

The Golden Treatise (Tibb Al-Rida)

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Imam Ali al-Rida

**Translated by
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Al-Islam.org

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Al Risala al-Dhahabiyya (or al-Mudhahhaba) fi al-Tibb or Tibb Al-Rida

The Golden Treatise is a medical dissertation that summarizes different facets of Islamic medicine and focuses on medical cures and the maintenance of good health. The text is attributed to the eighth Imam Ali b. Musa Al-Rida (a) and issues concerning its attribution to the Imam (a) are discussed in the appendices.

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Topic Tags:

[Islamic medicine](#) [6]

Foreword

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It has been a real pleasure to work on the translation of the Golden Treatise, which pertains to Islamic medicine and is attributed to Al-Imam Al-Rida' (a), the eighth Holy Shi'a Imam.

I was very glad when I found some introductory courses about traditional and Islamic medicine. My teacher had asked each student in our course to select one, from among the list of lectures she had given, and to reformulate it while focusing on one subject. I chose Al-Imam Al-Rida' (a)'s Golden Treatise because it is an all-encompassing subject that summarizes the different facets of Islamic medicine.

It also gave me an opportunity to do a translation, which is one of my favorite endeavors; the short length of the dissertation (19 manuscript pages or 14 printed pages) made me feel confident even though it was to be from Arabic into English. It is my first translation of an Arabic text into English. With God's gracious help and that of a believing sister, it was completed.

Acknowledgement

It is my first translation of an Arabic text into English. With God's gracious help and that of a believing sister, it was completed. I would like to thank my teacher for handing out this assignment, which gave me this opportunity to work on something as meaningful.

Please note I have used a simplified form of transliteration from Arabic to English. I have added an appendix for those wanting more detailed information, as well as an index containing keys terms from the dissertation along with their Arabic and Persian translations.

Presentation Of The Text

The Golden Treatise is a medical dissertation on medical cures and the maintenance of good health attributed to Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida' (148–203/765–818), the eighth Holy Imam of Shi'a Muslims. He wrote it at the request of the caliph of his time, Al-Ma'mun. Its title is 'The Golden Treatise' because Al-Ma'mun had ordered it to be written in gold ink in recognition of its high value.

The superiority and fame of this treatise should be adequate proof for a researcher to conclude that it is indeed from the intellectual output of Imam Al-Rida' (a). However, while citing it, renowned scholars have doubted the attribution of the dissertation to the Imam¹ in fact, its attribution to the Imam continues to be disputed till this day. In spite of this, this dissertation has not gone unnoticed and recently, there is a renewed interest in it due to the 21st century's trend towards spirituality, natural medicine, and Shi'a Islam.

Among the Imami bibliographers of the 5th to 11th centuries, the dissertation became known through the initial transmission of Muhammad ibn Jumah al 'Amami, a Imami transmitter from Basra, or al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Nawfali, who is described as "highly esteemed and trustworthy" by al-Najjashi. This text has been transcribed by Abu Muhammad Harun ibn Musa Tal 'akbari from Muhammad ibn Himam ibn Sahl.

Several scholars have attempted to write commentaries on this dissertation².

The Significance Of This Dissertation

Islamic medicine³, like all traditional medicine, is a holistic form of medicine. It provides various therapeutic means to completely heal a person, such as:

- Spiritual healing through alms-giving,

- Dhikr (remembrance of God through repetition of His Name and Attributes),
- Mind–Body therapy through prayers, dietary, aroma, and herbal therapy,
- Applied therapy through leeches' therapy (hirudotherapy)[4](#), cupping, and massage.

This wholeness stems from Islam's cosmic vision of creation, in which all creatures are seen as closely intertwined. The body, the microcosm, is seen as a duplicate or a reflection of the universe, the macrocosm. Health and disease[5](#) are mainly matters regarding the interfaces and interactions between these two worlds.

After being overshadowed for approximately 150 years by other forms of healing, from approximately the year 1850 onwards, this traditional medicine, known now as alternative, holistic, or complementary, has made it come back and is featuring again on medical agendas. This traditional medicine is coming to the rescue of modern medicine from its powerlessness in healing numerous diseases. This should not cause surprise because modern medicine has a materialistic approach; it is incomplete because it assesses the human body in isolation from its environment and spirit. In 1987, the World Health Organization formalized the value of traditional medicine and over the past few decades, people have started to hear more about postmodern medicine or integrative medicine, which aims to reconcile traditional and modern medicine[6](#).

Historians of Islamic medicine have in large extent neglected the role played by the medical traditions of the Shi'a Imams with regards to the first periods of their establishment, communication, and assimilation into medical knowledge[7](#).

The Golden Treatise differs from the well-known *Tibb al Nabawi* (Prophetic medicine) in its doctrinal elaboration and its medical content. For instance, in this dissertation there are compounded prescriptions whereas in the *Tibb al Nabawi* there are only prescriptions using single items. The reason for this difference is that both are adapted to different times and space frames; that of the Prophet Muhammad (S) was for the Arab desert surroundings and at the early establishment of the religion of Islam, while in the case of Imam Al-Sadiq (a)[8](#), and especially Imam Al-Rida' (a), they were for a time of scientific renaissance and a strong 'court culture' in which caliphs invited scholars from different cultural backgrounds to hold in-depth discourses with them[9](#). The period of Imam Rida' (a) was the golden period of medicine in the Islamic world, with renowned Muslim physicians like Tabari (810–855), Razi (865–925), Ahwazi (925–994), and the great medical wise man, Ibn Sina (980–1013).

The Golden Treatise presents interesting and unique features compared to the other religious medical collections of the same epoch. It is especially noteworthy for its notable level of assimilation of pre-Islamic scientific doctrines and notions from a few centuries. Examples of the same caliber and type are found in the Sunni commentaries of *Tibb al Nabawi*. It can be safely claimed that this dissertation is one of the most precious pieces of Islamic legacy dealing with the science of medicine. It is the oldest synthesizing of galenic and pre-Islamic knowledge that is encompassed in the medical religious

traditions of Islam. Another salient feature of the dissertation is that its physiological, anatomical, and pathological lexicon is the same as that which we find in important Arabic medical books like Ibn Sina's (980–1037) *Qanun*.

The research presented in this dissertation facilitates designing a new model of lifestyle modification that could very possibly lead to reductions in many diseases, especially and certainly not limited to the more well-known diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Preventive medicine is the most important way to health preservation and this dissertation is the oldest medical text and among the first books in preventive medicine and health preservation which was written in the Islamic world by a Muslim¹⁰.

Discussion about a person's diet constitutes the cornerstone of this dissertation; diet is numbered as one of the six principles (*sitta daruriyya*) of good health¹¹.

While the dissertation appears to very simplistic, which was intentional in order to address the mentality at Imam's time, the content is in fact very deep, multidimensional, and complicated in its implications to a non-understanding mind. It needs a scientific lens to study it, understand it in its entirety, and to conduct lengthy research on it to unveil its secrets and uncover its treasures. At the least, it should be compared to modern scientific facts¹².

This inclusive, scientific, and invaluable dissertation is a summary and intersection of a number of medical sciences, such as anatomy, biology, physiology, pathology, and the science of health care. It provides most of the knowledge related to the science of preventive medicine, nutrition, chemistry, and a large portion of other sciences as well. What is most eye opening is that all of this greatness is found within a dissertation written during a period of time in which medical science was still primitive?

The Golden Treatise states that four substances or humors (*Taba'i' or khalT or mizaj*) determine a person's health:

- blood (dam)
- yellow bile (safra¹)
- black bile (sawda)
- phlegm(balgham)

These four substances are responsible for the nutrition, growth and metabolism of an organism. They originate in the digestive process, and their correct proportion and balance maintains health. Per the dissertation's teachings, nutrition and traditional medicine may be used to cure any imbalances, the liver plays an important role in producing and maintaining the required proportions, and a person becomes sick when their proportions are altered.

The dissertation can be divided into fourteen major areas of study:

1. Description of the body as a realm, which is supervised by the heart
2. The factors that best suit the body according to its humors
3. Recipe of the Imam's syrup (*sharbat Imam Al-Rida' (a)*)
4. Effects of the consumption of specific foods
5. Bathing etiquette (*adab al hammam*)
6. Principles for the good maintenance of internal organs (*al aj'iza' al dakhiliyya*)
7. Travelling etiquette (*adab al safar*)
8. Humoralism (*qiwa' al nafs wa al Taba'at al Farba'*)
9. Sleeping etiquette (*adab al nawm*)
10. Teeth-brushing etiquette (*adab al miswak*)
11. Disposition of the body according to life development stages (*halat al insan hasab al fusul*)
12. Cupping etiquette (*adab al hajama*)
13. Incompatible foods (*al aghziyya' al mutanafiyya*)
14. Sexual intercourse etiquette (*adab al muqaraba*)

1. See the Appendix 2.

2. See the Appendix 2.

3. See the chart of the traditional and Islamic medicine in the Appendix 4.

4. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hirudo> [7] medicinalis Medicinal use

5. <https://www.leechestherapy.com/about-leeches> [8]

Post-Modern Medicine: Reconciling Traditional and Modern Medical Practice; Kaynama MRa , Saberi Mb , Tazmini Gc, International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism, 2008, p,60. {<http://endometabol.com/1914.fulltext> [9]}

6. Idem, p.61.

7. Fabrizio Speziale. – La Risala al dhahabiyya traite medical attribue a l'Imam Ali al Riza Luqman. Annales des Presses Universitaires d'Iran, 2004, 20 (2), pp. 7 – Revue semestrielle, 1

8. The sayings of all the Imams especially the 6th and the 8th include, like those of the Prophet, multiples references on medical content. These references have been consigned in canonical Shi'a traditions collections like Al Kafi but this stuff has been as well-consigned in a medical treatise under the name: 'Tibbol Al A'imma compiled by the sons of Bistam ibn Safir disciple of Imam Jafar and Im'am Musa al Kazim, Abd Allah and Al Husayn in the tenth century. It has been translated into English from Arabic in the Oxford University. Trad. Angl. editée par A. Newman, Islamic medical wisdom, the tibt al-A'imma. 1991. For the medical teachings of Al-Imamal Sadiq, see: Fahd T-. 1970."Ga'f-ar as-Sadiq et la tradition scientifique arabe ">. in Le Shi'isme imamite" Paris. pp. 131-142.

9. Court Cultures in the Muslim World. Seventh to nineteenth centuries. Edited by Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung,

2011.

10. Herbalism Ebrahim Azarpour, Herbalism in MedicAl-ImamReza Ebrahim , journal on new biological reports, Islamic Azad University, Racht and Lahijan, 2015, p.4.{www.researchtrend.net/ [10]}

11. See in appendix, the chart 1. 4. Yasin T. Al-Jibouri., Kerbala and Beyond: An Epic of Immortal Heroism, 2011, U.S.A., p.284

12. Yasin T. Al-Jibouri., Kerbala and Beyond: An Epic of Immortal Heroism, 2011, U.S.A., p.284

Text Of The Golden Treatise



This text was written around 201/817, while Imam Al-Rida (a) was living in the city of Marv (or Nishapur); We have quoted it and translated mainly from two Arabic work: Al Majlisi , Bihar al Anwar Anwar, Mu'asasa al Wafa' , 1403/1983, vol 59, pp.306–328 ; Al Majlisi has chosen the manuscript of Al Muhaqqid al Karaki (940/1534) which he deemed to be the most reliable along with others translations of the 12th/18th century: Muhammad Mahdi Najaf, Al risala al dhahabiyya (Tibb Al-Imam al-Rida alayhi al salam), manshourat makataba Al-Imam al-Hakim al-amma,1403 ;we also used the Persian translation.

