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Great Muslim Philosophers - Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali (Their Life and Works)

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Abstract
Muslim philosophers were men of science who explored and set the very foundations of knowledge. They have had great influence and importance in the history of fundamental ideas through their notable contributions in the form of innumerable discoveries and countless books on medicine, surgery, physics, chemistry, philosophy, mathematics, and astrology. The two great Muslim philosophers Ibn Sine and Al-Ghazali had provided new insights in the realm of educational curricula, aims of education, educational stages of children, different methods of teaching and his remarkable work in the shape of his books like *Al-Qanun-fil-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine), *Kitab-al-Shifa* (The Book of Healing).

Keywords: Muslim philosophers, Ibn Sine, Al-Ghazali, life and works

Introduction

Ibn Sine's life and Works

Abu Ali al Hussain Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sine was born in Afshana near Bukhara in present-day Uzbekistan, the capital of Samanids, a Persian dynasty in central Asia and greater Khorasan. His mother, named Setareh, was from Bukhara, his father Abdullah was a respected Ismaili scholar from Balkh. At the time of Ibn Sine's birth he was the governor in one of the Samanids Nun Ibn Mansur's estate.

The young Bu Ali received his early education in Bukhara, and by age of ten had become well versed in the study of Quran and various sciences. He started studying philosophy by reading various Greek, Muslim and other books on this subject and learnt logic and some other subjects from Abu Abdullah Natili, a famous philosopher of the time. At a very young age he attained a commendable degree of expertise in medicine. As a teenager, he was greatly troubled by the metaphysics of Aristotle, which he could not understand, until he read al-Farabi's commentary on the work. For one and a half year, he studied philosophy, in which he encountered greater obstacles. He turned to medicine at 16 and achieved full status as qualified physician at the age of 18.He believed that medicine was no hard and thorny science, like mathematics and metaphysics.

According to his autobiography, Ibn Sine said: 'So I soon made great progress; I became an excellent doctor and began to treat patients using approved remedies.' The youthful physician's fame spread quickly, and he treated many patients without asking for payment.

At the age of 18, he was fortunate in curing Noor Ibn Mansour, the king of Bukhara, of an illness although all the well- known physicians had given up hope on his recovery. The king wished to reward Ibn Sina, but the young physician only desired permission to use his uniquely stocked library.

After the death of his father, Ibn Sine left Bukhara and travelled to Jürgen where Khwarizmi Shah welcomed him. There he met his famous contemporary Abu Raihan al-Beruni. He then moved to Ray and then to Hamdan, where he wrote his famous book *Al-Qanun fil-Tibb*. Here he treated Shams al-Daulah, the king of Hamdan; then he moved to Isfahan, where he completed many of his writings. He continued travelling and as the mental excretion as well as political turmoil spoilt his health, he finally return to Hamdan where, finding the disease of severe coli gaining ground, he refused to keep up the regime imposed, and resigned himself to his fate. His friends advised him to slow down and take life moderately. He refused, however, stating that: "I prefer life with width to a narrow one with length." On his deathbed remorse seize him; he bestowed his good on the poor, restored unjust, freed his slaves, and read through the Quran every three days until his death. He died in June 1037, in his fifty-seventh year, in the month of Ramadan and was buried in Hamdan, Iran.

Ibn Sine was the most famous physician, philosopher, encyclopaedist, mathematician, and astronomer of his time. He has attracted the attention of scholars, past and present, who have written books, treaties and articles on him. He speaks about humanity, society, knowledge and ethics. He devoted a treatise entitled "Politics" to education; and he speaks at some length in "The Canon" about the up-bringing of infants. Ibn Sine represents a living illustration of the meeting between philosophy and education, for the educator and the philosopher are both faced with the same problems: truth, goodness, the nature of the world, the meaning of knowledge and human nature etc. He as a philosopher has his own views on education.

Ibn Sina's two most important works are "The Book of Healing" and "The Canon of Medicine" The first is a scientific encyclopaedia covering logic, natural science, psychology, geometry, astronomy, arithmetic and music.

The second is one of the most famous books in the history of medicine.

