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Exploring the timeless philosophy of life and death: A review of Unani wisdom in the age of modern science

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Abstract

This paper explores the philosophy of life (*Hayat*) and death (*Maut*) through the lens of Unani medicine, integrating classical metaphysical concepts with physiological principles. It traces the human quest for immortality from ancient myths—such as the Epic of Gilgamesh—to contemporary figures like Michael Jackson and Bryan Johnson, revealing a persistent desire to prolong life. The Unani system defines life as a state sustained by *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat) and *Rutubat Ghariziyya* (innate moisture), whose equilibrium is vital for maintaining health and preventing decay. Life begins with the union of male and female reproductive substances and progresses through stages characterized by gradual desiccation and consumption of vital heat, ultimately culminating in natural death (*Maut Tabi'i*). The paper discusses the classification of life and death by notable physicians like Hippocrates and Avicenna, who emphasize the importance of preserving innate heat and moisture through proper management of diet, environment, and lifestyle—outlined in the six essential factors (*Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyyah*). Both internal and external causes of death are critically analyzed, including the corruption of organs, excess or deficiency of bodily qualities, and environmental factors. The work concludes by juxtaposing traditional Unani views with modern biological theories of aging, such as oxidative stress and telomere shortening, affirming that while life can be prolonged, death remains an inevitable biological reality.

Keywords: Unani medicine, Life, Death, Innate heat (*Hararat Ghariziyyah*), Innate moisture (*Rutubat Ghariziyyah*), Aging,

Introduction

Since the beginning of human thought, people have tried to understand the reasons behind life and death. Why and how does birth happen? How do the stages of life unfold? What causes life and death? And why is death unavoidable? Humans have always sought answers to these important questions. Many, throughout history, have wished for long life or even immortality. Like, Gilgamesh, the legendary king of Uruk in Mesopotamian mythology, is famously known for his quest for immortality in the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest literary works in history. After losing his close friend Enkidu, Gilgamesh becomes deeply troubled by the reality of death and seeks a way to escape it. His journey reflects humanity's timeless desire to overcome mortality and achieve eternal life.¹ In his search, Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim, a man granted immortality by the gods after surviving a great flood. Utnapishtim shares the secret of immortality with Gilgamesh, involving a plant that restores youth. However, despite finding the plant, Gilgamesh loses it to a serpent, symbolizing the elusive nature of immortality. Ultimately, Gilgamesh learns that true immortality lies in his legacy—his deeds, the city of Uruk, and the lasting impact of his life^[1]. This story highlights the human struggle to accept mortality while emphasizing the importance of living a meaningful life and leaving behind a lasting mark on the world.

In modern times, Michael Jackson, the renowned pop icon, pursued various methods to delay aging and preserve youth, including unconventional techniques such as oxygen chamber therapy. He took great care of his appearance with skincare routines and surgeries to maintain his iconic look. He reportedly tried unusual ways to live longer, like sleeping in a special oxygen chamber that he believed could slow aging and heal his body. Jackson was also curious about new medical technologies that might help people live longer lives.² His wish to stay young and healthy was not just about living longer—it was also tied to his desire to always look and feel his best. This made his interest in longevity an interesting part of his life story^[2].

Bryan Johnson, a tech entrepreneur and founder of Blueprint, is a pioneer in the field of longevity and health optimization. He invests millions annually in cutting-edge health research and practices to slow aging and enhance longevity. His approach combines advanced technology, rigorous data

analysis, and science-backed protocols to monitor and optimize his body. Johnson follows a strict daily routine, including personalized nutrition, exercise, and sleep strategies, designed to maximize his biological potential. He collaborates with leading scientists and experts to measure biomarkers and improve his physical and mental health. Johnson's work inspires a growing movement of people focused on extending health span, not just lifespan. His efforts highlight the potential of science and technology to redefine aging and human health. However, the truth is that death is inevitable. As Jorjani says, death is not something that can be avoided through treatment or remedies [3].

In Unani medicine, the contemplation and deep inquiry into the philosophy of *Maut* (death) and *Hayat* (life) is foundational. This exploration seeks to understand the origins and causes of existence and, conversely, the reasons for death, raising the crucial question of its necessity.

Humanity has perpetually striven for immortality and extended longevity, a pursuit evident even in contemporary times, as seen in the extensive efforts of figures like Michael Jackson. However, it is an undeniable truth that death is not an ailment that can be averted through *Ilaj wa Tadbeer* (treatment and regimen) as mentioned by Jurjani [4].