Introduction

During one of many scientific debates, a group of physicians and philosophers had gathered in Nishapur. They included Yohanna (John) ibn Masawayh (d. circa 777–857) and Jibraeel (Gabriel) ibn Bakhtishoo' (d. 826–7), who were Nestorian physicians, Iranian scientists, and Jundishapur university professors; an Indian philosopher, Salih ibn Salhama, and others were also among them. Discussion

turned to medicine and how bodies are improved by it. Al-Ma'mun and his attendants were involved in a very lengthy discussion of the subject, about how God created the human body, the contradictory things in it, the four elements, and the harms and benefits of various types of food.

The Imam kept silent and did not participate in the discussion. Al-Ma'mun asked the Imam, "What do you have to say, O father of al Hasan, on our discussion topic today?" The Imam replied, *"I have knowledge of this from what I have personally tested and learned about its accuracy, through experience and the passage of time, as well as what I was told by my ancestors, [matters] that nobody can afford to be ignorant about, nor for which they can be excused for ignoring them. I shall compile it with an equal portion of what everyone should know."*

Al-Ma'mun then rushed to Balkh and from the city, in a letter he asked the Imam to fulfill his promise and to write the compilation. Imam Al-Rida' (a) wrote back to him saying, "I have received the letter of the Commander of the faithful regarding what he ordered me about acquainting him with what is needed of matters I have tested and heard about, foods and drinks, medicines, venesection (phlebotomy), bloodletting, bathing, poisons, what should be avoided, and other things that manage the body's health, and I have explained what is needed to be done regarding one's own body, and God is The One Who gives success."

The Seasons

This part of the dissertation is a preparatory preface concerning what man must have and avoid during the seasons of the year. Imam has said:

"Now we must inform about the recommendations for the seasons of the year and its Roman months which occur within them. Each season (must be mentioned) separately, the foods and drinks which should be consumed in them, what must be avoided, and how one must maintain health, according to the viewpoints of the elders."

*The spring season is the spirit of time [ruh al zaman or ruh al azman]. Its beginning is **March** (Adhar). Its days and nights are good, the earth becomes soft, phlegm's power ceases, blood becomes energized, and one must consume light food such as meat, half cooked eggs (nimbrecht), and drink syrup mixed with water. One must refrain from eating onions, garlic, and sour (foods). It is recommended to use laxatives, and to undergo bloodletting and cupping in it.*

***April** (Nisan) is thirty days long. The day lengthens during it, the season's climate is strengthened, blood flows, and the eastern wind blows. Roasted foods are consumed in it as well as what is prepared with vinegar and the meats of (birds and animals which are) hunted. It is a suitable time to have an ointment in the bathroom as well as for sexual intercourses. One must not drink water before breakfast and it is good to smell flowers and scents.*

May (Ayyar) is thirty-one days long. Winds become clear in it and it is the end of the spring season. One must refrain from salty foods, thick meat such as heads and cow meat, and yogurt. Utilizing the bathroom at the beginning of the day is advantageous, and sports before lunch is best avoided.

June (Huzuyran) is thirty days long. Phlegm's power ceases in it and yellow bile's period arrives. One must refrain from tiring activities and eating a large amount of [fatty] meat. One must smell musk and ambergris. It is useful to eat cold vegetables such as endive and purslane, greens vegetables such as cucumber, Armenian cucumber, purgative manna¹, ripe fruit, and to consume sour things. Goat and young goat meat are good to eat in this month as well as meat of birds like chickens, dull – yellow partridge (tahiyyujj), and francolins. Yogurt and fresh fish are also suitable foods.

July (Tammuz) is the hottest of all the months and the floodwaters recede to go deep in the soil, so this is the appropriate time to drink cold water in the morning on an empty stomach and to eat watery foods. One must eat light, delicate, and digestible food as we mentioned for the month of June, and refreshing and scented herbs.

August (Ab) is thirty-one days long. The samum (hot south winds) become intense in it, cold stirs up at night, and the north wind blows. One's temper becomes good through cooling and hydrating. It is useful to drink yogurt. One must avoid sexual intercourse and laxatives, must decrease sports, and should smell cold flowers.

September (Aylul) is thirty days long. The air becomes pleasant in it, and the power of black bile is increased. Having laxatives is beneficial. It is useful to eat sweets and moderately, various kinds of meats, such as that of young goats and mutton. But one must refrain from eating cow and meat and from consuming a lot of grilled meat. Going to the bathroom (hammam) is not recommended. It is a good time to use light perfumes. One must refrain from eating melon and cucumber.

October (Tishrin al Awwal) is thirty-one days long. Various winds blow in it. One must breathe in the east wind, avoid bloodletting and taking medicine. It is an appropriate time for sexual intercourses. It is beneficial to eat fatty meat, sweet-and-sour pomegranate, and fruits after meals. It is beneficial to eat meat with spices. One must decrease drinking water, and sports are encouraged in it.

November (Tishrin al Thani or al Akhir) is thirty days long. Seasonal rains come down in it. One must not drink water at night; take a mouthful of warm water in the early morning every day. Avoid eating vegetables such as celery, mint, and watercress.

December (Kanun al Awwal) is thirty-one days long. Storms become strong and cold becomes intense in it. It is useful to have all that which has been mentioned in Tishrin al Thani. One should be cautious of having cold foods, and guard against cupping and bloodletting. One should consume foods that are truly and potentially warm.

January (Kanun al Thani) is thirty-one days long. The power of phlegm is strong in it. One must have a

mouthful of warm water before breakfast. Sexual intercourse is highly recommended. One must have warm vegetables such as celery, watercress, and leek [or chives]; Entering the bathroom at the beginning of the day and massaging (the body) with mathiola ointment (dihn al khayri) is useful in it; one must try to avoid sweet foods, eating fresh fish, and having yogurt.

February (Shibat) is twenty-eight days long. The winds become different in it, rain increases, grass appears, and water flows in the trunks (of trees). It is useful to eat garlic, the meat of birds and animals that are hunted, and dried fruits. One must decrease eating sweet foods. Abundant sexual intercourse, physical activities, and sport are recommended in this month.

1. It is the dew falling from the sky that lands on Russian olive trees (Shajarat al khilaf-sanjad) or tamarix tree (gaz or gazderakhti). It is one of the best varieties of manna (Mann-gaz angabine).

The dissertation of Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida' (a) follows:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Commander of the faithful,

When Allah tries a servant with a disease, he assigns a medicine to him in order to cure him with it, and for every type of disease, there is a particular type of medicine, conduct, and prescription. This is because the body has been created like a kingdom.

1. Description Of The Body As A Realm Which Is Supervised By The Heart

Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida' (a) describes the body as a kingdom, whose king is the heart and the (blood) vessels, limbs, and brain are its laborers. Imam was the first person to liken the body to a small country. This part ends with the Imam likening the earth to the human body. They are both in need of good nutrition and irrigation in order to grow and stay productive. This political metaphor is noticed by Speziale² and found relevant because the main addressee of the dissertation (Al-Ma'mun) was a ruler. The researcher takes this opportunity to make reference to the vision and the central role of the heart in different Islamic disciplines. Indeed, the heart, contrary to a common belief, is more important than the brain. This is because it is connected to the ruh (spirit) whereas the brain is connected to the nafs (soul).

"The king's house is his heart, his land is the body, and his helpers are the hands, legs, eyes, lips, and tongue. His storekeepers are the stomach and abdomen, and his chamberlain is the chest. Therefore, the hands are two helpers who bring (things) near, take (them) away, and work as the king commands them to. The legs carry the king to wherever he wishes to go.

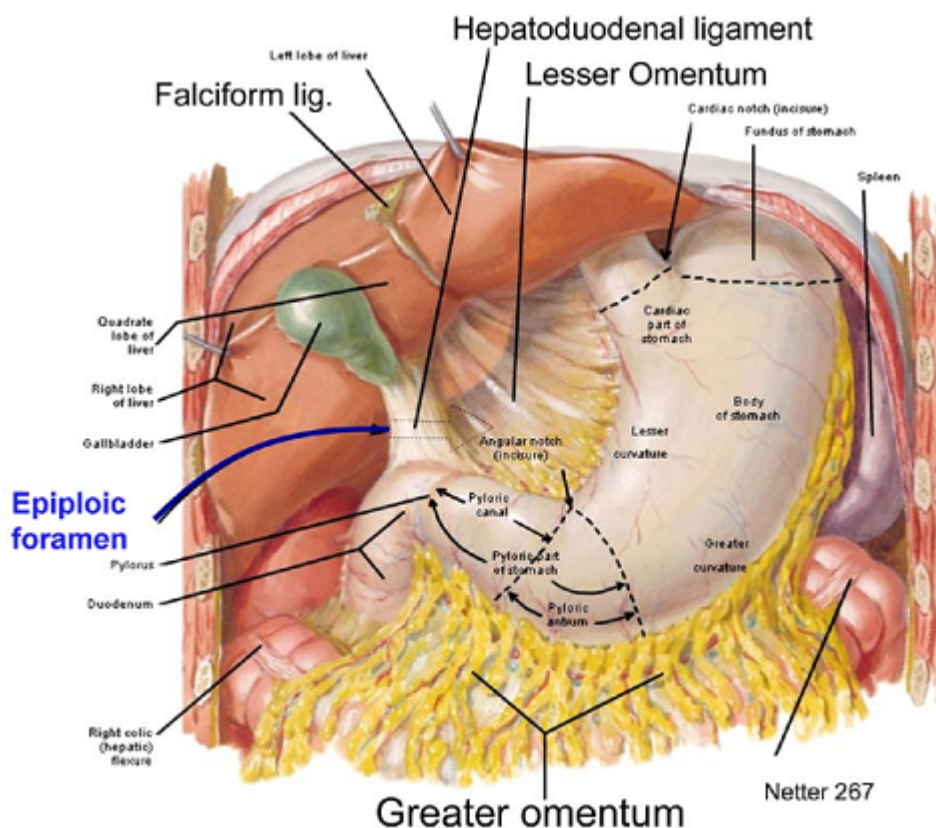
The eyes lead him to what is not visible to him; because he remains behind veils, the only way for him to gather information is through the eyes. Both eyes also serve as two lamps for the king. The ears are like

a fortress and a dungeon; they allow entry only to whom and to what the king permits. Indeed, these two organs are not capable of giving permission for entry to the king unless he orders them to do so.

The tongue translates the king's speeches with the aid of multiple elements it is endowed with, such as the stomach's moisture, the internal heart's air, and the lips. The lips cannot do anything unless the tongue undergoes movement. These two organs are dependent on each other.

The speech can be audible only if sound goes through the nose because it is the nose that makes pleasant speech the same way as a nice sound is produced by a flutist when he blows through a flute. The nostrils, which are two cavities of the nose, allow pleasant fragrances, that are allowed by the king, to enter within them. In the case of a smell that displeases the king, the latter orders the hands to prevent the entry of the bad smell.

The king also gives awards and punishments. His punishments are more severe than the punishments meted out by the most powerful kings and his rewards are far better too. The king's punishment is sorrow, and his reward is joy and felicity. The root of sorrow lies in the spleen; the root of felicity lies in the epiploon (omentum) and the kidneys. From these organs stem two connected blood vessels, which lead to the face so that it can express joy and melancholy. These vessels are the pathways that connect the king and the workers in both directions. Evidence of this is that when someone takes a medicine, blood vessels convey the medicine to the affected area.



Know, O Commander of the faithful, that the body is similar to the earth. It is fertile but it can be a wasteland. If you cultivate it and water it in a way not to drown it and not to neglect any part of it to

prevent it from remaining without water and becoming parched, it will remain fertile, well irrigated, and lush, and will produce bountiful harvests and crops. But if it is neglected, it will perish and weeds will appear. The same is true for the body; monitoring and taking care of what you eat and drink will contribute to sound health and wellbeing.”

2. The Factors That Best Suit The Body According To Its Humours

Here the Imam gives guidelines about the quality and quantity of food and beverages required for maintenance of a healthy body.

“Commander of the faithful,

Notice the kinds of foods that suit you, suit your stomach, and are tolerated by your body, and the kinds of food and drink you enjoy and are easily digested in order to understand what your diet should consist of.

