

Principles of Prophetic Medicine According to Mahmud Nazhim al-Nasimi

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Abstract

Prophetic medicine describes various methods of treatment and prevention of diseases recommended by the Prophet SAW. The Prophet was seen suggesting the use of certain natural ingredients such as honey, tamar and al-habbab al-sauda' to the his companions as a solution to their health problems. Recently, this aspect of holiness that accompanies the Prophet's words has been exploited by some parties with the aim of promoting their products that contain the ingredients mentioned in the hadith. Some traders who sell these ingredients directly are also seen not to be left behind in publicizing the business with the same modus operandi. Not only that, some of the generality of the hadith phrases of the Prophet (SAW) are also used arbitrarily to gain the interest of the buyers without taking the understanding of Islamic scholars and modern medical experts as a backup in interacting with the relevant hadiths. The objective of this article is to highlight the principles of prophetic medicine as espoused by Mahmud Nazhim al-Nasimi in his work "Al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-'Ilm al-Hadith". The analysis is done based on deductive approach and comparison of the principles he has proposed with the comments of Islamic scholars in the works of hadith compilations. The results of the study found that the principles of prophetic medicine stated by al-Nasimi such as the incorporation of elements of revelation and ijtihad in prophetic medicine were found to be in line with the ideas that had been stated by some early Islamic scholars.

Keywords: *Al-Tibb al-Nabawi, Prophetic Medicine, Principle, al-Nasimi*

INTRODUCTION

Al-tibb al-nabawi or prophetic medicine is a term that refers to the set of hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) pertaining to medical and health issues. Such hadiths have also been the focus of early Islamic scholars through the compilations they have carried out on the hadiths found to belong to this category. Some of them compiled these *al-tibb al-nabawi* hadiths in a special chapter of hadith master works with chapter titles such as *Kitab al-'Ayn* or *Kitab al-Tibb* (Malik, 1985; al-Bukhari, 1422H; Abu Dawud, 2009; Ibn Majah, 2009). Meanwhile, some other scholars also took a different approach by compiling them in a special work under the title *Al-Tibb al-Nabawi*, as has been done by past figures such as Ibn al-Sunni (2012), al-Dhahabi (1990), al-Suyuti (2002) and others.

According to Manshur (2011), it can be inferred that the collection of *al-tibb al-nabawi* hadiths cover two main themes namely; *al-tibb al-wiqa'i* (preventive medicine) and *al-tibb al-'ilaji* (curative medicine). The majority of *al-tibb al-nabawi* hadiths fall under the category of *al-tibb al-wiqa'i* but the works of early scholars saw their focus on *al-tibb al-'ilaji* exceeding the focus given to *al-tibb al-wiqa'i* (al-Nasimi, 1996). In the category of *al-tibb al-'ilaji* or treatment of diseases, al-Bukhari (1422H) narrated that the Prophet SAW has suggested some treatment methods such as cupping and the use of *al-kayy* (cauterization), as well as proposing the use of various natural materials, such as the use of water for fever treatment, honey for diarrhea treatment, costus root for pain in the side (al-Bukhari, 1422H & Muslim, 1433), sheep tail fat for sciatica treatment (Ibn Majah, 2009) and others. In fact, the use of these natural materials is in other words an access to medicines that existed at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the early generations. Medical science at that time, especially among the Arabs, was not very developed, so they relied on treatment methods inherited from generation to generation, or

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obtained through their observation of the practice of the civilization that was popular around them (Muhammad Akmalludin, 2022).

The rapid development of technology and information in modern times has had a positive impact on the new discoveries of conventional medicines that have turned out to be effective in treating and preventing various diseases. The modern medicines produced today are more complex in nature; unlike the prophetic medicines that make natural ingredients a direct antidote to disease (Yuan et al., 2016). Even so, the element of holiness that exists in prophetic medicines causes it to still be given attention, especially to make it an alternative and complementary antidote to certain diseases. This can clearly be seen in some major hospitals in Malaysia that have established a special division called the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Division, which plays a supportive role to the current medical practices (Ministry of Health Malaysia, n.d.).

