

Contemporary Human and Forgetting about the Health of Self Based on the Wisdom Principles of Avicenna

Abbas Bakhshandeh-Bali 

Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Iran.
 *Correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Abbas Bakhshandeh-Bali; Email: a.bakhshandehbali@umz.ac.ir

Article Info

Received: Mar 14, 2021
 Received in revised form:
 Apr 9, 2021
 Accepted: May 17, 2021
 Available Online: Sep 23, 2021

Keywords:

Avicenna
 Human
 Self health
 Spiritual health



 <https://doi.org/10.22037/jrrh.v7i3.34358>

Spiritual health refers to enjoying a sense of acceptance, a positive feeling, morality and the feeling of being in a mutual relationship with the dominant divine power, others and one's self. It develops in a dynamic and coordinated cognitive, emotional, and proactive process and personal consequences. Among the main components of spiritual health are spiritual knowledge, spiritual emotions, spiritual actions, and spiritual benefits (1). The concern about human development in the mentioned areas has led to the emergence of different views in different schools of thought in a way that some of them have focused solely on the physical dimension and, in contrast, some have been only concerned with the non-physical dimensions. The present editorial attempts to explain how the spiritual dimension has been ignored and how to compensate for it based on the wisdom principles of Avicenna.

With a brief review of the holy books in different religions and religious groups, one can be certain that the route of the most of the past humans has been full of uncertainties and contemplation. In the Quranic teachings, there are serious warnings that have been less attended to by the contemporary human particularly the Muslims. In numerous verses, human's lack of understanding about the realities of the universe has been mentioned. A few examples are "But most of them do not know the truth, and so they are disregardful"¹, "But most people are not aware of it"² and "They know just an outward aspect of the life of the world, but they are oblivious of the Hereafter"³ (2). In addition to these verses, there are numerous narrations about incorrect attitude of the majority of people in different periods, which is also evident in the contemporary age. Avicenna mentions this harm in some of his works. In a part of his book "Ketab al-Esharat va al-Tanbihat", he asserts that "In spite of what most people assume, world creatures do not have only physical sensations" (3).

The way to protect oneself against this harm is to pay attention to spiritual health or belief in the existence of a self and the need to transcend it. In this writing, by human self is meant the soul or spirit. In a short definition, self can be considered as one of the strengths of the body with different effects. These effects originate from one single source, which is called the 'self' (4). In other words, following Aristotle, Avicenna asserts in his definition of human self that self is an independent being, which is not physical and can move the body (5). Like Farabi, Avicenna spent most of his life on different

¹) Chapter Anbia, verse 24.

²) Chapter Nahl, verse 38.

³) Chapter Rome, verse 7.

philosophical discussions taking an argumentative approach. He believes if human wisdom, which is one of the strengths of 'self', can be connected to a degree of 'active wisdom', it will prepare the ground for spiritual health or self health (3). According to him, the epistemological dimension of such a human is focused on important issues such as the existence of God, self, the other world and the need for Sharia.

What Avicenna has in mind is not physical and complements human selves and realizes their potential. The completeness of human self, in terms of the fact that s/he is immaterial in essence, is that s/he gains knowledge about God, the Most High, rather than the material world so that the universe is reflected in him/her from origin to the other world and s/he becomes full of awareness and knowledge. Concerning the fact that self is dependent on the body in terms of control over his/her thinking and planning, his/her completeness depends on his/her dominance over his/her physical strengths and keep his/her anger, lust, and thoughts at a balance and use them in planning his life as required by correct decisions. In other words, s/he considers justice, bravery,

and chastity as the guides for his life in this world (6).

In a part of his works, which are believed to have been written at the end of his life, Avicenna tries to explain a logical method for achieving spiritual health and to tend toward a spiritual intuition. However, he does not manage to complete it (7). In this method also, he seeks to draw a diagram (outline) to draw more attention to the importance of spiritual health. By re-raising some people's belief, he reminds us of inner (spiritual) pleasures. A healthy human being, according to him, attempts to pay attention to self and guide it toward the holy world (the other world), which is beyond the material world, using the Sharia.

In conclusion, it can be inferred from the works of Avicenna that human spiritual health is developed as the result of development of theoretical and practical wisdom in human. One of Avicenna's main concerns and warnings is related to some people's assumption of being limited to physical sensations of the universe and ignoring self health as an important aspect of spiritual health.

Please cite this article as: Bakhshandeh-Bali A. Contemporary Human and Forgetting about the Health of Self Based on the Wisdom Principles of Avicenna. Journal of Pizhūhish dar dīn va salāmat. 2021;7(3):1-6. <https://doi.org/10.22037/jrrh.v7i3.34358>