Know, O Commander of the faithful, that each one of these temperaments (mizaj) likes what suits it so eat that which suits your own body. Eating too much is of no benefit. The food will be beneficial to whoever eats in moderation, not too much or too less. The same holds true for water.

You must follow this prescription: eat at the right time and stop eating while you still feel inclined to eat more. Thus, by God’s Permission, your body will remain healthy, your mind will be sharp, and you will have a lighter spirit.

Apart from that, O Commander of the faithful, during the summer, eat cold foods and in the winter, eat warm foods. During other seasons, eat tepid foods in proportions according to your appetite and strengths.

Begin your meal with light and delicate foods, and in accordance to habits and mood (or considering the place you live in, your activities, and your schedule). You should eat every eight hours daily, or three meals within two days. By doing this, you will eat early in the morning and then at dinnertime, and on the following day, after the eight hours have elapsed, you will eat another meal. By doing this, you will not need to eat dinner. This meal should also be balanced; neither eat too little or too much, and you must stop eating while you still feel like eating more. After eating, drink this previously known and allowed beverage.”

3. Imam Al-Rida’s (a) Syrup

Here the Imam gives instructions for a special beverage, a lawful drink prepared from medicinal plants. It carries lots of benefits, aids digestion, and should be consumed after food as a dessert. This drink has

high nutritional value and contains important components like carbohydrates, vitamins, and other essential strengthening ingredients. This drink is said to have the same effects as alcohol, without its intoxication.

Prescription:

First, wash 10 rithl³ of brown raisins.

Then soak them in pure water. The amount of water should be four finger lengths above the raisins.

During the winter, this mix should rest for three days. During the summer, it should rest for 24 hours.

Then pour it into a pan (a clean container).

It is better that the raisins be soaked in rainwater, otherwise it must be fresh water whose source is from the east. The qualities of such water are: clear, glistening, and light, and this kind of water quickly absorbs the cold and the heat. These factors indicate the lightness of the water.

Boil the water till the raisins become swollen.

Then, squeeze the raisins, filter (and collect) the liquid, and allow them to cool down.

For a second time, put the liquid into a pan. Measure it with a wooden stick. Place it over medium heat and bring it up to a light boil. Then simmer it till two-thirds of the water has evaporated and one-third remains. Measure the quantity using the stick.

Add one rithl⁴ of refined honey to the reduced liquid. Measure the water with the honey (with the stick).

Boil the mixture till the quantity of water reduces to the amount it was before you added the honey.

Then, crush and sift each of these separately: 3 dirhams (1 dirham = 2.5g) of ginger, ½ dirham of clove, ½ dirham of cinnamon, 1 dirham of saffron, ½ dirham of spikenard, ½ dirham of endive (incense), and ½ dirham of mastic.

Mix all of these, place them in a thin cloth, and tie the cloth with a string. The string should be longer on one side so that the tied cloth can be tied to the wooden stick.

The tied cloth, which now resembles a bag, should be immersed in the pan's liquid till it is completely covered. Pour the liquid over the bag, if needed, and from time to time, stir the bag in the liquid so that its contents infuse into the liquid.

Bring the liquid to a boil over low heat until the amount of honey decreases. The liquid solution should return to its previous measured quantity.

Filter the liquid and allow it to cool. Transfer it to an airtight container. Keep the container unopened for

three months so that the flavors settle in.

After three months, the liquid is drinkable. It should be consumed like this: Mix 323 g of the drink into 646 g of water.

*Know, O Commander of the faithful, after eating your meal in the manner I have explained to you, drink three cups of this beverage. If you do that, with God's Permission, you will be free on that day from gout, uncomfortable flatulence, and a cold temperament. After that, if you want to, drink half of the water you used to drink and you will have a healthier body, your sexual capacity will increase, and you will enjoy a stronger memory."*⁴

4. Effects Of The Consumption Of Specific Foods

The Imam gives a reminder about the harmful effects of excessive heat exposure to food. It destroys the food's nutrients, like its vitamins and other beneficial elements, and rapidly loses its benefits as if liquid were evaporating. In this field, Imam has surpassed the nutritionists.

"After eating according to the quantities we have described, O Commander of the faithful, drink three cups of this syrup after your meal. If you act in accordance with this prescription, God willing, you will be safe on that day (from gout, cold temperament diseases, and unpleasant flatulence). However, if you feel like drinking water, drink half the quantity you were drinking before. Indeed in drinking water your body will be healthier, you will see your sexual capacity increased, and your memory will become stronger."

"Drinking cold water after eating fresh fish causes paralysis [as well as taking a bath]. Eating citron (bergamot) at night causes strabismus and squinting. To have sexual intercourse with a woman during her period causes the birth of a child with leprosy. If one does not urinate after sexual intercourse, it causes kidneys stones. Having multiple sexual intercours, one after the other (without performing ritual bathing after every intercourse), causes the birth of a mad child. Eating too many eggs causes spleen disease and flatulence in the upper part of the stomach. To eat too many boiled eggs causes asthma and shortness of breath. Eating raw meat causes intestinal worms, and eating too many figs causes lysis in the body. Drinking cold water after eating something hot and after eating sweets destroys teeth. Eating too much wild game meat and beef meat causes intellectual impairment (caused by the drying up of sources of intelligence), brainlessness, difficulty in understanding, and recurring loss of memory".

5. Bathing Etiquettes



Sultan Amir Ahmad Bathhouse in Kashan. The room shown above is the Sarabineh (a dressing room).

The Imam highlights the importance of bathing by presenting the anatomical and physiological advantages of bathing, its basic function of maintaining bodily hygiene, and its etiquettes. He also compares the similarity of its structure to that of the body, according to the humors theory. The Imam has thus summed up the whole etiquette of hammam: what must be done before entering them, inside them, and after using them.

Traditionally, water was not available in houses so once every week, people spent a whole day in the public bathhouse, and therefore it became an important place for social gatherings.

"When you want to go to the public bathhouse (hammam–garmabeh)⁵ and you suffer from a headache, drink five sips of warm water and by God's Permission, you will be safe from a headache and migraine. Some people say that when you enter the bathhouse, you have to pour five handfuls of warm water on your head. Know, O Commander of the faithful, that the bathhouse has a similar structure to that of the human body. In the same way as the body has four natures, the bathhouse has four rooms: The first one is cold and dry, the second one is cold and humid, the third one is warm and humid (Garmkhane), and the fourth one is warm and dry.

The benefits of bathing are as follows:

- It restores the balance of the body*
- It removes all the impurities of the body*
- It relaxes the nerves as well as the blood vessels*
- It strengthens the main organs*
- It helps to cleanse infections and toxins*

If you do not want to have skin rashes or blisters or similar problems after entering the hammam, rub your body with violet oil, and if (after hair removal) you do not want your body to have any wound, scratches or black spots, before depilating, wash yourself with cold water. Whoever intends to remove hair in the hammam, must refrain from sexual intercourse 12 hours before, which is a whole day before going to the hammam.

To the depilatory cream (nura), add aloe (sabr or zard) or acacia (aqaqiya) or lycium afrum (hafdh al hadhadh)⁶ or a mixture containing a little bit of each of these ingredients.

Mix the nura into boiling water that has chamomile, marjoram, or dry violet added to it. Add a small quantity of chamomile, marjoram, and dry violet to boiling water; infuse each of them separately. The amount of each of them should be such that the water begins to smell like the flowers.

Mix the nura into the infused boiling water. The amount of arsenic in the nura should be one third of the nura⁷. To get rid of the nura's smell, use items like peach leaves, residues of carthamus flowers, henna, yellow nutsedge [cyperus esculentus], and rose to massage the body. To prevent the nura's burning effect, avoid mixing it too much. Do not delay in removing the nura when it has been applied to the skin, and then rub the body with a little bit of rose oil. In case of burning, God forbid, one has to apply crushed skinless lentils mixed with vinegar and rose water and, God willing, it will be cured. To remove side effects of the nura, it is necessary to massage the body thoroughly and without delay with grape vinegar [thaqif] and rose oil."

6. Rules For The Good Maintenance Of Internal Organs

Here the Imam gives recommendations for the good health of internal organs.

"Whoever does not want to have bladder pain must avoid withholding his urine even if he is riding on his own mount.

Whoever does not want to suffer from stomachache should refrain from drinking water while he is eating and wait to drink after finishing his meal. Drinking water while eating causes the water retention in his body to increase, which weakens the stomach's functions and the veins are not able to absorb the energy coming from the food. When you drink water many times while eating, the food macerates in the stomach.

Whoever wants to prevent kidney stones, urinary retention should not restrain his sperm during ejaculation, and sexual intercourse must not last too long.

Whoever wants to be free from buttock pain and hemorrhoids has to eat seven dates (tamr hayroun – khorma bernink) mixed with cow fat, and should also grease his testicles with pure mercure (zi'baq)⁸.

Whoever wants to have a strong memory should, during breakfast, first eat seven mithqal (72 gr or

21grapes) of currant raisins (zabib – maviz). Whoever wants to be safeguarded from memory loss should daily eat three pieces of ginger preserve with honey. He should also eat mustard seeds daily with his meals.

Whoever wants to boost his intelligence should, on an empty stomach before going outside in the morning, chew three black myrobalan (su'd) with rock candy sugar (nabat, sukar tabar zad)⁹.

Whoever does not want his nails to split or get damaged, should trim them only on Thursdays.

Whoever wants to stay safe from ear-aches at night, should place a piece of cotton inside the ears while lying in bed.

Whoever does not want to catch a cold for during the entire winter season, should eat three spoons of honey every day.

Know, O Commander of the faithful, there are signs by which you can distinguish between beneficial and harmful honey. Some honey, when you smell it, it causes you to sneeze; others cause intoxication and have a very strong and spicy taste. These kinds of honey are lethal.

Another way to stay safe from the cold during the winter is to smell narcissus and black seeds¹⁰. If cold spreads during the summer, it is good to eat a cucumber every day and be careful not to sit in the sun.

Whoever is afraid of getting a migraine (shaqiqa) or stomachache (shawsa), should avoid sleeping after eating fresh fish¹¹.

Whoever wants to have a healthy and thin body should eat moderately at night.

Whoever does not want to have liver pain during cupping, should eat chicory with vinegar after cupping.

Whoever wants to be protected from navel pain, should massage it at the same time that he massages his head.

Whoever wants his lips not to crack and get damaged [because of gingival sulcus] has to massage his eyebrows.

Whoever wants to prevent his palate and uvula (epiglottis) from sagging after eating sweets, should gargle with vinegar after eating them. Whoever wants to prevent tooth decay, should chew a piece of bread before eating sweets.

Whoever wants to stay safe from jaundice (yarqan) and intestinal worms (safar), during the summer, he should first wait for a while and then open the door to a room he wants to enter, wait a little bit [again], and then enter the room; during the winter as well, when he opens the door of a room in the morning, he has to wait a while and then enter the room.

Whoever does not want to suffer from flatulence has to eat garlic every seven days.

Whoever wants to digest food properly should first sleep on his right side and then on his left side.

Whoever wants to get rid of phlegm (balgham) should eat hot jawarish (gavaresh)¹² every day, have lots of sexual intercourse, go to bathe often, sit under the sun a lot, and avoid eating cold foods. Doing so will cause the phlegm to vanish and burn.

Whoever wants to get rid of yellow bile, should eat soft and cold foods, take rests, avoid staying in the standing position, and look at the person he likes.

Whoever wants to get rid of the burning of black bile has to vomit, undergo bloodletting, and use the nawra.

Whoever wants to get rid of the cold wind has to undergo liquid enemas, oil his body, sit in an abzan¹³ (abzan) of warm water, avoid anything cold and dry, and use warm and strong things.