According to Ibn Rushd, the art of *Tibb* (Unani Medicine) is fundamentally concerned with the practical application of established principles for the preservation of the human body's health and the elimination of disease⁵, thereby ensuring human survival. The philosophy of *Hayat* (life) and *Mamat* (death) is discussed with extensive detail and clarity within Unani medical texts; a level of comprehensive exposition not commonly found in other sciences. The science of *Tibb* is primarily categorized into two distinct branches: the theoretical aspect (*Ilm-e-Nazri*) and the practical aspect (*Ilm-e-Amali*). The practical aspect is further subdivided into [5, 6]:

1. *Ilm-e-Hifz-e-Sehat* (Science of Health Preservation): This branch deals with the management (*Tadbeer*) of healthy bodies (*Abdan-e-Sehatmand*).
2. *Ilm al-Ilaj* (Science of Treatment/Principles of Management): This branch focuses on the management (*Tadbeer*) of diseased bodies (*Abdan-e-Mareez*).

A specific discussion on the philosophy of *Hayat* and *Mamat* is found within the *Ilm-e-Hifz-e-Sehat*, as it outlines measures for the preservation of life and protection from death. Avicenna articulated

that if an individual adheres to the principles of health preservation naturally, they can indeed prolong their life. However, it is explicitly stated in the philosophical discourse that the role of *Hifz-e-Sehat* is not to prevent death from external calamities or to make humans immortal. Instead, its fundamental connection lies with protecting against two primary morbid processes [6, 7, 8]:

1. Preventing the occurrence of corruption (*Fasad*) and inherent deficiency (*Naqs-e-Juz'i*) in the *Ajza-e-Ghariziyya* (innate constituents) of the body.
2. Safeguarding against the rapid dissolution (*Fana o Tahlil*) of the *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat) ⁵ and

Rutubat Ghariziyya (innate moisture) of the body.

It has become evident that *Hifz-e-Sehat* is not a science that can avert death, as death is an inevitable truth. Physicians have further classified the science of *Hifz-e-Sehat* into three categories:

1. **Management of Weak Bodies (*Tadbeer-e-Abdan-e-Zaeefa*):** This category includes the management of frail individuals, such as the elderly and those with inherent weaknesses.
2. **Management of Individuals Prone to Weakness (*Tadbeer-e-Ashkhas-e-Maila-il-Zaeef*):** This refers to the management of individuals who show signs of impending disease or a predisposition to weakness.
3. **Absolute Preservation of Health (*Hifz-e-Sehat Bil Itlaq*):** This applies to the management of individuals who are perfectly healthy and show no inclination towards weakness.

In Unani medicine, the concepts of *Hayat* (life) and *Maut* (death) are defined thoroughly by prominent physicians like *Tabri* in various treatises.

Definitions of *Hayat* (Life) [9]

1. **Life as the Continuity of Sensation and Respiration:** *Hayat* is the state characterized by the continuous presence of sensation (*hiss*) and respiration (*tanaffus*). This definition emphasizes the vital functions that are overtly observable and are essential for maintaining life. Without these, life, as understood in this context, ceases.
2. **Life as Protection from Corruption and Transformation:** *Hayat* is the state of being preserved from the corruption (*fasad*) of faculties (*quwa*) and protected from the transformations (*taghayyurat*) of qualities (*kayfiyat*) through the endurance (*istehala*) of the body (*badan*). This definition highlights life as a dynamic state where the body actively resists decay and maintains its inherent qualities, indicating a robust internal system of self-preservation.
3. **Life as the Natural Functioning of Souls within the Animal Body:** *Hayat* is the animal body's ability to maintain the natural states of its animal soul (*nafs-e-haywani*), sentient soul (*nafs-e-hissi*), and natural soul (*nafs-e-taba'i*). This implies that life is dependent on the harmonious and proper functioning of these vital principles or "souls" within the living organism. Each soul is responsible for different physiological and psychological functions, and their healthy operation signifies life.

Definitions of *Maut* (Death) [9]

1. **Death as Complete Dissolution:** Death is the complete dissolution (*istehala-e-kulli*) of the natural body. This definition emphasizes death as the ultimate disintegration of the physical structure, leading to a loss of form and function.
2. **Death as the Cessation of Faculties:** Death is the termination of the animal faculties (*quwa-e-haywani*) and the corruption (*fasad*) of the organs (*a'da*), whereby the organs cease to accept the reception of other faculties. This definition describes death as the point where the body's intrinsic powers, particularly those associated with the animal soul, become defunct, and

the organs are no longer capable of performing their functions or responding to vital impulses.

