



# CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF MORALITY IN ISLAM: A STUDY OF AL-GHAZALI'S AND IBN MISKAWAIH'S THOUGHTS

**Abstract:** In the contemporary era, moral crises often separate the social and spiritual dimensions of human ethics, creating a void in a comprehensive understanding of morality. Therefore, this study critically analyzes and synthesizes the thoughts of two of the most influential Muslim thinkers in the field of ethics (akhlaq), Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih. This research aims to answer how these two thinkers construct the concept of morality within the context of Islamic ethics. This study employs a qualitative analysis with a comparative approach. Primary texts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih are examined to identify similarities and differences in their views on morality. The theoretical framework utilized includes Islamic ethical theory and moral philosophy, allowing for a deeper understanding of the values espoused by both figures. The findings indicate that while Al-Ghazali emphasizes the spiritual aspect and the relationship between humans and God, Ibn Miskawaih focuses more on character development and social ethics. Nevertheless, both contribute significantly to the understanding of morality in Islam. This synthesis of thought is expected to provide new and relevant insights for contemporary studies of Islamic ethics, bridging the dichotomy between the spiritual and social aspects of morality that frequently occurs today. So This study offers an integrative moral framework that is valuable for advancing contemporary Islamic ethical discourse

**Keywords:** *Islamic morality, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, ethical synthesis, Islamic philosophy*

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**Abstrak.** Pada era kontemporer, krisis moral seringkali memisahkan dimensi sosial dan spiritual etika manusia, menciptakan kekosongan dalam pemahaman komprehensif tentang akhlak. Oleh karena itu, studi ini menganalisis secara kritis dengan mensintesis pemikiran dua tokoh Muslim paling berpengaruh dalam bidang etika (akhlak), Al-Ghazali dan Ibnu Miskawaih. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab bagaimana kedua pemikir ini mengkonstruksikan konsep moralitas dalam konteks etika Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis kualitatif dengan pendekatan komparatif. Teks-teks primer Al-Ghazali dan Ibnu Miskawaih diuji untuk mengidentifikasi persamaan dan perbedaan pandangan mereka tentang moralitas. Kerangka teori yang digunakan mencakup teori etika Islam dan filosofi moral, memungkinkan pemahaman mendalam tentang nilai-nilai yang dianut oleh kedua tokoh tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Ghazali menekankan aspek spiritual dan hubungan antara manusia dan Tuhan, sementara Ibnu Miskawaih lebih berfokus pada pengembangan karakter dan etika sosial. Meskipun demikian, keduanya memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pemahaman moralitas dalam Islam. Sintesis pemikiran ini diharapkan memberikan wawasan baru yang relevan untuk studi etika Islam kontemporer, menjembatani dikotomi antara aspek spiritual dan sosial moralitas yang sering terjadi saat ini. Jadi penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka moral integratif yang berharga untuk memajukan wacana etika Islam kontemporer.

**Kata Kunci:** Moralitas Islam, Al-Ghazali, Ibnu Miskawaih, Sistesis Etika, Filsafat Islam



## INTRODUCTION

Morality in Islam is a fundamental aspect that serves as the basis for forming individual character and a just social order. The term 'morals' originates from the Latin word meaning good manners, habits, and attitudes, while "morality" itself refers to everything concerning good manners (Miswardi, 2021). The concept of morality is not only rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith but also developed through the thoughts of Muslim scholars and philosophers.

Currently, Indonesia is experiencing a moral crisis which is a negative effect of globalization, but it is still not permissible to blame the development of globalization. The effects of globalization itself do not always have a negative impact, it can all still be controlled and how to respond and bring the influence of globalization towards something positive. The influence of foreign cultures that enter through social media (internet) also plays a major role in the decline of morals in Indonesia, in this case foreign cultures are cultures that are not in accordance with the views of Indonesian society. Free association is increasingly widespread among young people, so that the impact of this freedom produces results such as drugs, free sex/prostitution, homosexuality, and others become phenomena that cannot be hidden (Budiarto 2020). Such incidents are very clearly not in accordance with the values of the life of the Indonesian nation and the values in religion, this has indicated the worsening of morals in life. Therefore, it is important to re-examine the thoughts of classical ethics that provide a comprehensive explanation between spiritual aspects and moral practices. In the intellectual treasury of Islam, two central figures who representatively discuss and develop ethical approaches from both aspects are Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih.