7. Travel Etiquette

"O Commander of the faithful, Do not travel when it is hot and while your stomach is full or empty. When you intend to travel, eat with moderation and avoid eating cold foods like qarīs (light meat prepared with vinegar and pickles) or hulām (veal meat), vinegar, olives, verjuice (ma' al 'asrām), and other cold foods.

Know, Commander of the faithful, that for thin people, walking in hot weather with an empty stomach is harmful, while for plump people, it is beneficial.

Concerning water to drink during travel, every time a traveler reaches a new station, he should mix some water from the previous station with some water from the new one, and then drink this mixed water in order to avoid the potential negative effects of the [new] water; or he can take some of his homeland's water and mix it with water from every station he reaches. The traveler should also take some of his homeland's dust and clay and every time he reaches a station, he should put a bit of that clay in a vessel and dissolve it with the water he brought. Doing that will make the [new] water absorb the properties of the water he is accustomed to.

The best water to drink for the traveler and the resident is also the water which springs up from an east-oriented source and which is clear. The best waters flow between the east and the west summer sun.

The best and healthier waters, which conformed to this description, are those which gush out, and whose bed lies in mud mountains; these kinds of waters are warm during the winter and cold during the summer. They are laxatives and beneficial for anyone who has a fever.

Salty and heavy waters cause constipation.

Snow and icy waters are very harmful.

Water of clouds is clear, and as long as they do not stand for a long time beneath the earth and do not accumulate, they are very beneficent

Well water is light fresh and tasty and provided it is flow is continuous and it do not stand for a long while beneath the earth and does not accumulate, it is be very beneficent.

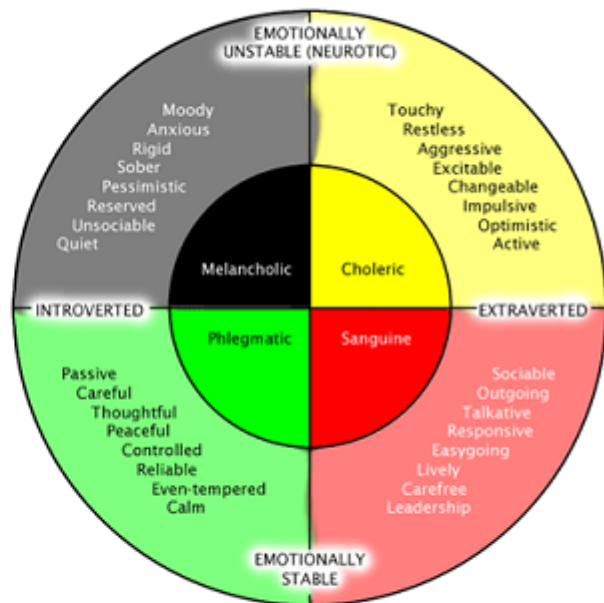
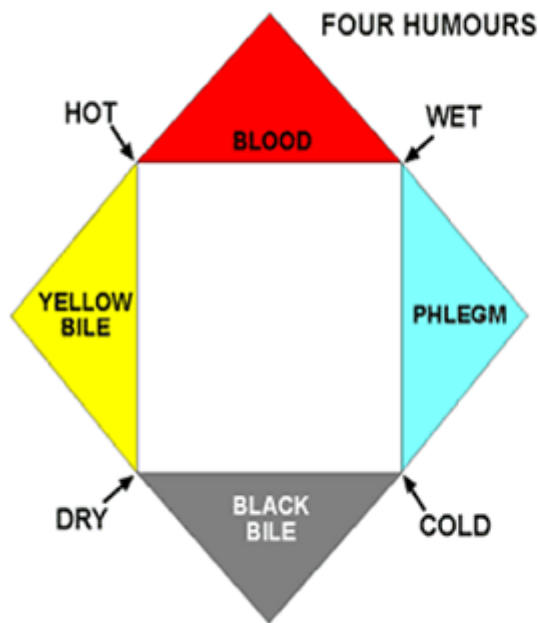
Marsh water and sandy valley water are warm and thick during the summer because of the continuous sunshine and the water standing still. Everyone who drinks this water for a long time will develop a dry and hot temperament, and spleen hypertrophy.

O Commander of the faithful, in my upcoming instructions, you will find what is sufficient if you implement them. You will find instructions concerning sexual intercourse. [Strength and healthiness of the body relies on food and beverages, as well as its weakness and illness. If you are getting healthy foods

and beverages, you will have a healthy body, but if you eat and drink unhealthy foods and beverages, your body will become unhealthy¹⁴]."

8.Humoralism (Temperaments Or Humors :Hot, Cold, Wet, And Dry)

8. Temperaments or humors (hot, cold, wet, and dry)¹⁵



Eysenck, H.J and Eysenck, M.W. *Personality and Individual Differences*. Plenum Publishing, 1958.

"Know, O Commander of the faithful, that the strength of the soul¹⁶ is dependent on the body's substances; the latter are in close conjunction with climatic variations. When the weather fluctuates between being hot sometimes and being cold at other times, this results in the body and its complexion changing. So when the climate is uniform and temperate, the body remains unchanged.

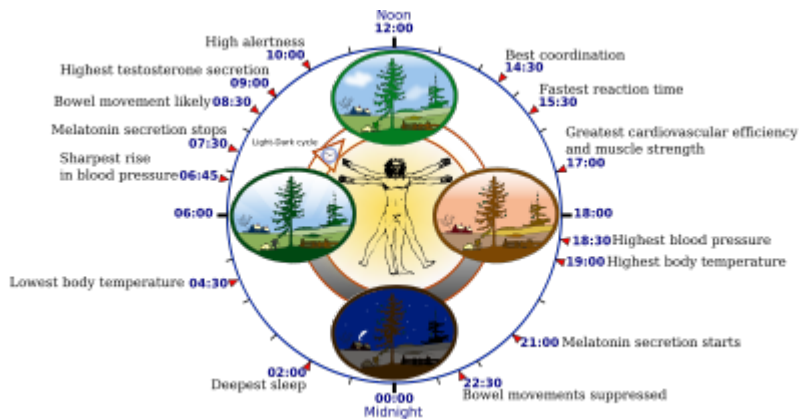
Indeed, God, The Elevated, The Sublime, has composed bodies of four temperaments: Blood, Phlegm, Yellow Bile, and Black Bile. Among them, two are warm and two are cold. Another feature is that there are pairs of differences: warm and dry, warm and humid, cold and dry, and cold and humid. Each of these temperaments is divided among four parts of the body: the head, the chest, the upper part of the stomach (epigastrium), and the bottom part of it.

O Commander of the faithful, know that the ears, the eyes, the nostrils, the nose, and the mouth are where the blood is; the chest is where phlegm and wind are; the upper part of the stomach is where yellow bile is, and its bottom part is where the black bile is."

9. Sleeping Etiquette

The Quran discusses the beneficial effects of sleep and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a pattern of light and darkness. Sleep is one of the elements necessary for man's life and the health of his body. Apart from supplying the body with vitality and functionality, it removes the day's tiredness and plays a crucial role in the proper functioning of the digestive system. The Imam begins this subject by highlighting the prime importance of sleep and the way one has to organize it.

Circadian Rhythm



"Know, O Commander of the faithful, that sleep reigns over the brain and determines the body's soundness and steadfastness. Therefore, when you want to go to bed, first lie on your right side and then turn over to your left side."

When you want to wake up and get off the bed, do the same as you did when you wanted to sleep: first stand up on the right side. Accustom yourself (to portioning out one third of your sleep), [not to stay awake at the beginning of the night], to wake up two hours before the end of the night¹⁷, to use the toilet, and to take the time necessary to relieve yourself – but do not stay too long otherwise you will become afflicted by illnesses caused by the long stay [hemorrhoids, elephantiasis, and the likes].”

10. Teeth Brushing Etiquette

Here, the Imam mentions dental health, has explained necessary recommendations to protect teeth against external factors, and how to ensure dental hygiene using effective and whitening materials.

"Know, O Commander of the faithful, the best thing to brush your teeth are humid wooden sticks [miswak or siwak]¹⁸ with contractile properties. This is because they make teeth shine with brightness, spread fragrance in the mouth, strengthen the gums and makes them grow bigger, and prevents tooth decay. Of course, these benefits are derived only if the miswak is used in moderation. Otherwise, if the miswak is overused, it will flatten teeth, weaken their roots, and loosen them.

Whoever wants to retain healthy teeth has to use burned deer horns (ibex), the fruits of tamarix, yellow nut sedge, rose, and valerian (spikenard). He prepares all of them in the same proportion. He should also prepare some rock salt (milh andaruni –namak turki) in the proportion of one quarter of the other ingredients. Each ingredient has to be crushed separately and then used to wash the teeth. Using these ingredients will make teeth strong and healthy. If someone wants white teeth, he should take equal parts of rock salt and meerschaum (seafoam), finely grind them, and brush his teeth with the mixture."

11. An Account Of A Person's Life Stages

Here the Imam talks about the different states of a human depending on his life span and relative to his humor.

"Know, O Commander of the faithful, the four states that God, The Exalted, has established for man throughout his lifetime are:

The first one is up to fifteen years. That is the period of youth, beauty, and freshness. The blood's temperament is the master [over man] during this period.

The second one is between fifteen and thirty-five years. Yellow bile is the dominant temperament during this stage. This is the period of strength, alertness, awareness, and playfulness. This state lasts until [man] reaches the age of thirty-five years.

After this, he enters the third state that lasts from thirty-five years until sixty years. During this period, black bile's temperament is dominant. During this stage, intelligence, wisdom, discretion, circumspection, and foresightedness gain more emphasis.

He then enters the fourth state, which is the state of phlegm's dominance over other temperaments. At this stage, he can no longer ever return to the other temperaments. He enters the stage of old age where youthfulness is definitely over. He begins to experience memory loss and he does not recognize what was familiar to him to the extent that he sleeps in the presence of other people. He stays awake when it is time to sleep. He can easily recall old memories but he forgets what you say to him. He speaks with himself, and his body withers and loses its moisture and freshness. Nail and hair growth slow down. During this life's term, his strengths constantly decrease because of phlegm's temperament –which is cold and stiff– dominance during this stage. (and this stiffness and humidity in his body take it gradually to its destruction).

Until now I have told you, O Commander of the faithful, the necessary actions and treatments to deal with your body and I have enlightened you about its different states. Now I will mention what is necessary to consume [foods and drugs] and what it is necessary to refrain from. I will, as well, mention the most suitable times to do necessary things."

12. Cupping Etiquette (Phlebotomy And Venesection)

12. Cupping etiquette¹⁹ (Phlebotomy and venesection)

Here the Imam discusses in length and in details the cupping therapy etiquette and alludes also to the bloodletting therapy.

"So if you intend to do cupping therapy, it should preferably be performed between the twelfth and

fifteenth of a (lunar) month. Those days are the most favorable to give strength to the body. Do not do cupping after that period except if you have no other choice, because during that period the moon is declining and the blood's volume decreases with the moon's decline, and increases as the moon escalates. Cupping depends on a person's age. Somebody who is twenty, should do cupping every twenty days, somebody who is thirty should do it every thirty days, somebody who is forty should do it every forty days, and so on²⁰.

Know, O Commander of the faithful, that cupping's goal is to collect blood from small capillary vessels that are disseminated throughout the flesh. This fact is evident because during cupping, a person does not feel weakened, which is contrary [to what a person feels] during bloodletting (fasd). Cupping of the nuqura [recess in the back, four fingers above the neck vertebrae] is useful for relieving the heaviness of the head, and the cupping of occipital veins (akhda'ayn) provides ease to the head, face, and eyes, and relieves toothaches. Sometimes, bloodletting is used to relieve the same disorders cupping treats.

