

## Miskawayh's Philosophy of History in the Light of *Tajarib al-Umam*

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### ABSTRACT

*This writing seeks to discuss and interpret Miskawayh's philosophy of history as may be perceived in the section on contemporary history of the Tajarib al-Umam that tell the history of Buyid era in his work. As a historian of medieval Islam, Miskawayh did not clearly expound his philosophy of history in the works of Tajarib al-Umam. Employing textual interpretation and analysis method comprehensively and partially, this writing seeks to construct Miskawayh's philosophy of history in the light of Tajarib al-Umam. The results of this analysis and interpretation show that the section on Miskawayh's contemporary history is considered important for the philosophy of history as constructed by Miskawayh. There are three forms of historical development and stages in the section, i.e. formation and stability, weakness and restoration apart from brilliant achievement. These three forms and stages characterise the semi-cyclical concept history in Miskawayh's philosophy of history. This concept indicates that Miskawayh was among the earlier Muslim historian who pioneered the cyclical form of philosophy of history and he thus preceded other Muslim historians such as Ibn Khaldun.*

*Keywords: cyclical history, historiography, Miskawayh, philosophy of history, Tajarib al-Umam*

Philosophy of history is a study of two aspects: to understand the process of historical development and the methods applied by historians to understand history. Moreover, philosophy of history is a philosophical examination, study and theorizing about the past or history (Aviezer Tucker 2009). In Muslim historiography, the field of philosophy of history was founded by Ibn Khaldun only in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century CE. His work, *Muqaddimah*, outlined the principles and basis of philosophy of history on the methods needed by historians to write and understand history, and proposed the cyclical theory and concept of history of formation and excellence of civilization (Muhsin Mahdi 2006: 133). Muslim philosophy of history was formed when Muslim historiography had already reached its peak with the completion of great works and the emergence of leading historians such as Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, al-Tabari, al-Mas'udi and Miskawayh. In this state of existence within the treasury of diverse historical sources and Muslim historiography, Ibn Khaldun attempted to understand and compile the field of Muslim historiography by laying down the foundation of its epistemology in his *Muqaddimah* which may be named as the foundation of 'Muslim philosophy of history' (Zaid Ahmad 2009: 439-443). Therefore, the development of Muslim philosophy of history by Ibn Khaldun shows that this field only emerged after all the major works of Muslim historiography, particularly in the medieval age, had already been compiled and written by the leading historians. This development shows that accomplishments of all these works in Muslim historiography and the emergence of the historians were not marked with the element of philosophy of history, as conceived by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah*. The issue is whether this statement is true. If it is true, this means

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that medieval Muslim historians did not have their own philosophy of history in the compilation and writing of their historical works whereas their works represented an age of historical importance with methods and sources which reflected scholarship and epistemological value. This article attempts to answer this issue by evaluating a medieval historical work by Miskawayh entitled *Tajarib al-Umam* (Experiences of Nations). The focus is on proving that the idea of Muslim philosophy of history was already conceived in a narrative historical work such as *Tajarib al-Umam*, and on re-structuring the foundation of 'semi cyclical concept of history' which became the Miskawayh's philosophy of history at the time of writing history.

### Notes on Biography

Abu 'Ali Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ya'qub Miskawayh was born in Rayy, Iran about the year 932 CE. He passed away in the year 1030 CE (Arkoun 1993: 143). Miskawayh was said to have a hard start in life. Al-Khwarizmi recorded in *Rasa'il* the demise of Miskawayh's father while he was at a tender age and his mother re-married a young man (al-Khwarizmi 1879: 173). However, as an adult, Miskawayh had a background of excellent service in the Buwayhd or Buyid government of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century CE during the rule of Buyid *Amir al-Umara'*, Mu'izz al-Dawlah (356 H/967 CE) in Baghdad, Rukn al-Dawlah (365 H/976 CE) in Rayy and 'Adud al-Dawlah (372 H/983 CE) in Shiraz and Baghdad. He served as *nadim* (secretary and drinking companion) to the *wazir* (minister) al-Muhallabi (352 H/963 CE) and Abu al-Fadl Ibn al-'Amid (360 H/970 CE). While serving Ibn al-'Amid, Miskawayh also acted as *khazin* (librarian) for seven years and also taught his son, Abu al-Fath Ibn al-'Amid (366 H/976 CE) (Siddiqui, 1974: 87-111). After going through an academic and intellectual process, Miskawayh successfully established himself as one of the leading scholars in Baghdad, particularly in the fields of moral philosophy and history in the medieval age of Islam. As a scholar of moral philosophy, Miskawayh wrote his well-known *magnus opus*, '*Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*' (Refinement of Characters), while as the leading historian of the Buyid era (the second phase of Abbasid rule) he wrote the history book, '*Tajarib al-Umam*'. Margoliouth described his scholarship in the field of history as the legacy of al-Tabari, who was an earlier Muslim historian of a different intellectual age (Margoliouth 1977: 129). Based on this statement, it appears that Miskawayh must have had a certain form of historical concept which he conceived at the time of compiling and writing the *Tajarib al-Umam*. The question is what is that form that concept? Early observation of the title '*Tajarib al-Umam*' shows that there was an idea of history underlying his thinking, that is, '*Tajribah*' or experience. What is the basis for this statement and why did he use this term to describe the idea and its philosophy of history?

### Epistemology of *Tajribah* (Experience) in *Tajarib al-Umam*

Discussion of the epistemology of '*Tajribah*' or experience in *Tajarib al-Umam* needs to begin by looking at the structure of its writing as a whole. *Tajarib al-Umam* is a narrative chronicle which is divided into two sections, universal and contemporary. The section on universal history includes the time of the Prophet, Khulafa' al-Rashidin and Umayyad until the 'Abbasid era. The other section on contemporary history is the main chapter in the 'Abbasid period which describes or chronologically narrates Buyid history only from the year 340 Hijrah to the year 369 Hijrah (Azmul Fahimi 2010: 37).

