

Islamic Ethics as Educational Discourse

Edited by
Sebastian Günther and
Yassir El Jamouhi



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Islamic Ethics as Educational Discourse

Thought and Impact
of the Classical Muslim Thinker Miskawayh
(d. 1030)

Edited by

Sebastian Günther and Yassir El Jamouhi

Mohr Siebeck

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Cover Image: Aristotle teaching. Illustration from *Kitāb Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsīn al-kalim* (*The Book of Choice Wise Sayings and Fine Statements*), a work of biographical sketches of ancient, almost exclusively Greek, sages; composed in 1048/1049 by Abū l-Wafā' al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, an 11th century Egyptian historian and savant. Ms. Ahmed III 3206, pen & ink and gouache on paper, Turkish School (13th century); Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, Turkey. Reproduced with kind permission of Bridgeman Images, Berlin.

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Dedicated to Our Academic Teachers

وذلك لأجل الخير العظيم الذي يشرف عليه ويصل إليه، وللرجاء الكريم الذي لا يتحقق إلا بعنايته ولا يتم إلا بمطالعتة، ولأنه والد روحاني.

This is because of the great good which the student envisions and attains, the sublime hope which cannot be realized except by the teacher's care nor be fulfilled except by the teacher's attention, and the fact that she or he is a spiritual parent.¹

¹ Miskawayh, *al-Tahdhīb*: 149; Miskawayh, *The Refinement*: 134 (slightly modified).

Preface

The increasing global interdependence that contemporary societies are currently experiencing in key areas of economy, politics, culture, and science, next to issues affecting social cohesion, sustainability and many other areas of communal and individual life, have given rise to significant challenges in the fields of ethics and education. Key crucial concepts of ethics, deeply rooted in human history, such as the ‘highest good’ and ‘correct action and behavior’, or the ‘freedom of will’ and ‘individual integrity’, for example, are today specific, urgent questions of interest in our increasingly multicultural, democratic societies.

Such urgency is closely linked to the need for a system of standards that structures and sensibly directs people’s actions and behaviors for a prosperous, that is to say, peaceful, coexistence. Indeed, the intense debates sparked in Europe and North America about the norms and values of different cultures and religions seem to require more than ever a historical and, if you will, anthropological, perspective. Therefore, historical-critical research on culturally specific values and traditions appears a both reasonable and promising way of developing more useful, trenchant and pertinent questions and responses with regard to the crippling conflict that exists today in the realm of ethics, education, and religion on the global scale.

Current societal developments of this kind, coupled with our academic interest in the history of Islam’s deep and sophisticated intellectual culture, formed both the starting point of and important stimuli for the international symposium *Islamic Ethics as Educational Discourse: Thought and Impact of the Classical Muslim Thinker Miskawayh*, which took place at the University of Göttingen in May 2018. The subject of this conference, which is also the thematic focus of this volume, was the life and scholarly oeuvre of a thinker of special importance in the intellectual history of Islam: the moral philosopher, historian, and writer Miskawayh (ca. 932–1030 CE).

The papers presented at that symposium, included in this volume in significantly expanded form, aim to foster a more informed and comprehensive understanding of the educational and ethical preoccupations – as well as the academic environment and scholarly network – of this renowned classical Muslim scholar. In addition, this volume offers insights into the fruitful, though at times conflicting branches of knowledge and human interaction in Islam: ethics, education, and religion.

The challenge of delineating and studying the multifaceted spectrum of Miskawayh's reception, adaptation, and recontextualization of Greek and ancient Iranian concepts, especially regarding educational philosophical and ethical views, along with the reception and continuing vitality of his thought among later medieval Muslim and contemporary progressive scholars, form the driving question of our research. To this end, this book offers a well-balanced application of historical-philological as well as religious-philosophical and cultural sociological perspectives, in combination with innovative methodical approaches and research tools.

The special value of the various studies published here, however, is manifested in the academic expertise of their authors, who are internationally esteemed senior specialists in the fields of Arabic and Islamic studies alongside remarkably talented junior scholars.

As the volume's editors, we wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to all contributors for their cooperation and patience during the editorial process. In respect of such an international exchange of ideas, it is worth noting that the present collection of studies reflects the rich multilingualism of its contributors as well as their different theoretical approaches and the diversity of their viewpoints. This kind of multiplicity nourishes academic study; it stimulates new insights and thus renders it perennially relevant.

We would like to thank the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 1136, "Education and Religion in Cultures of the Mediterranean and Its Environment from Ancient to Medieval Times and to Classical Islam", in particular its director, Professor Dr. Peter Gemeinhardt, for the scholarly and financial support provided to the Miskawayh Symposium and to the publication of the current book. We also thank the German Research Foundation for its generous support of CRC 1136, as well as Lower Saxony's Ministry of Science and Culture and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for two significant conference grants in support of the 2018 symposium.

We cordially thank Dr. Mathias Pätzold, Secretary General of the Lower Saxony Scientific Commission, for his participation in the opening ceremony of the Miskawayh Symposium. To Professor Dr. Norbert Lossau, Vice President of the University of Göttingen, and Professor Dr. Riem Spielhaus, then director of the Göttingen Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, we offer our thanks and respect for enriching the opening ceremony of the symposium with welcoming thoughts and creative ideas, in which they stressed the importance of historical research for current educational and religious discourses in Europe.

