Tracing the Scholars of Islam

Series 28

Ibn Sina

Author of al-Qanun fi at-Tibb, the Medical Book Taught for Centuries



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 28

IBN SINA

Author of al-Qanun fi at-Tibb, the Medical Book Taught for Centuries

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

"And We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:82

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent down the Qur'an as healing and mercy for the believers. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This twenty-eighth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells the story of a boy who memorised the Qur'an by the age of ten, then wrote a medical book taught in East and West for centuries. May his story inspire a love of learning from childhood.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook is an **image generated by artificial intelligence (AI)** — an ***imaginative depiction, not a real likeness*** of Ibn Sina. This label is also printed on the cover. This time we look **from outside the building**, through a **carved wooden window** on a winter night in **Hamadan**. Snow lies on the window sill.

In the warm room, Ibn Sina is seen **in side profile**, **writing in a large manuscript** with a reed pen by lamplight — a symbol of his writing ***al-Qanun fi at-Tibb***.

Behind him are **shelves of books and scrolls**, **glass flasks** of medicine, **dried herbs** hanging from a beam, and a **brass astrolabe** on the wall — showing the breadth of his knowledge: medicine, chemistry, astronomy and philosophy.

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CONTENTS

IBN SINA — *Introducing the scholar*

1. HEALING AND MERCY — *al-Isra' 17:82; Yunus 10:57*

2. THE BEST OF STATURE — *at-Tin 95:4; al-Infitar 82:7–8*

3. BACKGROUND: SAMANID BUKHARA — *The royal library*

4. WHO WAS IBN SINA? — *Timeline; list of works*

5. THE BEST OF YOU — *Sahih al-Bukhari 5027*

6. JOURNEYS AND TRIALS — *ash-Sharh 94:5–6; journey figure*

7. AL-QANUN FI AL-TIBB — *Five books figure; testing drugs*

8. CONTAGIOUS DISEASE AND ISOLATION — *Sahih al-Bukhari 5728*

9. THE PULSE AND THE SIGNS OF DISEASE — *Examining the patient*

10. THE SIX ESSENTIALS OF HEALTH — *Six essentials figure*

11. EXERCISE AND STRENGTH — *Sahih Muslim 2664*

12. CLEANLINESS AND WATER — *Sahih Muslim 223*

13. HONEY: HEALING FOR PEOPLE — *an-Nahl 16:69; Sahih al-Bukhari 5684*

14. SIMPLE AND COMPOUND DRUGS — *Books two and five*

15. MENTAL HEALTH — *The story of the racing pulse*

16. IBN SINA AND THE EARTH SCIENCES — *an-Naba' 78:7; how mountains form*

17. TEACHING AT NIGHT — *Sahih al-Bukhari 73*

18. FROM HAMADAN TO EUROPE — *Latin translation; legacy*

19. ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES — *Assessing the reports; history note*

20. LESSONS AND CONCLUSION — *Eleven lessons*

GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFERENCES

SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = history note (reports from the books of history and biography); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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IBN SINA

The twenty-eighth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abdullah ibn Sina***, known in the West as ***Avicenna***. He was a physician and philosopher called ***al-Shaykh al-Ra'is*** (the Chief Master).

His book ***al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*** (The Canon of Medicine) became the medical textbook of the Muslim world and of ***European universities for centuries***.

This eBook also explains Ibn Sina's ***journeys***, ***the conditions for testing drugs***, ***contagious disease***, ***the pulse***, ***the six essentials of health***, ***exercise***, ***clean water***, ***mental health*** and his contributions to ***the earth sciences***.

Note: The translation of Qur'anic verses in this eBook is that of Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in the Hadith box. Information from books of history and modern research is **biographical narration (not Hadith)** *and is placed in the brown "History Note" boxes. A cover image that shows the scholar is an AI-generated image and is marked as such. His year of birth is an estimate. This eBook is* **not medical advice***; seek treatment from a qualified doctor.*

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HEALING AND MERCY

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:82

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

And We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:82

Allah sent down the Qur'an as ***"that which is healing and mercy for the believers"***. The Qur'an is healing for the ***heart***, while medicine is an effort to treat ***the body***. Ibn Sina studied both — he memorised the Qur'an before becoming a physician. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:82.

HISTORY NOTE: READING FORTY TIMES

In the autobiography he dictated to his student al-Juzjani, Ibn Sina said he read Aristotle's ***Metaphysics forty times*** until he had memorised it, yet still did not understand it. Then he came across a commentary by ***al-Farabi*** in the book market for three dirhams, and at last he understood — and he ***gave charity in gratitude***.

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HEALING FOR WHAT IS IN THE BREASTS

SURAH YUNUS 10:57

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُم مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/10:57

The Qur'an came as instruction and ***"healing for what is in the breasts"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 10:57.

Ibn Sina realised that ***the state of the soul*** affects bodily health. Islam had long taught that a calm, believing heart is the foundation of well-being.

