

Avicenna (Ibn Sina)

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Avicenna (Ibn Sina)

Born: c. 980 | **Died:** 1037

Nationality: Persian

Primary Field(s): Doctor, Islamic philosopher, Scholar, Writer

1. Summary

Ibn Sina, revered in the Western world as Avicenna, was a monumental Persian polymath whose life spanned from approximately 980 to 1037 CE. His intellectual prowess allowed him to excel simultaneously as an exceptionally skilled physician and a profound Islamic philosopher. Beyond these primary designations, Avicenna was an indefatigable scholar and an incredibly prolific writer, known for his relentless pursuit of knowledge and his comprehensive documentation across a vast and diverse array of academic disciplines, solidifying his status as a pivotal figure in medieval scholarship.

His extensive literary output is estimated to have comprised an astonishing 450 distinct works, a testament to his intellectual vigor and deep understanding across numerous fields. Although a significant portion of these writings has regrettably been lost over time, approximately 240 of his treatises have survived, offering invaluable insights into his thought. Notably, these enduring works are concentrated heavily in his core areas of expertise, with around 150 dedicated to intricate philosophical inquiries and another 40 meticulously detailing medical knowledge. His lasting legacy is firmly anchored in these foundational texts, which not only synthesized but also significantly advanced understanding in both philosophy and medicine.

2. Key Contributions

Authored **The Book of Healing** (Kitāb al-Shifāʾ), a monumental philosophical and scientific encyclopedia. This comprehensive compendium systematically organized knowledge across logic, natural sciences, mathematics, and metaphysics, becoming a cornerstone of Islamic intellectual tradition.

Penned **The Canon of Medicine** (Al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb), an authoritative medical encyclopedia. This seminal work meticulously organized and significantly advanced medical understanding, serving as the standard medical textbook for centuries in both the Islamic world and subsequently in Europe.

3. Intellectual Context and Impact

Avicenna emerged during the vibrant period of the Islamic Golden Age, an era characterized by fervent intellectual curiosity, remarkable scientific advancement, and the systematic translation and

assimilation of ancient Greek, Persian, and Indian scholarship. Within this rich intellectual environment, Avicenna did not merely absorb existing knowledge; he actively engaged in its synthesis, critical analysis, and substantial expansion. His distinctive encyclopedic approach, most prominently showcased in works like **The Book of Healing** and **The Canon of Medicine**, enabled him to consolidate vast and disparate bodies of information into coherent, accessible, and authoritative texts. This methodical process of comprehensive compilation and systematic presentation was crucial in making complex subjects digestible and played a vital role in the widespread dissemination of advanced knowledge.

The impact of Avicenna's profound contributions was both immediate and enduring, resonating across geographical and temporal boundaries. **The Canon of Medicine**, in particular, exerted an unparalleled influence on medical education and clinical practice throughout the Islamic world for many centuries. Following its translation into Latin, it subsequently became a foundational textbook in European medical curricula, shaping Western medicine for generations. Similarly, his philosophical magnum opus, **The Book of Healing**, presented a sophisticated and comprehensive system of philosophy that deeply influenced Islamic theology and scholastic thought, and later found significant resonance within medieval European intellectual traditions. His meticulous scholarship and systematic classification of knowledge ensured that his intellectual legacy remained a pivotal force in the history of science and philosophy.

4. Major Works

The Book of Healing (Year of composition not specified in source content)

The Canon of Medicine (Year of composition not specified in source content)

5. Criticisms and Debates

The provided source content does not contain specific information regarding criticisms or scholarly debates directly pertaining to Avicenna's works or his philosophical and medical positions. However, given his immense stature and profound influence across both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions, it is historically consistent for such a prominent figure to be the subject of ongoing academic discourse, varying interpretations, and occasional critiques across different eras and schools of thought. Without explicit details within the given text, a discussion of specific criticisms or debates cannot be accurately generated here based solely on the provided information.