

*"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" ash-Shū'ara' 26:90*

# Medicine of the Prophet

﴿Tibb an-Nabī﴾

صلى الله  
عليه  
وسلم



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## DISCLAIMER

*This book has been compiled as a reference and not intended to diagnose, prescribe or treat.*

*The information contained herein is in no way to be taken as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare professional.*

## Introduction

***'You have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh a model for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allāh.'*** Qur'ān, al-Aḥzāb 33:21

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was the final Prophet, sent to mankind by Allāh to guide it away from deviancy towards the straight path. He was the best of creation who taught us not only that which would lead us, if fully implemented, to Paradise in terms of worship and beliefs, but also that which help us all live enhanced and easier lives in this world. His teachings were comprehensive in every sense, a fact recognized by even the non-Muslims of his time and of time to come.

Salmān ؓ related that one Mushrik (polytheist) said, 'I see that your associate (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ) teaches you everything, even the method of using the toilet.' Upon hearing this Salmān ؓ proudly confirmed that this was very much the truth. al-Hākīm

Of his many teachings relating to life in this world, some related to health and how an attempt could be made to conserve this great ni`mah (favour) from Allāh.

Ibn `Abbās ؓ reported that he heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say, 'There are two favours in regards to which most people are in a loss, good health and free time.' al-Bukhārī

Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught numerous cures, many of which have since been discovered and used by modern-day medicine. The teachings taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ regarding health and cures from different illnesses were way ahead of their time, confirming the fact that they were indeed divine teachings.

***'Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) Desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him.'*** Qur'ān, an-Najm 53:3-4

## **Islāmic Contribution to Science and Medicine**

Initially, these teachings regarding medicine were simply practiced by the Muslims, but later as Muslim scholars delved deep into these teachings, a whole field of prophetic medicine was formulated based around the teachings of Rasūlullah ﷺ.

Further research continued, with Greek, Persian and Indian knowledge being integrated and more Muslims began specializing in the field of Medicine. Later this field came to be known as Ṭibb, an Arabic term which has also been referred to as Arabic, Greco-Arab, Unani, Prophetic, Islamic and Sufi medicine.

While Europe experienced the 'Dark Ages', Arab Muslim physicians were exploring the writings of Galen, Aristotle, Paul of Aegaeia and other Greek sources. Recent discoveries of manuscripts by an Egyptian Physician Muḥyuddīn at-Tātāwī have shown that Islamic Physicians not only possessed excellent knowledge of anatomy and physiology from the Greeks but they added some challenging new concepts.

Perhaps the best example is the discovery of the lesser or pulmonary circulation by Ibn Nafis (1288 CE). Until recently this discovery was credited to Servetus and Colombo, who described it in similar terms 200 years after Ibn Nafis. The description given of the pulmonary circulation by Ibn Nafis challenged the fundamental concept held by Galen. In fact, it suggested that there existed a pulmonary capillary bed where the blood was 'purified' before being brought back to the heart by the pulmonary artery, thus predating the discovery of pulmonary capillaries that accompanied the invention of the microscope by Anthony Von Luwenheek.

One of the most famous scholars of Ṭibb was Ibn Sīnā (or Avicenna as he is known to the West), who was born in 980 CE in Afshānā, near Bukhārā. His major work, the Canon of medicine, drew on Greek, Arabian, Persian, Asian and European knowledge. This book remained the leading authority in the field of medicine for over six centuries.

Muslims contributed extensively in the fields of botany, pharmacology and pharmacy. The texts of Rāzī's 'al-Ḥāwī' mentions 829 herbs with their pharmacological actions. Al-Iḍrīsī of Spain wrote, "The Comprehensive book on views of the Ancients as well as the Moderns on Simple Drugs". Ibn Juljul produced a commentary of herbs and plants described by Dioscorides.

One of the most authoritative books on herbs was written by the famous scholar and philosopher `Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Bayṭā (d.1248) entitled 'The Book on Herbs.' It contains a compendium of 1400 herbs (of which approximately 200 plants were then unknown), their actions and their equivalent names in several languages.

Muslims also developed techniques to refine medicines by processes of distillation, sublimation and crystallisation. Druggists or 'Aṭṭārīn' became commonplace in Islamic lands and their proliferation ultimately required the institution for licensing of chemists and druggists. Modern Ḥakīms still use recipes that were tried and tested by Galen and the Arab physicians.

Muslim physicians also contributed to diagnosis and treatment of psychological illnesses. The eminent psychotherapists were aṭ-Ṭabarī (d.861), Ibn Sīnā, ar-Rāzī, Iṣḥāq ibn `Imrān (d.908) and Dāwūd ibn `Umar al Antākhi (d.1600).

Surgery has always been an inseparable part of Tibb medicine. Muslim physician Abul Qāsim az- Zahrāwī (936-1013) known as the father of modern surgery developed many of the surgical instruments still in use today. Donald Campbell writes about him,

"The chief influence of Abu al Casim on the medical system of Europe was that his lucidity and method of presentation awakened a prepossession in favour of Arabic literature among the scholars of the West; the method of Abu al Casim eclipsed those of Galen and maintained a dominant position in medical Europe for five hundred years, i.e. long after it had passed its usefulness. He, however, helped to raise the standard and status of surgery in Christian Europe".

Arabian Medicine, Volt 1926

Another significant Islāmic achievement was the development of hospitals and hospital based clinical training of medical practitioners, which were financially supported by the religious law of charitable endowments. Despite some criticism from traditionalists, Muslim physicians provided care for the sick in sophisticated hospitals. These hospitals were remarkable structures built for the practice of integrative medicine. They contained within them spacious courtyards, lecture halls, libraries, mosques and chapels for people of all religious beliefs, charity wards, kitchens and dispensaries. They even practiced a form of sound therapy!

During the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn, there were as many as 860 registered physicians and 60 hospitals in the city of Baghdad alone. Muslims were at the fore-front of advancements in healthcare and technology.

Other contributions to medicine included nutrition and dietetics (Ibn Z̄uhr), the preventative medicine initiative and the importance of

hygiene. It must be said that Islām encouraged what are now common sense practices such as breast feeding, basic hygiene, eating in moderation, physical fitness, etc.

It is noteworthy that the great plague known as the Black Death, which swept through European populations, stopped at the borders of the Muslim world because of the Islamic measures of cleanliness alone.

ʿAbdul ʿAli, Hamdard

"I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has continued to put out of sight our obligations to the Muhammadans [sic]. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated forever. The Arab has left his intellectual impress on Europe. He has indelibly written it on the heavens as any one may see who reads the names of the stars on a common celestial globe."

John William Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories, science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute method of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of new spirit of enquiry, of new methods of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics, in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs."

Robert Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*



Ṭibb has since developed into a very complex field requiring years of study and experience, which cannot all be compiled into one short book.

Therefore, those practices and cures which can be traced back directly to Rasūlullāh ﷺ have been compiled together in this short booklet in an attempt to educate and thereafter benefit the reader.

### **Illness and Disease – A Great Test from Allāh**

Although health and vitality are immense gifts from Allāh ﷻ that we cannot fully appreciate, illness and disease can also be a great favour, but only if an individual with an illness or disease can realise they are a test from Allāh ﷻ and then observe patience during a very testing time. Otherwise, the same illness or disease can easily become the cause of great grief in this world and the next.

Often, it is very easy for someone suffering an illness or disease to begin questioning why they have been afflicted or why Allāh ﷻ chose to make them or their beloved to suffer from all people when he is the Most-Merciful, thoughts which could leave an individual on the verge of denouncing their faith.