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THE BEST OF STATURE

SURAH AT-TIN 95:4

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ فِىٓ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

We have certainly created man in the best of stature.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/95:4

Allah says: ***"We have certainly created man in the best of stature"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 95:4.

SURAH AL-INFITAR 82:7–8

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّىٰكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾

Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you?

فِىٓ أَىِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَآءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾

In whatever form He willed has He assembled you.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/82:7-8

Allah is the One ***"Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 82:7.

LESSON

Medicine is the study of ***Allah's most perfect creation*** — the human body. Ibn Sina described the parts of the body in the first book of the Canon, and every discovery adds to our ***awe*** of the Creator.

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ANATOMY IN THE FIRST BOOK OF THE CANON

PART	IBN SINA'S DESCRIPTION
Bones	Their number, shape and function as the pillars of the body.
Muscles	The muscles that move the limbs.
Nerves	The nerves that carry sensation and movement from the brain.
Blood vessels	The veins and vessels that carry blood throughout the body.
Internal organs	The heart, liver, brain and other organs and their functions.

Some of these descriptions were later ***corrected*** by scholars after him, such as ***Ibn al-Nafis***, who described the pulmonary circulation of blood through the lungs. Knowledge always grows through ***correction***.

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BACKGROUND: SAMANID BUKHARA

Ibn Sina grew up in ***Bukhara***, the capital of the ***Samanid*** state. The Samanids were famous for patronising ***learning and literature***, especially in ***Arabic and Persian***.

> **HISTORY NOTE: THE ROYAL LIBRARY OF BUKHARA**
>
> After treating Amir ***Nuh ibn Mansur***, Ibn Sina was allowed into the ***royal library***. He described it as a building with ***many rooms***, each room for one field of knowledge, with chests of books in good order.
>
> He said he read books that ***few people had ever seen***. Not long afterwards the library ***burned down***, and Ibn Sina was among those who had managed to ***inherit its knowledge***.

LESSON

Libraries are ***the treasure of the ummah***. Knowledge that is read and written down again is not lost even if the building is destroyed.

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IBN SINA'S TEACHERS

TEACHER	FIELD
His father, 'Abdullah	Encouraged study and scholarly discussion at home.
Isma'il al-Zahid	Jurisprudence and manners.
Abu 'Abdullah al-Natili	Logic, geometry and astronomy.
Abu Mansur al-Qumri	Medicine; said to be one of his medical teachers.
Al-Farabi (through his books)	Philosophy; his commentary opened Ibn Sina's understanding.

Ibn Sina then studied ***on his own***, by reading and treating patients. He said medicine was ***not a difficult science*** for him — yet he still ***stayed up at night*** revising, and prayed when he met a difficult problem.

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WHO WAS IBN SINA?

Ibn Sina was ***born around 980 CE*** in the village of ***Afshana***, near ***Bukhara*** (now in Uzbekistan). According to his autobiography, he ***memorised the whole Qur'an by the age of ten***, then studied jurisprudence, logic, mathematics and medicine.

At about ***17***, he treated the Samanid Amir ***Nuh ibn Mansur***, and was allowed to read in ***the royal library***. Later his life was full of travel: he became ***vizier in Hamadan***, was once ***imprisoned***, and kept writing even in hard conditions. He ***died in Hamadan in 1037 CE***.

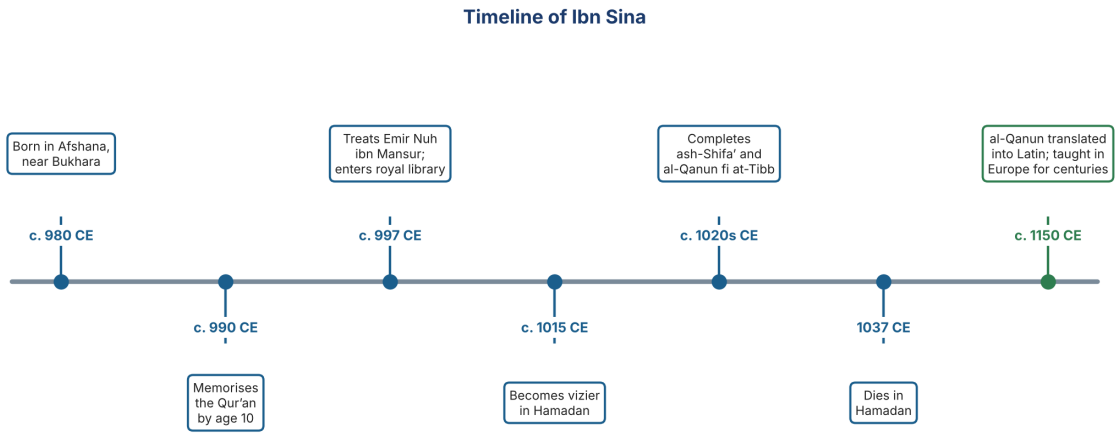


Figure 1: Timeline of Ibn Sina.