It is a true pleasure to thank Professor Dr. Wadad Kadi, The Avalon Foundation Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of the University of Chicago, for her deeply engaging and stimulating inaugural speech with which she set the tone and, indeed, foresaw many of the topics of concern for the ensuing academ-

ic exchange that would unfold over the three-day 2018 Conference.¹ Our sincere thanks are likewise due to Professor Dr. Gerhard Endress, Professor Emeritus for Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Bochum, for his learned prologue to this volume, and Dr. Ruth Mas of New York, specialist in Islamic thought, for her inspiring closing remarks, with which she builds a bridge, in a particularly thought-provoking way, between the mainly historical-philological research presented in this publication and current theoretical and philosophical discourses in religious studies.

Special gratitude is due to Professor Dr. Manfred Fleischhammer, Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, for chairing one of our thematic panels. Likewise, we warmly thank Professor Dr. Fatima Henini, Professor Emerita of German Studies at the Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah, Fès, for making the journey to Göttingen and actively participating in the symposium. To Professor Dr. Hans Daiber, Professor Emeritus of Oriental Languages at the University of Frankfurt am Main, as well as Professor Dr. Lutz Richter-Bernburg, Professor Emeritus of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Tübingen, we are extremely grateful for their valuable advice on the introduction to this volume. Additional warm thanks are due to Professor Dr. Richter-Bernburg for his overall help with questions relating to the subjects of this book.

Cordial words of gratitude go to our symposium panel chairs and roundtable participants: Professors Lale Behzadi (Bamberg), Mohammed Ghaly (Doha), Ghada Jayyusi-Lehn (Toronto), Mutaz Al-Khatib (Doha), Ulrich Marzolph (Göttingen), Asma Sayeed (Los Angeles), and Jens Scheiner (Göttingen) as well as Dr. Enrico Boccaccini (Göttingen). Furthermore, it should be noted that some of the papers, which contributed much to the success of the symposium, unfortunately could not be included in this volume, for reasons mainly relating to the manifold professional obligations of their authors. Specifically, this relates to the papers of professors Mariam Alhashmi (Abu Dhabi), Hassan F. Ansari (Princeton), Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt (Bochum), Fatima Henini (Fès), and Seyfi Kenan (Istanbul).

Dr. Dorothee Lauer (Pielow) and Jana Newiger, M. A., staff members at the Göttingen Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, not only helped with professionalism, dedication, and enthusiasm in planning the symposium conceptually and logistically, they also expended considerable time and expertise in finalizing the manuscript of this book for the press. Elizabeth Crawford, a freelance editor in Göttingen, was of tremendous help in editing the English-language contributions to this book, and Jacqueline Pitchford, a freelance professional indexer based in Leiwen, prepared the indices. Both of them deserve our warm thanks

¹ Professor Kadi's lecture was recorded and is accessible at the University of Göttingen's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpsAIndmIw8>.

and appreciation. Dr. Monika Winet, former academic coordinator of the Göttingen CRC 1136 “Education and Religion” and an Arabic studies specialist, is to be thanked for her untiring administrative help and scholarly advice for our research on Miskawayh during the time of our membership at the Centre.

Our special gratitude is due to all those colleagues in Arabic and Islamic studies who willingly acted as peer reviewers for contributions to this volume and offered extremely constructive advice and support.

Last but not least, we wish to cordially thank the editors of the SERAPHIM book series for including this volume in their series, as well as the publisher, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, for their cooperation in the final stages of publishing this book.

Göttingen, August 2020

Sebastian Günther and Yassir El Jamouhi

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Abbreviations

ASL	Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus
ASP	Arabic Sciences and Philosophy
BEO	Bulletin d'Études Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas
CMR	Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History
DPhA	Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques
EI2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Leiden 1954–2004
EI3	Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition, Leiden 2007-
EIr	Encyclopaedia Iranica, London 1982-
EMPh	Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy between 500 and 1500
EQ	Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, Leiden 2001–2006
FO	Folia Orientalia
GAS	Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums
HWPh	Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie
IC	Islamic Culture
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies
IPS	International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society
IPTS	Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JAS	Journal of Abbasid Studies
JEastCS	Journal of Eastern Christian Studies
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
MJSS	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences
MNAWL	Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde
MTSR	Journal of Method and Theory in the Study of Religion
MW	The Muslim World
REP	Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy
SGA	Studia Graeco-Arabica
SI	Studia Islamica
VNAWL	Verhandelingen der (K.) Nederlands(ch)e Akademie van Wetenschappen (te Amsterdam). Afdeling Letterkunde
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZfPäd	Zeitschrift für Pädagogik
ZGAIW	Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften

Prologue

Miskawayh: Ethics and the Lessons of History

GERHARD ENDRESS

Can we learn from history?

And what, if anything, could be gained from such lessons?

