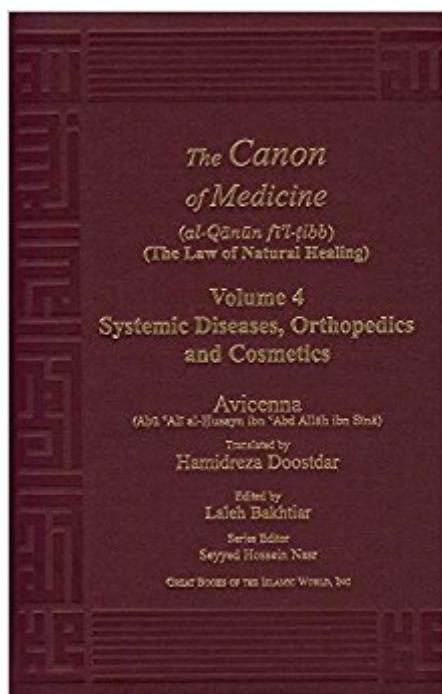


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Avicenna Canon Of Medicine Volume 4: Systemic Diseases, Orthopedics And Cosmetics



Synopsis

Volume 4 of the Canon contains seven parts: Part 22: On Dysfunctions in Various Parts of the Body, Avicenna gives a detailed analysis of the pain that comes from various physical dysfunctions. Part 23: On fevers is a famous section, often published on its own in the Latin translation. Part 24: On Diagnosis Based on Symptoms includes a discussion on what a medical crisis is and how to deal with it. Part

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As the definition of integrative includes alternative it is interesting to note what about Avicennian Integrative Medicine is similar to the major alternative medicines. First, the similarities with certain practices of alternative medicines and then a glance at total systems of alternative medicine, namely, Ayurveda, Chinese and Naturopathic Medicines. Perhaps the best definition of Integrative Medicine is that provided by Dr. Andrew Weil indicating the holistic approach: Integrative medicine is healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (body, mind, and spirit [energy]), including all aspects of lifestyle. It emphasizes the therapeutic relationship and makes use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative. The principles of integrative medicine: A partnership between patient and practitioner in the healing process: Appropriate use of conventional and alternative methods to facilitate the body's innate healing response Consideration of all factors that influence health, wellness and disease, including mind, spirit [energy] and community as well as body A philosophy that neither rejects conventional medicine nor accepts

alternative therapies uncritically. Recognition that good medicine should be based in good science, be inquiry driven, and be open to new paradigms. Use of natural, effective, less-invasive interventions whenever possible. Use of the broader concepts of promotion of health and the prevention of illness as well as the treatment of disease. Training of practitioners to be models of health and healing, committed to the process of self-exploration and self-development. --Dr. Andrew Weil

Avicenna in *The Canon of Medicine* discusses the distillation of many other oils. Distilled essential oils have been employed as medicines since the invention of distillation in the eleventh century¹¹ when Avicenna isolated essential oils using steam distillation. The importance of Avicenna to the history of aromatherapy is threefold, for he not only described accurately many hundreds of plants and their uses, and set down such accurate instructions on giving massage that they could be used as a teaching manual now, but he is credited with having discovered the method of distilling essential oils from flowers. Whether or not he personally made this discovery, which is not really proven, it is certain that rose oil was produced in Persia during his lifetime, and there are some persuasive arguments for attributing the discovery to him. Apart from his all-round brilliance as a scientist, poet, doctor and scholar, Avicenna was an alchemist, and roses had a very specific significance in alchemical experiments. White roses and red roses held different symbolic importance and were used at different stages of the work. They were placed in a flask, or alembic, and heated with other materials, the vapor so produced being collected in another flask as it cooled. Roses heated in this way will produce a quantity of rosewater, with a very small amount of rose oil floating on the surface.

Massage Techniques Avicenna wrote lucid descriptions of massage techniques, describing, for example, brisk friction to produce localized warmth and redness, and more gentle strokes which he prescribed for the softening of hard bodies. Writing about massage for athletes, he said: There is a friction of preparation, which comes before exercise. Then there is a friction of restoration, which comes after exercise and is called rest-inducing friction. The object of this is the resolution of superfluities retained in the muscles, not evacuated by exercise, that they may be evaporated, and that fatigue may not occur. This friction (i.e. massage) must be done smoothly and gently. It would be hard to better this advice which corresponds almost to the letter to the regime followed by some Olympic teams.

Cleansing Diet Some of Avicenna's medical thinking is astonishingly modern, and encompasses much that is valued in alternative medicine. As well as using massage, plants and plant oils, he originated various forms of manipulation for spinal problems (and traction for broken limbs), and either introduced, or at least popularized, the all-fruit diet as a cleansing process, using fruits rich in natural sugars, such as melons and grapes.

Balenotherapy and Hydrotherapy Avicenna recommended these practices as well as

Thalassotherapy or the use of bathing in the ocean and marine products. Chromotherapy Avicenna, who described color to be of vital importance in diagnosis and treatment, made significant contributions to chromotherapy. He states in The Canon that: Color is an observable symptom of disease and also developed a chart that related color to the temperature and physical condition of the body. His view was that red moved the blood, blue or white cooled it, and yellow reduced muscular pain and inflammation. The author further discussed the properties of colors for healing and was the first to establish that the wrong color suggested for therapy would elicit no response in specific diseases. As an example: He observed that a person with a nosebleed should not gaze at things of a brilliant red color and should not be exposed to red light because this would stimulate the sanguineous humor, whereas blue would soothe it and reduce blood flow. His view was that red moved the blood, blue or white cooled it and yellow reduced muscular pain and inflammation.