3. **Death as the Total Annihilation of Bodily Faculties:** Death is the complete and simultaneous annihilation (*fanā-e-kulli*) of the animal body's faculties (*quwa-e-jismaniya*) due to the corruption of the body itself. This further elaborates on the second definition, emphasizing the comprehensive and irreversible loss of all physical capabilities and vital powers.
4. **Death as the Disappearance of Innate Faculties:** Death is the disappearance (*fana*) of those faculties that are inherent to the animal body. This simple definition points to death as the ultimate cessation of all intrinsic powers and functions that characterize a living being.
5. **Death as the Corruption of Innate Composition:** Death is the corruption (*fasad*) of the inherent composition (*tarkib*) of the elements (*ajza*) that were responsible for maintaining continuous health through their organization and balance. This implies that life exists as long as the intricate balance and healthy composition of the body's fundamental components are maintained; death occurs when this inherent order breaks down.
6. **Death as the Corruption of Innate Organization:** Death is the corruption (*fasad*) of the organization (*tarkib*) of the innate elements that existed within the body and were maintaining *Hayat* (life) by being compounded and organized. This definition is closely related to the previous one, stressing that the proper arrangement and interaction of the body's constituent parts are vital for life, and their disorganization leads to death.

The Role of Hararat Ghariziyya and Tabi'at: In Unani medicine, the concept of *Hayat* (life) is intricately linked to fundamental physiological processes. Life is essentially a quality that necessitates the presence of sensation (*hiss*) and movement (*harakah*). The manifestation of this sensation and movement occurs through the medium of *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat).

For the body's survival and the proper execution of its functions, *Hararat Ghariziyya* plays a crucial role. It facilitates essential activities such as the absorption of beneficial substances and the expulsion of harmful ones (e.g., digestion, assimilation, and excretion). These vital bodily functions cannot be accomplished without the presence of *Hararat Ghariziyya*, which essentially acts as the body's protective and sustaining agent. Just as a lamp illuminates a place through its oil, *Hararat Ghariziyya* bears the same relationship to the body, spreading from the heart throughout the entire organism, illuminating and sustaining it. It is, therefore, considered the common instrument for all faculties (*quwa*) [6, 8].

Consequently, from a philosophical perspective, life is directly dependent on the continuous presence of *Hararat Ghariziyya* within the body, as it constitutes the fundamental essence of the body's composite nature. The duration of life is thus directly proportional to the abundance and vitality of this innate heat; a greater presence of *Hararat Ghariziyya* correlates with a longer lifespan.

It is universally acknowledged among Unani physicians that the endurance and sustenance of the *Arwah* (spirits/souls) and, by extension, the continuation of life itself, are dependent upon the *I'tidal*

(moderation) of *Hararat Ghariziyya*. This necessitates that *Hararat Ghariziyya* maintains its balanced temperament and is constantly nourished by the *Ruh-e-Haywani* (vital soul) through proper respiration and a balanced diet. The primary function of respiration is to produce the vital soul and to moderate the intense heat generated in the heart, providing a tempered cooling effect. This process also facilitates the expulsion of the smoky vapors that are produced from the blood, which serves as the material basis for *Hararat Ghariziyya* [6, 8].

Similar to how fire illuminates an entire space by spreading within it, *Hararat Ghariziyya* spreads throughout the entire body from the heart, maintaining its vitality. The preservation of the body's heat is directly connected to its life and health. The moderation of *Hararat Ghariziyya*, which is the source of the *Arwah* (spirits) and heat, is essential for maintaining this balance, and the *Quwa-e-Haywaniyya* (vital faculties) assist in this moderation [6, 8].

However, this ideal state of inherent capability is not always maintained due to the constant influence of external factors. Therefore, the vital soul, through respiration, continuously refines the *Hararat Ghariziyya* and generates other *Arwah*. This is precisely why the vital faculties, with the assistance of the vital soul, supply heat to the soul located in the heart, enabling it to strengthen and sustain other faculties. If *Hararat Ghariziyya* and the vital soul were absent, no other vital faculties could exist. Conversely, an excessive increase leading to the subsequent suppression or obstruction of *Hararat Ghariziyya* and the vital soul can result in sudden death [6, 8].

According to Unani medicine, the initial formation of the body originates from two primary substances: the male semen (*Mani-e-Rijal*) and the female semen (*Mani-e-Nisa*) or menstrual blood (*Dam-e-Hayd*). In the male semen, the *Ruh* (spirit) and *Hararat* (heat) are more predominant, whereas in the female semen (*Mani-e-Nisa*) and menstrual blood (*Dam-e-Hayd*), the *Rutubat* (moisture) and *Ardiyat* (earthy substance) are more dominant. However, both menstrual blood and semen are inherently moist. The initial creation and development of the embryo (*janin*) primarily necessitate a very moist state, which is the *Nutfā* (zygote/early embryo). This *Nutfā* is formed from the union of both substances, and due to continuous digestion (*hadim*) within the uterus, heat gradually becomes predominant [6, 8, 24].