A true believer will not think in this manner, rather, they will realise that whatever may happen, whether good or bad, it is from Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

***'Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, We believe, and will not be tested with affliction? And certainly We tried those before them, so Allāh will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars.'***

Qur'an al-`Ankabūt 29:2-3

A true believer may also realise that in fact they have been granted an opportunity through observing patience upon an illness to gain a tremendous reward.

***'And be patient and persevering:  
For Allāh is with those who patiently persevere'***

Qur'an al-Anfal 8:46

ʿĀ'ishah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'No calamity befalls a Muslim but that Allāh expiates some of his sins because of it, even a thorn that pricks him.'

al-Bukhārī

Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ also said,  
'If Allāh wants to do good with somebody, He afflicts him with trials.'

al-Bukhārī

Abū Hurayrah ؓ also narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying,

'No fatigue, disease, sorrow, sadness hurt or distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were a prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.'

al-Bukhārī

### **A Cure for every Illness**

Jābir ؓ narrated that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said,  
'For every illness there is a cure. Thus, if the cure of the illness is found, (the afflicted one) will be cured by the Will of Allāh.'

Muslim

Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Allāh did not send down an illness but He sent down a cure with it.'

Ibn Ḥibbān

Allāh ﷻ, through his infinite grace and compassion has created a cure for every illness and disease. The Prophet ﷺ taught us the cures for many illnesses, but as more illnesses appear, it is our responsibility to find their cures. Thus, Islām does not disapprove of scientific research into medications, but rather emphasises its importance.

Finally, it should be constantly kept in mind that cure is in the hands of Allāh ﷻ and He cures whom He wills, when He wills. Therefore, even though the correct cure may be found, Allāh ﷻ will only remove a disease or illness if He wills. This explains why scientists say a person has a strong/good/average chance of being cured.

### **The Causes of Disease**

Prevention of disease and illness is better than any cure. This fact was long ago taught to us by the Prophet ﷺ through his blessed teachings and noble habits. According to many scholars of Ṭibb, there are six major causes of disease/ill health, identifying them will help prevent the spread of disease. They are:

1. Air
2. Food and Drink
3. Bodily Movement and Rest
4. Wakefulness and Sleep
5. Emotions
6. Emission and Retention

These are the six main causes of illness and disease. Other factors such as age, gender, habits, occupation, environment, etc also play a role as causes, but will not be discussed in detail here.

## Air

Air is our primary source of nutrition. Oxygen within the air is used by the body to transform any other nutrition into heat energy. The air we breathe out removes waste products such as carbon dioxide, a gas that is essential to plants.

Air, as long as it remains pure, is a great protection for the body and is essential to keep the self balanced. Depending on the temperature and moistness of the air it can have very different effects. A change in air can often be the cause of disease. It is not only the quality of the air we breathe but also the quality of our own breathing. Headaches, tiredness and irritability can often be a result of insufficient oxygen.

Seasonal changes can also have an adverse effect on the body. Exposure to extreme conditions can be severely dangerous and so special care should be taken that an optimum body temperature is maintained.

It was a well known fact that the air of Madinah, at the time of Hijrah, was a cause of many diseases to visitors. According to some scholars, this is the very reason Madinah was formerly known as Yathrib. (Yathrib is either derived from tathrib, in which case it means to blame, or from tharb, in which case it has the meaning of putridity and disintegration). After the Hijrah prominent companions such as Abū Bakr ؓ and Bilāl ؓ fell ill due to the air of Madinah after which the Prophet ﷺ supplicated to Allāh ﷻ to remove this affliction.

ʿĀ'ishah ؓ narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ supplicated to Allāh ﷻ, 'O Allāh! Make us love Madinah as we love Makkah or even more than that. O Allāh! Bless our Sā' and Mudd (measures symbolising food) and make the climate of Madinah suitable for us, and divert its fever towards al-Juhfā.'

al-Bukhārī

Soon after this the Prophet ﷺ saw a dream which he interpreted as his wish being fulfilled. `Abdullāh ibn `Umar ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

‘I saw (in a dream) a dark, ugly woman with unkempt hair going out of Madīnah and settling in Maḥyā’, I interpreted that as the epidemic of Madīnah being transferred to Maḥyā’, i.e. al-Juḥfā.’ al-Bukhārī

## Food and Drink

The food and drink we consume have a great impact on the state of the body. Hot (heat creating) foods produce heat in the body and cold foods have the opposite effect. It is essential that a balance is struck between the two. The Prophet ﷺ also is reported to have attempted to create a balance between the two.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ would eat watermelon with ripe dates and then say, ‘We abate the heat of this (date) with the coolness of that (watermelon) and the coolness of this (watermelon) with the heat of that (date).’ Abū Dāwūd

Foods also play a vital part in creating dryness and moisture in the body. So whilst ensuring that the foods consumed will create a balance between heat, coldness, dryness and moisture, it is also recommended that when selecting foods it is important that the temperament of the individual is considered along with what is appropriate for their age, the season and the climate.

Apart from a balanced diet, it is also essential that food and drink are consumed in moderation. The adverse effects of malnutrition and excessive eating in the modern day world are evident for all to see. Excessive intake of food is currently a widespread problem in the West and not only leads to obesity but a wide range of diseases related to it.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

***'Eat and Drink, but not excessively.'***

Qur'ān al-A`rāf 7:31

Miqdād ؓ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'A person does not fill a container which is worse than the stomach. A few morsels is sufficient for the child of Ādam which will keep his back straight, but if there is a (genuine) need for more food then one third (of the stomach) for food, one third for drink and one third for his breath (i.e. empty).'

at-Tirmidhī

In another narration, Abū Hurayrah ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ hosted a non-Muslim and asked for a goat to be milked (to feed the guest). The guest drank all the milk so the Prophet ﷺ asked for another goat to be milked and again the guest drank all the milk. (For a third time) the Prophet ﷺ asked for another goat to be milked and again the guest drank all the milk. This process continued until the guest had drank the milk of seven goats. In the morning the guest accepted Islām and (when he came in the presence of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for a goat to be milked and the guest drank the milk. Thereafter Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked for another goat to be milked but this time the guest could not drink all the milk. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said, 'A believer drinks from one stomach and a disbeliever drinks from seven.'

Muslim

Nāfi` narrates that Ibn `Umar ؓ would not eat until a poor person was brought to him who would eat with him. Once I brought a man to eat with him who ate a large quantity of food. Ibn `Umar ؓ thereafter said, 'O Nāfi`, do not bring this man to me again as I heard the Prophet ﷺ say, "A believer eats from one stomach whilst a disbeliever eats from seven stomachs."

al-Bukhārī

Food, when taken in moderate amounts and when balanced holds

numerous benefits. Some foods such as honey, black seed, etc hold a whole host of benefits. These will be discussed in more detail later.

## **Bodily Movement and Rest**

Movement and exercise cause warmth in the body by increasing the rate of respiration. Rest has the opposite effect. Modern day doctors emphasise the need of regular exercise and the need of burning off those calories. The Prophet ﷺ, through his noble habits taught this to us over fourteen centuries ago.

The Prophet ﷺ had a habit of walking, often for long distances. Ibn `Umar ؓ narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ would go to Qubā (an area 5km away from Madinah, where he built the first Masjid after the Hijrah) every Saturday, (sometimes) walking and (sometimes) riding. al-Bukhārī

`Ā'ishah ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ raced with me and I beat him. This was before I had put on some weight. Thereafter I raced him again (after a period of time) and he beat me and said, 'This (win) avenges that (defeat).'

