



The great spiritual legacy of Abu Ali Ibn Sina as a philosopher and physician

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received April 2025
Received in revised form
15 May 2025
Accepted 15 June 2025
Available online
25 June 2025

Keywords:

Ibn Sina,
philosophy,
medicine,
humanism,
scientific heritage.

ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to the scientific and philosophical legacy of Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna), his contribution to the development of medicine and philosophy during the medieval period. Avicenna's humanistic ideas, aimed at caring for human health and the well-being of society, remain relevant in the modern world [1]. His works, such as "The Canon of Medicine," had a significant influence on both the East and the West.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-1415-vol6-iss3-pp195-201>

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Abu Ali Ibn Sinoning faylasuf va tabib sifatidagi buyuk ma'naviy merosi

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit so'zlar:

Ibn Sino,
falsafa,
tibbiyot,
insonparvarlik,
ilmiy meros.

Ushbu maqola Abu Ali ibn Sino (Avitsenna)ning ilmiy va falsafiy merosiga, uning o'rta asrlarda tibbiyot va falsafa rivojiga qo'shgan hissasiga bag'ishlangan. Ibn Sinoning inson salomatligi va jamiyat farovonligiga qaratilgan insonparvarlik g'oyalari bugungi kunda ham dolzarbligicha qolmoqda. Uning "Tib qonuni" kabi asarlari Sharq va G'arb ilm-fani rivojiga katta ta'sir ko'rsatgan.

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Великое духовное наследие Абу Али Ибн Сины как философа и врача

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

Ибн Сина,
философия,
медицина,
гуманизм,
научное наследие.

Эта статья посвящена научному и философскому наследию Абу Али ибн Сины (Авиценны), его вкладу в развитие медицины и философии в средневековый период. Гуманистические идеи Ибн Сины, направленные на заботу о здоровье человека и благополучие общества, остаются актуальными и в современном мире. Его труды, такие как «Канон врачебной науки», оказали значительное влияние как на Восток, так и на Запад.

*"I do not accept your lies, I am not a hypocrite,
I will bow to the truth – the best of all beliefs.
I am alone, but do not consider me false,
For I am the first example of true faith."*

Ibn Sina

Abu Ali Ibn Sina belongs to the group of titans of medieval culture who, through the strength of their spirit, the encyclopedic breadth of their mind, and their scientific-philosophical inquiries and aspirations, are related to the great figures of the Renaissance era. In their works, a deep combination of scientific sobriety, a creative approach to the study of nature, the expansiveness of philosophical analysis, and concern for the well-being of the working human being can be found.

The scientific community worldwide is well aware that Abu Ali Al-Husayn Ibn Abdullah Ibn Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Sina (980–1037) is truly one of the great encyclopedic scholars to have emerged from Central Asia, from the village of Afshona, near the city of Bukhara.

He studied theology, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, geology, natural sciences, and poetry, achieving outstanding results in medicine and medical practice.

European thinkers regard Ibn Sina as an Arab scholar who had a profound impact on the intellectual foundations of medieval European universities. This assertion is supported by his encyclopedic masterpieces, particularly *The Book of Healing* and *The Canon of Medicine*. In these works, Ibn Sina not only integrated the intellectual heritage of antiquity but also enriched it with his own groundbreaking discoveries. As recognized in the resolution of UNESCO's 20th General Conference, his legacy spans philosophy, logic, medicine, the natural sciences, sociology, literary criticism, poetry, and linguistics – demonstrating his remarkable influence on the global advancement of knowledge. [2]

Though more than a millennium has passed since his lifetime, and many branches of philosophy and science have evolved significantly – introducing concepts like dialectical and historical materialism, [3] splitting the atom for human benefit, decoding the genetic blueprint of life, and reaching outer space – many of Ibn Sina's ideas continue to hold relevance. His emphasis on humanism remains especially pertinent, as seen in the titles of his works: *The Book of Healing* and *The Canon of Medicine*, which reflect his deep

concern for both the spiritual and physical well-being of individuals. Moreover, his vision included aspirations for societal betterment and the pursuit of peace, advocating for the removal of warfare from human existence.

Despite the dramatic progress humanity has made in various domains, Ibn Sina's intellectual and ethical outlook still resonates today, affirming his enduring place among the great minds of history and underscoring that his thought remains strikingly modern.

MAIN CONTENT

Ibn Sina was born on August 16, 980, in the village of Afshana. His father, Abdullah, from the city of Balkh, moved to Bukhara during the reign of Nuh and Ibn Mansur Samani. His mother, Sitara-Banu, was from the village of Afshana. In the 10th century, Afshana was a small but heavily fortified settlement, famous for its weekly market. Ibn Sina's father held an important position among the city's elite. There were two sons in the family: Hussein (the real name of Ibn Sina) and Mahmud (5 years younger than Hussein). In 986, the family of Abdullah moved to Bukhara, where Hussein was sent to study.