On the other hand, some individuals of the society are seen to be exploiting these hadiths related to prophetic medicine with the aim of gaining worldly benefits through their business activities. Some of them also rely on the generality of the wording of the Prophet's hadiths to grab the attention of buyers and sell their products, without taking the understanding of past Islamic scholars and modern medical experts as the basis for understanding these hadith-reports with a proper and thorough methodology (Hassan, 2023; Mokhtar, 2022 & Osman et al., 2019).

Undoubtedly, scholarly discussions on theoretical and practical concerns in prophetic medicine are significant components of various Islamic works from the classical and modern periods. Particularly thorough editions in the “prophetic medicine” genre were published in the twentieth century. When reworking a classical or mediaeval text of the prophetic medicine genre, the current edition engages in a broader process of “conveyance.” This process does not entail the mere substitution of words and phrases from one language to another (in this instance, from classical or mediaeval to contemporary linguistic constructs). Instead, it involves discerning the placement of the secondary text in relation to the primary text, as well as the socio-cognitive and intellectual networks associated with each. Within al-Suyuti’s *Ma Rawabu al-Wa’un fi Akhbar al-Ta’un*, the editor Muhammad ‘Ali al-Baz (1997), who is prominently recognised on the book’s cover for his expertise in the field of medicine, meticulously reconstructs the historical events and the importance of the treatise. Al-Baz also provides a modified presentation of the edited book, offering a thorough examination of its substance and context. This edition pertains to a type of literature that involves the modification and re-publication of mediaeval works authored by renowned religious experts, which mostly discuss the topic of “prophetic medicine” and are subjected to contention.

The edition and publication of this “prophetic medicine” genre occurred alongside the surges of Islamisation and the increasingly religious climate of the twentieth century. Muṣṭafa Mahmud gained recognition as a notable speaker in different Arabic media outlets. In the introduction he penned for an edition of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s *al-Tibb al-Nabawi*, Mahmud prompts the reader to reflect on his connection to medicine, stating, “My relationship to medicine is a close and intimate one. Medicine to me is a history, a family, a lifetime, and a study, which I have loved, indulged in, and followed [closely]” (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, 1989). Other physicians, although their bibliographies may be shorter, were also eager to showcase their medical expertise on the covers of their books on prophetic medicine (al-Barr, n.d.). For instance, Muhammad ‘Ali al-Barr included his medical credentials in his edition of Ibn Habib al-Andalusi’s treatise on prophetic medicine. Similarly, ‘Abd Allah ‘Abd al-Razzaq Mas‘ud al-Sa‘id (2000) self-published a collection where he relied on the work of Ibn Qayyim without directly editing the volume. For all intents and purposes, ‘Abd al-Basit Sayyid (2000) presents himself as a professor of biological physics and botany in his book about plants and herbal remedies in the Prophetic traditions.

In a similar vein, Mahmud al-Nasimi, a medical doctor published a book entitled *al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-‘Ilm al-Hadith*. The primary text of hadith or Prophetic traditions form the core of the Mahmud al-Nasimi’s text, which seeks to establish its credibility by offering a contemporary interpretation of these traditions using current medical knowledge. The modern scientific narrative serves as the purpose for the secondary text and forms the true foundation for its legitimacy. On a deeper level of the Islamic narrative, Mahmud al-Nasimi has the ability to explore different approaches in interpreting and filtering the Prophetic tradition, making it

