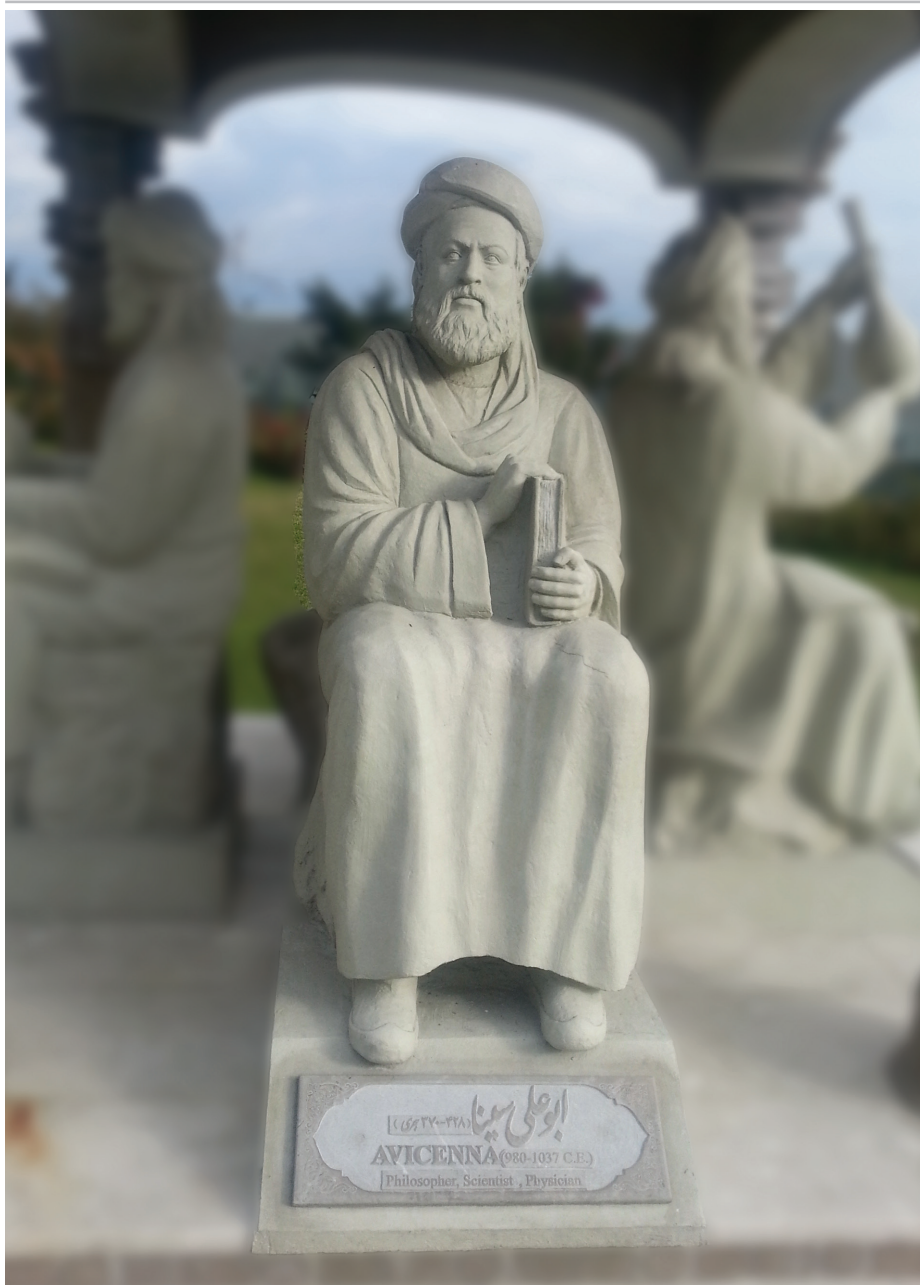


“Medicine is the science by which we learn the various states of the human body, in health, when not in health, the mean by which health is likely to be lost, and when lost, is likely to be restored to health.”

*(Ibn Sina, The Canon)*

## II



Statues of Iranian Avicenna at UN Office in Vienna

Ibn Sina or Abu Ali Sina (ابن سینا c. 980 –1037) is often known by his Latin name of Avicenna (ævi'senə/).

