Ethics of the Physician:
(Pre-) Modern Islamic Perspectives-

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The Islamic Tradition

**Theology (‘Aqidah)**

- Jurisprudence (fiqh)
- Ethics
- Theology (‘Aqidah)

* Practicing Rituals
* Jurist-physician (Averroes)

* Healer, Pre-destination
* Fatalism & medical treatment
(1) Pre-modern Sources

Ishaq B. Ali Al-Ruhawi (9th Century)
English translation:

Martin Levey (1976). Medical Ethics of Medieval Islam with Special Reference to Al-Ruhawi’s "Practical Ethics of the Physician". *American Philosophical Society*.

Earliest example of Arabic medical deontology

Interdisciplinary work: history of medicine, intercultural encounter (Greek & Arab Culture), philosophy, particularly ethics.

Religious identity of the author?

Reflecting the spirit of the book’s historical context

Assimilating Hellenistic/Greek knowledge with unique insights from Islamic /religious teachings.
(1) Pre-modern Sources

- Abu Bakr Al-Razi (d. 925)
- Ethics of the Physician (akhlaq al-Tabib)
(1) Pre-modern Sources

Taj l-Din al-Subki (d. 1370)

"Kitāb Muīd An-Nī'ām Wa-Mubīd An-Niqām"

The Restorer of Favours

And the

Restrainer of Chastisements

By

Tāj-Ad-Din

Abū Naṣr 'Abd-Allāh as-Subki

The Arabic Text with an Introduction and Notes.

Edited by

David W. Myhrman

Deacon at the University of Uppsala.

London.

Luzac & Co.

46 Great Russell Street W.C.

1908.
(1) Pre-modern Sources

- Books on Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh)
- Relevant references distributed throughout various chapters
- Exa. *Al-Shar’ al-Shareef ala al-Madhahib* (Introduction to Islamic Jurisprudence According to Schools of Thought)
- Ibn al-Hajj (d. 1336)
Contemporary Relevance

- Islamic Perspectives on the Principles of Biomedical Ethics.
(2) Modern Sources

- Muhammad Al-Bar & Hassan Shamsi Pasha
- The physician: His Ethics and Jurisprudence (*al-tabib*: *Adabuh wa fiqhuh*)
Religio-Scientific Institutions

The Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences (IOMS)
1984
Kuwait.

The Islamic Fiqh Academy (IFA)
1977
Mecca
Saudi Arabia.

The International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA)
1981
Jeddah
Saudi Arabia.
Main Topics

1. Theoretical Ethics/Metaethics
   - Epistemology of ethics
   - *Adab* genre: What makes a certain action/personal good or bad?
   - Sources of knowledge: (a) divine scripture, (b) human intellect (pre-modern or modern)

2. Practical/Applied Ethics
   - External aspects: Personal traits, appearance, voice modulation, etc.
   - Internal aspects: cultivating ethics
   - Ethical responsibility: conscientiousness, God-consciousness, accountability before God/legal authorities
Main Topics

- Professionalism
  - Al-Ruhawi (9th Century): Dignity of the Medical Profession
  - Warning against Quacks and Charlatans
  - Qualifying Examinations for Physicians
  - Taj I-Din al-Subki (d. 1370)
  - Practicing medicine prior to completing all requirements and earning the necessary credentials.

- Public policy and governance: calls for institutionalization
- Modern time: more stress high (Western) standards
- Confidentiality
- Paternalism versus autonomy: “Nobody is allowed to dispose of another’s property without their consent”
Main Topics

- Religious aspects
  - Interreligious encounter
  - Cross-gender relations: E.g. “Examine sensitive body parts when and as deemed necessary”
  - Minimum knowledge of religious rulings (*akham*) related to the practice of medicine
  - Modern bioethical issues and the new role of physician
  - **Social justice**: treating the rich and the poor
  - Modern time: understudied aspect, Muhammad Albar & the situation in the Gulf countries: Migrant labor
  - Problem of historical context: global economy, multinational pharmaceutical companies, etc.