



KITĀB AL-AGHDHIYYAH OF ABŪ MARWĀN ‘ABD AL-
MĀLIK IBN ZUHR (d. 1162): AN ANNOTATED
TRANSLATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to bring into existence the English translation of *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah*, a work in medical science composed by Ibn Zuhr, an Andalusian physician who lived in the 11th century. The research is conducted based on literature study using books and manuscripts related to the topic as sources. The original text is an edited text published in Arabic by *Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe* of *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*, Spain. *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah* has clearly shown how, in the Muslim world, medical science was dynamic rather than static by virtue of the physicians' passion for experimentation and observation. Through the discussion about food and their healing properties, *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah* has made clear how important diet is in treating illnesses, employing a method called "dietotherapy" that takes a relatively more holistic approach- as opposed to a reductionist one that modern medical science favours. As this book contains the author's findings never before discussed by any other physician or writer, it provides good evidence to refute the allegation that Islamic physicians were less than those from the Greek tradition. In addition, it gives us a glance at the socio-cultural life in the Andalusian society in the 11th century. As the text contains references to many kinds of food, it provides us with information on the kinds of edibles available then. The author's description of several herbs that were not found in his country provides us clues on trading. More importantly, Ibn Zuhr's belief in God as the ultimate Healer, which is manifested in this book, ensures that Islamic medicine, based on an Islamic world view, is distinguished from other systems of medical science. Studies on the works of Muslim physicians, such as Ibn Zuhr's *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah*, are necessary to construct the philosophy of Islamic medicine, besides filling the gap in the historical study of Muslim legacy. The availability of the English translation of these texts is expected to open avenues for others to conduct further research on the texts.

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى ترجمة كتاب الأغذية من أصله العربية الى الإنجليزية. و كتاب الأغذية عمل في العلوم الطبية و مؤلفه هو ابن زهر ، الطبيب الأندلسي الذي عاش في القرن الحادي عشر. يعتمد هذا البحث على مصادر المواد المكتوبة من المؤلفات و المخطوطات المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع. أما النص الأصلي فهو نسخة مصححة منشورة باللغة العربية من قبل معهد التعاون مع العالم العربى و المجلس الأعلى للبحوث العلمية بأسبانيا. و قد تبين بوضوح من خلال كتاب الأغذية أن العلوم الطبية في العالم الإسلامي كانت شيئاً منتعشاً و حيويًا و هذا من منطلق الإحساس و العاطفة لدى الأطباء لمواصلة التجارب والملاحظات. يبحث الكتاب المواد الغذائية و خواصها العلاجية. و من خلال كتاب الأغذية يتبين لنا بوضوح مدى أهمية التغذية في علاج المرض. وهو أسلوب يُدعى بـ " العلاج بالأغذية " الذي كان يُستخدم، وهو أشمل نسبياً مقارنةً بنهج تطبيق العلوم الطبية الحديثة التي تستخدم في علاج الأمراض. يحتوي الكتاب على النتائج التي توصل اليها المؤلف والتي لم يناقشها أي طبيب أو كتاب آخر، و في ذلك دليل قاطع يدحض المزاعم القائلة بأن الأطباء المسلمين ليسوا سوى تابعين للتقاليد اليونانية. أكثر من ذلك، فهو يعطينا لمحة عن الحياة الاجتماعية والثقافية في مجتمع الاندلس في القرن الحادي عشر. كما يتضمن النص اشارات كثيرة الى انواع من الطعام و هذا يقدم لنا معلومات عن أنواع المواد الغذائية المتوفرة في تلك الأيام. وصف الكاتب لعدد من الأعشاب التي لا وجود لها في بلاده يعطينا إشارة الى وجود التجارة. والأهم من ذلك هو وضوح إيمان ابن زهر بالله بأنه هو المعالج المطلق، و ظهور مثل هذه الروح في هذا الكتاب تؤكد أنّ الطب الإسلامي بقيامه على الفكرة الإسلامية يختلف عن منظومة العلوم الطبية الأخرى. ان دراسة اعمال الاطباء المسلمين، مثل كتاب الأغذية لابن زهر تعتبر أمراً ضرورياً و ذلك لبناء فلسفة الطب الإسلامي و ملء الفراغ في الدراسات التاريخية عن تراث المسلمين. لعل أكبر مساهمة تقدمها هذه الترجمة الإنجليزية أنها تفتح الباب لدراسات و بحوث أخرى في المستقبل القادم.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy, Ethics, and Contemporary Issues.

