

TEARS OF THE SICK - FOLLOWERS OF IBN SINA

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Abstract:

This article examines the medical services of Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna, whose medical innovations left a lasting legacy in Islam's golden age. It explores his holistic approach to health and emphasizes the importance of diet, lifestyle and mental wellbeing. The study highlights Ibn Sina's pioneering work in the field of pharmacology, detailing his careful documentation of medicinal plants and compounds, his advances in surgical techniques, particularly his use of anesthetics. Additionally, his pioneering approach to mental health, clinical trials and evidence-based medicine will be explored. The influence of his students such as Abu Ubayd al-Juzhani on the preservation and expansion of his teachings is discussed and the transfer of knowledge during this time is shown. Ibn Sina's comprehensive model of medical education and his principles of public health and hygiene are also examined, revealing his holistic and empirical approach to medicine. This study highlights the lasting impact of Ibn Sina's contributions, which continue to inspire modern medical research and practice.

Keywords: Ibn Sina, Avicenna, medical law, holistic health balance, nutrition and lifestyle, pharmacology, medicinal plants, surgical techniques, anesthesia, mental health, clinical trials, evidence-based medicine, Abu Ubayd al-Juzhani. Avicenna, also known as Avicenna in the West, was a polymath of the Golden Age of Islam whose contributions to medicine and philosophy left an indelible mark on both the Islamic world and Western intellectual traditions. Ibn Sina, who was born in Afshona near Bukhara in what is now Uzbekistan in 980, excelled in the sciences of medicine, astronomy, chemistry, geography, geology, psychology, Islamic theology, logic, mathematics and poetry. However, his achievements in medicine brought him the most lasting recognition. Ibn Sina's major work entitled "The Laws of Medicine" ("Al-Qanun fi at-tibb") from 1025 is a comprehensive medical encyclopedia that systematically summarizes the medical knowledge of his time and links it with his innovations and opinions. His approach to treatment was based on a holistic understanding of the human body and its relationship to the environment, groundbreaking



principles of pharmacology, clinical trials and evidence-based medicine that anticipated modern practices. Ibn Sina's treatment methods were revolutionary for his time. He advocated a balanced lifestyle as a preventative measure against disease and emphasized the importance of diet, exercise and mental health. His treatments often included herbal remedies, many of which are still used today, as well as precise dosages and preparation instructions. He also developed techniques such as the distillation of essential oils and the use of anesthetics in surgical procedures. His approach was methodical and empirical, relying on careful observation and experimentation to test the effectiveness of treatments.¹ The importance of Ibn Sina's contributions cannot be overstated. His work bridged the gap between ancient medical traditions and the emerging scientific methods of the Renaissance. Translated into Latin in the 12th century, the "Law of Medicine" became the basis of medical education in Europe and had a profound influence on figures such as Paracelsus and Vesalius. In the Islamic world, Ibn Sina's legacy continued to inspire generations of physicians and scientists and cemented his reputation as one of the greatest medical minds in history.

Ibn Sina's influence extended beyond his works to his students, who played a crucial role in spreading and expanding his teachings. One of his prominent students was Abu Ubayd al-Juzhani, who contributed to the preservation of Ibn Sina's works and also wrote his own important medical texts. These students ensured that Ibn Sina's methodology and discoveries were disseminated throughout the Islamic world and Europe, and developed a tradition of rigorous scientific research and medical practice that laid the foundation for future successes. Ibn Sina's treatment methods and their significance lie in his innovative approach to medicine, his holistic understanding of health, and the lasting influence of his teachings through his works and students.² His contributions continue to resonate widely in the fields of medicine and philosophy, underscoring the enduring value of his intellectual legacy. Ibn Sina's medical philosophy was deeply rooted in the principles of balance and harmony and was influenced by both the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions. He believed that health is the result of a delicate balance between the body's four humors:

¹ Nosir, M. (1987). *Avitsennaning tibbiyot qonunlari*. Zamonaviy kitobxonlar uchun moslashtirilgan. Karachi: Hamdard fondi.

