

THE PRINCIPLE OF MODERATION IN IBN MISKAWAIH'S ETHICAL THOUGHT: JUSTICE AS THE VIRTUE OF THE SOUL

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the principle of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in Ibn Miskawaih's ethical philosophy, with particular attention to his concept of justice as a central virtue of the soul. Drawing primarily on *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-A'rāq*, this study employs a qualitative library-based research method, utilizing conceptual and textual analysis of Ibn Miskawaih's works alongside relevant secondary literature on Islamic ethics and virtue theory. The study seeks to address two main objectives: first, to examine Ibn Miskawaih's understanding of justice within the framework of moral cultivation; and second, to explore the relationship between justice, love, and friendship in his ethical system. The findings demonstrate that Ibn Miskawaih conceives justice as the balanced mean between *zulm* (committing injustice by unlawfully taking others' rights) and *inḡilām* (submitting to injustice by relinquishing one's rights improperly). Justice, therefore, functions as an integrative virtue that harmonizes the faculties of the soul and sustains moral equilibrium. The study further reveals that Ibn Miskawaih's ethical framework situates justice alongside simplicity, courage, and wisdom as foundational virtues essential for achieving moral perfection. This analysis highlights the enduring relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's moderation-based ethics for contemporary discussions on moral balance, justice, and character formation in Islamic ethical thought.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis prinsip moderasi (*wasatiyyah*) dalam pemikiran etika Ibn Miskawaih, dengan fokus pada konsep keadilan sebagai kebajikan utama jiwa. Kajian ini merujuk terutama pada karya *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taṭhīr al-A'rāq* dan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan melalui analisis konseptual dan tekstual. Penelitian ini memiliki dua tujuan utama, yaitu: pertama, mengkaji pandangan Ibn Miskawaih tentang keadilan dalam kerangka pembentukan akhlak; dan kedua, menganalisis relasi antara keadilan, cinta, dan persahabatan dalam sistem etika yang ia bangun. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ibn Miskawaih memaknai keadilan sebagai titik tengah antara *zulm* (melakukan ketidakadilan dengan merampas hak orang lain secara tidak sah) dan *inḡilām* (menerima ketidakadilan dengan menyerahkan hak secara tidak semestinya). Dengan demikian, keadilan berfungsi sebagai kebajikan integratif yang menyeimbangkan seluruh potensi jiwa dan menjaga harmoni moral. Lebih lanjut, kajian ini menegaskan bahwa etika Ibn Miskawaih menempatkan keadilan bersama kesederhanaan, keberanian, dan kebijaksanaan sebagai kebajikan fundamental dalam upaya mencapai kesempurnaan akhlak. Temuan ini menunjukkan relevansi berkelanjutan etika moderasi Ibn Miskawaih bagi diskursus kontemporer tentang keadilan, keseimbangan moral, dan pembentukan karakter dalam pemikiran etika Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Moderate is an adjective derived from the term moderation, which means neither excessive nor extreme. This word was eventually adopted into Indonesian as *moderasi*, which is described in the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI) as minimizing violence or avoiding extreme attitudes. The Latin term *moderatio*, which means moderation (neither excessive nor deficient), according to the KBBI, originates from the word moderation. Thus, the term "religious moderation" refers to a mindset that minimizes violence or avoids extreme actions in religious activities when used in conjunction with the word moderation (Humaidi, 2022).

Radical zeal for religious truth often sparks hostility and strife among congregations rather than promoting peaceful and tranquil lives. Extreme zeal for religious truth often causes hostility and strife among communities, rather than peaceful and comfortable lives (Masa & Covid, 2022). According to Islam, a person must live naturally according to their role. This applies to almost all activities of a Muslim, not just certain activities. When society was not yet familiar with today's technology, they tried to carry out their daily activities with whatever resources they had available. They relied on their own potential and cooperated with others, but today such characteristics have disappeared from the earth and most people have become highly sensitive, egotistical, and uncaring. This has led to crime, violence, and brutality becoming a daily occurrence. If concern for others continues to decline, it is no surprise that the saying "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" holds true (Urzilla, 2025).

