

# Zakariya Razi (Rhazes) - The Physician of 9<sup>th</sup> AD

Azizur Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Humera Zaki<sup>2</sup>, Shabina Khatoun<sup>3</sup>, Farukh Hasan<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Mahiyatul Amraz, National Institute of Unani Medicine, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

<sup>2,3</sup> PG Scholar, Dept. of Mahiyatul Amraz, National Institute of Unani Medicine, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Mahiyatul Amraz, Markaz Unani Medical College and Hospital, Kozhikode, Kerala.

Corresponding Author: Humera Zaki

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## ABSTRACT

During the 9th to 13th century AD, medical science was especially developed by Iranian and Arab physicians. Zakariya Razi (865–925 AD) was a prominent physician in the 9<sup>th</sup> AD, flourished medicine with his cogent ideas and literature. He introduced a new pattern of treatment and diagnostic tools to medical science when the world was unaware. He has written many pages in various fields of medical science like *Kitāb al-ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* (The Comprehensive Book on Medicine), *Kitab ul Murshid* (The Guide), etc. His writings were considered as an ultimate reference in the world for a long time. Now a day, it is a need for time to explore and generalize his writings for research purposes and health assurance to mankind. In this manuscript, it is trying to gather his valuable works and contributions.

**Keywords:** Rhazes, philosophy, the guide, Razi, History of unani medicine

## INTRODUCTION

Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakariya Razi, also known as Rhazes, was a distinguished physician and philosopher from Iran. Although his early education focused on philosophy and alchemy, he transitioned to the field of medicine at the age of thirty, eventually rising to prominence as a key

figure during the Islamic Golden Age.<sup>[1]</sup> Razi authored over 224 works, including significant medical texts like *Kitāb al-ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* (The Comprehensive Book on Medicine) and *Kitab ul Murshid* (The Guide). His innovations in clinical practices, hospital design, and medical specialization greatly influenced both Eastern and Western medicine. This paper explores Razi's contributions, particularly his medical writings, and examines his lasting impact on modern healthcare.<sup>[2]</sup>

## MATERIALS & METHODS

The research study on the early life and works of Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakariya Razi, known in the Latin world as Rhazes, was conducted by following a systematic approach. The study aimed to explore his background, medical contributions, and philosophical works by analyzing historical texts, medical manuscripts, and scholarly sources.

This structured approach allowed for a thorough understanding of Razi's life and works, contextualizing his innovations and contributions within both the historical framework of the Islamic Golden Age and their lasting impact on modern medicine.

## Early life and Works of Rhazes

Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakariya Razi was born in 865AD in Ray, a town in Iran.<sup>[1]</sup> He is known in the Latin world as Rhazes. He was a philosopher, alchemist,

and musician in his early span of life. Before becoming a physician, he was an alchemist. [2,3] Earlier, he has been taught philosophy by Abu Zayd Ahmad Ibn Sahl Balkhi. At thirty, he studied medicine.[4] His teacher of medicine was a famous Persian physician and philosopher Ali Ibn Sahl Rabban Tabari.[2] After studying medical knowledge, Razi was appointed as director of the hospital in Ray during the reigning period of Mansur Ibn Ishaq. Because of his clinical expertise, Razi was again appointed as a director of the city hospital in Baghdad by Abbassid Caliph Al Muktafi. He also worked as a regal physician. He served his duties in Baghdad till the death of Caliph Al Muktafi (907 AD). After that, he came back to his

hometown and devoted himself as a physician. [5,6] But mostly he was involved to teach medical scholars and students. In the last days of his life, he became blind. He died in 925 AD. [7] In 9th AD, Razi had given the concept of a hospital and pointed out the best place for the establishment of the hospital. He introduced the idea of a specialty in medicine. [2]

Razi wrote over 224 books and treatises on medicine, alchemy, philosophy, and religion. Razi's name is famous for his medical works,[3] especially for his masterpieces *Kitāb al-ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* (The Comprehensive Book on Medicine).[8] His most notable books and treatises on medicine with descriptions are mentioned in Table. 1