This contemporary history is the basis for Miskawayh's idea of *Tajribah* in *Tajarib al-Umam* because in this section he used *masadir* or primary sources and *tajribi* (personal experience) methods to compile and write it. Epistemology is a theory knowledge which is founded on three main aspects: scope, source and method (Kattsoff 1954). In this context, Miskawayh's historical sources which were directly related to *Tajribah* may be evaluated based on the scope of contemporary history, that is, his personal experience of the Buyid history and oral historical reports by informants of history (Azmul Fahimi 2016: 64-69).

The method used by Miskawayh in the contemporary history section is the *mushahadah* (eyewitness) which drives the *Tajribah* theory mechanism, that is, *mulahazah* (observation) using *'iyan* (vision) and *khobar* (narration) in order to obtain historical information. In the section on contemporary history, Miskawayh described in detail the outline of philosophy of history through evolutionary narrative and historical chronology beginning from the year 340 to 369 Hijrah (Khan 1980: 65-73). The issue is how was the form of outline for the *Tajribah* idea applied by Miskawayh to contemporary history? And what were the characteristics and form of philosophy of history used? This analysis and discussion is considered the climax in understanding Miskawayh's philosophy of history. At this stage, the merits, weaknesses and contribution of Miskawayh's philosophy of history are evaluated. Its purpose is to present technically and scientifically the form of *tajribah* idea in the writing of history.

### Miskawayh's Contemporary History

The focus of application for the *tajribah* idea was only in the contemporary history section. This means that it was not applied in the universal history section. The writer considers that the universal history section was only to complement Miskawayh's writing of history. This situation was due to two factors. First, in the section on contemporary history, Miskawayh practically wrote history based on *masadir* (primary historical sources) or firsthand personal experience. Second, in this section, Miskawayh also had direct relation and interaction in the context of time and place. These two factors did not happen in the universal history section which used the *maraji'* (historical references) system and conclusions inferred from available historical information. The issue is how did the application of the *tajribah* idea occur in the contemporary history section?

Miskawayh holistically focused on development of *Tajarib al-Umam* epistemology in writing the Buyid history of Iraq beginning from the year 334 to the year 369 Hijrah. In the year 369 Hijrah Miskawayh stopped writing *Tajarib al-Umam*. It is not clearly known what is the justification and reason for him to discontinue writing of *Tajarib al-Umam* in the year 369 Hijrah. Following his action, the historian al-Rudhrawari continued writing the *Tajarib al-Umam* in his own records entitled '*Dhayl Tajarib al-Umam al-Umam*'.

However, the continuation of writing *Tajarib al-Umam* by al-Rudhrawari did not become significant in the context of Miskawayh's philosophy of history. The writer holds the opinion that this was due to the need for focus on the *tajribah* idea in *Tajarib al-Umam*. Al-Rudhrawari's effort was a secondary factor and did not directly represent Miskawayh's philosophy of history. Perhaps al-Rudhrawari's writing in *Dhayl* had the legacy of Miskawayh's historical thinking because he wrote *Dhayl* as a continuation of *Tajarib al-Umam*. The writer, nevertheless, holds the opinion that a concrete and specific inference first needs to be built based on the scope of history from the year 334 to 369 Hijrah in *Tajarib al-Umam*.

For this purpose, a holistic study needs to be done in order to evaluate the form of historical movement which occurred in *Tajarib al-Umam* from the year 334 to 369 Hijrah. This study involves the process of identifying, evaluating and inferring the entire plot of historical events which occurred. The writer identified three main periods underlying the process of historical movement of the period 334-369 Hijrah. First is the time of Mu'iz al-Dawlah, second, the rule of 'Iz al-Dawlah and third, the era of 'Adud al-Dawlah. The three periods formed the background of the historical events chronologically written by Miskawayh based on the Buyid political leadership in Iraq.

### First Stage: Formation and Stability

According to Miskawayh, the history of Buyid rule in Iraq began on 11 Jamadi al-Akhir of the year 334 Hijrah when Ahmad bin Buwayh entered the al-Shammasiyyah gates of Baghdad city. The

success of his expedition to Baghdad marked the beginning of the Buyid Dynasty domination over the 'Abbasid caliphate. Ahmad was later appointed as Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq by Caliph al-Mustakfi bi'llah and was awarded the robe of honour with the *laqab* (title) of Mu'iz al-Dawlah (Imami 2001: 6/115; Margoliouth 1921: 5/88).

The question is why did Miskawayh begin his records of the Buyid kingdom by focusing on Mu'iz al-Dawlah's rule? Based on facts, Mu'iz al-Dawlah was not the highest *Amir al-Umara'* in the Buyid hierarchical structure. In fact, at the time he became *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq, the Buyid dynasty still had 'Imad al-Dawlah and Rukn al-Dawlah as more senior Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* compared to Mu'iz al-Dawlah. By political convention of the Buyid dynasty, the state hierarchy was determined by the seniority factor of an *Amir al-Umara'* in terms of age which earned respect for his position at once making him the highest authority and reference for state policy. Mu'iz al-Dawlah who became *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq was not more senior than his two brothers, 'Imad al-Dawlah and Rukn al-Dawlah, thus he was not highest in authority (Donohue 2003: 18-34).

The writer is of the opinion that even though Mu'iz al-Dawlah was not the highest Buyid ruler when he governed Iraq and Baghdad in the year 334 Hijrah, Miskawayh was being realistic by focusing his writing of *Tajarib al-Umam* on the historical development centred in Baghdad or Iraq. Baghdad's position as the most important socio-politico-economic city and centre of the Muslim world at the time made its position in Iraq as very significant. Miskawayh's main focus was in the context of the Buyid historical development in Iraq. This focus is seen as very strategic, precise and practical because Mu'iz al-Dawlah's domination of Baghdad meant direct Buyid control over the 'Abbasid caliphate which in turn meant the Persian world's domination of the Arab world or the domination of a weak state. This development had a very big impact as it is an important fact of the beginning of the rise of the Buyid dynasty against the backdrop of Persian domination of the Arab and Islamic world.

