



# AL-SHAJARAH

ISTAC Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization

Published by IIUM Press  
Special Issue 2024

# AL-SHAJARAH

## EDITORIAL BOARD

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

OSMAN BAKAR, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### EDITOR

AHMAD MURAD MERICAN, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

AHMAD EL-MUHAMMADY, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

NURUL AIN NORMAN, ISTAC-IIUM

### BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

WAN ALI WAN MAMAT, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### GUEST EDITOR (SPECIAL ISSUE 2024)

KHALIQ AHMAD, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

### MEMBERS

SYED KHAIRUDIN ALJUNIED, NUS, Singapore

BADROL HISHAM @ FARISH AHMAD NOOR, NTU, Singapore

PETER CHANG, UM, Malaysia

MOHAMED ASLAM MOHAMED HANEEF, IIUM, Malaysia

ABDELAZIZ BERGHOUT, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

WALEED FIKRI FARES, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

TENGGU MOHD AZZMAN SHARIFFADEEN, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia

## INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

AFIFI AL-AKITI (UK)

JOHN L. ESPOSITO (USA)

JOMO K. SUNDARAM (Malaysia)

YASUSHI KOSUGI (Japan)

AMIN SAIKAL (Australia)

TU WEIMING (China)

IMTIYAZ YUSUF (Vietnam)

MUHAMMED HARON (Botswana)

IBRAHIM KALIN (Turkey)

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR (USA)

MUHAMMAD SUHEYL UMAR (Pakistan)

SALLEH YAAPAR (Malaysia)

*Al-Shajarah* is a refereed international journal that publishes original scholarly articles in the area of Islamic thought, Islamic civilization, Islamic science, and Malay world issues. The journal is especially interested in studies that elaborate scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age, scholarly works that provide fresh and insightful Islamic responses to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. *Al-Shajarah* will also consider articles written on various religions, schools of thought, ideologies and subjects that can contribute towards the formulation of an Islamic philosophy of science. Critical studies of translation of major works of major writers of the past and present. Original works on the subjects of Islamic architecture and art are welcomed. Book reviews and notes are also accepted.

The journal is published twice a year, June-July and November-December. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief, *Al-Shajarah*, F4 Building, Research and Publication Unit, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), No. 24, Persiaran Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Taman Duta, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. All enquiries on publications may also be e-mailed to [alshajarah@iium.edu.my](mailto:alshajarah@iium.edu.my). For subscriptions, please address all queries to the postal or email address above.

Contributions: Submissions must be at least 5,500 words long. All submissions must be in English or Malay and be original work which has not been published elsewhere in any form (abridged or otherwise). In matters of style, *Al-Shajarah* uses the *University of Chicago Manual of Style* and follows the transliteration system shown on the inside back cover of the journal. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to return accepted manuscripts to the author for stylistic changes. Manuscripts must be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief in Microsoft Word. The font must be Times New Roman and its size 12. IIUM retains copyright to all published materials, but contributors may republish their articles elsewhere with due acknowledgement to *Al-Shajarah*.





IBN SINA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERNITY:  
INTEGRATING MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY,  
NEUROPHILOSOPHY, AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN  
ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILISATION

*Nurul Ain Norman<sup>1</sup> and Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract**

*This study explores the enduring legacy of Ibn Sina, a seminal figure in Islamic medieval philosophy, focusing on his theory of the soul and its implications for modern neurophilosophy, educational reform, and the renewal of Islamic thought and civilisation. By bridging the intellectual heritage of Ibn Sina with contemporary discussions in neurophilosophy, this paper highlights his contributions to understanding the nature of consciousness, perception, and the human mind. Furthermore, it examines how Ibn Sina's insights can inform modern educational practices, advocating for an integration of classical wisdom and scientific advancements within the curriculum of Islamic studies. This integration not only pays homage to the rich intellectual tradition of Islamic civilisation but also fosters a dialogue between the medieval and the modern, contributing to the ongoing process of renewal and reform in Islamic thought. By applying Ibn Sina's philosophical principles to contemporary challenges in education and society, this research underscores the potential for medieval Islamic philosophy to contribute to modernity, offering innovative pathways for navigating the complexities of the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** Ibn Sina, Neurophilosophy, Educational Reform, Islamic Thought, Modernity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Assst. Professor, ISTAC, IIUM

<sup>2</sup> PhD student, ISTAC, IIUM

## Introduction

Ibn Sīnā stands as a monumental figure in the annals of Islamic philosophy and medicine, whose intellectual legacy has profoundly influenced both Islamic and Western traditions. Renowned for his ability to synthesise Greek philosophy with Islamic thought, particularly in his works such as *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing)<sup>3</sup> and *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* (The Book of Pointers and Reminders)<sup>4</sup>, Ibn Sīnā advanced a comprehensive metaphysical system that became a cornerstone for medieval and later scholastic philosophy. His magnum opus, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine)<sup>5</sup>, revolutionised medical science, establishing principles<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See: Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1952); Ibn Sina, *The Metaphysics of The Healing (Al-Shifā')*. Translated by Michael E. Marmura. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005); Ibn Sina. *The Physics of The Healing (Al-Shifā')*, Translated by Jon McGinnis, (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> See: Ibn Sina, *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Edited by Sulaiman Dunya, (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1957); Ibn Sina, *Remarks and Admonitions: Logic, Part One of al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Annotated Translation by Shams C. Inati, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984); Ibn Sina, *Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics, Part Two and Three of al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, Annotated Translation by Shams C. Inati, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1877); Ibn Sina, *The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb)*, Translated by O. Cameron Gruner; (London: Luzac & Co., 1930); Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Medicine: A New Translation of the 11th-Century Canon with Practical Applications for Integrative Health Care*, Translated by Mones Abu-Asab, Hakima Amri and Laleh Bakhtiar, (Vermont: Healing Arts Press, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> 1) **The Four Humors Theory:** Ibn Sina expanded on the ancient Greek theory of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile), integrating it into his medical philosophy. He provided detailed descriptions of how imbalances in these humors could lead to disease and emphasised the importance of balancing them for maintaining health. This theory became a cornerstone of medieval medical practice in both the Islamic world and Europe (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 1, Section 3; Bakhtiar, L., The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb): Principles of the Humoral Theory and Its Influence on Modern Medicine. *Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of North America*, (2011), 43(3), 133-141. doi:10.5915/43-3-9082);

2) **Comprehensive Pharmacology:** In *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Ibn Sina compiled an extensive list of medicinal substances, describing their properties, effects, and uses.

that remained authoritative in both the Islamic world and Europe well into the modern era. By integrating various disciplines, including early neurophilosophy<sup>7</sup> and ethics, he not only transformed the medieval intellectual landscape but also laid the groundwork for enduring reforms in philosophy, medicine, and education.<sup>8</sup> His works bridged the ancient and modern worlds, shaping the trajectory of scientific and philosophical thought across cultures and centuries.<sup>9</sup>