In the 10th century, Bukhara stood not only as the political heart of the Samanid state and a thriving center of trade and craftsmanship in *Maveraunnahr*, but also as one of the foremost hubs of scholarship, culture, literature, and the arts in the Eastern world. This illustrious city attracted scholars, poets, and intellectuals from across the Islamic East, fostering an environment rich in learning and creative exchange. It was within this intellectually vibrant atmosphere that the formative years of the young Husayn – destined to become known globally as Avicenna – unfolded.

Gifted with exceptional intellect, Husayn had, by the age of ten, already committed the entire Qur'an to memory and attained mastery in linguistic sciences, including Arabic grammar, stylistics, and poetics. The arrival of the renowned scholar Abu Abdullah Natili in Bukhara marked a turning point. Invited by Husayn's father to reside in their home, Natili undertook the education of the prodigious boy and was quickly astounded by the depth of his comprehension and rapid intellectual progress.

By the age of 15 or 16, Ibn Sina was largely self-taught, having absorbed and systematized the breadth of scientific knowledge available in his time. The philosophical works of Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870–950), whom Ibn Sina referred to as the "Second Teacher" after Aristotle, [5] played a formative role in shaping his own philosophical worldview, particularly in harmonizing reason with revelation and logic with metaphysics.

Over the millennium that has followed, the fields of science and philosophy have undergone transformative revolutions. Dialectical and historical materialism emerged as complex frameworks for understanding socio-historical change; atomic energy was unlocked, and its applications reshaped technology and warfare; the genetic code was deciphered, enabling bioengineering and targeted therapies; biology is approaching the threshold of creating synthetic life; medical science has developed entirely new paradigms for disease prevention and treatment; and humanity has breached the bounds of Earth, venturing into outer space.

In this context of scientific acceleration, it is only natural that certain elements of Ibn Sina's intellectual system may no longer align with the rigor or paradigms of contemporary science. Nevertheless, his humanistic ideals – his advocacy for physical and spiritual well-being, his belief in the transformative power of education, his commitment to ethical responsibility, and his vision for a peaceful and just society –

remain profoundly relevant. These principles, deeply embedded in his encyclopedic works such as *The Book of Healing* and *The Canon of Medicine*, continue to inspire scholars, medical professionals, and philosophers alike.

In light of his enduring influence, Ibn Sina's legacy transcends temporal and disciplinary boundaries, affirming his place not just in the history of science, but in the moral and philosophical imagination of humanity.

However, many of his ideas remain relevant and resonate with modern representatives. Especially relevant are Ibn Sina's concepts of humanism, which focus on the care for the spiritual (not without reason his encyclopedias are named "*The Cure*" and "*Salvation*") and physical health ("*The Canon of Medicine*") of humans, concern for the improvement of public life, and the exclusion of war from the lives of nations. In light of all this, Ibn Sina, even after a thousand years, remains a contemporary of ours.

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In the 10th century, Bukhara stood not only as the political epicenter of the Samanid dynasty and a thriving hub of trade and craftsmanship in Maverannahr, but also as the premier intellectual and cultural capital of the East. It was a magnet for scientists, poets, and cultural luminaries from across the Islamic world. Within this fertile scholarly environment, the early education of the boy Husayn – who would later be known as Avicenna – commenced. From a young age, he demonstrated exceptional intellectual aptitude. By the age of ten, he had memorized the entire Qur'an and had mastered grammar in both his native tongue and Arabic, along with stylistics and the basics of poetic composition.

When the renowned scholar Abu Abdullah Natili visited Bukhara, Husayn's father, recognizing the importance of structured learning, invited him to reside in their household to tutor his gifted son. Natili was soon astonished by the brilliance and speed with which Husayn grasped complex material. By the time he reached fifteen or sixteen years of age, Ibn Sina had moved beyond his teachers and pursued independent study, successfully absorbing the entirety of contemporary scientific and philosophical knowledge. Of particular importance in shaping his worldview were the works of Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870–950), whom he would later refer to as his intellectual guide after Aristotle.

In the preface to one of his final works, *Mubahathat (Disputations)*, Ibn Sina notes that he had authored a comprehensive book titled *Insaf (Justice)*, [6] in which he categorized scholars into "Easterners" and "Westerners." He described their disagreements on a wide range of issues and sought, through systematic analysis, to illuminate the contradictions in their arguments and present balanced resolutions. The manuscript reportedly contained discussions on around 28,000 philosophical and scientific problems.

Ibn Sina's renown as a physician also began in Bukhara. When the ruler, Nuh ibn Mansur, fell ill, the young Avicenna, whose name was already circulating among medical circles, was summoned to assist in his treatment. He quickly distinguished himself with

his medical skill and deep knowledge. Seizing the opportunity, Ibn Sina requested access to the palace library. Within it, he discovered rooms dedicated to various fields – one devoted to Arabic poetry, another to jurisprudence (Fiqh), and so on. He diligently studied the manuscripts, absorbing their insights and critically evaluating the intellectual merit of their authors.