As the *Nutfā* progresses through its developmental stages, the innate heat present within it begins to thicken and solidify it. This process eventually allows the formative faculty (*Quwwat-e-Musawwirah*) to shape the embryo, forming various organs from different parts of the *Nutfā*. As the internal heat increases, the embryo reaches a state where it is neither too soft nor too hard, signifying a balanced consistency. Gradually, dryness increases in the body's parts due to the activity of *Hararat Ghariziyya*. Consequently, the body's strength for movement, such as walking, sitting, and running, also develops. This continuous drying process, driven by heat, leads to increasing agility and sharpness in the faculties, until a point of complete desiccation and eventual decay [6, 8, 24].

Since life is maintained by *Hararat Ghariziyya* and its presence in the body, and *Hararat Ghariziyya* is continuously being consumed, its gradual reduction ultimately leads to the cessation of life. This means that as *Hararat Ghariziyya* depletes, life also diminishes.

If the body, originating from *Nutfa* and *Mani* (seminal fluid), were to remain perpetually soft and moist without undergoing a process of drying, it would never achieve a complete and mature form. It would also lack the necessary power of movement and would not develop the vigor of youth. Therefore, a certain degree of dryness in the body is essential for its proper development. This initial dryness allows the body to complete its formative processes and gain the strength for movement and actions, leading to the stage of youth. However, this process of drying and stiffening continues progressively throughout life [6, 24].

Eventually, the continuous process of drying leads to the complete consumption of the innate moisture (*Rutubat Ghariziyya*) in the body. Since *Rutubat Ghariziyya* is the material basis for *Hararat Ghariziyya*, as the moisture is completely consumed, *Hararat Ghariziyya* gradually diminishes and eventually extinguishes. This leads to the understanding that as age progresses, the process of desiccation intensifies, eventually causing the *Hararat Ghariziyya* to self-extinguish. When *Hararat Ghariziyya* consumes its own substance and all faculties cease, death occurs. Therefore, it is crucial to understand why replenishment (*Badal ma yatahallul*) and sustenance are necessary to counteract this natural process of decay [6, 7].

Dissolution, and the End of Hararat Ghariziyya: In Unani medicine, the continuous processes of breakdown (*takharrib*), disintegration (*tafattaq*), wear and tear (*kasr wa shikasht*), dissolution (*tahlil*), and other transformations constantly occur within the human body. To counter these changes, *Tabi'at* (the innate healing power/nature) continuously produces restorative and compensatory substances to maintain equilibrium and prevent the body from deviating from its natural balance. Therefore, to sustain life, the intake of food (*ghiza*), drink (*sharab*), and air (*hawa*) is essential. As *Ibn Sina* stated, these are necessary for the survival of living beings [6, 7].

The body is always undergoing a continuous process of dissolution (*tahlil*) and decay (*ta'affun*). We can only strive to minimize this dissolution to prolong human life. However, there is no escape from death, which is the ultimate culmination of bodily decay. Similarly, the decay of the body is a frequent phenomenon.

Dissolution and decay in the body occur through both internal and external factors [6].

- **External Factors:** These include elements that cause both breakdown and decay in the body. For example, certain external agents can cause decomposition.
- **Internal Factors:** These are typically the *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat) that causes the body to undergo dissolution, as well as the internal corruption that leads to decay.

Beyond these factors, an imbalance in the *Arkan-e-Arba'a* (Four Elements - Earth, Water, Air, Fire) also contributes significantly. When we observe the elements, the lighter elements like air (*hawa*) and fire (*nar*) are more quickly and easily affected by dissolution, whereas the heavier elements like earth (*ard*) and water (*ma'*) are less susceptible. Consequently, in creatures predominantly composed of lighter elements (e.g., animals and plants), dissolution is more rapid, leading to shorter lifespans. Conversely, in substances with a greater dominance of heavier elements (e.g., minerals), dissolution is very slow, resulting in longer

lifespans, as seen in substances like glass, iron, and stone [10].

To counter dissolution and ensure the body's survival, constant *Badal ma Yatahallal* (replenishment of what is dissolved) is crucial. If this replenishment does not occur, the body will disintegrate, and life will cease. As Razi stated, the preservation of any body depends on two factors [7]:

1. **Prevention of Dissolution:** Nothing within the body should dissolve (e.g., preventing pus formation or excessive sweating).
2. **Replenishment of Dissolved Matter:** The body should continuously receive replenishment for what has dissolved.

For the preservation of the body's form and integrity, the primary function of *Tabi'at* in any living organism is to maintain the form and composition (*qiwam*) of the body. Since the body is composed of opposing qualities, it is essential to maintain a state of moderation (*i'tidal*). As a result of the vital activities and the inherent heat generated within the body, a constant, albeit subtle, process of dissolution occurs. Additionally, external and environmental heat also contributes to this dissolution.

