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2. His Golden Medical Dissertation

The sciences of Imam al–Ridha', peace be on him, were not confined to the precepts of Islamic law; rather they included all kinds of science of which was medicine. The Imam was unique in medicine, and the clear proof of that is this dissertation which al–Ma'mu'n called *al–Risa'la al–Dhahabiya fi al–Tibb* (the golden medical dissertation). As al–Ma'mu'n admired the dissertation, he gave the Medal of Doctor to the Imam, peace be on him. The dissertation contains general programs necessary for putting right man's body and protecting it from diseases, so it is regarded as the main base of preventive medicine in these times and as a great means of improving health.

Anyhow, it is necessary for us to give a brief outline of this dissertation before presenting it. That is as follows:

The Reason for Writing it

Al-Ma'mu'n's palace was distinguished by that it was most times one of the seminars of knowledge and literature, especially as it concerns the time of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, the great figure of this community and pioneer of its intellectual, and scientific renaissance, for the 'Abba'sid palace was changed into a theater for philosophical and scientific researches, as we mentioned in the previous chapters.

One of the scientific researches which were presented in that seminar was on man's body, which contains marvelous cells, organs and systems which show the wisdom and wonderful power of the Almighty Creator. The people discussed those things which put right and corrupted man's body. The seminar included the greatest scholars and leaders of whom are the following:

- 1. Imam al-Ridha'.
- 2. Al-Ma'mu'n.
- 3. Yohnna' b. Ma'sawayh.

- 4. Gabriel b. Bakhtishu"
- 5. Sa'lih b. BAhla al-Hindi.

These people discussed medicine, but Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, remained silent, so al-Ma'mu'n asked him with admiration: "Abu' al-Hasan, what do you say about this matter which we are discussing today, and which is necessary for recognizing these things, useful and harmful foodstuffs, and directing the body?"

Al-Ma'mu'n asked the Imam to open for him horizons to the science of systems of man's body, to guide him to useful and harmful foodstuffs, and those things which put right and harmed man's body.

The Imam answered him, saying: "I have of it knowledge of what I have personally tested and came to know about its accuracy by experience and by the passage of time in addition to what I was told by my ancestors of what nobody afford to be ignorant of, nor excused for leaving it. I shall compile it with an equal portion of what everyone should know."

Surely the Imam, peace be on him, was among the keepers of wisdom and inheritors of the prophets, for he had the knowledge of what the people needed from among the affairs of their religion and their world. As a result the Imam responded to al–Ma'mu'n's request and supplied him with *al–Risa'la al–Dhahabiya fi al–Tibb*.

The Explanation and Translation of the Dissertation

As this dissertation was of great importance, it was explained and translated by some scholars who have been mentioned in the introduction to it by His Eminence al-Muhaqqiq al-Hujjah al-Sayyid Mahdi al-Khurasa'ni. That is as follows:

- 1. *Tarjamat al-'Alawi lil Tibb al-Radawi* by Sayyid Diya" al-Din Abu' al-Ridha' Fadl Allah b. 'Ali al-Ra'wandi (died 548 A. H.).
- 2. *Tarjamat al-Dhahabiya bi al-Fa'risiya* by Fayd Allah 'Usa'ra al-Tassturi, a contemporary of Fath 'Ali Kha'n.
- 3. *Tarjamat al-Dhahabiya bi al-Fa'risiya* by Muhammad Ba'qir al-Majjlisi (died 1111 A. H.)
- 4. Ibn Muhammad Ha'shim al-Tabib explained it in Persian.
- 5. Muhammad Sharif b. Muhammad Sa'diq al-Khawa'tu'n explained it and mentioned the explanation in his book *Ha'fiz al-Abbda'n*.
- 6. It was explained by Sayyid 'Abd Allah Shubbar (died 242 A. H.).

- 7. Mirza Muhammad Ha'di b. Mirza Muhammad Sa'lih al-Shira'zi explained it and named it 'Afiyat al-Bariya fi Sharh al-Dhahabiya. He was a contemporary of Sulta'n Husayn al-Safawi.
- 8. Al-Mawla' Muhammad b. al-Ha'ji Muhammad Hasan al-Mashhadi al-Mudarris.
- 9. Al-Sayyid Shams al-Din Muhammad Badi' al-Radawi al-Mashhadi explained *al-Dhahabiya* and ended it in 1125 A. H.
- 10. Muhammad b. Yahya' explained al-Dhahabiya in Persian.
- 11. Nawru'z 'Ali al-Basta'mi explained *al-Dhahabiya* and mentioned the explanation in his book *Firdous al-Tawa'rikh*.
- 12. Al-Hajj Mirza Ka'zim al-Mu'sawi al-Zanja'ni (died 1292) explained it and entitled the explanation as al-Mahmu'diya.
- 13. Al-Sayyid Nasr Allah al-Mu'sawi al-Aru'mi explained it in Persian and named the explanation as *al-Tibb al-Radawi*.
- 14. Maqbu'l Ahmed explained it in Urdu' and named the explanation as *al-Dhahabiya fi Assra'r al-'Ulu'm al-Tabi'iya*, printed in Hayderaba'd.
- 15. Al-Sayyid Mahmu'd wrote *Mafa'tih al-Sihha* in which he gathered the medicine of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, the medicine of the Imams, and *al-Risa'la al-Dhahabiya* along with little explanation in Persian, printed in al-Najaf al-Asraf in 379 A. H.
- 16. Al-Sayyid Mirza 'Ali explained al-Risa'la al-Dhahabiya in Persian.
- 17. Al-Sayyid Husayn b. Nasr Allah al-Aru'mi al-Mu'sawi wrote *Tarjamat al-Mu'sawi fi al-Tibb al-Radawi*.
- 18. Abu' al-Qa'sim Saha'b explained it in Persian and named the explanation as *Bihda'sht Radawi*, and it was printed at the end of volume one of his book *Razandagani Hazrat Imam Ridha'*, peace be on him, pp. 301–350.
- 19. Dr. al-Sayyid Sa'hib Zayni explained *al-Risa'lah* (the dissertation) in the light of modern medicine, and the explanation was printed in the *Multaga' al-'Asrayn* periodical series, in Baghdad.
- 20. 'Abd al-Wa'si' translated al-Risa'la into Persian. 1

As this dissertation is of great importance, it has been written in ancient calligraphy. An ancient copy, handwritten by 'Abd al-Rahma'n b. 'Abd Allah al-Karkhi in 715 A. H., is available at the Imam al-Hakim Library, serial 237.

Al-Ma'mu'n praises the Golden Medical Dissertation

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, sent his al-Risa'la al-Dhahabiya (golden medical dissertation) to al-Ma'mu'n, and he admired it and ordered it to be written in gold, to be copied many times, to be given to his sons, the members of his family, and the machinery of his government. He also ordered copies of it to be deposited at his depository of wisdom (Buyu't al-Hikma). Without doubt al-Risa'la al-Dhahabiya was shown to the great physicians of his time, and they read it. Accordingly, al-Ma'mu'n praised it through the following letter: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise belongs to Allah, Qualified for praise and its Guardian, the end and beginning of it belongs to him, the Possessor of blessings, favors, and kindness. I praise Him for His uninterrupted blessings and favors, and I praise Him for His gifts and grants with a praise which gives rise to His increase and brings (me) near to Him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah with the witness of one who is loyal to Him through belief, not of the one who denies His Lordship and Oneness; rather the witness which confirms His ascription to Himself; and that He is just as He, the Great and Almighty, says: Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him. Such is our Lord, the Great and Almighty; and may Allah bless the master of the first and the last, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, the last of the prophets.