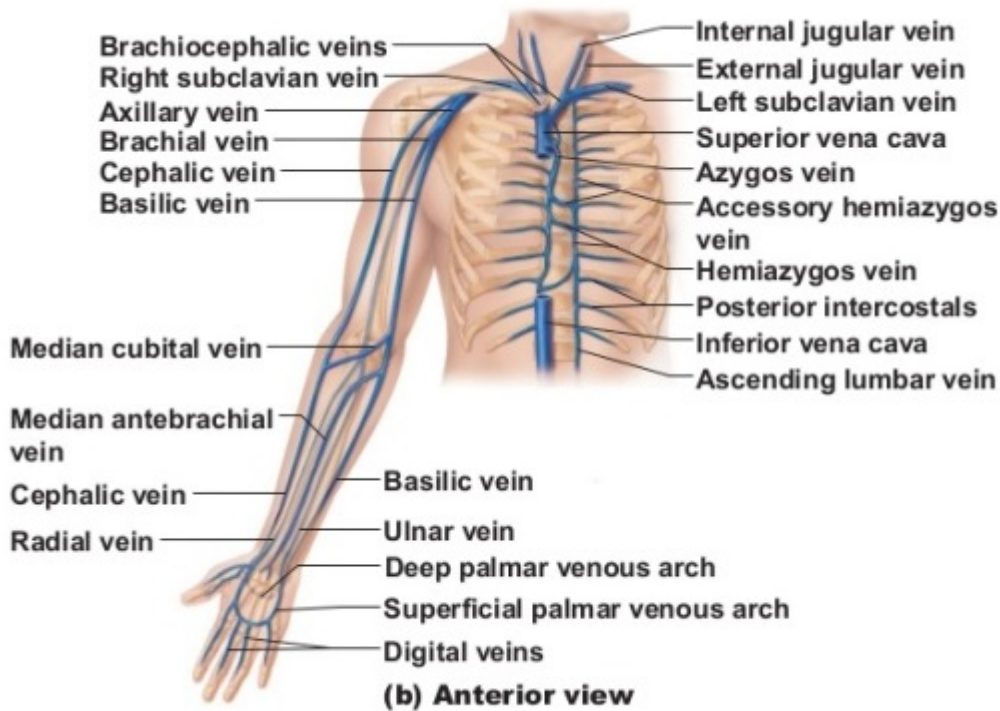
Cupping can be performed under the chin to treat wounds from mouth rashes (al qala'), damaged gums, and others mouth ailments. Cupping between the two shoulders is beneficial for [fixing] heart beat ailments caused by fullness or hotness.

Cupping legs alleviates the kidney, bladder, and uterus' chronic pains; and it makes women's menses flow well. But this kind of cupping is exhausting to the body. It can sometimes cause frequent decreased vision (haze) accompanied by intense rheum. However, it is beneficial for people with pustules, blisters, or abscesses.

In order to alleviate cupping pain, when the cupping glass is applied on the area to be treated, the suction should firstly be performed slowly and gently and then be increased gradually so that the second and third suction can be longer and stronger and so on. Before performing the cut with the lancet (scarificator), the cups have to be applied several times and suction performed so that the region turns red hot. The scarificator should be sharpened and the area must be coated with oil; the area of bloodletting must also be coated with oil because doing this will alleviate pain. The scarificator must also be oiled. Once the cupping is finished, oil should be applied again on the area.

During bloodletting, some oil should be dripped on the vein otherwise the area will disappear and the benefit of letting will be wasted. The phlebotomist has to choose veins that are located near a little flesh because that will lessen the pain.

The most painful veins in the arm are the radial vein (habl al dhira')²¹ and the cephalic vein ('irq al qayfal)²² because they are situated beneath a thick layer of flesh [and because of the firm skin] and they are linked to muscles. The basilic (warid al basiliq)²³ and the median cubital vein (warid al akhal) are less painful if there is no flesh on them.



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Figure 18.28b

It is necessary, especially during the winter, to apply a warm wet compress on the bloodletting area in order for the blood to appear. This will also soften the skin, lessen the pain, and ease the bloodletting. Additionally, another advice is that the person who wants to have bloodletting should refrain from sexual intercourse twelve hours before the bloodletting.

Cupping should be performed in fine, clear, cloudless, and non-stormy weather.

Changes appearing in the blood's quality determine the amount of blood to be taken. [As soon as the color of the blood lightens, one has to stop.] Do not take a shower or a bath the same day you perform cupping otherwise you will experience pain. However, do not forget to splash warm water on your head and your body in the hour following the cupping.

As we mentioned, do not take a bath otherwise you will catch a permanent fever [and it can potentially lead to skin damage or inflammation]. After cleaning the cupping area, put a piece of downy fabric (made of goat hair or silk) or any kind of other soft fabric on it and eat an amount the size of a chickpea of Theriac Andromac (triyāq faruq)²⁴ If it is winter, eat it without liquids, and if it is summer, eat it with boiled oxymel (Sakanjabine or serkeh angabin)²⁵. If you do that, God willing, you will remain safe from facial paralysis, leprosy, albinism (vitiligo), and elephantiasis.

Do not forget to eat a sweet-sour pomegranate because that kind of pomegranate invigorates the mind and vivifies blood. For forty minutes prior to the procedure, do not eat salt or salty foods because they cause the scabies (mange). If you perform cupping during the winter, eat Taya' hij ²⁶(guhst tayahu) and after it, the drink I have mentioned to you earlier. Apply matthiola oil (al khayri), rose water, and some musk on the cupping area and when you have finished, apply some of this mix on the parting of your

head too. But if you perform cupping during the summer, eat sakbaj²⁷, Al-halam²⁸, masus²⁹, and yamir³⁰. Put violet oil, rose water, and some camphor on the parting of your head. After your meal, drink the syrup I told you about. The day you perform cupping, avoid a lot of movement, anger, and having sexual intercourse.

13. The Incompatibility Between Some Foods

"Commander, do not eat fish and egg at the same time otherwise you may get colic, hemorrhoids, and toothache. Eating figs and alcohol from raisins, [usually] drunk by its regular consumers, at the same time, may cause gout and alphas [non contagious leprosy]. Eating onions regularly may cause the emergence of freckles on the face. Eating salted stuffs, salted meats, and salted fish after cupping or bloodletting may cause vitiligo and scabies (mange). Eating sheep's bowels and kidneys regularly will damage the bladder. Entering the bathroom with a full stomach will cause colic".

14. Sexual Intercourse Etiquette

"Don't have sexual intercourse at the beginning of the night, be it in summer or winter because at that time, the stomach and veins are replete. It is not recommended because it may cause colic, hemiplegia (fali), facial paralysis (liqwa), gout (nigris), kidney stone (al husa), strangury or diuresis (taqtir al boul), hernia (fitq), worsened vision, and intellectual impairment (da'if al basar wa al dimagh). So choose the end of the night to have sexual intercourse; it is more beneficial for your health and increases the chances to have children, and furthermore, the children God has decreed for them, will be more intelligent.

Do not have coitus with your spouse unless you perform foreplay, titillate, and massage her nipples. Doing so allows your liquid and her liquid to merge, and to end in the conception of a child, and your spouse will desire from you what you desire from her. (The sign of lust, in a woman, is revealed by her eyes.)

Have sexual intercourse only when your spouse is pure [free from her menstrual periods]. Doing so, by God's Permission, will contribute to the body's health and tranquility. Do not perform sex in standing or sitting positions; rather, lie on your right side, and then get up soon to urinate when you have finished because you remain safe from kidney stones with Allah, the Most High's Permission. Then wash your own body and immediately drink something made with bees wax (al-mummya'i) mixed with honey or honey without foam, because it generates water (semen) equal to the amount that has come out of you.

And know, O Commander of the faithful, that it is better for you to have sexual intercourse with them (your wives) when the moon is in the Ram or Aquarius, and it is even better when it is in the Taurus, which is the moon's high rank. And he who follows what I have described in my dissertation and directs his body through it all, will be safe, with Allah's Permission, from all diseases, and his body will be healthy with Allah's Help and Power, because He gives wellbeing to whomever He wishes and grants it

to him. And praise belongs to Allah, the First and Last, the Outward and Inward.”

15. Last Advice

"Never say: "I did that for a while" or "I eat that and it did not cause any harm to me" or "I drink that kind of thing but I have not seen any ill effects on me" or "I did that but I did not see any bad consequences". O Commander of the faithful, those people are like animals that cannot distinguish what is beneficial for them and what is harmful. If a thief were to be punished the first time he stole, he would not repeat his act and his punishment would be lighter; but if they let him go free and he is given a second chance, he will repeat his robberies until the point where he will commit a very daring theft and will get arrested. At this stage the punishment meted out will be harsher: his hand will be cut off as a result of his cupidity.

Everything is in God Hands. His position is so Sublime that a child is birthed from Him [by His Will]. We all belong to God and to Him we shall return. We hope in His good reward. He indeed is the All-forgiving and accepts repentance. In Him we put our trust; indeed, the believer has to trust no one except Him. There is no strength and no power except in God, the Elevated, the Most Sublime.”

Abu Muhammad Qummi³¹ says, "My father said to me, ‘When the letter of Abu al Hasan Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida’ reached Ma'mun and he read it, he became very enthusiastic and he ordered to write it with gold ink³² and for it to be titled, The Golden Dissertation’."

This dissertation ends here, by God’s Grace. The needy and humble servant of God, the Most High, nicknamed Abd al Rahman, Abu Bakr ibn Abd Allah al Karkhi, the happy freed slave of the deceased, the judge of the judges (attorney general) who was in Iraq, Al Hasan ibn Qasim ibn Abi al Husayn ibn Ali ibn Qasim al Nili. (May the Almighty rest his soul in peace.)

The manuscript’s drafting was finalized on Tuesday before the call to crepuscule prayer in Balkh, the 19th of Dhul Hijjah, in year 715/14th March 1316.

¹. It is the dew falling from the sky that lands on Russian olive trees (Shajarat al khilaf–sanjad) or tamarix tree (gaz or gazderakhti). It is one of the best varieties of manna (Mann–gaz angabine).

². Fabrizio Speziale, La Risala al dhahabiyya, traité médical attribué à l’imam Ali al Riza; Luqman Annales des Presses Universitaires d’Iran, 2004, Numéro 18, p. 20–23

³. One Iraqi ritl is equivalent to about 315 grams

⁴. Concerning the syrup, Dr. Sahib Zayni Abideen Razavi, writes: “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 needs always, 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 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 red blood cells and treating the disease of anemia; and they are the best of all drugs in treating many disease states such as indigestion, gastritis, gases in stomach and intestines, some liver diseases, dullness of intestines, and constipation.” This drink is particularly recommended after

meals for cold temperament people while vinegar is recommended for hot-tempered people. Dr. Sahib Zayni Abideen Razavi, "Tibb al Reza (a)" Multaqa al-Asrayn periodical series, number 2, p. 130, Baghdad.

5. The structure of the hammam is as follow: Entrance proch (jelokhan), then the entrance, wurḡdi, then the vestibule (hashti), then twists and turns way corridors (rahro) lead to the rakhtkon with surrounding curb to sit on; then we enter the first room: bineh or sarbineh or bayt al awwal or seraye nokhost. It is richly decorated and the most important place, with a big dome and a pool in the center with a fountain; than the garmkhane, which is more sober. These are the two main spaces of the hammam; the space between this to principal parts is named miyandar; it is linked to theses rooms by twisting and turning corridors (rahro) and prevents the mixing of the atmosphere of the two mains spaces, providing a gradual acclimatization for the body.

6. Ibn al Baytar (d.646/1248), Al jami li mufradat al adwiyya wa al aghdhiyya.; translated in French by Lucien Leclerc, *Traité des simples*, d'Ibn El-Beitar, Paris, 1877, *Histoire de la médecine arabe*, Ernest Leroux ed. 1876.

7. One finds also the proportion of 1/6. Nura is a depilatory paste made up mainly of lime (nura) and arsenic and also potassium and sulfur and soothing ingredients.

8. See : Al Shaykh ʿUmar al Anṣari (d.1008/1600), *Tadhkira UL* al albab wa al jawami li al ʿajab al ʿajab, vol.1,p. 184; If it is read zanbaq, it means orris or iris.

