

## **PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF ABU ALI IBN SINA**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the philosophical views of Abu Ali Ibn Sina, a prominent figure in Eastern Islamic philosophy and medicine. The paper delves into his unique perspectives on metaphysics, the nature of the soul, knowledge, and the existence of God. Ibn Sina's synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Islamic theology laid the foundation for a new era of philosophical thinking in the Muslim world and influenced Western scholastic thought for centuries. The article also examines how his ideas contributed to the development of logic, ethics, and science, highlighting his enduring legacy as a universal thinker.

**Keywords:** Ibn Sina, Avicenna, philosophy, metaphysics, Islamic thought, soul, logic, ethics, knowledge, science.

**Introduction.** Abu Ali Ibn Sina, widely known in the West as Avicenna, is one of the most influential philosophers and scientists of the Islamic Golden Age. Born in 980 in Afshana near Bukhara, Ibn Sina made remarkable contributions to various fields, including philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and logic. His philosophical ideas, especially those presented in his major works such as "*Kitab al-Shifa*" (The Book of Healing) and "*Kitab al-Najat*" (The Book of Salvation), demonstrate a profound synthesis of Aristotelian thought and Islamic theology.

Ibn Sina's philosophy revolves around metaphysical questions such as the nature of being, the existence and attributes of God, the soul's immortality, and the

process of human knowledge. Through a rational and systematic approach, he shaped Islamic philosophy (falsafa) and greatly influenced both the Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. His works became foundational texts in medieval Europe and continued to be studied in Islamic countries for centuries. This paper aims to explore the core philosophical principles of Ibn Sina and assess their relevance and influence in both historical and contemporary contexts.

**Literature Review.** The philosophical legacy of Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention across both Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. His major philosophical treatises, such as *Kitab al-Shifa* (The Book of Healing) and *Kitab al-Najat* (The Book of Salvation), have served as central texts in the study of metaphysics, epistemology, and logic. Scholars like Gutas (2001) and Nasr (2006) have emphasized Ibn Sina's critical role in the development of Islamic philosophy, particularly his efforts to reconcile Aristotelian metaphysics with Islamic theological principles.

In his analysis of being (*wujūd*), Ibn Sina developed a nuanced theory distinguishing between essence (*māhiyya*) and existence (*wujūd*), a concept that became pivotal in later Islamic thought and deeply influenced scholars such as Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra. His argument for the existence of God as the “Necessary Existent” (*wājib al-wujūd*) represents one of the earliest formulations of metaphysical proof for divine existence within Islamic philosophy.

In the Western tradition, thinkers like Thomas Aquinas engaged deeply with Avicennian philosophy, particularly his notions of essence and existence, integrating them into Christian Scholasticism. Dimitri Gutas's comprehensive study, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (2001), provides a detailed exploration of Ibn Sina's integration of Greek philosophy into a coherent Islamic framework.

Contemporary researchers have also analyzed the psychological and ethical aspects of Ibn Sina's work. For example, Nasr (2006) explores Ibn Sina's theory of the soul, including his tripartite model (vegetative, animal, and rational soul), which aligns with both philosophical inquiry and spiritual development. Additionally,

Rahman (1958) discusses the enduring significance of Ibn Sina's epistemological theories, particularly his understanding of intellect and knowledge acquisition.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that Ibn Sina's philosophical contributions continue to influence modern interpretations of Islamic metaphysics and philosophy of mind, highlighting his unique role as a bridge between classical Greek philosophy and Islamic theological thought.

**Analysis and Results.** Abu Ali Ibn Sina's philosophy stands as a foundational pillar in both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions. His contributions span multiple areas including metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and ethics. The analysis of Ibn Sina's philosophical views reveals a profound synthesis of Aristotelian logic and Islamic thought, which significantly shaped subsequent philosophical developments.

Ibn Sina's theory of essence (*māhiyya*) and existence (*wujūd*) is central to his metaphysical framework. His distinction between these two concepts is critical, as he argues that while essence can exist in the mind, it cannot exist independently in the external world without existence. This distinction became a cornerstone of Islamic philosophy, later influencing thinkers like Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra. Ibn Sina's argument for the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*) further deepened the philosophical discourse surrounding the existence of God, offering a systematic and logical approach to proving God's existence that was later adopted by Western philosophers, notably Thomas Aquinas.

In his epistemological theory, Ibn Sina distinguishes between different levels of knowledge, from sensory perception to intellectual intuition. His famous concept of the "Active Intellect" (*al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*) plays a crucial role in the acquisition of knowledge, where the intellect's interaction with the material world allows humans to access abstract knowledge. Ibn Sina's exploration of the relationship between the individual intellect and the universal Active Intellect provided a framework for later thinkers, including Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi and Western philosophers such as Aquinas, who integrated these ideas into their own works on the nature of human knowledge and divine understanding.

Ibn Sina's psychological and ethical theories also contributed significantly to Islamic philosophy. His classification of the soul into three parts – the vegetative, the animal, and the rational soul – reflects his attempt to merge Greek psychology with Islamic thought. He argues that the rational soul is the highest faculty, guiding individuals towards intellectual and spiritual perfection. His moral philosophy emphasizes the cultivation of virtues such as temperance, courage, and wisdom, which guide the individual toward the ultimate goal of spiritual purification and alignment with the divine.

Ibn Sina's philosophy is deeply rooted in Aristotelian logic and metaphysics, but he also engages with Platonic and Neoplatonic thought. His integration of Greek philosophical principles with Islamic theology allowed for the development of a more sophisticated philosophical system that could bridge the gap between reason and faith. The influence of thinkers like Aristotle and Plotinus is evident in Ibn Sina's metaphysical writings, yet he adapts these ideas to fit the framework of Islamic monotheism.