--Avicenna Time
Experimental Medicine The Canon of Medicine was the first book dealing with evidence-based medicine, experimental medicine, clinical trials, randomized controlled trials, efficacy tests, risk factor analysis, and the idea of a syndrome in the diagnosis of specific diseases. The Canon contained a set of rules that laid down the conditions for the experimental use and testing of drugs which were a precise guide for practical experimentation in the process of discovering and proving the effectiveness of medical substances. Clinical Pharmacology The emphasis of The Canon on tested medicines laid the foundations for an experimental approach to pharmacology. The Canon laid out the rules and principles for testing the effectiveness of new drugs and medications, which still form the basis of clinical pharmacology. Inductive Logic The Canon of Medicine was the first to describe the methods of agreement, difference and concomitant variation which are critical to inductive logic and the scientific method. Pharmaceutical Sciences The book's contribution to experimental as well as the pharmaceutical sciences include the introduction of experimental medicine, evidence-based medicine, clinical trials, randomized controlled trials, efficacy tests and clinical pharmacology; the first careful descriptions of skin troubles, sexually transmitted diseases, perversions and nervous ailments; and the discovery of the healing property of gaseous mercury besides its poisonous quality; as well as the use of ice to treat fevers, and the separation of medicine from pharmacology, which was important to the development of the pharmaceutical sciences. Blood Pressure Avicenna dedicated a chapter of The Canon to blood pressure. He was able to discover the causes of bleeding and hemorrhage, and discovered that hemorrhage could be induced by high blood pressure because of higher levels of cholesterol in the blood. This led him to investigate methods of controlling blood pressure. Pharmacotherapy Avicenna wrote a separate supplement treatise dedicated to the pharmacotherapy of hindiba

[chicory, endive], a compound drug he suggested for the treatment of cancer and other tumors and which could also be used for treating other neoplastic disorders. He gives details on the drug's properties and uses, and then gives instructions on its preparation as medication. In inhalational drug therapy, The Canon described the inhalation of essential oils from pine and eucalyptus to alleviate respiratory symptoms. Both of these compounds are still present in modern-day proprietary inhalational medicines.³⁶ Pharmacy The Canon described no less than 800 preparations of medications, their properties, mode of action and their indications. Avicenna devoted in fact a whole volume to simple and compound drugs in Volume 5 of The Canon of Medicine: Pharmacopia. It credits many of them to a variety of Arabic, Greek and Indian authors, and also includes some drugs imported from China, along with many of Avicenna's own original contributions. Using his own expertise, he was often critical of the descriptions given by previous authors and revised many of their descriptions.³⁷ --Great Books of the Islamic World

The Prince of Physicians, Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna) (b. 370/980) was born in Bukhara. By the age of ten he had learned the entire Quran as well as grammar and then began the study of logic and mathematics. Once these subjects were mastered, he studied physics, metaphysics and medicine. By the age of sixteen he had mastered all of the sciences of his day except metaphysics. While he had read Aristotle's Metaphysics over and over again and had even memorized it, he could not understand it until he read al-Farabi's commentary on it. Avicenna was then eighteen years old. He was favored by the ruler of Bukhara because of his mastery of medicine, but when he was thirty-two, he was forced to migrate because of the political situation in his home town area. He migrated to Jurjan on the southeast coast of the Caspian Sea in an attempt to join the court of the well-known Qabus ibn Wushmgir. This never materialized as the ruler had died in 1013 during Avicenna's travels to Jurjan. Avicenna then retired to a village near Jurjan where he was to meet his disciple-to-be, al-Juzjani. Al-Juzjani was devoted to Avicenna and was to write commentaries upon his works as well as to preserve copies of all of the master's writings. It was in Jurjan in 1012 that Avicenna wrote the beginning of his great medical text, The Canon (al-Qanun) on medicine. Avicenna remained in Jurjan for two or three years before moving to Rey in 405/1014 or 406/1015, a city near present day Tehran and from there to Hamadan in the northwest Iran. He became a minister in the Buyid Court of Shams al-Dawlah as well as the court physician. Once again Avicenna was obliged to migrate because of the unstable political conditions in Hamadan so he moved to Isfahan where he enjoyed a fifteen year period of peace, writing many of his major works at that time. Eventually, however, he was forced to migrate once again and moved back to

Hamadan where he died in 428/1037.

I found one of the most important chapters of this long-awaited English translation to be that entitled: On Diagnosis. According to all reports on the practical work of Avicenna, this is what he excelled at. As a practicing counselor, it was most helpful to me. The other chapter that offered me the most insight into possible modern day application was his entire section on Cosmetics. I highly recommend this book to those wanting to further develop the field of integrative medicine. It also has a great index of the healing properties of each of the entries.

To translate a book like Avicenna's Canon, with all those herbs and compounds old and scientific names to plain English, is such a monumental job that is beyond my apprehension... Ms. Bakhtiar makes it feel like a breeze, but this is no walk in a park... A must have for anyone into Oriental and Alternative Medicine.

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