harmonious with medical science. Hence, in short, the purpose of this article is to reveal the principles of Prophetic medicine according to Mahmud al-Nasimi. Essentially, this article explores the transformation of the classical and mediaeval corpus' intellectual influence and the way their text is replicated within the context of a contemporary medical discussion of Mahmud al-Nasimi. Examining the perceived and formulated epistemic value of the primary text is essential during the editing process, regardless of the intellectual tradition it belongs to. The editing process inherently involves choosing a text to edit and advocating for a particular value of that text. However, the assessment and assignment of this value are contingent upon the underlying paradigmatic structure in which the editing takes place. In short, this study will encompass three main aspects: the perception of the primary text and its influence on shaping the identity of the Mahmud al-Nasimi's corpus, the connection between the al-Nasimi's text and modern medical discourse, and the various discursive strategies employed by al-Nasimi in this process of negotiation.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The correct method of understanding the principles of prophetic treatments and medicines is usually discussed in past works of hadith synthesis, such as *al-Mufhim* by al-Qurtubi (1996), *Syarab Shahib Muslim* by al-Nawawi (1392H) and *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (1390H). In addition, contemporary *al-tibb al-nabawi* works also discuss this issue extensively, such as *al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-'Ilm al-Hadith* by al-Nasimi (1996) and *al-Haqai'iq al-Tibbiyyah fi al-Islam* by 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kilani (1996). Instead, this article aims to highlight the principles of prophetic medicine as espoused by al-Nasimi, a contemporary doctor of medicine who lived during the 1980s. The scope of this study is limited to his work titled "*Al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-'Ilm al-Hadith*" as it is a work written to elaborate on his ideas in understanding the concept of *al-tibb al-nabawi* and its relation to modern medical science. This principle review is further minimized by only examining the third volume of this work because it has been devoted to discussing the chapter on the treatment of diseases and medicines according to *al-tibb al-nabawi* and modern medicine. While the previous two chapters are not included in the scope of this study because both of them only discuss the chapter regarding the prevention of disease (*al-tibb al-wiqai'i*) solely. In addition, a comparison will be made between the principles of prophetic medicine expounded by al-Nasimi and the commentaries of Islamic scholars in the works of hadith compilations in order to gain a more complete understanding of the issue under discussion.

AL-NASIMI AND THE WORK *AL-TIBB AL-NABAWI WA AL-'ILM AL-HADITH*

Based on the author's search, there is no complete information regarding the biography of al-Nasimi. A small number of works that compile biographies of scholars present his biography with information that is too brief. In general, his full name is Mahmud Nazhim al-Nasimi (1996) and he was the Chairman of the Aleppo Doctors Syndicate in his day (Zaino, 1997). Before delving into the field of medicine, he had first studied the science of Sharia (al-Nasimi, 1996), so much so that he already had a solid foundation in this science. In addition, he also produced several works of writing related to Islam and medical science, such as his famous works; "*Al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-'Ilm al-Hadith*", "*Al-Shiyam Baina al-Tibb wa al-Islam*" (al-Nasimi, 1963) and "*Hukum al-Istifadah min A'da' al-Mawta*".

His work entitled "*Al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-'Ilm al-Hadith*" is a three-volume work that aims to analyze the traditions of *al-tibb al-nabawi* from the perspective of current medical science. In the preamble, he states some of the features of the work such as the existence of the discussion of Sharia rulings to further enhance the benefits that can be obtained by the readers. The work also includes only those hadiths of *al-tibb al-nabawi* that are *maqbul* and does not include any narrations of a spurious or very weak level (*da'if jiddan*). As for the hadiths that were considered to be mildly weak (*da'if yasir*), he included them wherever there was a need to do so along with a clearly stated indication of their weakness either in the text of the work or in the footnotes. In addition, he also devoted the initial part of his work to briefly explaining the principles of *mustalah al-hadith* science and discussing the validity of the previous works of *al-tibb al-nabawi* to their authors. He also devoted the first two volumes of the work to discussing the hadiths of *al-tibb al-nabawi* related to the prevention of diseases and devoted the last volume to perfecting the special discussion regarding the treatment of diseases and the prophetic remedies (al-Nasimi, 1996).

AL-NASIMI'S ELABORATION METHODOLOGY OF THE HADITHS RELATED TO THE PROPHETIC MEDICINE

Scholars from the classical to contemporary era analysed medical hadith through several reiterations spanning extended centuries, in order to address societal needs and criticisms. These interpretations and comments served two purposes: firstly, to establish the credibility of the hadith of medicine in the midst of intricate intellectual dynamics, and secondly, to advocate for the hermeneutic approach that Sunni scholars considered was most effective in preserving the true essence of hadith. Although recent scholarly research on the genre of *al-tibb al-nabawi* has shed light on the development, transmission, authentication, and application of these literatures in various fields such as law, medicine, health, and food or nutrition, there are still several unanswered questions that require further investigation.