"Now then, I have reviewed the dissertation of my 'Aladwide learned cousin, loved and virtuous one, the logical physician, which deals with the betterment of the body, the conduct of bathing, the balance of nutrition, and I found it very well organized and one of the best blessings. I carefully studied it, reviewed and contemplated upon it, till its wisdom manifested itself to me, its benefits became obvious, and it found its place my heart, so I learned it by heart and I understood it by mind, I found it to be a most precious item to post, a great treasure, and a most useful thing, so I ordered it to be written in gold due to its being precious, good, abundantly blessed, and I called it al-Mudahhaba (the golden one) and deposited it at the depository of wisdom after I had it copied down by the descendants of Ha'shim, the youths of the nation. Bodies become healthy by balanced diets, and life becomes possible by overcoming disease and through life wisdom is achieved, through wisdom the Garden is won. It is worthy of being safeguarded and treasured; it a place of qualification and consideration, a reliable arbitrator an authority adviser and a source of knowledge, to which commander and forbidder yield. It is so because it came out of the houses of those who derive their knowledge from the knowledge of the chosen Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, the missive of the prophets, the proofs of the testamentary trustees, the manners of scholars, the cure to the hearts and the sick from among men of ignorance and blindness, Allah's pleasure and blessings be upon them, the first of them and the last, the young and the old.

"I showed it to the elite from among my closest train who are known for their wisdom and knowledge of medicine, and who are authors of books, those who are counted among men of knowledge and described with wisdom. Each one of them lauded it and thought highly of it, elevated it with esteem and evaluated it in order to be fair to its author, submitting to him, and believing in the wisdom he included

therein, so if those after us from among our children, the children of our state, our subjects, the rest of the people from various classes come across this *Risa'la* (medical dissertation), they should recognize its importance, his talent, and his perfect favor; they should take it with gratitude, for it is more precious than agates, more important than pearls and corals; they should learn it by heart and think of it day and night, for it brings them benefit and safety from all diseases, Allah willing, Allah bless His Messenger Muhammad and all his good, pure children. Allah is sufficient for us and is the Best Agent. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

Al-Ma'mu'n has praised the Imam for his medical dissertation and his praise gives an account of the following:

A. Its Medical Contents

As for the contents of the Imam's medical dissertation, they are as follows:

Firstly, the betterment of the body, protecting it from diseases, and making it enjoy perfect health, for the medical dissertation includes general programs for it.

Secondly, the conduct of bathing which is one of the basic elements of health as well as it takes care of the cleanness of the body; like wise, it takes care of creating activity therein.

Lastly, the balance of nutrition on which man's health and protection from diseases depend on.

B. His Studying it

Al-Ma'mu'n carefully studied the Imam's medical dissertation. He viewed reading it, and it manifested its wonders and great wisdom to him. He found it as one of the treasured books and among the mines of wealth, for it contained the fundamentals of general health and rules of medicine in the time when medicine was in the first stage. This medical dissertation is regarded as a development in this science, for it has opened brilliant ways to it.

C. His Showing it to the Physicians

Al-Ma'mu'n showed the Imam's medical dissertation to the great physicians of his time, so each one of them lauded it, adopted it, thought highly of it, elevated it with esteem, and evaluated it. All those great physicians who read it admitted the excellence and experience of the Imam, peace be on him, in this science. These are some of the contents in this praise.

The Text of the Golden Medical Dissertation

As for the text of this medical excellent dissertation, we have quoted it from the book entitled *Tibb al-Imam al-Ridha*', which is one of the publications of the al-Haydariya Press. It was printed in the year

1385 A. H., and it reads as follows: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Know, Commander of the faithful, when Allah tries a servant with a disease, he appoints for him a medicine in order to cure himself with it, and for every kind of disease there is a kind of medicine, conduct, and prescription."

This paragraph gives an account of Allah's firm wisdom in creating man, who contains wonderful systems which are subject to various kinds of diseases. Allah, the Exalted, creates a disease and creates a medicine for destroying and putting an end to such a disease. Nowadays, medicine has reached zenith: antibiotics such as penicillin and oromycin have been discovered, the science of surgery has been developed, so a group of diseases such as tuberculosis, enteritis, and typhoid has been folded and thrown into the sea. Accordingly, modern medicine has confirmed the wise words of the grandson of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who says that Allah appoints a medicine for each disease. As a result, those diseases which have no cure will be omitted from the file of medicine.

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, has said: "Man's body is just like a kingdom: The heart is the king of the body; the (blood) vessels, the limbs, and the brain are workers. The house of the king is his heart; his land is the body; the helpers are his hands, his legs, his eyes, his lips, his tongues, and his ears; his storekeepers are his stomach and his abdomen; and his chamberlain is his chest. Therefore, the hands are two helpers which bring (things) near, take (them) away, and work as the king reveals to them. The legs carry the kings wherever he likes. The eyes lead him to that which disappears from him, for the king is behind a curtain and does not reach it except through them. They are also his two lamps; they are fort and well–fortified place of the body. The ears introduce nothing to the king except that which agrees with him, for they are unable to bring in anything unless the king inspires to them. When the king inspires to them, he keeps silent and listen to them. Then he answers whatever he likes; and the tongue explains on his behalf with many tools of which are the wind of the heart, the steam of the stomach, and the help of the two lips; and the two lips have no strength except by the means of man, and they are in need of each other."

The wise Imam has shown man's body; this wonderful body through which Allah's mighty power, His marvelous creation, and His firm regulation have manifested themselves. In this connection Allah, the **Exalted, says**: *O man, what has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious One, Who created you, then made you complete, then made you symmetrical, into whatever form He pleased He constituted you*. Concerning this body containing systems and cells which none can describe, the pioneer of wisdom and eloquence in Islam, Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, says: "Do you think that you are a small body, while the greatest world has folded itself in you."

Yes, man is not a limited skeleton; nor is he a small body; rather he contains the whole world, so he is a group of universes and worlds.

The Prophet's grandson, source of knowledge and wisdom (i.e. Imam al-Ridha') has likened man's body to the government whose machinery consists of a president, soldiers, helpers, and a land over which it

rules. The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the following main organs and systems of the body:

A. The Heart

The heart, it is one of Allah's marvelous signs in man's body, for it pumps the blood to all parts of the body, and the blood conveys food and oxygen in order to distribute them among all places of the body, and then it conveys the waste products in order to rid the body of them.2

The heart pumps the blood to the lungs in order that they may take adequate supply of oxygen from the air which man breathes. In the lungs, the blood gets rid of some waste products which it gathers from the parts of the blood and which take form of a gas called carbon dioxide. The heart also pumps the blood to the kidneys. As for the regulation of the beats of the heart, it is one of the secrets of creation and origination; the average of the beats of the heart is seventy times per minute. So their average amounts to one hundred thousand times a day, forty million times a year, and over two thousand millions in middle age. Therefore, we must think of this great glorification which never ceases nor flags by night and day. We must think of this marvelous sign in the body, which is the organization of heat. There is something like thermometer in the body. When sensory news comes from the skin and tells about the external surroundings and degree of their heat, this area which is in the brain stem and what is on it hurries to the circulatory system and urges it to protect the external boundaries and orders it to play the role of the sincere worker during this crisis, and the flexible circulatory system responds to it, and quickly the contraction of the blood vessels occur, and the heart pumps adequate supply of blood to the skin. If the skin is cold, the flow of blood which conveys heat increases in order to remove the coldness and vice versa.

Surely, the heart is the source of man's and animal's life; therefore, it is the king of the body, and all man's organs are its soldiers and helpers.

B. The Nerves

The nerves, they are the sinew of life; and it is they which control the body; and they play an important role during anger, fear, the rest of the emotions, match, sexual work, and the like. Some nerves are called voluntary, and they control a group of muscles in the body which are called the striated muscles. In this connection some important physiological researches have been mentioned; therefore, the nerves are proof of the Wise Creator's mightiness.