The Arabic term for moderation or middle ground is *wasathiyah*. People do not take sides when they are in the middle, which suggests that this can lead to fair behavior. When someone is in the middle, they may be viewed differently by others and can then become an example for everyone (Ikromi, Ahmad, & Faqir, 2025).

The principles of Islamic law, Greek philosophy, Persian civilization, and direct experience all underpin Ibn Miskawaih's ethical perspective. In Ibn Miskawaih's ethical theory, the influence of Plato, Aristotle, and Galen is evident. Miskawaih's goal was to integrate philosophical ethical theory with Islamic legal teachings. One of the fundamental ideas in education is found in Ibn Miskawaih's view of moral education. Ibn Miskawaih's moral philosophy is directly related to the question of the spirit; he compares the nature of the spirit to virtue, which has three different qualities: courage, desire, and rationality. In addition, the soul has three interrelated virtues: simplicity, courage, and knowledge (Herningrum & Alfian, 2019).

The words for character, morals, and habits in Arabic are *khuluqun*, and the plural form of this word, *akhlak*, is where the word *akhlak* gets its etymology. Terminologically, character (*khuluk*) is defined by Ibn Miskawaih as the state of a person's soul that motivates them to act without thinking too much first. There are two types of situations like this. The first is normal and stems from personality, such as someone who gets angry easily over small things or is afraid of dealing with small matters. The second develops from repetition and habit. This state initially arises because it is thought about and considered, but by being practiced continuously, this state continues to acquire its own personality (Miswar, 2020).

Ibn Miskawaih highlights the possibility of changing character, particularly through education, in contrast to some Greek philosophical views that argue that character is innate and cannot be changed. People may strive to change their negative mental traits into positive ones; humans can develop various good traits either quickly or gradually. This can be seen in the way children transition from one state to another during their

formative years based on their environment and the type of education they receive. Miskawaih assesses the possibility of people undergoing spiritual transformation (Fauzil et al., 1907). From this perspective, Sharia law, advice, and various forms of teaching about proper behavior are very important. All of these give mentally capable beings the ability to decide what should be done and what should not be done. Miskawaih then considers the importance of environmental education for human growth in relation to moral development. Ibn Miskawaih argued that the soul (ruh) is a living, eternal gem (element) that does not accept death and destruction because the topic of morality is connected to the soul. The soul differs from matter because it has intrinsic reasoning knowledge and the ability to understand events that are mental, spiritual, or material in nature.

Khuluq, which means character, behavior, disposition, or morals, is the plural form of *akhlak*. Ragib al-Isfahani defines *khuluq*, which is the singular form of the word *akhlak*, as having a dual meaning. On the one hand, ghartziya power is a manifestation of the state of the soul known as *khuluq* (character); conversely, this state of the soul is the result of human effort and is manifested in spontaneous actions. From the perspective of Islamic ethics, *akhlak* or character is nothing more than the true moral behavior that a person possesses as a result of continuous efforts to cultivate the moral character bestowed upon them by Allah SWT, thereby producing actions that are moral in nature. present in a moral way (Sharī'ah et al., 2023).

Abu Ali Al Khazin Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub Miskawaih is the full name of Ibn Miskawaih. Miskawaih, also known as Ibn Miskawaih, is better known. The name comes from his grandfather, who converted to Islam after being a Majusi (Persian) for some time. After his death, the Muslim community chose him as their leader, and he used the name Abu Ali. Al Khazin, which means "treasurer," comes from this title because Adhud Al Daulah from the Bani Buwaih was convinced of his role as treasurer at that time. Ibn Miskawaih died in Asfagan on 9 Safar 421 AH (February 16, 1030 AD), born in the city of Ray, Iran, in 320 AH. The majority of his supporters who supported the Saman family came from the Dailan mountains of Persia, located in the hills of the southern coast of the Waswain Sea. Abu's father was a warlike tribal leader. In the world of education, Ibn Miskawaih followed the same routine as the younger generation of his time, starting with learning to read, then studying Arabic grammar, Nahwu, and *Arrudh* (the science of reading and producing poetry). These basic subjects were taught at the mosque. After learning the basics, children were taught fiqh, hadith, arithmetic, history (Persian, Arabic, and Indian), and practical sciences such as music, chess, and foreign policy (military affairs).