Works of Ibn Sine's

Ibn Sine was a tenth century Muslim scientist who has made major contribution in many diverse areas - from Medicine, Psychology, and Pharmacology to Geology, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry and Philosophy. The lunar crater - 'Avicenna' and the mountain peak 'Ibn Sine Peak' are named in his honour, and even hospitals and institutions of learning are named after him out of respect for his achievements. In Iran he is considered a national icon, and is regarded as one of the greatest Persians to have ever lived. Many portraits and statues remain in Iran today. An impressive monument to the life and works of this man who is known as the "doctor of doctors" still stands outside the Bukhara museum and his portrait hangs in the Hall of the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Paris.

Total Number of Books: 450 (Four hundred fifty),

Most Famous Ones of Ibn Sine's

Al-Qanun fil-Tibb - The Canon of Medicine - (A 14-volume medical encyclopaedia with over one million words) - is the most famous single book in the history of medicine in both East and West. It is systematic encyclopaedia based on the most part of achievements of Greek physician Ibn Sine.

Kitab al-Shafa - The Book of Healing - (A scientific and philosophical encyclopaedia). In Book of Healing, he wrote on Earth science, philosophy of science, logic, physics and psychology.

Fiaqsam al-ulum al-aqliyyah- (A classification of the rational sciences).

Regarded as:

Father of Modern Medicine, Father of clinical Pharmacology, and Father of Geology due to his founding contributions in their areas.

List of some well-known works of Ibn Sine

1. *Sirat al-sheikh al-Raees* (The Life of Ibn Sine)
2. *Al-Isharat wa-I-tanbihat* (Remarks and Admonitions)
3. *Al-Qanun fil-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine)
4. *Risilah fi sirr al-Qadir* (Essay on the Secret of Destiny)
5. *Danishnamah-yi-i `ala`i* (The Book of Scientific Knowledge)
6. *Kitab al-Shifa* (The Book of Healing)
7. *Kitab al-Nejat* (The Book of Salvation)
8. *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan*-a Persian myth. (A novel based on Ibn Sine's story)
9. *Al-Jadal* (Dialectic)
10. *Al-Khatabah* (Rhetoric)
11. *Al-Ilahiyat* (Theology)
12. *Al-Nafs* (The Soul)

Persian Works

1) *Danishnamah-yi-i 'Alai*

Danishnamah-yi-i 'Alai, called "The Book of Knowledge for PrinceAla ad Daulah", is one of Ibn Sina's important Persian works. Through its linguist aspects and originality, *Danish amah* covers such topics as logic, metaphysics, music theory, and other sciences of the time.

2) *Andar Danesh-e Rag*

Andar Danesh-e Rag, called "On the Science of The Pulse", contains nine chapters on the science of the pulse and is a synopsis.

3) Persian Poetry

Persian poetry from Ibn Sine is recorded in various manuscripts and later anthologies such as *Nozhat al-Majales*.

Major Contribution:

Philosophy

1. Wrote more than 150 treatises on Philosophy.
2. Founder of *Avicennism*- a school of thought of Islamic Philosophy.
3. Developed an early theory on 'hypothetical syllogism'.
4. Developed an original theory on temporal model syllogism.
5. Developed an early theory on 'propositional calculi.
6. First to describe the methods of 'agreement, difference and concomitant variation' thatis part of Mill's methods.
7. Wrote the first criticisms of Aristotelian logic.
8. Wrote a number of treatises on Islamic theology in which he gave scientific and philosophical interpretation of Quran.

Medicine

1. Separation of medicine from pharmacology.
2. Discovery of sexually transmitted diseases.
3. First detailed description of skin problems, perversions and nervous ailments.
4. Introduction of systematic experimentation and qualification in to the study of physiology.
5. First description of Meningitis.
6. First known treatment of cancer. Discovery of cancer as a tumour.
7. Discovery of the causes of bleeding and haemorrhage.
8. First description of bacterial and viral organisms.
9. Description of working of heart as a valve.
10. Discovered that madness is a disorder of reason with its origin in the middle part of the brain.
11. Introduction of quarantine for contagious diseases.
12. Identification of tuberculosis and phthisis as contagious.
13. First description of the surgical procedure of intubation.
14. Distinguished anatomy from medicine.
15. Discovered the cerebral vermin and the caudate nucleus.
16. Gave correct descriptions for the time, on the physiology of eye movements, conjunctive sclera, cornea, optic nerves, iris, and central and peripheral facial paralyses - still used in modern ophthalmology.
17. First explained the distribution of diseases by water and soil.
18. First correct explanation of pulsation.