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Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy, Ethics, and Contemporary Issues.

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This dissertation was submitted to Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy, Ethics, and Contemporary Issues.

.....
Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim
Dean

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mersita Eko Medikawati

Signature.....

Date

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***KITĀB AL-AGHDHIYYAH OF ABŪ MARWĀN ‘ABD AL-MĀLIK IBN ZUHR
(d. 1162): AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION***

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Although history noted the flourish of science in Islamic world centuries ago, some scholars ironically claimed that Muslim scholars only copied and translated what others had done before them. Particularly in the field of medicine, they think that what is called “Islamic medicine” is simply “Greek medicine” presented in Arabic language. Their allegation is not based on any firm background. In fact, for the field of Islamic medicine, while Muslim physicians maintain their respect for the authority of ancient texts, they tested, challenged and modified the theories and practices of the classical scholars. These attempts were done since there was a need to keep this branch of knowledge in conformity with the Islamic worldview. Besides, Muslim physicians needed to adapt their theories and practices to the actual problems in the society through the means of observation and experimentation. *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah* as one among the works that had ever been written by Muslim physicians provides a good example to show how medical science was dynamic rather than static in the Muslim world. Composed by Ibn Zuhr who was passionate about observation and experimentation, he did not only challenge his predecessor on some theories but also contributed new practices and ideas to the medical science of his time.

Studies on the works of Muslim physicians in the past, such as Ibn Zuhr’s works, are needed to be done. If for the Classicist the study of Islamic medical literature is to recover the lost works of Greek authors, for Muslim, the study of these literatures is to extract from it the philosophy of Islamic medicine. It may also fill in the gap in the historical study of the Muslim legacy. Although compared to other field

of Islamic studies, the study of the history of medicine in Islam progresses very well, there are still many sources of material that have not been completely identified, insufficiently studied or even have not been studied at all. Discoveries to be made and problems to be solved are legion. This thesis is expected to contribute to this need, however minor it may be.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to render one of the works of Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Zuhr, *Kitab al-Aghdiyyah*, into English, based on the text edited by Expiración García Sánchez (Ibn Zuhr, 1992). The brief analysis on the text provided in chapter four is aimed to give some information on the nature of the writing, besides to show the interesting features which can be found in the text.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study would contribute a translated work of one of the best scholars that Islamic civilization has. If the English version of the book is in the existence, the possibility to conduct further researches is expected to rise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no doubt that Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Zuhr earned his fame both in Islamic world and the western world. Ibn Khaldun had confirmed his well-known skill. In the western world, the fact that *Kitāb al-taysir*, one of his works, was translated into Latin and was used all the way long to the 18th century is enough to prove the significance of his legacy. However, it seems that, today, studies on Islamic medicine

have not given this figure enough attention. More effort is still needed to dig into his history and works.

Apart from biographical work such as '*Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Tabaqāt al-Aṭṭibā*' by Ibn Abī 'Uṣaybi'ah and *Wafayāt al-'Ayān* by Ibn Khalikan, up to this time, there have been several works that make major contributions to the study about Ibn Zuhr. The most notable contributions are made by those who edited and published the text of Ibn Zuhr. Dr. Michel al-Khuori (Ibn Zuhr, 1983) edited the text of *Kitāb al-taysir fī mudawāt wa al-tadbīr*, making this work available to the public. Another person who edited the work of Ibn Zuhr is Expiración García Sánchez. She compared three manuscripts of *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah* and published the edited text together with her own translation of the text from Arabic into Spanish. By publishing the edited text to the public, she had made this work more accessible for further studies. Three other texts ascribed to Ibn Zuhr are partially edited and published in *Al-Ṭibb wa al-Aṭṭibā'* of Muḥammad al-Arabiyy al-Khaṭṭabī. They are *Kitāb al-tadhkira*, *Kitāb al-Qānun* and *Risala fī tafdil al-'Asal 'ala al-Sukkar*.

