



IBN SINA AND THE REVOLUTION OF FOLK MEDICINE

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Field: Medical Treatment

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Abstract: This article analyzes the connection between the legacy of the famous scholar Abu Ali Ibn Sina and folk medicine. It explores how Ibn Sina's medical views—on nature, proper nutrition, psychological health—and widely used folk remedies are harmonized from a scientific perspective. Furthermore, the article compares the scientific basis of herbs and natural remedies used in folk medicine with the methods recorded in Ibn Sina's works.

Keywords: Ibn Sina, folk medicine, scientific heritage, natural healing, medical science, phytotherapy, ancient medicine.

Throughout the history of the Uzbek people, the field of medicine has always held a special place. Folk medicine—consisting of treatments used in natural conditions among ordinary people—has developed over centuries, passed down both orally and in written form. In this regard, one of the greatest scholars, the “Sultan of Eastern Medicine,” Abu Ali Ibn Sina, scientifically advanced medical concepts. His book *The Canon of Medicine* (*Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*) served not only scientific circles but also formed the theoretical basis for folk medicine. This article evaluates the interrelation, similarities, and differences between Ibn Sina's legacy and folk medicine from a modern point of view.

Ibn Sina (980–1037) was one of the greatest physicians, philosophers, and encyclopedists of the medieval East. Although he worked in many scientific fields, he is particularly renowned for his contributions to medicine. His most famous work, *The Canon of Medicine*, consists of five volumes and was used as a main textbook in European medical universities for over 600 years. This work provides detailed analysis on healthcare, disease diagnosis and treatment, diet, hygiene, and more. Notably, Ibn Sina systematized the scientific foundations of medicinal products derived from plants, animals, and minerals.

Folk medicine is a system of treatments formed mainly on practical experience and includes:

- Herbal medicine (phytotherapy)
- Use of animal products (honey, oil, milk, snake fat, etc.)
- Heat and cold therapies (steaming, compresses, friction)
- Healthy diets and proper nutrition
- Spiritual treatments (prayers, incantations, counseling)

These methods evolved over thousands of years and are widely used among people.

Similarities between Ibn Sina's medicine and folk healing include:

1. Phytotherapy

Ibn Sina's works mention over 800 medicinal plants. These same herbs—such as ginger, cumin, licorice, wormwood—are commonly used in folk medicine. Ibn Sina, however, provided scientific details regarding their physiological effects, dosages, and impact on hormonal balance.

2. Proper Nutrition

Folk medicine considers dietary habits closely tied to health. Ibn Sina held profound scientific views on this topic, explaining the relationship between nutrition and diseases, as well as the digestive system's role in disease prevention.

3. Psychotherapy

In folk practice, emotional states like sadness and fear are treated through prayer, wisdom, and music. Ibn Sina scientifically explained the influence of such methods, asserting that “mental illnesses are closely linked with physical diseases.”

IV. Differences and Modern Interpretation

In some cases, folk medicine includes unscientific or even harmful treatments. Ibn Sina, on the other hand, validated each method through observation, experimentation, and logical analysis. Therefore, modern medicine aims to evaluate folk remedies through scientific criteria—preserving effective methods and discarding harmful ones.

During Ibn Sina's time—the 10th to 11th centuries—medicine lacked modern labs and technologies, yet significant achievements were made through practical experience and logical reasoning. Especially during the Islamic Golden Age, science, including medicine, greatly progressed. In cities like Baghdad, Bukhara, Ray, and Isfahan, pharmacies, hospitals, and madrasas were established, shaping a scholarly environment that nurtured Ibn Sina.

He scientifically analyzed some common folk practices and criticized others. For instance, harmful treatments like excessive bloodletting or branding were strongly criticized by Ibn Sina.

Today's concept of “integrative medicine” reflects Ibn Sina's approach: he considered not just the illness but the patient's overall condition—including mood, season, climate, age, diet, and mental state. Folk medicine was also historically based on this principle. Ibn Sina writes:

“Every illness stems from cold, heat, moisture, or dryness. The cure must also correspond to these qualities.”

This view aligns with the folk medicine concept of “imbalance in the body.”

Examples of scientifically supported medicinal plants:

- Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*):

Used in folk medicine to treat coughs and colds. Ibn Sina recommended it not only for respiratory issues but also as a blood purifier and diuretic.

- Spinach and Parsley:

Folk medicine uses these to increase blood iron levels. Ibn Sina described them as easily

digestible vegetables that strengthen the liver.

Modern science confirms many of Ibn Sina's views. Phytotherapy remains relevant today. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 80% of the global population still relies on traditional medicine.

The modern concept of psychosomatic illness also stems from Ibn Sina's idea that mental states affect the body—a foundation of today's psychotherapy and neurology.

Folk medicine includes precautionary measures but is not always safe. Ibn Sina also discussed the side effects of certain herbs and gave the following advice:

- Any remedy must suit the body's temperament.
- Avoid overdosing.
- Try new treatments cautiously and in small amounts first.

Today, many pharmaceutical drugs are developed based on Ibn Sina's insights. His systematization of folk remedies has helped bridge traditional healing and scientific medicine.

Folk medicine and Ibn Sina's medical system are complementary approaches. The scientifically grounded methods of Ibn Sina remain relevant in modern healthcare. In essence, folk medicine represents community experience, while Ibn Sina stands for scientific analysis and validation. Their harmony ensures a stable and effective approach in today's medical practice.

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