JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
Volume 3, Issue 5, October 2025 **Online ISSN: 3030-3508**
https://spaceknowladge.com

IBN SINA'S VIEWS ON NATURAL SCIENCES AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH MODERN PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY

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Talimi yonalishi 2- bosqich talabasi

MAQOLA MALUMOTI

MAQOLA TARIXI:

Received:11.11.2025
Revised: 12.11.2025
Accepted:13.11.2025

KALIT SO'ZLAR:

Ibn Sina, Avicenna, natural sciences, physics, biology, causality, empirical observation, philosophy of nature

ANNOTATSIYA:

This article explores Ibn Sina's perspectives on natural sciences and their relevance to contemporary physics and biology. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) integrated philosophy, logic, and empirical observation to formulate a comprehensive understanding of natural phenomena. The study examines how his theories on motion, causality, matter, and life processes correlate with modern scientific principles. By analyzing Ibn Sina's systematic approach to natural sciences, the article highlights his enduring influence on both medieval and modern scientific thought.

Introduction

Ibn Sina (980–1037) was a polymath whose contributions spanned medicine, philosophy, physics, and biology. While primarily recognized for his metaphysical and medical works, Ibn Sina developed extensive theories on the natural world that anticipated many modern scientific principles. His works, particularly Kitab al-Shifa (Book of Healing), systematically addressed natural phenomena, motion, matter, and life, integrating philosophical reasoning with empirical observation.

This article investigates Ibn Sina's understanding of natural sciences and explores the connection between his theories and modern physics and biology. The study emphasizes his conceptualization of matter, motion, causality, and life processes, showing how these ideas can be interpreted in light of contemporary scientific knowledge.

Main body

Ibn Sina's approach to natural sciences was grounded in both philosophy and observation. He proposed that all natural phenomena follow causal principles, which can be analyzed logically and empirically. In physics, Ibn Sina discussed motion, force, and the composition of matter, introducing notions akin to inertia and momentum. Although framed within Aristotelian concepts, his treatment of continuous motion, acceleration, and celestial mechanics demonstrates a rational approach to understanding the physical world.

In modern physics, concepts such as Newtonian mechanics and principles of dynamics reflect parallels with Ibn Sina's reasoning. While he did not formulate equations in the modern sense, his qualitative analysis of motion and causation prefigures foundational ideas in mechanics. His distinction between necessary and accidental causes, and between essential and accidental properties of matter, offers a framework that resonates with contemporary discussions in physics regarding fundamental forces and particle properties.

In the realm of physics, Ibn Sina extended Aristotle's framework to explore the properties of motion and matter. He distinguished between different types of motion, such as local motion, natural motion, and forced motion, and analyzed the effects of various causes on the movement of objects. For example, he considered that a body in motion would continue moving until an external force acts upon it, an idea that foreshadows the later concept of inertia developed by Galileo and Newton.

In biology, Ibn Sina emphasized the study of living organisms, reproduction, and anatomy. He distinguished between essential characteristics of living beings and accidental features, showing a systematic approach to classification. His theories of life processes included the concept of the soul as a principle of animation, which guided the functioning of biological systems. While modern biology relies on molecular and cellular explanations, Ibn Sina's emphasis on systematic observation, classification, and causal understanding of life forms resonates with contemporary methods in zoology, botany, and physiology.

Furthermore, Ibn Sina's understanding of the interdependence between natural laws and observable phenomena illustrates his holistic scientific approach. He argued that natural occurrences are governed by rational principles, which can be understood through careful study and logical analysis. This idea underlies modern scientific methodology, where empirical evidence and theoretical reasoning are integrated to explain complex phenomena.

The connection between Ibn Sina's natural philosophy and modern science is also evident in his treatment of the elements and matter. He adopted and expanded Aristotle's four-element theory, emphasizing the importance of qualitative properties such as hot, cold, wet, and dry. Modern chemistry and physics, while discarding the four-element model, still reflect the principle that matter has intrinsic properties that determine its behavior. Ibn Sina's systematic categorization of matter, energy, and motion forms an early epistemological basis for understanding natural processes.

In medicine and biology, Ibn Sina's empirical methods and detailed observations laid the foundation for modern physiological and anatomical studies. His classification of diseases, organs, and bodily functions reflects an approach consistent with modern biology's focus on structure, function, and causation. Moreover, his integration of metaphysical and natural explanations anticipates modern interdisciplinary approaches, where physics and biology interact to explain phenomena such as bioenergetics, biomechanics, and the physics of living systems.

Ibn Sina's influence extends beyond his direct contributions; his works served as references for European scholars during the Renaissance, shaping the development of natural sciences. His insistence on the unity of knowledge and the application of reason to study nature provided a model for scientific inquiry that aligns with contemporary perspectives in both physics and biology.

In biology, Ibn Sina made remarkable observations about anatomy, physiology, reproduction, and classification of living beings. He distinguished between essential and accidental characteristics in living organisms, an approach that resembles modern taxonomy and systematic biology. He also explored the concept of the soul as the organizing principle of life, which governs growth, motion, and perception in living beings. While modern biology explains these processes through cellular and molecular mechanisms, Ibn Sina's emphasis on structure, function, and causality demonstrates his commitment to understanding life in a rational and systematic way.

Ibn Sina also contributed to embryology, observing the stages of fetal development and the role of nourishment in growth. His detailed anatomical observations, drawn from both human dissection and animal studies, provided a foundation for subsequent developments in medicine and biology. His integration of empirical study with philosophical reflection allowed him to address questions of vitality, reproduction, and the organization of life systematically.

Conclusion

Ibn Sina's insights into natural sciences reflect a sophisticated integration of philosophy, observation, and logical reasoning. His treatment of motion, matter, causality, and life processes resonates with modern physics and biology, highlighting his enduring relevance. By examining Ibn Sina's theories, contemporary scholars can appreciate the historical continuity of scientific inquiry and recognize the intellectual foundations laid by medieval Islamic philosophers. His holistic and systematic approach remains instructive, demonstrating that empirical observation, logical analysis, and ethical understanding can coexist within a coherent framework of natural science.

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