opus, *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, paints the eclectic nature of ethics through the intertwined ideas from Aristotle, Plato, and Galen. Although it is deeply influenced by the Aristotelian ethical treatise, *Ethica Nicomachean*, the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* had applied a Platonic interpretation to Aristotle's philosophy. In short, the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* consists of six sections, i.e., the principle of ethics, human nature and its state of origin, goodness and its types, love and friendship, justice, as well as the soul and its healthy state (Omar, 2003).

Miskawayh's other great works in ethics also include the *al-Fawz al-Asghar* (The Diminutive Triumph), which bears three important sections, i.e., God, the Soul, and the Prophecy. To elaborate, the *Fawz al-Asghar* is considered as a work on theology and metaphysics, and the three sections denote the philosophical interpretation of the three fundamental aspects of Islam which revolve around the existence of God, life after death, and prophethood (Omar, 2003). Among all three discussions, the Soul had the biggest bearing as it became a foundation to later discussions on the refinement of character, especially in his *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (Marcotte, 2012). Marcotte (2012) noted that *Fawz al-Asghar* additionally elaborates on the soul, particularly on the affirmation of its resurrection, as well as the nature of its happiness. A similar subject was also examined in the *Risalat al-Nafs wa al-'Aql* (Epistle on the Soul and the Intellect) (Marcotte, 2012).

AL-MISKAWAYH'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS ON THE SOUL AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

The Epistemological Aspect of Miskawayh's Thoughts on the Soul

In producing his many works, Miskawayh had chosen to base his thoughts on ethical grounds (Omar, 2003), propagating that ethics enables one to become good and is not limited within theoretical knowledge alone (Omar, 2016). He also emphasised that virtues, which are the goals of ethics, are real as they represent deeds and actions (Omar, 2016). This is evident in the manifestation of ethics within an individual, where the potential virtues should be translated into actuality through appropriate actions and deeds. Therefore, one who remains true to himself and honest produces a trustworthy man, as well as how a just man is produced by being just to himself and others.

From an epistemological light, Miskawayh argued that the soul acquires knowledge through the rational soul. Beginning with sensory perception, the knowledge attained by the rational soul advances to the universal and intellectual truths, which shapes one's moral knowledge. By introspection and deliberating on one's behaviour, man is believed to be cultivating his virtues. In the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, Miskawayh argued that the soul and body are different, where the differences lie in the soul's rationality which can distinguish between truth

and false and comprehend any other contradicting forms (e.g. sensible or intelligible, big or small, near or distant) (Fakhry, 2004). The excellence or virtue of the soul therefore rests on its pursuit of knowledge and the values cultivated by it.

The Ontological Aspect of Miskawayh's Thoughts on the Soul

Miskawayh had numerous views on human existence, which he elaborated in his works. According to Radez (2019), Miskawayh's idea of existence is described as *providence* and *invention*, which are in line with the Islamic teachings and the Qur'ān. The former refers to the purpose of creation and the benefits to mankind, while the latter denotes that all creations are invented by God. Radez (2019) added that the following logic is an inventor must precede every invention. This shows the strong connection between the ontological aspect of soul and religion from Miskawayh's perspective.

Miskawayh believes that the soul is separate from the body, immaterial and immortal. It uses the body but does not decompose alongside one's physical being. Miskawayh's idea of the immateriality of the soul was further elaborated by Adamson and Portmann (2012) which was found to be coherent with the Aristotelian argument. Miskawayh argued that the mind is not easily overwhelmed by excessively intelligible things as opposed to powerful sensibles such as bright light or strong scents. This explains the nature of the soul, which is from a higher spiritual realm and not from physical elements.