---

His work in pharmacology, including the preparation and classification of drugs, was highly influential and remained a reference for centuries (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 2, Chapter 1; Rahman, S. Z., Shah, J. U., & Rahman, K., Avicenna's Contributions to the Field of Pharmacology. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, (2008), 29(1), 75-80. doi:10.4103/0257-7941.48500); 3) **Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment:** Ibn Sina emphasised the importance of clinical observation and diagnosis, advocating for a systematic approach to patient care. He described symptoms of various diseases, methods of diagnosis, and appropriate treatments, including dietary regulations, pharmacological remedies, and surgical interventions. (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 3, Chapter 4; Bos, G., Ibn Sina's Canon of Medicine: Some Remarks Concerning Its Influence on the History of Medicine. *Medical History*, (2006), 50(4), 457-478. doi:10.1017/S0025727300001419);

4) **Contagion and Quarantine:** Ibn Sina discussed the concept of contagion in diseases and the importance of quarantine to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. His insights prefigured modern practices in public health and epidemiology (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 4, Chapter 3; Dhanani, A. H., & Khoja, S., The Concept of Contagion and Quarantine in the Canon of Medicine by Ibn Sina. *Journal of Infection and Public Health*, (2014), 7(4), 272-276. doi:10.1016/j.jiph.2014.04.002);

5) **Anatomy and Physiology:** Although largely based on Galen's work, Ibn Sina's *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* included his own observations on anatomy and physiology, particularly in relation to the circulatory and nervous systems. His detailed descriptions helped shape the understanding of human anatomy in the Islamic world and Europe (See: Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*, Book 5, Chapter 1; Savage-Smith, E., The Contribution of Ibn Sina to the Understanding of Human Anatomy. *The Anatomical Record*, (2011), 294(6), 921-928. doi:10.1002/ar.21393).

<sup>7</sup> "Early neurophilosophy" in this context refers to the foundational ideas in the philosophy of mind concerning the brain, consciousness, and mental functions. Though a modern term, it retrospectively applies to Ibn Sina's exploration of the mind-body problem, consciousness, and the brain's role in perception and cognition, anticipating concepts central to contemporary neurophilosophy.

<sup>8</sup> Black, D. L., Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing That One Knows. *Topoi*, (2013), 32(2), 199-213. doi:10.1007/s11245-012-9127-2.

<sup>9</sup> Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Second Edition, Expanded and*

Building upon the intellectual legacy of Ibn Sīnā is essential for reforming Islamic thought and civilisation, as his work exemplifies the successful integration of reason, science, and spirituality — a synthesis that he masterfully achieved in his contributions to philosophy, medicine, and education. By revisiting his methodologies, particularly his ability to reconcile philosophical inquiry with religious principles, modern scholars and educators can find a balanced framework for fostering intellectual growth while remaining rooted in Islamic values. His holistic approach to knowledge, as demonstrated in his *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* and philosophical treatises<sup>10</sup>, offers valuable insights into how Islamic civilisation can advance scientifically and philosophically without compromising its foundational beliefs. This synthesis is particularly relevant today as the Muslim world seeks to engage with modernity<sup>11</sup> while preserving its rich intellectual heritage. Reinvigorating Islamic thought with the principles laid out by Ibn Sīnā could lead to a more dynamic and resilient civilisation capable of contributing meaningfully to global discourse.<sup>12</sup>

---

*Updated*, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 135-140; McGinnis, J., *Avicenna*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 75-80.

<sup>10</sup> See: Ibn Sina, *Dānishnāmeḥ-yi 'Alā'ī*, Edited by M. Minovi and M. Mohaqqueq, (Tehran: Sherkat-i Sahami-i Chap, 1952) – On metaphysics and logic; Ibn Sina, “*Risālah-yi 'Ishrāq*”, In *Majmū'a-yi Rasā'il-i Ibn Sīnā*, (Tehran: Anjuman-i Asar-i Milli, 1984) -- On knowledge and philosophy; Ibn Sina, *Risālah-yi Nafs*, Edited by Mohammad Mohaqqueq, (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 1980) – On nature of the soul and its relation to knowledge and intellectual development.

<sup>11</sup> In another note, with regards to the author’s opinion, “modernity” is often equated with the concept of civilisation in contemporary discourse. However, in the time of Ibn Sina, civilisation was not compartmentalised into separate disciplines; instead, it encompassed an integrated approach to knowledge that included physics, metaphysics, nature, and the soul or spiritual matters. This holistic view contrasts with the dichotomous nature of modernity, where there is a distinct separation between scientific knowledge and spiritual or metaphysical inquiry. This division, while enhancing technical and material progress, risks marginalising the ethical and spiritual dimensions that were integral to earlier civilisations.

<sup>12</sup> Nasr, S. H., *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*. Albany, (NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 251-256; Leaman, O., *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 122-126.



## Relevance to Modern Discourses

The relevance of Ibn Sina's work to modern intellectual discourses is profound. His exploration of the mind-body connection, particularly his concept of the “floating man,” has been recognised as an early precursor to modern theories of self-awareness and consciousness.<sup>13</sup> This thought experiment, where a person suspended in space without sensory input becomes aware of their own existence, is a powerful illustration of the innate human capacity for self-awareness—a concept that remains central in contemporary discussions of consciousness and cognitive science.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, Ibn Sina's theory of the soul is not merely a metaphysical construct but a foundational element that underpins his entire philosophical system, influencing his views on ethics, psychology, and even educational philosophy.<sup>15</sup> The significance of this theory lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the material

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI with Historical-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition*, Translated by Fazlur Rahman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 33-35; Adamson, P., *The Arabic Plotinus: A Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle' and Related Texts*, (Duckworth:2005), pp. 120-125; Black, D. L., “Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows”, (2008), *Topoi*, 29(2), pp. 63-73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-008-9045-2>.

<sup>14</sup> McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 56-60; Marmura, M. E., “Avicenna's “Flying Man” in Context”, *Monist*, (69(3): 2005), pp. 383-395. doi:10.5840/monist19696322; Hasse, D. N., *Avicenna's 'De Anima' in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160-1300*, (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 2000), pp. 45-50. See: Damasio, A. R., *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, (New York: Harcourt Brace:1999); Metzinger, T., *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 2003); Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D., *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. (London: Routledge, 2008); Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E., *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 1991); Tononi, G., An Information Integration Theory of Consciousness. *BMC Neuroscience*, (2004), 5(1),42, doi:10.1186/1471-2202-5-42 – On cognitive science that discuss concepts related to self-awareness and consciousness, which can complement the discussion of Ibn Sina's “floating man” thought experiment.