Ibn Kathir

It is worth noting that the Prophet ﷺ married `Ā'ishah ؓ in the later part of his life and that when he raced her he would have been at least fifty years old, maybe even approaching the age of sixty. At this age he was healthy enough to race and beat someone less than half his age.

Sahl ibn Sa`d ؓ reports that we were with Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the trenches (during the battle of Aḥzāb) and Rasūlullāh was himself digging.

al-Bukhārī

Again it is worth noting that the Battle of Aḥzāb occurred during the fifth year after the Hijrah and so the Prophet ﷺ would have been at the

age of at least fifty-seven or fifty-eight whilst undertaking this vigorous task of digging a trench.

Although rigorous exercise has multiple benefits, the need for rest is also vital. Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught that although regular exercise is vital, the body should not be exhausted to dangerous limits.

Abū Mūsā ؓ narrated that the wife of `Uthmān ibn Maz`ūn ؓ complained regarding the extreme habit that her husband had of fasting everyday and spending the nights, standing in prayer (and not resting). When the Prophet ﷺ came to know of this he met `Uthmān ؓ and said to him, 'Your family has a right over you and your body also has a right over you. Stand in prayer (for part of the night) and also sleep (i.e. rest for part of the night), fast (on some days) and abstain (i.e. rest on other days).'

Ibn Hibbān

## Wakefulness and Sleep

As mentioned in the above chapter the body needs sufficient rest. It should also be noted that although sleep is essential, excess sleep is detrimental and discouraged and leads to laziness. The Prophet ﷺ did not sleep throughout the night, but rather spent a portion of the night in prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ was instructed by Allāh ﷻ,

***'Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night, half of it or a little less, or a little more and recite the Qur'ān in slow measured rhythmic tones.'***

Qur'ān al-Muzzammil 73:2-4

The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, 'The most beloved prayer to



Allāh is the prayer of (the Prophet) Dāwūd, and the most beloved fast to Allāh is the fasting of Dāwūd. He would sleep for half the night, stand (in prayer) for one third and then sleep for one sixth of the night. He would (also) fast one day and not fast one day (i.e. he fasted on alternate days). al-Bukhārī

Apart from refraining from excess sleep or a lack of it, the Prophet ﷺ also advised on suitable times for sleep. The night has been created such that man can sleep during it. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

***'He it is Who made for you the night that you might rest in it, and the day giving light, most surely there are signs in it for a people who would hear.'***

Qur'ān, Yūnus 10:67

Sleeping on a full stomach has strongly been discouraged. The best time to sleep is after the food has been digested. The Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, 'Digest your food with the remembrance of Allāh (e.g. recitation of the Qur'ān or Ṣalāh) and do not sleep upon it (before it has digested) otherwise you will become hardhearted.'al-Firdaws

Sleep during the day time is also detestable apart from a short nap during the midday heat (Qaylūlah - siesta). Experts in the field of Ṭibb claim that sleeping during the day affects the complexion adversely, loosens the nervous system and can also hamper sexual potency. The worst time for sleeping is late afternoon after the `Aṣr prayer.

`Ā'ishah ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Whoever sleeps after the `Aṣr prayer and then goes mad, he should blame none but himself."Abū Ya`lā

Khawāt ibn Jubayr ؓ, a companion who attended Badr, is reported to

have said,

'Sleeping in the morning (after the Fajr prayer) is clumsiness, at midday it is in accordance with nature and in the late afternoon it is foolishness.'

Ibn Abī Shaybah

Sleeping throughout the night in a manner that Fajr Ṣalāh is missed has an adverse effect not just spiritually but also physically.

Abū Hurayrah ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

'Satan ties three knots on the back of the head of each one of you. On each knot he reads and exhales the following words, 'The night is long for you so stay asleep.' When the person wakes up and remembers Allāh, one knot is undone; and when he performs ablution, the second knot is undone and when he offers Ṣalāh, the third knot is undone and one will get up energetic and with a good heart (in a good mode) in the morning; otherwise (if he does not offer the Ṣalāh) he gets up in a bad mode and feels lazy.'

al-Bukhārī and Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ had a habit of resting for a short period during the midday heat.

Umm Sulaym ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ would come to their house and take a siesta, so she would place down for him a leather-spread. He would sweat profusely so she would collect his sweat and add it to her perfume and collect it in bottles.

The Prophet ﷺ once asked, 'O Umm Sulaym, what are you doing?'

She replied, 'It is your sweat; I intensify the scent of my perfume with it.'

Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ also discouraged sleeping before the night prayer.

Abū Barzā ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ disliked sleeping before `Ishā' Ṣalāh.

al-Bukhārī

The Prophet ﷺ also advised on the manner and posture of sleeping. He himself slept on his right side, facing the direction of Qiblah. He forbade sleeping on the stomach.

Abū Umāmah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ passed by a person who was sleeping in the Masjid with his face down (on his stomach). The Prophet ﷺ pushed him with his foot saying, 'Stand or be seated as this is the sleeping style of the people of Jahannam.'

Ibn Mājah

## Emotions

It is common knowledge that the body is certainly affected by emotions to such a degree that often high levels of stress and anxiety can lead to physical illnesses. Allāh ﷻ Himself gives the cause and remedy for unrest in the heart,

***'But whosoever turns away from My message, verily for him is a life narrowed down (full of grief), and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement.'***

Qur'ān, Ṭā Hā, 20:124

***'For without doubt in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find satisfaction.'***

Qur'ān, ar-Ra`d 13:28

The Prophet ﷺ himself regularly supplicated to Allāh ﷻ to save him from anxiety.

Anas ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

'O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief, from weakness and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by (other) men.'

al-Bukhārī

This does not mean that a believer should be or is free of all worries. The true believer will worry, to a certain extent, but only in regards to those things that really matter.

Hind ibn Abī Ḥālāh ؓ, a companion, is reported to have said whilst describing the Prophet ﷺ,  
'The Prophet was always concerned and always in deep thought, he did not enjoy freedom from anxiety.'

Ash-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyah of at-Tirmidhi

Commentating on this, scholars write that this anxiety of the Prophet ﷺ was not for the world; rather it was for the hereafter and the state of his Ummah.

Anxiety is just one of the many different types of detrimental emotions. Another is anger. Everyone, to a certain extent, experiences anger. The Prophet himself is reported to have, on occasions, become extremely angry particularly when a commandment of Allāh was broken. Through this we come to learn that anger in itself is not undesired, but rather that extreme anger triggered by wrong things, and what is uncontrollable and can lead to someone committing actions which they may later regret.

***'Whatever you are given (here) is (but) a convenience of this Life:  
but that which is with Allāh is better and more lasting:  
(it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord;  
those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds,  
and, when they are angry even then forgive.'***

Qur'ān, ash-Shūrā 42:36-37

***'Race for forgiveness from your Lord,  
and for a Garden whose width is that of the heavens and earth,  
prepared for the righteous.'***

***Those who spend (in charity),  
whether in prosperity, or in adversity;  
(those) who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;  
for Allāh loves those who do good.'***

Qur'ān, Āl `Imrān 3:133-134

Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated that once a companion approached the Messenger ﷺ and asked him for some advice. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Do not become angry.' The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet ﷺ said (each time), 'Do not become angry.' al-Bukhārī

Abū Hurayrah ؓ also narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'The strong is not the one who overcomes people with his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.' al-Bukhārī

Joy is a quality which is acceptable and commendable as long as it is in moderation. It is said that it strengthens the inward energy.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān,

***'Say: "In the Bounty of Allāh. And in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice," that is better than the (wealth) they hoard.'***

Qur'ān, Yūnus 10:58

Extreme joy and happiness is not approved as Allāh ﷻ also says,

***'Exult not, for Allāh does not love those who exult.'***

Qur'ān, al-Qaṣaṣ 28:76

This does not mean that happiness is forbidden, but the meaning of this is that happiness should be expressed and indulged in with moderation. The example of the Prophet ﷺ bears testimony to this.