**Table. 1 Notable works of Zakariya Razi on Medicine**

S.no	Book name	Description	Reference
1.	<i>Al-Jami' al-Kabir</i>	A Great Comprehensive book on diseases and their treatments	[2,9]
2.	<i>Kitab fil falij</i>	Paralysis related discussion	[2]
3.	<i>Kitab fil laqwa</i>	On Bell's palsy (facial paralysis)	[2, 10]
4.	Fi al-'Illah al-lati laha Yanjahu Juhhal al-Atibba' wa al-Nisa' Akthar min al-'Ulama'	The Reason Why the Ignorant Physicians and Old Women Have More Success (in treatment) than the Scholarly Learned Ones	[9]
5.	<i>Kitab fil hayyatul Ain</i>	A book about the shape of the eye	[2]
6.	<i>Ithbat al-Tibb</i>	Proofs to Medicine	[9]
7.	<i>Kitab fil hayyatul kabit</i>	Appearance of liver	[2,9]
8.	<i>Kitab fil hayyatul qalb</i>	Position and structure of the heart	[2,9]
9.	<i>Al-Madkhal Ila al-Tibb</i>	Introduction to Medicine	[9]
10.	<i>Kitab Fi Hay'at al-'Unthayayn</i>	On the anatomy of the Testicles	[2,9]
11.	<i>Kitab Fi Hay'at al-Sammakh</i>	On the Anatomy of the Orifice of the Ear	[2,9]
12.	<i>Kitab fil hayyatul Mafasil</i>	Appearance of joints	[2]
13.	<i>Kitab ul Mansoori</i>	Handbook of medical science written for the ruler Abu Salih Al Mansur Ibn Ishaq, in 903AD	[2,5,11]
14.	<i>Kitab ul fakhir fil tib</i> (The Manual of Magnificence)	Attributed to him, about disease and treatments	[2,9]
15.	<i>Kitab tibbul fuqra</i> ( <i>Kitab ila man la Yahduruha al-Tabib</i> )	Explanation of diseases and their possible treatment with universally available drugs	[2,12]
16.	<i>Kitab fi munafeul aza</i>	On physiology	[2]
17.	<i>Fi al-Aghrad al-Mumilah li Qulub Kathirin min al-Nas 'an Afadil al-Atibba' ila Akhissa'ihim</i>	What are the Reasons to Turn the Hearts of Public Away from Capable Worthy Physicians to the Unaware Disgraceful physicians	[9]
18.	<i>Maqala fil bahiq wal bars</i>	A treatise about leukoderma and Pityriasis	[2]
19.	<i>Kitab barus sa</i> (Cure in an Hour)	The short essay by Al-Razi concerning ailments that he claims can be cured within an hour's time.	[2,5]
20.	<i>Maqala fil aghziya mukhtasara</i>	A treatise on intake of less diet	[2]
21.	<i>Maqala fi abdalul advia</i>	Treatise on drug substitute	[2,9]
22.	<i>Kitab saidala al tib</i>	On Pharmacology	[2,9,13]
23.	<i>Taqasim-al-'ilal</i> (Classification of Diseases)	Known as <i>Taqsim wa al-Tashjir</i> (Dividing and Schematization of diseases).	[2,9]
24.	<i>Kitabul kafi fil tib</i>		[2]