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MAJOR WORKS

WORK	DESCRIPTION
al-Qanun fi al-Tibb	An encyclopaedia of medicine in five books.
Kitab al-Shifa'	An encyclopaedia of philosophy and science: logic, physics, mathematics, metaphysics.
Kitab al-Najat	A summary of al-Shifa'.
al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat	His last philosophical work.
Danishnama-yi 'Ala'i	An encyclopaedia of philosophy in Persian.
al-Urjuza fi al-Tibb	A summary of medicine in verse, for easy memorisation.

Ibn Sina is said to have written ***more than 200 works***, mostly in Arabic and some in Persian.

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THE BEST OF YOU

Ibn Sina's learning began with ***the Qur'an***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a high rank to those who learn and teach it:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5027

حَدَّثَنَا حَجَّاجُ بْنُ مِنْهَالٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مَرْثَدٍ، سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ». قَالَ وَأَقْرَأَ أَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فِي إِمْرَةِ عُثْمَانَ حَتَّى كَانَ الْحَجَّاجُ، قَالَ وَذَاكَ الَّذِي أَقْعَدَنِي مَقْعَدِي هَذَا.

TRANSLATION:

'Uthman رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."** (Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah) said: Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman (as-Sulami) taught the Qur'an from the caliphate of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and he said: "That is what has kept me sitting in this seat of mine."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hajjaj ibn Minhal, from Shu'bah, from 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah, from Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith No. 5027.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5027

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it. A firm foundation from childhood opens the way to other sciences. Parents who teach their children to read the Qur'an are preparing ***a generation of scholars***.

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JOURNEYS AND TRIALS

After the Samanid state fell in ***999 CE***, Ibn Sina moved from city to city — sometimes honoured as physician and vizier, sometimes pursued and imprisoned.

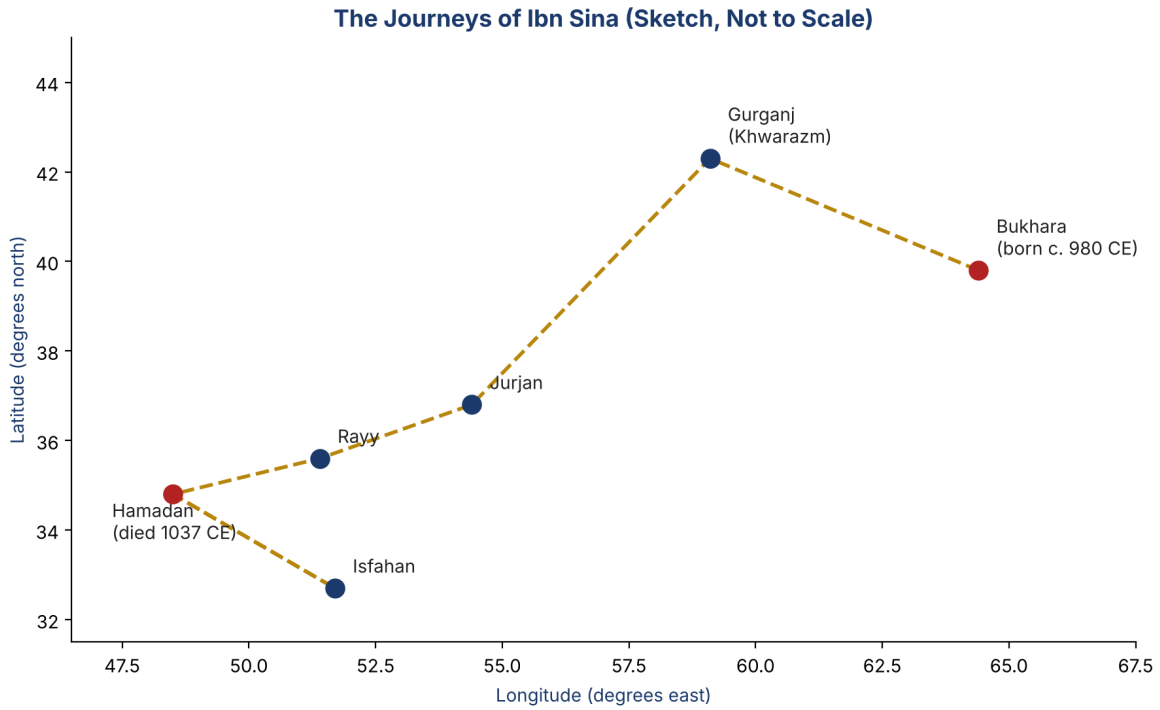


Figure 2: A sketch of Ibn Sina's journeys.

In every city he kept ***treating, teaching and writing***. Part of the Canon was written in ***Jurjan***, and some of his works were completed while he was ***in hiding*** or ***in prison***.

