



Newsletter of Ibn Sina Academy (NISA)

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CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN UNANI MEDICINE

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

Department of AYUSH

THE COUNCIL

The Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, Department of AYUSH. Established in 1978, the CCRUM started functioning from 10 January 1979, and ever since it has been busy researching into various fundamental and applied aspects of Unani Medicine. Over the years, the CCRUM has emerged as the world leader in the field.

THE NETWORK

20 research Centres of the Council are functioning in different parts of the Country.

THE AREAS OF ACTIVITY

The Research Programme of the Council has four major components:

- * Clinical Research
- * Drug Standardization
- * Literary Research
- * Survey & Cultivation of Medicinal Plants

THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Some significant achievements of the Council are as follows:



**Developing Research
in
Unani Medicine**

CLINICAL RESEARCH

- Has developed 24 Unani Drugs which are purely natural, standardized and without any side effects, for successful treatment of leucoderma, sinusitis, viral hepatitis, eczema, malaria, rheumatoid, arthritis and bronchial asthma.
- Has filed patents on seven of these drugs.

DRUG STANDARDIZATION

- Has evolved Standards for 222 single and 385 compound Unani drugs.
- Has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for taking up advanced research in the field of drug development.

LITERARY RESEARCH

- Has translated from Arabic and Persian into Urdu language 25 Unani Medical Classics mostly manuscripts. And has edited and published these works.

SURVEY & CULTIVATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS

- Has collected 59462 specimens of 1730 medical plants from the wild.
- Undertaking successful cultivation of four important medicinal species.
- Has gathered and documented 6650 folk medicinal claims.

PUBLICATIONS

- Has produced over 1000 research papers and brought out 116 research publications, besides regular publications of a bimonthly CCRUM Newsletter, Quarterly Urdu Journal Jahan-e-Tib and Annual Report.

For further information, please contact

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IAMMS ACTIVITIES

**EVENTS AT IBN SINA ACADEMY
(From October to December 2009)**

AIDS Day

A programme on the occasion of World AIDS Day was organized on 1st December 2009 at the Library Hall of Ibn Sina Academy. An exhibition of books, posters and other documentations on HIV/AIDS extant in the AIDS Cell of the Academy, was also arranged. In addition, posters and postcards produced by the civil society of World AIDS Campaign and that represent the 2009 World AIDS Day theme – Universal Access and Human Rights, were also as well exhibited.

AIDS Cell has been organizing various programs on the occasion of World AIDS Day for the last 6 years. It acknowledges the support of **UNAIDS** (India Office), **World AIDS Campaign** (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), and **International AIDS Candlelight Memorial** (Global Health Council, USA) in organizing the programmes.

Aik Shaam Shairon aur Kaviyon ke Naam

In memory of last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar and to honour a number of poets of Aligarh city, a programme was organized by Shikhar (NGO) on 30.09.2009 at the Library Hall of Ibn Sina Academy. During the programme, eminent local poets such as Prof. Budhsen Nihar, Khalid Faridi, Ramgopal Varshney, Jamunaprasad Rahi, Moazzam Ali Khan Moazzam, Babar Ilyas, Harish Betab, Abid Ali Abid, Sudhir Sisodia, Masum Badr, Bashirul Hasan Naqvi, Musharraf Husain Mehzar, Zamir Atraulvi, recited their

favourite poems under the presidentship of a noted poet Khalid Nadeem Farooqui.

Mr. Harish Betab (PRO, Ibn Sina Academy & Secretary General, Ganesh Shankar Journalist Press Club, Aligarh) conducted the whole programme.

Weekly Mock Test for PG Entrance

Mock test to practice for PG MDS Entrance test was arranged at every Sunday during October, November and December 2009. Dr. M. Jawed Khan (Life Member, IAMMS and Resident, Dept. of Pharmacology, JN Medical College, Aligarh) in collaboration with 'Target EduCare' (Mumbai) conducted these practical sessions for MDS aspirants.

One year completion as 'Centre of Excellence' – A brief report

Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, designated Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine and Sciences as 'Centre of Excellence' in November 2008. The grant sanctioned helped in fulfilling the aims and objects of the academy to develop and propagate the Unani Medicine in general and History of Unani Medicine in particular.

The academy owes the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, to make it a real center of excellence. The academy extended the construction work and bought many things under the scheme.

**Visit of Personalities / Delegates
Following dignitaries visited the Academy:**

1. Dr. Syed Ali Rizvi, President, AMU Alumni Federation, USA, 17th Oct. '09.
2. Prof. Obaid Siddiqui, Founder Father, National Centre for Biological Sciences, TIFR, Bangalore, 18th October 2009.
3. Ms. Amber Abbas, Austin TX, USA, 9th December 2009.