The connection between the physical and metaphysical aspect of the soul was also established by Miskawayh in his works. In the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (Miskawayh, 10th century BCE/1968), Miskawayh highlighted that a man's soul consists of three faculties i.e. the appetitive, irascible, and rational; and the rational is the highest among all three. Miskawayh also viewed a human being's existence as both perfect and purposeful (Abu Bakar, 1989). By adopting Aristotle's philosophical thought, Miskawayh noted that immediate perfection in humans relies on a man's judgment which generates actions according to his reasoning. A human's distant perfection, in contrary, is aimed to achieve happiness, wisdom, and virtue (Abu Bakar, 1989). These acknowledge Miskawayh's notion of the soul as a hierarchical faculty that governs the body, and the rational state of the soul makes humans unique and noble. The uniquely human soul is therefore the onset to the refinement of human character.

The Axiological Aspect of Miskawayh's Thoughts of the Soul

As an eminent scholar in the field of ethics, Miskawayh emphasised on the importance of the soul to strive and achieve ethical perfection. The human soul should be perceived as the starting point for humans to search for good. In the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (Miskawayh, 10th century BCE/1968), Miskawayh adopted Aristotelian's position when he asserted that only the soul is capable of cultivating virtues. Since he perceives the soul's highest purpose is to seek for happiness, Miskawayh continued to outline the relationship between the body and soul in relation to achieving happiness by commenting on Aristotle's stance on happiness in his *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*. Miskawayh believes that happiness should be a man's end, and the prerequisite in attaining the goal is through the constant struggle against oneself (Ansari, 1963). Since happiness or *al-sa'ada* appeared to be an important value to Miskawayh, he had discussed the subject at length in his *Kitab al-Sa'ada* (Ansari, 1963), which consists of both the theoretical and practical aspects of ethics. The *Kitab al-Sa'ada* became a frequent reference in Miskawayh's *Tahdhib Al-Akhlaq* to complete his work on the important concept of happiness (Ansari, 1963).

Happiness was also described by Miskawayh as the completion of virtues. Since virtues are attained through actions and deeds, happiness may also be achieved through performing good acts and exhibiting the virtues through daily activities. According to Omar (2016), virtues should be appropriately performed on others, as it is not possible for a virtuous man to demonstrate his virtues only on himself. Like other virtues, happiness, as described by Omar (2016), could not be attained only within the capacity of oneself but also within the connection and bond with others. This entails the importance of living within a society where dealings and communication occur within the community. An earlier review on Miskawayh's concept of happiness by Ansari (1963) on the matter suggested that in completing happiness, Miskawayh believes that a certain extent of material or external fulfilments are needed apart from spiritual elements per se, which include wealth, friends, health, as well as social success. Such interconnections may explain Miskawayh's emphasis on social institutions such as society and the government and the importance of fulfilling one's needs through the help of another.

Happiness is achieved through a healthy relationship between the body and soul. By introducing the idea of *al-sa'āda al-'azma* or supreme happiness, Miskawayh claimed that ancient philosophers classified happiness into two kinds: one that is attained in this world and the other that is accomplished when the soul separates from the body (Topkara, 2022). The former is not considered as complete happiness due to Miskawayh's belief that if the soul is attached to the body, the bodily impurities will hinder the soul from achieving true happiness. Vices are also deemed as deforming the soul and leading it astray from happiness. Therefore, Miskawayh believes that the process of self-restraint is paramount for the soul to cultivate good traits and develop its virtues (Haque, 2004).

THE NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOUL ACCORDING TO AL-MISKAWAYH

The soul (*al-nafs*) is an important subject that Miskawayh carefully explored in several of his works. From the many works he had produced, the (*Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa-Tathir al-'A'raq* (The Refinement of Character), which was also known as one of his prominent contributions to ethical literature, was centred on the discussion of the soul (Omar, 2017). This chief ethical treatise fulfilled Miskawayh's contribution in understanding the soul to develop excellent states of character. Miskawayh began by establishing a metaphysical foundation of the soul, afterlife and prophethood in his work *Al-Fauz al Asghar*. He then continued with an extensive discussion of the soul in the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* and devoted the first section of the work on it. This extension was explainable from a metaphysical perspective as Miskawayh believed that the soul is the essence and symbolises man's perfection in relation to God, himself, and the society (Radez, 2019).