19. Described diabetes insipid us very precisely for the first time.
20. First diagrams of the cranial sutures.

Psychology

1. Pioneer of neuropsychiatry. First described the neuropsychiatric conditions of hallucination, insomnia, mania, rabies, nightmare, melancholia, dementia, epilepsy, paralysis, stroke, vertigo, and tremor and provided treatment methods.
2. Described melancholia (depression) as a type of mood disorder in which the person may become suspicious and develop certain types of phobias.
3. Developed a system for associating changes in the pulse rate with inner feelings.

Astronomy

1. Criticized Aristotle's view of the stars receiving their light from the Sun and stated that the stars are self-luminous.
2. Concluded that Venus is closer to the Earth than the Sun.
3. Solved the equate problem in the Ptolemaic model.

Physics

1. Developed a detailed theory of motion. The concept of inertia put forward in this theory was consistent to that given by Isaac Newton about seven centuries later in his famous first law of motion.
2. Considered pioneer in putting forward the concept of momentum that is part of Newton's second law of motion.
3. Invented air thermometer to measure the relative hotness and coldness of dry air.
4. Stated that if the perception of light is due to the emission of some sort of particles by a luminous source, the speed of light must be finite.

Music

1. Believed that music had both physical as well as psychological effect on patients.
2. Followed Al-Kindi in classification of music as a branch of mathematics. Translated title of his book on music is, therefore, chapter three of mathematical science which is on the science of music.

Engineering

1. First to classify five constituent simple machines-lever, puller, screw, wage, and windlass and their combinations.
2. First correct description of ‘mechanism’.

Poetry

Various verses written by him are present in many of his works. These are written in Arabic as well as in Persian.

Ibn Sine spent every night with his students composing their works and carrying out general philosophical and scientific discoveries related to them. These sessions were often combined with musical performance and gaiety which lasted until late hours of the night. Even in hiding and in prison he continued to write. The great physical strength of Ibn Sine enabled him to carry out programme that would have been unimaginable for a person of a feebler constitution.

Al-Ghazali life and Works

Abu Hameed Mahammad ibn Mahammad Al-Ghazali is most famous for his contribution in philosophy, religion, and Sufism. Al-Ghazali was born in Khorasan, Iran. His father, a traditional Sufi, died when he was still very young but he had the opportunity of getting education in the prevalent curriculum at Nishpur and Baghdad. His first important trip to Nishpur occurred around 1080 when he was almost 23 years old. He became a student of the famous Muslim Scholar Abu'l Ma'ali Juwayni, known as Imam al-Haramain. After Al-Juwayni’s death in 1085, Al-Ghazali was invited to go to the court of Nizamul Mulk Tusi, the powerful Vizier of the Selijug Sultans. The vizier was so impressed by Al-Ghazali's scholarship that in 1091 he appointed him as chief professor in the Nizamiyya of Baghdad. He used to lecture more than 300 students, and his participation in Islamic debates and discussions made him popular all over the Islamic territories. He passed through spiritual crises in 1095 and abandoned his career and left Baghdad on the pretext of going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Making arrangements for his family, he disposed of his wealth and adopted the life of a poor Sufi. After some time in Damascus and Jerusalem, with a visit to Medina and Mecca in 1096, he settled in Tus to spend the next several years in seclusion. He ended his seclusion for a short lecturing period at the Nizamiyya of Nishpur in 1106. Later he returned to the Tus where he remained until his death in December, 1111. He had one son named Abdul Rahaman Allam.

Al-Ghazali made major contribution in religion, philosophy and Sufism. In philosophy, Al-Ghazali upheld the approach of mathematics and exact science as essentially correct. However, he adopted the techniques of Aristotelian logic and the neo-platonic procedures and employed these very tools to lay bare the flows and lacunas of the then prevalent neo-platonic philosophy and to diminish the negative influences of Aristotelianism and excessive rationalism. In religion, particularly mysticism, he cleansed the approach of Sufism of its excesses and re-established the authority of the orthodox religion. He stressed the importance of genuine Sufism which, he maintained, was the path to attain the absolute truth.

Al-Ghazali was a prolific writer. His immortal books include *Tuhafat-Falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), *Ihyan al-Ulum-Islamia* (The Revival of Religious Sciences), *The Beginning of Guidance*, and his autobiography, *Deliverance from Error*. He also wrote a summary of astronomy. An important event confirms Al-Ghazali's tremendous learning strides. When Al-Ghazali wrote his book 'Mankul' and presented it to his teacher for his opinion about the work, Imam ul Haramain exclaimed with grief, “Alas! You have eclipsed my fame as a writer to such an extent that I feel as if I were dead.” But it was admitted by all his contemporary scholars that Imamul Haramain was an erudite scholar in jurisprudence, theology, philosophy etc. His erudite scholarship spread to the whole Muslim world and his fatwa were the final word for the learned.