In elaborating on the hadiths of *al-tibb al-nabawi* that contain the Prophet's suggestions regarding natural ingredients used in the treatment and prevention of diseases, al-Nasimi is found to be adhering to the following methodology:

Stating the *Masdar* (Source) of the Hadith and Its Level of Authenticity

When presenting two traditions regarding the use of henna in the treatment of some ailments related to the soles of the feet such as *athlete's foot*, namely the hadith: "No one complained to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) of pain in the head but he said: use cupping, and no one complained of pain in both feet but he said: use henna" (Abu Dawud, 2009) and the hadith "No wound or thorn befell the Messenger of Allah (SAW) but he would put henna on it" (al-Tirmidhi, 1975), al-Nasimi clearly states the source of these two traditions. He quotes the first tradition from al-Bukhari in his *Tarikh* and Abu Daud in his *Sunan* while the second tradition is quoted from al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Abu Daud and Ahmad. Not only that, he also cites the level of validity of these two narrations based on the assessment that has been perfected by the scholars of hadith science (al-Nasimi, 1996).

Review the Details of the Natural Ingredients Used as Prophetic Medicines

In describing the hadith: "Indeed, the best thing for you to treat with is cupping and *al-qust al-babri*" (al-Bukhari, 1422H), al-Nasimi (1996) reviews the meaning of the term "*al-qust*" mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad in the hadith. *Al-qust* according to him refers to a piece of wood from the root of the costus tree that lives in the Indian sub-continent, especially in Kashmir and China. Traders used to bring it to the Arabian Peninsula by sea, hence it is known as sea costus, or also known as Indian costus. Traditionally, the white-colored costus was called sea or Arabian costus, while the black-colored one was known as Indian costus. Al-Nasimi (1996) also did the same thing with other natural materials such as *al-babbab al-sauda'*, senna, antimony and others.

Describes the Prophetic Medicines in The Perspective of Current Medical Science.

This methodology is the cornerstone of his work. Al-Nasimi (1996) said: "The specialty of this work compared to previous works on *al-tibb al-nabawi* is its numerous and extensive discussions, in addition to the modern medical findings that accompany it." It can also be seen how al-Nasimi placed the phrase *al-tibb* (medicine) in most chapter headings in this work, such as *al-shiyam wa al-tibb* (fasting and medicine), *al-khitan wa al-tibb* (circumcision and medicine), *al-naum baina al-islam wa al-tibb* (sleep between Islam and medicine) and others. This proves al-Nasimi's commitment to summarizing all the contents of *al-tibb al-nabawi* and detailing it in the perspective of current medical science.

As for the prophetic medicines, al-Nasimi also elaborates on them by taking modern scientific studies as among the main sources to understand the related hadiths more thoroughly and comprehensively. For example, when reviewing the hadith: "Whoever eats seven seeds of *'ajwah* dates in the morning, then poison and sorcery will not harm him on that day" (al-Bukhari, 1422H), he points out the reasons why this recommendation was expressed by the Prophet Muhammad by referring to the evidence of related scientific studies. According to him, dates are proven to be effective in preventing the harm of poison through its high glucose content. It will be used by the liver to produce glucuronic acid which is one of the important

compounds in the process of stopping the impact of harmful metabolic materials such as toxins on the human body (al-Nasimi, 1996).

The same methodology is also used in describing the hadith about the use of honey in the treatment of diarrhea (al-Bukhari, 1422H & Muslim, 1433H). He emphasized that the purgative properties of honey are beneficial to patients suffering from diarrhea due to indigestion. This is practiced by current medicine which gives purgative ingredients to patients experiencing indigestion, such as sodium sulfate and others dissolved in water. In fact, according to him, honey is among the best purgative substances due to its ability to cleanse the intestines due to indigestion and prevent the effects of food poisoning at the same time through the antibacterial function contained in it (al-Nasimi, 1996).

THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPHETIC MEDICINE ACCORDING TO AL-NASIMI

Al-Nasimi has put forward some of the principles of prophetic medicine through a discussion of the hadiths that contain the Prophet's suggestion to use certain ingredients in the treatment and prevention of diseases. The author summarizes these principles as follows:

Combining Elements of Revelation and Ijtihad in Prophetic Medicine

In general, matters of progress and worldly management are subject to the wisdom, experience and studies carried out by mankind itself. Islam, which came through the Prophet Muhammad SAW, never prevented any form of progress and development built on human management that uses the intelligence of his mind to the maximum. This can be seen in the famous hadith *talqih al-nakhl*, where the Prophet said: "You know better (what is best) for your world affairs" (Muslim, 1433H). Nonetheless, within the freedom of *ijtihad* granted, religion still guides people on ethical and moral aspects (al-Nasimi, 1996). The hadith about the pollination of palms exemplifies an inaccuracy that was subsequently identified by human observation rather than divine revelation. The underlying principle of this hadith is to emphasise that it is not within the scope of the Prophet's mission to actively contribute to the advancement of "technology" through divine revelation. Instead, the human empirical experience is intended to be the sole method for technological advancement. In other words, every worldly activity carried out needs to adhere to the moral laws regulated by the Sharia, such as staying away from elements of oppression, usury, and maintaining reasonable social boundaries (Jam, 2017). At the level of the mainstream discourse, Kassim presents a dichotomy among Muslim scholars about the imperative and non-imperative nature of Prophet Muhammad's *ijtihad* or prophetic deliberation. Certain scholars advocate for the direct involvement of the Prophet in *ijtihad*, encompassing both Shariah and worldly problems. In contrast, others contend that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is solely obligated to exercise *ijtihad* in situations pertaining to the material world (Kassim, 1989).

Likewise, in spurring the advancement of medical technology and health care, all these matters are left to humans to develop them and sharpen their benefits. However, in support of the prophetic medicines and treatments that have been suggested by the Prophet SAW in the hadith, al-Nasimi is of the view that they were not solely created through the personal *ijtihad* of the Prophet SAW alone, in fact there are elements of revelation in some of the practices of the Prophet SAW in this regard. In fact, according to al-Nasimi the prophetic remedies include elements of revelation and *ijtihad* at the same time, but both can be distinguished through the essence of the hadith as hinted by the Prophet.

For example, according to al-Nasimi, the hadith regarding the use of *al-kam'ab* (desert truffle): "*Al-kam'ab* is among *al-man* and its water is a healer for the eyes" (al-Bukhari, 1422H) is a revelation from Allah SWT to the Prophet (SAW) and should not be considered as one of the *ijtihad* of the Prophet (SAW) as a human being. This is because the use of *al-kam'ab* in eye treatment was never practiced by any human civilization at the time of the Prophet SAW and the companions, rather the source of this information was certainly obtained by way of revelation. On the other hand, the use of *al-qust* in the treatment of some diseases can be considered as an *ijtihad* of the Prophet SAW as a human being, as it was common practice at that time to obtain such material from India through traders who came by sea (al-Nasimi, 1996).

The distinction between these two elements needs to be clearly understood because the method of interacting with them is different. Medicines obtained through the path of revelation should be believed to be effective in treating the stated ailment. However, the method of deriving maximum benefit from them should be clarified and studied by the relevant experts. As for the remedies obtained through *ijtihad* and built upon the practicalities of society, their efficacy is certainly subject to dispute and is subject to absolute validation by experts in the field. Moreover, many of the hadiths that contain hints of prophetic medicines were mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (SAW) without accompanying them with details regarding the rate of intake or the specific method of use. However, the companions did not raise any issues regarding these matters. This proves that the space for *ijtihad* was opened by the Prophet for the companions to use these medicines based on the practicalities of the surrounding community that they knew (al-Nasimi, 1996).

This distinction of the elements of revelation and *ijtihad* in the prophetic medicines described by al-Nasimi has in fact been initiated by early scholars such as al-Khattabi. Al-Khattabi (1988) said: "There are two types of medicine: *tibb qiyasi* i.e. the medicine of the Greeks which is practiced by most humans in various parts of the world and Arabic and Indian medicine which is a medicine based on experience... if you notice, most of the Prophet's explanations regarding diseases are in accordance with the views practiced by the Arabs, but some of them are specific and then related to the prophetic knowledge obtained through revelation. Indeed, that part overcomes everything that doctors, as well as clever sages, understand. Some of those healing methods may also involve the element of taking blessings from his prayers, his charm and his saliva spray (*al-nafath*). All that he said and did in those parts was right and good through the protection of Allah for him, so that he did not say and do anything but the truth."