9. One of the finest and freshest sugars

10. Black cumin seeds.

11. It is preferable not to eat fish at night, whether it is in summer or winter because it has a cold nature.

12. Kind of sweet composed of multiple ingredients mainly used to cure digestive problems

13. Kind of large basin that fits for person to sit in, it has a cover on it and a hole for the head

14. The expressions between the brackets are not found in some manuscripts.

15. See also chart number 2 in the Appendix 4.

16. Here, the word soul refers to the physicians' definition for soul not the abstract soul of the philosophers. According to the physicians' definition, soul is a soft steam-like material that appears from the blood mucus.

17. In other words, one has to sleep at the time when the performance of the obligatory night prayer (al-Isha) has become qadha' and one has to wake up about one hour before the day rises; the time to go to sleep is according to the cosmic time, roughly between 10:30 PM to 3:30 AM. It is good to wake up at the time when blood is building itself up

18. It is made from the *Salvadora persica* tree (known as arak in Arabic). This stick has to be chewed on or shaped like a brush to be used like a toothbrush.

19. *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Cupping Therapy*, Ilkay Zihni Chirali, Churchill Livingstone/ Elsevier, 200. *Islamic Cupping & Hijamah: A Complete Guide*, Dr. Feroz Osman-Latib, 2013. {<http://www.alhijamah.com/> [11]}

20. There is two kind of cupping: wet and dry; here, the Imam refers here to wet one; again, there is two kind of wet cupping: preventive and therapeutic. Here the Imam discusses the preventive one. The frequency of the preventive cupping therapy varies according to the person age, the person humor and his health condition; the frequency is also calculated in this way: (not to be practiced before 4 months); one year age: every month; two years age: every two months and son on.

21. It is one of the three embranchments of the cephalic vein and it is situated on the wrist.

22. Vein situated on the extern face of the arm and the beginning at the elbow

23. The outward vein from the elbow to the forearm

24. It is a medical concoction originally formulated by the Greeks, a kind of electuary, an alexipharmic, or antidote, considered a panacea. Theriaca andromachi or Venice Treacle contained 64 ingredients; in its Greek formula, it contains forbidden (haram) ingredients.

25. Sekanjabin is a sweet and sour drink or syrup made from a combination of grape vinegar (serkeh angur) and "angabin," [term which refers to honey or the natural honey sweet] or sugar and mint. It serves also as a medicine and is must have to be in every Iranian home.

26. Tabaij is grouses dull yellow partridge.

27. Al sakbaj is stew made from meat cooked in vinegar.

28. Al Halam is al-sakkbajj, which is purified from fat or it is the meat of cows, 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

[29.](#) Masus is a stew made from chicken meat and seasonings and sometimes–sour fruit juice

[30.](#) Yamir is meat cooked with vinegar, mustard, and herbs

[31.](#) He is Abu Muhammad al Hasan ibn Jumhur al Ammi al Basri

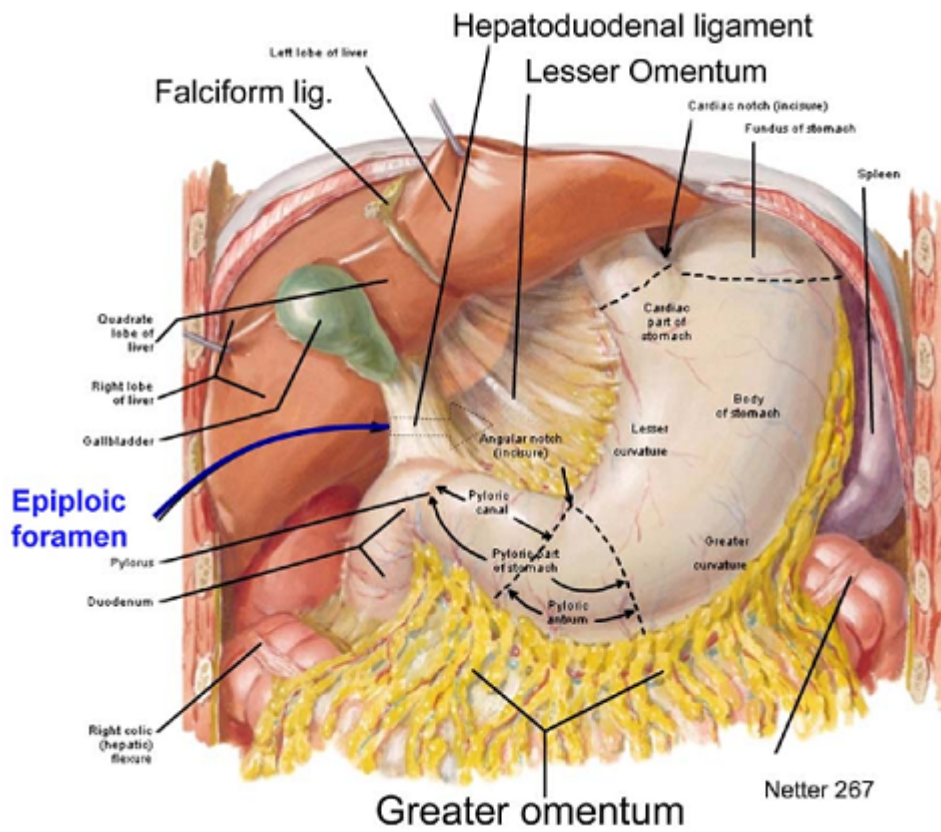
[32.](#) And to be copied many times, to be given to his sons, the members of his family, and the machinery of his government.

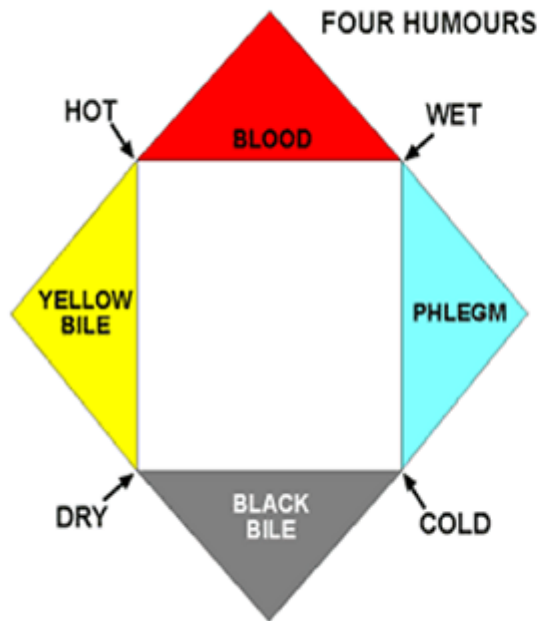
He also ordered copies of it to be deposited at his Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom). It was a major intellectual center during the Islamic Golden Age. The House of Wisdom was founded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809), and culminated under his son, Al-Ma'mun (reigned 813–833).

House of Wisdom was founded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809), and culminated under his son, Al-Ma'mun (reigned 813–833).

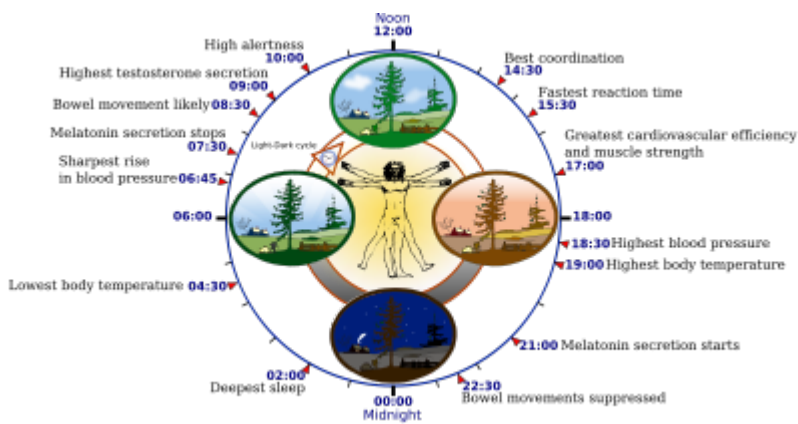
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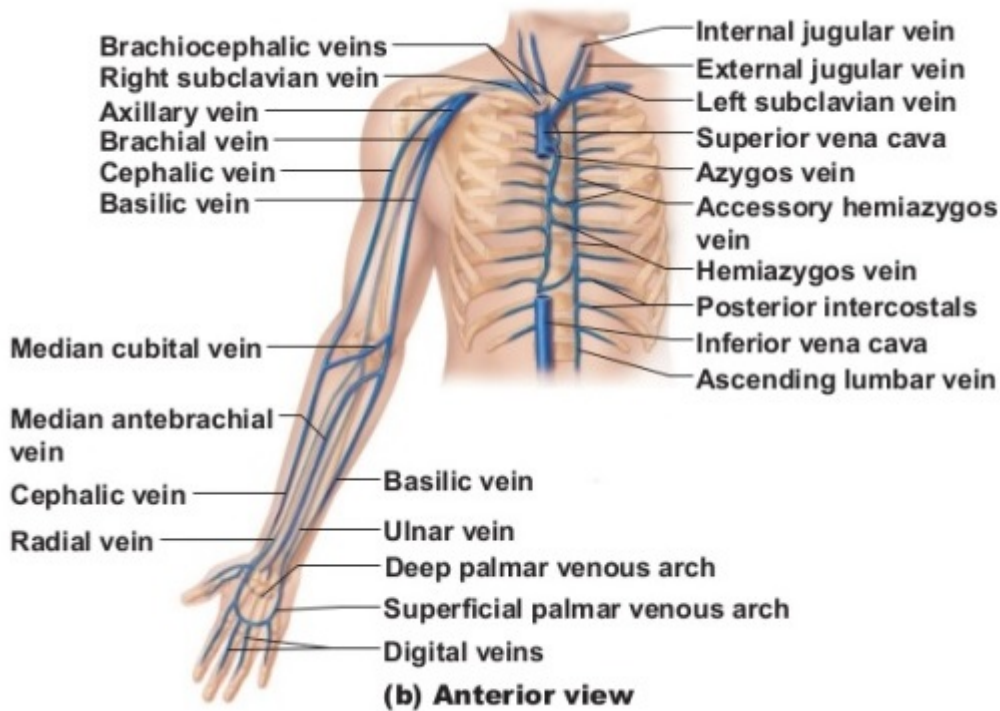






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Figure 18.28b

Appendix 1: Al-Ma'mun's Answer After Receiving The Dissertation

“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 that 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, Mohammed b. ‘Abd Allah, the last of the prophets.

I have reviewed the dissertation of my learned cousin, the loved and virtuous one, the logical physician, which deals with the betterment of the body, the conduct of bathing, and the balance of nutrition, and I found it very well organized and one of the best blessings. I carefully studied it, reviewed it, and contemplated upon it till its wisdom manifested itself to me, its benefits became obvious, and it found its place in my heart. I learned it by heart and I thoroughly understood it, because I found it to be most precious, a great treasure, and most beneficial. So, I ordered it to be written in gold due to its

preciousness, and I deposited it at The Depository of Wisdom after I had it copied down by the descendants of Hashim, the youth of the nation.

Bodies become healthy by balanced diets, life becomes possible by overcoming disease, wisdom is achieved through life, and Paradise is won through wisdom. And this is worthy of being safeguarded and treasured, an object of value and esteem, a reliable physician, a counselor to refer to, and a treasury of knowledge in its injunctions and prohibitions. [This is] because it came out of the house of those who derive their knowledge from the knowledge of the Chosen One (S), the mission of the prophets, the proofs of successors to the prophets, the manners of scholars, the cure to the hearts and the sick from among the people of ignorance and blindness, may God be pleased with them, bless them, and be merciful to them, the first of them and the last, the young and the old.