Abū 'Alī Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), the subject of this volume of studies, explored the history of the Muslim dynasties, and especially those of contemporary Iraq and Iran. His chronicle, under the significant title *Tajārib al-umam* (*The Experiences of the Peoples*), examines

useful *experiences* among those things that continue to recur, and happenings the like of which may be expected again, like the beginnings of dynasties and the rise of kingdoms and the occurrence of calamities, and how those who corrected and repaired their situation returned to the best of states, and how those who neglected and spurned amendments came to dwindle and vanish.¹

His own was a time of crisis: *The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate* (the title given to the annals of Miskawayh's own lifetime by its English translator), giving occasion to denounce grievances rather than to praise shining examples:

Now let the reader consider whether these sovereigns laid themselves open to attack otherwise than through want of caution, letting themselves be drawn away by the pursuit of pleasure from attending to their affairs, neglecting their secret service, failing to investigate the dispositions of their viziers and officers, and the condition of their troops, relying on fickle fortune and coincidence, and failing to study the history of earlier sovereigns, and the methods pursued by those who maintained themselves successfully, who secured their realms and the loyalty of their followers in various ways.²

The crisis of the caliphate, looming since the mid 2nd/8th century and reaching its climax with the Buyid takeover in Baghdad (in 339/945), brought not only turmoil and the 'Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate' through an uneasy cohabitation

¹ Miskawayh, Abū 'Alī, *Tajārib al-umam*, reprod. in facsimile by Leone Caetani, vol. i (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series VII, 1; Leyden: Brill, 1909): 1–2 (my translation). On this passage, see also the Editors' Introduction to this volume, n. 112.

² Miskawayh, *al-Tajārib*: ii, 36; trans. Miskawayh, *The Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*, ed., trans. and elucidated by Henry F. Amedroz/David S. Margoliouth, vol. v (6 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1920–1921): 41.

of the Abbasid caliph and the Buyid rulers but also a period of intellectual variety, of open and eager debate between religious groups – Muslim, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish –, between traditions of knowledge, and between philosophic schools of thought: between Sunni orthodoxy and the sects of the Shi'a, rationalists and traditionists among the theologians, logicians and grammarians in methodology and hermeneutics. In the rich literary culture of *adab*, “erudition”, where the *humaniora* were clad in the style of the literary heritage of “pure” Arabic language, the indigenous and foreign traditions – Indian, Iranian, Greek, and ancient Arabic – were first merged and amalgamated, forming a common heritage of “Wisdom” (*ḥikma*, as in Miskawayh’s own compilation).

The foundation of wisdom, and the way to happiness through the study of rational science, was found in the philosophy of the 3rd/9th century philosopher Ya‘qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī. It was al-Kindī’s concept of philosophy as an autonomous way of thought and way of life – albeit in the service of the Muslim community and compatible with the Quranic revelation – which stayed alive in the circles of the *ḥukamā’*: of scientists, of learned courtiers, and of physicians who in the spirit of Galen’s Platonism revered philosophy as the healing art of the soul. In this tradition, Miskawayh sought in philosophy a universal truth and a universal morality that discarded the limitations of institutional dogma and the casuistry of law. This universalist claim, and the intellectual optimism that went with it – the belief that perfect knowledge could be reached through the perfection of the soul, *The Refinement of Character* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, the title given by Miskawayh to his manual of philosophical ethics) – is an expression of the truly international culture which had emerged from what is called the classical period of Islam, a culture in which men of all creeds took part. The teaching of the Ancients proved a living force, creating new problems while solving old ones – a source of conflict which shaped Islamic thought even where it was rejected, and so, once again, changing the world.

But can there be moral progress in dark times? Is education illusory?

As a moral philosopher, Miskawayh followed the tradition of the rational sciences, notably those of the mathematicians, astronomers, and learned physicians, who since the rise of the Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad had entered the service of the Arabic-Islamic administration, and who along with the progress of Arabization and Islamization of Near Eastern society propagated their activity as a service to the foundation of the Islamic community, vindicating philosophical instruction – the doctrines of the Greek philosophers – on God, the world and humanity as a universal demonstration of the truth of the revelation.

In Miskawayh’s philosophical works – as in the works of the 4th/10th century Baghdadi school of logic and Aristotelian physics, the Christian translators and commentators and their Muslim disciples and continuators – this philosophi-

cal theology is built upon a systematic foundation of Aristotelian epistemology, physics, and positive ethics (supplemented by the anthropology of Galen). This is the tradition of the ethical propaedeutic, the way to happiness signaled in the Neoplatonic schools of Athens and Alexandria as leading to the purification of the soul, and hence to the ultimate happiness. This way is prepared by study of the rational sciences on the basis of the Aristotelian canon, and in the end leads to knowledge of the Good according to the Platonic theology. The supreme beatitude will be realized when the highest degree of knowledge is attained. At that stage, the intellect will be identical with the first intelligibles, and the acts of the human being at this highest stage of perfection will be divine: his essence will be identical with his acts, and he will be acting for the sake of his divine nature.