Lighter elements like air and fire readily accept and undergo dissolution, meaning they are easily affected and break down quickly. In contrast, heavier elements like earth and water do not easily accept dissolution. This explains why the dissolution of solid organs is very slow. Since the body's physical composition consists of a proportion of elements, and this proportion can fluctuate, the delicate elements are quickly dissolved and accept dissolution readily. However, the replenishment for these elements also occurs at a slow rate. Therefore, *Tabi'at* undertakes the replenishment of the dissolved matter in a subtle way. All living beings unconsciously receive replenishment for what has been dissolved [10].

Tabi'at also instills a desire in living beings for appropriate food, water, and air, so that they can maintain the body's balance. Similarly, it encourages living beings to inhabit environments that are conducive to their temperament and where antagonistic forces to their body's temperament are minimized, and where necessary provisions are easily accessible.

In addition, to prevent death and the severe changes that occur in the body due to lack of nourishment or extreme changes in toxins, *Tabi'at* performs certain actions through which the process of dissolution in organisms slows down significantly. In contemporary terms, this relates to hibernation and aestivation, where an organism enters a prolonged sleep. During this period, the activity of the heart and respiration becomes extremely slow, and bodily dissolution is greatly reduced. *Tabi'at* also slows down these processes so that the *Hararat Ghariziyya* and *Rutubat Ghariziyya* can be preserved [6, 13, 14, 17].

According to most philosophers, among the Four Qualities (*Kayfiyat-e-Arba'a*), *Hararat* (heat) and *Yabusat* (dryness) hold a fundamental and essential status. Conversely, *Burudat* (coldness) and *Rutubat* (moisture) are considered accidental. Avicenna states that if the innate heat (*Hararat Ghariziyya*) and innate moisture (*Rutubat Ghariziyya*) within an organism are preserved, natural life will persist, leading to a prolonged lifespan and a healthy existence [15, 16].

In the view of Unani physicians, life, heat, and moisture are inextricably linked. Death occurs from the loss of moisture and subsequently heat. If the active faculties (*Quwa-e-Fa'ila*) of heat and moisture is strong within a body, and its constitution (*Tarkib*) maintains a moderate temperament (*Mizaj Mu'tadil*), then the duration of life will be sustained for a longer period, resulting in an extended lifespan.

Why Does Death Occur ^[11]?

Abbas Majusi states in *Kamil ul sana* that the immediate cause of death is the corruption (*fasad*) of the brain's composition, which in turn leads to the corruption of the vital soul (*Ruh-e-Haywani*).

However, the corruption of the vital soul and the brain's composition is impossible without the corruption of *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat). Therefore, death is ultimately caused by the corruption and imbalance in the *Hararat Ghariziyya*. It is essential to understand the factors that cause this corruption and imbalance in *Hararat Ghariziyya*. We will first discuss the internal causes that produce corruption.

Internal Causes (*Asbab-e-Muharrrikah Dakhiliyyah*) ^[11]:

1. Corruption of Organs (*Fasad-e-A'za*):

- **Brain:** Corruption in the brain leads to the weakening of the motive faculty (*Quwwat-e-Muharrrikah*). For example, Brain death due to head trauma, stroke, or hanging (where oxygen is cut off to the brain).
- **Heart:** Corruption in the heart leads to a decrease in the vital faculty (*Quwwat-e-Haywaniyya*) and weakening of respiration (*tanaffus*), causing *Hararat Ghariziyya* to extinguish. For example, Cardiac arrest, myocardial infarction (heart attack).
- **Liver:** Corruption in the liver results in the weakening of the nutritive faculty (*Quwwat-e-Ghaziya*). The liver fails to produce blood, and as a result, *Hararat Ghariziyya* diminishes due to lack of material, eventually extinguishing, much like a lamp goes out when its oil runs out. As seen in Fatal liver failure, leading to metabolic collapse.

2. Corruption of Qualities (*Fasad-e-Kayfiyat*) ^[11]

- **Excessive Heat:** If the quality of heat in *Hararat Ghariziyya* becomes excessively strong, as seen with very potent hot drugs like aconite (*Bish*) or certain fevers, *Hararat Ghariziyya* is consumed and extinguished. This resembles to a lamp burning out quickly when its flame is too strong. Like, Death due to heatstroke, high-grade fever, or burns.
- **Excessive Coldness:** If the quality of cold becomes dominant, as caused by very cold drugs like opium (*Afyun*) or hemlock (*Shawkaran*), it produces a substance in *Hararat Ghariziyya* that extinguishes the heat. This is like oil solidifying due to extreme cold, causing the lamp to go out. Like, Death by hypothermia, poisoning by cold-inducing narcotics.