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Avicenna was a Persian polymath and one of the most famous physicians from the Islamic Golden Age. He is known as the father of early modern medicine and his most famous work in Medicine called “The Book of Healing”, which became a standard medical textbook at many European universities and remained in use up to the recent centuries. His Book of “The Canon of Medicine” was reprinted in New York in 1973 that shows his works and theories are still alive and in use. Avicenna also had written on astronomy, alchemy, geography and geology, psychology, Islamic theology, logic, mathematics, physics and poetry. There have been various international congresses and festivals in different countries during 1937 to 2004 and also publication of about 750 articles and books in different European languages during 1906 to 2006 about him and also the formation of the scientific educational network called “Avicenna Knowledge Centers” (A.K.C.) over the Europe as well as the World Network of Medical Sciences Data Bank under the name of Avicenna. There are some international prizes in Avicenna’s name including one by UNESCO. His birthday is “National Doctor’s Day” in Iran.

It is believed that he was extremely genius with a remarkable IQ. Avicenna memorized the entire Quran by the age of 10 and became a knowledgeable physician at the age of 16 and introduced new methods of treatments by the age of 18. During his medical career he treated many patients including some governors and politicians and ordinary people without asking for payment. He was a hard working person and his friends advised him to slow down and take the life easy but he answered “I prefer a short life with width to a narrow one with length”.

Avicenna wrote a medical encyclopedia in five volumes named “The Canon of Medicine (Al-Qanunfi’t-Tibb)”. The first volume contains theories on the four elements of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. This volume also includes anatomy, etiology and symptoms, hygiene, health and sickness, death, clinical and therapeutic classification of disease, regimens and dietary treatments. The second volume is a “MateriaMedica,” and the third volume covers “Head-to-Toe Diseases”. Volume 4 explains “Diseases That Are Not Specific to Certain Organs” such as fevers and other systemic and humoral pathologies, and the fifth volume gives information on “Compound Drugs”.

Avicenna had a book called “On the Science of the Pulse”, which demonstrated the most detailed clinical description on the characteristics of the pulse that had been ever written. The pulse section

consists of techniques for feeling the pulse. In this book he explained the certain types of arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation, premature and dropped beats and more than fifty different pulses.

The British Orientalist, Edward G. Browne opined that “Avicenna was a better philosopher than physician as Ibn Sinā wrote many books and articles on Islamic philosophy, including subjects like logic, ethics, and metaphysics that some of them were in Persian. He made an argument for the existence of God and claimed that there must be a “necessary existent”. Peter Adamson, the famous historian of philosophy, called this argument one of the most impressive arguments for God’s existence. Avicenna tried to merge rational philosophy with Islamic theology and his main goal in that regard was to prove the existence of God and His creation of the world by science and logic. His psychology and theory of knowledge had a deep impact on William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris and Albertus Magnus. Avicenna’s theories in metaphysics influenced Thomas Aquinas. When Avicenna was imprisoned in Hamedan, he wrote his famous “Floating Man”. Avicenna believed that “Floating Man” demonstrated that the soul is a substance, so he claimed humans cannot doubt their own consciousness, even in a situation that physical sensory stops. Later, Ibn Sina surprisingly considered music as one of the branches of mathematics and gave some theories on tonic intervals, rhythmic patterns, and musical instruments.

Avicenna became ill with colic symptoms and shortly died in June 1037. He is buried in Hamadan, Iran.

The most famous works of Avicenna include:

- Al-isharatwa al-tanbihat (Remarks and Admonitions) on Logic
- Al-Qanunfi’t-tibb (The Canon of Medicine), which is an Encyclopedia of medicine
- Risalah fi sirr al-qadar (Essay on the Secret of Destiny) on Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics.
- Danishnama-i ‘ala’i (The Book of Scientific Knowledge) on The Metaphysics of Avicenna
- Kitab al-Shifa’ (The Book of Healing) on philosophy.
- Kitab al-Najat (The Book of Salvation) on Psychology.
- Danishnama-i ‘Alai (the Book of Knowledge for [Prince] ‘Ala ad-Daulah) which is a scientific vocabulary in Persian on logic, metaphysics, music theory and other sciences of his time.
- AndarDanesh-e Rag (On the Science of the Pulse) contains nine chapters on the science of the pulse and is a condensed synopsis.
- Persian poetry from Ibn Sina is recorded in various manuscripts and later anthologies such as Nozhat al-Majales

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