C. The Brain

As for the brain, it is the greatest of all Allah's creatures; it dominates the whole body, controls all movements of it; and drives it to wherever it desires; and by it man is distinguished from the rest of animals. Allah has singled out the brain for man, and through it He has ennobled man over all His creatures.

Surely, the brain is a world of wonders. No creature can match it in greatness, for it contains stores which never are full and it preserves whatever knowledge is deposited in it. If we want to mention the wonders of the brain, then we have to write a full book about them. Glory belongs to Him who has originated and created the brain!

D. The Hands and the Legs

Among the amazing organs in man's body is the hand, which helps man accomplish his own needs such as preparing food and drink, and which help him perform wonderful works such as writing, goldsmithing, building, and others. The hand carries out all these works according to signals and guidance it receives from the brain, for it is as a worker in the factory of the brain; likewise, the leg helps man walk and accomplish his own needs. Were it not for the hand and the leg, man would do nothing. So glory belongs to Allah, the Wise!

E. The Ear

One of the marvelous organs in man's body is the ear, which contains the following:

- A. The Outer Ear: It is the lobe of the outer ear along with the cannel which leads to the eardrum.
- B. The Middle Ear: It has three bones just as the tools of a blacksmith: the hammer and the anvil, the stirrup, and the two muscles of the hammer and the stirrup; there is a lobe which connects the middle ear to the pharynx.
- C. The Inner Ear: It contains something like snail and three semicircular canals, and these parts are connected with each other and interlocked. Membranous canals like bags are in the semicircular canals, and Korti organ is in the cochlea, which circles two times and a half.

It is the inner ear which receives sounds. As for the middle and the outer ears, they convey sounds.

Sound results from the vibration of the molecules of a matter, so it does not travel unless there is a material means such as liquid air, gases, solid bodies, and the like. Medical books have mentioned important researches regarding sound, which reveals the Wise Creator's mightiness and marvelous creation. 5

F. The Eye

As for the eye, it is among Allah's greatest signs, for through it man receives light, knows external surroundings, realizes forms and colors. It is the most marvelous room of art photography; for it is a dark room and closed by three walls which are from outward to inward: the sclera which gives the white color to the eye; the choroid which irrigates the eye through its veins; the retina which conveys the sensitive elements; cones and rods which receive light. In the front there is a thin crystal called the cornea which

let the light coming to the eye enter.

Then the light, after the cornea, passes through the transparent liquid which refracts light; it is the aqueous humor which lies between the cornea and the iris; and it is the iris which gives the familiar color to the eyes, in the middle of it there is a special opening receiving light and is like the lens of a photographer; it is called the pupil. When light enters the pupil, it faces a crystal of a new kind; it is the crystal body (the lens); it is the most marvelous crystal in existence, for it expands and contracts to the extent that the forms of its convexity are very different; therefore, the eye harmonizes with the views before it. If the visible distance is near, it expands and changes in order to fit the condition, and viceversa; therefore, it is the sane, motive crystal. After the crystal body, light enters a new, transparent humor refracting light; it is the vitreous humor. When light ends passing through it, it reaches the retina where the rods and the cones receive and move it as a nervous stream to the occipital lobe.6

The eye is marvelous in creation and protection, for Allah, the Most High, has placed it in a low, facial area surrounded by three high hills, which are: the eye-brow, nasal pyramid, and the bony prominence of the forehead as well as it is covered by lids which opens and shuts very quickly. Besides Allah has surrounded it by tears in order to purify and moisten it. So glory belongs to the Creator, the Originator, the Almighty!

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, has mentioned some organs of man's body. He has shown their characteristics and their functions (anatomy). Now, let us move to another part of this dissertation. He, peace be on him, has said: "And speech is not good unless it is repeated through the nose, for the nose adorn speech as blowing adorns the flute; likewise, the nostrils are the two openings of the nose and they bring good air to the king. If they bring bad, displeasing air to the king, he reveals to the hands to be as a curtain between him and that bad air. There will be a reward and punishment for the king because of this, so his punishment is severer than that of the outward, powerful kings in the world, and his reward is better than theirs. As for his punishment, it is sadness; and as for his reward, it is happiness. The origin of sadness is in the spleen, and the origin of happiness is in the kidneys and the ribs7, and from them they reach the face, so from there happiness and sadness arise, so their signs are seen on the face, and all these blood vessels are ways of workers to the king, and from the king to the workers, and the proof of that is that when you take a medicine, the blood vessels convey it to the place of illness, with their help."

The Prophet's grandson (i.e. Imam al–Ridha') has displayed the operation of utterance and mode of expression, which is a wonder in itself, for speech comes out harmoniously and equally balanced, and it aims at a certain (thing); and it is among the unique, wonderful phenomena which are proof of the Almighty Creator's mightiness. He, the Most High, says: *The Beneficent (Allah) taught the Qur'an; He created man; He taught him the mode of expression.* So what man wants to perform before uttering it arises in the brain, which inspires the tongue to perform it, and that occurs through a wonderful operation which the concerned in this research are mentioned.

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned that the reward and punishment which the heart and the brain bring about to man's body. Both reward and punishment appear on the expressions of the face; happiness covers the face when there is a reward; and sadness covers it when there is a punishment. The Imam has shown that the origin of sadness is the spleen, and the origin of happiness is the kidneys and the ribs. These phenomena result from these organs in man's body.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And know, Commander of the faithful, that the body is like a good land which is maintained by plowing and watering; water should not be increased lest it should drown it; nor it should be decreased lest it should make it thirsty, so that its reformation lasts; its revenue increases; and its plants grow. If the land is neglected, it becomes spoiled and no plant grows therein; therefore, the body is like such a land; it becomes good and well-being flourishes through organizing foods and drinks.

"O Commander of the faithful, reflect on the food which fits you and your stomach, strengthens your own body and gives it to enjoy it, so estimate and carefully consider your own food.

"And know, O Commander of the faithful, that each one of these natures likes that which suits it; therefore, eat that which suits your own body; he who takes an increase of food does not make use of it; and he who takes an amount of food without an increase or a decrease makes use of it; and raise your hand from food while you still incline to it; for it puts right your own body and stomach, pure your reason, and lightens your body."

The wise Imam has specified the general program of general health, which depends on balance and immoderation in eating and drinking. The Qur'an has mentioned this rule regarding keeping man's body and protecting it from diseases; saying: *Eat and drink but do not be extravagant*.

Surely the digestive system is the most important one of man's systems; it is the most vital and sensitive of them, for it is affected by the extravagance of food which results in fatness, which is one of the blights which destroy man's body.

Certainly taking care of nutrition, especially in the prim of life, has a great effect on the health condition in the years that follow as well as it lengthens the period of youth; and it is one of the most modern means in preventive medicine; therefore, the different diseases which affect man are a direct result of extravagance in food and drink, unbalanced sexual life, and other life affairs.

The wise Imam has likened man's body to a fertile land; and this is a very wonderful comparison, for if man takes care of his land and reforms it, then it will produce and give the most agreeable crops; and if he turns away from it and neglects it, it will be damaged, die, and not give any crop; likewise, if man takes care of his body, puts it right, and does not spoil it through extravagance in food and drink, it becomes good and he enjoys health, which is the most expensive thing in man's life.

