

## Message from the Editor

### Assalaamu alaykum

#### Dear IMANA Members and JIMA Readers:

This is the first issue of this year. It does include thought-provoking articles. The article *Function of Dreams* by Dr. Mohamed O. Salem explores the spiritual and religious aspects of dreams. It discusses how peoples over the ages and in different civilizations looked at dreams. There has always been fascination with the significance of dreams and their interpretation, specifically whether they can predict future events. More recently there have been scientific attempts to answer some of these questions. Especially interesting is the author's reference to a book by Sir John Eccles, a Nobel Prize-winning neuroanatomist. In that book, he mentions that the directing influence on the brain comes from the heart. It is noteworthy that the Qur'an frequently mentions the heart as the site of faith or disbelief and not the brain (March 1, 2010 e-mail from W.D. Ahmad to me; unreferenced, see "Notes").

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ  
يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى  
الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind.<sup>1</sup>

End-of-life issues have a prominent place in JIMA and in our ethical discourse. We published recently an article about Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders.<sup>2</sup> In the current issue, Professor Omar Kasule analyses the Islamic perspective of DNR using the Islamic theory of ethics and principles of Islamic law. He discusses it from the aspects of certainty, waste of resources, consent, and the potential of abuse.

Dr. Ezzat Abouleish in the current issue writes *When My Time Comes Let Me Go*. He addresses the topic from a personal perspective in a literary, almost poetic, style. He disapproves of some of the new procedures applied to the terminally ill. He believes they do not add anything of value. They just prolong the suffering of the patient and the agony of the family and add exorbitantly to the cost of medical care.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Faroque Khan reports in an interesting article his personal experience as a clinical researcher and cites examples of clinicians who through their astute observations made important contributions to medicine. Dr. Khan urges all clinicians to engage in clinical research. He lists factors that contribute to their success. He believes that they can become effective researchers.

Dr. Husain Nagamia in his article *Prophetic Medicine: 'A Holistic approach to Medicine'* defines prophetic medicine and gives its historical background. The Prophet ﷺ gave broad guidelines for the use of home remedies, including herbal remedies. He also advised dietary discretion and exercise, and promoted several hygienic measures. In addition, the Prophet ﷺ used Qur'anic recitations, ritual prayers, supplications, and talismans in search of cure for the sick. In essence, his approach was to treat the body as well as the soul. This dual approach is the prototype of what is now "holistic medicine."

This issue includes the article *Cord Blood Banking, Ethical Considerations*. Umbilical Cord blood (UCB) is an easily available source of both hematopoietic and pluripotent stem cells. Collected UCB units can be cryopreserved and stored in banks and can be used for at least 15 years. These units have been used in the treatment of leukemias, other malignancies, and hematologic diseases. They offer many advantages over bone marrow transplants. They have been used in research and are currently used in clinical trials for the treatment of several chronic diseases such as type 1 diabetes mellitus and neurologic diseases. Their use obviates the ethical dilemma of using human embryonic stem cells for the same. However they also pose some ethical concerns. In this article I discuss the pros and cons of private and public UCB banks, the truth in advertising by the private banks,

the potential waste of units limited to autologous use, privacy versus linkage of the units to the donor, informed consent, and distributive justice. I also discuss the appropriateness of selective conception of a baby to be a potential donor to a diseased sibling. I believe that UCB donation should be encouraged. I tend to favor public banks and advocate for more financial support to them, and for governmental strict regulation of UCB banks' collection and storage methods.

In this issue, Professor Omar H. Kasule in *Biomedical Ethics: An Islamic Formulation* argues that ethics is an indivisible part of Islamic law, unlike in the West where it had to evolve as a separate entity "that deals with moral issues that secular law cannot approach because it divested itself of religious elements." Many ethical issues are purely legal issues under the Islamic system. He termed this part of the law *al-fiqh al-tibbi*. The contemporary issues that cannot be dealt with from the primary sources i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah or the secondary sources such as *qiyās* or *ijmā'* are dealt with through the use of the theory of purposes of the law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'a*) to determine the rulings. He termed that *ijtihad maqāṣidi*. He believes this to be the method to be used for the foreseeable future.

As is customary in each issue of JIMA, Dr. Farouque Khan profiles a prominent physician, Dr. Al Amro, the chief executive officer of King Fahd Medical City (KFMC), Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). He is an accomplished physician, administrator, and a strong leader. He helped in establishing health outreach programs throughout KSA, oncology centers, research centers, and the Saudi Cancer Support Society, in addition to making KFMC into the largest and most advanced medical complex in the Middle East.

Also in the current issue Dr. Nagamia reviews the book *Ibn al-Haytham: The First Scientist* by Bradley Steffens. The book gives a detailed biography of Ibn al-Haytham based on documented sources. It also credits him with being the first true scientist who pioneered scientific inquiry, experimentation, debate, and discussion. The book lists some of Ibn al-Haytham's pioneering works especially *Kitāb al-manāẓir* (The Book of Optics). Dr. Nagamia credits the author with a very unique style of writing, which makes the reading of the book an easy and fascinating experience.

I would like to remind the readers that JIMA is published online as well. You can get to it at [jima.imana.org](http://jima.imana.org). Please register online if you have not yet done so. Also, you need to consider registering as a reviewer in the area of your interest. We need to increase the pool of reviewers. Please share this information with your colleagues and friends even if they are not IMANA members. Last, but not least, I would encourage you to register as an author and submit your articles, whether they are research, clinical studies, reviews, case reports, or commentaries on any of the articles that are published. If you are interested in history of medicine, ethical issues, or an Islamic perspective on a medical issue we welcome such contributions. I appreciate your comments as well as your suggestions to improve the Journal.

I hope that many of you are planning to go to Tashkent insha Allah this summer. I expect that many will be presenting at the meeting. I hope that you submit your presentations to JIMA.

#### Notes

Wahaj ud-Din Ahmad, an editorial board member, communicated with the editor regarding issues raised by the Functions of Dreams article and permitted parts of this communication to be cited in this editorial.

#### References

1. The Glorious Qur'an Chapter 22, Verse 46.
2. Saiyad S. Do Not Resuscitate: a case study from the Islamic viewpoint. *J Islam Med Assoc.* 2009;41:109-13. Available from <http://jima.imana.org/article/view/4477>.
3. IMANA Ethics Committee. Islamic medical ethics: the IMANA perspective. *J Islam Med Assoc.* 2005;37:33-42. Available from <http://jima.imana.org/article/view/5528>.

Wassalaam,

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