3. Corruption of Matter (*Fasad-e-Madda*) ^[11]

- **Deficiency of Matter:** If matter decreases significantly, such as from severe hunger, excessive blood loss, or extreme thirst, *Hararat Ghariziyya* extinguishes, similar to a lamp going out when its oil finishes. Severe hunger, dehydration, or massive blood loss causes fuel for *Hararat Ghariziyya* to deplete.

- **Excess of Matter:** If the body's condition leads to an excess of matter, such as in very obese individuals or those with obstructed vessels, the *Hararat Ghariziyya* gets suffocated internally and extinguishes. This is comparable to a lamp's flame being stifled by excessive air. We will now describe the external causes of death, following the internal causes. *Death due to obesity-related heart failure or embolism.*

External Causes (*Asbab-e-Muharrrikah Kharijiyyah*) ^[11]

1. **Excessive Cold/Dispersion:** In the first scenario, if *Hararat Ghariziyya* is exposed to intense cold, it becomes dispersed and cools down, affecting both the internal and external body. This is like a very strong wind extinguishing a lamp's flame. Such a condition leads to the weakening of vital functions and can cause conditions similar to severe old age, as seen in Hypothermia, frostbite-induced death.
2. **Sudden Fear/Shock:** In the second scenario, if external cold enters the body, as occurs during acute illnesses or intense fear, it can cause the hands and feet to become cold, signifying a withdrawal of *Hararat Ghariziyya*. Like, Sudden cardiac arrest due to emotional shock (Takotsubo cardiomyopathy).
3. **Drowning:** In the third scenario, if a person drowns in water, *Hararat Ghariziyya* diminishes internally because respiration is obstructed, similar to a lamp's wick being submerged in oil and extinguishing. Death by drowning, submersion in water or other fluids is best examples of this.
4. **Suffocation/Strangulation:** In the fourth scenario, if respiration is prevented by strangulation, foul vapors accumulate layer by layer around the heart, leading to the extinguishing of *Hararat Ghariziyya*. This is like someone smothering a lamp's flame. Like, Hanging, choking, manual strangulation.
5. **Corrupt Air/Poisons:** In the fifth scenario, if *Hararat Ghariziyya* is exposed to putrefaction, such as from the vapors of decaying corpses, filth, or extremely foul odors, it becomes corrupted. This is similar to a lamp's wick becoming dirty due to external impurities, or a lamp being placed in a room filled with strong, foul odors, causing it to extinguish. For example, Death from inhalation of toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide or decaying biological matter.
6. **Severe Trauma:** In the sixth scenario, if the body sustains severe hot or cold trauma (e.g., from a deep cut), *Hararat Ghariziyya* becomes corrupted. The effects on the lamp are similar to those described under the corruption of quality. Like, Death by deep wounds, burns, severe electric shock, or freezing.

What is Natural death (*Tabi'i mout*)? ^[11]

Rutubat Ghariziyya (innate moisture) acts as the preserver of *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat) throughout different stages of life. In the stage of growth (*San-e-Numu*), the quantity of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* gradually decreases. In the stage of youth (*San-e-Shabab*), the quantity of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* is enhanced, aiding in the preservation of *Hararat Ghariziyya*. However, in the stage of old age (*San-e-Kuhoolat*), the quantity of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* diminishes, and its ability to preserve *Hararat Ghariziyya* weakens, though it remains present to some extent. By the stage of extreme old age (*San-e-Shaykhorhat*), the quantity of both

Rutubat Ghariziyya and the preserving power for *Hararat Ghariziyya* becomes very low, although *Rutubat Ghariziyya* is still minimally present.

Furthermore, the variation in lifespan among different individuals, even within the same species, for instance, in the case of humans, depends on the initial quantity of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* with which they are born. This also determines the natural variation in their lifespan, which remains concealed for a period. Although the body undergoes continuous *Badal ma Yatahallul* (replenishment of what is dissolved) through diet, *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat), environmental heat, and the functions of organs, the replenishment of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* is never fully commensurate with its dissolution. Over time, *Rutubat Ghariziyya* gradually diminishes completely, and with its annihilation, *Hararat Ghariziyya* also perishes. This process of the annihilation of *Rutubat Ghariziyya* and *Hararat Ghariziyya* is termed "Natural Death" (*Maut Tabi'i*) in Unani terminology. The specific timing of death varies among individuals according to their unique temperaments (*Mizaj*).