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4. Dr. G. Yardani, Hakim Herbal Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 10th December 2009.
5. Delegates, Subject Refresher Course in Arabic and Persian Studies, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 26th October '09. On this occasion, Prof. Syed Zillur Rahman (President, IAMMS) addressed the participants and gave an account on the influence of Arabic and Persian Sources in Unani Medicine.
6. Delegates, Orientation Programme for Madrasa Teachers, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 22nd November 2009.
7. Delegates, Refresher Course in Science, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 15th December 2009.
8. Delegates, Refresher Course in Social Science, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 16th December 2009.
9. Delegates, Refresher Course in Hindi, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 17th December 2009.
10. Delegates, Orientation Programme, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 23rd December 2009.
3. Member, Judging Committee, Sir Syed International Award'09 in the field of Life Sciences (Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Microbiology and Marine Biology), Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.
4. Attended, International Seminar on "Indian Archives & Libraries as Source for Arab History", Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Oct. 6-8, '09. Presented a paper on "Arabic Manuscripts Extant in the Library of Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine & Sciences".
5. Delivered Guest Lecture on Research Methodology in Arabic and Persian Studies, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 31st October 2009.
6. Resource Person, Subject Refresher Course in Research Methodology in Oriental Studies, UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, 31st October '09.
7. Attended, International Ghalib Seminar, Ghalib Awards (2009), Aalami Mushaira at Ghalib Institute, New Delhi, 11-13 December 2009. Also presented an invited paper in the seminar.
8. Attended, Meeting of the Markazi Majlis-e-Amla, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, New Delhi, 14th Nov. '09.
9. Attended, Meeting, Board of Management, Sir Syed Academy, VC Secretariat, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 17th December 2009.
10. Attended, Meeting of the Markazi Majlis and Majlis-e-Amla (Combined), All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, New Delhi, 12th December 2009.
11. Appointed thesis external examiner of Phd candidates 2009-2010, Faculty of Pharmacy, Hamdard University, Karachi, Pakistan.

IAMMS MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

Prof. Syed Zillur Rahman (President, Ibn Sina Academy) has been invited in the following events:

1. Presided, Inaugural session, National Workshop on Akhlat: Philosophies vs scientific validation, Faculty of Unani Medicine, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 23rd November 2009. Prof. Anis A. Ansari (Executive Member, IAMMS) was the Director and Organising Secretary of the above workshop.
2. Presided, Sir Syed Day Function, Mohsinul Mulk Hall, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 17th October 2009. Dr. Suhail Sabir (Executive Member, IAMMS) is the Provost of the above residential Hall.

Dr. Abdul Latif (Joint Secretary and Chairman, Department of Ilmul Advia, AK Tibbiya College, AMU, Aligarh) has been invited in the following events:

1. European Congress of Integrative Medicine, Berlin, Germany, 20-22 November 2009. Also presented paper entitled "Scientific Validation of Unani Eye Drop on Conjunctivitis".
2. Placebo Symposium in Munich, Germany 27th & 28th November 2009 organized by Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich and Samuelli Institute, USA.

Dr. A. Latif was also invited to visit the following Institutes in Germany and to interact there with the historians of Islamic Science. They are:

1. Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Sciences, Frankfurt (Director, Prof. Fuat Sezgin). Institute for History of Arabic & Islamic Sciences at Johan Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany on 30th November 2009.
2. Institute for Oriental Studies and Islamic Sciences, Ruhr University at Bochum, Bochum (Director, Prof. Stefan Reichmuth).

Dr. Latif has very fruitful visits to these two Institutes. He wishes to pursue his contacts further.

Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman (Treasurer, Ibn Sinâ Academy and lecturer, Department of Pharmacology, JNMC, AMU, Aligarh) has been invited as:

1. Appointed Member, Advisory Board, Mahatma Gandhi Doerenkamp Center for Alternatives to Use of Animals in Life Science Education, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India, since 2009.
2. Attended. One day Seminar on 'Ahimsa and Animal Alternatives – Implications and benefits of teaching humane science', Gandhi-Gruber-Doerenkamp Chair for Alternatives in Life Science Education and In Vitro Toxicology and Mahatma Gandhi-Doerenkamp Center

(MGDC) for Alternatives to Use of Animals in Life Science Education, A collaborative venture between Bharathidasan University, People for Animals and Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation, Switzerland, October 2, 2009. Book released (see photograph at the last page).