The Imam, peace be on him, has emphasized the necessity of avoiding extravagance in food, and that man should raise his hand from food while he is still desirous of it, for that is the most useful way for

keeping his health and protecting him from diseases. Definitely, eating too much food leads to fatness, which gives rise to the following:

A. Heart failure

B. High blood pressure

Now, let us move to another part of this dissertation. He, peace be on him, has said: "O Commander of the faithful, eat cold (foods) in summer, hot (foods) in winter, and moderate (foods) in the two seasons according to your strength and appetite; and start with the lightest food on which your body feed according to your material, your ability, your activity, and your time in which you must have food every eight hours or three meals every two days; you must have food early at the beginning of day, and then you have supper; when eight hours of the following day passes, you must eat one lunch; and you are in no need of supper; likewise, my grandfather, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, ordered 'Ali, peace be on him, to have one meal on every day and two meals on the following day; that should be according to an amount which should be neither increase nor decrease; raise your hand from food while you feel appetite for it; and let your drink be immediately after your food."

This part of the dissertation gives an account of organizing the food on which general health stands as follows:

- A. One must have light foods during the days of summer, for having heavy foods causes heavy damages to his own body. As for winter, it is on the contrary, namely, one must have heavy food which containing fat and sugar, for his body is in need of them.
- B. One must have food according to his own ability; he must not overexert himself in having food.
- C. One must have the lightest and the easiest food for the digestive system; in the meantime, he must take into consideration his own age, for when man grows old, he must have light food with little salt and fat, for they bring about arteriosclerosis, especially when he is over fifty years of age.
- D. One must decrease the meals of food; he must confine himself to three meals of food, according to what the Imam, peace be on him, has detailed; without doubt this way makes body sound and safe from diseases.
- E. The Imam has underlined that it is necessary for one not to eat any food except when he feels appetite for it and must not fill his own stomach with it. These are some valuable health pieces of advice.

Now, let us read another part of this dissertation. He, peace be on him, has said: "Now we must mention what must be mentioned regarding the direction of the seasons of the year and its Roman months which occur therein; each season (must be mentioned) separately; the foods and drinks which must be used (therein); what must be avoided; and how one must maintain (his) health, according to the view points of the old."

This part of the dissertation is a preparatory preface concerning what man must have and avoid during the seasons of the year. He, peace be on him, has said: "As for the season of spring, it is of the rest of time, and its beginning is March (Adha'r); and the number of its days is thirty days; and therein day and night are good; the earth becomes soft; and the power of phlegm terminates; the blood becomes exited; and one must use light food and meat; and he must refrain from eating onions and garlic and sour (things); and he must use laxative therein; and he must use therein bloodletting and cupping."

The Imam has mentioned the season of spring, which is the most beautiful one of the seasons of the year, and the most useful of them to living beings. How wonderful these words of the Imam: "It is of the soul of the time." That is because, therein, night and day become good; the earth becomes soft; the blood becomes exited. The Imam has warned men against eating onions and garlic and sour things, for they bring about diseases which modern medicine will discover, as well as he has regarded it as recommended to have laxative and to take some blood through bloodletting and cupping.

He, peace be on him, has said: "April (Nisa'n) is thirty days; day lengthens therein; the temper of the season becomes strong; the blood moves; the east wind blows; roasted foods are used therein, what is prepared with vinegar; the meat of (birds and animals which are) hunted; and you must treat yourself with having a sexual intercourse, and then massaging yourself with an ointment in the bathroom; drink water before breakfast; smell flowers and scent."

The Imam has mentioned the month of April (Nisa'n) and mentioned its characteristics, which are as follows:

- 1. Day lengthens while night shortens.
- 2. Temper becomes strong.
- 3. The blood moves.
- 4. The east wind blows.

The Imam has regarded it as recommended to have roasted foods and what is cooked in vinegar along with the meat of the birds and animals which are hunted, for such a food benefits man's body. He has also made it recommended to enter the bathroom, to massage the body with an ointment, and to drink some water before breakfast, for it has a great effect on cleaning the urinary tracts and removing cystic calcali from them.

He, peace be on him, has said: "May (Ayya'r) is thirty-one days; the winds become clear there in; it is at the end of the season of spring; one must refrain from salty foods, thick meat such as heads and beef, and yogurt; entering the bathroom at the beginning of day is useful therein; and sport before lunch is reprehensible therein."

As for May (Ayya'r), it is at the beginning of summer, so the digestive system cannot bear heavy foods,

especially when one reaches old age, for having thick meat leads to dreadful damages such as high blood pressure, and the like.

He, peace be on him, has said: "June (Huzayra'n) is thirty days; the power of phlegm terminates therein; the time of the yellow bile comes; one must refrain from tiredness and eating abundant meat; one must smell musk and ambergris; it is useful to eat cold vegetables such as endive and purslane, to eat greens such as cucumber, purgative manna, ripe fruit, to use soured things; of the meat is goat and young goat; of the birds is chickens, dull-yellow partridge (*tahiyuij*), francolins; yogurt and fresh fish."

As for June (Huzayra'n), it is the first of the months of summer; bodies become weak therein, for they face intense and bitter heat. The Imam, peace be on him, has emphasized that one must:

- 1. avoid tiredness.
- 2. avoid having abundant meat.
- 3. eat vegetables and fruit, for they are light, and not heavy.

He, peace be on him, has said: "July (Tammu'z) is thirty-one days; heat becomes intense therein; water goes down; one must drink cold water before breakfast, eat cold, fresh things, and digestible foods (like those mentioned in June); one must smell cold, wet flowers with agreeable scent."

As for July (Tammu'z), it is the heaviest of all the months of the year and the most harmful of them toward man. That is because of the intense heat which occurs when water goes down. The Imam has stressed that one must use cold things and eat light foods lest the digestive system should be affected by them. He has also focused on that one must smell cold flowers with pleasant scent, for they have a good effect on the digestive system.

He, peace be on him, has said: "August (Ab) is thirty-one years; the simoom (hot wind) becomes intense therein; cold becomes exited at night; the north wind blows; temper becomes good through patting and moistening; it is useful to drink yogurt; one must refrain from having sexual intercourse and laxative, decrease sport, and smell cold flowers."

Like July (Tammu'z), August (Ab) is hot; cold becomes intense out of the weakness of bodies because of the intense heat, hence the Imam has made it recommended to use cold thins which decrease the intensity of heat.

He, peace be on him, has said: "September (Aylu'l) is thirty days; the air becomes good therein; the power of the black bile becomes strong; having laxative is good; it is useful to eat sweets and moderate various kinds of meat such as that of young goats and mutton; one must refrain from beef, eat abundant roasted meat, enter the bathroom, use therein perfume with moderate temper, and refrain from eating melon and cucumber."

The intensity of heat decreases in September (Aylu'l), especially at the end of it, for the air is agreeable therein, so it is useful for one to have all kinds of sweets provided that he should not be afflicted by diabetes or fatness, or having candy harms him very much; likewise, it is useful for him to have all kinds of meat except beef, for it harms him. The Imam has warned men against eating melon and cucumber, for they are harmful in this month.

He, peace be on him, has said: "October (Tishrin al-Awwal) is thirty-one days; various winds blow in it; one must breathe the east wind, avoid bloodletting and taking medicine; sexual intercourse is praiseworthy therein; it is useful to have meat in spices; one must decrease drinking water; and sport is praiseworthy in it."

As for October (Tishrin al-Awwal), it is one of the excellent months of the year, for heat terminates in it; the east wind blows therein. The Imam has warned men against bloodletting, for it causes damages to the body. Similarly, he has ordered them to decrease drinking water as well as he has ordered them to practice sport, for it is useful for the vitality and activity of the body.

He, peace be on him, has said: "November ((Tishrin al-Tha'ni) is thirty days; seasonal rain comes down in it; one must not drink water at night, decrease entering the bathroom and having sexual intercourse, take a mouthful of warm water in the early morning every day, avoid eating vegetables such as celery, mint, and watercress."