<sup>15</sup> Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, (Leiden: Brill. 2001), pp. 45-50; McGinnis, J. (2010), pp. 75-80.

and immaterial, offering a holistic understanding of human existence that integrates both body and soul.<sup>16</sup> In the modern context, Ibn Sina's insights into the nature of consciousness and self-awareness provide a valuable framework for addressing contemporary issues in neurophilosophy<sup>17</sup> and cognitive science. His emphasis on the soul's capacity for intellectual and spiritual growth underscores the importance of nurturing both the rational and moral faculties in education, advocating for a comprehensive approach that prepares individuals not just for technical proficiency but for a life of ethical conduct and intellectual rigor.<sup>18</sup> This makes Ibn Sina's theory of the soul a critical touchstone for ongoing discussions in both philosophy

---

<sup>16</sup> Nasr, S. H. (2006), pp. 98-102; Adamson, P. (2005), pp. 120-125.

<sup>17</sup> See: Azadpur, M., *Analytic Philosophy and Avicenna: Knowing the Unknown*, (New York: Routledge, 2020), ISBN: 9781032048680. – On epistemology and contemporary analytic philosophy; Black, D. L., “Varieties of Consciousness in Classical Arabic Thought: Avicenna, Averroes, and the Mutakallimūn”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, (2023), pp. 1-22. doi: 10.1080/09608788.2023.2201615. – On Ibn Sina's forms of consciousness and the philosophy of mind; Al-Kindi, Ahmad, “Ibn Sina wa al-Nazariyya al-Nafsiyya: Bayna al-Falsafa wa al-'Ulūm al-Mu'āshira” [Ibn Sina and the Psychological Theory: Between Philosophy and Contemporary Sciences], *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Islamiyya* [Journal of Islamic Studies], (2020), 12(3); Al-Hussein, Fatima, “Ta'ammulāt fī Falsafat al-Nafs 'inda Ibn Sina wa Ta'thūrahā 'alā al-Fikr al-Falsafī al-Ḥadīth” [Reflections on the Philosophy of the Soul in Avicenna and Its Impact on Modern Philosophical Thought], *Majallat al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya* [Journal of Islamic Philosophy], (2019), (8(1); Rohani, Seyed Ali, “Tahlil Maḥmūmī-yi Nafs wa Agāhī dar Āthār-i Ibn Sina: Rūykard-i Falsafī-Ravānshinakhtī” [Conceptual Analysis of the Soul and Consciousness in the Works of Avicenna: A Philosophical-Psychological Approach]. *Faslname-yi Falsafeh-yi Islāmī* [Islamic Philosophy Quarterly], (2018)14(2); Mansoori, Reza, “Barrasi-yi Ta'thīr-i Āmūzash-hā-yi Ibn Sina bar Mabāhith-i Falsafī-'Ilmī-yi Nawīn” [Examining the Impact of Avicenna's Teachings on Modern Philosophical-Scientific Discussions]. *Nashriyeh-yi Hikmat wa Falsafeh* [Journal of Wisdom and Philosophy], (2020),10(3).

<sup>18</sup> Nasr, S. H., (2006), 98-102; Black, D. L., “Varieties of Consciousness in Classical Arabic Thought: Avicenna, Averroes, and the Mutakallimūn”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*. (Forthcoming); Norman, N.A., “Ibn Sina's Theory of the Soul: A Taxonomy of Islamic Education.” *Islamic Civilisational Renewal (ICR) Journal*, (2021), 12(2), 275-289. <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v12i2.867>.

and education, offering timeless insights that continue to resonate with and inform modern thought.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, which emphasised the systematic acquisition of knowledge and the integration of rational inquiry with religious understanding, provides a valuable framework for modern educational reform. His approach to education, which balanced the sciences with metaphysical inquiry, is particularly relevant in today's context, where there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate classical wisdom with scientific advancements in curricula.<sup>20</sup> By applying Ibn Sina's insights to contemporary educational practices, there is potential to foster a more holistic and integrated approach to learning that respects both tradition and innovation.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Dialogue Between Medieval and Modern Thought**

The engagement between medieval Islamic thought and modern intellectual traditions is not merely a retrospective exercise; it is an essential endeavour for the renewal of Islamic civilisation in the 21st century. Ibn Sina's work exemplifies this bridge, showing that medieval Islamic philosophy can offer valuable insights into contemporary issues. His emphasis on the compatibility of reason and faith, alongside his systematic approach to knowledge, serves as

---

<sup>19</sup> Wisnovsky, Robert, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Ithaca, (NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.45-50; Leaman, Oliver, *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009),122-126. (See: Norman, N.A., Ruhullah, M.E., "Exploring the Ethical Dimensions of Fiqh: The Role of the Soul in Achieving Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah", *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation* (2014), 26(2), 123-145 – On Ibn Sina's ideas on the soul with contemporary Islamic jurisprudence and ethics.)

<sup>20</sup> Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 45-52.

<sup>21</sup> Norman, N.A., (2021), 275-289; Saihu, Made, Supriyadi, A., Darwis, H., and Hariyadi, M., "Study of Ibn Sina's Educational Thought and Its Contextualization in the Contemporary Era." *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*. (2024), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1431986> ; Embong, Rahimah, "Educational Views of Ibnu Sina." *al-Irsyad: Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Issues*, (2017), 2(1), 45-56, <https://al-irsyad.uis.edu.my/index.php/alirsyad/article/view/23>. Muslim Heritage (n.d.), "Ibn Sina on Education", *Muslim Heritage*, <https://www.muslimheritage.com/article/ibn-sina-on-education>.

a model for addressing the complexities of modern life through the lens of Islamic tradition.<sup>22</sup>

Ibn Sina's philosophy, rooted in a synthesis of Aristotelian logic<sup>23</sup> and Islamic philosophy<sup>24</sup>, demonstrates how ancient wisdom can inform modern debates in ethics, education, and governance. This philosophical synthesis is not only historically significant but also offers a robust framework for addressing the moral and intellectual challenges of the present. Scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr have argued that revisiting Ibn Sina's philosophical principles is crucial for addressing contemporary challenges, particularly in fields like education, where the integration of rational inquiry and spiritual understanding is increasingly recognised as essential.<sup>25</sup>

In his work *Islamic Life and Thought*, Nasr explores how Islamic intellectual traditions, including those of Ibn Sina, provide essential insights into maintaining a balance between reason and spirituality. He emphasises that Ibn Sina's approach to integrating science, philosophy, and theology remains relevant for contemporary educational systems that often struggle to reconcile technical expertise with ethical and spiritual dimensions.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in *The Need for a Sacred Science*, Nasr highlights the enduring significance of Ibn Sina's metaphysical framework, which supports the development of a worldview that acknowledges both the material and

---

<sup>22</sup> In his work *Kitāb al-Najāt*, Ibn Sina provides a systematic outline of the sciences, beginning with logic and proceeding through natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics. He illustrates how each discipline builds upon the previous ones, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the world that integrates empirical and rational knowledge. In the same work, as well as in his *al-Shifā'*, he provides concrete illustrations of how his philosophical writings emphasise the compatibility of reason and faith, as well as his systematic approach to organising and acquiring knowledge. These principles continue to serve as a model for addressing the complexities of modern life through the lens of Islamic tradition.