Previous research on the principle of moderation in Ibn Miskawaih's ethics includes several scientific works discussing moderation and ethics written by Rusada Nilyani. "Ethics According to Ibn Miskawaih" discusses Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts on ethics as a state of mind that drives a person to perform actions without prior consideration.

Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts on ethics are generally identified with morals. However, although both relate to the good and bad of human actions, ethics and morals have different meanings. Morals are more directed at the meaning of "the good and bad values of every human action." Thus, it can be said that ethics is part of the theory of good and bad, while morals are part of its practice.

This type of research is library research, which involves collecting data or scientific papers by conducting a study of books, literature, and notes related to the object of study. This research approach uses a qualitative descriptive approach (Moleong, n.d.). This study uses qualitative review. Qualitative review is research based on qualitative data. Such data

consists only of sentences or questions, rather than numbers or calculations. Primary data is data obtained directly from the research subjects. The purpose of collecting this data is to answer the questions in the research. This primary data source will be the main reference for the research, namely the principle of moderation in the morals of Ibn Miskawaih. The book that is the primary source in this research is entitled "Tahzibul *Akhlak* Ibn Miskawaih." Secondary data is complementary or supporting data. This data is used to support the analysis that will be carried out so that it becomes more detailed and accurate.

JUSTICE IN THE ETHICS OF IBN MISKAWAIH

Justice is one of the fundamental concepts in Islamic ethics that plays a central role in shaping human character. In the classical Islamic moral philosophy tradition, Ibn Miskawaih places justice at the pinnacle of moral perfection, born of balance and harmony between the elements of the human soul. The concept of justice is not only understood as a social relationship between humans, but also as an internal condition of the soul, where rational, emotional, and sensual potentials are in proportion. Therefore, the discussion of justice in Ibn Miskawaih's morals is important to understand how personal and social ethics are built through moral balance rooted in reason and Islamic values.

Classification of Justice

Justice is understood as one of the fundamental qualities of the soul that gives rise to a moral impulse for individuals to always act fairly, both towards themselves and towards others. This virtue shapes ethical awareness that guides humans to demand and provide justice proportionally. In Ibn Miskawaih's view, justice is a middle ground (wasath) between two extremes, namely committing injustice and experiencing injustice. A person is said to be unjust if they obtain wealth or profits through unlawful and immoral means. Conversely, individuals who respond to unfair treatment with wrongful actions are also in an ethically disadvantaged position.

Individuals who possess a fair character will treat themselves and others equally, without a tendency to prioritize their personal interests over the rights of others. Justice, according to Ibn Miskawaih, is manifested in three main areas: first, in the distribution of wealth and honor; second, in socio-economic transactions such as buying, selling, and bartering; and third, in various forms of interaction that have the potential to cause rights violations and injustice.

Justice can be classified into three main dimensions. First, justice in the relationship between humans and God and nature, which requires humans to act to the best of their ability and carry out the obligations set by the Creator. Justice in this dimension is realized when humans fulfill God's rights proportionally as a form of recognition for the various blessings He has bestowed. In this sense, justice is defined as placing rights with those who are entitled to them in a correct and responsible manner. Second, justice in human relations, which is reflected in the obligation to respect and protect the rights of others, respect legitimate authority, obey applicable rules, and conduct social and economic activities, including business transactions, honestly and fairly. Third, justice in the socio-historical dimension, namely society's responsibility to previous generations, which is manifested through the fulfillment of obligations such as debt repayment and the execution of wills that have been left behind.

Someone who does not repay kindness with obedience and sincere love can be seen as having committed injustice and oppression. This kind of injustice becomes even more reprehensible when it relates to great and abundant blessings. This is because repayment

for a blessing should be proportional, commensurate with the position, level of benefit, and quantity of blessings received. The greater and higher the value of the blessing, the stronger the moral demand to fulfill one's obligations as a form of repayment. Therefore, neglecting the obligation to repay blessings through obedience, gratitude, sincere love, or sincere efforts demonstrates an ethical failure in understanding and implementing the principle of justice.

