Ibn Sina: The Renowned Philosopher And Physician Of The East

<"xml encoding="UTF-8?>

Among the greatest intellectuals of Islam is the name of Abu Ali Husain ibn Abdullah ibn Sina, the well-known philosopher. Abu Sina is called “Bu Ali Sina” and “the chief Shaykh”. This great personality was a national of Bukhara, which at that time was a part of the Iranian kingdom. His father had come from Balkh but they had settled down in Bukhara.

Not only this intellectual is the matter of pride for the Islamic world and the people of the East, he is counted among the greatest thinkers and intellectuals of the world.

Ibn Sina was an expert of all the sciences of his time like Rationalism, philosophy, medicine, logic, and mathematics and also wrote books on these subjects.

The writings of Ibn Sina even after a period of a thousand years are considered valuable not only in the Islamic world but non-Islamic centers of knowledge are also studying and doing research on these writings. Thousands of scholars and students have benefited from his books and continue to do so in every corner of the world. The fact is that Ibn Sina was one of the enlightened brains of the world. He was of those who have few equals and who possessed an outstanding position over the rest of the people.

Regarding his natural gift of intellect it is written that during his infancy when a child has not even reached the age of understanding, lying in his cradle he used to study the stars in the heavens, and committed all this to his memory for the rest of his life. He possessed an extraordinary ability of memorization and many episodes are recorded to illustrate these qualities. Other incidents connected with him prove his insight, understanding and God-given knowledge and perfect manners.

His respected father was in the service of the Sasanid government. When it was felt that Husain has reached the age of understanding he was put under a teacher to learn the holy Quran.

After that he went to the teachers of literature for further education. So sharp was the mind of the child that he committed to memory whatever the teacher taught to other students.

Within a brief period of one and a half years he completed the study of books like Gharibul Musannif, Adabul Katib, Tasrif Mazani, Al-Kitabul Sibuya, Riyaziyat, Hisab Hindi and Jabr-o-Muqabela etc. At that time he was only ten years old. By the time he was twelve he had become proficient in jurisprudence and religious law and became capable to deliver religious

edicts (Fatawa).[1]

Umar Abu Abdullah Nayli was the foremost scholar of that time. Once when he came to Bukhara, the father of Ibn Sina invited him to their residence and kept him as a guest for some days during which Ibn Sina studied under him the books of logic and philosophy. It is apparent that how much Ibn Sina must have gained from the knowledge of this scholar can only be known to the teacher. This much however is known that after the study he posed such questions to his teachers and raised such points and doubts that even the teacher was unable to solve them.

After that, the teacher went towards Khwarizm and during this time Ibn Sina was busy in the study of natural and divine sciences and other areas of research, especially medicine. He collected many books of philosophy and medicine and he made such a deep and vast study that he became the most accomplished and expert physician of his time.

During this period many researchers from far-off places began to come to him. They used to study under him and learn the knowledge he had obtained through his own experiments. By the time he was eighteen, Ibn Sina had mastered all the sciences of his age. In spite of this he used to be engrossed in studies and did not waste a single moment. Whenever he was confronted with a difficult problem he used to perform ablution, go to the Jame Masjid of Bukhara, pray two units of prayer and invocate Allah for the solution.

In that period Nuh ibn Mansur, the Samanid ruler, fell ill. He summoned Ibn Sina for his treatment. The treatment provided by this youthful physician cured the illness and the Sultan accorded him a permanent place in his court.

The Samanid dynasty had a huge library having all the books on every subject prevalent in that period. Some of the books were priceless and very rare. Ibn Sina used them to further his knowledge and even committed to memory the most important treatises. When this library was burnt to ashes all the rare manuscripts perished but they were safe in the memory of Ibn Sina.

When he was twenty-one, he began writing and compilation. When he was twenty-two, his father passed away and the same year he was appointed as the Diwan (Prime Minister) of the Samanid Kingdom. When the Samanid kingdom began to decline and the royal treasury was almost empty, Ibn Sina bid adieu to Bukhara and moved to Gurganj in Khwarizm, the seat of the Maimoniya kingdom. There he became close to the ruler of Khwarizm, Ali Ibn Mamun Ibn Muhammad and his Vizier, Abul Hasan Ahmed ibn Muhammad Sahli who was a great intellectual of his time. He stayed there for many years and wrote many books.

Later when Mahmud Ghaznavi planned that all the intellectuals of Khwarizm should move to his court, Ibn Sina left Khwarizm and went to Nishapur, Tus and

Samangan towards Gurgan, since he was of Shia faith and he feared that there would be discrimination at the court of Ghazna and he may be a target of the Sultan's bigotry and enmity.

But the ruler of Gurgan, towards whom Ibn Sina headed, was killed in 403 A.H. and Ibn Sina went towards Dahsan. After some days he left Dahsan again and traveled to Gurgan and there he completed most of his writings. In 405 A.H. he went to Rayy. There he treated Majdud Dawla the son of Fakhrud Dawla Daylami and wrote his book, Maad.

This young philosopher and physician left Rayy also and went to Qazwin and from there to Hamadan. He lived there for sometime and wrote his famous books Shifa. He was approximately thirty-seven years of age when Shamsud Dawla the son of Fakhrud Dawla appointed him as Vizier. After some days there was a mutiny and he was stripped of his post. However after some months he was reinstated in his position. However, the hectic life of a Vizier did not deter him from his studies. He continued to write books after books.

After the death of Shamsud Dawla he went to Isfahan and became a close confidant of the ruler, Alauddin Kakooya. In 468 A.H. he traveled with his mentor to Hamadan and died there at the age of 58, where he was buried.

Ibn Sina was an expert of two languages: Arabic and Persian, thus he wrote in both the languages. He was also a poet. His well-known writings are: Shifa, Isharat, Danish Nama Alayee (Persian), Nijat, Commentary on Shifa and Qanun Tibb. These books are very famous in the East. In spite of his difficulties and homeless wanderings he wrote more than a hundred volumes on different subjects.[2]

Ibn Sina was a strong, active and an elegant young man. He possessed the delicacy of manners and well articulated behavior. Despite his intense studies, research and writings he never felt tired and indolent. That is the reason that royal posts, company of rulers and extensive travels never became barriers in his writing work. For the most part of the nights he was buried in pages of books and journals but all this never affected his presence of mind. He was always witty and never did he fall short intellectually. Many strange episodes are recorded about his exceptional capabilities.

He became an expert physician at the age of eighteen and discovered the modern methods of [diagnosis and cure.[3

References

[1] Ali Duali: Kitab Darakhshan

[2] Tarikhul Hukama Pg. 413

[3] Tarikh Adabiyat Dar Iran, Zabihullah Safa