Jābir ؓ narrates that the extent of the Prophet's laughter was a smile.

at-Tirmidhi, al-Ḥākim

Anas ؓ narrates that the Messenger ﷺ addressed his followers:  
'By Allāh! If you were to know what I know, you would laugh less and cry more.'

al-Bukhārī, Muslim

The companions asked, "What did you see, O Messenger of Allāh?"

The Prophet replied, 'Heaven and Hell.'

Muslim

Laughing relates to any amusing thing that a person may come across. One may note that even in the severity of the above Ḥadīth, the Prophet did not prohibit a person from being happy, but rather explained that one must always try to have the hereafter in mind. The method of achieving success in the hereafter is crying to the Lord in repentance and in supplication.

## **Emission and Retention**

There are two types of elimination/emission according to Ṭibb philosophy: natural and induced.

Natural elimination is the natural function of the body to rid itself of waste by different means such as the exchange of gases through the lungs, passing of stool and urine, sweating and menstruation.

The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said,  
'When one of you needs to go to the toilet and prayer has begun, let him begin with the toilet (instead of standing in prayer whilst holding it in, and upon relieving himself, join the prayer).'

al-Ḥākīm

Emission through lawful sexual intercourse (i.e. through Nikāḥ) is also part of human nature. The Prophet ﷺ himself married and encouraged his followers to marry.

ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'He who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him to lower his gaze (from looking at unlawful things) and save his private parts (from illegal sexual practices) and he who cannot afford to marry is advised to fast as it will restrain his sexual desire.' al-Bukhārī

In a narration reported by Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There is no (concept of) abstention from marriage in Islām.' al-Ḥakīm

Ibn Masʿūd ؓ said, 'we used to fight (in the holy battles) alongside the Prophet ﷺ and we had no wives with us. So we asked, 'O Rasūlullāh! Shall we get castrated (to relieve sexual urges)?' The Prophet forbade us from doing so. al-Bukhārī

The various emotions also play a role in elimination. They eliminate various toxins from the body because the experience of various emotions is linked with the movement of muscles, secretions of different glands and changes in breathing and the circulatory system.

Induced elimination is the elimination of an accumulated waste product from the body by other means, such as cupping, laxatives and diuretics.

Removing bad blood through the practice of cupping (blood-letting) was also practised by the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ practised cupping even whilst he was in the state of Iḥrām. al-Bukhārī

Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Healing is in three things: cupping, a gulp of honey or cauterization (branding with fire) but I forbid my followers to use cauterization.' al-Bukhārī

Cupping on the 17th, 19th and 21st of each month is preferable whereas cupping on a Tuesday has been discouraged.

Abū Hurayrah ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Whoever has cupping done on the 17th, 19th or 21st (of any month),  
it will be a cure from all illnesses.'

Abū Dāwūd

Abū Bakrah ؓ's daughter reported that her father would forbid his family from cupping on a Tuesday claiming that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,  
'Tuesday is a day of blood and on Tuesdays there is a time wherein  
blood does not clot (i.e. it will continue to flow).'

Abū Dāwūd

## Hygiene

One of the fundamental teachings of Islām is the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene. Many of the ritual worships also require the believer to be in a state of absolute purity. Rasūlullāh ﷺ strongly advised his followers to remain at all times pure and clean. His teachings regarding hygiene were extremely comprehensive covering every aspect of life from performing Wuḍū' and Ghusl to clipping the nails and wearing clean clothing.

Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'ān,

***'There is a Masjid whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of you standing forth (for prayer) therein. In it are men who love to be purified; and Allāh loves those who make themselves pure.'***

Qurān, at-Tawbah 9:108

***'And your garments keep pure.'***

Qur'ān al-Muddath-thir 74:4



Abū Mālik al-Ash`arī ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Cleanliness is half of Īmān.'

Muslim

In terms of personal hygiene Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself set an example we can only hope to emulate. After fourteen centuries we can appreciate how important his teachings were in terms of preventing the spread of disease. What we now classify as indispensable actions to prevent the spread of infections and so-called 'super-bugs' were practised and shown to the world before bacteria and viruses were even discovered.

Salmān ؓ reports that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say,  
'The blessing of food is in washing the hands and mouth before and after eating.'

Abū Dawūd

Anas ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Keep clear from (the splashes and drops of) urine, because generally the punishment in the grave is a result of it (i.e. a result of not abstaining from urine, which affects the validity of Ṣalāh thereafter).

Dāraqūṭnī

Abū Hurayrah ؓ reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,  
'Fiṭrah (nature) is in five things: Circumcision, to shave the pubic hair, to trim the moustache short, to clip the nails and to depilate (remove hair from) the armpits.'

al-Bukhārī

Food being left open is an easy way for harmful bacteria to spread and so Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered that food should also be covered.

Jābir ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Extinguish all lamps when you intend to sleep, close all doors, tie up the (mouth of the) water skins and cover all food and drink.'

al-Bukhārī

Rasūlullāh's clothing was also extremely clean and pure. He preferred white clothing, although he did wear clothing in other colours. One of

the reasons mentioned by scholars for his preference of white clothing was that stains could easily be seen on them and so could be immediately washed off.

Samurah ibn Jundub ؓ narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,  
'Wear white clothing and shroud your dead in it for it is all the more clean and pure.'  
al-Hākim

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also stressed the importance of household hygiene. He went to the extreme of teaching that not only should the interior, which we are generally more concerned about, be clean but also the external area around the house be clean.

Sa`d ibn Abī Waqqās ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
'Keep the open area in front of your homes clean.'  
at-Tirmidhī

## CURES FOR ILLNESSES AND DISEASES

The causes of infection, illness and disease have already been mentioned. Now a range of products used or recommended by the Prophet ﷺ will be discussed briefly.

An important point one must note here is that although these products hold numerous benefits and cures, the only true cure is from Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ cures when and how he desires. Often someone taking the products prescribed by the Prophet ﷺ may feel their condition has not improved at all or has further deteriorated. This does not in any way mean that these products do not have a benefit but rather at such times we should remember that 'shifā' (cure) is only in the hands of Allāh ﷻ. We should pray to Allāh ﷻ that He cures us just as the Prophet ﷺ was cured by consuming certain products and those whom He cured by prescribing certain other products.

With this it is also imperative to bear in mind that illness is not always an affliction. Rather, it is a test from Allāh to identify if his servant can remain patient and steadfast through times of adversity. We have been taught (and promised) that whoever is patient at such times will reap great rewards.

Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'ān,

***'O you who believe, seek assistance through  
patience and prayer; surely Allāh is with the patient.'***

Qurān, al-Baqarah, 2:153

## Honey

***'And your Lord revealed to the bee saying: Make hives in  
the mountains and in the trees and in what they build.  
Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord  
submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage  
of many colours, in which there is healing for men;  
most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect.'***

Qur'ān an-Nahl 16:68-69

Abū Sa`īd al-Khudrī ؓ narrates that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'My brother has some abdominal trouble.'

