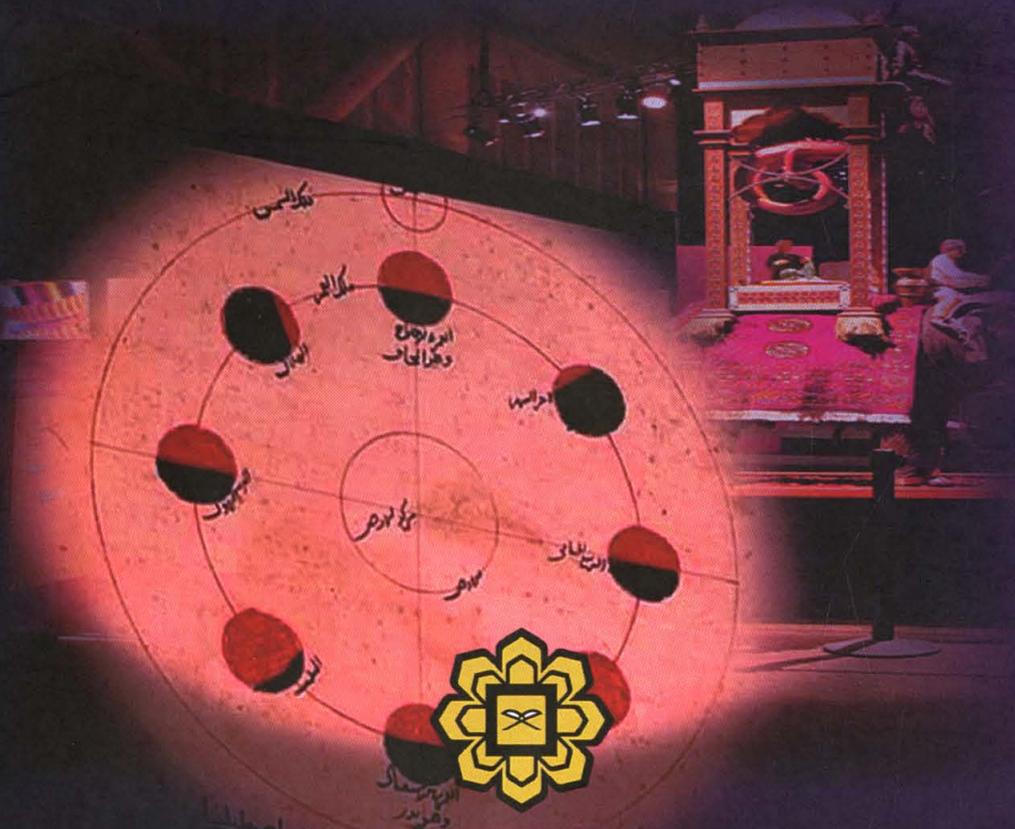


Contributions of Muslim Scientists to Medicine and Related Sciences

Abdi O. Shuriye
Raihan Othman



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CHAPTER SEVEN

AL-RAZI'S UNDERSTANDING AND CURING OF SMALLPOX AND MEASLES

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is an attempt to introduce the role of the Muslim scholar, namely Al-Razi, in establishing treatment for smallpox and measles clinical observations. The methodology of this chapter uses the book written by Al-Razi about smallpox and measles in Arabic language as a reference. In 1970, the World Health Organization (WHO) praised Al-Razi for the originality and accuracy in his writings in this subject (Amoozaneh & Ashtiyani, 2010). Smallpox and measles have been known through the decades as prominent killers destroying millions of lives as they pass through towns and villages, though vaccines for both diseases were developed.

From the discussion below, it is seen that Al-Razi was a pioneer in distinguishing the two diseases from each other and the initiative in using natural and homemade remedies to cure and prevent the disease. Al-Razi's treatise was translated into Latin, Persian, English and other European languages. The significance of this chapter is to acknowledge the studies of small pox and measles and its treatment initiated by one of the famous Muslim scholars, Al-Razi.

7.2 MUHAMMAD IBN ZAKARIYA AL-RAZI

Abu Baker Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi, also called Rhazes, was born in Rayy, Iran in 865 C.E. He showed talent at early age in music, alchemy and philosophy. He has numerous contributions in different disciplines such as his medicine encyclopaedia which he called Al-Hawi. However this chapter will be restricted to discussing his achievements in smallpox and measles treatment (Glick et al., 2005). Al-Razi was described as:

“Rhazes is rightly considered one of the greatest medical practitioners and writers in the period between Galen and the Renaissance re-emergence of medicine as an empirical discipline. He was a rationalist, extremely confident in the power of reason, free from every kind of prejudice, and daring in the expression of his thoughts. He was described as outstanding in generosity and always willing to treat and help the poor. He was an independent thinker and not afraid to rely on his own observations when they contradicted the past [...] Razi's fame rested on clear-cut clinical descriptions of illness,