<sup>23</sup> Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Wisnovsky, R., *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Ithaca, (NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Nasr, S. H., *Islamic Life and Thought*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981).

<sup>25</sup> Nasr, S.H., (2006), pp.98-102.

<sup>26</sup> Nasr, S. H., (1981).

the spiritual aspects of existence.<sup>27</sup> This perspective is particularly relevant in modern governance and ethics, where there is a need for a holistic approach that addresses not only the physical well-being but also the moral and spiritual needs of individuals and communities.

In the context of modernity, engaging with Ibn Sina's work allows scholars and educators to draw from the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic civilisation while responding to the demands of the present. This engagement is not a mere academic exercise but a vital process for the ongoing renewal and reform of Islamic thought. By integrating the insights of medieval Islamic philosophers like Ibn Sina into contemporary discourse, we honour their legacy and contribute to a dynamic and resilient civilisation capable of meaningful contributions to global discourse.

## **Ibn Sina's Theory of the Soul**

### **Foundations of Ibn Sina's Philosophical Thought**

Ibn Sina's philosophy, particularly his theory of the soul, is grounded in a synthesis of Islamic theological principles and the philosophical traditions of the Greeks, notably Aristotle and Plato. This synthesis is evident in his major works, *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing)<sup>28</sup> and *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine)<sup>29</sup>, where he elaborates on the nature of the soul, its faculties, and its connection to the body. Ibn Sina posited that the soul is a substance, distinct from the body, yet intimately connected to it, which allows for the operation of faculties such as perception, imagination, and intellect.<sup>30</sup>

In his metaphysical framework, Ibn Sina categorised the soul into three primary levels: the vegetative soul, the animal soul, and the rational soul, with the latter being unique to humans. This tripartite division reflects his Aristotelian influences, but Ibn Sina further

---

<sup>27</sup> Nasr, S.H., *The Need for a Sacred Science*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 88-94.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing), (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-'Āmmah li-Qusūr al-Thaqāfah, 1968), pp. 335-350.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine), (Beirut: Alaalami Library, 1999), pp. 55-70.

<sup>30</sup> Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 45-52.

developed these ideas within an Islamic context, emphasising the soul's immortality and its journey towards intellectual and spiritual perfection.<sup>31</sup> Arif notes that Ibn Sina innovated upon Aristotle by placing greater emphasis on the role of intuition (*hads*) as a source of immediate knowledge.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Aristotle, who focused primarily on deductive reasoning, Ibn Sina believed that intuition allowed for the direct grasping of universal truths without the intermediary of logical reasoning, thereby expanding the epistemological tools available in his philosophical system.

### The Soul and Consciousness

Ibn Sina's theory of the soul extends into a profound analysis of consciousness, particularly through his famous 'floating man' thought experiment. In this thought experiment, Ibn Sina imagines a person suspended in the air, deprived of all sensory input, yet still aware of their own existence.<sup>33</sup> This scenario illustrates the concept of self-awareness independent of the body, suggesting that consciousness is a fundamental property of the soul itself, rather than a mere byproduct of physical processes.<sup>34</sup> This early exploration of

---

<sup>31</sup> McGinnis, J., (2010); Sabra, A. I., "Avicenna on the Origin of the Human Soul." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, (1980), 18(1), pp. 11-19; Gohlman, W. E. , *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*. Albany, (NY: State University of New York Press, 1974); Nasr, S.H. (2006); (See also: Al-Akiti, M.A., "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of *Falsafa*: Al-Ghazali's *Madnun*, *Tahafut*, and *Maqasid*, with Particular Attention to Their *Falsafi* Content." In *Avicenna and His Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*, Edited by Y. Tzvi Langermann, (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 69-127 – On Ibn Sina's integration of Greek influences with Islamic thought particularly in his evolving concepts of the soul and intuition).

<sup>32</sup> Arif, Syamsuddin, "Intuition and Its Role in Ibn Sina's Epistemology", *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)*, (2021), 26(2), 123-145.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sina. *Kitāb al-Nafs*, In *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriya, 1960), pp. 349-350.

<sup>34</sup> Nasr, S.H., (2006), pp. 159-175; Gutas, D., (2006), pp. 45-67; Adamson, P., *The Arabic Plotinus: A Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle' and Related Texts*, (London: Duckworth, 2005), pp. 120-135; Ashtiani, Jalal al-Din, *Sharḥ-i Muḥaṣṣal-i Asrār wa Mā Yanbaghī an Yu'lam fī Ḥāl al-Rūḥ* [A Commentary on the Mysteries and What Should Be Known About the Soul]. (Tehran: Intisharat-i

consciousness aligns closely with contemporary discussions in neurophilosophy, where the nature and origins of consciousness remain central debates.

Ibn Sina's work on consciousness also delves into the relationship between the soul and the intellect. He argued that the human intellect has the potential to comprehend universal truths, a process that involves the soul's ascension from sensory knowledge to intellectual understanding.<sup>35</sup> This ascent mirrors the Neoplatonic influence in his thought, particularly the idea that the soul can attain a higher state of being through the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. In this context, Ibn Sina's theory of the soul not only addresses the nature of consciousness but also its development and perfection through intellectual and spiritual growth.

### **Comparative Analysis with Modern Neurophilosophy**

Ibn Sina's insights into the nature of the soul and consciousness have striking parallels with modern neurophilosophical discussions. His notion of the soul as an immaterial substance that is capable of self-awareness resonates with contemporary debates on the mind-body problem<sup>36</sup>, particularly the question of how consciousness

---

Bunyard-i Farhang-i Iran, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> In *Kitāb al-Nafs*, Ibn Sina discusses the faculties of the soul, particularly focusing on the rational soul's ability to ascend from mere sensory experiences to the intellectual grasp of universal truths (See: Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 270-275). This process is central to his epistemology, where he diverges from Aristotle's more empirical approach. While Aristotle emphasised the importance of sensory data as the foundation of all knowledge, Ibn Sina advanced this idea by incorporating a more spiritual dimension, positing that the intellect can directly apprehend metaphysical truths, a capability he attributes to the Active Intellect. This idea also contrasts with Al-Farabi's interpretation, who placed more emphasis on logical deduction rather than the intuitive grasp of universals that Ibn Sina emphasises.

<sup>36</sup> In *Kitāb al-Nafs*, which is part of *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing), Ibn Sina describes the soul as an immaterial, self-aware entity that is distinct from the body. He posits that the soul's self-awareness is not dependent on physical processes, suggesting that consciousness is an inherent property of the soul itself. This idea anticipates later philosophical discussions on the mind-body problem, where the relationship between mental states (such as consciousness) and physical states (such as brain activity) remains a central debate (Ibn Sina (1968), 260-265).