The Differences in the Meanings of Medicines and Diseases Follow the Balance of the Times

Any individual who interacts with the hadiths related to the Prophetic remedies and diseases declared by the Prophet SAW should be aware of some of the differences that exist in the meanings of the terms used by the Prophet SAW and the early generations with the terms used in the modern period. Some of the terms meant by the Prophet SAW sometimes refer to certain meanings that differ from what is understood today. For example, natural ingredients such as *al-qust al-hindi* or *al-'ud al-hindi* carry the same meaning according to the understanding of the early generations. Both were understood in their time to mean the root of the costus tree used in the treatment of some diseases as stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. However, nowadays the term *al-'ud al-hindi* refers to the *karas* tree which is the main source of *agarwood*. It is in high demand as it is utilized by the industrial sector in the production of fragrance oil and clover (al-Nasimi, 1996). This fact is supported by al-Kasymiri (2005); he said: "*Al-qust al-hindi* is what is obtained from Kasymir. Its meaning is *kust* (costus), while *al-'ud al-hindi* (*aker* - agarwood) is not what is meant here." In fact, this distinction should be emphasized so that misunderstandings among the public do not continue to spread and worsen.

In addition, al-Nasimi also elaborated on the concept of *al-tanadburat* (syndromes) in the traditions of *al-tibb al-nabawi*. This is because some of the names of diseases stated by the Prophet SAW refer to syndromes or symptoms found in the body of the infected patient. While the name of the disease is understood with different meanings according to the current understanding of medical science. For example, the disease *dhat al-janb* stated in the hadith refers to *dhat al-janb ghair haqiqi* according to classical medicine, i.e. the pain that arises in the part of the human stomach due to the trapping of a strong and painful wind of bloating between the ribs, instead *al-qust* crushed and mixed with heated oil, then swept over the affected part or can also be licked, was found to be useful in treatment according to classical medicine (al-Kahhal, 1955). However, *dhat al-janb* in modern terms refers to the disease *pleurisy* which refers to the inflammation of the two large tissues that separate the lungs and the human chest wall (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2015).

In addition, al-Nasimi also emphasized that sometimes one disease name stated by classical medicine refers to several series of diseases understood according to modern medicine. This is due to the limitations of information regarding the basic causes of most disease occurrences at the time. In addition, discoveries related to bacteria and the study of disease diagnosis only emerged after the 19th century, so the drugs used on the side of classical medicine and *al-tibb al-nabawi* only played the role of treating the symptoms of the disease or relieving it alone (symptomatic treatments), and did not treat the underlying causes of the disease (al-Nasimi,

1996). In conclusion, every disease and treatment hinted at by the Prophet SAW and the classical works of medicine needs to be filtered first based on modern scientific findings that have been proven by relevant experts.

The Generality of the Text in *Al-Tibb Al-Nabawi* Hadiths Does Not Overwhelm the Overall Meaning

Undoubtedly, some of the phrases in the hadiths related to the Prophetic medicine sometimes come in a generalized form. This generality has led some to think that the Prophet was referring to the meaning of the whole thing in general without any boundaries. For example, there are several hadiths that describe the use of the word *shifa'* (healer) in the *nakirah* form with reference to certain natural substances, while emphasizing its efficacy to cure all diseases. Among them are the hadith: "In *al-habbab al-sauda'* there is a cure for every disease except *al-sam* i.e. death" (al-Bukhari, 1422H) and the hadith: "You should use *al-sana* and *al-sannut* because they have a cure for every disease except *al-sam*" (Ibn Majah, 1996). Moreover, there are hadiths that specify some natural substances as healers and do not specify others, such as the hadith: "Healers are found in three things: cupping, drinking honey or *al-kayy* (cauterization) and I forbid my ummah from *al-kayy*" (al-Bukhari, 1422H). Therefore, this generality needs to be supported by a correct method that coincides with the Arabic language method. This is elaborated by al-Nasimi in his work as follows:

***Al-Syifa'* in Arabic Carries Two Meanings Namely Healer and Nurse**

Al-Nasimi emphasized that the Arabic word *al-syifa'* can refer to the meaning of a healer or antidote to something. *Al-syifa'* needs to be understood with this meaning especially when it is attributed to Allah SWT, as He says in the Quran (al-Syu'ara': 26:80): "And if I am sick, it is He who heals me." In addition, *al-syifa'* can also refer to the meaning of a nurse to something whether the treatment is successful or otherwise. Thus, the term *al-syifa'* in the hadith can be understood with the second meaning i.e. the nurse or remedy to the disease. This means that the three things that become *al-syifa'* as stated by the Prophet Muhammad in the above hadith refer to their ability to treat or be a remedy to certain diseases, thus denying their generality due to the nature of the treatment or remedy exposed to the possibility of successfully curing the disease or vice versa (al-Nasimi, 1996). This fact of al-Nasimi's is seen to be in line with the views of early scholars such as Ibn al-Athir in his work (Ibn al-Athir, 1979).