3. Visited Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu) to study artifacts extant in the Arts Gallery and Fort Museum, 3rd October 2009.
4. Attended, the First MCI sponsored Workshop on Basic Course in Medical Education Technology for Medical Teachers, Regional Centre MAMC, Department of Medical Education, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, during November 3-5, 2009. Dr. Rahman was nominated to attend this workshop by the Dean, Faculty of Medicine, JN Medical College, AMU, Aligarh. Next day on 6th of November, he also visited the Department of Pharmacology and met many faculty members including Dr. Uma Tekur, Professor and Head, to whom he presented his recent publications on pharmacology including the guide to alternatives to animal experimentation.
5. Delivered Invited Talk on 'Legal issues on environmental pharmacology' during the 9th Annual conference of Society of Pharmacovigilance, India (SoPI) on 21.11.2009 at Rajendra Institute of Technology and Sciences, Sirsa (Haryana). Dr. Rahman also chaired a scientific session.
6. Chaired a scientific session, Annual Conference of Association of Physiologists and Pharmacologists of India (APPI), U.P. Rural Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Safai (UP), 5th December 2009.
7. Delivered Invited Talk on 'environmental issues in relation to therapeutic drugs' during a special symposium on 'Heavy metals and other contaminants in food

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and drugs', at the International Conference on Integrative and Personalized Medicine and 42nd Annual Conference of the Indian Pharmacological Society (IPSCON-2009), 11.12.09, at Swabhumi, Kolkata.

Dr. Rahman has joined as PhD scholar in the University of Western Sydney (Sydney, Australia). He also took IELTS Examination and scored good grades.

Mr. Mohd Nafees (Assistant Curator, Karam Hussain Museum of Arts, Culture and Science, Ibn Sina Academy) was invited to attend the workshop on conservation, Raza Library, Rampur, November 2009. He was the official delegate on the recommendation of Ibn Sina Academy.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AT IAMMS

Ibn Sina Memorial Lecture

The fourth Ibn Sina Memorial Lecture 2009 will be delivered by Prof. Irfan Habib (Professor Emeritus, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh) on 8th January 2010.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES AT ELSEWHERE

6th Annual HAPSAT Conference on Instruments: Mental and Material

HAPSAT, the Graduate Student Society at the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science at Technology at the University of Toronto, will host its sixth annual conference, Instruments: Mental and Material on April 25, 2010.

Scientific instruments have emerged as a central theme in the history and philosophy of science and in science and technology studies. In *Leviathan and the Air Pump*, Shapin and Schaffer cite instruments, together with writing style and modest witnessing, as the technologies that enable the new scientific life. More recently,

Galison's *Image and Logic* gives instrument makers equal standing with theorists and experimentalists within the trading zones of scientific discovery. The historiography of medicine has also explored how instruments played a significant role in changing the diagnostic acumen of doctors and revolutionizing concepts of disease. However, there is still a great deal of work to be done in order to consider instruments as both a serious subject of study, and a resource for historical investigation and argumentation. Similarly, since Hacking's seminal *Representing and Intervening*, philosophers of science have acknowledged instruments as being of central importance to the practice of science. They have become a nexus for worries about empiricism and standards of evidence; Latour (*Science in Action*) for instance, has argued that facts and artifacts are constructed in the same way, while Davis Baird (*Thing Knowledge*) argues that instruments contain knowledge of how to produce effects.

The keynote address will be given by Jacalyn Duffin (Queen's University): "Stethoscope: Technology and the Meaning of Life"

We welcome papers addressing, but not limited to, the following questions:

How do we learn from instruments? What roles do scientific instruments play in scientific investigations of nature

What is the relationship between science and instrumentation?

To what extent have medical instruments transformed the patient-practitioner relationship?

Can abstract entities like scientific models or mathematical equations be considered instruments? Is there anything to be gained by doing so?

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How have social, cultural, and economic contexts shaped decisions about instruments?

How can we, as historians, learn from instruments? Can our textual field learn to effectively marshal material evidence?

How can we trust scientific instruments?

What kind of evidence do we get from scientific instruments?

We invite graduate students and recent graduates working in fields such as HPS, STS, history, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, gender studies, and law, to submit paper and panel proposals that critically engage with this theme. For papers please email abstracts of up to 250 words to HAPSAT@gmail.com by March 19, 2010 and for panels please email a document with a 250 word abstract describing the panel as a whole in addition to individual abstracts for each paper (also 250 words). Each presenter will be given 20 minutes.

We hope to be able to offer billeting and small travel subsidies for graduate students traveling to Toronto for the conference.

For more details and our past programs, please go to www.hps.utoronto.ca/hapsat/

FELLOWSHIPS

The Center for the Humanities and the Horning Endowment are now accepting applications for a new post-doctoral fellowship in the history and philosophy of science. See below for details.