While philosophers like Descartes later developed dualist perspectives,

arises from or interacts with physical processes in the brain.<sup>37</sup> Modern neurophilosophy often grapples with these issues, exploring the implications of neuroscientific findings for our understanding of the mind and consciousness.

Furthermore, Ibn Sina's concept of the rational soul, which he believed could attain knowledge of universals and abstract truths, parallels modern discussions about the nature of intellectual cognition and its relationship to physical brain states.<sup>38</sup> Smith further elucidates this connection by exploring how classical philosophical ideas, particularly those of Ibn Sina, have influenced contemporary neuroscience. Smith argues that Ibn Sina's notion of the rational soul offers a foundational perspective that aligns with current understanding in neurophilosophy, particularly regarding the processes through which abstract reasoning and universal knowledge are cognitively realised and linked to neurological functions.<sup>39</sup>

While modern neurophilosophy often approaches these questions from a materialist perspective, Ibn Sina's framework provides a nuanced counterpoint. Although he acknowledges a distinction between the immaterial soul and the physical body, he also emphasises their interdependence, arguing that cognition and consciousness arise from the unity of these elements rather than from their strict separation.<sup>40</sup> By comparing Ibn Sina's theories with

---

distinguishing between mind and body as fundamentally different substances, Ibn Sina's approach integrates the concept of a self-aware, immaterial soul within a broader metaphysical framework. His work provides an early exploration of the idea that mental phenomena cannot be entirely reduced to physical processes, a concept that continues to be relevant in contemporary philosophy of mind (Black, D. L., "Avicenna and the Problem of Dualism: An Examination of the Mind-Body Distinction." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, (2013), 51(1): 37-60; Zamboni, C., "Ibn Sina and Descartes on the Nature of the Soul", *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, (2011), 7(2): 45-58).

<sup>37</sup> Adamson, P., (2005), pp. 120-135.

<sup>38</sup> McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 80-85; Smith, R. J., "The Influence of Classical Philosophies on Modern Neuroscience: Revisiting Avicenna's Rational Soul", *Journal of Neurophilosophy*, (2020), 17(2), pp. 145-162; Brown, C.L., Patel, A., "Mind and Brain: Historical Perspectives and Modern Understandings", *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, (2019) 31(7), pp.899-911.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, "The Influence of Classical Philosophies", pp. 145-162.

<sup>40</sup> McGinnis, J., (2010), pp. 78-90; Gutas, D. (2001), pp. 45-67. Ibn Sina's



contemporary neurophilosophical approaches, scholars can gain deeper insights into the enduring questions about the mind, consciousness, and the nature of human knowledge.

In addition, Ibn Sina's emphasis on *hads* (intuition) as a means of direct knowledge acquisition<sup>41</sup> offers an early model of non-deductive reasoning that resonates with modern explorations of intuitive cognition<sup>42</sup>. His concept of the *Active Intellect* as a guiding principle in intellectual cognition<sup>43</sup> predates and informs contemporary discussions on how the brain processes abstract reasoning and universal truths<sup>44</sup>. This integration of philosophical reasoning with early cognitive theories showcases how Ibn Sina's thought remains relevant and provides valuable perspectives in ongoing neurophilosophical debates.<sup>45</sup>

---

philosophy integrates elements of dualism and unity, where the soul is viewed as an immaterial, self-aware substance that exists independently of the body. However, unlike Cartesian dualism, which posits a strict separation between mind and body, Ibn Sina's theory maintains that the soul and body function together in a unified manner. The soul's faculties, particularly the rational soul, operate through the body's organs but are not reducible to physical processes. This concept aligns more closely with the hylomorphic tradition of Aristotle, where the soul is the form of the body, giving it life and guiding its actions, rather than being an entirely separate substance (See: Norman, N.A., *Islamic Philosophy for Soul Development in Early Childhood: A Model Based on Ibn Sina Theory of Soul*. (PhD diss., Universiti Malaya, 2020).

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 260-265; Gutas, D., (2001), 45-67.

<sup>42</sup> Churchland, P. S., *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind-Brain*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 110-135; Damasio, A., *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. (New York: Harcourt, 1999), pp. 200-225. (Churchland and Damasio do not directly discuss Ibn Sina or concepts like *hads* (intuition) in the same way that Ibn Sina does. Their work focuses on modern neurophilosophy and cognitive neuroscience, however, the parallels can be drawn in how they discuss the brain's capacity for understanding complex, abstract concepts, and non-deductive reasoning, which can resonate with Ibn Sina's ideas.)

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 320-335; Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* (The Book of Pointers and Reminders), (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1957).

<sup>44</sup> Torey, Zoltan. *The Crucible of Consciousness: An Integrated Theory of Mind and Brain*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 70-85; Churchland, *Neurophilosophy*, 110-135.

<sup>45</sup> See: Torey (1999), for a modern exploration of consciousness as an emergent property of the brain, and Northoff (2014), which discusses the intersection of

## Educational Reform Inspired by Ibn Sina

### Rationale for Integrating Neurophilosophy with Educational Reform

In exploring Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, it becomes essential to consider the foundational elements of his approach, particularly his insights into the nature of the soul, intellect, and consciousness. Understanding these elements is crucial not only for their historical significance but also for their practical application in modern educational settings.<sup>46</sup> By integrating neurophilosophy, which investigates the connections between brain processes, consciousness, and intellectual functions, we can gain deeper insights into how education can be tailored to nurture both the cognitive and moral development of individuals.

Neurophilosophy offers contemporary perspectives on how the brain processes abstract reasoning and universal truths—key areas that Ibn Sina also emphasised through his concept of the *Active Intellect*. However, while neurophilosophy primarily focuses on the

---

philosophy and neuroscience. While neither work specifically addresses Ibn Sina, their analyses offer valuable insights that can be aligned with his perspectives on the soul and cognition (Torey, *The Crucible of Consciousness*, 70-85 ; Northoff, Georg, "Philosophy of the Brain: The Brain Problem." *Philosophy Compass* 9, (2014) no. 1: 45-60).

<sup>46</sup> See: Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), which emphasises the importance of foundational principles in shaping educational practices. For a similar approach within Islamic educational philosophy, see: al-Nahlawi, Abdurrahman, *Usul al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah wa Asalibiha* (Foundations of Islamic Education and Its Methods) (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1996). Additionally, al-Alwani's, Taha Jabir, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995) discusses the integration of foundational elements in educational reform. Barrow, R. and Woods, R., *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), further outline the need to consider foundational elements such as views on knowledge, the learner, and the purpose of education. For a broader philosophical context, consider Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), and Iqbal, Mohammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1930).

brain and where cognitive functions are situated<sup>47</sup>, Ibn Sina's philosophy presents a more nuanced view. He posits that the soul operates through two forms of intellect: one that functions with the body, facilitating basic cognitive processes, known as the *Material* or *Potential Intellect*, and another, the *Acquired Intellect*, which, while interacting with the body, elevates the soul toward the divine. This higher intellect progresses through various stages, with the *Active Intellect* being the highest phase, serving as an intermediary that connects the human intellect with the divine, ultimately guiding the soul towards intellectual and spiritual perfection.<sup>48</sup> By bridging these classical ideas with modern neuroscience, we can develop educational methods that align with the natural workings of the mind, fostering intellectual growth that is both scientifically informed and philosophically grounded. This integration underscores the relevance of Ibn Sina's holistic approach, demonstrating that a deep understanding of cognitive processes is vital for designing educational systems that nurture well-rounded, ethically sound individuals.