The Use of the Concept of *Al-Qashr Al-Idafi* in the Hadith Related to the Prophetic Medicine

The concept of *al-qashr al-idafi* is one of the debates that exist in the science of *balaghah*. It refers to the recognition or specialization of some facts to something without excluding the rest (al-Jarim & Amin, n.d.). This style of language is usually used in Arabic to draw an individual's attention to the fact that is being mentioned without intending total recognition. For example, the hadith: "Healing is found in three things: Drinking honey, cupping and hot iron. I forbade my Ummah from practicing medicine with a hot iron sling" (al-Bukhari, 1422H) seems to describe the recognition of healing to three methods of treatment only. However, this is not the meaning intended by the Prophet SAW. In fact, reality testifies that there are various drugs and treatments that people use apart from the three methods mentioned in this hadith. In addition, the Prophet himself prescribed different medicines and suggested different treatments to many companions in different situations. Thus, the real purpose of the Prophet (SAW) was to emphasize the importance and efficacy of these three methods of treatment, in addition to drawing the attention of the public to hear and realize the importance of these methods, not with the intention of presenting the cure of diseases through these three methods alone (al-Asqalani, 1390H).

The Use of the Concept of *Takhshis Al-'Am* in Understanding Traditions Related to the Prophetic Medicine

Takhshis al-'am or specializing the generality is one of the main discussions in the science of *Ushul al-Fiqh*. This method is widely used in understanding the generality that exists in religious texts. Many of the scholars of *Ushul al-Fiqh* are of the view that acting on a generality in a text is not required before examining the existence

of a special argument that specializes it (al-Ghazali, 1994). This is because the arguments of Sharia regarding a matter are found scattered in the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, so the related arguments need to be compiled first so that a more complete conclusion can be determined (al-Nasimi, 1996). In fact, most of the general propositions have their particulars including the hadiths related to the Prophetic medicine itself. There are several propositions that contain a hint that the Prophet's statement about certain ingredients being able to cure every disease should not be understood with a general meaning. For example, the hadith: "Every disease has a remedy, if the remedy is suitable, the disease will be cured with the permission of Allah *'azza waja'*" (Muslim, 1433H) implies the need to intensify studies and experiments so that more remedies can be identified to treat more diseases. Thus, if one type of material only is enough to treat all disease plans, of course the Prophet SAW would not require the suitability of drugs for certain diseases as a basis for effectiveness in the treatment of the disease (al-Nasimi, 1996).

In addition, there is also a clear hadith passage that ties the suitability of the medicine or treatment to the disease it seeks to treat. In describing some of the best types of medicine or treatment methods, the Prophet SAW said: "If there is anything good in any of your medicines, then it is in cupping, or drinking honey, or the use of a hot iron appropriate to the disease, while I dislike the use of a hot iron" (al-Bukhari, 1422H & Muslim, 1433H). The phrase "a hot iron suitable for the disease" proves that the benefit of a particular medicine or treatment is subject to its suitability for the disease being treated, thus denying the fact regarding the ability of one type of material to treat all forms of disease (al-Kasymiri, 2005). In addition, the Prophet (SAW) also emphasized that there are incurable diseases such as *al-haram* (old age sickness) (Abu Dawud, 2009; al-Tirmidhi, 1975 & Ibn Majah, 2009), contrary to the generality of the hadith which states that one type of material alone is sufficient to treat all diseases is also unable to cure old age sickness, even though it is characterized as a cure for every disease (al-Nasimi, 1996).