Here are the factors that contribute to the decline of *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat), leading to reduced lifespan and weakness, as described in Unani medicine ^[12]:

a. Physiological & Behavioral Imbalances ^[12]

- Excessive hunger and thirst, Anxiety and fear.
- Excessive joy or excessive anger.
- Grief and sorrow.
- Excessive bodily rest or excessive bodily movement (imbalance in physical activity).
- Excessive or deficient vital rest and movement (imbalance in the activity of the vital faculties).
- Excessive wakefulness or excessive sleep, Excessive coitus/sexual intercourse.
- Excessive vomiting and evacuation (e.g., severe diarrhea or excessive induced vomiting).
- Excessive purging or surgical incisions/wounding (leading to significant loss of bodily fluids/trauma).
- Excessive speech, Excessive bleeding.
- Remaining in a state of prolonged anticipation or emotional stress.
- Excessive love, compassion, and maintaining kinship (when they lead to emotional exhaustion or stress).
- Lethargy or extreme inactivity, Exhausting exercise,
- Prolonged stay in a very hot bath (*Hammam*).

b. Environmental & External Factors ^[12]

- Putrid vapors, intense external heat, or foul-smelling air/winds.
- Residing in a very tight and confined place, being afflicted with chronic diseases.
- Hearing frightening sounds or bad news, Seeing frightening sights or enemies.
- Exposure to very hot or very cold environments/substances (extreme temperatures).

c. Dietary Factors ^[12]

- Excess or deficiency in food and drink, Consumption of heavy and indigestible foods.
- Excessive consumption of sour, pungent, and salty foods.
- Consumption of substances that produce very cold and

inert moisture (e.g., foods that generate excessive phlegm or black bile).

All these factors are considered detrimental, as they contribute to the decline of *Hararat Ghariziyya*, which in turn leads to a reduction in overall vitality and a shortened lifespan.

Taskheene Hararat: Factors Causing the Generation of Heat ^[12]

According to Avicenna, the following factors lead to the generation and increase of heat (*Hararat*) within the body. These factors contribute to the augmentation of innate heat (*Hararat Ghariziyya*):

1. **Moderate intake of food (*Ghiza-e-Mu'tadil*):** Consuming food in balanced quantities ensures proper digestion and metabolism, generating appropriate heat without overwhelming the system.
2. **Moderate rest and movement (*Harakah wa Sukoon-e-Mu'tadil*):** A balance between physical activity and rest are crucial for maintaining the body's natural heat. Neither excessive inactivity nor extreme exertion is beneficial.
3. **Moderate massage (*Dalk-e-Mu'tadil*):** Regular, moderate massage stimulates circulation and helps in the distribution of heat throughout the body.
4. **Application of leeches (*Alaq Gushtan*):** Leeches, when applied without excessive accompanying bleeding or the use of cold compresses, can generate heat in the affected area due to the local physiological response. (This point seems to describe a mechanism, where heat is produced rather than directly increasing innate heat; it might imply a localized warming effect.)
5. **Moderate filling of the stomach (*Imtila-e-Mu'tadil*):** Eating just enough to be full, without overeating, allows for optimal digestion and heat generation. This means consuming food in moderation so as to not overload the organs and maintain balance.
6. **Use of hot foods (*Aghziya-e-Harra*):** Consuming foods with a hot temperament increases the body's internal heat.
7. **Use of hot medicines (*Adviya-e-Harra*):** Administering medicines with a hot temperament directly contributes to increasing body heat.
8. **Moderate bath (*Hammam-e-Mu'tadil*):** Taking baths at a moderate temperature helps in maintaining and distributing body heat without causing excessive loss or accumulation.
9. **Exposure to hot substances, hot air, hot compresses, hot plasters, and professions that generate heat in the body:** Contact with hot elements like warm air, hot plasters (*Tila-e-Harra*), or engaging in occupations that involve heat (e.g., blacksmithing, working in a hot kitchen) can contribute to an increase in body heat.
10. **Moderate wakefulness (*Jagran-e-Mu'tadil*):** A balanced sleep-wake cycle promotes healthy physiological functions, which include the generation and regulation of heat.
11. **Moderate sweating (*Ta'arruq-e-Mu'tadil*):** Moderate sweating is a natural process of heat regulation and indicates a healthy metabolic rate.
12. **Excessive contemplation and thought (*Ghaur wa Fikr*):** While thought processes generally consume vital energy, moderate engagement in contemplation can be

a cause of heat generation, provided it is not excessive.

13. **Anger (*Ghusus*):** Anger, whether mild or intense, generates heat within the body.
14. **Moderate aging (*Sheyhookhat-e-Mu'tadil*):** Moderate aging implies a gradual decline in the body's functions, but within a certain range, the existing *Hararat Ghariziyya* still functions.
(This point seems to contradict the general idea of heat diminishing with age, so it might refer to a specific type of 'healthy' aging where metabolic heat is still maintained, or perhaps a temporary increase due to compensatory mechanisms.)
15. **Constriction of pores (*Tangee-e-Masamat*):** When the pores constrict, it traps internal vapors, which in turn leads to an increase in body heat.