I showed it to the elite among my closest students, who are known for their wisdom and knowledge of medicine, who are authors of books, those who are counted among the people of knowledge and ascribed wisdom, and each one of them lauded it, thought highly of it, regarded it with high esteem, and appreciated it with fairness towards its author, submitting to him, and believing in the wisdom he included in it. So if our children, the children of our state, our subjects, and other people from various classes come across this Risala (medical dissertation), they should recognize its importance, his talent, and his great favor. They should accept it with gratitude because it is more precious than agates and more important than pearls and corals. They should learn it by heart and think of it day and night, because it brings them benefit and safety from all diseases, Allah Willing. May Allah bless His Messenger Muhammad and all of his pure children. Allah is Sufficient for us and is the Best Agent. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

Appendix 2: Attribution Of The Dissertation To Al-Imamal-Rida' (A)

The opinions about the attribution are divided into two sides, those who argue in favor of the attribution to Al-Imamal-Rida' and those who doubt it¹. Therefore, its attribution to the Imam is not a certainty. This text cannot be considered as a reliable tradition (Sunna) and be acted upon due to the last opinion. Nonetheless, this dissertation arouses a growing interest among physicians in favor of traditional and Islamic medicine.

Arguments in Favor of the Attribution

Historical evidences

- Al Tusi and Shar Ashoub are the first ones to mention it, but they criticize the validity of the Sanad (the chain of narrators of the risala). Indeed, they judge Hasan ibn Jumhur as an unreliable transmitter (dhaeef).
- Manuscripts exist, dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries, in addition to translations.
- Al Najashi considers one of the two narrators, Al Nawfali, as a true transmitter.

Fame

- Al Majlisi judged the dissertation as a well-known work. He quotes it in full in his masterpiece Bihar al Anwar under the title of Tibb Al-Rida'. He does criticize many parts of it for the attribution of some sentences to the Imam.

- Abd al Sa'id al Zayni wrote:

“Despite all of this, we see no reason to doubt that it was authored by the Imam if we apply the criterion generally applied to derive legislative verdicts (ahkam) or those to be familiar with the principles of the creed (usul), because there are conditions which are not required here. Otherwise, doubt would encompass the attribution of authorship to a large number of books due to the lack of a method that would assure us of such an attribution's reliability. Yet the fame that verifiers consider as the means towards confirmation can by itself prove to us the accuracy of attributing this dissertation to the Imam (a).

It is proven for us that al-Najjashi meant this same gold dissertation when he was quoting al Nawfali saying that he narrated one text from Al-Rida' (a). The knot would surely be untied. What supports this assumption about al Najjashi is that some scholars have said that Allama al-Askari's library in Samarra (Iraq) contains a copy of a manuscript dealing with the medical knowledge of Imam al-Rida' (a), narrated by Abu Muhammad al Hasan ibn Muhammad al Nawfali, provided there is no other copy by al Nawfali in which he quotes the Imam (a) other than this dissertation. Otherwise we would be confused and we would not be able to reasonably understand why al Najjashi did not provide sufficient details about the books that he attributed to their respective authors or narrators, or at least their titles!"²

- The style of the dissertation is different from that of famous Islamic physicians and resembles more that of the Quranic discourse and the style of Nahj al Balagha's sermons.

Arguments Against the Attribution

The narrator and the transmitter's chain (Sanad)

The chain of most of the manuscripts is considered by the specialist of hadith as 'mursal' (unreliable). Therefore, the main narrator's trustworthiness is doubted by Tusi, Shar Ashoub, Ibn Khadha'iri, and Al

Hilli, as well as with regards to the transmitter chain.

If the chain is considered reliable (musnad), one of the two first cited narrators of the dissertation (Muhammad ibn Jumhur رحمته الله Ammi) is judged as an unreliable transmitter (see above).

- Famous physicians like Rhazes (Abu Bakr Razi died 925) and Avicenna (Ibn Sina died 1037) did not mention this dissertation.
- Nishapur does not withstand historical scrutiny as being the place of Ma'mun's gathering; the city of Marv does.

The Content of the Dissertation (matn)

- The comparison between the text of the treatise with other medical works of the same time does not contain any distinguishing features which could have aroused the praise of Al-Ma'mun.
- It was impossible for Ibn Bakhtishu to have been present in Al-Ma'mun's majlis because they were not on good terms.
- Neither scholars nor hadith specialists have ever mentioned this work before the eleventh century (That is, before Al Majlisi mentioned it).
- The dissertation mentions food that does not match the Islamic criterion of halal like the Andromac triac, mentioned in the part pertaining to wet cupping (hijama).
- The words of the Imam in his answers to Al-Ma'mun's request are inconsistent with the kind of knowledge the Imam holds. In his answer, he speaks about experiences and knowledge of predecessors whereas the Imam possesses divinely inspired knowledge. Furthermore, the dissertation is not a personal answer to Al-Ma'mun because according to the principles of the humor theory, the medicine to be prescribed for a specific illness differs from one temperament to another.
- The literary style and the vocabulary used in the dissertation are not in accordance with the other medical writings of the Imams. There is use of much Greek and Persian vocabulary.

[1.](#) Complete references of the names cited here are to be found in the biography.

[2.](#) Cited in Tibb Al-Ridha' (Medicine of Al-Ridha'), "MulTaqa al رحمته الله Asrayn" series, Issue number 2, p.130, Baghdad

Appendix 3: Manuscripts And Commentaries On

The Treatise

The oldest manuscripts date back to the seventh and eighth centuries. It has been handwritten by ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd Allah al-Karkhi in 715/1315 A.H; it is available at the Imam al-Hakim Library in Najaf, serial 237.

1. Sayyid DHIya’ al-Din Abu Riḥa Fadhī Allah b. ‘Ali al-Rawandi (circa 548/1174). Tarjamat al-‘Alawi lil Tibb al-Radhawi is the oldest commentary.

Al Salmasi, Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn Ibrahim ibn Abu Bakr (circa. /1226, Azerbadjan), translated in Persian. This translation is in Fatih Library in Turkey, Ehsanoglu, islamiTip yazmalari, 194, p.238.

It was not until the 17th century that other translations and commentaries appeared.

2. Tarjama al-dhahabiyya bi al-Farisiya by Faydh Allah ‘Usara al-Tustari(s. 1078 or 1088/1667 or 1677) (a contemporary of Fath ḥAli Khan)

3. Tarjamat al-dhahabiyya bi al-Farisiya by Muhammed Baqir al-Majlisi (died 1111 AH) Available at the private library of the late Sayyid Hassan al-Sadr, Kaḥimiyya, Iraq).

4. Ibn Muhammed Hashim al-Tabibi explained it in Persian.

5. Muhammed Sharif b. Muhammed Sadiq al-Khawaturun (abadi?) explained it and mentioned the explanation in his book Hafiz al-Abbdan. Around 1120 AH.

6. Sayyid ‘Abd Allah Shubbar (1242/). Tibb al A’ima 1376/1998.

7. Mirza Muhammed Hadi b. Mirza Muhammed Salih al-Shirazi explained it and named it ‘Afiyat al-Bariya fi Sharh al-dhahabiyya. He was a contemporary of

Sultan Husayn al-Safawi. It is the most extensive commentary in Persian. Ketabkhaneh-ye Razawi. Mashad. p.490.

8. Al-Mawla Muhammed b. al-Hajj Muhammed Hasan al-Mashhadi al-Mudarris. m. 1257/184 l) has been printed in Mashad, Al Fawa'id al-Rida'wiya. (1400 /1980).

9. Al-Sayyid Shams al-Din Muhammed Badiḥ al-Radhawi al-Mashhadi explained al-dhahabiyya and ended it in 1125 A.H.

10. Muhammed b. Yahya explained al-dhahabiyya in Persian.

11. Nawruz ḥAli al-Bastami explained al-Dhahabiyya and mentioned the explanation in his book Firdous al-Tawarikh.

12. Al-Hajj Mirza Kaʿim al-Musawi al-Zanjani (dies 1292) explained it and entitled the explanation as al-Mahmudiya.
- 13.. Al-Sayyid Husayn b. Nasr Allah al-Arumi al-Musawi wrote Tarjamat al-Musawi fi al-Tibb al-Radhawi.
14. Maqbul Ahmid explained it in Urdu and named the explanation as al-dhahabiya fi Asrar al-ʿUlum al-Tibbi'iyah, printed in Hyderabad.
15. Al-Sayyid Mahmud wrote Mafatih al-Sihha in which he gathered the medicine of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, the medicine of the Imams, and the al-Risala al-dhahabiya with a brief explanation in Persian, printed in al-Najaf al-Ashraf in 379 A.H.
16. Al-Sayyid Mirza ʿAli explained al-Risala al-dhahabiya in Persian.
17. Abu al-Qasim Sahab explained it in Persian and named the explanation Behdasht Razawi, and it was printed at the end of volume one of his book Zandagani Hazrat Imam Al-Rida, pp. 301–350.
18. ʿAbd al-Wasi translated al-Risala into Persian. It is listed in the Imam Ali library under the serial number 377
19. Baqir Sharif al Qarashi, Sharh al risala al dhahabiyya fi Tibb Al-Imam Al-Rida', ed. Mehr Amir al Muminin, 1383s.
19. Dr. al-Sayyid ʿAhib Zaini Razavi conducted a comparative study between the theory of the golden treatise and the latest modern scientific discoveries. It is printed in the Multaqa al-ʿAsrayn periodical series, number 2, p. 130, Baghdad, under the title, "Tibb al Reza (a)" (on line :Imamreza.net. Retrieved 19 June 2014).
20. ʿAllama Sayyid Murtada al ʿAskari, Tebb Al-Rida', Tebb al ʿAdiq, (Tebb va darman dar Islam), translation : Zayn al Din Kazemi Khalkhali, ed. Fuad, 1366.
21. One manuscript is in the Escorial library in Spain under the number 707. It probably dates back to the seventh or eighth hijri century (13–14). {Hart Wig Derembourg; Manuscripts arabes de l'Escorial; tome premier, numero 707, page 507–513; Paris, 1884.
22. The risala has also been printed in Bombay, Hyderabad, and Rampur in India.
23. It is also in the Vatican.

Appendix 4: Charts

Chart 1: Al Daruriyyat Al Sitta

Iranian traditional medicine consists of six essential principles of good health:

1. Life environment (weather, climates, and seasons)
2. Diet
3. Physical activity (movements and stillness)
4. Sleeping and waking,
5. Retention and excretion
6. Mood (psychological and spiritual states)



{<http://quranmed.com/8476.fulltext> [12]}

Chart 2. A Unifying Conceptual Model of Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM)