Several studies have been done on *Kitāb al-taysir*. The book has been studied by Henry A. Azar in both his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation (Azar, 1998). These two writings give lengthy analysis on the history of Ibn Zuhr as well as on the content of *Kitāb al-taysir*. His dissertation also provides the analysis on the contribution of Ibn Maymun, a Jewish physician who cited Ibn Zuhr's works, to Ibn Zuhr's fame in the west, besides some other figures who translated Ibn Zuhr's works from Arabic into Latin. He also wrote papers on *Kitāb al-taysir*. The one published by Journal of International Society on the History of Islamic medicine (Azar, 2002) is the most interesting as it provides excerpts from *Kitāb al-taysir* which is very useful for readers who are not familiar with Arabic language. Another person who wrote

dissertation on Ibn Zuhr is Rosa Kuhne Brabant. Her analysis on *Kitāb al-iqtisād* had led her to the hypothesis that this work may be what people know as *Kitāb al-Zinah*, another work by Ibn Zuhr which is thought to be lost.

Gabriel Colin (Colin, 1911) also wrote lengthy analysis on the history of Ibn Zuhr and his family as well as his extant works. This work frequently referred by those who write about Ibn Zuhr later. The most notable contribution given by this work is his refutation on the opinion of some scholars who thought that Ibn Zuhr was a Jew while he was not. There are still several other papers have been written about Ibn Zuhr. Some of them are not accessible to me as they are written in languages other than Arabic or English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted based on literary study. The sources are books and manuscripts related to the topic. Original text to be used in translation is obtained from a published book entitled *Tratado de los Alimentos*. This edition contains the edited Arabic text of *Kitāb al-aghdiyyah* and a translation of the book from Arabic into Spanish by Expiración García Sánchez. From 10 manuscripts that are identified around the world, she chose three manuscripts to be compared. They are the manuscript number 2960 in the National Bibliotheca of Paris, the manuscript number 127 of Gayangos Collection in the Bibliotheca of Royal Academia of History Madrid, and the manuscript *Tibb* number 2068/2 of Ahmet III Collection in the Bibliotheca Topkapi Sarayi Istanbul. She took the manuscript found in National Bibliotheca of Paris as the base as it is the oldest among them. In the edition, the Arabic text consists of 145 pages which are divided into 14 chapters.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I Introduction

Chapter II Biographical Account of Abu Marwan Abd al-Malik Ibn Zuhr

Chapter III Annotated Translation of *Kitab al-Aghdhiyyah*

Chapter IV Brief Analysis of *Kitab al-Aghdhiyyah*

CHAPTER TWO
BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF
ABŪ MARWĀN ‘ABD AL-MALIK IBN ZUHR

As noted by Ibn Khalikan (vol.3, ed. 1868: 135), the Zuhr family was “one of which all the members were [either] men of learning [in the law], chiefs [in the civil administration], physicians, or viziers. They obtained the first offices in the state, enjoyed the favour of sovereign and exercised great authority”. This family belonged to the Arabian tribe of ‘Iyād ibn Nizār which originally came from Tihāma, the western coastal region of Arabia north of Yemen. The exact period when the first family migrated to Spain is not known. However, Zuhr al-‘Iyādī was known to have settled on the east of Spain at Shatiba (Jativa), an inland town southwest of Valencia in the tenth century. According to Colin (1191), he remained there until the Christians took over the region in Ramadhan, 645 H (30 December 1247 C.E -28 January 1248 C.E).

Famous as a prominent jurist consult, Abū Bakr Moḥammad ibn Marwān (d. 1030 C.E), Zuhr al-‘Iyādī’s grandson, was the first figure of the family to hold important role in the society. This figure was then followed by six generations known in the history for their success as physicians.