Repaying kindness is a commendable act and an undeniable moral obligation, including the obligation to leaders who have provided kindness and protection. However, this obligation becomes even more important and fundamental when directed towards the Almighty King, from whom humans constantly receive countless blessings, both every day and every moment. Therefore, repaying these blessings through the fulfillment of established obligations is an ethical requirement that cannot be ignored. The fundamental question is whether humans deserve to neglect the earliest and most fundamental blessing, namely their very existence in this world.

Humans cannot ignore the various gifts bestowed upon the soul and body, such as unlimited potential interests and talents, as well as the light of reason that enables the attainment of true happiness and eternal life. These fundamental blessings are essentially impossible to forget, because through continuous reflection on their condition, humans will realize their existence and value. Meanwhile, the Creator never needs human help or effort. Therefore, neglecting one's obligations to Him or not repaying these gifts with righteous deeds is a despicable form of injustice. This kind of attitude shows humanity's failure to free itself from injustice and to fulfill the principle of justice as required ethically.

Parts of Justice

In Ibn Miskawaih's ethical perspective, justice is not only understood as an abstract normative concept, but also as a virtue of the soul that is concretely manifested in human attitudes, behaviors, and social relations. Justice becomes a regulating principle that balances human relationships with God, with others, and with oneself. Therefore, justice has various practical manifestations that can be recognized through everyday actions, whether in the form of social interaction, self-control, or moral responsibility. The following sections on justice describe how this virtue operates in real life in individuals and society according to Ibn Miskawaih's view (Ibnu Miskawaih, 1966).

According to Ibn Miskawaih, justice is not merely an abstract principle but a concrete moral disposition that manifests in daily attitudes, social interactions, and inner character. Justice is realized when a person is able to position themselves appropriately in relation to others, society, and God, reflecting the harmony of the soul. One of the clearest expressions of justice is friendliness, which arises when individuals relate to others on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and sincere goodwill rather than domination or self-interest. This attitude is closely connected to a strong social spirit, because justice presupposes the awareness that human beings are inherently social and cannot live in isolation. Active participation in communal life, cooperation, and concern for the common good are therefore essential dimensions of a just character.

Justice also appears in the commitment to maintaining relationships, both within the family and in wider social circles. Preserving these ties ensures that emotional, moral, and social rights are not neglected or broken. In this relational framework, justice requires giving appropriate recognition and reward to others according to their efforts, services, and sacrifices. Fair compensation is not only an economic matter but a moral obligation that affirms human dignity. Similarly, justice in cooperation is reflected in kindness and integrity at work, where mutual trust, honesty, and the fulfillment of agreed responsibilities form the ethical foundation of collective endeavors.

Another important dimension of justice in Ibn Miskawaih's thought is careful and rational decision-making. A just person exercises caution and deliberation, relying on reason and objective considerations rather than being driven by emotion, impulse, or personal interest. This rational balance is inseparable from love and devotion in worship, as justice ultimately involves harmonizing one's relationship with God and with fellow human beings. Love for others and sincerity in worship indicate the integration of spiritual and social responsibilities, which lies at the heart of moral justice. In this inner dimension, justice also requires freedom from envy, since envy disturbs the balance of the soul and gives rise to destructive intentions toward others.

The highest form of justice, according to Ibn Miskawaih, is demonstrated when a person responds to wrongdoing with goodness. Repaying kindness with kindness, even when faced with harm or injustice, reflects moral excellence that transcends emotional reactions and is rooted in the virtue of the soul. This inner nobility is further expressed through gentleness in outward behavior. A soft and respectful manner in speech and action prevents harm and preserves the dignity of others. True authority, in this sense, does not stem from coercion or power, but from moral consistency, integrity, and fairness that inspire respect and trust.

Justice also seeks to maintain social harmony by avoiding hostility and unnecessary conflict. A just person refrains from engaging in behavior or speech that fuels enmity, because the ultimate aim of justice is order, peace, and mutual understanding. This principle extends to verbal conduct, where justice requires restraint from speaking about inappropriate matters, spreading harmful talk, or violating the honor and privacy of others. Following the truth becomes the foundation of intellectual justice, as truth serves as the primary for thought, speech, and action. In this context, refraining from idle or harmful talk about fellow believers reflects ethical communication and social responsibility.