The prophet ﷺ said to him, 'Let him drink honey.' The man came for the second time and the Prophet ﷺ said to him, 'Let him drink honey.' He came for a third time and the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Let him drink honey.' He returned again and said, 'I have done that.'

The Prophet ﷺ then said, 'Allāh has said the truth but your brother's abdomen has lied. Let him drink honey.'

So he made him drink honey again and he was cured.

al-Bukhārī and Muslim

ʿĀ'ishah ﷺ reported that the Prophet ﷺ used to like 'ḥalwah' (sweet edible things) and honey. al-Bukhārī

Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh ﷺ narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, 'If there is any healing in your medicines, then it is in cupping, a gulp of honey or branding with fire (cauterisation), (one of three) according to that which suits the ailment, but I do not like to be branded with fire (cauterised).' al-Bukhārī

In the narration reported by Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Healing is in three things: cupping, a gulp of honey or cauterisation, but I forbid my followers to use cauterisation.' al-Bukhārī

Abū Ubayy ﷺ narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say, 'Recommended for you are the use of Senna and honey, for indeed in them is a cure for every illness except 'Sām'.'  
The Prophet ﷺ was asked, 'What is 'as-sam'?'  
He replied, 'Death.' al-Ḥākim and Ibn Mājah

Abū Hurayrah ﷺ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Whoever consumes honey on three mornings of every month, no major tribulation will afflict him.' Ibn Mājah

ʿAbdullāh ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Recommended for you is the usage of the two treatments; Honey and the Qur'ān.' Ibn Mājah

Traditional uses of honey have included honey mixed with lemon for sore throats. Honey coats the throat and reduces throat irritation. Research has already shown that honey blocks the growth of oral bacteria.

Honey has also been used for stomach pains and problems. Modern

research shows that honey is effective when used in the treatment of gastric or peptic stomach ulcers.

Research has also revealed that honey is effective in the treatment of various wounds and infections because of its antimicrobial (antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal) properties.

Researchers are not absolutely sure why honey heals but they are learning new things about honey everyday. We do know that honey contains a variety of sugars and minerals. Honey is also considered an antioxidant. This means it allows the blood to circulate better and provide more oxygen to areas of the body such as the brain.

Honey can also be used externally to promote healing when applied to wounds, even post-operative wounds. Honey has also been effective in its use to treat burns. It has even been shown to be low in calories and useful as a sweetener for diabetics, people with heart disease or those overweight.

Although there is healing in honey for a variety of medical disorders, certain precautions should be taken. Children under the age of one year should not be given honey due to the possibility of infant botulism. This type of food poisoning can be deadly; however, it only seems to affect infants under one year of age. Also, if you have any known allergies to specific plants, then you should make sure the honey you are using is not made from that plant. People with allergies to bee stings should be careful when using other bee-related products such as propolis or royal jelly. If these precautions are followed, then honey may provide healing for you.

As Muslims, we must acknowledge and accept that Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ know better and have revealed the truth. We should,

therefore, study the research that is available, not to merely confirm the truth that has been revealed by Allāh ﷻ and his Prophet ﷺ, but to learn of new ways for the use of honey.

### **Black seed / Black Cumin (Al-Habbatus Sawdā')**

Khālid ibn Sa`d ؓ narrated: We went out (of Madīnah on some trip) and Ghālib ibn Abjar ؓ was accompanying us. He fell ill on the way back and when we arrived at Madīnah, he was still sick. Ibn Abī Aṭīq ؓ came to visit and said to us, "Treat him with black cumin. Take five or seven seeds and crush them (and mix the powder with a little oil) and drop the resulting mixture into both nostrils, for indeed `Ā'ishah ؓ narrated to me that she heard the Prophet ﷺ say,

'This black cumin is a healing for all diseases except 'Sām'.'

So I (`Ā'ishah) asked him, 'What is 'Sām'?'

He replied, 'Death.'"

al-Bukhārī

Ibn Ḥajr `Asqalānī, in his commentary of al-Bukhārī has written the following in regards to black cumin:

Black cumin in its disposition is hot and dry. It reduces swelling and is beneficial for quartan (a malarial fever recurring every 72 hours). It is also effective in reducing phlegm, opening up blockages and releasing trapped wind. It removes excess moisture in the stomach, and when ground, mixed with honey and taken in hot water it can dissolve calculus (gallstones, bile stones, etc.) and allow urine to pass more freely as well as menses. After being ground and tied within a piece of cloth, inhalation of its scent can help sufferers of the common cold.

Faṭḥ al-Bārī

## Olives and Olive Oil

***'By the Fig and the Olive, And the Mount of Sinai,  
And this City of security, We have indeed created man  
in the best of moulds, Then do We abase him (to be)  
the lowest of the low, Except such as believe and do  
righteous deeds: for they shall have a reward unailing.  
Then what can, after this, contradict thee, as to the  
Judgment (to come)? Is not Allāh the wisest of Judges?'***

Qur'ān, at-Tin, 95:1-8

***'Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil  
and relish for those who use it for food.'***

Qur'ān, al-Mu'minūn, 23:20

Mount Sinai is renowned for its olive trees. Many claim that the best olive trees in Arabia are those growing in the region of Mount Sinai. Further Allāh ﷻ calls the olive tree a blessed tree,

***'Allāh is the light of the heavens and the Earth.  
The parable of His light is as a niche and in it a lamp:  
the lamp enclosed in glass; the glass as it were a brilliant star:  
lit from a blessed tree, an Olive (tree),  
neither of the East nor of the West,  
whose oil is well-near luminous, though fire scarce touched it:  
Light upon light! Allāh doth guide whom He will to His light:  
Allāh sets forth parables for men: and Allāh knows all things.'***

Qur'ān, an-Nūr, 24:35

The Prophet ﷺ himself ate olives and also used olive oil and instructed his followers to do the same.

Umar ibn al-khaṭṭāb ؓ narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say,

‘Consume olive oil and anoint yourself with it for indeed it is from a blessed tree.’  
at-Tirmidhī

The Prophet ﷺ specified olive oil as being a cure from haemorrhoids. Experts in Ṭibb claim that olive oil is moist and hot in nature and so is beneficial for the bowels.

‘Uqbah ibn `Āmir ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
‘Recommended for you is the consumption of (the product of) this blessed tree: olive oil. Use it as a medication as it is a cure for haemorrhoids.’  
aṭ-Ṭabrānī

The Siwāk taken from the olive tree also has numerous benefits.

Mu`ādh ibn Jabal ؓ related that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say,  
‘The Siwāk from the olive tree is truly excellent; it is from a blessed tree. It scents the mouth and cures scurvy and it is my Siwāk and the Siwāk of the Prophets before me.’  
aṭ-Ṭabrānī

## ‘Ajwah

The ‘Ajwah is a type of date commonly found in Arabia, usually slightly smaller than other dates. The Prophet ﷺ recommended this date above other dates.