As for November ((Tishrin al-Tha'ni), it is one of the most agreeable months of the year, for men receive winter through it; seasonal rain, which is the source of good and mercy to men, falls in it; hence land becomes green and gives crops. Everyone must drink a mouthful of warm water in the early morning in order to get rid of cold. The Imam has warned men against eating celery and other vegetables, for they strongly harm them.

He, peace be on him, has said: "December (Ka'nu'n al-Awwal) is thirty-one days; storms become strong and cold becomes intense in it; it is useful to have all that which has been mentioned in November (Tishrin al-Tha'ni); one must be cautious of having cold foods and guard against cupping and bloodletting; and he must use therein foods which are actually and potentially hot."

As for December (Ka'nu'n al-Awwal), it is the first month in winter; men face severe cold therein; storms become strong in it. The Imam has warned people against having cold foods, for they have bad effects on their health and cause some diseases to them. Similarly, he has summoned them to have hot foods, for they have some health advantages.

He, peace be on him, has said: "January (Ka'nu'n al-Tha'ni) is thirty-one days; the power of phlegm is strong in it; one must have a mouthful of warm water before breakfast; sexual intercourse is praiseworthy therein; one must have in it hot vegetables such as celery, watercress, and leek; entering the bathroom and massaging (the body) with al-Khayri ointment is useful in it; one must be careful of sweet things, eating fresh fish, and having yogurt."

Men face the severity and intensity of cold in January (Ka'nu'n al-Tha'ni), so the Imam has made it recommended for them to have warm water in the early morning in order to get rid of the consequences of cold. Similarly, he has summoned them to have hot vegetables in order to warm their bodies and protect them from cold. He has made it recommended to enter the bathroom, for the blood-circle becomes active through it; and he has warned them against having fresh fish, yogurt, and candy, for they harm their bodies.

He, peace be on him, has said: "February (Shiba't) is twenty-eight days; the winds become different in it; rain increases; grass appears; water flows in the hollow; it is useful to eat garlic, the meat of bird and animals which are hunted and fruit; one must decreases eating sweet; abundant sport and movement is praiseworthy therein."

When February (Shiba't) enters, the severity and intensity of cold terminate, rain increases, and grass appears. The Imam has made it recommended to eat garlic, which is very useful to man's body, for it protects it from many diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and others. With this month the Imam ends his speech about the seasons of the year, what man must use and avoid in them.

He, peace be on him, has said: "Know, O Commander of the faithful, that the strength of the soul follows the tempers of bodies, and that the tempers depend on the air and change according to it in places."

Certainly the strength and soundness of reason depend on the health of body. If one is ill or afflicted by diseases, then his reason is weak just as they say: "Sound reason is in sound body." It is certain that good, fresh, and unpolluted air is one of the basic elements which play an important role in general health.

Describing the way of preparing a lawful drink, he, peace be on him, has said: "(As for) the description of a lawful drink and its usage after food, as we mentioned its benefit when we started talking about the seasons of the year and what one had to have therein to preserve his health, is that one must take ten rotls8 of clean raisins; he must wash them and soak them in abundant, clear water to an increase of four fingers over it and leaves it in its container; that is for three (days) in winter, a day and a night in summer; and then he must put them into a clean container; the water must be that of the heaven (i.e. rain) if he is able (to get) it; otherwise, it must be of fresh water whose fountain is in the east direction; shining water as well as it is light, which becomes hot and cold quickly; and this is a proof of clear water. He must cook the raisins until they become swollen and ripe; and then he must squeeze them, clarify their water, and leaves it to be cold. Then he must return it to the container again, measure it with a stick, and leave it to boil on a calm fire until two-thirds of it has steamed. Then he must take one rotl of purified bee honey and pour it into it, and it replaces the amount of the water which was in the cookingpot; and then he must leave it to boil until the amount of honey has evaporated, and it comes down to its limit. Then he must take a thin piece of cloth and put on it a dirham9 of ginger, half a dirham of carnation, half a dirham of cinnamon, a dirham of saffron, half a dirham of spikenard, half a dirham of endive, and half a dirham of mastic. He must grind each one of them separately and put them on the

piece of cloth and tie it well with a thread. Then he must put it into (the liquid). The piece of cloth must be macerated in the drink to the extent that the strength of the drugs wherein comes down (into the drink). He must go on stirring the drink gently on a calm fire until the amount of honey has steamed. Then he must lift the cooking–pot, leave it to be cold, and leave it for three months, that its tastes may overlap with each other; and then he can use it. He can drink of it one or two okes of pure water. So if you, O Commander of the faithful, eat the amount of food which I have described to you, then drink of this drink an amount of three glasses after your food. If you do that, you will be safe throughout your day and night from cold, chronic aches such as gout, wind, and others from among the aches of nerves, brain, stomach, and some aches of liver, spleen, intestines, and bowels. If you, after that, feel appetite for water, then you must drink of it the half of what you had drunk, for it puts right, regulates, and keeps the body of the Commander of the faithful.

"Surely the betterment and straightness of body and its corruption come through foods and drinks. So if you put them right, then your body is good; and if you corrupt them, then your body is corrupt."

The Imam, peace be on him, has regarded this drink as a lawful one which brings about the most important health advantages to the body and protects it from many diseases. He has mentioned its ingredients and how it is prepared. This drink contains important elements necessary for strengthening man's body; among them is raisins which include a large amount of vitamins; yet another example of them is honey which is rich in vitamins as well as the other elements which must be added to this drink.

It is worth mentioning that the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned that the water must be of that of the heaven (i.e. of rain) or of fresh water, lest it should be polluted, and hence it gives rise to some diseases and invalidates this drink.

Dr. Sa'hib Zayni has said: "This lawful drink has a large food value, for it contains useful elements which are regarded as the most important sources and producers of calories which the body always needs, especially in the cold seasons. As for the easiness of digesting it and assimilating its elements, it is well–known, for grape sugar (glucose) is the easiest of all materials in digestion, and of the materials which if one takes, is in no need of most other food stuffs, for it is simply changes into glycogen which is stored in the liver as food reserve and which the body can use at any time.

"Raisins contain a large amount of iron; they are useful for generating blood red cells and treating the disease of anemia; and they are the best of all drugs in treating many disease states such as indigestion, gastritis, gasses in stomach and intestines, some of liver diseases, dullness of intestines, and constipation. 10"

The following is of what the Imam, peace be on him, has said: "And know, O Commander of the faithful, that sleep is the power of brain, the straightness and strength of the body. If you want to sleep, then first lie on your right side, and then turn over your left side; likewise get out of your bed and sleep on your right side just as you had done at the beginning of your sleep. Habituate yourself to get up at night; enter

the toilet for relieving nature and stay wherein as long as you relieve you nature; do not stay wherein for a long time; for that gives rise to elephantiasis."

Sleep is one of the elements necessary for man's life and the health of his body. Indeed Allah has created in man's body some organs which give rise to sleep; in the meantime they supply the body with vitality and activity, remove from it the tiredness and overexertion of the day. The Imam, peace be on him, has shown the health performance of sleep, which is as follows: One must sleep on his right side, for this gives rest to the heart and soundness to the body. Similarly, he, peace be on him, has displayed the way of entering the toilet; it is an act of wisdom that man should not stay for a long time wherein lest he should be afflicted by elephantiasis.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And know, O Commander of the faithful, that the best thing which is used to clean the teeth is the branch of Zingiber officinale, for it removes dirt, makes pleasant the flavor, strengthens the gum; and it is useful for (treating) tooth decay when it is used moderately, but when it is immoderately used, it thins out, shakes the teeth and weakens their roots.