25.	<i>Kitab fil dawa ul mus'hily wal muqi</i>	Book on emetics and laxative drugs	[2]
26.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-Jahiz fi Munaqadatihi al-Tibb</i>	Reply to al-Jahiz Concerning His Critiques of Medicine	[9]
27.	<i>Kitab ma-al Farq au ul Furooq au Kalam fil furooq bainul amraz</i>	On differential diagnosis of diseases	[2,14]
28.	<i>Al-Radd 'ala al-Nashi fi Naqdihi al-Tibb</i>	Reply to a Nashi Concerning His Critiques of Medicine	[9]
29.	<i>Risala fil hammam wa munafe wa muzare</i>	Article on harm and benefits of steam bath	[2]
30.	<i>Fi annahu Yanbaghi li al-Tabib an Yatalatt afa li Isal al-Nas ila Shahawatihim</i>	The Physician should be more Flexible with his Patients in allowing them to Eat What Their Likes in Moderation	[9]
31.	<i>Maqala fi ilaj ul ain bil hadeed</i>	Dissertation on treatment with iron	[2]
32.	<i>Kitabul murshid wa-al-fusul (the Guide or the book of Aphorism)</i>	Short general treatise based on his earlier observations and meant as an introduction of basic principles for students of medicine	[2,15,16,17]
33.	<i>Kitab Fi Mihnat al-Tabib wa kayfa yanbaghi 'an yakun</i>	The Examination of the Physician and How He Should Undertake	[9]
34.	<i>Kitab fil- qolanj</i>	Book on intestinal colic	[2]
35.	<i>Al-Tibb al-Muluki</i>	Royal Medicine	[9]
36.	<i>Maqala fil qolanj har or Kitab al- qolanj sagheer</i>	Treatise on inflammatory intestinal colic	[2]
37.	<i>Al-Qarabadhin al-Saghir</i>	The Small Abridged Pharmacopeia	[9]
38.	<i>Al-Qarabadhin al-Kabir</i>	The Large Abridged Pharmacopeia	[9]
39.	<i>Kitab fi alalul mafasil wa niqras wa irqun nisa</i>	Book on joint diseases, gout, and sciatica, a compilation of 22 chapters	[2]
40.	<i>Fi anna al-Tabib al-Hadhiq Laysa Yaqdiru 'ala Ibra' al- 'Ilal Kulliha wa anna Dhalika Laysa fi Wus'i al-Bashar</i>	Book on the Inability of the Expert Physician to heal entire Diseases as this is not Within His Power	[9]
41.	<i>Waja ul Mafasil</i>	Short book on arthralgia	[2]
42.	<i>Dafe 'Madarr al-Aghdhiyyah</i>	How to Prevent Harmful Nutriments	[9]
43.	<i>Al-Judari wa al-Hasbah</i>	Smallpox and Measles	[9]
44.	<i>Maqala fil bawaseer wal Shiqaq fil Miqad</i>	Treatise on piles and fissures in ano	[9]
45.	<i>Fi Tawallud al-Hasat</i>	Description of Development of Stone in Bladder or Kidney	[9]
46.	<i>Fi al-Fasd</i>	Phlebotomy (blood-letting)	[9]
47.	<i>Al-Saydanah</i>	Pharmacology related explanation	[9,18]
48.	<i>Kitab Sifat ul Bimaristan</i>	A book about characteristics of Hospital	[9]
49.	<i>At'imat al-Marda</i>	Discussion of special Diets for the Patient	[9]
50.	<i>Maqala fi -Sikanjabin wa Manafi wa madhara</i>	Treatise on the Oxytel, its advantages, and disadvantages	[2,9]
51.	<i>'Ilajat al-'Ubna</i>	On Management of Itching	[2,9]
52.	<i>Kitab fi Al-A'mal bi al-Hadid wal jabr</i>	Refers to surgical procedures by iron	[9]
53.	<i>Kitab fi Asqal ul Adviat ul Murakkabah</i>	Book on weight and dosage of medicine	[9]
54.	<i>Fi al-'Atar wa al-Anbajat wa al-Adkhan</i>	Book on the aromatic plants, Mangos, and smokes	[9]
55.	<i>Kitab Siratul Hukma</i>	Refers to the behavior of physicians	[2]
56.	<i>Taqdim al-Fakihah Qabla al-Ta'am wa Ta'khiruha Minhu</i>	The Priority of Taking Fruit Before or After Taking the Meals	[9]
57.	<i>Kitab fi Aidha hal illata allati biha tadfa al hawam bil taghzi wa marrat ud tadbeer</i>	Book on nourishment and care to people	[9]
58.	<i>Fi ma Jara Baynahu wa Bayn Jarir al-Tabib fi al-Tut 'Aqib al-</i>	The discussion between him and, Jarir (physician) concerning the preference of taking	[9]