Sa`d ؓ narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,  
‘Whoever takes seven ‘Ajwah dates in the morning will not be affected by magic or poison on that day.’  
al-Bukhārī

Rāfi` ibn `Amr ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,  
‘The ‘Ajwah date and the Rock (at Bayt al-Maqdis) are from Jannah.’  
al-Ḥakīm



## Milk

***'And verily in the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from between excretions and blood, pure milk; palatable to the drinkers.'***

Qur'an, an-Naḥl, 16:66

Milk is rich in nutrients such as calcium and was of the preferred drinks of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. On the night of Mi`rāj he was given the option of either drinking milk or wine and he chose milk. Upon this Jibrīl ؑ said, 'You have been guided to fiṭrah (nature); if you had chosen wine your Ummah would have been misguided.'

al-Bukhārī

Anas ؓ narrated that some people were sick and said, 'O Rasūlullāh, Give us shelter and food.' So when they became healthy they said, 'the climate of Madīnah is not suitable for us.' So Rasūlullāh sent them to Ḥarrā with some camels of his and said, 'Drink of their milk.'

al-Bukhārī

Ibn `Abbās ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Whenever one of you eats some food he should say, 'O Allāh grant us blessings in this food and feed us something which is better.' But when one of you drinks milk he should say, 'O Allāh grant us blessing in this milk and provide more milk for us' for indeed there is nothing which can take the place of both food and drink except milk.'

Abū Dāwūd

## Barley and Talbīnah

Barley was very much liked by the Prophet ﷺ and he consumed it in various forms such as bread, dough and gruel.

Abū Sa`īd ؓ narrated that in the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ we gave (in

charity) one sā` (a measurement) of food on the day of `Īd al-Fiṭr. He further said, 'our food then was of barley, raisins, cheese and dates.'

al-Bukhārī

Sahl ibn Sa`d ؓ, a companion, said, 'We used to be happy on Fridays, for there was an old lady who used to pull out the roots of 'as-salq' (a kind of beet) and put it in a cooking pot (and cook it) with some barley. When we finished the Ṣalāh, we would visit her and she would present that dish before us.'

al-Bukhārī

Talbīnah is a dish prepared from barley flour. It was prescribed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to his followers on numerous occasions.

Talbīnah, according to Ibn al-Qayyim, is prepared by boiling barley flour mixed with five-times as much water, until the whole mixture is reduced to three quarters. Honey is added to taste.

`Ā'ishah ؓ reported that whenever one of her relatives passed away, the women assembled and then (later) dispersed except her relatives and close friends. She would give the order for a pot of Talbīnah to be prepared. Then Tharīd (a dish made from meat and bread) would be prepared and the Talbīnah would be poured over it. `Ā'ishah would instruct the women, 'eat of it, for I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying, 'Talbīnah soothes the heart of the sick person and relieves the sick person from some of their sadness.''

al-Bukhārī

## Siwāk

The Siwāk is truly a miracle brush and Rasūlullāh ﷺ heavily emphasised its use on a regular basis.

Abū Umāmah ؓ has reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Use the Siwāk,

for the Siwāk is a cleansing agent for the mouth and it is beloved to the Lord. Jibril never came to me except that he counselled me regarding the Siwāk, so much so that I feared it may become compulsory upon my Ummah and me.”

Ibn Mājah

The Siwāk has numerous health benefits. This is primarily due to its ingredients as Siwāk contains:

- a) Antibacterial acidic inhibitors that fight decay. They are natural disinfectants and can be used to stop bleeding. They disinfect the gums and teeth and close any microscopic cuts that may have existed in the gums. On first usage, the Siwāk will taste harsh and maybe even burn/sting, because of a mustard-like substance found in it, but this is the ingredient that fights decay in the mouth and kills germs.
- b) Minerals such as sodium chloride, potassium, sodium bicarbonate and calcium oxides. These clean the teeth. The American Dental Association considers sodium bicarbonate to be a preferred ingredient in advanced toothpastes.
- c) Anti-decay and anti-germ ingredients that act as a penicillin of sorts, decreasing the amount of bacteria in the mouth, which means cleaner teeth and cleaner air when breathing through the mouth.
- d) Enzymes that prevent the build-up of plaque that causes gum disease. Plaque is also the number one cause of premature loss of teeth.
- e) Natural scented oils that taste and smell nice, give the mouth a nice smell. They make up about 1% of the Siwāk.

The presence of these properties has actually encouraged some

toothpaste laboratories to incorporate powdered stems and/or root material of *Salvadora Persica* (a tree from which *Siwāk* is taken, also known as `Arāk) in their products.

Ḥisān ibn `Aṭiyyah has reported that Wuḍū' is half of Īmān and *Siwāk* is half of Wuḍū'.

Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah

Ja`far ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ narrated that a group of people came to the Prophet ﷺ, and he said to them,

“Why is it that I see you with yellow teeth? Use the *Siwāk*.”

Kitāb al-Āthār of Abū Yūsuf

`Alī ؓ related, “Five things eradicate memory loss and decrease phlegm: *Siwāk*, fasting, recitation of the Qur'an, honey, and milk.”

ad-Daylamī

Abū ad-Dardā' ؓ stated, “Make the use of the *Siwāk* compulsory upon yourself, use it constantly and do not neglect it,” and then he went on to mention many benefits of the *Siwāk*, including:

“The greatest and highest of its virtues is that the Most Merciful's pleasure is earned, and whoever attains the Most Merciful's pleasure will enter Jannah.

Secondly it is a Sunnah.

Thirdly, the reward of prayer is increased by seventy times.

Fourthly, wealth and provision are increased.

Fifthly, it sweetens the smell of the mouth.

Sixthly, it strengthens the gums and makes them firm.

Seventhly, it relieves one from headaches.

Eighthly, it eradicates the pain felt in the molars.

Ninthly, the angels shake the hands of the person who uses, because of the illumination seen on his face.

Tenthly, it keeps one's teeth clean...”

al-Fayḍ al-Qadir

Ibn `Abbās ؓ reported, “Make the use of the Siwāk necessary for indeed it is a means of cleansing the mouth, attaining the pleasure of the Lord and a cause of happiness for the angels. It increases one’s reward, and is from the Sunnah, makes ones eyesight sharper, eradicates scurvy, strengthens the gums, diminishes phlegm, and creates a pleasant smell in the mouth.” al-Bayhaqī in Shu`ab al-Īmān

## Kohl

Rasūlullāh ﷺ regularly applied Kohl (antimony) to his eyes.

Ibn `Abbās ؓ reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had a Kohl container from which he applied Kohl every night three times in each eye. al-Bayhaqī

From amongst the different varieties of Kohl, Rasūlullāh ﷺ preferred the Ithmid Kohl.

Ibn `Abbās ؓ reported that he heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, ‘The best from among your Kohl is Ithmid, for it strengthens the eyesight and causes the hair to grow.’ Abū Dāwūd

## Truffles

For infections of the eyes, Rasūlullāh prescribed the water of truffles.

Sa`id ibn Zayd ؓ narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, ‘Truffles are like Mann, and their water is a cure for the eyes.’ al-Bukhārī

Mann is sweet dew which was specially given to the people of Mūsā.

Doctors in Egypt have confirmed that by boiling truffles the water left behind, when cooled can help in cases of eye trachoma when used as eye drops. Treasures in the Sunnah, Dr Zaghlul El-Naggar

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān,

***'And we gave you (Banū Isrā'il) the shade of clouds  
and sent down to you Mann and Quails, saying,  
'Eat of the good things we have provided you.'***

Qur'ān, al-Baqarah, 2:57

Rasūlullāh ﷺ drew similitude between truffles and Mann because just like Mann were given to the Banū Isrā'il without any effort on their part, truffles also grow without having to be grown like other plants.

Some scholars have mentioned that mushrooms in general do qualify as having similar benefits, but care should be taken to ensure that only non-harmful (non-poisonous) ones are consumed.