Fellowship Program

Each year the Center brings together a group of up to ten Research Fellows (mainly from OSU but also visiting scholars) to pursue research and writing in an interdisciplinary environment designed to

be stimulating as well as protected from the usual daily demands of academic life. The Fellowships are open to scholars pursuing projects in traditional humanities disciplines as well as the social and natural sciences that are historical or philosophical in approach, and that attempt to cast light on questions of interpretation or criticism generally found in the humanities.

Visiting Fellows receive a stipend of up to \$32,000, while OSU Fellows receive a stipend that provides release time for one to two terms. In addition, all Fellows receive an office in Autzen House, a computer, and general support services. For their part, Fellows are asked to contribute to intellectual life at OSU by participating in Center programs, notably the lecture series; some visiting Fellows also teach a course or lead a seminar series.

Post-doctoral Fellowship

Scholars not currently employed by OSU who have completed doctorates since January 2005 are eligible for a 2010-11 Fellowship in the history and philosophy of science, with a stipend of \$40,000. Postdoctoral fellows will be in residence for nine months at the Center along with other fellows in a variety of humanities disciplines. Applications are welcome from all fields of the history of science, including medicine and technology, as well as the philosophy of science and intellectual history. Deadline for applications is March 1, 2010.

Internal Fellowship Program

This Fellowship is available to OSU faculty members and generally provides release time for one to two academic terms, though Fellows may keep their offices at Autzen House for the entire academic year. In addition to providing time for research and writing, the Fellowship is intended to encourage interaction among faculty from different disciplines. All projects must fall

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within the general bounds of humanities research.

Visiting Fellowship Program

We have had to suspend the Visiting Fellowship Program (except for the new post-doctoral Fellowship) for Academic Year 2010-11 because of losses to the endowed accounts that support it. We hope to be able to resume the program in the near future. Please check back with us next fall.

Further information and application forms also are available by writing to Fellowship Program, The Center for the Humanities, Oregon State University, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue, Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506, or by calling 541-737-2450. Although the forms are available electronically, the finished application will include ten copies of the completed materials.

DOCUMENTATION

On Relevance of Ibn Sina today

By

A. Rahman

Ex-Director, National Institute of Science,
Technology & Development Studies, New Delhi

Introduction

History of Science, as it has been written and taught, provides a long list of contribution of European scientists and the Western culture area, starting with Greek and skipping over the medieval period, to those at the beginning of European renaissance and then on to contemporary period. In these descriptions, the contribution made by the scientists of Asia, India and West Central Asia and the major developments of Asian culture area, are rarely mentioned. Their contributions, if mentioned at all, are made out to be marginal to the mainstream of scientific tradition. Today, when the millenary of the

birth of a tenth century Asian scientist, Ibn Sina, is being celebrated, we must ask ourselves why we should do so. Are we doing so for purely nationalistic reasons or is there a deeper reason, besides taking pride in one of the earlier scientists of Asia? The countries of Asia and Africa, which were colonies of European powers, started achieving independence after the Second World War. After having gained independence, they began the process of their development on the one hand, and started looking for their cultural roots, identity and their distinctiveness on the other. In doing so, they started discovering the fallacies of ideas and concepts evolved by European powers and inculcated in their subject races to suit their political and economic objectives. One of these concepts was that science and technology was an European phenomenon and the features which go to make a scientific mind -capacity to observe, experiment, scientific integrity, logical consistency and courage of conviction- were not possessed by the oriental mind. By implication, it was suggested that since people of Asia did not have this bent of mind, science could not have developed in Asia.

Future, the colonization disrupted direct relationships between two different countries of Asia. These countries over the centuries, has interacted with each other through exchange of ideas in different field of science and areas of scholarship in technology, socially and culturally as well as politically. Successive developments in certain parts of Asia had deeply influenced the other parts of the continent. As a result of colonization, the people of Asia came into contact with the West and began to look at each other through the eyes of Europeans. This had wide-ranging effects in their relations with each other. This is so even now when, as free nations, they are trying to re-establish their older relations

and developing cooperation for achieving their development.

In this paper, therefore, we would explore some of these dimensions in the context of the life & work of Ibn Sina & his relevance to some of the contemporary problems.