Al-Ghazali is a prominent theologian and Sufi. Al-Ghazali views morality as the result of soul purification (tazkiyatun nafs) and full obedience

to religious teachings. From the outset, Al-Ghazali's concept of morality was that a pure soul would shape all human actions without excessive deliberation, thereby creating individuals with good personalities characterized by wisdom, courage, simplicity, and balance, with the hope of gaining Allah SWT's pleasure (Indo Santalia, 2023). In Al-Ghazali's view, morality is deeply rooted in the spiritual aspect and one's relationship with God. Al-Ghazali's concept of morality is that a pure soul will shape all human actions without excessive consideration, thus creating an individual with a good personality characterized by wisdom, courage, simplicity, and balance, in the hope of gaining the pleasure of Allah SWT. Thus, the core of Al-Ghazali's ethics lies in internal transformation and cleansing of the heart as the foundation for noble moral behavior (Zainurohmad 2020).

In contrast, Ibn Miskawaih, influenced by Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, views morality as a result of habit formation, which can shape and guide humans toward a balance between anger, intellect, and desires. Ibn Miskawaih's perspective on ethics is divided into two parts: first, innate character (*akhlak* or *fitrah*), and second, acquired through effort. However, Ibn Miskawaih places more emphasis on the second part. Ethics can be formed through good habits, and good ethics can be developed through effort (Indo Santalia, 2023). This ethical approach by Ibn Miskawaih highlights the pragmatic aspect of morality, where the formation of ethical character primarily focuses on self-discipline and the continuous cultivation of good behavior.

The author structured this research by considering previous studies. Previous research by Miswardi, et al. (2021), “ethics, morality, and law enforcement”. Indo Santalia's research (2023) “ethics according to Ibn Miskawaih's thought”. Muhammad Fariq Wajdi and Siti Sofiah's research (2024) “Al-Ghazali's thought on moral education”. The third study that the



author presents has similarities, namely studying morality according to the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih. Although the previous three studies had similarities in studying the morality of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih, differences were found that became the research gap from the researcher's title, namely that there has been no comprehensive and critical research that has synthesized and measured in depth the concept of morality from these two great Islamic figures simultaneously. The researcher will fill the gap because none of the three previous studies have directly tried to connect and carry out a critical synthesis between the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih regarding morality. From this research gap, the study tries to connect and carry out a critical synthesis of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih regarding morality in Islam.

To systematically examine the thoughts of these two moral figures, a theoretical foundation is needed. The study of the thoughts of these two moral figures requires a method that can develop their ideas. A qualitative research design with a literature review approach is employed in this study, in which references are obtained through books, journals, and other scientific works. A philosophical-comparative method with critical synthesis is also applied, involving textual analysis of primary sources to extract key ethical principles. These principles are then thematically compared and conceptually integrated to produce a new understanding of morality. The research process includes data collection, classification, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of the ethical thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih.

In this study, the author uses several theoretical foundations: the concept of morality in Islam, Al-Ghazali's ethical theory, Ibn Miskawaih's ethical theory, and critical synthesis theory. These theories will be explained based on scientific references. The difference between the two figures lies in the way they form morality, while their similarity is their goal to achieve good morality. This study's main objective is to synthesize two major Islamic

thoughts on morality and to contribute significantly to the understanding of contemporary Islamic ethics. Based on the problems explained by the author in the background regarding efforts to achieve good morality through different means, the author attempts to combine these two thoughts by taking the title "**Critical Synthesis of Morality in Islam: A Study of Al-Ghazali's and Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts.**"

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Basic Concepts of Morality**

Concept of Morality, Regarding the concept of morality, Islamic scholars, before discussing morality, first discuss the fundamental principles of Islamic creed (*aqidah*). Imam Al-Ghazali states in the translation of the book *Ihya Ulum Al-din* that the provisions related to the rules and principles of creed in Islam are concerning the relationship and differences between Faith (Iman) and Islam. Scholars and religious experts differ on the meaning of Islam and Iman (Al-Ghazali, Volume 1).

Linguistically and in its meaning, Iman (faith) means believing in a truth. As described by Allah SWT in His saying, "And you will never believe us," (QS Yusuf [12]: 17). Whereas the linguistic meaning of Islam is complete submission. That is, submitting oneself with humility and obedience, not denying, not deviating, not resisting, and not opposing. The soul is the dwelling place of true faith or affirmation. The tongue is the interpreter or spokesperson for the language of the heart.