This background factor of Persian nationalism was the main reason that Miskawayh promoted the concept of the emergence of the Persian or Iranian dynasty as an interlude power which crossed the long history of Arab domination over the Muslim world. The rise of this interlude power was portrayed by Minorsky as the Iranian intermezzo which inferred the rise of alternating kingdoms of the Persian race. The rise of Persian power caused the decline in the greatness of the Arab-Islamic state, namely the 'Abbasid caliphate and the excellence of its civilization, and replaced it with the appearance of various Persian-Islamic kingdoms such as the Taharid, Saffarid, Samanid and the Buyid (Minorsky 1953: 110-124).

Miskawayh documented the historical development of Mu'iz al-Dawlah's twenty-two year rule from the year 334 Hijrah until his death in the year 356 Hijrah. Mu'iz al-Dawlah or, his real name, Abu al-Husain Ahmad bin Abi Shuja' Fanakhusraw Buya was the third prince to the founder of the Buyid dynasty. He was born in the year 303 Hijrah and died in Baghdad on 17 Rabi' al-Akhir, 356 Hijrah. Mu'iz al-Dawlah was a Buyid prince with a fighting spirit. He was not so interested in learning, literature and religion, and in fact, his knowledge of Islam and Arabic language was rather limited. He was more interested in physical strength, courage, wrestling, sprint racing and swimming (Donohue 2003: 47-48). Nevertheless, his position and approach as military commander created political stability and restored the position of the military in Iraq which had been beset with political, financial and military problems for ten years. These problems existed at the time *Amir al-Umara'* took over Iraq from the *Atrak* who were appointed by the 'Abbasid caliphate (Donohue 2003: 34-35).

On 22 Jamadi al-Akhir of the year 334 Hijrah, a week after his appointment as *Amir al-Umara'*, Mu'iz al-Dawlah arrested Caliph al-Mustakfi billah and replaced him with Aba al-Qasim al-Fadl bin al-Muqtadir billah with the title Caliph al-Muti' lillah (Imami 2001: 6/116-117; Margoliouth 1921: 5/89-90). However, in order to stabilize the position of the Buyid in Iraq, in that same year, Mu'iz al-Dawlah also arrested Caliph al-Muti'. The Caliph was only released after a reciprocal agreement was reached between the Buyid and the 'Abbasid, in which was stated



that one of the princes of Mu'iz al-Dawlah be given facilities to hold royal ceremonies in the Caliph's palace (Zettersteen 1993: 484).

This situation and action however did not avert various external and internal enemy threats which Mu'iz al-Dawlah had to confront. The external threats were from the Hamdanid kingdom led by Nasir al-Dawlah centred in Mawsil. In the early stage, Mu'iz al-Dawlah managed to make peace with Nasir al-Dawlah in the month of Muharam, 335 Hijrah (Imami 2001: 6/126; Margoliouth 1921: 5/ 97). However, in the year 337 Hijrah, Buyid-Hamdanid relations became tense again due to a demand for tribute payment whereby Nasir al-Dawlah refused to seal an agreement to pay eight million dirham (Imami 2001: 6/126; Margoliouth 1921: 5/ 119). The same episode again erupted between them in the years 347 and 353 Hijrah (Donohue 2003: 35). Besides that, in the year 336 Hijrah, Mu'iz al-Dawlah succeeded in repelling the advance of the Baridid kingdom led by Abu al-Qasim al-Baridi in Basra (Donohue 2003: 35). Once again in the year 341 Hijrah Mu'iz al-Dawlah succeeded in defending Basrah from multiple attacks by Qarmatid and Wajihid kingdoms who ruled Oman (Zettersteen 1993: 484).

Internal threats faced by Mu'iz al-Dawlah were in the form of rebellions and conspiracies by elite Daylamites for five times. The purpose was to topple him: in the year 334 Hijrah by Yanal Kushah (Imami 2001: 6/120-121; Margoliouth 1921: 5/92), in the year 336 Hijrah by Kurkir in Basra (Imami 2001: 6/143-144; Margoliouth 1921: 5/115), in the year 337 by Isfahdust (Imami 2001: 6/145; Margoliouth 1921: 5/117) and in the same year by the military commander and officer in charge of palace affairs, Sabuktakin (Imami 2001: 6/150; Margoliouth 1921: 5/121). The greatest threat towards the Buyid in Iraq was by the elite Daylamites in the year 345 Hijrah when Mu'iz al-Dawlah was indisposed (Imami 2001: 6/199-204; Margoliouth 1921: 5/ 173-178). This situation occurred because the Daylamites who served as officers and soldiers in the Buyid military felt marginalized and did not get the deserved attention from Mu'iz al-Dawlah. In fact, the *Amir* gave privileges and attention to the *Atrak* who received rewards and good positions in the military administration (Donohue 2003: 40).

This situation was also due to Mu'iz al-Dawlah's overdependence on the *Atrak* as the Buyid military in Iraq. He rewarded them with land through the *iqta'*, a system which became the policy and basic characteristic of his rule. Nonetheless, besides the *Atrak*, the elite Daylamite also received *iqta'* from Mu'iz al-Dawlah (Sato, 1982: 85). However, the elite Daylamite felt that they deserved better status as they also came from Persian ancestry as the Buyids. They sought opportunity to replace the Buyid with a Daylamite kingdom in Iraq. This led to a series of five main rebellions launched by the elite Daylamites in the Buyid kingdom, all of which were successfully brought under control by Mu'iz al-Dawlah with the assistance of his *wazir* (vizier), al-Muhallabi (Donohue 2003: 41 & 51).