Substances that Prolong Life and Strengthen *Hararat Ghariziyya* ^[12]

The following substances are believed to increase vitality and strengthen *Hararat Ghariziyya*, thus contributing to a longer lifespan:

- a. **Oil (*Zait*):** Olive oil or other beneficial oils.
- b. **Honey (*Asal*):** Known for its warming and strengthening properties.
- c. **Wine (*Sharāb*):** (Historically, in Unani texts, fermented grape juice was considered to have warming properties when consumed in moderation, though modern interpretation would differ regarding its health benefits).
- d. **Gold (*Dhahab*):** Often used in alchemical preparations and believed to have vitalizing effects.
- e. **Jewels (*Jawahir*):** Certain precious stones were thought to have medicinal properties.
- f. **Musk (*Misk*):** Known for its warming and invigorating properties.
- g. **Camphor (*Kāfūr*):** (This is traditionally cooling, so its inclusion here might be due to a specific context or an error in transcription, or it refers to a very small amount used in specific compounds where its overall effect becomes stimulating or harmonizing, not cooling).
- h. **Fragrances (*Atrīyāt*):** Aromatic substances that invigorate the spirit.
- i. **Nārdin (Spikenard) and other such strengthening aromatics.**
- j. **Fruits (*Fawākih*):** Especially those with a warm and moist temperament.
- k. **Various types of birds (*Tuyūr*):** Their meat, especially if light and easily digestible.
- l. **Coitus/Sexual Intercourse (*Jima'*):** When practiced in moderation, it is considered to release pent-up vital energy and contribute to overall well-being.
- m. **Frankincense (*Kundur*).**
- n. **Aromatic substances like ambergris (*Anbar*).**
- o. **Sleep (*Nawm*):** Moderate and timely sleep allows for restoration of vital energy and heat.

The foundation of medicine, in terms of both health and disease, is based on empirical knowledge and the subject of the *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah* (Six Essential Factors). Health is understood in the context of the body's normal states, while disease is a deviation from these states. The *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah* are the active factors upon which the body's integrity depends; they are the core elements controlling its functions. These Six Essential Factors are ^[18],

19, 20];

1. Air (*Hawa*)
2. Food and Drink (*Makoolat wa Mashrubat*)
3. Bodily Movement and Rest (*Harkat wa Sukoon Badani*)
4. Psychic Movement and Rest (*Harkat wa Sukoon Nafsanī*)
5. Sleep and Wakefulness (*Nawm wa Yaqza*)
6. Evacuation and Retention (*Istifragh wa Ihtibas*)

Life is impossible without these factors, and they are crucially responsible for the body's existence and benefit. Since an imbalance in these factors leads to disease, if a person maintains moderation in their lifestyle according to the principles related to these factors, they can lead a long, naturally robust, and preserved life. Historical records also show that people in ancient times, like Luqman, Hippocrates, and others, lived very long lives by strictly adhering to the principles of the *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah*. This often resulted in a longer lifespan compared to people in other countries whose geographical conditions might have been less conducive to longevity ^[18, 19, 20].

The following modern perspectives related to the philosophy of life and death are presented in the history of medicine ^[21, 22, 23]:

1. Cross-linking / Glycation hypothesis of aging.
2. The evolutionary senescence theory of aging.
3. Theory of antagonistic pleiotropy (Disposable soma theory).
4. The genome maintenance hypothesis of aging.
5. The neuroendocrine hypothesis of aging.
6. The oxidative damage / free radical hypothesis of aging.
7. The rate of living theory of aging.
8. The replicative senescence hypothesis of aging.

Results

The study reveals that in Unani medicine, life (*Hayat*) is sustained by *Hararat Ghariziyya* (innate heat) and *Rutubat Ghariziyya* (innate moisture), while death (*Maut*) results from their decline. Health preservation is achieved through lifestyle regulation and balance of the *Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah* (Six Essential Factors). Classical definitions and causes of life and death are thoroughly examined, aligning with some modern aging theories.

Discussion

Unani philosophy integrates physiological, environmental, and spiritual aspects of life. It views death as a natural, inevitable process resulting from internal imbalance or external harm. While modern science seeks to delay aging, Unani emphasizes moderation and health preservation as the key to a longer, balanced life.

Conclusion

The Unani philosophy of life and death presents a comprehensive, integrated view of human existence, where *Hayat* is sustained by the balance of innate heat and moisture, and *Maut* is the inevitable result of their corruption or depletion. The doctrine emphasizes prevention over cure, advocating for the preservation of health through moderation in lifestyle, diet, and environment.

Despite technological advancements in modern science

aiming to delay aging and death, the Unani system maintains that death is an unavoidable biological reality governed by natural laws. However, life can be enhanced in quality and possibly extended in duration through adherence to the principles of *Hifz-e-Sehat* and *Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriyah*. This ancient system offers timeless wisdom applicable even in the context of modern preventive medicine.

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Not available

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