

# **Medical Ethics In The Arab-Islamic Civilization**

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# Medical Ethics In The Arab-Islamic Civilization

Up to 1000 years ago, 5th and 6th centuries

- Many famous Moslem Physicians during that time (100 years ago) were interested very much in the Ethics of Practicing Medicine. Because practice of medicine was regulated, only those who pass an exam (after an apprenticeship based program) were allowed to practise
- The published several books on the subject of medical ethics.
- Abu Al-Hasan Ali Al-Tabery described “the Islamic Law of Medical Ethics” in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC in a book named “Firdaws Al-Hikma” as follows:

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1. The physician should be humble, noble, compassionate.
2. The physician should wear clean clothes, and to be reverent (وقوراً), and combs the hair of his head and beard very well.
3. The physician should choose his friends from those who are reputable. Nobody asks who your friends are nowadays
4. The physician should be accurate with what he says, and not to hesitate asking for forgiveness if he comets a mistake. Also not found nowadays (2nd part)
5. The physician should be tolerant and and not to intend revenge.

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6. The physician should be affectionate and peace maker.
7. The physician should avoid prediction whether a patient is going to live or die because Allah only know that. Don't tell patient if they'll live or die
8. The physician should not loose control (يُفْقَدُ صَوَابُهُ).
9. If the patient continues to ask question, the physician should answer gently and with compassion.
10. The physician should treat the rich and the poor, the master and the slave by the same way. Allah will reward him if helps the needy.

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- 11. The physician must keep time and appointments and to be trustworthy.**
- 12. The physician should not argue about his fees if the patient is severely ill, or came as an emergency, and he should thank him regardless how much money he pays.**
- 13. The physician should not prescribe drugs to pregnant ladies to help them get aborted, except when necessary to the mother health.** Still applied by fatwa

Hospitals existed at the time,  
First hospital built in Baghdad  
Second in Qayrawan (Tunisia)  
Third in Cairo

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- 14. The physician should be polite with women, and not breech the confidentiality of his patients.**
- 15. The physician should not talk with an evil way about any descent person in the society, and should not criticize the religious believes of any body, and should talk in a good manner about his colleagues.** So physician-patient relationship, and physician-society relationship, and physician-colleagues
- 16. The physician should not glorify himself and criticize others.**

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- Isaac Bin Ali Alrahawi wrote in his book “Adab Al-Tabib” in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC about the following:
  1. Loyalty and Sincerity that the physician should believe in.
  2. The care of medical professionals.
  3. Things the physicians should avoid and be cautious about.
  4. The Physician’s instructions to patients.
  5. The behavior of patient’s visitors. Not mentioned anymore in codes of ethics

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- 6. The physician should no simple and complex drugs.** Back in the day: herbs and minerals
- 7. The type of questions that physicians should ask patients about.**
- 8. The need that patients must trust physicians.** The condition needed for the patient to trust the physician
- 9. The need that patients follow physician instructions.**
- 10. Patient's behavior towards who serves him.**
- 11. Patient's behavior towards his visitors.**
- 12. Honor of the medical profession.**

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- 13. The general public respect to the physician according to his skills.**
- 14. Distinctive incidents of interest to physicians.** Sharing special incidents with other physicians
- 15. Individuals with the right temperament and high moral qualities only should practice the medical profession.**
- 16. Physicians should be examined before authorizing them to practice medicine.**
- 17. Corruption among physicians should be corrected.**

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18. Beware of charlatans who call themselves physicians. Sorcerers
19. Bad habits that hurt people were also addressed.

- In addition to that the book contains valuable information about conditions conducive to personal health, physician-patient relationships, and some notes on the relationship between the medical profession and government.

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**Abu Baker Mohammad Bin Zakaryya Al Razi** in his book “**Akhlaq Al-Tabeeb**”:

- He pointed out that the physician should be expert in **meicie** and should serve as a role model. As students learn from them, must practise correct Medicine
- This book represents the first model of medical ethics in The Arab-Islamic Civilization.
- He divided his vision to medical ethics to:

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1. The physician's responsibility towards the patient.
2. The physician's responsibility towards himself.
3. The patient's responsibility towards the physician.

- According to his opinion:

Back in the day, teaching was an obligation

1. The physician should continue educating himself in medicine, and continue his commitment to medical education to others.
2. The physician must be effective and honorable, and holds back from vanity, and be devoted to his patient and gives him love.

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3. Physicians should be concerned about their look, an their clothes and hair should be clean and tidy.
4. Among the duties of physicians toward patients are: treating them with compassion, not to be rude or hostile, and must be tender-hearted and humble. Compassion is agreed upon by all 3
5. The physician must keep the secretes that he gets to know during treatment of the patient as stated in the Hippocratic oath.

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6. The physician should psychologically encourage the patients, even those with no hope to live, and to instill hope in them.
7. The physician should treat all patients in the same way regardless of their wealth.
8. The primary aim of the physician should be the cure of the patient, and not the fees that he gets.
9. Caution should be exercised when treating women, and not looking at their private parts. Mentioned in 2 different writings so far

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10. The patient duty toward the physician is respect and to speak to him in a kind way.

- Al-Razi attacked the charlatans and those who claimed knowledge in medical practice, who roam the country and distant districts, to sell their drugs that cure every disease.
- He also pointed out that the most skilled physicians have no answers to all medical problems, and can not cure all diseases.
- Physicians should rely on Allah alone, and to expect recovery from him alone, Almighty (جل وعلا). We help to the best of our ability, and God cures

”قضاء وقدر“ وانت مش عامل اشي 