This highest grade can be attained only by those who have studied all parts of philosophy, practical and theoretical, exhaustively. Toward this goal, Aristotle had shown the way: in his books on logic, the way towards true judgment and the methods for persuading others to pursue the good, and in his books on ethics, the dispositions of the soul required for the attainment of happiness, and the states and degrees thereof. The counsel of the wise leads to happiness through knowledge of the truth, i. e., the true essences of things (*ḥaqqā'iq al-umūr*), and from this, to doing right. Accordingly, two classes of knowledge, theoretical and practical wisdom, lead the way to the perfection of humanity (*insāniyya*, humanness) and to the realization of the ethos (*khuluq*) of human nature.

Could this ideal ever be realized?

Sometimes, in the great moments of history, a shining example of virtue, learning and rectitude appears. In the year 359/970, Miskawayh laments the death of Abū l-Faḍl Ibn al-'Amīd (d. 6th Safar 359/9th December 970), vizier of the Buyid ruler Rukn al-Dawla (d. 365/976) and tutor of the young 'Aḍud al-Dawla (d. 372/983), who was to become the greatest of the dynasty. As a librarian at the Buyid residence of Rayy, Miskawayh became intimately familiar with the powerful vizier whose virtue and learning he depicts as a living example of the education commended in his ethics; a man who had been encompassing the twofold encyclopaedia: the religious-hermeneutical disciplines, and the rational sciences of the Greek tradition.

The talents and virtues which this man displayed were of a sort that made him outshine his contemporaries, that the enemy could not resist or the envious fail to acknowledge. No-one rivalled his combination of qualities. He was like the sun which is hidden from no one, or the sea 'about which one may talk without restraint'. He is the only person whom I ever saw whose presence outdid his report. ... He was the best *kātib* of his time, and possessed the greatest number of professional attainments, command of the Arabic language

with its rarities, familiarity with grammar and prosody, felicity in etymology and metaphor, retention by memory of pre-Islamic and Islamic collections of poems.³

Miskawayh goes on to praise his excellence as an epistolographer, and as a poet familiar with the disciplines of the Arabic language, along with Quranic exegesis and Muslim jurisprudence. But then, he was at home in both worlds, that of Arabic Islamic erudition and that of the rational sciences inherited from the Greeks: logic, philosophy, and the applied sciences indispensable for administration and statecraft. Miskawayh ends his panegyric of the vizier with praise of his administrative and financial reforms, brought to bear under the great ruler ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, whom he had taught the art of kingcraft, closing with:

Some reader of this section of my book who did not witness his career, may imagine that I have been gratuitously eulogizing, claiming for him more than the real extent of his attainments and height of his virtues. I swear by Him who bade us utter the truth and forbade us to say anything else, that it is not so.⁴

But the panegyrist was also a realist; the Good Vizier was not able to open an age of justice and peace. He had to face ugly realities, times of unrest, Iraq on the brink of civil war, Western Iran exposed to attacks from outside and from inside, misgovernment and anarchy.

In the year 355/966, when serving Abū l-Faḍl Ibn al-‘Amīd in Rayy, Miskawayh saved the library of his master (*ustādh*) from the looting of Khwarazmian war hordes.

[They] occupied themselves with plundering the *Ustādh*'s palace, stables and stores, which were newly filled, till nightfall, when they departed. I was in charge of his Library, and this only among his stores remained intact and was not touched. When at night time he returned to his palace, he could find nothing to sit down upon, nor even a jug to drink water out of. ... His thoughts were for his books, than which he cherished nothing more, and indeed they were numerous, containing every form of science, and every species of wisdom and learning; there was a hundred camels' burden of them or more. When he saw me, he asked about them, and when I replied that they were as they had been and untouched, he was relieved, and said: I declare that you are a bringer of luck! All my other stores can be replaced, it is only this store which could not be replaced.⁵

Preceding this period of turmoil, and the subsequent restoration of Iraq by ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, are Miskawayh's reports devoted to the rule of ‘Izz al-Dawla Bakhtiyār (d. 367/978); a portrait of an incapable and irresponsible weakling. Miskawayh reports in his chronicle the events after the Byzantine invasion of 361/972 when riots shook the capital; how the masses assaulted the caliphal palace, demanding the Holy War against Byzantium, telling the Caliph "that he was incompetent to discharge the duties which God had enjoined upon the Imams" – but the Ca-

³ Miskawayh, *al-Tajārib*: ii, 275; trans. Amedroz: v, 293–294.

⁴ Miskawayh, *al-Tajārib*: ii, 224–225; trans. Amedroz: v, 237.

⁵ Miskawayh, *al-Tajārib*: ii, 282; trans. Amedroz: v, 237.

liph lacked power and means. Meanwhile, Bakhtiyār, the ruler, stayed in Kufa, ostensibly to visit the shrine of the martyr, in point of fact to go hunting. Here, Miskawayh's older friend and sparring partner Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) tells more: How a group of judges and scholars set out to remonstrate with the ruler for his neglect, and to represent to him the woes and distresses of the population – in vain, but it is a moving narrative of jurists, administrators and scholars taking responsibility in the face of the failure of the authority.⁶