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SURAH ASH-SHARH 94:5–6

فَإِنَّ مَعَ ٱلۡعُسۡرِ يُسۡرًا ۝٥

For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

إِنَّ مَعَ ٱلۡعُسۡرِ يُسۡرًا ۝٦

Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/94:5-6

Allah says: ***"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease"*** — repeated twice for emphasis. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 94:5.

LESSON

The trials of life ***did not stop*** Ibn Sina's scholarly work. Hardship is often ***the most productive*** time for those who are patient and keep striving.

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AL-QANUN FI AL-TIBB

al-Qanun fi al-Tibb is arranged in ***five books***. It gathers the medicine of the Greeks, Persians, Indians and Arabs, together with Ibn Sina's own experience, in an orderly arrangement.

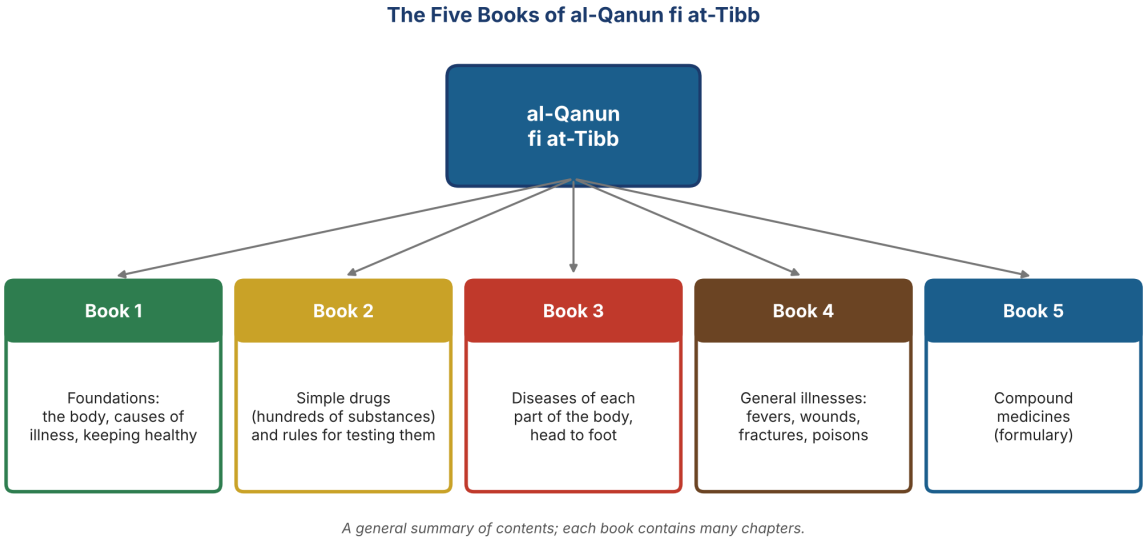


Figure 3: The five books of al-Qanun fi al-Tibb.

The book was translated into Latin in the 12th century CE and used in European universities ***until the 17th century CE***.

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CONDITIONS FOR TESTING DRUGS

In the second book of the Canon, Ibn Sina listed ***conditions for testing the effectiveness of a drug***:

CONDITION	MEANING
The drug must be pure	Not mixed with other substances.
The disease must be clear	Tested on a single, identified disease.
Tested in two different cases	To see whether the effect truly comes from the drug.
Matching strength	The dose suits the strength of the disease.
Timing observed	An immediate effect is more clearly due to the drug.
The effect must repeat	The same result when tested many times.
Tested on humans	Testing on animals is not necessarily the same as on humans.

These conditions are very close to the principles of ***modern clinical trials*** (Wikipedia: The Canon of Medicine).

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CONTAGIOUS DISEASE AND ISOLATION

Ibn Sina wrote that some diseases are ***contagious*** through air, water and contact, and that patients should be ***isolated***. This principle agrees with the teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ during epidemics:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5728

حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصُ بْنُ عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي حَبِيبُ بْنُ أَبِي ثَابِتٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنَ سَعْدٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ، يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِالطَّاعُونِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلاَ تَدْخُلُوهَا، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلاَ تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا». فَقُلْتُ أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَهُ يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا وَلاَ يُنْكِرُهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ.

TRANSLATION:

Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما narrated to Sa'd (ibn Abi Waqqas) رضى الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: "**If you hear of a plague in a land, do not enter it; and if it breaks out in a land while you are in it, do not leave it.**" (Ibrahim ibn Sa'd said:) I asked, "Did you yourself hear him narrate it to Sa'd, and Sa'd did not deny it?" He replied, "Yes."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hafs ibn 'Umar, from Shu'bah, from Habib ibn Abi Thabit, from Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, from Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما, who narrated it to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Medicine (Kitab at-Tibb), chapter on what has been mentioned about the plague, Hadith No. 5728.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5728

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Do not enter a plague area, and ***do not leave*** it. Isolation protects others and stops the spread of disease — a form of ***compassion*** for society.