	<i>Batikh</i>	mulberry after taking a melon	
59.	<i>Kitab fil bah</i>	Advantages and disadvantages of sexual intercourse	[9]
60.	<i>Maqala Fi al- Zukam wa -al Nazlah</i>	About common cold and Catarrh	[9]
61.	<i>Ktab fi al- Wajaul Mafasil</i>	A short book on joint pain	[2]
62.	<i>Fi Wujub al-Istifragh fi Awa'il al-Hummiyat</i>	On the Necessity of elimination at the Beginning of Fevers	[9]
63.	<i>Fi al-'Illah al-lati laha Yaz'am Juhhal al-Atibba' 'ann al-Thalj Yu'attish</i>	On What Ignorant Physicians Considered about Snow Causing a Person to become thirsty	[9]
64.	<i>Kitab fi Illat</i>	Book about Diseases	[9]
65.	<i>Fi al-'Ilal al-Qatilah li 'Izamiha li Zuhuriha Baghtatan</i>	Book on Fatal Diseases and Their Unexpectedness and Strength of Appearances	[9]
66.	<i>Resala fi anah la ujad sharab ghair maskar yafi be jamee Af'alul shar'r ul Maskar ul Mahmood fil badan</i>	Letter about Alcohol Intoxication	[9]
67.	<i>Kitab fi fazl ul Ain ala Sairul hawaas</i>	Book related to eye	[9]
68.	<i>Fi 'Illat al-Mawt al-Wahi min al-Sumum</i>	On the Death from Poisons	[9]
69.	<i>Fi Anna al-Himyah al-Mufritah Darrah bi al-Asihha'</i>	The Excessive Dieting is Injurious to the Health	[9]
70.	<i>Fi anna li al-Tin al-Mutanaqqal bihi Manafi'</i>	On the Benefits of terra-cotta (baked clay)	[9]
71.	<i>Talkhees kitab al Ulul wal Aeraz</i>	Summary about complications	[9]
72.	<i>Talkhees kitab al Aza al Alimah le jalinoos</i>	Summary of Galen Book	[9]
73.	<i>Fi 'Illat Ta'tish al-Samak</i>	Book on Why eating of Fish Causes Thirst	[9]
74.	<i>Fi al-'Illat al-lati laha Sar al-Na'im Yu'riq Akthar min al-Yaqzan</i>	Discussion about Why anyone Sweats More during Sleeping than the wakeful state	[9]
75.	<i>Ikhtesar kitab Hilat ul bar le jalinoos</i>	Abbreviations of Galen Book	[9]
76.	<i>Fi al-'Illat al-lati Sara al-Kharif Mumridan</i>	Refer to causes of People Become ill More in Autumn Season	[9]
77.	<i>Ikhtesar kitab al Nabz ul Kabeer le jalinoos</i>	Short book of Galen book on Pulsology	[9]
78.	<i>Kitab fi Istefragh Al Mahmoomeen Qabl al Nudj</i>	A book about elimination in anxious people before concoction	[9]
79.	<i>Fi al-'Illah al-lati laha Taraka (Ba'du) al-Nasi Wa Ru'a'uhum al-Tabib wa in Kana Hadhiqan</i>	The Reasons Why Some Common People and Others Leave a Physician while He is a Skillful Physician	[9]

Razi has also written books on cosmology, theology, logic, mathematics, and philosophy. He thought that a good physician must also know philosophy. His most important philosophical works are a commentary on Plato's Timaeus. As he believed in self-determining thinking, he thought that every person could think by himself what to do or not. [19] He was also aware of clinical trials because he divided his patients suffering from meningitis into two groups. He treated one group with

bloodletting while the other group did not get any treatment.[20] He also prepared case history; as a practicing clinician (a collection of over 900 case histories recorded by his students and exists with the title of 'The Book of Experience or Casebook').[21]

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the systematic review of Razi's contributions are showing that Razi has given a lot of knowledge about

medicine to the world. Given the wide range of information in terms of medicine, philosophy, chemistry, cosmology, etc. Out of 224 books on different topics; Razi has written over 79 books on medicine and related topics. The researcher should explore his medical writings to serve the humanity.

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