

Philosophy of Islamic Medicine and Critical Rationalism

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Abstract:

Critical rationalism is an approach in epistemology and science philosophy, based on which each cognitive predicate, in general, and each scientific theory, in particular, can be criticized rationally. In case of having experimental content, the theory can be experimentally tested by applying different experiments and observations, to be supported or rejected. In critical rationalism, when man encounters a particular problem, he provides some solutions, and when the number of solutions is higher, there is a higher probability of finding an appropriate solution. One of the concerns of the supporters of each particular philosophy, for instance medical philosophy, is to evaluate whether or not the evaluation and confirmation of the methods and hypotheses of the particular field is possible in the framework of critical rationalism.

When talking about the philosophy of the science of medicine in the Islamic world, one can elaborate on the Islamic “philosophy of medicine” on the one hand and the philosophy of “Islamic medicine” on the other hand. The authors do not believe in the existence of a unique “medical philosophy” through the Islamic world. Furthermore, we accept the presence of a tradition called “Islamic medicine” (in spite of internal heterogeneity) and believe that one can talk about the philosophy of “Islamic medicine.” Therefore, the elements of this medical philosophy can be considered and its methods and hypotheses can be described and also criticized. By devising different medical encyclopedias and presenting different solutions for treatment of various diseases, critical appraisal of different treatment methods in different medical traditions, attempts to found large hospitals with instruments required for precise evaluation of the diseases for a large number of patients, employment of some effective methods for diagnosis and treatment in the hospitals, and development of effective educational, rehabilitation, and legal medical systems, physicians of the Islamic world have provided a good sample of critical rationalism. Moreover, by using different treatment methods for particular diseases and employment of different experimental methods, they had a great chance for finding appropriate treatments.

Keywords: Critical rationalism; Islamic medical system; Islamic philosophy of medicine; Philosophy of Islamic medicine.

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