Faith is a strong foundation possessed by every Muslim. Building a strong foundation is formed through *aqidah*. Indeed, The creed (*aqidah*) of ordinary believers is initially based on imitation (*taqlid*), but can be developed through reflection and practice. This imitation at first is not free from the factor of weakness that surrounds a person. However, if this weakness is continuously corrected, developed, strengthened, and



affirmed, then it will naturally disappear until they find the true essence of conviction. The way and means to achieve perfect faith (conviction) do not need to be done by teaching argumentation and the science of Kalam. Instead, it is sufficient by frequently reading and contemplating the contents of the Qur'an and its interpretations, studying Hadith and its understanding, and then, of course, implementing the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith with applied acts of worship (Al-Ghazali, Volume 1).

The teaching of faith (conviction) to children's souls can be likened to sowing excellent seeds in their souls. Furthermore, if these seeds are watered and nurtured, they will grow fertile and strong, towering high. Like a flourishing tree, strong, its roots deeply embedded in the earth, and its branches soaring high into the sky. Children should be nurtured and protected from theological confusion at early stage, and prevented from quarreling or from studying misleading Kalam science. This is because, at a young age, the harm caused by Kalam science is much greater than its benefits. Strengthening faith through debate and argumentation can be likened to hitting a wooden stick with an iron hammer. Instead of strengthening the stick, it actually damages and destroys it. This is what often happens now, and it is clearly visible everywhere. (Nalva 2020)

If someone intends to walk the path to the hereafter and wishes to receive Allah SWT's guidance and grace, then they must perform many righteous deeds. In addition, they should constantly increase acts that lead to piety towards Him, avoid following desires, and always train themselves and strive (mujâhadah). Thus, the door of guidance will open for them, and the reality of Divine light will be unveiled, then penetrating their pure and clean hearts (Al-Ghazali, Volume 3). In line with the formation of individual character and social order, the establishment of the core creed in Islam gives rise to the concept of morality in Islam.

## 2. Morality in Islam

The word "moral" comes from the Latin "mores," which is the plural form of "mos," referring to custom or habit. Morality is an assessment of the behavior of an action, whether it is judged as good or bad. Morality as human conduct is based on the awareness that one is bound by the necessity to achieve good, in accordance with the values and norms applicable in one's environment (Chalim 2019).

Morality in Islam, in addition to using the word "moral" to describe good and bad actions, the word "Akhlak" is also used. Some Muslim philosophers have used the word akhlak for the titles of their works. Morality and akhlak are primarily conditions of the human soul. A pure soul will produce good qualities, and vice versa, a corrupted soul will produce bad qualities (Sayfudin 2018). Before something can be called akhlak, there must first be a process of habituation or actions that are done repeatedly, so that eventually these actions become a habit. At this stage, there is a process of integration between the elements of the soul, character, and will. Therefore, once it becomes a habit, a person can perform actions without requiring rational considerations anymore (Riami, Muhammad, and Susandi 2021).

Regarding akhlak, it is inseparable from the word character. Rusfian Efendi quotes Ibn Miskawaih as stating that character is a state of the soul that causes the soul to act without prior thought or deliberation. This state is divided into two types. First, it is natural and originates from one's disposition or temperament. Second, it is acquired through habit and training. Initially, this state involves actions that are thought about and deliberated upon, but through gradual and continuous training, it transforms into a character (Rusfian Effendi, 2019).





To acquire a good soul and character, several practices are required, namely knowledge of ethics (akhlak). A person can perform good actions if they have knowledge about those actions. In addition to knowledge, in Ali Usman's journal, quoting Galen, it is argued that the soul has a strong desire for knowledge, so one should not cease to repeat what has been learned. The soul is divided into 3 parts:

- The soul related to understanding, reflection, and deliberating on all realities.
- The soul related to emotions such as anger, courage, taking risks in danger, maintaining self-esteem, and various types of preserving honor.
- The soul related to the pleasure of eating and drinking, and other pleasures.