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PREVENTING INFECTION TODAY

STEP	DESCRIPTION
Washing hands	With soap and water, especially before eating and after using the toilet.
Covering the mouth	When coughing or sneezing, use a tissue or your elbow.
Vaccination	Protects yourself and others from contagious diseases.
Isolating yourself	Resting at home when feverish or contagious.

These steps are recommended by global health experts (WHO: Hand hygiene). They agree with the Islamic spirit of ***cleanliness*** and ***caring for others***.

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THE PULSE AND THE SIGNS OF DISEASE

Ibn Sina wrote at length about ***the pulse*** — its speed, strength and rhythm — as a guide to the state of the body. He also observed ***urine***, ***skin colour***, ***the tongue*** and ***the eyes***.

EXAMINATION	WHAT IT INDICATED TO MUSLIM PHYSICIANS
Pulse	Speed and strength indicate fever, weakness or emotional stress.
Urine	Colour and clarity indicate the state of digestion and the kidneys.
Skin and eyes	Pale, yellow or red signs indicate problems of the blood or liver.
Tongue	Its colour and coating indicate the state of digestion.

EXAMINATION TODAY

Modern doctors still ***check the pulse*** and ***urine***, but with the help of tools such as ***the stethoscope, laboratory tests and scanners***. The principle is the same: ***observe the signs*** before deciding.

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THE SIX ESSENTIALS OF HEALTH

In the Canon, Ibn Sina listed ***six things*** that affect everyone's health. Taking care of all six is the way to ***prevent disease*** before it comes.

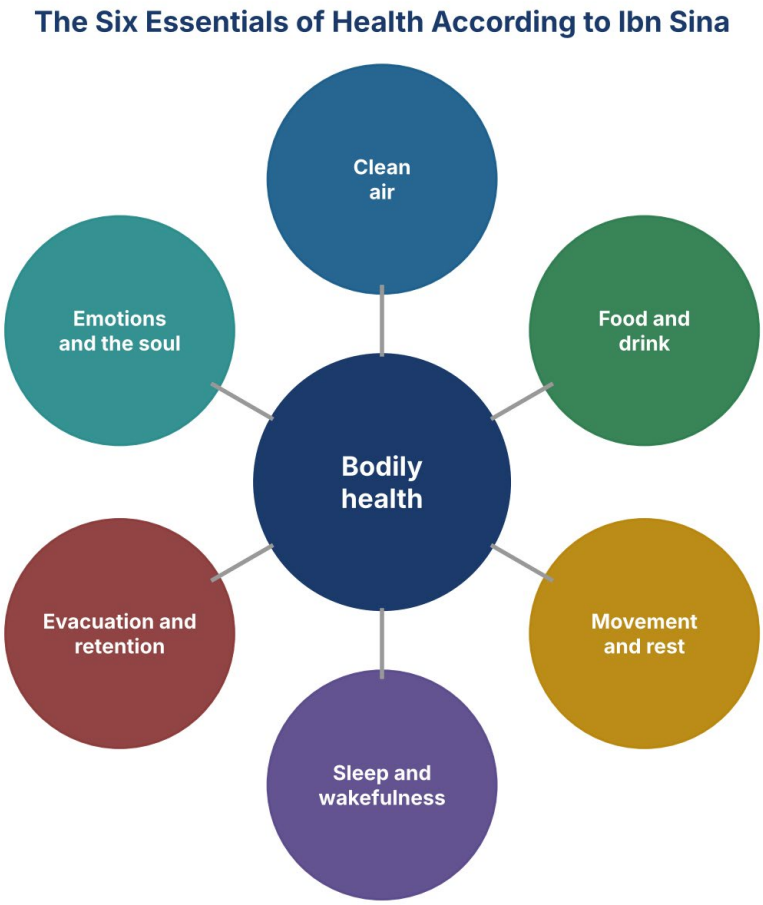


Figure 4: The six essentials of health according to Ibn Sina.

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THE SIX ESSENTIALS EXPLAINED

ESSENTIAL	PRACTICE TODAY
Air	Live where the air is fresh; avoid cigarette smoke and pollution.
Food and drink	Eat sufficiently; choose a balanced diet.
Movement and rest	Exercise regularly and rest enough.
Sleep and wakefulness	Sleep at night; do not stay up without need.
Evacuation and retention	Look after digestion and excretion; drink enough water.
Emotions	Control anger and sadness; increase remembrance of Allah and think well of others.

This principle resembles the ***healthy lifestyle*** guidance recommended by modern health experts.