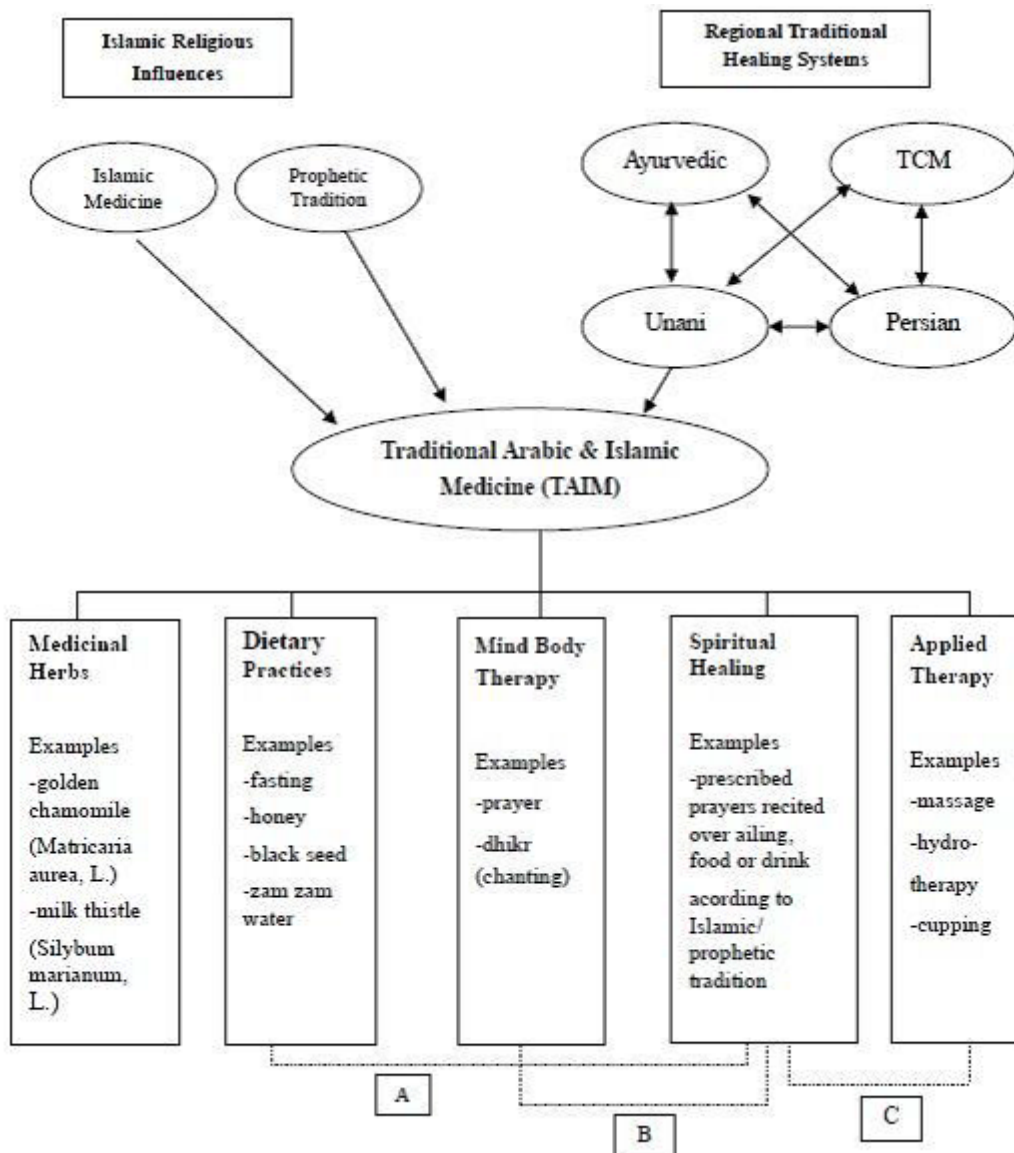


Chart 3: The Temperaments

	Hippocrates' four humours	Blood	Yellow bile	Black bile	Mucous
<u>400 BC</u>	Season: Element: Organ:	Spring Air Liver	Summer Fire Gallbladder	Autumn Earth Spleen	Winter Water Brain/Lungs
c. 400 BC	Characteristics:	Courageous, Amorous	Easily angered	Despondent, sleepless	Calm, unemotional
c. 325 BC	Aristotle's four sources of happiness	Hedone (sensuous pleasure)	Ethikos (moral virtue)	Propraitari (acquiring assets)	Dialogike (logical investigation)
c. 190 AD	Galen's four temperaments	Sanguine (liver)	Choleric (gallbladder)	Melancholic (spleen)	Phlegmatic (lungs)
c. 1550	Paracelsus' four totem spirits	Curious sylphs	Changeable salamander	Industrious gnomes	Inspired undines
c. 1905	Adicke's four world views	Industrious	Doctrinaire	Traditional	Sceptical
c. 1912	Adler's four personality types	Social Useful	Ruling Dominant	Avoiding	Getting or Learning
c. 1914	Spranger's four value attitudes	Artistic	Religious	Economic	Theoretic
c. 1920	Kretschmer's four character styles	Hypomanic	Hyperaesthetic	Depressive	Anesthetic
c. 1947	Eric Fromm's four orientations	Exploitative	Receptive	Hoarding	Marketing
c. 1958	MBTI Function types	SP – sensory perception	NT – intuitive Thinking	SJ – sensory judgement	NF – intuitive Feeling
c. 1978	Keirsey Bates four temperaments (old)	Dionysian	Apollonian	Epimethian	Promethian
c. 1998	Keirsey Bates four temperaments (new)	Artisan	Idealist	Guardian	Rational

Chart 4. Hammam Architecture



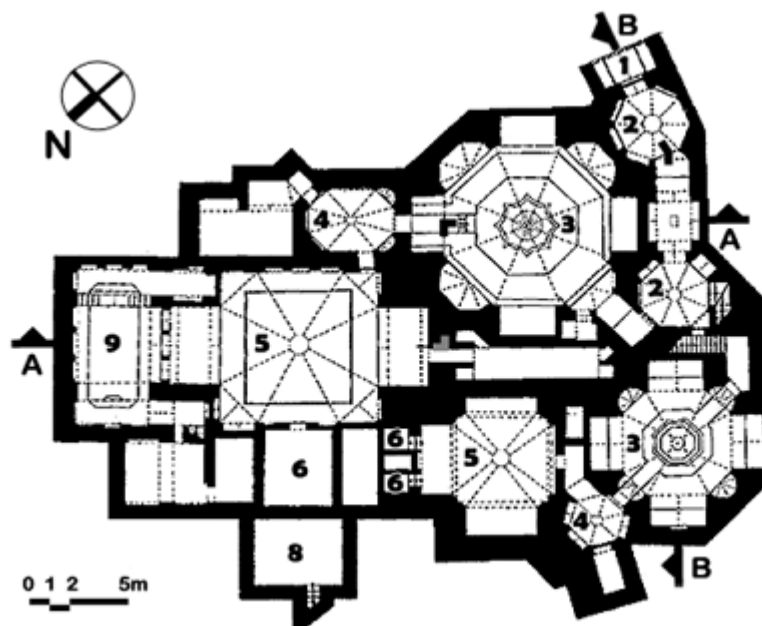
Garmkhaneh



Myandar



Sarbine or Rakhtkon



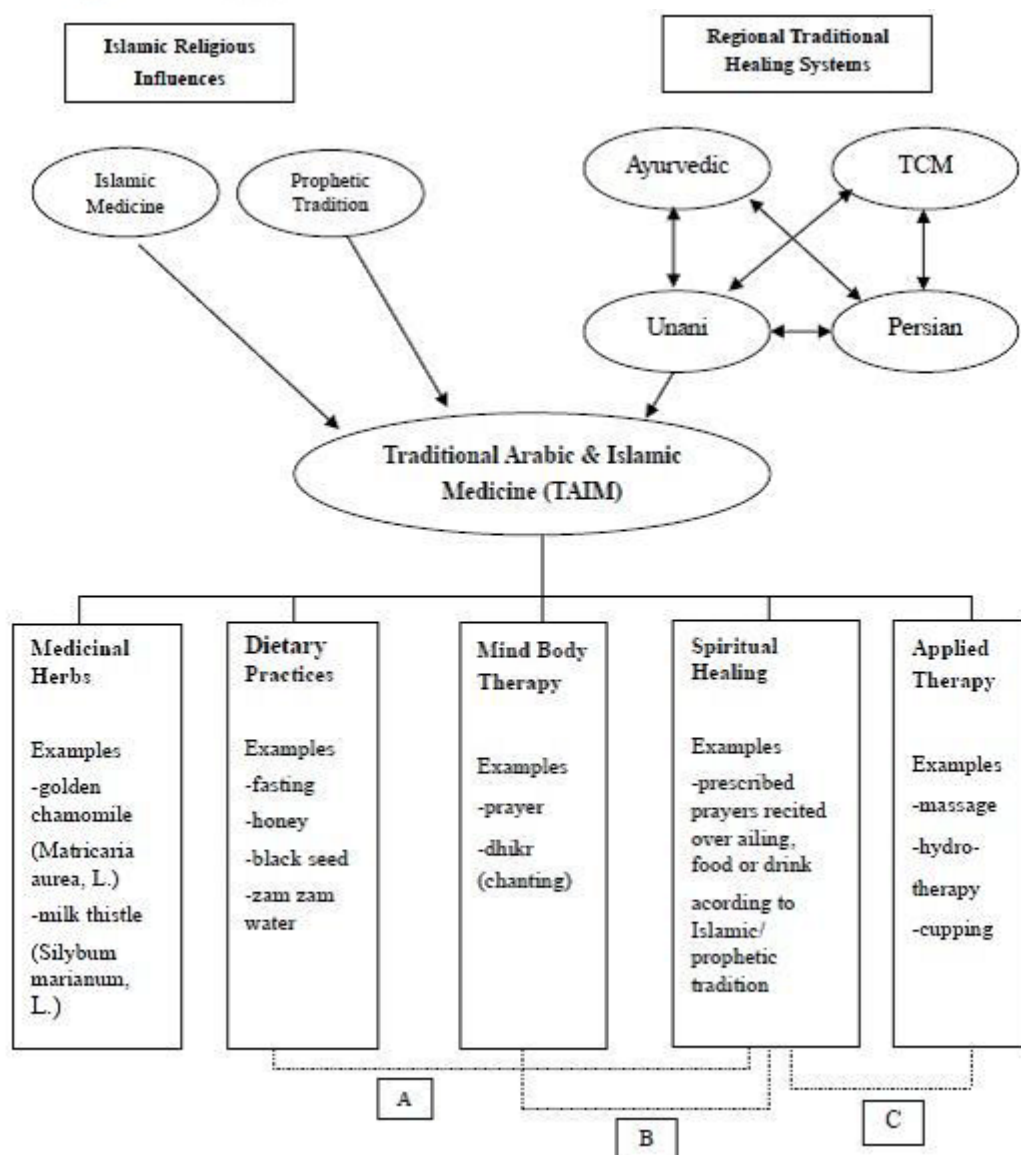
Horizontal floor plan of Gulshan traditional bath (Yazd)

1. Vurudi (entrance hall)
2. hashti (vestibule)
3. sarbiné or rakhkon (disrobing room, apodyterium)
4. myandar (the passage between the two main rooms)
5. Garmkhané (washing and massaging room, caldarium)
6. Khazineh (small washing room; some bathhouses also have tepid and cold water khazines (tepidarium and frigidarium))
8. tune or golkhan (hypocauste or furnace room)
9. Fazayeh tchal howz (large and relatively deep pool of cold water)

Image:



teb-str.blogfa.com



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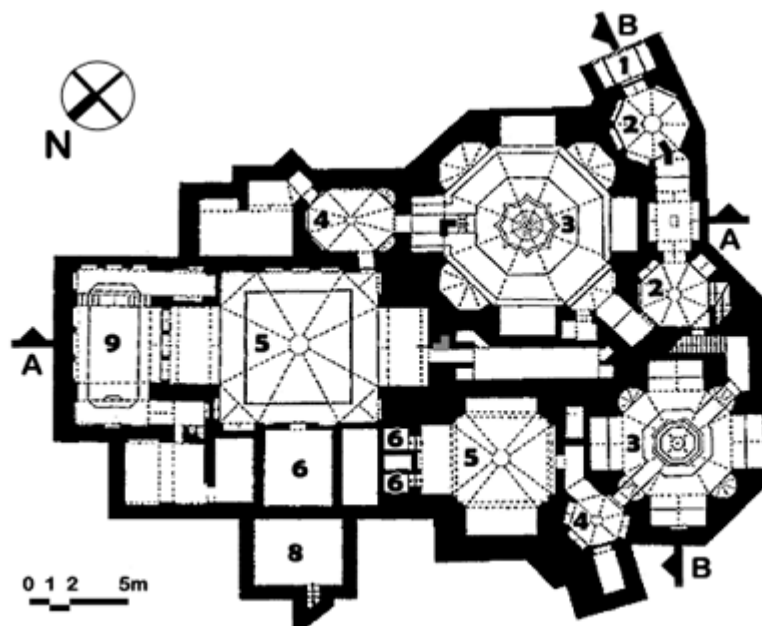
Garmkhaneh



Myandar



Sarbine or Rakhtkon



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