"So he who likes to keep his teeth, then let him take a burnt horn of an ibex, tamarisk, sedge, roses, spikenard (one part), Andara'ni salt (a quarter of a part), and then let him powder them and clean his teeth with it, for it strengthens the teeth, protect their roots from accidental maladies. He who likes his teeth to be white, then let him take part of Andara'ni salt and sea foam equal to it, and then let him powder them and clean his teeth with it."

The Imam has presented the treatment of teeth and mentioned two prescriptions to put them right. The first is that one must clean his teeth with the stick of a Zingiber officinale, and this is one of the best prescriptions in putting teeth right, for this stick had been analyzed and found as one of the most wonderful drugs in purifying teeth and protecting them from diseases, and that it was the best of modern tooth–pastes. 11

The second prescription concerns tooth-paste; the Imam has mentioned its ingredients which treat tooth-decay.

He has said: "And know, O Commander of the faithful, that man's sates on which Allah, the Exalted, has built him and made him move about in them are four: The first state is fifteen years; his youth, his beauty, his radiance, and the power of the blood in his body are during it. Then the second state is from fifteen years to thirty–five years; the power of the yellow bile and the strength of its victory over a person are during it; he is still so until he terminates the mentioned period, which is thirty–five years; and then he enters the third stage until the period of his life span, which is sixty years, has terminated; hence he is in the power of the black bile, which is the age of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, regulated affairs, correct results, true opinions, and steadfastness in behavior. Then he enters the fourth stage which is the power of phlegm, and it is the stage in which he, if remains alive, moves to old age, trouble, withering, the decrease of strength, the collapse of his structure, condemning all things which he had

come to know of his own soul, to the extent that he sleeps while standing, passes sleep awake, remembers the past things, forgets what occurs in the times, his body withers, his habitual condition changes, the water of his beauty and radiance dries, the growth of his hair and finger–nails decrease, his body continues retreating and turning away throughout the rest of his life; that is because he is in the power of phlegm; he is dull and inactive; dullness and inactivity bring about the extinction of everybody over which the phlegm power dominates after all."

This part of the dissertation gives an account of the stages of man's life span. They are four stages: The first stage begins from his birthday and ends when he reaches fifteen years of age; it is the stage and beginning of youth, which is the most marvelous and best of all stages in activity.

The second stage begins from fifteen years and terminates in the fifty-three years of age; it is one of the most wonderful stages of lifetime, for therein man's strength, activity, and radiance are perfect.

The third stage begins from thirty-five and ends in sixty years; and in this stage man's knowledge is perfect; his affairs are regulated; that is through his experiences in affairs and his knowledge in events, for in this age his intellectual activity is perfect, but his bodily forces become weak.

The fourth stage begins from sixty years until he dies; in this stage all his organs, his cells, and his forces are weak; and he is dependent on others, especially when he becomes eighty years of age, for his complaints and moans are many. In this connection the poet says:

Surely the eighty (years) which I have reached

has made my ears in need of an interpreter!

And just as they say: "Old age is a cloud which showers diseases!" Definitely, the body in this stage is just as the Imam says: "His body withers and the water of his beauty dries, and it is the stage of his extinction!"

He, peace be on him, has said: "I have mentioned to the Commander of the faithful all that which he needs in the indulgence of the temper, the conditions of his body and its treatment; and I have mentioned the foods and drugs and what he must do in his times.

"So if you like cupping, then let that be between twelve and fifteen nights of the crescent, for it is better for your body. When the month decreases, do not use cupping except when you are forced to do that. That is because the blood decreases according to the decrease of the crescent, and it increases according to its increase; and cupping must be equal to the years which pass: one who is twenty years of age must apply cupping every twenty days; one who is thirty years old, must use cupping every thirty days; one who is forty years of age must use cupping every forty days, and so on.

"And know, O Commander of the faithful, that the blood of cupping is taken from the small veins spreading in the flesh; and the proof of that is what I have mentioned that it does not weaken strength as

bloodletting does; and the cupping of *al-nuqura* 12 is useful for the heaviness of the head; and the cupping of *al-akhdaʻayn* 13 gives rest to the head, the face, and the eyes, and it is useful to tooth-ache; and perhaps bloodletting replaces all of that; and one may use cupping under the chin in order to treat *al-qaldaʻ*14 in the mouth, the corruption of the gum, and other mouth aches. Similarly, the cupping between the two shoulders is useful to the beating which results from fullness and heat, and that which placed on the two legs may decrease the fullness with a clear decrease, and it is useful to chronic aches in the kidneys, bladders, and wombs, and it makes menstruation flow abundantly, but it exhausts the body, and a severe haze may stems from it, but it is necessary for those who have blisters and abscesses.

"Gentle sucking decreases the pain of cupping when one places the cupping glasses; and then he graduates the sucking a little more; the sucking in the second (cupping) must be more than the first, and so must be the third, and so on. He must stop slashing until the place has become red through repeating the cupping glasses across it. He must softens the lancets across soft skins; and he must massage the place with some ointment before he slashes it; so must he do during bloodletting, for such an act decreases pain. He must also soften the lancet during cupping; and when he has finished it, he must soften the place with some ointment and drips onto the veins some of it lest they should disappear and harm the phlebotomized. The phelbotomist should bleed the veins in the places where flesh is little, for the little flesh on the veins decreases pain; and the most painful vein when bled is habl al-dhira' 15 and al-qifa'l 16, for they are connected with the upper arm and this skin is solid. As for al-ba'saliq 17 (basilic vein) and al-akkhal, they are less painful when bled if there is no flesh on them. It is obligatory to apply hot water to the place of bloodletting that the blood may appear, especially in winter, for it softens the skin and decreases pain and makes easy bloodletting. During all what we have mentioned regarding bringing forth blood, it is obligatory to refrain from women twelve hours before that.

"One must use cupping on a clear day on which there is neither clouds nor strong winds; and he must bring forth blood equals to its change which he sees. Do not enter the bathroom immediately, for it gives rise to illness; and pour warm water on your head and body, but do not do that soon.

"Be weary of taking a bath when you apply cupping, for chronic fever stems from it. If you wash yourself off (the blood) of cupping, take a downy piece of cloth or a soft, silk garment or the like and put it on the places of your cupping; and take an amount equal to a chick-pea of *al-tirya'q al-akbar* 18 and drink it when winter; and if it is summer, then drink honey oxymel and mix it with the gladdening, moderate drink, and have it, or with fruit juice. If that is difficult, then drink citron (juice). If you do not find anything, then have it (citron) after you have chewed under the teeth and drink after it a mouthful of lukewarm water; and if that is in the time of winter and cold, then drink after it some honey oxymel, for if you do that, you will be safe from facial paralysis, vitiligo, and leprosy with the permission of Allah, the Exalted; and suck pomegranate, for it strengthens soul and renews the blood; and do not eat salty food after that for three hours, for that may bring about mange; and if you like, then eat (the meat) of dull-yellow partridges (*al-taha'iyiji*), that is when you have used cupping; and drink after it some of the purified drink

which I have mentioned at outset; and massage (your body) with al-Khayri ointment or with some of musk and rose water; and pour on your head some of it as soon as you have finished cupping.

"As for summer, when you apply cupping, then eat *al-sakkbajj* 19, *al-hala'm* 20 *al-masu's* 21, and the sour; and pour on your head violet oil mixed with rose water and some camphor; and drink after your food some of that drinks which I have prescribed to you; and be careful of abundant movement, anger, and having an intercourse with women on the same day."