In view of the initial stage of the soul, Miskawayh posits that it is designed with innate capabilities and has the capability of developing virtues. This is coherent with Miskawayh's definition of the soul as an indestructible and incorporeal entity that is created by God and is destined to reside in physical bodies (Siddiqui, 2001). The soul is developed by achieving balance through the harmonisation of the impulses with reason and allowing the rational faculty to navigate the lower states. By adopting the Platonic and Aristotelian view of the tripartite structure of the human soul (i.e. nutritive, irascible, and rational states) (Omar, 2018), Miskawayh highlighted that only intellect is performed through the soul's essence, while the other two are fulfilled through the physical body. Miskawayh also argued that all creations experience the spiritual urge to return to God and that their development is a constant process toward God (Siddiqui, 2001). Additionally, Salleh, Embong, Noruddin, and Kamaruddin (2015)

noted that according to Miskawayh, the spiritual value owned by man is the force behind his body (also known as the immortal spirit or *ruh*); the *ruh*, is further manifested through the body as life, sensation, movement, reasoning, cognition, and discretion. This therefore implies the important role of the immortal spirit in shaping a man's character holistically.

The three hierarchies of the soul by Miskawayh and its relation to Plato's trichotomy of soul is also important to understand the development of soul. According to Fakhry (1975), the theory on the trichotomy of the soul has been refined by earlier Muslim scholars such as Al-Kindi and Al-Razi to suit Aristotelian's psychological framework. Like Plato who classified the soul into three categories, i.e., the rational, spirited, and appetitive, Miskawayh categorised the soul into the rational, spirited, and nutritive, or also known as *al-natiqa*, *al-ghadabiyya*, and *al-shahawiyya* respectively (Omar, 2017). The Platonic conceptualises that the rational is the capacity of the mind in making decisions and reflecting on both the good and the bad, while the spirited soul concerns one's emotions such as love, anger, honour, and animosity. On the other hand, the nutritive involves an individual's biological needs such as drink, food, sexual intercourse, and other desires. In Miskawayh's comments, he believes that the rational faculty functions through physical organ, i.e., the brain; while the second (spirited) is related to the heart, and the third (appetitive) is manifested through the liver (Omar, 2017).

Miskawayh has also connected Plato's trichotomy of the soul with Islamic guidance, as reflected in his discussion on the Qur'anic teachings related to the soul. According to the Qur'an (n.d.), the soul may be classified into three types, i.e., *nafs ammara* or the imperative soul, to which is susceptible to evil (12:53), the *nafs lawwama*, also known as the self-reproaching soul, which reprimands the self for indulging in worldly desires and aims for moral perfection (7:52), as well as *nafs mutma'inna* (the peaceful soul) which is the highest level of the human soul, which is liberated from vices and rests in God's grace (89:2). According to Omar (2017), Miskawayh had highlighted the similarities between the Qur'an's view of the soul with Plato's trichotomy theory. Miskawayh agrees that the *nafs ammara* may be likened to Plato's idea of the appetitive soul as both souls are the lowest in state, constantly instigating man to engage in evil acts. Next, Miskawayh finds that *nafs al-lawwama* may be coherent to the spirited soul, which Plato argues to desire dominance and evoke emotions. This makes it more aware of the good and bad and hence, responsive to moral training. Thirdly, Miskawayh acknowledges that the rational soul is in line with the concept of *nafs al-mutmainna* in the Qur'an. He believes that this faculty is the source of discernment and reflection and is created pure and noble as well as capable of constraining the other parts of the soul (Omar, 2017). Miskawayh's discussion on the Platonic trichotomy of the human soul, woven with Islamic principles, indicates that Miskawayh strived to comprehend other theories from the Islamic lens in his works.

In achieving the final stage of a man's development of the soul, Miskawayh argued that it must experience the process of moral and intellectual expansion. This is coherent with Aristotelian thought that the *entelechy* or the striving to achieve a full realisation of a man's potential is what drives the development of every being. This concept by Aristotle heavily influences Miskawayh's notion of the *falāsifa* (Topkara, 2022). Based on the *falāsifa*, Miskawayh suggests that man should perfect his ability to achieve rational judgments. This can only be done by adopting philosophy as a tool in perfecting one's character, and the soul must be the medium for it. Miskawayh believes that to achieve happiness, man should perfect his theoretical and practical divisions of philosophy as it helps to realise a human being's full potential.