Moreover, justice is closely tied to the ethical use of language. Avoiding harsh or offensive words, and refraining from speech that humiliates or degrades others, demonstrates moral maturity and sensitivity to the social impact of one's words. Inner justice also demands the ability to ignore speech that arises from malicious or stingy intentions, so that the soul remains pure and unaffected by negative influences. Alongside this, justice requires empathy and a sincere effort to understand the conditions and problems of those in need before offering help, ensuring that assistance is appropriate and genuinely beneficial.

Finally, intellectual justice is reflected in the willingness to seek clarity and understanding. Repeating questions when matters are unclear is not a sign of weakness, but of fairness in reasoning, because sound judgments can only be made on the basis of accurate and sufficient knowledge. In Ibn Miskawaih's ethical vision, justice thus encompasses inner balance, social harmony, moral integrity, and intellectual honesty, forming a comprehensive framework for virtuous individual and communal life (S Jamal, 2017).

All virtues reflect balance, and justice is the name that encompasses all virtues. Religious law determines voluntary actions that are the result of divine thinking and rules, so people who adhere to religious law in their actions are certainly just, and those who violate it are certainly unjust. That is why we say that justice is the name given to those who adhere to religious law. But justice is also the attitude of the soul that gives birth to this virtue. If you reflect on this attitude, those who possess it will surely submit to religious law with open arms and will not oppose it in any way. This is because they follow proportional relationships. Since these relationships are a form of quality, and they

choose them based on careful consideration and their own desires, it is certain that they will act in accordance with religious law and will not violate it.

ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF JUSTICE IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF IBN MISKAWAIH

According to Ibn Miskawaih, justice is the pinnacle of moral perfection that arises from the balance of the human soul. In the context of leadership, justice cannot be reduced to merely a legal – formal attitude or compliance with the law alone, but rather as an ethical quality formed from the harmonization of reason, emotion, and desire. A just leader is one who is able to balance every potential within their soul proportionally, while also placing each member of society according to their rights and position. Thus, justice functions as a regulatory principle that maintains the inner order of the leader and social order in communal life (Ridwan & Aisyah, 2022).

Awareness of the nature of power is the main foundation for realizing leadership justice. Ibn Miskawaih emphasized that power is not the ultimate goal, but rather a mandate that is fraught with moral responsibility. Leaders who understand this will view power as a means to achieve the common good, not as a tool for satisfying personal ambitions. From this awareness comes a cautious attitude in action, because every decision is understood to have ethical consequences that directly impact the lives of the people.

The primacy of reason and wisdom are also important characteristics of a just leader. In Ibn Miskawaih's ethical perspective, reason functions as the main controller that guides emotions and desires to remain within balanced limits. Therefore, a just leader always bases his policies and actions on rational considerations and wisdom, not on the impulses of desire, short – term interests, or pressure from certain groups. This attitude requires openness to advice and knowledge, because justice cannot be achieved if leaders close themselves off from the views of knowledgeable and wise people who can help maintain balance in decision – making.

Furthermore, fair leadership requires a strong moral commitment to eradicating all forms of injustice. Fair leaders do not remain neutral towards injustice, oppression, or abuse of power, but rather have an ethical drive to reject and eliminate them. This commitment must be accompanied by humility and self – control, because arrogance is seen as a sign of the domination of desire over reason. With humility, leaders are able to maintain clarity of conscience and avoid authoritarian attitudes that undermine justice.

Awareness of the essential equality of human beings is also an important dimension in Ibn Miskawaih's ethics of leadership. A leader must realize that, in essence, he or she is equal to the people being led, and that differences lie only in functions and responsibilities, not in human worth. This awareness gives rise to genuine concern for the welfare of the people, which is reflected in empathy, attentiveness, and a real commitment to meeting their needs and alleviating their suffering. In this context, justice is manifested not only in structural policies, but also in the leader's personal attitude toward the people.