Scientific Tradition and Remembering Scientists of Bygone Days

Scientific tradition, as we know, is different from other tradition of scholarship, insofar as it represents a tradition of cumulative knowledge. Information and Knowledge acquired by different scientist is sorted out, and the grain picked up serves as a base for acquiring more knowledge. The process of accretion is of a dual nature, that of rejection and acceptance. What is not in conformity with new observations and experiments is rejected and what is not conformity with these is accepted. In this process the younger scientists, standing on the shoulders of their predecessors, are able to see farther and are also responsible for modifying, or even totally changing or completely rejecting the hypotheses, theories of ideas of their predecessors. Each discovery made by younger scientists and the results achieved modify or change the conceptual framework or theories developed by older scientists, however, great they might be. History of science is full of records, which testify to this process. Further, because of the cumulative nature of scientific knowledge, one reads only the latest literature. A scientist working in the eighties of the present century would hardly look at the literature of the sixties, much less of the last century. Unless, of course, it is for historical reasons, i.e. research in history of science.

The question, therefore, arises: why should one celebrate the centenaries or millenaries of scientists of the bygone ages? Further, if we do so, then in paying homage to them, which particular aspect of their contribution

are we to remember or honour them for? This question is all the more important and significant when we happen to honour one who does not belong to our country.

We remember Ibn Sina as he represents the tradition of science, which is true for all ages, in which search for knowledge and zeal for acquiring it are unparalleled. At a very young age, Ibn Sina showed thirst for knowledge, ability to learn, and mental caliber. In his autobiography he mentions:

"From then onwards I took to reading texts myself; I studied the commentaries until I had completely mastered the science of logic. Similarly, with Euclid"

"I now occupied myself with mastering the various texts until all the gates of knowledge were open to me. Next I desired to study medicine and proceeded to read all the books that have been written on the subject ..."

"I was now a master for logic, natural sciences and mathematics. I, therefore, returned to metaphysics; I read the metaphysics (of Aristotle), but did not understand its content and was baffled by the author's intention; I read with over forty times, until I had the text by heart. Even then I did not understand it .." Until Ibn Sina came across, by chance, a book by Abu Nasr al-Farabi, *On the Objects of the Metaphysics*, and says: "I returned home and hastened to read it, and at once the objects of that book became clear to me, for I had it by heart".

There is an interesting incident quoted by this discipline and also his biographer, Abu 'Ubaid al Juzjani, which is worth mentioning: One day during the course of a discussion one of his contemporaries, Abu Mansoor, Chided him for his lack of knowledge in philology and his eagerness to express opinion without having studies

the subject. According to Abu 'Ubaid: "The Master was stung by this rebuke, and devoted the next three years to studying the book on philology; he even sent for the *Tahdhib al balagha* of Abu Mansur al-Azhari from Khurasan. So, he achieved a knowledge of philology but rarely attained."

Ibn Sina's times were particularly different. The difficulties arose as a result of political instability. He lived in an area which was divided into small kingdom every often at war with each other and the fortunes of these kingdom were fluctuating with the size of their resources & , therefore, of their armies. These difficulties were accentuated as a result of petty jealousies at the courts, and often due to intolerance of new ideas and orthodox views held by Ibn Sina. However, Ibn Sina does not mention these in his autobiography; we know of these only from other sources. For instance, Abu 'Ubaid says: "They then asked him to take the office of Vazier, and he accepted; but the army conspired against him, fearing for themselves as a result of his action against them; they surrounded his house, sent him off to prison, pillaged his belongings, and took all that he possessed. They even demanded of the Amir that he should be put to death," despite this, however, when the Sultan fell ill, Ibn Sina was called to treat him.

The most interesting feature about Ibn Sina is that despite all the turbulences and personal problems, he continued to contribute to knowledge. According to Abu 'Ubaid: Meanwhile he remained in hiding in the house of Abu Ghalib, the druggist. I requested him to complete the *Shifa*, and he summoned Abu Ghalib and asked for paper and ink; these being brought, the master wrote in about twenty parts (each having eight folios) in his own hand the main topics to be discussed; in to two days he had drafted all the topics, without having

any book at hand or source to consult, accomplishing the work entirely from memory" Later he was captured and imprisoned. "While imprisoned in the fortress he had written the *Kitabal – Hidayya* (Book of Guidance), the *Risala Haiy ibn yaqzan* ("Living son of the Wakeful") and the *Kitab-al-Qaulanj*) Book of Colic)

Ibn Sina's learning was not merely bookish; he also acquired knowledge through observation and may be experimentation, in particular in the field of medicine. He himself says: "I also undertook to treat the sick, & methods of treatment derived from practical experience revealed themselves to me such a baffle description"

He was, it appears, a critical person and did not accept anything and everything, which was taught to him or was in fashion those days. This would be evident from his remarks about the Ismaili propagandist: "had listened to what they had to say about the spirit and the intellect, after the fashion in which they preach and understand the matter ... but my spirit would not assent to their arguments," His attitude to alchemy shows another dimension of his outlook. Alchemy in those days was a much sought-after science, since it was closely associated with the objective of transformation of baser metals into gold & in the preparation of Elixir of Life. A large number of charlatans and adventures like those who now-a-days masquerade as "guruns", claimed to possess the secret art and benefited at the expense of credulous nobles and kings. Ibn Sina was one of the few amongst a large number of medieval scientists who exposed the charlatans and adventurers masquerading as alchemists. He disbelieved in alchemy for the reason that, according to him, the differences in the structure of metals were deep seated than what could be modified by change of colour.