The highest state of the soul, which is *al-sa'ada* or happiness, is therefore achieved when the soul has been purified through moral and intellectual development. Miskawayh elaborates on the three forms of happiness i.e., the happiness ensuing from the environment, the happiness of the physical body, and the happiness of the soul (Wakelnig, 2011). He suggested that the first two kinds of happiness are not ends by themselves; rather, they are the means to attain the ultimate happiness (Wakelnig, 2011). Although happiness from the environment and physical body are in nature inclined towards worldly desires, they are significant in supporting the soul to achieve the supreme happiness. In his *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, Miskawayh also outlined the definition of happiness as suggested by Aristotle, according to five categories (Topkara, 2022). First, happiness is referred to as the health of body and the well-functioning senses. If a man has a moderate temperament, therefore his five senses (i.e. hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste) are good. Second, one has good fortune when he spends his money to support goodness around him. The third category describes the joy of holding a good reputation among the virtuous. Fourth, happiness is defined as garnering success in a man's affairs (i.e. the fulfilment of a man's plans). Lastly, the fifth category claims that possessing sound thinking (*ṣaḥīḥ al-fikr*), good judgment (*jayyid rā'y*), and sensible beliefs in both religious and non-religious areas (*salīm al-i'tiqādāt fī dīnihi wa ghayr dīnihi*). It is important to note, however, that Miskawayh interpreted the fifth category from a religious perspective as it is unlikely for Aristotle to raise such an argument (Topkara, 2022).

IMPLICATIONS TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY

The core concepts of Miskawayh's outlook on the soul is seen to show relevance to contemporary psychology. The concepts by Miskawayh that will be discussed in relation to contemporary psychology are the soul's tripartite nature, its ability to develop through intellectual and moral means, and its goal of seeking for happiness or *al-sa'ada* through knowledge and virtue. The discussion will also connect Miskawayh's concept of soul to few other psychological concepts.

The notion of the soul as existing in three faculties and is capable to be developed is one of the significant notions in Miskawayh's discussion of the soul. Based on the concept of the nutritive, spirited, and rational soul, Miskawayh argues that personality is the byproduct of the conflict between the irrational and rational faculties (Siddiqui, 2001). He believed that the rational will triumph over the irrational soul, and its success will develop a strong moral conscience, which serves as the basis of *khulq* or personality. Personality, from Miskawayh's lens, is therefore viewed as an acquired capability and is regarded as a habit of action which aims to cultivate virtues.

The study of personality is paramount in psychology, as it helps man understand human nature. Psychology began with the study of consciousness, which was advocated by Wilhelm Wundt and other psychologists of the late 19th century (Schultz & Schultz, 2009). As the field of psychology grew, personality was yet considered as a distinct area, and it was only formally included in psychology in the late 1930s, by the efforts of Gordon Allport from Harvard University. Selected modern theoretical personality models in psychology may be parallel to Miskawayh's structure of the soul (i.e. nutritive, spirited and rational). Literature shows that many models that guide human behaviour rests on dual processes. However, there is a need to introduce a motivational element that serves as a behavioural catalyst, as proposed by Strack and Deutsch (2004). According to them, a triple system cognitive model involves a reflective-impulsive-affective model. To compare with Miskawayh's view of the soul, the model proposed

by Strack and Deutsch (2004) concerns one's impulsive system (analogous to the nutritive soul), reflective system (likened to the rational soul), and the motivational/affective system (like the spirited soul). In view of modern psychology, an imbalance in the nutritive and spirited soul may precipitate unhealthy mental states. Personality is therefore accomplished by regulated emotional systems which are governed by higher reasoning, like Miskawayh's view of the rational soul governing both the nutritive and spiritual faculties.