Finally, justice in leadership according to Ibn Miskawaih is also reflected in simplicity of life, an attitude of qana'ah (contentment), and gentleness in action. A simple lifestyle signifies the balance of the soul and distances a leader from exploitative tendencies that give rise to social inequality. Meanwhile, gentleness, courtesy, and ethical conduct in interaction demonstrate that inner justice has been concretely realized in behavior. All of this ultimately culminates in obedience to moral values and the Sharia, for true justice can only be achieved when a leader takes divine law and ethical principles as the primary foundation for every policy and decision made.

In Ibn Miskawaih's view, a leader's justice also encompasses various dimensions, such as commutative justice, distributive justice, social justice, and state justice, all of which aim to realize the common good and preserve social harmony. Thus, just leadership can only be achieved through wisdom and moral virtue, rather than merely through lineage, wealth, or formal authority.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP IN THE VIEW OF IBN MISKAWAIH

Love and friendship are important aspects of human social life that are not only related to emotional relationships, but also possess profound moral and ethical dimensions. In the tradition of Islamic moral philosophy, interpersonal relationships are viewed as a means for shaping and perfecting moral character. Ibn Miskawaih, as one of the classical Islamic ethical thinkers, places love and friendship as fundamental elements in the cultivation of moral virtues and social harmony. Through the concepts of love and friendship, Ibn Miskawaih demonstrates that moral perfection cannot be achieved individually alone, but must be realized through reciprocal relationships grounded in virtue, goodness, and shared moral aims (Afidah, 2029).

Love

According to Ibn Miskawaih, love is understood as an innate human capacity that leads to association and connection with humanity in general. However, in practice, friendship is often limited to certain individuals and is formed on the basis of considerations such as benefit, goodness, and even pleasure. Love that arises from pleasure is a passionate form of love that can intensify and eventually transform into a more perfect and pure affection. Love, therefore, has various types and causes. One type of love is formed quickly but also disappears quickly; another is formed quickly but fades slowly; a third is formed slowly but disappears quickly; and a fourth is formed slowly and fades slowly. This classification of love arises because the objects that become the aims of human will and action are threefold, namely pleasure, goodness, usefulness, and the combination of these three.

Since these are the aims that human beings seek to attain, they also become the causes of love toward those who help in achieving them and who serve as the means to their attainment. Love that arises from pleasure is a love that is formed quickly but also fades quickly, because pleasure, as has been explained, changes rapidly. Love that arises from goodness is a love that is formed quickly but fades slowly. Meanwhile, love that arises from benefit or utility is a love that is formed slowly but fades quickly. Love that is driven by pleasure or benefit may occur among both virtuous and wicked people. This type of love fades once the pleasure or benefit that causes it disappears, because such love is accidental in nature. It usually arises when people meet in unfamiliar or temporary settings such as on a ship or in similar circumstances and vanishes as soon as they leave that place. The root of this kind of love lies in friendship, since human beings are naturally inclined toward companionship and are not inherently cruel or inclined to hate one another. From this inclination comes the Arabic term *insān* (human), derived from *uns* (intimacy or sociability). It is therefore not as some poets have claimed, saying, "You are called *insān* because you are *nasiy* (forgetful)." Such an assumption that the word *insān* is derived from *nisyān* (forgetfulness) is indeed a mistake.

The cause of one of these two forms of love may change, while the other remains constant. An example of this can be seen in the relationship between husband and wife. Between them there exist both goodness and benefit, and therefore they work together to

realize them—namely, the positive elements that bring about the well-being of family life. The wife expects goodness from her husband, since it is the husband who seeks and acquires it. Conversely, the husband expects his wife to manage that goodness so that it bears fruit and is not wasted. When a lover complains about the one he loves and accuses that person of being unjust, while in fact he himself is the one who is oppressive and deserving of blame, it is usually because he wishes to obtain his own pleasure quickly without paying attention to the recompense that is rightfully due to his partner. Love that is full of reproach takes many forms; however, what is certain is that its foundation does not consider the other person at all.