Both the external and internal threats were recorded by Miskawayh according to their sequence from one year to the next for twenty-two years of Mu'iz al-Dawlah's rule in Iraq. Miskawayh freely and boldly criticized Mu'iz al-Dawlah's personality and state policy. Nonetheless, his criticism and analysis did not deny the reality that Mu'iz al-Dawlah succeeded in maintaining a stable Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* rule in Iraq. This stability was achieved through successful military administration in a series of war with external powers. His determination in facing external threats was complemented by implementation of financial policy through *iqta'*, *kharaj* and *tasbib* which contributed to the inner stability of the military institution and balanced the kingdom's financial position.

With the demise of Mu'iz al-Dawlah on the 17 Rabi al-Akhir, 356 Hijrah, Bakhtiyar, his son, succeeded him as Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq with the title 'Iz al-Dawlah. Bakhtiyar ruled Iraq for eleven years from the year 356 until 367 Hijra overshadowing two 'Abbasid caliphs, Caliphs al-Muti' lillah and al-Ta' lillah. Throughout his rule, Iz al-Dawlah was said to pale in comparison to his father's authority as military commander and head of the kingdom. In fact, he was said to have plunged the government into a state of crisis and weakness.

## Second Stage: Weakness

When Mu'iz al-Dawlah was indisposed with kidney problems, his son, Abu Mansur Bakhtiyar was appointed as the second Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq carrying the title 'Iz al-Dawlah. Upon his demise in the year 356 Hijrah, Mu'iz al-Dawlah surrendered his palace administration, war horses, slaves and affairs of state governance to 'Iz al-Dawlah on condition that he would always be supervised and guided by the military commander, Sabuktakin and *wazir* (vizier) al-Muhallabi (Mafizullah 1964: 15). Mu'iz also picked two officers as *wazir* (ministers) without portfolio, Abu al-Fadl 'Abbas bin Husayn and Abu al-Faraj Muhammad bin al-'Abbas, to assist his son in state administration. He even urged his son to seek advice from his uncle, Rukn al-Dawlah and his cousin, 'Adud al-Dawlah, who were more senior and skilled in administration (Imami 2001: 6/273; Margoliouth 1921: 5/ 248).

Mu'iz al-Dawlah decided on two key policies which were to be followed by 'Iz al-Dawlah, peace talks with the Daylamites and concern for the interest and welfare of the *Atrak* soldiers. These two groups were to be given serious attention by 'Iz al-Dawlah to ensure peace and avert internal rebellion in the kingdom. The welfare of the *Atrak* soldiers had to be looked after due to the kingdom's dependence on them as defenders against attacks by the Daylamites. In fact, the *Atrak* soldiers functioned as a strong and effective military force. Based on these two factors, Mu'iz al-Dawlah advised 'Iz al-Dawlah to accept guidance from Sabuktakin, the military commander with authority over the *Atrak* military force (Imami 2001: 6/273; Margoliouth 1921: 5/248).

The process of power transfer from Mu'iz al-Dawlah to Bakhtiyar took place without restrictions or obstacles from any party. Miskawayh recorded the scenario after the death of Mu'iz al-Dawlah as siding with 'Iz al-Dawlah because rain poured down non-stop for three days and three nights. According to him the rain gave an advantage to 'Iz al-Dawlah as any effort by the Daylamites to rebel or seize power would have failed (Imami 2001: 6/270; Margoliouth 1921: 5/245-246). In fact, the political environment in Iraq and other provinces showed stability, peace and absence of turmoil. The death of some prominent leaders in Iraq and the surrounding provinces became the main contributor to this factor. Other than the demise of Mu'iz al-Dawlah in Baghdad, Sayf al-Dawlah also passed away in Mawsil, Kafur al-Ikhshidi passed away in Egypt and Abu 'Ali Muhammad bin Ilyas passed away in Kirman (Donohue 2003: 51-53).

Therefore, nature and human factor gave an advantage to Bakhtiyar in the power transfer to him as *Amir al-Umara'*. The question is whether he took the opportunity from the stable and conducive political development in Iraq and the surrounding region after his father's death? 'Iz al-Dawlah was appointed as *Amir al-Umara'* in the second phase of Buyid rule in Iraq when he was twenty-five years old. He ruled for eleven years from the year 356 until 367 Hijrah. Before becoming *Amir*, he was Deputy Governor in Oman during his father's rule and was also officer in charge of palace affairs for Caliph al-Muti' in the year 344 Hijrah (Donohue 2003: 52).

Generally, 'Iz al-Dawlah failed to fulfill his father's legacy and demands of political aspirations. Miskawayh recorded 'Iz al-Dawlah's ruling style as '*su' tadbir Bakhtiyar limamlakatihi wa linafsihi hatta fasada jundihi*' (Bakhtiyar's weakness in governance and personality caused neglect in the military aspect) (Imami 2001: 6/273; Margoliouth 1921: 5/249). Miskawayh explained two aspects of 'Iz al-Dawlah's weakness covering neglect of the military and national defence. These aspects were the cornerstone and main strength of the Buyid kingdom in Iraq. In fact, military strength was the main factor for his father's successful rule because it was the key to political stability and foundation of the kingdom's formation.