These souls will then be trained to achieve good attitudes and actions. Furthermore, to train these three souls, Ibn Miskawaih suggests in Ali Usman's journal that they are divided into four virtues:

- The virtue of knowledge The virtue of knowledge originates from the activity of the rational soul. This virtue can be attained when the soul is directed towards seeking true knowledge. When the soul has achieved this virtue, it will be accompanied by the virtue of wisdom.
- The virtue of patience The virtue of patience originates from the activity of the irascible soul (anger). The duration of emotional anger depends on the response of the rational soul. This virtue can be attained when this soul obeys or submits to the rational soul and is not manifested at inappropriate times or expressed excessively.
- The Virtue of Moderation Moderation stems from the activity of the animal soul. This virtue is attained when this soul is controlled by the thinking soul, does not oppose what it decides, and does not follow the

heart in pursuing its own desires. When the soul has attained the virtue of moderation, it will be accompanied by the virtue of generosity.

- The Virtue of Justice This virtue emerges when the three preceding virtues are harmonious and properly interconnected. The virtue of justice represents the perfection and completeness of the other three virtues. (Rusfian Efendi, 2019)

Furthermore, if the soul is not trained with the four virtues mentioned above, it will not be able to achieve good character and behavior. The opposites of the four virtues are also four: ignorance, greed, cowardice, and injustice. Moreover, these four opposites of virtues are soul diseases that cause pain, fear, and anger.

Other Islamic philosophers, such as Al-Ghazali, differentiate training to achieve good morals through various external and internal acts of worship. (Hayatunnisa, 2024) Furthermore, the explanation for the acceptance of morals through change is by means of practice. Whereas the explanation for the cause is what can lead us to acquire good morals. The explanation for the available paths is more about how to understand the details of the paths to moral education and soul training. After that, the explanation for the intended signs is what can identify the diseases that afflict the heart. In addition, there will also be an explanation of the ways that humans can use to recognize their own mistakes (Akilah Mahmud, 2020).

### 3. Al-Ghazali's Moral Concept

'Abdurrahman ibn Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him) once said, "We were with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Then he said, *إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ الْبَارِحَةَ عَجَبًا رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّنِي جَانِبًا عَلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَبَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ* 'Indeed, I witnessed something



amazing last night. I saw a man from my Ummah kneeling. Between him and Allah there was a barrier. Then his good character came and entered him to meet Allah 'Ta'ala.'" (Al-Ghazali, Volume 2)

Furthermore, for Muslims to possess good character, as stated by Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Thalib, "The essence of noble character lies in three matters: avoiding Allah's prohibitions, seeking what is lawful, and being generous to others." (Al-Ghazali, Volume 2).

Critical Analysis of Morality in Islam: A Study of Al-Ghazali's and Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts Al-Ghazali, as a prominent theologian and Sufi, grounded morality in spirituality and complete obedience to religious teachings. For him, good character (akhlak) is a manifestation of a purified soul (tazkiyatun nafs). His thought began with the view that a pure soul would shape all human actions without excessive rational deliberation, thereby producing individuals with wisdom, courage, simplicity, and balance, which would ultimately lead to Allah SWT's pleasure.

The process of forming morality according to Al-Ghazali is closely related to strengthening aqidah (creed) and iman (faith). He analogized teaching iman to children like sowing excellent seeds that, if watered and nurtured, will grow abundantly. In addition to the metaphor of planting seeds, Al-Ghazali strongly emphasizes that the process of forming solid morality is rooted in the purification of the heart and spiritual strengthening. For Al-Ghazali, faith is not just an intellectual belief, but an inner condition that must permeate all aspects of a person's life. Good morality, according to him, is the fruit of a clean heart and a soul that is close to God (Putri 2020). He argues that knowledge of God (ma'rifatullah) and fear and love for Him (khawf wa raja') are the main foundations of ethics. When a person understands the greatness of Allah and always feels watched, he will tend to behave well, not because of coercion, but because of spiritual awareness (Mukhlis 2008). Therefore,

moral education for Al-Ghazali does not only involve teaching about right and wrong, but also spiritual practice (riyadah) and cleansing oneself from reprehensible traits (tazkiyatun nafs). This includes fasting, prayer, dhikr, and avoiding sin, all of which aim to strengthen faith and purify the soul.

To achieve perfectman and good morality, Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of frequently reading and contemplating the content of the Qur'an and its interpretations, studying Hadith, and implementing these teachings in applied acts of worship. He also warned against exposing children to debates and misleading Kalam (theological discourse) at an early age, as its harm outweighs its benefits. In Al-Ghazali's view, the path to good character also involves outward and inward acts of worship. This includes fulfilling all commands of Allah SWT, avoiding all His prohibitions, and maintaining good relationships with fellow human beings, which is manifested through fairness, patience, and honesty. As stated by Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Thalib, the essence of noble character lies in three things: avoiding Allah's prohibitions, seeking what is lawful, and being generous to others.