Love between rulers and their subordinates, or between the rich and the poor, can also be infiltrated by anger and reproach, because the causes that give rise to such bonds of love differ, or because each party expects a return that is never fulfilled by the other. As a result, their relationship becomes disturbed, with each side accusing and reproaching the other. In fact, such situations could be avoided if both parties acted justly, if each were satisfied with what they rightfully received from the other, within the limits of their due rights, and if each were willing to uphold justice. They will never be satisfied even when they are given more than what is rightfully theirs. A master, for example, may feel that his servant is slow in carrying out tasks, inattentive, and lacking in goodwill. Such perceptions give rise to reproachful attitudes and a corrupted state of mind. Human beings find it very difficult to free themselves from this blame-filled form of love, unless they act justly and take the middle path namely, striving for and being content with what is truly their due (Miskawaih, n.d.).

Friendship

Love has its companions, which is something more common. Essentially, this refers to affection, which occurs less frequently than love among many individuals. Because romantic love is limited to only two people, it has a certain superiority over general affection and is more commonly found. Even in such cases, the motivation is not merely profit, nor simply benefit combined with additional factors. Rather, it may arise when a person is struck by excessive generosity, or when one falls in love with excessive pleasure. The first type is very dangerous, whereas the second is worthy of praise (Miskawaih, n.d.).

It is commonly observed that friendships among adolescents, or among others who display similar behavior, are motivated by pleasure. They become friends quickly, but they also separate just as quickly. Some people even have friendships of a very short duration, and this pattern may continue throughout their lives. Even so, there are also friendships that last longer. However, such relationships do not endure unless there remains a belief that the pleasure which serves as their aim still exists. Once this belief fades, the friendship itself comes to an end.

When it comes to older people or those who share similar traits, the situation is different. Their friendship is based on mutual benefit, and they associate with one another precisely because of this factor. Such friendships endure as long as these benefits are felt, most of which are long-term in nature. However, the love between them will also come to an end once the bond of shared interest is severed and their expectations fade. This is unlike the friendship of virtuous people, which is founded upon noble aims. Those who are united by this kind of friendship will love one another constantly and enduringly, because genuine affection is always present.

Relationships that arise from shared attraction or physical appeal rarely last long. A person's friendship develops in accordance with changes in interest. If a friendship is built solely on physical attraction, that attraction diminishes once a person's appearance

changes. Over time, bonds of friendship that were once strong gradually loosen, and this can happen at any moment, ultimately leading to the dissolution of what was once a close friendship. Relationships grounded in pleasure emerge from friendships whose nature is essentially temporary, unstable, and subject to change, lacking a rational foundation. Even if people initially enter such relationships in the hope of gaining benefit, only friendships that recognize a shared, unblemished soul and the true value of companionship are capable of producing profound intellectual joy.

Ibn Miskawaih emphasizes that the fundamental principle of social interaction is friendship. Due to human imperfection and deficiency, it is impossible for individuals to fulfill their basic needs without cooperating as a community to establish peace and order. Every person is endowed with an innate desire to engage in social action. Therefore, tolerance is easily cultivated when people are bound by friendship, and friendship together with a reasonable degree of tolerance can function as a moral regulator in the application of social norms.

Aristotle classifies friendship into three types: first, friendship based on mutual benefit; second, friendship based on pleasure; and third, friendship grounded in affection or mutual love. A person's relationship with a true friend represents the pinnacle of happiness. It is difficult for someone whose perfection is realized through others to achieve complete happiness in isolation. This leads to the conclusion that truly happy individuals are those who are able to form friendships and strive to spread goodness among their friends, thereby attaining collectively what they cannot achieve individually. In this way, they find joy together, and others find joy in them. Because of their noble character, the first type of friend whose qualities have been described is necessarily rare. Moreover, such a friend is deeply cherished, for only one person can truly experience and attain great love in this sense. Good and virtuous individuals treat their acquaintances as friends, even though forming a truly genuine relationship with them is not easy. A pleasant demeanor, cordial association, and the cultivation of true friendship are all pursued for the sake of attaining virtue.