Miskawayh's ethics is rational education in the tradition of Platonism. Its concept of value recognition is that of Socrates – no one knowingly acts badly – its ethics is based on knowledge; its ethical education is directed at purifying the rational, the highest of the three Platonic soul parts. Here, for the formation of the use of reason, the Aristotelian encyclopedia of rational sciences is recommended and complements Platonic psychagogy, and Stoic and Galenic anthropology: ethics as 'purification of character' (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*). With Miskawayh, the Aristotelian criterion of value cognition, *mesotês*, and its ideal, *dikaiosynê* (Arabic: *'adl*), also determine the goal of a virtuous life: the highest human good that is actively attainable and available to man in life and action. The path of virtue is not the *sharī'a* of religion; rather, it is education for the purification of character in the service of a way of life pleasing to God. For this purpose, the renowned philosopher-theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) integrated the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* into the practical ethics of his *Revivification of the Disciplines of Religion* and his *The Criterion of Action*, and henceforth, Miskawayh's paradigm persisted as a principal source of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502–1503) and later authors of *kutub al-akhlāq*. Here is the lasting legacy of the cosmopolitan Miskawayh, in whose work Greek philosophy, Iranian wisdom and Arabic Adab are merged to become an epitome of humanism in classical Arabic Islamic civilization.

⁶ Miskawayh, *al-Tajārib*: ii, 303–304; trans. Amedroz: v, 326–327; al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtā'*: iii, 157, l. 19–158, l. 9.

Einführung

Der Moralphilosoph und Historiker Miskawaih: Traditionsbindung und Neubestimmung im Bildungsdiskurs des Islams

SEBASTIAN GÜNTHER UND YASSIR EL JAMOUHI*

Für einige seiner gelehrten Zeitgenossen und Nachfolger in der islamischen Geistesgeschichte war bzw. ist Miskawaih ein islamischer Philosoph und Historiker ersten Ranges. Zudem sei er, wie es der algerisch-französische Philosoph und Miskawaih-Kenner Mohammed Arkoun (gest. 2010) ausdrückte, ein Vertreter des „arabischen Humanismus“ par excellence. Andere wiederum sehen in Miskawaih eher einen Eklektiker, wie der marokkanische Philosoph Mohammed Abed al-Jabiri festhält, und jemanden, der die schönen Dinge des Lebens an der Seite der Mächtigen genoss.¹

Zeugnisse wie diese kennzeichnen die beiden Pole in einem vielschichtigen Spektrum von Meinungen zu diesem „klassischen“ muslimischen Gelehrten mit dem ungewöhnlichen Namen Miskawaih. Doch wer war dieser Miskawaih? In welcher Weise nahm er an den vielfältigen Diskursen seiner Zeit – insbesondere zu Bildung und Ethik – teil? Was sagen seine Schriften zu diesen Themenbereichen aus? Wie arbeitete Miskawaih und wie wurden seine Auffassungen von seinen Zeitgenossen und späteren Denkern rezipiert? Und schließlich: sind seine Ideen in den heutigen Diskussionen um Bildung und Erziehung noch *oder vielleicht wieder* von Bedeutung? Einige erste Antworten auf Fragen dieser Art zu finden, macht sich diese Einführung zum vorliegenden Sammelband zur Auf-

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Die Transliteration des Arabischen und Persischen folgt im gesamten Band den Regeln der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (DMG) für die deutschsprachigen Aufsätze bzw. des *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) für die englischsprachigen Beiträge. Übersetzungen aus dem Arabischen und dem Englischen stammen von den Verfassern dieser Einleitung. Zitate aus dem Koran folgen – im Wortlaut und in der typographischen Wiedergabe mitunter modifiziert – der Übersetzung Rudi Paret's 2007.

¹ Vgl. Arkoun (1961, 1970, 1982, 2012b). Zu al-Jabiri (transkribiert und so im weiteren Text: Muḥammad 'Abid al-Ġābirī), siehe al-Ġābirī 2001: 406. Siehe zu Miskawaih als Person und zu seinem Gesamtschaffen die Abschnitte 1.4 und 3 dieser Einleitung.

gabe. Ausgehend von der aktuellen Forschung sollen die Primärquellen deshalb erneut umfassend und kritisch befragt werden, um ein möglichst authentisches Bild von Miskawaih und wesentlichen Aspekten seines Schaffens in Fragen der Bildung im Islam zu zeichnen.

1. Miskawaihs Leben

Miskawaih war vor allem Philosoph und Historiker; er wirkte aber auch als Mediziner, Literat und Dichter. In seinen Arbeiten widmete er sich zahlreichen weiteren Wissensdisziplinen wie der Logik, Metaphysik, Theologie und Psychologie bis hin zur Alchemie. Sein Ansehen in der heutigen arabischen und islamischen Welt als „Begründer der islamischen Ethik“ beruht aber vor allem auf seinen Schriften zur Moralphilosophie.