Starting from the above discussion, the generality that exists in the hadith of the prophetic medicine should be understood after being specialized by certain proofs, including the proofs of reason, medical facts and *waqi'*, in addition to describing the condition of the patient to whom the Prophet (PBUH) was referring at that time. For example, the hadith: "In *al-habbab al-sauda'* there is a cure for all diseases" should be understood with a more specialized meaning. In this issue al-Khattabi is of the view that this generality falls under the category of *al-'am yurad bibi al-khash*, i.e. a generality that applies only to a specific group or type of thing. This is because it is impossible for a plant to have all the power to combat the various characteristics that are contrary to it in treating various diseases. Rather, the generality of antidote here carries the meaning of the total ability to cure infectious diseases due to humidity, in accordance with the dry and hot nature of *al-habbab al-sauda'* (al-Khattabi, 1988). This is proven to be the practice of some of the *salaf* who used *al-habbab al-sauda'* as one of the ingredients for treating flu (al-'Asqalani, 1390H).

Ibn Hajar also emphasized that the Prophet SAW prescribed *al-habbab al-sauda'* in this hadith because it reflects the situation of the patient that the Prophet SAW witnessed at that time, and then thought that it was found to be suitable for treating the illness of that individual (al-'Asqalani, 1390H). This means that the Prophet (PBUH) said this hadith to a specific group of people and not to all people. It is also quoted from al-Qurtubi (1996) that whatever is stated in the (prophetic) medicine in general, it carries a specific meaning (al-Nasimi, 1996). Meanwhile, al-Dhahabi (1990) is also of the view that the prophecy of the Prophet (PBUH) to his companions and the local community is specific to their nature and land, but there are evidential guidelines that imply that it is general (al-Suyuti, 2002).

After laying out the methods of understanding the generality of the prophetic medicinal traditions, al-Nasimi touches briefly on some of the attempts pioneered by some scholars to preserve the generality of the text without the need to understand it with the specificity that has been stated in the previous discussion. Among them is Ibn Hajar's statement that *al-habbab al-sauda'* is an antidote for every disease can also be understood with the meaning of its use in conjunction with other medicinal substances through various methods of taking such as crushed or not, whether it is eaten, drunk, put in the nose and others (al-'Asqalani, 1390H). Al-Nasimi (1996) disagrees with this view and asserts that it is not practically proven. Moreover, some scholars are also of the view that the generality of this antidote is able to reveal its efficacy through the existence of valid intentions and high spiritual conviction. He also disagrees with this view because if it is true that it is effective even once,

it will not continue to be effective continuously. This is because the *karamah* (glory) bestowed is a form of excess and peculiarity that goes against human custom, so it is impossible for it to be consistently effective.

CONCLUSIONS

In the realm of contemporary Prophetic medicine genre, the editors and authors have the ability to employ distinct approaches to organise, verify and interpret the Prophetic tradition in a way that makes it harmonious. By examining the applicability of contemporary scientific principles, these approaches not only conform to the conventional principles of hadith science, but also emphasise their alignment with the scientific framework as understood by their practitioners. However, reintroducing and popularising the scientific commentaries in this literature would limit the ability of secondary writers to understand the scientific discourse and complicate the discursive concerns. Similarly, examining the time-bound characteristics of religious texts might provide an alternate resolution to the ongoing dispute and question the foundational tenets of this collection of writings. While the concept of “conveyance” might be helpful in describing the overall processes that seek to redefine the relationship between Islam and contemporary medicine, it provides limited insight into the specific techniques adopted by contemporary editors and authors.

For *al-Tibb al-Nabawi wa al-‘Ilm al-Hadith*, the work incorporates medical wisdom, medications, modern medicine, and certainly the collection of hadith corpus. It also includes the personal experiences of scholars as described in the literature and medical practices of physicians. Demonstrating compatibility with the fundamental roots of Prophetic traditions, and so acquiring legitimacy, al-Nasimi put forward three main principles of prophetic medicine namely: the incorporation of elements of revelation and *ijtihad* in prophetic medicine, the difference in the meanings of medicines and diseases according to the balance of time and the generality of the hadith phrases of prophetic medicine does not limit the overall meaning. Each of these principles is found to coincide with the ideas that have been initiated by scholars especially among Islamic scholars who produced works of hadith commentary. These principles should be disseminated to the general Islamic community so that the proper method of donating prophetic medicines can be widely practiced. In addition, the crime of exploiting religious texts for the purpose of linking the bounty of the world will also be indirectly stemmed, the result of public awareness that is no longer tricked by the usual *modus operandi* pioneered by some irresponsible parties.

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