In this part of the dissertation, the Imam, peace be on him, has presented cupping which causes great advantages to the body, returns activity to it, and drives away from it illnesses and diseases; it is the greatest of all prescriptions and most successful of them in treating those who have high blood pressure, for the blood during it comes out of the small veins spreading in flesh, as the Imam says, and this does not cause weakness to the body. The Imam has mentioned some diseases which are treated with cupping. They are as follows:

- A. Tooth and gum congestion.
- B. The chronic diseases of the kidney, the bladder, and the womb.
- C. The paucity of menstruation.
- D. Blisters and abscesses.

The Imam has described the operation of cupping in full detail and explained what one should use after it, the foods and drinks from which one should refrain from. Similarly the Imam has presented bloodletting and mentioned the veins which should be bled such as *habl al-dhira*" and *al-qifa'l* 22; he has also mentioned some refreshing drinks which should be drunk after it and warned against some foods which bring about dangers.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And be cautious, O Commander of the faithful, of bringing together eggs and fish in the stomach at the same time, for if they come together in man's stomach, they give rise to gout, colic, piles, and tooth-ache.

"When yogurt and wine (which some people drink) gather, they cause gout and leprosy; eating onions23 constantly results in freckles; eating salty meat and fish after cupping and bloodletting gives rise to vitiligo and mange; eating sheep's kidneys and bowels disorders the bladder.

"Entering the bathroom during fullness gives rise to colic; washing with cold water after eating fish brings about hemiplegia; eating citron at night results in cross-eye; and having a sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman causes leprosy to the baby.

"Having a sexual intercourse without discharging semen after it gives rise to stone; a sexual intercourse after a sexual intercourse without an interval between them causes madness to the baby; eating eggs24

very much and constantly brings about spleen (disease) and winds in the head of the stomach; fullness of boiled eggs gives rise to asthma and dyspnea; eating raw meat brings about worms in the stomach; and eating figs decreases (the weight of) the body when one addicts himself to it.

"Drinking cool water after a warm thing and candy destroys teeth; eating abundant meat of wild animals and beef results in changing reason, perplexing understanding, making dull the mind, and plentiful forgetfulness."

In this part of the dissertation, the Imam, peace be on him, has warned against bringing together various kinds of foods during eating, for it gives rise to many diseases; among the foods against which he has warned is eating fish and eggs at the same time, for it leads to the following diseases:

- 1. Gout.
- 2. Colic.
- 3. Piles.
- 4. Tooth-ache.

He has also warned against having salty foods, for it brings about arteriosclerosis and high blood pressure.

Among the things against which the Imam has warned is drinking cold water after warm things or after eating candy, for it destroys teeth, as it has been emphasized by dentists, who has mentioned that this is one of the acts which destroy teeth.

This part of the dissertation contains health advantages of great importance; if men put them into practice, medicine will be preventive, and they will be in no need of the clinic of physicians.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And if you like to enter the bathroom and you feel no ache in your head, then start, during entering the bathroom, with five handfuls of warm water and pour them on your head, for you will be, Allah willing, safe from headache and migraine.

"And know, O Commander of the faithful, that bathroom has a construction just as that of the body; it has four places just as the natures of the body: the first place is for taking off clothes; it is cool and dry. The second (places) is cool and wet; the third is warm and wet; and the fourth is warm and dry. Taking a bath is very useful, for it leads to moderation, removing dirt, softening nerves and veins, strengthening the big organs, melting (the bodily) excrement, and driving away bad smell.

"So if you do not want any pimple or the like to appear in your body, so start, when entering the bathroom, with massaging your own body with violet ointment; and if you want to use depilatory (paste) without any wound nor any cut nor any evil, then wash (your body) with cool water; and if one wants to

enter the bathroom for using depilatory (paste), then he must avoid taking a sexual intercourse for twelve hours before that, and it is a full day, and he must mix with the depilatory (paste) some aloe, some acacia, some rock at the foot of a mountain, or he gathers that and takes little of it if it is together or separate, and he must put nothing into the depilatory (paste) until it is mixed with hot water in which chamomile, marjoram or dry violet rose has been boiled or all of that little parts together or separate in an amount whose smell the water takes; and (the amount of) arsenic must be equal to the one–sixth of the depilatory (paste); after he has used it and in order to remove its smell, he must rub his own body with something like the leafs of plum, the marc of safflower, henna, roses, and spikenard together or separate.

"And he who wants to be safe from the burn of depilatory (paste), then he must decrease turning it; and when he uses it, he must hasten to wash it and rub his body with some rose oil; if it burns his body, Allah forbids, he must take peeled lentils, crush it, mix it with rose water and vinegar, and rub with it the area which has been burnt by the depilatory (paste), for he recovers with the permission of Allah, the Exalted; and if he wants to avoid the (bad) effects of the depilatory (paste) on his body, he must rub his body very well with al-Thaqif grape vinegar and rose oil."

It is necessary for man to take a bath in order to clean his own boy from dirt which gives rise to skin diseases. The Prophet's grandson, source of knowledge and wisdom (i.e. Imam al–Ridha') has talked about all sides of bathing, of which are the moderation of the body, cleanness from dirt, and removing bad smell.

Surely the Imam, peace be on him, has talked in detail about bating, for it is one of health means and among the sources of purity and cleanness which removes outward bodily dirt and secretions. He, peace be on him, has also talked inclusively about depilatory (paste) which cleans and refreshes the body when it removes thick hair from it.

He, peace be on him, has said: "He who does not want to complain of his bladder must not withhold his urine even if he is on the back of his own mount.

"And he who does not want his stomach to hurt him must not drink water until he has finished having his food; and he who does that, his body becomes wet, his stomach becomes weak, and his veins do not make use of food, for if water is suddenly poured on the food, a pass will occur in the stomach.

"And he who does not want to find stone and the retention of urine must not withhold semen when libido comes down and must not stay for a long time with women.

"And he who wants to be safe from the ache of the lowest part and of piles must eat seven Barni dates mixed with cows' fat and rub (the area) between his buttocks with pure lily oil."

"And he who wants to increase his memory must eat seven weights of raisins before breakfast; and he who wants to decrease his forgetfulness and to be a memorizer must eat every day three pieces of

ginger mixed with honey jam, and must nourish (his own body) with mustard along with his food every day; and he who wants to increase his reason must have every three pieces of *hilija* along with *Ibloj* sugar25; and he who does not want his finger–nail to split a part or to become yellow or black must not clip it except on Thursday; and he who does not want his ear to ache must put a piece of cotton wherein when sleeping.

"And he who wants to get rid of cold throughout the days of winter must eat every day three mouthfuls of honey."

In this part of the dissertation, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned some health recommendations of great importance, for he has given health prescriptions necessary for safety and protection from diseases; the following are some of them:

- 1. The soundness of the urinary system.
- 2. The soundness of the stomach.
- 3. Protection from stone.
- 4. Protection from piles.

He has also mentioned other health recommendations which are necessary for protecting the body from diseases.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And know, O Commander of the faithful, that there are signs through which useful and harmful honey is known: some of it makes one sneeze when he smells it; some of it makes one drunk; some of it makes one feel severe burning when he tastes it. So these kinds of honey are deadly.

"One should not delay smelling narcissus, for it prevents cold throughout the days of winter and such is the black cumin; and if one fears cold in the days of summer must eat every day a cucumber and be careful of sitting in the sun.