Nevertheless, 'Iz al-Dawlah was indifferent to these aspects due to his '*linafsihi*' (selfishness) or personality problem. 'Iz al-Dawlah was portrayed by Miskawayh as one who loved to spend his time with *lahwi* (entertainment), *la'ab* (sports), *ma'asyiratu al-masakhir* (jesters), *al-mughannin* (singers) and *al-nisa'* (women) (Imami 2001: 6/273; Margoliouth 1921: 5/249). Miskawayh further explained that his lifestyle and actions caused the military

commander Sabuktakin to adopt an attitude of '*la yarkabu ilayhi wa la yathiqu bihi*' (disregard and loss of confidence in him). This situation forced Sabuktakin to use an intermediary, through other individuals, to communicate with 'Iz al-Dawlah (Imami 2001: 6/273; Margoliouth 1921: 5/249). Thus, his position as *Amir al-Umara'* became increasingly weak until he was no longer accompanied and assisted by officers of credibility and authority such as Sabuktakin. Instead he ended up in the company of only two *wazir* without portfolio, namely, Abu al-Fadl dan Abu al-Faraj who, unlike Sabuktakin, were incapable of functioning competently in the military sector.

The estrangement between 'Iz al-Dawlah and *Atrak* led to three series of rebellion led by Sabuktakin in the years 363 to 634 Hijrah. The series of rebellion caused the government of 'Iz al-Dawlah, specifically and the Buyid generally to temporarily collapse but not yet totally. Upon the third and final series of rebellion, the atmosphere in Baghdad witnessed the takeover of power by the *Atrak*. As a consequence, 'Iz al-Dawlah was forced to retreat to Wasit for almost two years. *Atrak* domination in Baghdad at the time also signified their readiness to rule by appointing a new *Amir al-Umara'*, to dominate the 'Abbasid family and deny the power of the Buyid dynasty in Baghdad (Donohue 2003: 58).

However, swift action by 'Adud al-Dawlah who sent Ibn al-'Amid's military assistance from Rayy succeeded in saving Buyid rule in Baghdad and the position of 'Iz al-Dawlah. However, 'Adud al-Dawlah was not appointed by his father, Rukn al-Dawlah (the most senior Buyid ruler at the time) to rule Baghdad. Instead, his father helped 'Iz al-Dawlah to restructure his administrative organization by appointing 'Iz al-Dawlah's younger brother, Abu Ishaq as military commander (Donohue 2003: 59).

Miskawayh recorded the weaknesses of 'Iz al-Dawlah in the battle against 'Imran bin Shahin which occurred in the year 360 Hijrah. '*Zakara su' tadbir Bakhtiyar li'amri 'Imran munzu inhadara min Baghdad ila 'an kharaja 'a'ida ilayha*' (the event about Bakhtiyar's administrative weakness in war with 'Imran since he began to leave Baghdad until he returned) (Imami 2001: 6/336-337; Margoliouth 1921: 5/317). Miskawayh recorded in detail his weaknesses in military affairs in fighting 'Imran bin Shahin at al-Nu'maniyyah. He was portrayed as a military commander who was not serious in facing war. Instead, his attitude was like leading a hunting expedition. As a result, his military was not ready, had no strategy, was not disciplined and lacked focus on the main mission (Imami 2001: 6/336-337; Margoliouth 1921: 5/317). Miskawayh's explanation was sufficient for researchers to understand the portrayal of 'Iz al-Dawlah's level or lack of credibility as the second Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq.

'Iz al-Dawlah also delegated too much administrative affairs to both his *wazir*. This and his mother's interference caused all the decisions of the government to be not his own decisions as *Amir al-Umara'*. The administrative environment made Buyid rule in Baghdad become weak and on the verge of collapse. (Donohue 2003: 53). The real downfall of 'Iz al-Dawlah's rule began with the demise of Rukn al-Dawlah in the year 366 Hijrah. As the most senior *Amir al-Umara'* in the Buyid political hierarchy, this enabled his son, 'Adud al-Dawlah to plan a mission to control Baghdad. Following that, in the year 366 Hijrah, 'Iz al-Dawlah moved to Wasit and Ahwaz in preparation to face his cousin (Donohue 2003: 66). However, the series of battles witnessed 'Iz al-Dawlah as unable to withstand attacks by 'Adud al-Dawlah. Finally, in negotiations with 'Adud al-Dawlah, he agreed to withdraw from his position as *Amir al-Umara'* of Iraq (Imami 2001: 6/423-424; Margoliouth 1921: 5/411-413).

### Third Stage: Restoration and Excellence

Upon the withdrawal of 'Iz al-Dawlah, 'Adud al-Dawlah, already one of the Buyid *Amir al-Umara'*, entered the city of Baghdad in the month of Rabi' al-Thani, 367 Hijrah. His full name was Abu Shuja' Fanna Khusraw, the eldest son to the most influential Buyid *Amir*, Rukn al-Dawlah. He had begun his career as *Amir* in Fars and later in Shiraz. In the year 351 Hijrah, he was awarded the title 'Adud al-Dawlah by Caliph al-Muti' (Mafizullah 1964: 42).

The irony was that Miskawayh provided a scope of only two years in recording 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule in Iraq, from the year 367 to 369 Hijrah. In the year 369 Miskawayh discontinued writing the *Tajarib al-Umam*. It is not clear why he ceased documenting the rest of 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule until the latter's demise in the year 372 Hijrah. In fact, at the time, Miskawayh was still serving as *nadim* (secretary) to 'Adud al-Dawlah, thus making it possible for him to access a wealth of historical information as primary and firsthand personal proof.