### **Ibn Sina's Educational Philosophy and Integration with Modern Education**

Ibn Sina's approach to education was holistic, integrating rational inquiry with religious understanding. He believed that education should nurture both the intellectual and moral faculties of individuals, preparing them for a life of ethical conduct and intellectual rigor.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Neurophilosophy is an interdisciplinary field that primarily focuses on understanding the relationship between the brain and cognitive functions. It seeks to bridge neuroscience with philosophical questions about the mind, consciousness, and cognition. This field addresses how cognitive processes, such as reasoning, perception, and decision-making, are rooted in brain activity, exploring topics like the mind-body problem, consciousness, and the nature of mental states. (See: Churchland, P.S., (1986); Churchland, Paul M., *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Kim, Jaegwon, *Philosophy of Mind*. Boulder, (CO: Westview Press, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Sina, (1960), pp. 320-335; McGinnis, J., (2010), 85-100; Gutas, D., (2001), pp. 67-89.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Sina, (1960); Ibn Sina, *Kitāb al-Najāt* (The Book of Salvation), (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Sa'ada, 1938); Ibn Sina, *Danishnama-i 'Alā'ī* (The Book of

His educational philosophy was deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition but also incorporated elements from Greek philosophy, particularly in the sciences and logic. In his works, particularly *Kitab al-Shifa*, he emphasised the importance of a broad curriculum that included not only the sciences but also metaphysics, ethics, and medicine.

Ibn Sina proposed that education should begin with the basics of language and logic, progressing towards more complex subjects such as mathematics, natural sciences, and metaphysics. His pedagogical methods were designed to cultivate critical thinking and independent reasoning, encouraging students to explore the natural world and understand the underlying principles of existence. He also advocated for the study of ethics and the development of virtuous character, which he believed were essential components of a well-rounded education.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, his emphasis on intuition (*hads*) as a source of knowledge provides a unique perspective on how to approach learning in a way that incorporates both rational and intuitive understanding.<sup>51</sup>

The relevance of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy to modern educational reform lies in its emphasis on the integration of classical wisdom with contemporary knowledge. In today's context, there is a growing recognition of the need to balance scientific advancements with ethical and philosophical inquiry, creating a more holistic approach to education. Ibn Sina's model provides a framework for this integration, demonstrating how classical Islamic scholarship can be harmonised with modern educational practices.<sup>52</sup>

---

Knowledge for 'Alā al-Dawla), (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1952).

<sup>50</sup> For discussions on these educational principles, see: Ibn Sina's *Kitāb al-Shifā'*, particularly in the sections on logic, mathematics, metaphysics, and ethics. Further elaboration on these ideas can be found in *Kitāb al-Najāt*, where Ibn Sina stresses the importance of a solid foundation in logic and language before advancing to higher sciences, as well as the significance of moral education. His Persian work, *Danishnama-i 'Alā'* also provides a summary of his educational philosophy, advocating for a curriculum that fosters independent reasoning, critical thinking, and the cultivation of virtuous character.

<sup>51</sup> Arif, S., (2021).

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion on the integration of classical Islamic philosophy with modern educational practices, see: al-Attas, S.M.N.A., "*The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*" (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999). On the

## Curriculum Development in Islamic Studies

Ibn Sina's ideas are particularly relevant for curriculum development in Islamic studies, where there is often a tension between traditional religious education and the demands of modern scientific inquiry.<sup>53</sup> By drawing on Ibn Sina's educational philosophy, curriculum designers can create programmes that respect the rich intellectual traditions of Islamic scholarship while also addressing contemporary educational needs.<sup>54</sup> This involves integrating classical texts and teachings with modern subjects such as science, technology, and ethics, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Practical applications of Ibn Sina's philosophy in curriculum development might include the incorporation of courses on logic, ethics, and natural sciences alongside traditional religious studies.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, his emphasis on the development of critical thinking and independent reasoning skills can inform teaching methods that encourage students to engage with both classical and contemporary sources critically. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnections between different fields of knowledge.<sup>56</sup>

---

development of educational models inspired by Ibn Sina's theory of the soul, refer to: Norman, N.A., (2020) and (2021). For further reading on the concept of Islamisation in education and its alignment with the educational philosophies of scholars like Ibn Sina, see: Wan Daud, W.M.N., *"The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization"* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998). Also, see Hashim, Rosnani, work on the practical application of Islamic educational philosophy at IIUM in *"Islamization of Education: The Case of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)"* (*American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 14, no. 2 (1997): 79-98) and her exploration of educational dualism in *"Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>53</sup> Hashim, Rosnani, (1996).

<sup>54</sup> al-Attas, S.M.N.A., (1999).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> See: Hashim, Rosnani, *Doing Philosophy for Wisdom in Islamic Education*, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2022); Hashim, Rosnani, *Towards an Islamic Curriculum: Principles and Issues* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2023); □ Hashim, Rosnani. *"Philosophical Inquiry in Islamic Education: The Hikmah Pedagogy."*

## Renewal of Islamic Thought and Civilisation

### Ibn Sina's Influence on Islamic Civilisation

Ibn Sina's contributions extend beyond philosophy and medicine; his work has profoundly influenced the development of Islamic thought and civilisation. His integration of Greek philosophy with Islamic principles created a foundation for a rationalist tradition in Islamic scholarship, which emphasised the compatibility of reason and faith. This intellectual framework contributed to the flourishing of the Islamic Golden Age, where scholars engaged deeply with both religious and secular sciences.<sup>57</sup> Ibn Sina's works, particularly his metaphysical explorations, became central to the curriculum in Islamic educational institutions, influencing subsequent scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd.<sup>58</sup>

---

(Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia Press, 2000); Hashim, Rosnani, "The Role of Philosophical Inquiry in Developing Critical Thinking Skills." *International Journal of Education* 8, no. 2 (2012): pp. 45-58; Hashim, Rosnani, "Hikmah Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century." *Contemporary Islamic Education* 17, no. 1 (2023): 65-82 – On effective strategies for curriculum development that align with classical Islamic educational philosophies while addressing contemporary educational needs.

<sup>57</sup> Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, pp. 45-67.