Miskawaih wurde zwischen 320 und 325 der islamischen Zeitrechnung, d. h. 932 und 936, in der iranischen Stadt Raiy, dem antiken Rhagai (Rhagae), in der Nähe Teherans geboren.² Er starb – fast hundertjährig – am 9. Šafar des Jahres 421/22. Februar 1030 in Isfahan.³ Als Repräsentant der arabophonen, durch iranische sowie hellenistische und nicht zuletzt indische Überlieferungen mitgeformten islamischen Kultur seiner Zeit verfasste Miskawaih seine Werke hauptsächlich in arabischer Sprache, der Lingua franca jener Zeit im Einflussbereich des Islams. Vor allem aber genießt Miskawaih bis heute Anerkennung als ein Denker, der über die Grenzen schiitischer oder sunnitischer konfessioneller Bindungen hinweg die Idee eines kulturübergreifenden geistigen Zugangs zu den Idealen und Werten von Bildung und Ethik repräsentiert, der den Menschen in den Mittelpunkt der Überlegungen rückt und die Notwendigkeit eines vernunftgemäßen Denkens und Handelns hervorhebt.

Die Grundlage hierfür ist für Miskawaih eine Art vorherbestimmte Ordnung von Offenbarung und Vernunft im Sinne einer „prästabilisierten Harmonie“ (und Willensfreiheit), wie Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) es nennen würde, wobei Miskawaih allerdings zumindest normativ keinen Zweifel an der Gültigkeit des islamischen Religionsgesetzes zulässt. Miskawaihs Verständnis vom Islam ist weder konfessionell ausgeprägt – auch wenn ihn die schiitische Tradition Jahrhunderte später gern für sich beansprucht –, noch besonders traditionalistisch. Vielmehr ist dieses Islamverständnis auch für außerislamisches oder selbst „säkulares“ Denken – um noch einmal einen moderneren Begriff zu bemühen – offen.⁴

² Endress 2012: 212.

³ Yāqūt, *al-İršād*: ii, 88–89; al-Ĥwānsārī, *ar-Rawḍāt*: i, 254, 257. Vgl. auch El Jamouhi 2019: 427–429; El Jamouhi 2020: 201–203.

⁴ Im Sinne Talal Asads verstehen wir das „Säkulare“ als epistemische Kategorie. Während „Säkularismus“ auf politische, staatliches Handeln betreffende Grundprinzipien rekurriert, bewegt sich das Säkulare „mit dem Religiösen, das ihm vermeintlich vorangegangen ist, weder in

1.1. Herkunft und konfessionelle Bindung

Zum Leben des Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb *al-Hāzin* („der Bibliothekar“), besser bekannt unter seinem Beinamen Miskawaih, gibt es nur wenige belastbare Informationen in den einschlägigen arabischen historischen und bio-bibliographischen Nachschlagewerken. Diese sagen unter anderem aus, dass Miskawaih (englisch oft: Miskawayh) die arabisierte Form des persischen Mushkōye sei.⁵ Zudem heißt es, dieser Name weise auf einen Vorort der Stadt Raiy hin, aus dem dieser Gelehrte (oder seine Familie) womöglich stammte;⁶ allerdings scheint es sich dabei um ein Missverständnis zu handeln, wenngleich dieser Ortsname tatsächlich belegt ist.

Über die Bedeutung des Bei- (oder Spitz-)Namens Miskawaih bzw. des persischen Nominalkompositums Mushkōye – mit *misk* („Moschus“) und dem Suffix *-ōye* – machen die einschlägigen arabischen und persischen Nachschlagewerke keine Angaben. Da das persische Suffix *-ōye* drei Bedeutungen haben kann – es kann die Ähnlichkeit, die Verkleinerung (Diminutiv) oder den Besitz von etwas ausdrücken –,⁷ könnte Mushkōye mit „der dem Moschus Ähnliche“, „der nach Moschus Duftende“ oder auch „der kleine Moschus“ bzw. „Moschüschen“ im Deutschen wiedergegeben werden.⁸

In einigen Quellen angenommen wird weiterhin, dass Miskawaih schon der Name des Vaters (oder Großvaters) dieses Gelehrten gewesen sei, weshalb in be-

einem Kontinuum (d. h. es ist nicht die letzte Phase einer von einem heiligen Ursprung sich herschreibenden Entwicklung), noch ist es ein einfacher Bruch mit ihm (sprich: es ist nicht das Gegenteil des Religiösen, keine Essenz, die darauf angelegt ist, das Heilige auszuschließen).“ Somit ist das Säkulare ein „Begriff, der bestimmte Formen des Verhaltens, des Wissens und des Empfindens zu dem konfiguriert,“ was als gelebte Wirklichkeit aufgefasst werden kann. Vgl. Asad 2017: 33.

⁵ Vgl. Emami/Umar 2008, online.

⁶ Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*: iv, 543; aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tārīḥ*: viii, 392. Vgl. auch Emami/Umar 2008, online. Die uns zugänglichen arabischen und persischen Nachschlagewerke machen darüber hinaus keine onomastischen Angaben zur Bedeutung des Namens Miskawaih.

⁷ Vgl. <https://dictionary.abadis.ir/fatofa/%D9%88%DB%8C%D9%87/>.