The analysis of Ibn Sina's philosophical works demonstrates that his contributions laid the groundwork for both Islamic and Western philosophical traditions. His integration of Aristotelian logic with Islamic theology helped to establish a coherent system of thought that addressed issues of metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and ethics. His ideas on the nature of existence and the soul continue to be studied and debated by scholars, illustrating his lasting impact on philosophy.

In particular, his theory of existence and essence has had a profound impact on both Islamic and Western thinkers, shaping the development of metaphysical discussions on the nature of reality. Furthermore, his concept of the Active Intellect and his ideas on knowledge acquisition have influenced subsequent intellectual traditions, including the medieval Scholasticism of Europe.

Ibn Sina's work in psychology and ethics has also continued relevance, as his emphasis on the cultivation of virtues and the purification of the soul resonates with contemporary discussions in both philosophy and psychology. His work serves as a

bridge between classical Greek thought and Islamic philosophical and theological traditions, making his contributions indispensable to the history of philosophy.

**Discussion.** Abu Ali Ibn Sina's philosophical contributions represent a monumental synthesis of classical Greek thought and Islamic theological perspectives. His ability to integrate Aristotelian logic with Islamic principles allowed him to create a robust framework that addressed complex metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical questions, providing solutions that still influence contemporary thought.

Ibn Sina's distinction between essence and existence marks a significant shift in Islamic metaphysical thought. His argument for the Necessary Existent as a basis for the existence of God not only provided a comprehensive philosophical argument for monotheism but also laid the foundation for later metaphysical debates in both Islamic and Western philosophy. This idea also prompted subsequent philosophers, particularly Thomas Aquinas, to explore the relationship between God and the cosmos through a rational lens, showing the universal appeal of Ibn Sina's metaphysical vision. While critics may argue that Ibn Sina's reliance on Aristotelian concepts, such as the unmoved mover and the eternal existence of the universe, creates limitations in addressing the full complexity of divine action, his nuanced approach helped bridge rational thought and faith.

Ibn Sina's exploration of knowledge acquisition through the Active Intellect is a fascinating aspect of his philosophy. His theory suggests that human knowledge is not only derived from sensory experiences but also from a higher, divine source that guides intellectual cognition. This concept aligns with the Neo-Platonic tradition but is uniquely Islamic in its articulation. The idea that the Active Intellect serves as an intermediary between the human mind and divine knowledge challenges the view of knowledge as merely empirical and highlights the importance of intellectual and spiritual refinement. While some critics might view the concept of the Active Intellect as overly abstract or detached from practical experience, it nevertheless provided a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between the human soul and divine truth.

Ibn Sina's division of the soul into the vegetative, animal, and rational faculties offers a compelling model for understanding human psychology and moral development. His emphasis on the rational soul as the key to human perfection mirrors many later Western and Islamic philosophical traditions that prioritize intellectual and ethical cultivation. His ethical philosophy, which stresses the importance of virtues like temperance, courage, and wisdom, aligns with the broader Aristotelian tradition but with an emphasis on spiritual purification. The ethical teachings of Ibn Sina, which encourage individuals to engage in self-reflection and strive for intellectual and moral improvement, remain relevant in modern discussions on the role of virtue ethics in contemporary society. However, some might argue that Ibn Sina's focus on intellectual perfection could marginalize the emotional and social aspects of ethical life, which have gained greater emphasis in modern psychological and ethical theories.

Ibn Sina's philosophical system, though deeply rooted in Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions, was revolutionary in its fusion with Islamic theology. This integration allowed Ibn Sina to address questions that were not only of intellectual interest but also of religious significance. His works, particularly the "Kitab al-Shifa" and "al-Najat," became central texts in the Islamic intellectual tradition and later influenced Christian scholastics, especially in medieval Europe. His ideas on logic, metaphysics, and ethics were absorbed and modified by philosophers such as al-Ghazali, Mulla Sadra, and, most notably, Thomas Aquinas, demonstrating the lasting impact of his intellectual legacy. Despite some critiques of his reliance on Greek philosophy, Ibn Sina's contributions remain indispensable in understanding the evolution of Islamic and Western thought.

**Conclusion.** Abu Ali Ibn Sina's philosophical views represent a significant intellectual achievement that not only bridged Greek philosophical thought and Islamic theology but also contributed foundational ideas to metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and ethics. His arguments for the Necessary Existent, his theory of the Active Intellect, and his intricate understanding of the human soul have shaped both Islamic and Western philosophical traditions. Ibn Sina's

philosophical system, while influenced by Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought, was distinctly Islamic in its theological underpinnings, which allowed it to address questions of divine existence, knowledge, and morality in ways that resonated with both intellectual and spiritual concerns.

His emphasis on the rational soul as the means of human perfection, alongside his focus on virtue ethics, provided a roadmap for intellectual and moral development that continues to be relevant in contemporary philosophical and psychological discourse. Despite some critiques regarding his reliance on Greek philosophy and the abstract nature of certain concepts, Ibn Sina's work remains central in understanding the evolution of philosophical thought. His legacy, which extended beyond the boundaries of Islamic philosophy and influenced Christian scholasticism, exemplifies the profound and enduring impact of his intellectual contributions.

In conclusion, Ibn Sina's philosophical insights offer a comprehensive framework that remains an essential part of both Islamic and global philosophical heritage. His legacy continues to be studied, debated, and appreciated for its depth, intellectual rigor, and the way it integrates reason and spirituality, offering timeless lessons for contemporary thought.

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