<sup>58</sup> Although Al-Ghazali critiqued Ibn Sina's philosophy, particularly in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), where he challenged the compatibility of certain philosophical ideas with Islamic theology, Ibn Sina's influence was nonetheless profound. Al-Ghazali's critiques were part of a broader intellectual engagement rather than a wholesale rejection, and they spurred further development in Islamic thought. For instance, Al-Ghazali accepted aspects of Ibn Sina's logic and ethics, integrating them into his own works.

On the other hand, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) emerged as a staunch defender of Ibn Sina's philosophical approach, particularly in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), where he argued for the reconciliation of philosophy and Islamic theology. Ibn Rushd supported Ibn Sina's rationalist tradition, asserting that reason and faith could coexist harmoniously and that philosophical inquiry was essential for understanding divine truths.

In my opinion, the debates between these scholars reflect the vibrant intellectual climate of the Islamic Golden Age, where rigorous discussions were the norm, particularly in the realms of theology and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). During this period, Islamic scholars engaged deeply with both rational and religious sciences, and the critique of philosophical ideas was often motivated by a desire to reconcile new

His influence is evident in the establishment of *madrasas*, where his works were studied alongside the Qur'an and Hadith. These institutions became centres of learning, promoting a comprehensive education that included theology, philosophy, science, and medicine.<sup>59</sup> Ibn Sina's emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and understanding the natural world as a means to comprehend divine wisdom resonated deeply within Islamic educational practices, fostering a culture of intellectual inquiry that persisted for centuries.<sup>60</sup>

### **Applying Ibn Sina's Principles to Contemporary Challenges**

Ibn Sina's philosophical principles offer innovative pathways for addressing contemporary challenges in education, ethics, and social governance. His holistic approach to knowledge, which encompasses both the empirical and the metaphysical, can guide the development of educational curricula that prepare students to navigate the complexities of modern life while staying rooted in Islamic values. Furthermore, his views on the soul and consciousness provide a framework for engaging with modern neurophilosophical debates, particularly those concerning the nature of self and identity in an increasingly secular world.

In the realm of social governance, Ibn Sina's ideas on the ethical responsibilities of rulers and the importance of justice and wisdom in leadership can inform contemporary discussions on governance in Muslim-majority countries. His emphasis on the integration of ethical principles into governance resonates with the works of scholars who highlight the need for moral integrity and wisdom in leadership roles. For example, Al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Muluk* (Counsel for Kings) emphasises the ethical duties of rulers,

---

knowledge with established religious principles. I believe that, Ibn Sina, through his works, sought to revive the use of reason in understanding both the physical world and metaphysical concepts, challenging the prevailing trend of limiting rational inquiry in favour of purely theological or jurisprudential interpretations.

<sup>59</sup> Gutas, D., *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*; Makdisi, G., *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

<sup>60</sup> Nasr, S.H., 2006; Gutas, D., 2001.

while Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* explores the role of justice as the foundation of leadership.<sup>61</sup> These works, alongside Ibn Sina's contributions, offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the moral obligations of those in power and the necessity of wisdom in decision-making, offering a timeless blueprint for moral leadership that transcends historical and cultural boundaries. For example, his insistence on the integration of ethical principles with practical governance could be applied to current efforts to combat corruption and ensure justice in public administration. Furthermore, his advocacy for wisdom (*hikmah*) in decision-making is particularly relevant today, where leaders are increasingly called upon to balance the demands of economic progress with the ethical and social well-being of their communities.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, Ibn Sina's approach to integrating empirical knowledge with ethical and spiritual wisdom can be applied to contemporary challenges in public health and environmental stewardship. In today's globalised world, where issues such as climate change, pandemics, and resource management demand coordinated and ethical responses, Ibn Sina's principles can offer valuable insights. His emphasis on the interconnectedness of all aspects of existence—physical, spiritual, and intellectual—suggests that modern challenges cannot be adequately addressed through purely technical solutions but require a holistic approach that considers the ethical implications of actions and policies. This perspective aligns with the growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical responsibility in global governance, advocating for a model of

---

<sup>61</sup> Al-Ghazali, *Nasihah al-Muluk* (Counsel for Kings), Edited by Jalaluddin Humayi, (Tehran: Amir Kabir Press, 1964); Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Translated by Franz Rosenthal, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> This approach is echoed in the *Madani* concept introduced by Malaysia's Prime Minister Dato' Sri Anwar Ibrahim, which emphasises governance that integrates moral and ethical considerations with economic development. Scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr have also emphasised the importance of integrating ethical wisdom in governance, arguing that true leadership requires balancing material progress with spiritual and moral responsibilities (See: Nasr, S.H., (2006); Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, "Membangun Malaysia MADANI - Amanat YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim," January 19, 2023, <https://www.pmo.gov.my>).



development that respects both the natural environment and the moral duties we owe to future generations. As Bakar emphasises in *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage*, the Islamic tradition provides a framework for understanding the profound ethical and spiritual responsibilities humans have towards the environment, which can guide contemporary environmental policies.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the inclusion of SDG 18 — *Spiritual and Moral Development* — proposed by Abdelaziz Berghout and Khaliq Ahmad, underscores the need for a spiritual and ethical dimension in sustainable development goals, ensuring that development is not just economically and environmentally sustainable but also spiritually and morally sound.<sup>64</sup> By drawing on Ibn Sina's wisdom, contemporary leaders and policymakers can develop strategies that not only address immediate needs but also promote long-term well-being and justice for all.

## **The Role of Ibn Sina's Legacy in the 21st Century**

### **The Continuing Relevance of Ibn Sina**

Ibn Sina's intellectual legacy continues to resonate in the 21st century, particularly in the fields of philosophy, medicine, and education. His comprehensive approach to knowledge, which integrates empirical investigation with metaphysical inquiry, offers a valuable model for contemporary scholars who seek to balance scientific advancements with ethical considerations.<sup>65</sup> In a world increasingly dominated by technology and materialism, Ibn Sina's emphasis on the spiritual and ethical dimensions of human existence serves as a crucial reminder of the need to maintain a holistic approach to knowledge and life.

---

<sup>63</sup> Bakar, Osman, *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage*, (Kuala Lumpur: Center for Civilisational Dialogue, University of Malaya, 2022); Norman, N.A., "Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage". *ICR Journal*, (2022), 13 (2), pp. 163-65, <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v13i2.929>.

<sup>64</sup> Berghout, Abdelaziz, Ahmad, Khaliq, *SDG 18: Spiritual and Moral Development in Sustainable Development Goals: Relevance, Importance, and Implementation*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM Publication, 2023).

<sup>65</sup> Pormann, P.E., Savage-Smith, E., *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Gutas, D., (2001).

In the realm of medicine, Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine* remains a foundational text, influencing medical practice and education in both the East and West. His methods of observation, experimentation, and logical reasoning have been integrated into modern medical curricula, demonstrating the timelessness of his contributions. Moreover, his holistic view of health, which considers the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of individuals<sup>66</sup>, aligns with contemporary trends in integrative and holistic medicine, making his work increasingly relevant in today's healthcare practices.