⁸ Auch die Übersetzung „Moschusbröckchen“ wurde in dieser Hinsicht vorgeschlagen. Angemerkt sei hierzu auch, dass Wohlgerüche und Duftstoffe in der Gesellschaft der Zeit – bzw. in ihrer Vorstellungswelt – allgegenwärtig waren. Als förmliche Namen wurden diese – wie die Bezeichnungen anderer Kostbarkeiten, etwa jene für Edelsteine – vor allem auch für Sklaven verwendet. Insofern könnte sich der Name Miskawaih auf parfümierte Haare oder auf eine dunklere Hautfarbe beziehen oder auch nur allgemein als gutes Omen für Attraktivität gemeint sein. Tatsächlich ist „Miskawaih“ als Bei- bzw. Spitzname nicht unikal in der arabischen Namensgebung. In ähnlichem Kontext bezieht sich Kees Versteegh (1997: 29) auf die in einigen arabischen Quellen verzeichnete – volkstümliche – Erklärung zum Bei- bzw. Spitznamen (*la-qab*) des großen persischen Grammatikers Sibawaih (gest. 180/796; mit der gleichen Endung wie Miskawaih), wonach dieser „smell of apples“ bedeute. Nöldeke und Brockelmann merken zudem an, dass *Sēbōe* im Persischen „kleiner Apfel“ bedeute (vgl. Carter 1997b: 524). Für diese Literaturhinweise danken wir herzlich Frau Professorin Wiebke Walther (E-Mail-Kommunikation vom 02. August 2020). Zu männlichen Personennamen in vor- und frühislamischer Zeit vgl. auch Walther 1966.

stimmten Editionen seiner Werke sowie in einigen modernen Publikationen die Namensform *Ibn Miskawaih* begegnet. Ebenso wird berichtet, dass Miskawaihs Vater (oder Großvater) vom Zoroastrismus zum Islam konvertiert sei.⁹

Zu Miskawaihs schiitischer Gesinnung, die heute in der Sekundärliteratur nahezu regulär vermerkt wird, machen die frühen arabischen Primärquellen keine Angaben. Erst spätmittelalterliche, vor allem schiitische Quellen – die früheste unter ihnen stammt aus dem 10./16. Jahrhundert – deuten Miskawaihs schiitische Neigung an, allerdings ohne konkrete Argumente in dieser Hinsicht beizubringen. Zu nennen ist hier vor allem ein Werk mit dem Titel *Mağālis al-mu'minīn* (*Die Lehrsitzen der Gläubigen*) des schiitischen Richters und Theologen Nūr Allāh al-Ḥusainī al-Mar'asī at-Tustarī (gest. 1019/1610).¹⁰ Auch dieser weist Miskawaih zwar nicht dezidiert als Schiiten aus, bietet aber zwei Hinweise, die ein solches Verständnis nahelegen sollen. Zum einen hebt at-Tustarī das schiitische Umfeld hervor, in dem Miskawaih wirkte. Zum anderen führt er eine Bemerkung Miskawaihs in dessen ethischem Hauptwerk *Tahdīb al-aḥlāq* (*Die Läuterung der Sitten*) an, in dem Miskawaih an einer Stelle von der Weisheit 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, d. h. des ersten Imams der Schia, spricht.¹¹

Eine andere diesbezügliche, allerdings noch um einiges spätere Quelle ist das Werk *Rawḍāt al-ğannāt* (*Die Gärten der Domänen des Paradieses*) des schiitischen Historikers Muḥammad Bāqir (al-)Ḥwānsārī (auch: Ḥwānsārī; gest. 1313/1895). Dieser zitiert eine Aussage des bekannten persischen Philosophen Mīr Dāmād (gest. 1041/1631), wonach Miskawaih über umfangreiches Wissen zu den *Ahl al-bait* („die Leute des Hauses,“ d. h. die leiblichen Nachkommen des Propheten Muhammad) verfügt und an die Pflicht der Muslime geglaubt habe, „ihnen zu gehorchen und sie zu lieben“.¹² Zusätzlich wird eine weitere Bemerkung Miskawaihs im *Tahdīb al-aḥlāq* zum Mut des 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib als Indiz für dessen schiitische Orientierung angeführt. Einschlägige Hinweise sind dann auch in der vielfach zitierten Enzyklopädie *A'yān aš-šī'a* (*Die hervorragenden Persönlichkeiten der Schia*) des schiitischen Gelehrten as-Sayyid Muḥsin al-

⁹ Al-Ḥwānsārī, *ar-Rawḍāt*: i, 254; Yāqūt, *al-Iršād*: ii, 91. Siehe ebenfalls Margoliouths Vorwort zur Edition und Übersetzung von Miskawaihs *Tağārib al-umam* (Miskawaih, *at-Tağārib* [Übers. Amedroz/Margoliouth] 1920–1921: vii, ii), wo es heißt: „Yaqut (author of the *Irshad*) states apparently on his own authority that Miskawaihi was a convert to Islam from Magianism; if this be true, the names of his father and grandfather, Mohammed and Ya'qub, are likely to be fictitious. That Miskawaihi was the *laqab* of himself, not of his father, appears very clearly from the statements of his contemporaries Abu Hayyan and Tha'alibi; the *ibn* which is prefixed in the printed editions of some of his works ... is due to his calling himself *Ahmad b. Mohammed Miskawaihi*, whence some supposed the *laqab* to belong to the father.“

¹⁰ At-Tustarī, *al-Mağālis*: iii, 157–159.