The first physician of the family was Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad (d. 1078 C.E). Although no writing was attributed to him, Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah (1979) reported that he was well-known for forbidding hot bath on the belief that it encourages putrefaction of the body and disturbs the disposition. It was a

contradictory view to his contemporaries. The son of the former, Abū al-‘Ala Zuhr¹ (d. 1130-1 C.E), was also a physician who was attached to the court of al-Mu’tamid and later to the court of the Almoravides. He became famous for his unusual remedies and for his knowledge of the condition of his patients without interrogating them by simply examining their urine or palpating their pulses². Fourteen texts are ascribed to him (Azar, 1998: 74)³. Eight works among them are listed by Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah as the followings:

1. *Kitāb al-khawāṣ*
2. *Kitāb al-adwiya al-mufrada*
3. *Kitāb al-īdhāḥ bishawāhid al-iftidhāḥ fī al-radd ‘ala Ibn Ridwān fīma raddahu ‘ala Hunayn ibn Ishāq fī kitāb al-madkhūl ila al-ṭibb*
4. *Kitāb ḥāl shukūk al-Rāzī ‘ala kutub Jālinus*
5. *Kitāb al-mujarrabāt*
6. *Maqālah fī al-radd ‘ala Abī ‘Ali ibn Sīna fī mawādhi‘i min kitābihi al-adwiyyah al-mufradah*, composed for his son, Abū Marwān Abd al-Malik Ibn Zuhr
7. *Kitāb al-nukat al-ṭibbiyyah*, composed for his son, Abū Marwān Abd al-Malik Ibn Zuhr
8. *Kitāb al-mujarrabāt*

¹ His exact place and date of birth is not known although Carmen Pena in Azar (1998) suggested that he was born perhaps in Denia around 1060 C.E, died in Cordoba in 1131 C.E and was buried outside the Victory gate of Seville.

² This is an anecdote wrote by Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah. It is possible that he wrote this as a mean to emphasize the great experience and perspicacity of Abu al-‘Ala. Arnaldez (1979: 977) pointed out that if this was true, Abu al-‘Ala was wrong to abandon a method which had become part of Arab medical practice which consisted of finding out about the patient’s forbears and acestru and about the conditions under which he lived.

³ For the complete list of Abu al-‘Ala’s works, refer to Azar (1998: 74).

The career as a physician continued to the next generation, the subject of the present chapter. Like his father, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Zuhr⁴ was also serving Almoravid sultans as a personal physician. His son, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Zuhr al-Ḥafidz (1113-4 C.E - 1199 C.E), although better known for his literary work, followed the step of the father as a doctor and enjoyed the confidence of the caliph Ya‘qub al-Mansur on medical matter. Ibn Zuhr also had a daughter whose name is not mentioned in any historical biographies who was a well versed midwife. Her expertise was inherited by her daughter, Ibn Zuhr’s granddaughter, whose name is never mentioned, either. The son of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Zuhr, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdallah ibn al-Ḥafidz, and the grandsons of the former, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik and Abu al-‘Ala Muḥammad were all physicians. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdallah ibn al-Ḥafidz was known to serve the caliph al-Nāṣir Ibn al-Manṣūr. By the latter figure, the successive generations of physicians in the Zuhr family ended.

As previously noted, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Zuhr is the most famous physician among other members of the Zuhr family. Born in Seville somewhere between 1092 C.E-1095 C.E (Colin, 1911) into a family of doctors, he soon acquainted himself to medical science under the supervision of his father. He was allowed to work as his father’s assistant and even substituted him in many occasions. He described about this in a part of his work, *Kitāb al-taysir*, when he wrote,

I remember when I was a youth practicing medicine under the supervision of my father, God have mercy on him. I was called one day

⁴ The name ‘Ibn Zuhr’ had metamorphosed into Avenzoar in many of the western literature while the name ‘Abhemeron’, from “Abu Marwan”, is also widely acceptable. More about the metamorphose of the name, refer to Colin (1911). According to Sarton (1975), the patronomic ‘Ibn Zuhr’, when used alone, represents without ambiguity the most illustrious member of the greatest medical family of Muslim Spain, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abū al-‘Ala ibn Zuhr. But, Ibn Khalikan, in his biographical writing, put under the title of ‘Ibn Zuhr’ the biography of the former’s son, Abū Bakr ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abū al-‘Ala. See, ‘Ibn Zuhr”, in Sarton (1975: 231).

upon his recommendation to [treat] Tamim, brother of the tyrant ‘Ali, and he was the governor of Seville...(Azar, 2002: 21).