As a result of Miskawayh having stopped writing in the year 369 Hijrah, the historian al-Rudhrawari later continued writing about 'Adud al-Dawlah in his *Dhayl Tajarib al-Umam al-Umam* from the year 370 until the year 372 Hijrah, for two years until the latter's demise in the year 372 Hijrah (Imami 2001: 7: 17-51; Margoliouth 1921: 1-78). However, what needs to be clarified here is Miskawayh's documentation about 'Adud al-Dawlah's role in Iraq. Even in the short span of two years, the period highlighted the process of restoration and excellence of the Buyid kingdom achieved by 'Adud al-Dawlah. Miskawayh's records since the eventful year 364 Hijrah had acknowledged the charisma, ability and authority of 'Adud al-Dawlah when he succeeded in helping 'Iz al-Dawlah overcome Alptakin's rebellion in Baghdad. According to Miskawayh *'amma tamma haza al-fath li 'Adud al-Dawlah lam yushakku ahadun mimman dana wabu'da fi 'annahu yastawla 'ala hazih al-mamlakatu wa yudifuha ila mamlakatuhu lida'fi Bakhtiyar 'anha'* (when 'Adud al-Dawlah achieved victory – defeating Alptakin in Baghdad – anyone living near or far – from Baghdad – regarded him as more qualified to rule the Iraq province because of Bakhtiyar's weakness) (Imami 2001: 6/387; Margoliouth 1921: 5/370).

This record proves the competition between 'Adud al-Dawlah and 'Iz al-Dawlah for authority over Iraq began much earlier. However, 'Adud al-Dawlah did not take drastic action to dominate Iraq because of the factor of Buyid seniority, still with Rukn al-Dawlah, did not permit him to take over Iraq from 'Iz al-Dawlah's rule (Imami 2001: 6/387; Margoliouth 1921: 5/370). Later, however, the demise of Rukn al-Dawlah in the year 366 Hijrah re-opened the opportunity for 'Adud al-Dawlah to dominate Iraq by ousting 'Iz al-Dawlah. Finally, in the year 367 Hijrah, his dream became a reality when 'Iz al-Dawlah withdrew from Baghdad towards western Iraq (Donohue 2003: 66).

According to Donohue 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule in Iraq was based on two forms of authority: First, his legitimate authority as Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* according to the Buyid concept of political seniority, which title he was awarded by the 'Abbasid caliph. Second, as Caliph al-Ta'i' did not properly function at the time, 'Adud al-Dawlah filled the vacuum left by al-Ta'i' to act as head of religion. 'Adud al-Dawlah regarded his ownself as *Malik al-Islam* and acted based on that authority. His action indirectly made him function as if he were a caliph. The second form of authority, according to Donohue led to military development and diplomatic relations with the Roman superpower as well as centralization of military and financial control (Donohue 2003: 67-68). However, as Donohue asserted, in spite of 'Adud al-Dawlah's success in the three aspects of governance, Miskawayh documented only half of it in *Tajarib al-Umam*, that is, only the historical events in two years of 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule in Iraq. As explained earlier, this situation happened because after the period of two years, in the year 369 Hijrah, Miskawayh discontinued writing the *Tajarib al-Umam*.

According to Miskawayh, the Buyid military developed under 'Adud al-Dawlah's leadership in the year 369 Hijrah. Military forces were sent to war in three important provinces and were victorious in two of them. First, they were victorious in fighting Banu Shayban in Shahrzur (Imami 2001: 6/447-448; Margoliouth 1921: 5/437-438). Second, they defeated Dabba bin Muhammad al-Asadi in 'Ayn al-Tamr (Imami 2001: 6/464; Margoliouth 1921: 5/453-454). However, 'Adud al-Dawlah's military campaign met with failure in Marsh when they fought with the army led by Hasan bin 'Imran Shahin. But this defeat was somewhat considered as tradition by the Buyid since even the era of Mu 'iz al-Dawlah and 'Iz al-Dawlah (Imami 2001: 6/459; Margoliouth 1921: 5/453-448). In order to strengthen state relations with the 'Abbasid caliphate, 'Adud al-Dawlah married the eldest princess of Caliph al-Ta'i' with a dowry worth



100,000 dinar. According to Miskawayh, 'Adud al-Dawlah hoped that this marriage would give them a son descended from the Buyid to inherit the throne of the 'Abbasid caliphate (Imami 2001: 6/464; Margoliouth 1921: 5/454).

Diplomatic relations between the Buyid and the Fatimid caliphate and the Roman Empire were established during 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule. However, Miskawayh only briefly documented the good relationship with Rome in the year 369 Hijrah. Relations began when Saqlarus al-Rumi named Ward, who opposed the Emperor of Rome in Qastantiniyyah (Constantinople), came to Baghdad and offered to form a pact with 'Adud al-Dawlah. On hearing the news, the Roman Emperor sent two emissaries to intercept Ward's offer and the two parties, Ward and the emissaries competed to obtain protection money from 'Adud al-Dawlah. Miskawayh recorded that this had never happened before and that this showed the glory of 'Adud al-Dawlah's reign (Imami 2001: 6/446; Margoliouth 1921: 5/436).

As explained, all of Miskawayh's records about 'Adud al-Dawlah are proof that his rule was very different from the two Buyid *Amir al-Umara'* preceding him, namely Mu'iz al-Dawlah and 'Iz al-Dawlah. 'Adud al-Dawlah succeeded in restructuring Iraq, particularly the city of Baghdad, to become more organized in terms of political stability, domestic prosperity and international relations. All these factors formed the basis for Miskawayh to compile the history of 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule as an era marked by the factor of Buyid revival, restoration from political anarchy and finally leading to its glory. However, as mentioned earlier, Miskawayh documented the developments for a period of only two years (367-369 Hijrah) and ceased writing *Tajarib al-Umam* in the year 369 Hijrah.

### **Cyclical or Semi-cyclical Concept of History?**

Even though the history of the Buyid kingdom began six years earlier than the scope of contemporary history (340-369 H), Miskawayh's records are nevertheless considered as the beginning of its historical framework. This framework covers the reign of three *Amir al-Umara'* in Iraq, namely Mu'iz al-Dawlah, 'Iz al-Dawlah and 'Adud al-Dawlah which spanned a period of thirty-five years. The development process had three stages of historical development: formation and stability, weakness, as well as restoration and excellence. The question is how did these three stages take place and what was the measurement of this process, which Miskawayh ceased documenting in the year 369 Hijrah?