¹¹ At-Tustarī, *al-Mağālis*: iii, 157–158.

¹² In diesem Kontext schreibt al-Ḥwānsārī: „Er (Miskawaih) verfügte über ein hohes Maß an Wissen hinsichtlich der Legitimation (*ḥaqq*) der *Ahl al-Bait* – Friede sei mit ihnen – und den Glauben an die Pflicht, ihnen zu gehorchen, sowie an die Notwendigkeit, sie zu lieben.“ Al-Ḥwānsārī, *ar-Rawḍāt*: i, 256.

Index of Proper Names

This index includes the names of mortal figures (incl. Prophets and Biblical characters). Groups of people, angels, God and other deities, mythological characters, and characters in narratives, however, are included in the Index of Topics and Keywords.

The following rules for sorting classical Arabic names have been applied:

1. Persons whose names start with “Abū” are sorted under “Abū”
2. Persons whose names start with “Abd/‘Abdallāh” are sorted under “Abd/‘Abdallāh”
3. Persons most known by their father’s given name are sorted under “Ibn”
4. If persons are not subject to the sorting rules mentioned under 1–3, they are sorted by their given names, *unless* the last component of the name indicates a place or tribal name (beginning with a definite article “al-” or “l-” and ending with “i” or “y”). In the latter case, the place/tribal element was used for sorting.
5. Exception: if authors have referred to a person by another name element or if a person is more known by another name, sorting has been done under that name. In these cases, cross-references have been made.
6. Neglected in sorting are:
 - a. “al-” and “l-” at beginning of name and following “Ibn” or “Abū” or Kitāb
 - b. “b.” (always)
 - c. ‘ayn (‘) and hamza (ʾ) (always)

The English transliteration guidelines of the International Journal of Middle East Studies have been followed for names in Arabic.

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Italics were used for book titles, regular font chapters and manuscripts. Quotation marks were used to indicate a chapter.

The English transliteration guidelines of the International Journal of Middle East Studies have been followed for titles in Arabic.

- Abhandlung über Enthaltsamkeit* (Yaḥyā b. ‘Adī) → *Maqāla fī tabyīn ḥāl tark ṭalab al-nasl*
- Abhandlung über Seele und Intellekt* (Miskawayh) → *Risāla fī jawhar al-naḥs; Risāla fī l-naḥs wa-l-aql*
- Ādāb al-‘Arab wa-l-Furs* (Miskawayh) → *Jāwīdhān Khiradh*
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- The Attainment of Happiness* (al-Fārābī) → *Taḥṣīl al-sa‘āda*
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- The Bezels of Wisdom* (Ibn ‘Arabī) → *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*
- Die Blätter* (al-Ṣūlī) → [al-] *Awrāq*
- Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (Saadia Gaon) → *Kitāb al-Amānāt wa-l-i‘tiqādāt*
- Book of Commandments* (Maimonides) → *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*
- Book of Comprehending the Oral Torah’s Laws* (Saadia Gaon) → *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-sharā‘i‘ al-sam‘iyya*

- Book of Directives and Remarks* (Ibn Sīnā) → *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*
- Book of Enjoyment and Bonhomie* (al-Tawhīdī) → *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*
- Book of Healing* (Ibn Sīnā) → *Kitāb al-Shifā'*
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- Book of the Seasons* (Saadia Gaon) → *Sefer ha-Mō'ādīm*
- Book of Wisdom* → *Jāwīdhān Khiradh*; *Kitāb al-Hikma*
- Borrowed Lights* (al-Tawhīdī) → [al-] *Muqābasāt*
- Buch Brysons über die Führung des Haushaltes durch den Mann* → *Oikonomikos*
- Buch der Anleihen [von Weisheiten]* (al-Tawhīdī) → [al-] *Muqābasāt*
- Buch der Glückseligkeit über Moralphilosophie* (Miskawayh) → *Tartīb al-sa'ādāt wa-manāzil al-'ulūm*
- Buch der Heilung* → *Kitāb al-Shifā'*
- Buch der Hinweise und Belehrungen* (Ibn Sīnā) → *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*
- Buch der Reinigung [der Seele]* (Miskawayh) → *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*
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- Buch über den Zuspruch und den vertrauten Umgang* (al-Tawhīdī) → *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*
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- Darüber, dass die Kräfte der Seele der Mischung des Körpers folgen* (Galen) → *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur*
- Davānīs Ethik* → *Lawāmi' al-ishrāq fī makārim al-akhlāq*
- Definitions of Logic* (Ibn Bahrīz) → *Ḥudūd al-manṭiq*
- The Deliverer from Error* → [al-] *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*
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- The Direction to the Attainment of Happiness* (al-Fārābī) → *Risālat al-tanbīh 'alā sabīl al-sā'ada*
- Discipline of the Soul* (al-Ghazālī) → *Kitāb Riyadāt al-naḥs*
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- Eternal Wisdom* ('collection of wisdom sayings', Miskawayh) → *Jāwidhān Khiradh*
- The Etiquette of Earning a Living* (al-Ghazālī) → *Kitāb Ādāb al-kasb wa-l-ma'āsh*
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