



## EDITORIAL

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### An Institute of Islamic Medicine — Dream or Reality?

While I have spoken so enthusiastically about the need for the establishment of Institutes of Islamic Medicine within the past several years, it is a happy moment to hear that such was considered at the Islamic Medical Conference held in Kuwait in January, 1981. It was on the Hajj Mission of 1977 that this concept was discussed in Riyadh, Kuwait and Baghdad.

Why should we have an Institute of Islamic Medicine?

Since the beginning of European colonialism of the 18th and 19th centuries in Islamic countries, the process of modernization has come to mean the adoption of Western ways, in a most superficial manner to be sure, and the throwing away of our own Islamic customs, traditions and attitudes without any discrimination. In this indiscriminatory "shedding off the past" among many other things, the long tradition of Islamic Medicine has been unceremoniously buried. Islamic Medicine, which widely based itself on Greek, Nestorian, African, Indian, and Chinese traditions, and developed most creatively, ruled supreme in the "civilized world" for over ten centuries (9th century to the 19th century A.D.). Such great medical centers as in Alexandria, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Shiraz, Herat, Ghazni, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Bangkok, etc., which European students traveled to in search of knowledge about medical arts, were closed; their

liberties buried under dust of neglect, and their practitioners, the hukama, were despised, degraded, impoverished, and castigated. No Muslim was able to raise his voice to say why? Such voices of whys should not be interpreted as anti-western or "anti-civilization" or "anti-scientific" or "anti-modernization". These whys we raise, are for the sake of knowledge and truth, for the pursuit of truth, for the pursuit of man's happiness, for the onward and upward progress built on foundations of past civilizations for a wholistic mankind with unfenced horizons, not for a materialistic, hedonistic, deterministic, and thwarted mankind reduced to the acts of ants and bees.

How could we accept, without careful study and examination, that there was nothing worth the human while in the treasures of pharmacopes of three continents and its empirical use for about ten centuries? How can we deny that our present modern clinical medicine is by and large the result of empirical data rather than scientific, experimental data? Therefore, there is a dire need for looking into ten centuries of "glorious practice" of Islamic Medicine. This systematic, methodical compilation, translation, experimental research of empirical Islamic Medicine can be accomplished by the establishment of an Institute of Islamic Medicine.

In the next issue I shall discuss the nature, the components, so to speak, of such an Islamic Institute of Medicine.

### Sayings of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

From the report of Anas:

*"He who goes out in search of knowledge is in God's path till he returns."* — Tirmidhi and Darimi