In several parts of his works, he described how he got assistance from his father in treating patients whenever he needed. However, the good education he received was not limited on the study of medical science. He also studied literary, legal and religious science. As reported by Ibn al-Abbar, Ibn Zuhr finished his studies of Hadith in the year 1118 C.E.

Like his father, Ibn Zuhr was attached to the Almoravid dynasty and “received wealth and favours from these rulers” (Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah, 1979: 519). After serving in Spain, he was then called to serve in the palace of ‘Ali ibn Tashfin at Marakesh, Morocco. It was during the reign of this caliph when his father fell into disgrace. Ibn Zuhr himself was put in prison and tortured in Morocco in 1130 (Azar, 1998: 73), a very unfortunate experience that he mentioned in two of his writings, *Kitab al-taysir* and *Kitab al-aghdiyyah*.

While the exact reason for the political situation that Ibn Zuhr bore was not known, some historians tried to develop possible scenarios to explain this fact. Some believed that Abū al-‘Ala uttered a misspoken word leading ‘Ali to order all types of harmful measures against the Zuhr family (Azar, 1998: 73). García Sánchez (1992) cited R. Kuhne’s explanation that the proud and irascible character and high political-social position enjoyed by Abū al-‘Ala had earned him many enemies. Another possible reason that could be the beginning of Ibn Zuhr’s persecution by ‘Ali ibn Yūsuf as assumed by García Sánchez is the confrontation that the former had with Abu Hafs ‘Umar bin Yusuf bin Tasfin when the latter was appointed as a new governor of Seville. As quoted by Azar (2002) from *Kitāb al-taysir*, Ibn Zuhr gives some clue about the unfortunate political situation that he bore:

...I became very depressed because of our bad treatment by ‘Ali resulting from a word for which he blamed my old father, God had mercy on him. He ordered that he be avenged in every possible manner. I developed a most unusual severe depression. I started behaving in a manner I was not accustomed to. When I wanted to sleep, I felt prolonged pain. I did not leave my bed as my condition worsened and I was seized with a persistent cough...Then I received some news that added to my fear. My mind got blurred and could not understand what happened to me. I remained in this condition not taking care of myself and not taking any meals except for some medicated water. I asked for it and I was given it because my thirst was strong. After seven days I [partly] recovered my memory. I remained not knowing who I was and what happened to me, and at times I somewhat recovered my senses...Then I remembered my situation and asked about what happened to my father and son. I was told that they were both in foreign lands. I was saddened and said that they were probably killed at the time when I was beaten on my chest and was stricken with a blow on my head because of which I could not lift it. Then I became overcome with terror about ‘Ali and feared I would be killed and urged that my condition be hidden and that no one should know I was alive...(Azar, 2002: 23)

After ‘Ali died in 1143 C.E, the power of the Almoravides was rapidly weakened by their rivals, the Almohad. The former lost its capital of Marakesh to the later, led by Ibn Tumart in 1147 C.E (Ibn Khalikan, vol.2, ed.1868: 182). García Sánchez believed that Ibn Zuhr was released from jail shortly before the death of ‘Ali and remained for some time in the North African city. He then served Ibn Tumart’s successor, ‘Abd al-Mu’min, who showed a deep interest in science⁵. ‘Abd al-Mu’min made him as personal doctor and “had confidence in him in medical matters” (Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah, 1979: 520). Ibn Zuhr spent his later life practicing as a doctor until the day of his death in Seville in 1162 C.E from *naghla*⁶, the same disease as what his father died from.

⁵ Later, ‘Abu Ya’qub Yusuf I (1163 – 1184), succeeded his father and surrounded himself with scholars, including Ibn Zuhr’s son, Abu Bakr al-Hafidz (d. 1198).

⁶ Colin (1911) identifies *naghla* as a gastric ulcer while Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘ah wrote that it is the name given in Spain to a *dubayla*, which according to Dozy is ‘an ulcer, the pus which is ichorous in whatever part of the body it appears” (Arnaldez, 1979: 977).