These qualities – search for knowledge, perseverance, scientific integrity and courage – are basic qualities. It is desirable to remind ourselves of these qualities, which Ibn Sina cultivated in a most difficult period, particularly these days when one every often notices the practice qualities, which are contrary to the tradition of science, in the pursuit of personal and limited gains. Further, Ibn Sina deserves to be remembered, beside for the above qualities which he showed in his person, also for his intellectual integrity and for challenging the commonly accepted views. The latter he did not merely base on his personal opinion, biases or prejudices, but on the basis of the then existing knowledge and the understanding of natural phenomena. Contrary to the then common beliefs he advocated new ideas, because of which he was often accused of not being a Muslim. The latter is evident from his couplet, written perhaps in reply to such accusations:

کفر چه من گزاف و آسان بود
حکم تر از ایمان من ایمان بود
در دهر چه من کجی و او هم کافر
پس در همه دهر یک مسلمان بود

'It is not so easy and trifling to call me a heretic

No belief in religion is firmer than mine own
I am the unique person in the whole world
and if I am a heretic

Then there is not single Musulman
anywhere in the world'.

Both the accusation and Ibn Sina's assertion of his beliefs are interesting. The accusation reflects intolerance of new ideas and efforts to confine human intellectual efforts to narrow limits. The reply represents an assertion of belief and that new knowledge and ideas can only reinforce the belief and not diminish it.

Human history is full of examples of the pull of conservation forces, which in the name of religious beliefs or political ideology exert

pressure against intellectual advances, new ideas and social growth. History is also full of examples of courage of conviction of religious and political leaders who refused to be cowed down, and enabled humanity to reach new intellectual horizons and help society attain new dimensions. Ibn Sina did exactly the latter.

This dimension of his personality also deserves to be remembered in contemporary India, when we notice that many scientists, a number of them quite eminent, tend to have a duality of approach, one based on scientific knowledge & the other based on common prejudices, ideas and concepts which are contrary to science. Some of the lessons that we can learn from him are logical consistency, scientific method of arriving at conclusion & an intellectual integrity, which refuses, to compromise with the above.

Should we remember him for these qualities only? Surely every scientist of some eminence has these qualities; why then should we go back to him, particularly when he was not an Indian? This takes us to a wider problem of history of science.

European Attitude to Asian Scientific and Technological Tradition

We have been brought up in the tradition of European science, whereby it has been inculcated in us that modern science began in Greece, and after the Dark Ages, the European mind again picked it up and then gave it to the rest of the world. The contributions of Asian societies, India, China, Egypt, Babylonia and other West and Central Asian countries in antiquity and during the medieval period are considered marginal, if at all. Only a few pages, as if it is a side commentary to the mainstream of science – the latter made out to be European stream – are devoted to it. For instance, writing on Arabic medicine, an

eminent historian of science, Sherwood Taylor, says:

"The Arabs gave a high place to their physicians, who were usually of another race – Persian, Jew, or Syrian Christian. They made very little original contributions to medicine but kept alive the knowledge of the Greeks and added little to it. In the Eastern Caliphate, Rhazes, Haly Abbas and Avicenna (to use their Latinised names) wrote voluminous works almost entirely taken from the Greeks."

The meaning of this is obvious and so is the purpose that Eastern mind was incapable of development science; at best it could be a carrier of ideas and knowledge developed by the Europeans.

The question which we must face and try to answer is: why this was so? Was it based on the then existing knowledge or a part of political policy to denigrate the Asian scientific achievements and then to use science and technology as an instruments of European hegemony over Asia? The full meaning of this would be clear from the understanding of the nature of European Renaissance. According to George Sarton: "To return to the Renaissance it was, among other things, a revolt against medieval concepts and methods. Of course, every generation reacts against the former one; every historical period is a revolt against its predecessors, yet in this case the revolt was sharper than usual. It is not sufficiently realized that the Renaissance was not simply a revolt against scholasticism; it was also directed against Arabic influence (especially those represented by Avicenna and Averroes)."

