

# Muslims' Learning And Research In Medical Field

The second and third century A.H. was the period of the Muslims' familiarization with study of foreign sciences. Scientific books in Greek, Pahlawi and Hindu were translated into Arabic with great speed by Muslims who felt great enthusiasm for their work.

Muslims were more interested in medicine than other sciences and, after a short period of time, they started their own research and writings and left behind valuable books about medicine. The reason for this interest, in addition to their need, was the emphasis of their religious leaders placed on learning medicine. The Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) had always encouraged people to learn the principles of belief, Islamic literature, knowledge of religion and medicine, and particularly stressed the importance of medical knowledge.

The Prophet of Islam had always told his Companions that religious and scientific studies were at the same level of importance and learning about both were necessary. Medicine was first established among Muslims by doctors at Jondi Shapur Hospital. Then, with the transferal and education of a group of doctors from Greece, they gained more knowledge from the books which were narrated from Greek and Syriac and then translated into Arabic, they increased their knowledge of this science by all the available means.

Regarding the methods of the Iranian doctors of Jondi Shapur in the propagation and distribution of medical books, it was said that Mansur, the second Abbaside Caliph, once became ill with stomach pains. He had no appetite and asked all of his doctors to do whatever they could to cure him. However, they could not find a cure and all their efforts were in vain.

One day Mansur asked if anyone knew of any skillful doctor who could help him. He was told that the head of Jondi Shapur hospital, a person called George Ibn-Bakhtishooa' was a very knowledgeable doctor and no one knew of anyone more reliable than him. George, a Christian was one of the most skillful doctors of his time. He had written many books about medicine and due to his skillfulness and

because of his meritoriousness in medicine, he became the head of Jondi Shapur Hospital, which was one of the biggest medical schools in the region at that time.

Mansur dispatched someone to bring Dr. Bukhtishoou to him. After describing his illness, George agreed to begin treating him and after sometime Mansur was cured.

The Caliph became so interested in him that he did not want the doctor to return to Jondi Shapur and asked him to stay in Baghdad. George remained there and she was fluent in Arabic, Syriac and Persian, he wrote several books on medicine while in Baghdad, some of which he translated from Greek into Arabic.

## The Research Period

After spending some time translating new books and taking selected information from the non-Islamic sciences, the Muslims entered a new era of research. They displayed such initiative in the history of science that they were regarded with amazement. In medicine, in particular, they produced great physicians. Ibn -Abi -Usaybiah in one of the volumes of his book *Tabaghatul Atba'* (the classification of physicians) categorized and listed the names of all of the Islamic scientists.

## A Distinguished Scientist And Doctor In Islam

One of the most famous examples of a Muslim scientist was Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya Razi, who was also nicknamed *Tabib-al-Muslimin*, (The Doctor of the Muslims) or Jalinusul Arab, (The Galenus of Arab). Razi was a respected physician, a famous philosopher and a very skilled mathematician, but he was best known in the field of medicine. It is said that he was first a jeweller, but he had a great interest in chemistry and for that reason, he spent most of his time experimenting with various chemicals. Due to his hard working and daily contacts with various gases and chemicals his eyes began to be seriously inflamed. Razi consulted a doctor for treatment and was charged 500 Ashrafi, which was the unit of currency at that time. The doctor told him that "It was the money which was the real alchemy" and not what he was doing. The doctor's words affected Razi so much that he began thinking of studying medicine at the age of 40.

Razi's thought was materialised and at the age of forty he displayed such dedication to medicine and became such a good physician that anyone suffering from a physical ailment and had heard of Razi came to him.

In the years 289–295A.H, Razi was head of the physicians in Baghdad and for showing his greatness and the services he had rendered in medicine, experts in the history of science have said that "The science of medicine which was in danger of dying, was revived by Jalinus, and it was Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya Razi who organized it."

This science was imperfect, but Ibn Sina perfected it. Razi busy in medicine at Baghdad for 50 years and as well as applying what he read in other medical books, he carried out numerous experiments and displayed great initiative in treating patients. He has outlined and described all the methods he had adopted in his books.

Some of his ideas, suggestions and initiatives are still of points of value and are being applied at the present time.

## **The Role Of Religion In Muslim Physicians**

Here we have to notice that, after the transferral of foreign sciences to Islamic countries and the familiarization of the Muslims with those sciences, the spirit of science in all civilizations was manifested and two great forces, spirituality and materialism, were combined. Nevertheless, for a Muslim physician the doctrine of "Every thing Belongs to God" had always been the main pivoting criteria and was always outstanding in their activities. The Muslim scientists who believed in this principle were humble servants of their society. Secularists, who based their practice on laws and were primarily concerned with acquiring the means of their enjoyment, were categorically different.

Great Islamic scientists have referred to Razi with much respect and they have confirmed that he acted compassionately towards his patients and used to treat poor people free of charge.

He spent some of his wealth in order to purchase medicine or food for his patients and if they didn't have a place in which to be treated, he used to bring them to his own house. There are many stories about the life of Razi and all of them illustrate that he possessed high morals and Great Spirit. One example we would like to mention here is the story that one day Razi was walking alone in the street, where he saw someone lying unconscious on the floor.

The passer by, had thought the man was dead. But Razi, after a close examination, asked people to find pieces of sticks. He told them to beat the unconscious man's consciousness and opened his eyes. In the view of everybody who witnessed this, Razi has restored life to a dead body.

When the Caliph asked Razi what this miraculous treatment had been, he answered that he had never used that treatment previously, but it had been applied successfully by primitive people, and it was not such an important matter. "The only thing which I did was to remember what the Beduins did to a sufferer of this kind; hence the credit should go to them and not me", said Razi.

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