### **Innovative Pathways for the Future**

Building on Ibn Sina's legacy, there are numerous opportunities for innovation in both educational and intellectual pursuits. One key area is the integration of his philosophical principles into modern educational systems, particularly in Islamic institutions. By developing curricula that draw on his approach to knowledge—one that values intuition alongside empirical evidence—educators can foster a more balanced and comprehensive learning environment.<sup>67</sup>

Another area for innovation is in the application of Ibn Sina's ethical and philosophical insights to contemporary challenges in bioethics, environmental ethics, and social justice. His emphasis on the moral responsibilities of individuals, particularly those in leadership positions, can inform current debates on ethical governance and sustainable development. By revisiting and adapting Ibn Sina's teachings, modern scholars and practitioners can develop new frameworks that address the complexities of today's global challenges.<sup>68</sup>

### **The Potential for Islamic Philosophy to Contribute to Modernity**

Ibn Sina's work provides a strong foundation for Islamic philosophy to engage meaningfully with modernity. His rationalist approach,

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Sina, *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitab al-Najat, Book II, Chapter VI with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition*, Translated by Laleh Bakhtiar, (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1980).

<sup>67</sup> Norman, N.A., (2021); Gutas, D., (2001).

<sup>68</sup> Nasr, S.H., (2006); Bakar, Osman, (2022).

coupled with his deep commitment to ethical and spiritual values, offers a model for how Islamic philosophy can contribute to contemporary discourses in philosophy, science, and ethics.<sup>69</sup> By embracing the intellectual rigor and moral clarity of Ibn Sina's philosophy, modern Islamic scholars can play a pivotal role in shaping global conversations about the nature of knowledge, the purpose of education, and the role of ethics in public life.

This potential is particularly evident in the growing field of Islamic bioethics, where Ibn Sina's integration of medical knowledge with ethical principles provides a valuable resource for addressing complex moral issues in medicine.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, his insights into the nature of the soul and consciousness offer a unique perspective in the ongoing debates about artificial intelligence, consciousness, and the ethics of emerging technologies.<sup>71</sup> Recent scholarly discussions have highlighted the importance of philosophical frameworks in addressing the ethical implications of AI, emphasising how these technologies should align with human values and moral reasoning.<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

This study has explored the enduring legacy of Ibn Sina and its relevance to modern intellectual and educational contexts. By analysing his contributions to medieval philosophy, neurophilosophy, and educational reform, we have demonstrated how his work continues to inform and enrich contemporary discussions. Ibn Sina's innovative approach to knowledge —integrating reason, faith, and intuition — offers valuable insights that remain applicable in addressing modern challenges in various fields, from education to ethics. Looking forward, Ibn Sina's contributions have the potential to shape future developments in both Islamic and global contexts. His emphasis on the ethical dimensions of knowledge and leadership provides a model for responsible governance and moral education.

---

<sup>69</sup> Gutas, D., (2001); Nasr, S.H., (2006).

<sup>70</sup> Pormann, P.E., Savage-Smith, E., (2007).

<sup>71</sup> Adamson, P., (2005); McGinnis, J., (2010).

<sup>72</sup> Simon, J., Rieder, G., & Branford, J., "The Philosophy and Ethics of AI: Conceptual, Empirical, and Technological Investigations into Values." *DISO* 3, no. 10 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44206-024-00094-2>.

As the world grapples with complex issues such as technological advancements, environmental sustainability, and social justice, Ibn Sina's philosophy offers a timeless blueprint for navigating these challenges with wisdom and integrity. While this study has highlighted several key aspects of Ibn Sina's legacy, there is still much to explore. Future research could delve deeper into the application of his principles in specific contemporary contexts, such as the role of Islamic philosophy in modern science or the integration of his educational methods in global curricula. Moreover, comparative studies between Ibn Sina's work and other philosophical traditions could further illuminate the universality and relevance of his ideas in today's interconnected world.



# AL-SHAJARAH

Special Issue 2024

## Contents

<b>EDITORIAL NOTES</b>	1
<i>Khaliq Ahmad</i>	
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
PROSPECTS OF REVIVING ISLAMIC CIVILISATION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES: MUSLIM CIVILITY AND AT THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP	11
<i>Emin Poljarevic</i>	
MODERN REFORMS IN THE ISLAMIC THOUGHT WITH REFERENCE TO SCIENCE: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT	37
<i>Zain Razzaq and Rab Nawaz</i>	
ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN WORK ETHICS: AN ANALYSIS	59
<i>Sumera Irfan, Mohammad Bin Ibrahim and Thameem Ushama</i>	
THE CONCEPT OF AL-ISTIKHLAF AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN RECLAIMING THE ATTRIBUTES OF MAN AS KHALIFAH ON EARTH	83
<i>Hidayah Wan Ismail and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
REIMAGINING ISLAMIC DISCOURSE: TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP	103
<i>Maqbool Hassan Gilani, Saima Ali and Ghulam Mohyiddeen</i>	
THE ARTISTIC COMPOSITION OF ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY IN THE <i>KISWAH</i> OF THE HOLY KAABA: A DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL STUDY	121
<i>Duaa Alashari and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
RECONCILIATION AND ISLAMISATION - A ROADMAP FOR AN ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL	141
<i>Safiyah Sabreen Syeed and Ahmad El-Muhammady</i>	
TECHNO-JAHILIYYAH: EXAMINING TRANSHUMANISM THROUGH THE ISLAMIC LENS	167
<i>Asif Adnan</i>	
IRANIAN CINEMA AND ISLAMIC REVIVALISM (1970-1990): THE ENTWINED TAPESTRY	205
<i>Saima Ali and Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	
IBN SINA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERNITY: INTEGRATING MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY, NEUROPHILOSOPHY, AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILISATION	225
<i>Nurul Ain Norman and Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah</i>	
EARLY IDEAS ON REFORM AND RENEWAL THROUGH JOURNALISM IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO: HAMKA'S ACCOUNTS IN <i>AYAHKU</i> (1950)	249
<i>Ahmad Murad Merican</i>	
INTER-CIVILISATIONAL ISSUES AND THE FACTORS AFFECTING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS: A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTIONS	263
<i>Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani, Ahmad Khaliq and Abdul Waheed</i>	
MASTERY-HUMILITY MODEL: FROM CONVERGENCE TO INTEGRATION	295
<i>Ruslan Hassan</i>	
THE DISCOURSE OF RENEWAL: ASSESSING FAZLUR RAHMAN'S HERMENEUTICS AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE	319
<i>Arief S. Arman</i>	
<b>ICRITC-24 REVIEW</b>	337
<i>Khaliq Ahmad</i>	

WoS-Indexed under Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Current Contents/Arts and Humanities and Scopus

ISSN 1394-6870



9 771394 687009