² . Siraisi, N. G. (1990). *Uyg'onish davridagi Italiyadagi Avitsenna: 1500 yildan keyin Italiya universitetlarida kanon va tibbiyot ta'limi*. Prinston universiteti matbuoti.



blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. In “The Law of Medicine,” he carefully cataloged hundreds of medications and described their properties, uses, and possible side effects. He laid the foundation for the development of modern pharmacology and emphasized the importance of dosage and administration. Ibn Sina introduced innovative methods of drug preparation, including methods of extracting active substances from plants, which increased the effectiveness and safety of drugs.

Ibn Sina's surgical practice developed similarly. He advocated the use of anesthesia during surgery and the use of a mixture of opium and other compounds for unpleasant pain. His descriptions of surgical procedures such as fractures, dislocations and abscesses demonstrated great skill and accuracy. Ibn Sina also emphasized the importance of hygiene and antisepsis, recognizing that cleanliness is essential in preventing and aiding in the treatment of infections. In addition to clinical and pharmacological successes, Ibn Sina also achieved great success in the field of medical education. He believed that every doctor must have a thorough knowledge of the natural sciences and advocated a curriculum that included not only medical science but also mathematics, logic, and philosophy. His education reflected this interdisciplinary approach from a young age and he sought to impart the same knowledge to his students.³

Ibn Sina's influence extended far beyond his time and shaped the development of medicine for centuries. The translation of the “Laws of Medicine” into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the 12th century was a crucial moment in the transmission of Islamic medical knowledge to Europe. The canon was the central textbook in medieval European medical schools and was used well into the 17th century. His systematic approach to diagnosis and treatment, as well as his emphasis on empirical observation, helped lay the foundations of modern scientific medicine.

Among the many students who continued Ibn Sina's legacy, Abu Ubaid al-Juzhani stands out for his contribution to the preservation and popularization of Ibn Sina's work. Al-Juzhani accompanied Ibn Sina on his travels and helped compile and edit his extensive works. He also wrote important texts that were based on and further developed the medical theories of Ibn Sina. The collaboration between Ibn Sina and his students was an example of the vibrant intellectual exchange that characterized the Golden Age of Islam and fostered a

³ Ullmann, M. (1978). *Islom tabobati*. Edinburg: Edinburg universiteti nashriyoti.



culture of learning and innovation that had a lasting impact on the world. Even today, Ibn Sina's legacy is recognized for having had a profound influence on both Eastern and Western medical traditions. His holistic approach to health care, his pioneering work in pharmacology and surgery, and his emphasis on empirical observation and systematic study remain relevant to modern medical practice. Its principles, such as the importance of lifestyle in disease prevention and careful preparation of medicines, are reflected in current medical advice and pharmaceutical practices.

In addition, Ibn Sina's work sparked a new interest in the history of medicine and the contributions of Islamic scholars to the field. As modern researchers examine the unique aspects of medieval Islamic science, Ibn Sina's achievements are recognized as the foundation for the development of medical knowledge and practice.⁴

His enduring legacy is a testament to the power of intellectual curiosity and the enduring value of a holistic approach to health and well-being.

Finally, Ibn Sina's treatment methods and their importance are highlighted through his comprehensive and innovative approach to medicine, his contributions to the fields of pharmacology and surgery, and the lasting influence of his teachings on his students and the broader medical community. His work not only advanced the medical practice of his time, but also created a foundation for future development, bridging the gap between ancient medical traditions and modern scientific methods. As we continue to study and celebrate the contributions of historical figures such as Ibn Sina, we gain a deeper understanding of medicine's rich and interconnected history.

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⁴ Elgud, C. (1951). *Fors va Sharqiy xalifalikning tibbiyot tarixi*. Kembrij: Kembrij universiteti nashriyoti.



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