The writer is of the opinion that each of the three stages represented basic characteristics in the reign of Mu'iz al-Dawlah, 'Iz al-Dawlah and 'Adud al-Dawlah. All three stages were an attempt by Miskawayh to deduce a philosophy of history he experienced close-up as *tajribah*. Miskawayh however did not explain explicitly in detail the three stages in *Tajarib al-Umam*. He only gave a brief example in his foreword at the beginning of *Tajarib al-Umam* and presented them simply as historical events and narratives. Nevertheless, the division, arrangement and writing about the reigns of Mu'iz al-Dawlah, 'Iz al-Dawlah and 'Adud al-Dawlah reflected this inclination. If examined closely, the three stages formed Miskawayh's philosophy about history. The writer perceives it as a form of inference with characteristics of cyclical history as conceived by Ibn Khaldun in *Muqaddimah*.

What is meant by historical cycle? According to Ghosh, cyclical history is a theory of history which believes that each civilization has and goes through a cyclical process and when the process is complete, the glory of the civilization ends (Ghosh 1964: 11). This is a general definition because each cyclical history is different from other cycles. Its cycle depends on the situation and background context of how the historical process begins and develops. Ibn Khaldun conceived his own theory of cyclical history. According to Zaid Ahmad, the development of Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory begins with *'umran badawi* (primitive civilization) and its peak ends with *'umran hadari* (urban civilization) (Zaid 1999: 262). What may be understood is that between the beginning of *'umran badawi* and *'umran hadari* as the peak of historical achievement and

civilization, are spaces filled with other factors which influence the successful process of climbing to the peak. *Dawlah* (sovereignty of state and government) and *asabiyah* (unity and strength) are two main factors which according to Ibn Khaldun contribute to success in achieving *'umran hadari* (al-Azmeh 1982).

The appearance of Ibn Khaldun and his work, *Muqaddimah* in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Hijrah proves that he had ample time and space to holistically analyse historical development. Ibn Khaldun's framework of cyclical history is based on his observation of the lengthy and extensive development process of Muslim history. Almost the same situation happened with Miskawayh and *Tajarib al-Umam* which appeared earlier than Ibn Khaldun, that is, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Hijrah. Even though Miskawayh was earlier, the historical development process at the time already passed through and went beyond important epochs in Muslim history, i.e. the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Khulafa' al-Rashidin, Umayyad and 'Abbasid.

There is an important factor which differentiates between Miskawayh's and Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history, that is, Ibn Khaldun's effort in writing in detail the philosophy of history in *Muqaddimah*. This was not the case with Miskawayh. Even though he wrote history, he did not compile in detail the philosophy of history in *Tajarib al-Umam*. But absence of this factor did not mean that Miskawayh did not have a philosophy of history. The existence of his philosophy of history needs to be proven and historical data in the historiography *Tajarib al-Umam* have to be analyzed and compiled. If Ghosh's definition of cyclical history is accepted as a guideline, then the three stages qualify to be adopted as a concept of cyclical history because there are beginning and peak stages. The question is how suitable are the three stages to be classified as a proper form of cyclical history?

The first stage is the formation stage, which was represented by the era of Mu'iz al-Dawlah's reign who was the first Buyid ruler of Iraq and Baghdad. His ability was in successfully restoring political stability in Iraq after the era of anarchy during which the *Atrak* dominated the 'Abbasid caliphate. Mu'iz al-Dawlah succeeded in placing Baghdad on the path of stability both internally and in the external aspect. However, this situation changed when his heir and successor, 'Iz al-Dawlah failed to maintain the legacy of his father's rule causing Buyid authority in Iraq to weaken. This weakness was the second stage of the Buyid cyclical history in Iraq after enjoying a long period of political stability in the formation era. However, this situation was in turn restored by his successor, 'Adud al-Dawlah, who led the province of Iraq to a level of excellence. This third stage was the major milestone in Miskawayh's process of cyclical history, that is, the era of excellence.

Ironically, Miskawayh ceased writing *Tajarib al-Umam* during the reign of 'Adud al-Dawlah. There is not any source of historians which recorded the reason why Miskawayh ceased writing the historical events of the year 369 Hijrah. Is it possible that he felt that his writing already accomplished the mission of showing the excellence of the Persian race so that continuing it would be redundant or immaterial?

The writing of *Tajarib al-Umam* was continued by the historian, al-Rudhrawari who wrote until the year 393 Hijrah during the reign of 'Amir al-Umara' Baha' al-Dawlah, while Miskawayh was still alive. Al-Rudhrawari is a Abu Shuja' Muhammad Bin al-Husayn Zahir al-Din was born in Jibal, Iran in the year 437 hijrah and died in the year 488 hijrah in Medina. He was an *adib* (literateur) and once served as *wazir* (minister) to 'Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadi. al-Rudhrawari continued the writing of *Dhayl Tajarib al-Umam al-Umam* which covered historical events of a time span of nearly twenty years from 369 to 389 hijrah. He was known as a historian, *adib* and wise *wazir* who called for policy to unite the *ahl al-Sunnah* and Shi'ite in Baghdad (Bosworth 1995: 586-587).

Miskawayh died in the year 421 Hijrah. Al-Rudhrawari stopped writing in the year 393 Hijrah when the Buyid kingdom in Iraq was already on the verge of decline. The complete downfall of Buyid kingdom took place in the year 447 Hijrah when Iraq was dominated by the Seljuks (Cahen 1986: 1350).