Works of Al-Ghazali
Al-Ghazali wrote more than 70 books on the Sciences, Islamic Philosophy and Sufism.

Incoherence of the Philosophers
The Incoherence of the Philosophers marks a major turn in Islamic epistemology. This book also marked a turning point in Islamic philosophy in its vehement rejections of Aristotle and Plato. The book took aim at the *Falasifa*, a loosely defined group of Islamic philosophers from the 8th through the 11th centuries who drew intellectually upon the Ancient Greeks.

Autobiography
The autobiography Al-Ghazali wrote towards the end of his life, *Deliverance from Error* (*al-munqidh min al-dalal*), is considered a work of major importance. In it Al-Ghazali recounts how once a crisis is of epistemological skepticism was resolved by 'a light which God Most High cast into my breast the key of most knowledge. He studied and mastered the arguments of *Kalam*, Islamic philosophy and Islamism.

The Revival of Religious Sciences
The major work of al- Ghazali is *Ihyan' al-Din or Ihya'u Ulumiddin* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) It covers almost all fields of Islamic sciences: *fiqa* (Islamic jurisprudence), *kalam* (theology) and Sufism. It contains four major sections

1. Acts of worship (*Rub' al 'ibadat*)
2. Norms of daily life (*Rub' al-'adatat*)
3. The ways of perdition (*Rub' al muhlikat*)
4. The Ways of Salvation (*Rub' al- munjiyat*).

He also wrote a brief version on this book in Persian under The Alchemy of Happiness.
At the insistence of his students in Jerusalem, al-Ghazali wrote a concise exposition of Islam entitled "The Alchemy of Happiness" (*Kimiya-yi sa'adat*).

The Jerusalem Tract
Ghazali also played a very major role in integrating Sufism and Sharia's. He combined the concept of Sufism with the Shari'ah laws. He was the first to present the formal description of Sufism in his works.
Works in Persian:
Al-Ghazali wrote few works in Persian. His most important works are as follows:
Kimyaye Sa'adat (The Alchemy of Happiness)
Nasihatul Muluk (The Counselling King)
Zad-e-Akherat (Provision for the Hereafter)
Pand-Nama (Book of Counsel)
Hamaqati ahli ibahat (Condemnation of antinomians)
Faza' ilul a`l-anam 'ili hujjat al Islam- a collection of letters in Persian that al-Ghazali wrote in response to kings, ministers, jurists and some of his friends after he returned to Khorasana.

Philosophy
Maqasid al-falasifa (Aims of Philosophy)
Tahafut al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)
Miyar al-Ilm fi fan al-Mantiq (Criterion of Knowledge in the Art of Logic)
Mihak al-Nazar fi al mantiq (Touchstone of knowledge in logic)
Al-Qistas al-mustaqim (The Correct Balance)

Sufism
Mizan al-'amal (Criterion of Action)
Ihya'u ulum al-din (Revival of Religious Sciences - the most important work of Ghazali)
Bida yat al-hidayah (Beginning of Guidance)
Al-Munqidh min al-dalal (Rescue from Error)
Minhaj al-'Abidan (Methodology for the Worshipers)

Theology
Hujjat al-Haq (Proof of the truth)
Al-Iqtisad fil-i' tiqad (Median in Belief)
Al-maqsad al-asna fi sharah asma 'Allahu al-husna (The best means explaining Allah's Beautiful Names)
Jawahir al Quran wa dururuh (Jewels of the Quran and Its Pearls)
Fayasl al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wa-i-zandaqa (The Criteria of Distinction between Islam and Clandestine Unbelief)
Mishkat al-Anwar (The Niche of Lights)

Jurisprudence
Fatawy al-Ghazali (Verdicts of al-Ghazali)
Al-wasit fi al-mathab (The medium [digest] in the Jurisprudential school)
Kitab tahzib al-Isul (Pruning on legal Theology)
Al-Mustasfa fi'ilm al-isul (The Clarified in Legal Theology)
Asasal-Qiyas (Foundation of Analogical Reasoning)

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