Friendship is necessary for everyone, in times of both prosperity and hardship. One needs the support of friends during moments of sorrow, just as one needs a friend with whom to share goodness and joy when experiencing happiness. Just as the poor require friends who can help and benefit them, so too does a great ruler need the assistance of others. Friendship, therefore, should be sought for the sake of virtue alone.

Nothing on earth can replace the role of a trusted friend in helping a person attain happiness in this world and the hereafter. How fortunate is the person who receives such a great blessing when he holds no authority, and how much more fortunate is one who possesses it while holding authority. For when a ruler attends to the affairs of the people and strives to understand their conditions, he will realize that two ears, two eyes, and a single heart are not sufficient. If he has a trustworthy friend, that friend becomes for him eyes, ears, and heart, as though they were his own. Through such companionship, what is distant becomes near, enabling him to perceive what is far away and to see what is absent. Once again, from where does such nobility arise if not from the role and presence of a true friend (Syafa'atul Jamal, 2017).

Choosing Friends

Human beings often like to pretend in order to display what is false. There are people who are willing to donate their wealth even though they are actually stingy, merely so that they may be regarded as generous. In other situations, someone may step onto the

battlefield and strike down an enemy whom he previously greatly feared, simply to be considered brave. This behavior is fundamentally different from the nature of animals.

Therefore, we must first examine how a prospective friend behaves toward his parents, siblings, and family during his youth, in order to protect ourselves from such risks. It can be said that a person will be virtuous if his conduct is good; if not, one should avoid him and refrain from associating with him. Observe closely the various aspects of his character as he spends time with his companions, and then compare these traits with the behavior of those who live in harmony with their parents and siblings (Miskawaih, n.d.).

Next, continue to examine his conduct closely. Determine whether he is the kind of person who appreciates blessings that ought to be met with gratitude, or one who fails to value them. Gratitude here does not mean that he must give something beyond his ability, but rather whether there is any intention of thankfulness within him at all—namely, whether he is unwilling to give what he is capable of giving, whether he takes the favors granted to him as if they were his own right, or whether he is unwilling even to express thanks verbally (Maghfiroh, 2016).

Indeed, expressing gratitude for blessings received, offering praise, and reciprocating the kindness of the giver are not burdensome for anyone. On the contrary, ingratitude brings nothing but the threat of punishment and suffering, as promised by God to those who deny His blessings, even though such ingratitude in no way harms God. There is no attitude more capable of attracting and strengthening blessings than gratitude, as reflected in God's promise to those who are thankful, despite His absolute lack of need for gratitude from His servants. From these attitudes, one can assess a person's worthiness to be chosen as a friend when selecting companions. Therefore, one should avoid ingratitude, not belittle what is given, and appreciate every form of kindness and generosity shown by others.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Miskawaih's ethical thought affirms that moral character (*akhlāq*) is the primary foundation of human perfection, with justice standing as the highest virtue that integrates all the potentials of the soul. Justice is not understood merely as a normative rule or a legal relationship between individuals, but as an inner condition that arises from the balance between reason, desire, and emotion. Within this framework, justice is positioned as the middle path (*wasatiyyah*) between two extremes committing injustice and suffering injustice thus becoming the core of the principle of moderation in human moral character.

In practice, justice according to Ibn Miskawaih has a broad scope and touches various dimensions of life. Justice is realized in the human relationship with God through the fulfillment of obligations and gratitude for His blessings; in social relations through respect for the rights, dignity, and equality of fellow human beings; and in social – historical responsibility through the preservation of trust and the fulfillment of collective duties. Thus, justice functions as a regulating principle that maintains harmony in personal and social life, while at the same time serving as an ethical foundation for the creation of a balanced and civilized social order.

Furthermore, the principle of moderation in Ibn Miskawaih's ethics is also reflected in his concepts of love, friendship, and leadership oriented toward moral virtue. Social relationships grounded in justice, goodness, and shared ethical aims make it possible to cultivate enduring and constructive friendships. In the context of leadership, justice requires an awareness of the trust inherent in power, rational wisdom, self – control, and genuine concern for the welfare of society. Therefore, Ibn Miskawaih's thought remains

relevant as a reference for an ethics of moderation in addressing moral and social challenges amid the dynamics of contemporary life.

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