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EXERCISE AND STRENGTH

Ibn Sina wrote about ***exercise*** (riyada) in the Canon: types of exercise, suitable times, and its importance for young and old. Islam also honours strength used for good:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2664

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَابْنُ، نُمَيْرٍ قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ إِدْرِيسَ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَبَّانَ، عَنِ الأَعْرَجِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلٍّ خَيْرٌ احْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلاَ تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَىْءٌ فَلاَ تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا. وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, and in both there is good. Strive for what benefits you, seek the help of Allah, and do not be weak. If something befalls you, do not say: If only I had done such-and-such, it would have been such-and-such. Rather say: Allah has decreed, and what He wills He does. For "if only" opens the door to the work of Satan."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Numayr, from 'Abdullah ibn Idris, from Rabi'ah ibn 'Uthman, from Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Habban, from 'Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Divine Decree (Kitab al-Qadar), chapter on the command to be strong and to abandon weakness, Hadith No. 2664.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2664

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The strong believer is more beloved to Allah. Strength includes body, faith and resolve — and ***do not lose heart***.

EXERCISE ACCORDING TO IBN SINA

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Timing	Exercise before meals, not after a heavy meal.
Intensity	Start slowly, then increase; stop before becoming exhausted.

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PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Types	Walking, riding, swimming, wrestling and light exercise.
Age	The elderly need lighter, more regular exercise.

Modern research confirms that regular exercise reduces the risk of ***heart disease, diabetes and depression*** (WHO: Physical activity).

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CLEANLINESS AND WATER

Ibn Sina wrote about ***clean water***: flowing water is better than stagnant water, and dirty water can be ***purified*** by filtering, boiling or distilling it.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 223

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حَبَّانُ بْنُ هِلاَلٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، أَنَّ زَيْدًا، حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ أَبَا سَلاَّمٍ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الأَشْعَرِيِّ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الإِيمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلأُ الْمِيزَانَ. وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلآنِ - أَوْ تَمْلأُ - مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَالصَّلاَةُ نُورٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ وَالْقُرْآنُ حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُو فَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَهُ فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوبِقُهَا».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Malik al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Purification is half of faith. Alhamdulillah fills the scale. Subhanallah and Alhamdulillah fill what is between the heavens and the earth. **Prayer is light (nur), charity is proof, and patience is radiance (diya').** The Qur'an is an argument for you or against you. Every person goes out in the morning and sells himself — either freeing himself or destroying himself."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Ishaq ibn Mansur, from Habban ibn Hilal, from Aban ibn Yazid al-'Attar, from Yahya ibn Abi Kathir, from Zayd ibn Sallam, from Abu Sallam Mamtur, from Abu Malik al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Purification (Kitab at-Taharah), Hadith No. 223.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:223

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Purification is half of faith. Cleanliness of body, clothing and place is part of the religion. The practices of ablution and bathing help prevent many ***contagious diseases***.

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WAYS OF PURIFYING WATER

METHOD	IN IBN SINA'S TIME AND TODAY
Boiling	Mentioned by Ibn Sina; still a simple way to kill germs.
Filtering	With cloth or sand; today with modern filters.
Distilling	Produces very pure water.
Letting it settle	Dirt sinks to the bottom before the water is taken.
Chlorine	A modern method at water treatment plants.

Clean water is ***a basic right*** of every person and a foundation of public health (WHO: Drinking-water).

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HONEY: HEALING FOR PEOPLE

Ibn Sina mentioned honey in his book of drugs. The Qur'an had long stated the benefit of honey:

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:69

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ فَٱسْلُكِى سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ۚ يَخْرُجُ مِنۢ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ
مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَٰنُهُۥ فِيهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down [for you]." There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:69

From the bellies of bees comes a drink ***"in which there is healing for people"***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also taught his community to use honey as a remedy, as in the following Hadith. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:69.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5684

حَدَّثَنَا عَيَّاشُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الأَعْلَى، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدٌ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي الْمُتَوَكِّلِ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، أَنَّ رَجُلاً، أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ أَخِي يَشْتَكِي بَطْنَهُ. فَقَالَ «اسْقِهِ عَسَلاً». ثُمَّ أَتَى الثَّانِيَةَ فَقَالَ «اسْقِهِ عَسَلاً». ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ فَقَالَ فَعَلْتُ. فَقَالَ «صَدَقَ اللَّهُ، وَكَذَبَ بَطْنُ أَخِيكَ، اسْقِهِ عَسَلاً». فَسَقَاهُ فَبَرَأَ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "My brother has a stomach complaint." He said: "Give him honey to drink." The man came a second time, and he said: "Give him honey to drink." Then he came again and said: "I have done so." He said: "**Allah has spoken the truth, and your brother's stomach has lied. Give him honey to drink.**" So he gave him honey to drink, and he was cured.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ayyash ibn al-Walid, from 'Abd al-A'la, from Sa'id ibn Abi 'Arubah, from Qatadah, from Abu al-Mutawakkil, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Medicine (Kitab at-Tibb), chapter on treatment with honey, Hadith No. 5684.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5684

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Allah has spoken the truth, and your brother's stomach has lied. A remedy sometimes needs ***time and patience*** before it shows its effect. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told the man to ***repeat*** the treatment until his brother recovered.

This lesson is very close to Ibn Sina's method: treatment must be ***observed, repeated and evaluated***, and the result is left to Allah.