By the age of eighteen, Ibn Sina had completed his study of virtually all branches of contemporary science. However, political changes compelled him to leave Bukhara. He journeyed to Gurganj, where he found refuge under the patronage of the vizier Abu'l-Husayn as-Suhami, a supporter of learning and the sciences. Through this connection, Ibn Sina was introduced to the local ruler, Ali ibn Mamun. Dressed in the scholarly garb of his time, he was formally welcomed and granted a monthly stipend suitable to his status as a prominent thinker.

The first universities in Europe were established at the end of the 12th century. At that time, the term "Universitas" was used to refer to student and teacher guilds, and the universities were called "*Studium generale*", only in the 15th century did they begin to be called "*Universitas*". In medieval universities, it was mandatory to study the seven arts, which were divided into two groups. The first group – *trivium*: consisted of grammar. The second group – *quadrivium*: included geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music. In the 10th–11th centuries, universities already had faculties of theology, law, medicine, and the arts. The first three faculties were considered the highest, while the fourth, preparatory, and general education faculty studied the seven liberal arts, i.e., trivium and quadrivium. The scientific philosophical and medical investigations of Avicenna played a significant role in the formation and development of the first universities in the 12th–13th centuries, not only in Europe but around the world. [7] The art of healing, i.e., medicine, particularly began to develop in Salerno and Montpellier. The University of Bologna developed, alongside other sciences, jurisprudence.

RESULTS

In the history of philosophy, the name of Ibn Sina is emphasized in the following way: there is a description of a four-year medical course at the University of Bologna. [8] Every day, four lectures were held. The first year was dedicated to the Arab philosopher Avicenna and his medical textbook *The Canon*. The second and third years studied Galen, Hippocrates, and Averroes. The fourth year was mainly devoted to repetition. Starting around 1300, human dissection began to be practiced in Bologna.

A medieval student could only obtain canonical education at the University of Bologna by studying Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine*, which was the fundamental encyclopedia of medieval medical knowledge. It covered the basic theories of medicine, anatomy, physiology, general etiology, symptomatology, specific pathology, surgery, pharmacology, and others.

Ibn Sina is one of the greatest masters of medicine, as such researchers, free from teaching duties in universities, were called in those times – *Magisteri non regens*.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be considered that the spiritual heritage of our great ancestor Abu Ali Ibn Sina, alongside the contributions of other prominent individuals, played a foundational role in the establishment of the first universities in Europe and around the world, in higher education. The multifaceted scientific and philosophical legacies of Abu Ali Ibn Sina had a profound and lasting influence on the subsequent development of

spiritual culture, for which Carl Linnaeus named one of the evergreen plants after him. Avicenna's ideas, covering all branches of medieval scientific knowledge, found their critics and continuers later on. Ibn Sina's ideas about the eternity of the world, the independence of natural phenomena from the influence of abstract forces, the denial of miracles regarding divine attributes, etc., were sharply criticized in theological circles.

Fakhruddin Razi (1149–1209) was a vocal critic of Ibn Sina's overarching philosophical framework. [9] In his commentary on *The Canon of Medicine*, he went so far as to misrepresent some of Ibn Sina's ideas in an attempt to undermine the authority of Shaykh al-Ra'is. However, in the 13th century, scholars such as Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274), and notably Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (1236–1311), came to Avicenna's defense. Shirazi not only endorsed Ibn Sina's philosophical outlook but also expanded upon it, particularly in core theoretical domains. [10] His major philosophical treatise, *Durrah al-Taj* ("The Pearl of the Crown"), was explicitly built on the structural foundations laid by Avicenna's *The Book of Healing*.

Shirazi begins this multi-volume work with a systematic categorization of the sciences. As Ibn Sina had done in both his treatise *On the Parts of Rational Sciences* and in *The Healing*, he distinguishes between rational and religious sciences, positioning the former at the heart of philosophical inquiry. [11] Ibn Sina's classification divide philosophy into two principal branches: theoretical and practical knowledge.

In his schema, theoretical sciences deal with entities and phenomena that exist independently of human influence. The pursuit of these sciences is aimed at the attainment of truth and intellectual virtue. Included in this category are physics, mathematics, and metaphysics. Logic, though not part of theoretical science per se, functions as a preparatory discipline across all branches of knowledge. Practical sciences, on the other hand, are subdivided into ethics (individual conduct), economics (household management), and politics (governance and civic life).

Like in *Danishname*, logic as a methodological discipline precedes other sciences in Kutbuddin's system. The parts of practical philosophy, our thinker also divides into three parts: ethics, housekeeping, and civil politics, covering the system of moral perception of society within the family and the conditions of existence and functioning of society within cities, regions, and countries. However, unlike Ibn Sina and his direct teacher Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Kutbuddin Shirazi, following the parts of theoretical and practical philosophy, provides a full classification of religious sciences, [12] thus dividing sciences into religious and non-religious. He classifies the religious sciences to include the recitation of the Quran, conjugation, the study of what is acceptable and unacceptable in the Quran, the interpretation of traditions, the proof of the essence of the Quran, instruction and preaching, semantics, stylistics, preaching, and so on. This departure of the thinker, who mainly followed Ibn Sina's teachings in his philosophical system, seems to be a necessary concession to the increasingly stringent position of the clergy in society.

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