Based on the above background, the writer is of the opinion that the three stages submitted by Miskawayh, that is, formation, weakness and glory do not represent the concept of a complete cyclical history. This is because in the year 369 Hijrah, he discontinued writing about historical events for the purpose of propaganda to show the success and glory of the Buyid kingdom during the reign of 'Adud al-Dawlah (Hachmeier 2002: 129). This situation also shows that Miskawayh tried to deny the era of decline towards the downfall of the Buyid dynasty in Iraq. Formation, weakness, glory, decline and downfall are a set of important factors which must be or are inevitable in each process of historical development and fulfill the characteristics of cyclical history. In my point of view, Miskawayh's discontinuation of writing the *Tajarib al-Umam* in the year 369 Hijrah is a full-stop to a constitutive framework of history or an imperfect semi-cyclical history, incompletely written.

### Practical Semi-cyclical Concept of History

Therefore, the three stages of semi-cyclical history conceived by the writer is an interpretation of Miskawayh's philosophy of history. Ibn Khaldun expounded his cyclical theory explicitly, systematically and clearly in his *Muqaddimah*. Miskawayh submitted a practical point about cyclical history without explaining his theory at great length. He merely briefly recorded in his foreword to *Tajarib al-Umam* by mentioning '*yatakarrar mithlaha wa yantaziru huduth shibhuha wa shakluha*' (repeated in the same form as it was) (Imami 2001: 1/47). This statement thus proves the existence of cyclical history according to Miskawayh in *Tajarib al-Umam*. The question is what is the form of the cycle?

Miskawayh explained that the repeated process or cyclical history occurred by giving a practical example, that is '*kazikri mabadi' al-duwal wa nash'u al-mamalik, wa zikri dukhul al-khalal fiha ba'da zalika, wa talafi man talafahu wa tadarakuhi ila an 'ada ila ahsanu hal*' (such as historical records about the policies of statehood and formation of government, and records of its subsequent weaknesses and then of its restoration which lead to its good condition) (Imami 2001: 1/ 47).

The writer is of the opinion that Miskawayh's statement '*kazikri mabadi' al-duwal wa nash'u al-mamalik*' (such as historical records about the policies of statehood and formation of government) referred to the formation of the Buyid kingdom in Iraq during Mu'iz al-Dawlah's reign. And '*wa zikri dukhul al-khalal fiha ba'da zalika*' (and records of its subsequent weaknesses) referred to the weaknesses of the Buyid kingdom during 'Iz al-Dawlah's reign. Finally, '*wa tadarakuhi ila an 'ada ila ahsanu hal*' (and restoration which leads to its good condition) referred to the era of restoration and excellence achieved by 'Adud al-Dawlah. This shows that the three examples given by Miskawayh in his foreword to *Tajarib al-Umam* were parallel and corresponded with his records of Buyid history which was part of contemporary history at the time.

The three situations formed the three stages of cyclical history briefly explained by Miskawayh in his foreword to *Tajarib al-Umam*. He merely did not compile his concept of cyclical history in detail neither in his foreword nor in the section on Buyid and contemporary history. But what is certain is that the stages of formation, weaknesses and restoration were Miskawayh's three characteristics of historical development which have the same elements and values as the concept of cyclical history. However, as asserted earlier, Miskawayh's concept of cyclical history was semi-cyclical, incomplete and imperfect because it was not accompanied by a historical development which involves a stage of decline and downfall.

Although Miskawayh discontinued writing *Tajarib al-Umam* about historical events in the year 369 Hijrah, in actual fact, he managed to present a practical framework of history. This was because he merely presented historical events without explaining how the process of semi-cyclical history occurred in *Tajarib al-Umam*. He was not inclined to compile exhaustively and in detail a form of philosophy of history as Ibn Khaldun did in his *Muqaddimah*. It was sufficient

even to present just a brief and short foreword accompanied by a record of events. This process is brought about without the need to isolate and separate into original components which if done, might produce a theory that does not correspond with the reality of history which occurred.

In conclusion, this discussion deduces that the historiography, *Tajarib al-Umam*, compiled and written by the Muslim historian, Miskawayh, before the appearance of Ibn Khaldun, indeed contained values and ideas equivalent to the philosophy of history presented by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah*. Nonetheless, the form and style of presentation of Miskawayh's philosophy of history in *Tajarib al-Umam* is very different from that of *Muqaddimah* due to the factors of difference in the age and circumstances when the writing took place. Miskawayh wrote his work using a narrative approach and historical chronology whereas Ibn Khaldun directly applied elements of philosophy with a conceptual and theoretical approach. However, the application of the *tajribah* idea submitted by Miskawayh in the section on Buyid and contemporary history is proof that philosophy of history elements and values exist in the work *Tajarib al-Umam*. This application is based on three stages of history developed by Miskawayh. The first stage covered the formation and stability which occurred during Mu'iz al-Dawlah's rule. The second was the stage of weaknesses during the reign of 'Iz al-Dawlah. The third was the stage of restoration and excellence of the Buyid kingdom during the time of 'Adud al-Dawlah. These three stages were the application of Miskawayh's *tajribah* and history which only functioned in his writing the section on Buyid and contemporary history. My evaluation of the second part finds that Miskawayh submitted a concept of cyclical history which was incomplete and imperfect.

This concept was not completed by him because he discontinued writing the *Tajarib al-Umam* about historical events during the excellence of 'Adud al-Dawlah's rule. He also did not continue the writing of *Tajarib al-Umam* during the time of Buyid decline in Iraq. Discontinuation of his writing made his historical concept semi-cyclical or incomplete half round. Nevertheless, the writer is of the opinion that this cycle is more practical and consistent with Miskawayh's statement in the foreword to *Tajarib al-Umam*, which explained that the *tajribah* process developed was based on three main stages, that is, '*mabadi' al-duwal wa nash'u al-mamalik*' (formation), '*dukhul al-khalal fiha ba'da zalika*' (weaknesses) and finally '*tadarakuhi ila an 'ada ila ahsanu hal*' (restoration) (Imami 2001: 1/ 47). In this context, Miskawayh may be considered as a historian who was practical, realistic and non-theoretical.

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