"And he who fears migraine and colic must not delay eating fresh fish in summer or winter; and he who wants to be good with light body and flesh must decrease his supper by night; and he who does not want to complain of his navel must anoint it when he anoints his hair; and he who does not want his lips to split apart nor do pimples appear in them must anoint them when he anoints his hair; and he who does not want his tonsils and epiglottis to inflame must not eat candy unless he gargles with vinegar after it; and he who does not want to be infected by yellows must not enter a house at once in summer and must not goes out of it at once in the early morning in winter; and he who does not want his body to be infected by winds must eat garlic once every seven days; and he who does not want his teeth to be decayed must not eat sweets except after a small piece of bread; and he who wants to enjoy his food must lean on his right side after he has finished eating, and then he must turn on his left side until he

sleeps; and he who wants phlegm to leave his own body or to decrease it must eat in the early morning every day some of hot ground (spices), take a bath and have a sexual intercourse with women several times, sit in the sun, and avoid all cold foods, for these things drive away phlegm and burn it; and he who wants to extinguish the flame of the yellow bile must eat every day something cold and wet, refresh his own body, decrease movement, and look for a long time at him whom he loves; and he who wants to burn the black bile must vomit several times, bleed the veins, and use depilatory (paste) constantly; and he who wants to take away cold winds must cling to liquid enemas and ointments softening the body, treating with hot water in basin; and he who wants to remove phlegm from his own body must have a weight of the small *ittrifil* every day."

In this part of the dissertation, the Imam, peace be on him, has presented the health of man's organs; he has specified health prescriptions to their safety and protection from diseases; he has mentioned necessary rules for protection from cold, which is the beginning of diseases; he has given winter and summer prescriptions to get rid of cold.

The Imam, peace be on him, has displayed his health recommendations necessary for the soundness of the systems of man's body, and specified to them the successful prescriptions which put an end to illness.

He, peace be on him, has said: "And know, O Commander of the faithful, it is obligatory on the traveler to be careful of heat. When he travels, he must be neither full nor hungry; rather he must be on a moderate level. He must have cold foods such as fresh meat, jelly, vinegar, oil, sour grapes juice, and others.

"And know, O Commander of the faithful, that hard walking in intense heat harms exhausted bodies when they are empty of food, but it is useful to strong bodies; as for water good to the traveler and removing harm from him is that he must not drink from every station at which he arrives except after he has mixed it with the water of the station before it or with one drink which is not different; he must mix it with different kinds of water; it is obligatory on the traveler to supply himself with some mud of his homeland on which he has lived; whenever he reaches at a station, he must throw into his own container, out of which he drinks, some of the mud with which he has supplied himself from his homeland; and he must mix the water with the mud in the container through stirring it; and he must leave it until it becomes very clear; the best kind of water in drinking for those travelers or residents is that whose spring is in the east direction, of quick and white; and the best kind of water is that whose vent is in the summer rising of the sun; and the best of them is that which is in this description from which it gushes out and whose bed is in the mud mountains (i.e. hills), for it is cool in winter and relaxes the bowels in summer, and it is useful to those who have fevers.

"As for salty water and heavy water, they constipate the bowels; and as for the water of snow and ice, it is bad to all bodies and is of great harm.

"As for the water of clouds, it is clear, fresh, light and useful to bodies if it is not stored in the ground for a long time. As for the water of the well, it is fresh and useful if its flow lasts and it is not stored in the ground for a long time. As for (the water) of level lands and marshes, it is warm and thick in summer, for it is stagnant and the sun always rises over it, and drinking it constantly may give rise to the yellow bile; and their bellies become big through it."

The Imam, peace be on him, has established vital programs for the safety of the traveler and protecting him from diseases; he has advised him not travel when he is full or hungry or very hot, for he is liable to dangers.

Similarly, the Imam, peace be on him, has presented the kinds of water which the traveler must drink and must not drink, for the latter harms his general health. He has accurately described water to the extent that none before or after him has described it in this manner.

He, peace be on him, has said: "In the previous part of this dissertation of mine, I have described to you, O Commander of the faithful, something sufficient for him who puts it into practice. Now, I will mention the matter of sexual intercourse: Do not have a sexual intercourse with your own wife at the beginning of night in summer or winter, for your own stomach and veins are full; and it is not praiseworthy; and it gives rise to colic, hemiplegia, facial paralysis, gout, stone, diuresis, hernia, and weakness of sight; if you want that, then let it be at the last part of the night, for it is more appropriate for your own body, more hoped for a boy–baby, and purer for the baby which Allah has decreed between them (husband and wife).

"Do not have a sexual intercourse with your wife unless you play with her very much and touch her breasts, for if do that, you will overcome her lust, her water comes together, for her water comes out of her breasts; and the lust appears on her face and eyes; and she desires you just as you desire her; and do not have a sexual intercourse with her unless she is pure; so if you want to do that, then do not do it in standing or sitting position; rather lie on your right side; and then get up soon to urinate when you have finished, for you will be safe from stone with the permission of Allah, the Most High. Then wash your own body and drink at once something of (bees) wax (*al-mummya*"i) mixed with honey drink or honey without foam, for it generates water (semen) equals to that which has come out of you.

"And know, O Commander of the faithful, that it is better for you to have a sexual intercourse with them (your wives) when the moon is in Ram or Aquarius; and it is better than that when it is in Taurus which is the high rank of the moon.26

"And he who puts into effect what I have described in this dissertation of mine and directs his own body through it is safe, with Allah's permission, from all diseases; and his own body is good with Allah's help and power, for He gives well-being to whomever He wishes and grants it to him; and praise belongs to Allah, the First and Last, the Outward and Inward."

In this part of the dissertation, the Imam, peace be on him, has discussed sexual life and mentioned

many of its important sides of which men are ignorant. He has warned husband against having a sexual intercourse with his own wife at the beginning of night, for it gives rise to many diseases, of which are the following:

- A. Colic.
- B. Hemiplegia
- C. Facial paralysis.
- D. Gout.
- E. Stone
- F. Hernia
- G. Weakness of sight.

Moreover he has summoned husband to have a sexual intercourse with his own wife at the last part of night. With this matter we will end our talk about *al-Risa'la al-Dhahabiya fi al-Tibb* (the golden medical dissertation), which is regarded as one of the stored medical books.

- 1. The translation in the script of the author is available at the Imam Amir al-Mu'minin Library, serial 237.
- 2. Robert Foblbith, Your Body the Marvelous, the Odd, p. 13.
- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Al-Tibb Mihra'b al-Ima'n, pp. 141-142.
- 5. Ibid., pp. 191-202.
- 6. Ibid., pp. 204-206.
- 7. In some versions, the origin of happiness is in the kidneys.
- 8. A rotl is about 340 grams.
- 9. A dirham is 5.5 grams.
- 10. Tibb al-Ridha', pp. 58-59.
- 11. This was announced by BBC.
- 12. Al-nuqra is a hole in the back four fingers above the neck vertebras.
- 13. Al-akhda'ayn are two veins in the back of the neck to the right and left of it.
- 14. Al-qalda' is an ulcer in the skin of the mouth and tongue.
- 15. Habl al-dhira' is the vein which extends from the forearm upwards.
- 16. Al-gifa'l is the vein which appears at the elbow.
- 17. Al-ba'saliq is the outward vein from the elbow to the forearm.
- 18. Al-tirya'q al-akbar is one of the ancient drugs.
- 19. Al-sakkbajj is soup along with vinegar.
- 20. Al-hala'm is al-sakkbajj which is purified from fat or it is the meat of cows and calves and goats which is boiled in salty water; and then the boiled meat is taken out and mixed with the boiled vegetables along with vinegar.
- 21. Al-masu's is meat which is cooked and placed into vinegar or it is the meat of birds.
- 22. See the previous footnotes.
- 23. In a version eating eggs.
- 24. In a version eating onions.

- 25. Ibloj sugar is a kind of plant.
- <u>26.</u> Al-Majjlisi said: "Perhaps he (Imam al-Ridha') has mentioned these matters, if they belong to him, for some interests in agreement with that al-Ma'mu'n and his companions were famous for adopting the viewpoints of the wise men."

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