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SIMPLE AND COMPOUND DRUGS

The second book of the Canon discusses ***simple drugs*** — about ***800 substances*** from plants, minerals and animals. The fifth book discusses ***compound drugs*** and how to prepare them.

SUBSTANCE	USES MENTIONED IN OLD MEDICAL BOOKS
Honey	For digestion, wounds and cough.
Ginger	For warming the body and aiding digestion.
Cinnamon	For digestion and bad breath.
Rose	For calming and cooling.

Caution: the uses above are ***historical records***, not treatment recommendations. Modern medicines must be tested by ***clinical studies*** before use.

LESSON

Ibn Sina organised the knowledge of drugs ***systematically*** — name, properties, uses and dose. This arrangement became a foundation of modern ***pharmacology***.

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MENTAL HEALTH

Ibn Sina deeply understood the link between ***emotions and the body***. He wrote that sadness, fear and anger can harm health.

> **HISTORY NOTE: THE STORY OF THE RACING PULSE**
>
> A famous story says Ibn Sina treated a young man who was ill without any clear cause. While ***holding his pulse***, he mentioned the names of villages and houses. When a certain name was mentioned, ***the young man's pulse raced***.
>
> Ibn Sina then knew the cause of his illness was ***his feelings for someone***, and advised his family. This story is ***famous in later Persian sources*** and cannot be fully verified.

LESSON

A good doctor ***listens*** to the patient, not merely examines the body. Mental health should be cared for with ***faith, family support*** and, when needed, ***professional treatment***.

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IBN SINA AND THE EARTH SCIENCES

In ***Kitab al-Shifa'***, Ibn Sina wrote about ***how mountains form*** and about ***rocks***. He proposed two causes: ***earthquakes*** that raise the land, and ***erosion*** by water and wind that wears away soft ground and leaves the hard parts.

SURAH AN-NABA' 78:7

وَٱلْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾

And the mountains as stakes.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/78:7

Allah made ***"And the mountains as stakes"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 78:7.

He also observed ***fossils*** and ***rock layers***, and concluded that some land ***was once sea***. These views make him one of the early pioneers of ***geology*** (Britannica: Avicenna).

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IBN SINA AND OTHER SCIENCES

FIELD	CONTRIBUTION
Logic	Organised logic in al-Shifa'; taught in madrasas for centuries.
Psychology	Discussed the soul, the senses and memory.
Music	Wrote on music theory and tones.
Astronomy	Observed in Isfahan and proposed an observing instrument.
Chemistry	Criticised the alchemical claim that base metals can be turned into gold.

Ibn Sina showed that a scholar can ***master many fields***, because they all spring from one aim: ***understanding the creation of Allah***.

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TEACHING AT NIGHT

His student ***al-Juzjani*** relates that by day Ibn Sina was busy with affairs of state, and at ***night*** he taught his students — reading al-Shifa' and the Canon with them.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 73

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي خَالِدٍ، عَلَى غَيْرِ مَا حَدَّثَنَاهُ الزُّهْرِيُّ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ قَيْسَ بْنَ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم « لاَ حَسَدَ إِلاَّ فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَسُلِّطَ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ، فَهْوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **"There is no envy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the way of truth, and a man whom Allah has given wisdom (knowledge) and he judges by it and teaches it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaidi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyainah, from Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qais ibn Abi Hazim, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, chapter on envying in knowledge and wisdom, Hadith No. 73. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 816).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:73

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ allowed ***good envy*** of two people: a rich man who spends his wealth on the truth, and one given ***wisdom*** who ***acts on it and teaches it***. Shared knowledge is wealth that never decreases.

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KNOWLEDGE IN VERSE

Ibn Sina wrote ***al-Urjuza fi al-Tibb***, a summary of medicine in ***verse*** (urjuza) of more than 1,300 lines. Its aim was to help students ***memorise*** the foundations of medicine ***easily***.

This method matches the tradition of Muslim scholars who arranged ***grammar, tajwid and jurisprudence*** in verse, such as ***the Jazariyya*** in tajwid. Memorised knowledge is ***carried everywhere***.

LESSON

A good teacher looks for ***the easiest way*** to convey knowledge. Songs, verse and summaries help students remember.

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FROM HAMADAN TO EUROPE

Gerard of Cremona translated the Canon into Latin in the 12th century CE as ***Canon medicinae***. After the printing press was invented, it was printed ***dozens of times*** in Europe.

PLACE / FIGURE	INFLUENCE OF THE CANON
Universities of Montpellier and Leuven	Used as a medical textbook until the 17th century CE.
Universities of Padua and Bologna	Taught and commented on by professors of medicine.
William Osler (20th century)	Described the Canon as a “medical bible” used longer than any other work.

The Canon is also still studied in ***traditional medicine*** in India and Pakistan today.

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HIS LEGACY TODAY

HONOUR	DESCRIPTION
Mausoleum of Ibn Sina, Hamadan	Rebuilt in the 1950s; visited by people from around the world.
Avicenna crater	A crater on the Moon is named after him.
UNESCO Avicenna Prize	A prize for ethics in science, named after him.
Universities and hospitals	Many medical institutions in the Muslim world bear his name.