#### **4. Ibn Miskawaih's Moral Concept**

Ibn Miskawaih: Character Development and Social Ethics In contrast to Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, who was largely influenced by Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, viewed morality as a result of habituation. For him, character (akhlak) is not merely innate but can be formed through effort and good habits. Character, according to Ibn Miskawaih, is a state of the soul that causes the soul to act without prior thought or deliberation. This state can be natural or acquired through gradual habit and training.



Ibn Miskawaih divided the soul into three parts: the soul related to understanding and reflection (intellect), the soul related to emotions such as anger and courage, and the soul related to pleasures (desire). To train these three souls and achieve good qualities and actions, Ibn Miskawaih put forward four main virtues:

- The Virtue of Knowledge: Originating from the activity of the rational soul, it is acquired when the soul is directed towards seeking true knowledge. This virtue is accompanied by wisdom.
- The Virtue of Patience: Originating from the activity of the irascible (anger) soul. It is acquired when the angry soul obeys the rational soul and is not manifested at inappropriate times or excessively.
- The Virtue of Moderation: Originating from the activity of the animal (desire) soul. It is acquired when this soul is controlled by the thinking soul, does not oppose its decisions, and does not follow its own desires. This virtue is accompanied by generosity.
- The Virtue of Justice: It emerges when the three preceding virtues are harmonious and properly interconnected. It represents the perfection and completeness of these three virtues.

Ibn Miskawaih believed that a soul not trained in these four virtues would tend towards negative traits such as ignorance, greed, cowardice, and injustice, which are diseases of the soul causing pain, fear, and anger. These traits are not mere defects, but are truly pathological conditions that cause mental suffering, fear, and anger. An untrained soul will always be restless and restless. Therefore, he argued that a thorough knowledge of morality that includes an understanding of virtue and vice and consistent and repeated practice is the essential key to forming a good moral character and a healthy soul. This is in line with his concept of morality as the result of habits formed through sustained effort (Arturo,

n.d.). Therefore, knowledge of akhlak and consistent practice are key to forming good moral character.

## 5. Critical Comparison and Synthesis

Comparative Aspect	Al-Ghazali's Thoughts	Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts
1. The Primary Basis of Morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Morality is rooted in spirituality and full adherence to religious teachings.</li> <li>- A pure heart (Qalb) is the foundation of moral behavior.</li> <li>- Moral motivation is to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT.</li> <li>- Strengthening the creed and faith is very important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Morality is the result of habit formation.</li> <li>- Balance between anger, reason, and desire.</li> <li>- Influenced by Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle</li> </ul>
2. Moral Formation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs).</li> <li>- Through spiritual practice (riyadah) and worship (fasting, prayer, dhikr).</li> <li>- Reading and contemplating the Qur'an and Hadith, and applying them in worship.</li> <li>- Avoiding misleading Kalam debates at an early age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through habituation and training.</li> <li>- Character can be acquired through effort.</li> <li>- Self-discipline and continuous cultivation of good behavior.</li> <li>- Training the three parts of the soul (understanding/reflection, emotion/anger, pleasure/desire)</li> </ul>
3. The Concept of Cardinal Virtues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The qualities of a pure soul: wisdom, courage, simplicity, and balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four cardinal virtues:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Knowledge (originating from the rational soul, accompanied by wisdom).</li> <li>b. Patience (originating from the angry soul, obedience to the rational soul).</li> <li>c. Moderation (originating from the animal soul/desire, controlled by reason, accompanied by generosity).</li> <li>d. Justice (arising from the harmony of the three previous virtues)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
4. The Concept of "Mental Illness"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disease of the heart (eg: reflected by the absence of excessive consideration in actions if the soul is pure)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative traits that arise if the soul is not trained: stupidity, greed, cowardice, and injustice.</li> <li>- Considered a mental illness</li> </ul>



		that causes pain, fear, and anger
5. Main Source of Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Al-Qur'an and Hadith.</li> <li>- Sufism/Sufism.</li> <li>- Study of the book Ihya' Ulum Al-Din</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation of human behavior and the process of habituation</li> <li>- Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle.</li> </ul>
6. The Final Goal of Morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT.</li> <li>- Internal transformation and cleansing of the liver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forming a balance between anger, reason, and desire.</li> <li>- Developing good character and a healthy soul</li> </ul>
7. Main Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spiritual and theological, emphasizing the divine dimension and religious obedience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pragmatic, philosophical, and psychological, emphasizing habit formation and social character development.</li> </ul>