### **Sa`ūt and Quṣṭ**

Sa`ūt is any medication which is taken up from the nose. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself took medication in this manner.

Ibn `Abbās ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was cupped and he paid the person who cupped him for his services and also took Sa`ūt. al-Bukhārī

In the time of the Prophet ﷺ, one medication used as Sa`ūt was the Quṣṭ (Costus - commonly Saussurea costus), an incense stick which was known as the Indian Quṣṭ (Indian Agarwood) and the sea Quṣṭ.

Quṣṭ may be more commonly known as `ūd, which is used as a fragrance. There are many who do, however, say that Quṣṭ is not exclusively `ūd, as its scientific name implies there are a few plants that fall within the same category and share similar benefits.

Umm Qays ؓ narrated that she heard the Prophet ﷺ say,  
'Treat with the Indian incense, for it has healing for seven diseases; it is

to be sniffed by one who is having throat trouble, and to be put in the side of the mouth of one suffering pleurisy.’

al-Bukhārī

The Prophet ﷺ also recommended Qusṭ as a treatment of tonsilitis. It was a common practice in those times that when a child was suffering from tonsilitis, the tonsils would be squeezed. This was hardly a cure but was extremely painful on the child.

Anas ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘The best medicines you may treat yourselves with are cupping and the sea Qusṭ. Do not torture your children by pressing the tonsils, but use Qusṭ’

al-Bukhārī

One can see an obvious root for aromatherapy to stem from in these teachings of the Prophet ﷺ.

## Vinegar

Jābir ؓ narrated, “The Messenger of Allāh took me one day with him to his house. He was served some bread. He asked, ‘Is there any condiment?’ They replied, ‘No, only some vinegar.’ He said, ‘Vinegar is a good condiment.’”

Jābir ؓ used to say, “I have loved vinegar since I heard that of it from Allāh’s Prophet.”

Muslim

Ibn Sinā wrote in his famous book “Al-Qānūn fiṭ-Ṭibb” (the Canon of Medicine), that vinegar is a powerful clotting agent. If poured on an external wound, it will stop the bleeding and prevent swelling. It aids digestion and is an expectorant. It helps with felons (inflammation of the tissues of a finger or toe) and carbuncles (a kind of skin inflammation). It acts quickly on burns. When mixed with oil and applied to the head, it helps with headaches caused by heat. It strengthens gums. It is an appetizer and aids digestion.

Modern day research has found that vinegar can be used to derive the following benefits:

1. To treat poisoning by alkaline (non-acidic) substances.
2. To help reduce fevers by applying a cold pad to the forehead that has been soaked with vinegar and water.
3. To cure 'black hairy tongue' - a disease caused due to intake of antibiotics like penicillin and tetracycline - by using vinegar once or twice daily for a week.
4. To soothe pain caused by rheumatoid arthritis by applying a pad soaked with vinegar and water to painful joints.
5. To treat bee and jellyfish stings by applying a mixture of equal amounts of salt and vinegar to the sting, relieving the pain and preventing inflammation.

The Martin-Dale Encyclopaedia of Pharmaceuticals 1989

## Beet

Sahl ibn Sa`d ؓ, a companion of the Prophet ﷺ, said, 'We used to be happy on Fridays, for there was an old lady who used to pull out the roots of 'salq' (a kind of beet) and put it in a cooking pot (and cook it) with some barley. When we finished the Ṣalāh, we would visit her and she would present that dish before us.'

al-Bukhārī

Beet along with barley was prescribed by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to those recovering from illness.

Umm al-Mundhir ؓ states that the Prophet ﷺ along with `Alī ؓ, who was recovering from an illness, came to her house. There was a bunch of dates hanging and Rasūlullāh ﷺ stood by them and began eating of them. `Alī ؓ also began eating them so Rasūlullāh ﷺ prevented him eating them saying, 'You are recovering from illness.' Umm al-Mundhir ؓ further states that she cooked beet with barley and



presented it to them, so Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, 'O `Alī, eat this as it is more suitable for you.'

al-Ḥakim

## Pomegranates

***'It is He, Who sends down rain from the skies; with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date palm and its sheaths (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! In these things there are Signs for people who believe.'***

Qur`ān, al-An`ām, 6:99

***'It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and crops with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not the wasters.'***

Qur`ān, al-An`ām, 6:141

***'In them will be fruits, and dates, and pomegranates: Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?'***

Qur`ān, ar-Raḥmān 55:68-69

Ibn `Abbās ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There is not a pomegranate which does not have a pip from one of the pomegranates of the Garden (of Jannah) in it'

Lisān al-Mizān of Ibn Ḥajar `Asqalāni

ʿAlī ؑ had said to the people of Kūfah, 'Eat pomegranates and (consume) its juice for it cleans the stomach' Aḥmad

Today's medicine has found that pomegranate juice is very effective in improving Carotid artery health and in lowering high blood-pressure. Sufferers of the above are often advised the consumption of this fruit's juice for relief from their ailments.

### Senna

Abū Ubayy ؑ narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say, 'Recommended for you are the use of senna and honey, for indeed in them is a cure for every illness except 'as-sām.' The Prophet was asked, 'What is 'as-sām?' He replied, 'Death.' al-Ḥākim and Ibn Mājah

Asmā bint Umays ؑ reported that she heard the Prophet ﷺ say, 'If there was to be anything that could cure death it would be senna.' at-Tirmidhi

Senna is a very effective natural laxative. It has been used to serve this purpose for many centuries; even at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Many modern day laxatives are also prepared using senna.

Note: Henna - the dye used to colour hair, is also a type of Senna but of a different variety.

## The Qur'ān

***'O mankind! There has come to you a Direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, Guidance and a Mercy.'***

Qur'ān, Yūnus, 10:57

***'We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.'***

Qur'ān, al-Isrā' 17:82

***'Had We sent this as a Qur'ān (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said:***

***Why are not its verses explained in detail?***

***What, (A book) not in Arabic and an Arab (Messenger)?***

***Say: It is a guide and a healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes):***

***they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!'***

Qur'ān, Fuṣṣilat 41:44

The greatest and most reliable cure ever shown to the believers is without doubt the Qur'ān. As shown in the verses above, it cures diseases of the heart (spiritual diseases) along with physical diseases.

Abū Sa'id ؓ narrates that some of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ went on a journey until they came to an Arab tribe (of non-Muslims at night). They asked the latter to treat them as guests but were refused. (During this time) the chief of that tribe was bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and the tribe tried their best to cure him but in vain. Some of them suggested, 'Go to those people who have come (i.e. the companions) maybe they will possess a cure.' So they came to the

companions (of the Prophet ﷺ) and said, 'Our chief has been bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and we have tried everything but nothing has benefited him. Have any of you got anything?'

One of them replied, Yes, By Allāh! I can recite a 'Ruqya' (curative chant), but you have refused to accept us as your guests, so I will not recite the 'Ruqya' until you allocate a payment in return.' They agreed to a payment of a flock of sheep. So this companion (of the Prophet ﷺ) went and recited 'Praise be to Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.' (i.e. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah) and blew over the chief who consequently recovered in such a way as though he had been released from chains. The chief got up and began walking, showing no signs of sickness. The tribe paid the companions what they had agreed.

Some of the companions suggested that the payment should be divided between them but the one who had performed the 'Ruqya' said, 'Do not divide the payment until we go to the Prophet ﷺ and tell him the whole story and wait for his advice.'

They came to the Prophet ﷺ and narrated the incident to him and he asked, 'How did you know that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah could be recited as a 'Ruqya'?'