Ibn Sina's true legacy is ***organised knowledge*** — so orderly that it was taught in East and West for ***more than 500 years***.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

The table below separates what is established from what needs checking about Ibn Sina.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STATEMENT	STATUS
Ibn Sina wrote al-Qanun fi al-Tibb in five books.	Established. The book still exists and is printed today.
He memorised the Qur'an by the age of ten.	Reported in his own autobiography (through al-Juzjani).
He read Aristotle's Metaphysics 40 times.	Reported in his own autobiography; famous.
He detected a young man's love through his pulse.	A famous story in later Persian sources; cannot be fully verified.
Before his death he repented, gave charity and freed his slaves.	Reported by Ibn Khallikan (13th century CE); famous but not fully verifiable.
He invented the 40-day quarantine.	Incorrect. He mentioned isolating patients; the term "40-day quarantine" came later in Europe.
All his philosophical views were accepted by the scholars.	No. Imam al-Ghazali criticised several of his views (see Book 13).

HISTORY NOTE: IBN SINA AND THE CRITIQUE OF IMAM AL-GHAZALI

Ibn Sina was also a great philosopher. But ***Imam al-Ghazali***, in ***Tahafut al-Falasifa***, strongly criticised several of his philosophical views, especially on ***the eternity of the world***, ***Allah's knowledge of particulars***, and ***bodily resurrection***.

This eBook focuses on Ibn Sina's ***medical contributions***, without endorsing the philosophical views criticised by the scholars.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: The Qur'an is healing and mercy for believers (17:82; 10:57).

Second: Man was created in the best of stature (95:4).

Third: The best of you are those who learn and teach the Qur'an (Sahih al-Bukhari 5027).

Fourth: With hardship comes ease (94:5–6).

Fifth: Prevent the spread of epidemics through isolation (Sahih al-Bukhari 5728).

Sixth: The strong believer is more beloved to Allah (Sahih Muslim 2664).

Seventh: Purification is half of faith (Sahih Muslim 223).

Eighth: Honey is a remedy; treatment needs patience (16:69; Sahih al-Bukhari 5684).

Ninth: Teach the wisdom Allah has given you (Sahih al-Bukhari 73).

Tenth: Look after the six essentials of health to prevent disease.

Eleventh: Well-organised knowledge can benefit for centuries — like the Canon.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Sina died in Hamadan in 1037 CE, and his tomb is still visited today. The next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha Allah, will tell the story of ***al-Zahrawi***, the father of surgery from al-Andalus. Wallahu a'lam.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
al-Qanun	The Canon; the name of Ibn Sina's medical book.
Simple drug	A remedy made from a single substance.
Compound drug	A remedy prepared from several substances.
Pulse	The beat of a blood vessel that can be felt at the wrist.
Isolation	Separating contagious patients from others.
Riyada	Exercise or bodily training.
Geology	The science of the earth, rocks and how they form.
Pharmacology	The science of drugs and their effects.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How did memorising the Qur'an from childhood help Ibn Sina pursue other sciences?

2. Why are Ibn Sina's conditions for testing drugs still important today?

3. Of the six essentials of health, which do you most need to improve?

4. What can we learn from the journeys and trials of Ibn Sina's life (94:5–6)?

5. How can we share knowledge as Ibn Sina did when teaching at night?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Feel the pulse at your wrist for one minute before and after light exercise. Record the difference.

Activity 2: Make a weekly chart for the six essentials of health: sleep, food, exercise, water, air and emotions.

Activity 3: Memorise a short surah this week and teach it to a younger family member.

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HADITH

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Sahih Muslim 223, 2664. https://sunnah.com/muslim

HISTORY AND MODERN RESEARCH

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

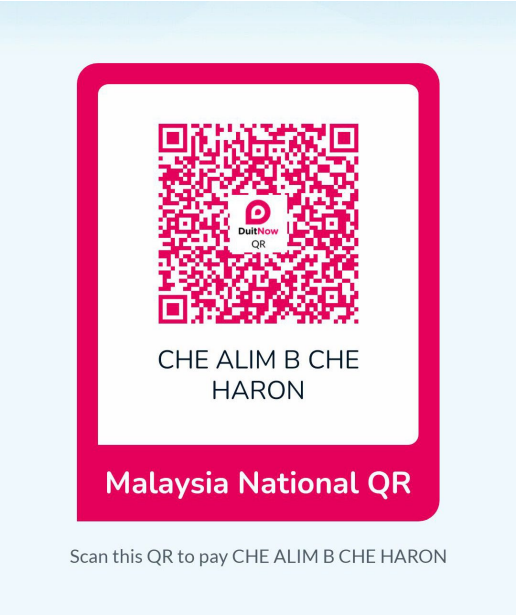
REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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