Why this movement against Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushid) in particular? The reason for this lay in the fact that both Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushid

represented the highest standards of science and scientific tradition of Asia, which dominated the intellectual life of Europe through the translation of their works into Latin and other European languages. It was this influence and the tradition, which they wished to do away with and minimize as much as possible. This hostility to Asian Thought was not a new tradition in Europe. It was exactly the same in antiquity when Greeks are having borrowed from Asian and Egyptian scientific tradition reacted against this tradition in exactly the same manner as Europeans did during Renaissance after borrowing from Arabic scientific and technological tradition. The effort by the Europeans to link their own scientific and technological tradition with that of Greece, to mentioned the intervening period as dark ages and to marginalize the Asian tradition, was part of the political effort to paint science & technology as purely as Western phenomenon. The political purpose behind this was to create a sense of inferiority amongst the Asians and use science and technology as an instrument of Hegemony.

While the reaction against the scientific tradition was particularly sharp, it was not so against the mystical and obscurantist Tradition of Arabic and Persian and Indian learning. On the contrary, one may notice definitive attempts, while suppressing the facts about the scientific tradition, to extol the obscurantist tradition and pseudo-philosophical learning. The result of these policies has been that Asian cultures are today unaware of their own scientific and technological tradition and heritage, and understand science and technology in term of what Europeans have taught them. In fact, it would also not be wrong to say that people of non- European culture area consider that their culture and civilization and their tradition is limited to what has come to be known as the "spiritual

tradition". There is a need, therefore, to take into our past with a fresh outlook and to link up our present, which at the moment looks dichotomized with the past. However, in doing so, we must take a lesson from Europe that instead of linking it with the irrational & obscurantist tradition, we should link it with the rational, scientific tradition.

Need for a new look at old knowledge

The main impact of Ibn Sina in India, as it was in Europe, was in medicine. The contributions, which are dismissed or minimized by European scholars, were both in theory and in practice. The medical system developed in Europe is based on mechanical philosophy and has the basic concept of an average man. However, recent developments in the field of science and specifically in medicine have brought to the fore the individuality of people, importance of diet, climate and systematic approach. The contributions of Ibn Sina have added significance in the present context. When serious doubts are being raised at the mechanical approach and its consequences. It may be worthwhile trying to study the treasure which is available, examine the knowledge in the context to present day development and make an effort to develop a new conceptual framework and theory of medicine, discarding the present one with its limited and narrow approach.

Incidentally, the Unani system, which was developed in West Asia and to which Ibn Sina contributed to such a large degree came to India and interacted with Ayurveda and developed considerably into an effective system and is used as one of the major systems of India. The system, under the impact of Europeanisation, became extinct in the land of its origin and now when efforts are being made to revive it, India is again helping these countries to do so. In other word, old relationships,

exchange of ideas, flow of information and mutual help have once again been reestablished.

There is yet another reason why we should have a second and fresh look at our past. Today we find ourselves at the end of an euphoria generated by the advances in science & technology, particularly since World War II. We, however, notice that the dreams have not been fulfilled. Misuse of science & technology for exploitation of men, society and nations, pursuit of narrow and limited goals & endeavour to increase private profit at social cost has all forced us to look at both the developments and the direction which these have taken. This has brought to the fore on the one hand the need for science & technology to be integrated with social, cultural & ethical values & on the other the need for modifying or changing the earlier values in consonance with existing knowledge & future possibilities in order to achieve the human & social goals that we set for ourselves.

Unfortunately for us, we have neither looked at concepts and values of the contemporary society, whose concepts and values we have been adopting uncritically, nor have we met the challenge of critical examination of the past. Consequently, the continuous working out and reshaping of the intellectual framework of society and science, which is the need of the hour, have not been met by our culture.

It is in this context that Ibn Sina is important, for he represents the truly international tradition of science and technology, which was delinked by European scholars and made to look as a minor marginal religious tradition with the objective of Europeanisation of the scientific movement. A re-assertion of this tradition would be a major step toward true

internationalization of science and technology through different periods of history and culture areas.

Interaction of Scientific & Technological Developments in Asia

A cursory glance at the history of scientific thought and technological developments in India reveals one feature that India, Central Asia and West Asia have been continuously interacting with each other to enrich each other and to help in each other's developments. These enrichments took place through traders and travelers, through scholar who came in search of knowledge or patronage, or through migration of peoples. This goes back to the mists of antiquity, and move on from one period to another and through religions, first through Buddhism and later through Islam.