Another core concept in the development of the soul from Miskawayh's perspective is happiness or *al-sa'ada*. Miskawayh defined *al-sa'ada* as a notion that embraces happiness, success, perfection, and prosperity Ansari (1963). In a broader sense, *al-sa'ada* refers to the realisation of a desirable end, which is naturally accompanied by pleasure or happiness. The end encompasses every aspect of life, which includes the end to all the activities of the soul (Ansari, 1963). In contemporary psychology, Maslow's theory of Self-Actualisation is deemed parallel to Miskawayh's view on happiness. According to Maslow, self-actualisation forms the pinnacle of one's hierarchy of needs (Guynn, 2021). To attain self-actualisation, an individual must fulfil the lower needs such as food, shelter and affection. The individual may begin his process of self-actualisation by constructing an honest understanding of themselves and the world and releasing himself of the lower needs and societal pressures.

Miskawayh's view on happiness as the apex of man's development of the soul is seen comparable to the concept of self-actualisation. For Miskawayh, supreme happiness is accomplished when the soul achieves intellectual perfection and is virtuous. It is therefore natural for a perfected soul to attain ultimate happiness as it has gained moral clarity and is free from inner turmoil, which makes it harmonious and balanced. Like Maslow who believes that an individual must fulfil his lower needs to attain self-actualisation (Neto, 2015), Miskawayh argues that supreme happiness can only be accomplished through a process of education and the strive for virtues. The highest state of the soul is manifested in a coherent, wise and purposeful state, and this concept is analogous in both Miskawayh's and Maslow's thoughts.

In the process of achieving supreme happiness, Miskawayh emphasised on the perfection of soul through the cultivation of virtues. It is important that man can control their emotions and establishing traits to hinder the soul from vices (Haque, 2004). By regulating impulses and restraining reactive emotions, the soul is learning to regulate the nutritive and spirited faculties. This allows the rational faculty to govern the soul by exercising ethical reasoning and evaluating behavioural consequences. With regards to emotional regulation, in modern psychology, research suggests that poor emotional control is correlated to higher physical, emotional, and social distress, while positive emotions can break an individual's stress cycle and increases longevity (Compare, Zarbo, Shonin, Van Gordon, & Marconi, 2014). Fredrickson (2001) added that positive emotions are found to effectively help individuals in adapting to life challenges. Parallels between Miskawayh's conception of the soul and contemporary psychology are therefore evident, where Miskawayh's argument on the cultivation of virtues through the training of emotional systems may be likened to today's concept of emotional regulation. The development of the soul, guided by reason, is believed to lead to harmony and emotional stability, which is coherent to the notion of cognitive regulation in achieving good psychological wellbeing.

Literature has also shown that discussions related to today's concept of psychotherapy were found in Miskawayh's works including the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (Jamal al-Din, 2001). According to Haque (2004), Miskawayh explored the concepts known at present as "self-reinforcement" and response cost. He suggested that feeling guilty for submitting to one's vice

(*nafs al-ammarah*) can be compensated through any psychological, physical, or spiritual means such as donating to the poor or fasting (Haque, 2004). This concept is analogous to the behavioural modification technique in behavioural intervention, known as token economy or (TE). Widely used in improving behavioural dysfunction in children, the TE uses tokens for desired behaviour (i.e., positive contingency reinforcement) and withdraws tokens (response cost) as a reaction to inappropriate behaviours. Although it appears punitive, the underlying notion to both concepts is for an individual to understand the consequences of his behaviour. The ability to evaluate one's actions is paramount in character development and the cultivation of virtues.

CONCLUSION

Known to produce multiple works in many areas including ethics and morality, Miskawayh was described as both religious and studious. His contribution of the *magnum opus* like the *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* has become central in the studies of ethics until the present. Miskawayh's elaborate discussion on the development of soul and the new perspectives of the Aristotelian and Platonic concepts mark a shift in classical Islamic thought. Miskawayh's goal in the conception of the soul has also shed light to the essence of happiness, which has been profoundly discussed in his works. His philosophical views have been absolute, and they reflect his spiritual sense as a Muslim. Most importantly, the parallels between Miskawayh's thoughts on the soul and contemporary psychology signifies an early contribution to Islamic moral philosophy.

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