He further said, 'You have done a right (permitted and noble) thing, divide (the payment) and also assign one share for me.' al-Bukhārī

## EPILOGUE

As has been mentioned in the introduction, medicine and treatment are not fields which Islām is a stranger to. Islām is the cause of the advancement of medicine and medical research because of it being their foundation.

This has not been written to remember a glorious but dead past, but rather it is to serve two purposes. The first is that Muslims need awareness about this in case they are made subject to inferiority complex. And the second reason is that the Western world should begin to realise that their preconceptions of Islām which have distorted history need to be redressed.

Below is an excerpt from the acclaimed book “The Road to Mecca” by Muhammad Asad. It shows how actively the teachings of Islām encouraged (and continue to encourage) Muslim participation in the important fields of medicine.

“It was obvious to me that the decline of the Muslims was not due to any shortcomings in Islam but rather to their own failure to live up to it.

“For, indeed, it was Islam that had carried the early Muslims to tremendous cultural heights by directing all their energies toward conscious thought as the only means to understanding the nature of God’s creation and, thus, of His will. No demand had been made of them to believe in dogmas difficult or even impossible of intellectual comprehension; in fact, no dogma whatsoever was to be found in the Prophet’s message: and, thus, the thirst after knowledge which distinguished early Muslim history had not been forced, as elsewhere in the world, to assert itself in a painful struggle

against the traditional faith. On the contrary, it had stemmed exclusively from that faith. The Arabian Prophet had declared *Striving after knowledge is a most sacred duty for every Muslim* (Ibn Mājah): and his followers were led to understand that only by acquiring knowledge could they fully worship the Lord. When they pondered the Prophet's saying, *God creates no disease without creating a cure for it as well* (al-Ḥākim), they realized that by searching for unknown cures they would contribute to a fulfilment of God's will on earth: and so medical research became invested with the holiness of a religious duty. They read the Koran verse [sic], *We create every living thing out of water* (Qur'an, al-Ambiyā 21:30) – and in their endeavour to penetrate to the meaning of these words, they begun to study living organisms and the laws of their development: and thus they established the science of biology... And in the same way they took to chemistry and physics and physiology, and to all the other sciences in which the Muslim genius was to find its most lasting monument. In building that monument they did no more than follow the admonition of their Prophet that *Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, God will make easy for him the path to Paradise* (Muslim); that *The student of knowledge walks in the way of God* (at-Tirmidhi); that *The superiority of the learned over the mere pious is like the superiority of the full moon over the stars* (Abū Dāwūd)...

“Throughout the whole creative period of Muslim history – that is to say, during the first five centuries after the Prophet's time – science and learning had no greater champion than the Muslim civilization and no home more secure than the lands in which Islam was supreme.

“Social life was similarly affected by the teachings of the Koran. At a time when in Christian Europe an epidemic was

regarded as a scourge of God to which man had but to submit meekly – at that time, and long before it, the Muslims followed the injunction of their Prophet which directed them to combat epidemics by segregating the affected towns and areas. And at a time when even the kings and nobles of Christendom regarded bathing as an almost indecent luxury, even the poorest of Muslim houses had at least one bathroom, while elaborate public baths were common in every Muslim city (in the ninth century, for instance, Cordoba had three hundred of them): and all this in response to the Prophet’s teaching that *Cleanliness is part of faith* (Muslim). A Muslim did not come into conflict with the claims of spiritual life if he took pleasure in the beautiful things of material life, for, according to the Prophet, *God loves to see the sign of His bounty on his servants* (at-Tirmidhi)...

“Little wonder, then, that as soon as it emerged beyond the confines of Arabia, Islam won new adherents by leaps and bounds. Born and nurtured in the world-contempt of Pauline and Augustinian Christianity, the populations of Syria and North Africa, and a little later of Visigothic Spain, saw themselves suddenly confronted with a teaching which denied the dogma of Original Sin and stressed the inborn dignity of earthly life: and so they rallied in ever-increasing numbers to the new creed that gave them to understand that man was God’s vicar on earth. This, and not a legendary ‘conversion at the point of the sword’, was the explanation of Islam’s amazing triumph in the glorious morning of its history.

“It was not the Muslims that had made Islam great: it was Islam that had made the Muslims great.”

Leopold Weiss (Muhammad Asad), *The Road to Mecca*, pp. 190-193.

## TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Please take note of the table below as our transliteration method may be different to those adopted by others.

The transliterated symbols are unvarying in pronunciation, e.g. the representation “s” will remain pronounced as “s” and not distort to “z” in any circumstance, e.g. Islām is *not* pronounced Izlām.

While every effort has been made to ensure the transliteration is as close to the Arabic as possible, no alphabet can ever fully represent another.

This is all the more true where recitation of Qur’ānic verses is concerned as this must adhere to the very precise science of Tajwīd. It is therefore imperative that the readers do not consider a transliteration a substitute for learning to read Arabic correctly from a competent teacher.

### VOWELS

<b>A / a</b>	SHORT “A” AS IN “AGO”	<b>I / i</b>	SHORT “I” AS IN “SIT”
<b>Ā / ā</b>	LONG “A” AS IN “HAT”	<b>Ī / ī</b>	LONG VOWEL AS IN “SEE”
<b>AY or AI</b>	DIPHTHONG AS IN “PAGE”	<b>AW or AU</b>	DIPHTHONG AS IN “HOME”
‘	ABRUPT START/PAUSE DOES NOT OCCUR IN ENGLISH	<b>U / u</b>	SHORT “U” AS IN “PUT”
		<b>Ū / ū</b>	LONG VOWEL AS IN “FOOD”

### CONSONANTS

ب	<b>B</b>	“B” NO “H” ATTACHED	ض	<b>Ḍ</b>	“DH” USING SIDES OF THE TONGUE
ت	<b>T</b>	“T” NO “H” ATTACHED	ط	<b>Ṭ</b>	“T” WITH RAISED TONGUE
ث	<b>TH</b>	“TH” AS IN THIN	ظ	<b>Ẓ</b>	“TH” AS IN THEN, SOUND IS WITH RAISED TONGUE
ح	<b>Ḥ</b>	“H” GUTTURAL SOUND	ع	‘	GUTTURAL SOUND - ACCOMPANIES VOWEL
خ	<b>KH</b>	“KH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE	غ	<b>GH</b>	“GH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE
د	<b>D</b>	“D” NO “H” ATTACHED	ق	<b>Q</b>	“K” WITH BACK OF TONGUE RAISED
ذ	<b>DH</b>	“TH” AS IN THEN	و	<b>W</b>	“W” READ - NOT SILENT
س	<b>S</b>	“S” ONLY - NOT “Z”	ي	<b>Y</b>	“Y” ONLY - NOT “I”
ش	<b>SH</b>	“SH” AS IN SHIN			
ص	<b>Ṣ</b>	“S” WITH RAISED TONGUE			

Note: Double consonants must be pronounced with emphasis on both letters without pause, e.g. **ALLĀHUMMA** should be read **AL-LĀHUM-MA**.

### SYMBOLS

SUBHĀNAHŪ WA TA`ĀLĀ FOR ALLAH “GLORIFIED AND EXALTED IS HE”	ṢALLALLĀHU `ALAYHI WA SALLAM FOR MUHAMMAD “PEACE BE UPON HIM”
RAḌĪYAL-LĀHU `ANHU FOR COMPANIONS “ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM”	`ALAYHIS-SALĀM FOR PROPHETS “PEACE BE UPON THEM”