Synthesis of Al-Ghazali's and Ibn Miskawaih's Thoughts in the Context of Islamic Morality Although Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih had different approaches to achieving morality, their thoughts can be synthesized to provide a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of character (akhlak) in Islam. Both scholars agreed that good character is not innate but can be formed through practice and habituation. This critical synthesis combines Al-Ghazali's emphasis on soul purification (tazkiyatun nafs) and full obedience to religious teachings to achieve morality that pleases Allah SWT, with Ibn Miskawaih's view of morality as the result of habituation that forms a balance between anger, intellect, and desires.

Clearly, this synthesis proposes that the solid foundation of Islamic morality begins with strengthening creed (aqidah) and spirituality as emphasized by Al-Ghazali. This means that individuals must first have strong faith, acquired through understanding the Qur'an and Hadith, and consistently performing outward and inward acts of worship. This aspect ensures that the motivation for morality is rooted in a transcendent relationship with God and an awareness of His pleasure.

Furthermore, upon this spiritual foundation, character development through habituation and practice, in the style of Ibn

Miskawaih, becomes crucial. After the soul is purified and the creed strengthened (Al-Ghazali's perspective), individuals need to consciously train themselves in the four main virtues proposed by Ibn Miskawaih: knowledge, patience, moderation, and justice. This training transforms knowledge of morality into automatic, real behavior, forming character without requiring repeated rational considerations. This means that obedience to Allah's commands and abstaining from His prohibitions (Al-Ghazali) are concretely implemented through the practice of these four virtues in daily life (Ibn Miskawaih).

Thus, morality in Islam is not solely about spiritual obedience (Al-Ghazali) but also about character formation internalized through continuous ethical practice (Ibn Miskawaih). The two complement each other: spirituality provides the divine purpose and direction for moral actions, while ethical habituation embodies these spiritual values in real and stable behavior. This process results in individuals who not only worship with devotion but also interact with other humans and the environment with justice, patience, moderation, and knowledge. This synthesis allows for a deeper understanding of morality in Islam, making it relevant for contemporary ethical studies. And suggests that effective moral development in Islam requires a sequential process: spiritual grounding (Al-Ghazali) followed by rational habituation (Ibn Miskawaih).

## CONCLUSION

The moral philosophies of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih, despite having different starting points and emphases, both significantly contribute to the understanding of character (akhlak) in Islam. Al-Ghazali, with his Sufi approach, grounds morality in spirituality and total submission to Allah SWT. For him, noble character is a manifestation of a purified soul (tazkiyatun nafs)





achieved through outward and inward acts of worship, as well as the cultivation of a strong creed from an early age. The ultimate goal of morality according to Al-Ghazali is to attain divine pleasure.

Meanwhile, Ibn Miskawaih, influenced by Greek philosophy, views morality as a result of habituation and practice. He argues that character is not merely innate but can be formed and developed through conscious effort in balancing the three faculties of the soul intellect, anger, and desire which then give rise to four main virtues: knowledge, patience, moderation, and justice. Ibn Miskawaih's approach focuses more on character development and social ethics.

A critical synthesis of these two perspectives demonstrates that morality in Islam is a comprehensive system, combining spiritual and practical dimensions. First, Al-Ghazali's spiritual foundation through the cultivation of a strong creed and purification of the soul is essential as the basis for moral motivation. Without strong faith, moral actions can lose their transcendent direction. Second, character development through habituation and practice, in the style of Ibn Miskawaih, complements this spiritual foundation, transforming religious values into tangible and internalized behaviors. This means that obedience to Allah's commands and abstaining from His prohibitions (Al-Ghazali's perspective) are concretely manifested through the practice of virtues such as justice, patience, and moderation in daily life (Ibn Miskawaih's perspective).

Thus, a Muslim of noble character is an individual whose soul is closely connected to God, seeking His pleasure in every action, while also possessing a character ethically trained to interact with fellow human beings and the environment justly, wisely, and in a balanced manner. This synthesis offers a strong framework for understanding and applying Islamic morality holistically, relevant for self and societal development.

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