

## POETIC AND SOCIO-ETHIC VIEWS OF IBN SĪNĀ

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Abu Ali Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) left a great heritage in all fields of knowledge of his epoch. His medical and philosophical works got widely spread and influenced the development of all fields of science. This aspect of Ibn Sīnā's heritage has been well investigated. But his poetic-aesthetical and socio-ethic views have not been studied well enough.

Abū Ubaid Djuzdjani—Ibn Sīnā's disciple and faithful friend—wrote that his great teacher never limited his work by generalizing the facts in a certain sphere of science or by investigation of what was known before. Ibn Sīnā undertook researches new in their essence. He was an innovator in the sphere of poetic-aesthetical and socio-ethic thought as well.

Ibn Sīnā was an excellent poet. And it was not accidental that he took to writing poetry. He grew up in the cultural surroundings of Bukhara where everybody enjoyed the fascinating lines of the Adam of the poets of the East—Rudaki. The poems of Dakiki and Shachid Balchi were put to music and sung at poetic contests. That was the time when great Firdawsi was in the heyday of his fame.

A few tens of quatrains—rubaii—are ascribed to Ibn Sīnā. Some of them undoubtedly belong to his pen. But others are ascribed both to him and to Omar Khaiyam who was an unsurpassed master of that genre. It is known that Khaiyam regarded Ibn Sīnā as his teacher; he translated Ibn Sīnā's works from Arabic to Farsi-Dari.

It was under the pen of Ibn Sīnā that the genre of rubaii, presented best of all in the creative work of Rudaki and his contemporaries, acquired its highly philosophical sounding. Khaiyam was the next to write in this genre. And today not only the poets of the East but a great many poetic masters in Europe and America work in the genre of the Oriental quatrain.

It won't be true to say that Ibn Sīnā was the founder of the scientific poetry. He might have been familiar with the famous poem of Titus Lucrecius Kar "On the Origin of Things". But his *Urdjuza* is a perfectly new phenomenon in the Oriental poetry. It is not a system of ideas about the world but a system of ideas

about man and his organism, about the achievements of medicine, and rules of hygiene. It is a kind of "The Canon of Medicine" in miniature and written in verse, very clear and easily understandable. A genuine humanist, Ibn Sīnā thought it his duty to popularize the achievements of science, especially medicine, in a clear and attractive way. The *Urdjuza* was translated into Latin and had several editions as a supplement to "The Canon of Medicine". The influence of Ibn Sīnā's scientific poetry on European poetry of the Middle Ages, though not yet investigated, is doubtless.

The genre of *Kasidah* or panegyric, in which heroes and rulers were sung, was turned by Ibn Sīnā into something absolutely new, not known before—into a poetic philosophic parable. I mean *Poem on the Soul*, which is not yet studied well enough.

Ibn Sīnā was an innovator both in poetic genres and in prose. His allegoric stories "Salaman and Absal", "Attair", "Khai Ibn Yakzan" are also a link between antiquity and the Middle Ages; they are also developed and imitated in the East and the West. The influence of Ibn Sīnā's humanistic ideas can be found in the works of such outstanding masters as Nizami, Jami, Navayi, and Dante.

Greatly valuable are the researches of Ibn Sīnā on poetics. He made excellent commentaries on Aristotle's "Poetics". Thanks to Ibn Sīnā's work, the humanists of the European Renaissance got acquainted with Stagirit's "Poetics". This and other works of his are full of innovations. Here he tries to make a comparative analysis of the specificity of Greek and Arab poetries to find universal laws of poetry. He analyzes thoroughly the genres of the Greek poetry and finds tragedy to be the leading genre, which differs from the Arab and Iranian literature where, he thinks, lyric is the leading genre.

Ibn Sīnā's thoughts about the purpose of poetry, about the connection between poetry and music, and about the moral responsibility of a poet are of no small interest. According to him poetry must excite surprise and enjoyment. "The art of healing cures the body, but the art of poetry cures the soul", wrote Ibn Sīnā.

Ibn Sīnā tried to comprehend the poetic creative process as a whole. He considered that "the poet's character leaves its mark on his poetry". Ibn Sīnā's own proud character is fully reflected not only in his verses that reached us but in his investigations of ethics and music. Like his contemporaries he did not tear one genre off the other, more than that he himself was the author of a number of melodies and invented musical instruments. The link between poetry and music in Ibn Sīnā's time was traditional. The founder of the poetry in Farsi-Dari, Abuhafs of Sogdiana (Samarkand) was also a musician and the inventor of the musical instrument musikor. The melodies composed by the great poet Rudaki are still included in the programmes of classical music. As a scholar, Ibn Sīnā paid much attention to the educative role of poetry and music and to their emotional influence on man.

A legend runs that to shorten a long caravan way in his endless wanderings, Ibn Sīnā selected the bells for the camels in such a way that the cameleers became sad after a period and started dancing. A legend is a legend. But Ibn Sīnā, the founder of psychotherapy, paid much attention to the influence of music on man, tried to make it consonant with a person's mood, and paid attention to the accord between poetry and musical form.

The classification of music according to its emotional effect—to music inspiring force and courage, mirth and joy, delight, sorrow and bitterness, and grief and depression—goes back to Ibn Sīnā's time.

The main subject of Ibn Sīnā's socio-ethical views is man—Nature's best creation. Like Aristotle and Farabi, Ibn Sīnā regards man as a social creature. "The first feature of a man," writes Ibn Sīnā, "is that to continue his existence a man cannot stop assisting similar creatures, cannot live alone as other animals do, cannot live on what is given him by Nature". Man's labour differs from that of an animal by its purposefulness and consciousness.

According to Ibn Sīnā, reason and justice must reign in an ideal kingdom. People must strive to achieve moral perfection, they must live by honest labour, take care of one another, and eradicate evils together. Robbery, usury and other socio-harmful ways of acquiring riches are prohibited. Ibn Sīnā thinks that people by their nature are inclined to beauty and harmony. In an ideal kingdom all people are beautiful, they appreciate poetry, music, science. They have healthy bodies and healthy spirits.

Ibn Sīnā condemned both over-indulgence and asceticism as extremes. He demands that people keep within limits, lead a moderate life.

Ibn Sīnā's humanism manifested itself in his views on the role of a woman in a family and society. Following the traditions of Rudaki and Firdawsi he raises the role of a woman in society very high. He regards a woman as a worthy partner of a man in the family life and bringing up children. Among the many good features of a woman Ibn Sīnā singles out her industriousness, culture, reason, learning.

A lot of wonderful ideas were put forward by the great thinker, Ibn Sīnā, about children's upbringing. This problem is tackled by him almost in all his works—philosophical, medical, poetic and especially pedagogical. Ibn Sīnā worked out quite a progressive programme of bringing up of the growing generation. He included collective and individual education, sport, labour, moral and aesthetical upbringing. He made high demands of professional preparation and moral merits of an educator.

Ibn Sīnā's ideas about pensions to disabled, invalid and diseased, about the right of all people to education are of great social value. His ideas were formed by the changes in social life of his epoch and they distinguish greatly his social position from the position of Plato and Aristotle.

Being a great humanist, Ibn Sīnā resolutely condemned despotism, wars, and strife between nations. He thought that people should live in peace and concord. Reason and justice should reign in human society. Ibn Sīnā's great soul was turned to the most important thing on the earth—man. His soul absorbed the greatest achievements of people's thought and then returned them developed and enriched by new ideas, observations, discoveries.