The first organized effort, of which we have records, to imbibe Indian knowledge in China was through Chinese travelers and Buddhist monks, who came to India to seek knowledge and enlightenment. What they took with them left a deep impression on their future developments. In West Asia, it was through Baitul Hikma during the reigns of Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad. It was during this period when Indian scientific texts on astronomy, mathematics, and medicine were translated into Arabic and became the foundation of Arabic Renaissance, of the further development of science and technology in West Asia and North Africa. The level and degree of impact of the scientific and technological exchange can be judged by the fact mentioned by Ibn Sina. Referring to Ismaili propagandists, he mentions: "presently they began to invite me to join the movement, rolling in their tongues talk about philosophy, geometry, Indian arithmetic, and my father sent me to a certain vegetable seller who used Indian arithmetic, so that I might learn form him."

This statement of Ibn Sina that such people as vegetable sellers were conversant with and used Indian arithmetic to their advantage clearly reveals the impact of Indian science. These also incidentally indicate the culture of society, were even such people as vegetable sellers were in the know of specialization subjects. One wished that in our own time, the level of education could be such that specialized science were part of the attainment of common people and their culture. Finally, the statement also reveals that on the culture then prevalent no person was low enough to be a teacher.

Al-Beruni (973-1048), a contemporary of Ibn Sina, (they were occasionally in touch with each other), wrote one of the finest books, Kitab al-Hind, which could be taken as a compendium of Indian science and which is not only the best medieval treatise on Indian mathematics and other sciences, but perhaps also the first book which is a comparative study, and aims at synthesis, of the Indian, Greek and West Asian knowledge of science. Al-Beruni came to India and learnt at the feet of scholars in India, despite the prejudices and practice then prevalent.

The reverse flow started when West Asian, Central Asian and North African progress in science reached its zenith, and also when people from these areas came, settled down here and established their empires. It would be of some interest to fully know and understand the degree and the extent of scientific & technological exchange, which had taken place and the degree to which this exchange had affected each other's development in science and technology. Unfortunately, there is considerable misunderstanding about this exchange, which has been deliberately perpetuated as a part of the political exigencies during the colonial rule.

There are many myths in history of science, particularly with regard to the growth and development of science in India. Some of these suggest that India did not contribute much to science and technology during the medieval period. The great savant among the historian of science, the late George Sarton, says:

"To begin with, Hindu culture was stifled, if not stamped out, in many places by Muslim conquerors. The patronage of Muslim courts went naturally to Muslim scholars."

Later, he goes on to elaborate the same view:

"The Muslim invaders, if they did not destroy Hindu culture & that what remained of Buddhist culture, were utterly indifferent to any culture but that of Islam. They encouraged their own learned men and drew their knowledge and inspiration from Western sources – that is Arabic and Persian."

Historical researches carried out on medieval Indian history give a picture contrary to the above and have gone a long way to dispel the general colonial view built up and perpetuated by the British in furtherance of their political objectives in India, which had also seeped into European outlook and scholarship.

As a result of my own studies, supported by Indian National Commission for History of Science, a book of source material on medieval science and technology has been compiled. It comprises a bibliography of about 10,000 manuscripts written in India in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. This is by no means, a complete catalogue since it leaves out a large number of books, in different private collections, in various Indian languages, which developed during this period on science & technology. If

Sarton were right, then this tremendous scientific activity would not have taken place. Obviously Sarton was misled owing to lack of knowledge of the Indian development and also, perhaps, because of prejudices created and promoted by the British political philosophy.

Asian countries, having become independent, are now busy in promoting science and technology and in doing so they need to collaborate with each other. In this context, it is desirable, in fact necessary, to do away with the prejudices promoted by the erstwhile colonizers which are coming in the way of effective collaboration, and to re-establish relationships which have been part of our cultural heritage and tradition. In doing so, we could bring to surface, once again, the scientific tradition of our culture area and thus reinforce the scientific & technological movement promoted since independence. Such an effort would also be helpful in doing away with intellectual colonization, fighting against irrationalism & in helping us to make science an integral part of our culture and outlook once again.

Ibn Sina stood for the scientific tradition. He and his contemporary Al-Beruni had a considerable impact on India, though the full impact requires to be studied. Today, when we choose to honour Ibn Sina, we do so out of respect we have for him as a scientist, scholar, philosopher, out of respect, for a person who had zeal for knowledge and humility and desire to learn, and for his promoting the secular scientific tradition. The celebration of his millenary also represents a step forward to do away with the intellectual colonization of the West and to re-establish the collaboration & co-operation amongst Asian nations. It is also to revive our scientific tradition and also to help learn our past as it was without the prejudices and without the tainted glasses provided by the West.

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