

PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE (SIHHA) IN THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF THE EASTERN RENAISSANCE

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Abstract: This paper explores the conceptual foundations of a healthy lifestyle (Sihha) as articulated in the intellectual heritage of the Eastern Renaissance. Unlike modern clinical approaches that often focus on the treatment of specific pathologies, the philosophy of health developed by medieval Eastern thinkers - such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Ar-Razi-emphasizes a holistic and preventive paradigm. The study analyzes the “Six Essential Factors” (*Al-Asbab al-Sitta*) - including environmental conditions, nutrition, physical activity, and mental hygiene-as a methodological framework for maintaining human equilibrium. The research argues that in Eastern Peripatetic thought, health is not merely a biological state but a philosophical category representing the harmony between the soul (*nafs*) and the body (*jism*). By synthesizing Aristotelian traditions with Eastern ethical values, these scholars established a system where the rational management of one's lifestyle is viewed as a moral duty and a prerequisite for intellectual perfection. The findings suggest that this medieval “philosophy of health” provides significant insights for contemporary preventive medicine and the bio-psycho-social model of well-being, offering a timeless strategy for holistic human development.

Keywords: Philosophy of health, Eastern Renaissance, Sihha, Ibn Sina, Holistic medicine, Preventive paradigm, Soul-body dualism, Healthy lifestyle, Medieval Islamic philosophy

Introduction

The modern world faces an increasing burden of chronic diseases and psychological stress, leading to a renewed global interest in preventive healthcare and holistic well-being. While contemporary medicine has achieved remarkable technological progress, the philosophical foundations of “how to live healthily” are deeply rooted in the intellectual heritage of the Eastern Renaissance [1]. The scholars of the medieval East, particularly between the 9th and 12th centuries, did not view health as a mere absence of infirmity; rather, they constructed a sophisticated *Philosophy of Health* that integrated biological, ethical, and environmental dimensions.

The term “*Sihha*” in the works of thinkers like Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Abu Bakr al-Razi, and Al-Farabi, transcends the narrow boundaries of clinical medicine. It represents a state of dynamic equilibrium - a harmony between the internal temperament of the individual (*mizaj*) and the external conditions of existence [2]. This philosophical paradigm suggests that health is a result of a conscious, rational lifestyle rather than a product of medical intervention alone. The relevance of this heritage lies in its proactive nature: it shifts the focus from “treating the sick” to “preserving the healthy”, a principle that aligns perfectly with the modern World Health Organization’s definition of well-being [3].

The methodological significance of Eastern health philosophy is most clearly seen in the doctrine of the “*Six Essential Factors*” (*Al-Asbab al-Sitta*). These scholars argued that human health is governed by six fundamental interactions: the air we breathe, the food and drink we consume, physical movement and rest, sleep and wakefulness, metabolic retention and evacuation, and, crucially, the state of the mind and emotions [4]. By managing these six pillars through the

faculty of reason (*Aql*), an individual maintains the balance necessary for both physical longevity and spiritual clarity.

This study aims to re-examine these foundational principles through a philosophical lens. By analyzing how medieval Eastern thinkers synthesized Aristotelian logic with original observations of human nature, we can uncover a timeless methodology for a healthy lifestyle. In an era of fragmented medical specialization, the Eastern Renaissance offers a holistic model that treats the human being as a unified whole, where the health of the body is inseparable from the purity of the soul and the quality of the environment.

Literature Review

The concept of health (*sihha*) in the intellectual heritage of the Eastern Renaissance has been studied through classical sources and modern interpretations. The literature can be divided into three main groups [5]. First, the foundational understanding of health is presented in the works of Ibn Sina, particularly in *The Canon of Medicine*, where health is explained through the balance of the body and the “Six Essential Factors.” Similarly, Abu Bakr al-Razi in *Spiritual Medicine* emphasizes the relationship between ethical behavior and physical well-being [6]. Al-Farabi in *The Virtuous City* considers health as a social phenomenon connected with moral governance.

Second, modern researchers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Dimitri Gutas have analyzed the philosophical foundations of Eastern medicine, showing its synthesis with Aristotle and Galen traditions [7]. They highlight that health was understood not only as a medical condition but also as a metaphysical and ethical category.

Third, contemporary studies, including those by Ziauddin Sardar, demonstrate the relevance of Avicenna’s preventive approach in modern healthcare. Regional scholars also emphasize the role of scientific centers such as House of Wisdom in shaping a health-oriented worldview [8-10].

Despite these studies, the concept of “*sihha*” is often examined separately in medical or philosophical contexts. There is still a need for an integrated approach that considers healthy lifestyle as a unified philosophical and methodological system. This thesis aims to address this gap.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of classical and modern sources demonstrates that the concept of *sihha* in the Eastern Renaissance is not limited to a purely medical understanding, but represents a holistic system integrating physical, ethical, and social dimensions of human life.

First, it was established that in the works of Ibn Sina, health is based on the principle of balance and regulation through the “Six Essential Factors.” This indicates that a healthy lifestyle is understood as a preventive and systematic process, rather than treatment of disease.

Second, the study shows that Abu Bakr al-Razi expands the methodology of health by incorporating moral and psychological self-control. As a result, *sihha* is interpreted as a state of harmony between body and soul, where ethical behavior directly influences physiological stability.

Third, in the socio-philosophical framework of Al-Farabi, health acquires a collective dimension. The findings reveal that public health is closely connected with social order, justice, and governance, suggesting that a healthy lifestyle also depends on the structure of society.

Furthermore, the comparative analysis of modern studies confirms that the Eastern Renaissance scholars developed an original methodology of health preservation that goes beyond the classical Greco-Roman tradition. Their approach can be characterized as preventive, integrative, and value-oriented, combining rational knowledge with ethical norms.

As a result, the concept of *sihha* can be defined as a multilevel system that includes: physiological balance, ethical self-regulation, and social harmony. This integrated model

demonstrates its relevance to contemporary holistic health paradigms, where lifestyle, mental well-being, and social environment are considered key determinants of human health.

Conclusion

The study shows that the concept of *sihha* in the intellectual heritage of the Eastern Renaissance represents a holistic and integrative model of health, combining physical balance, ethical self-regulation, and social harmony. The analysis of the works of Ibn Sina, Abu Bakr al-Razi, and Al-Farabi demonstrates that health was understood not merely as the absence of disease, but as a dynamic state achieved through lifestyle management and moral discipline.

It is concluded that the Eastern Renaissance scholars developed a preventive and value-oriented methodology of healthy living, which anticipates many principles of modern holistic health approaches. The findings confirm that *sihha* can be interpreted as a universal framework for human well-being, relevant to contemporary discussions on sustainable health and quality of life.

Thus, the integration of classical philosophical doctrines with modern perspectives allows for a deeper understanding of health as both a personal and social responsibility.

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