

Spinituality and Sustainability and Sustainability EXPERIENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Edited by Abdul Rashid Moten

With a foreword by Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Rector, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).



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CHAPTER 12

Malay Medical
Manuscripts:
Actualisation of
Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah and
Sustainable Development
Goals

Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri

Malay medical manuscripts are documents of their kind handwritten in the Jawi script across the Malay-speaking world. The oldest extant Malay medical manuscript, *Sia-sia Berguna* is said to have survived since the 15th century. Other Malay medical manuscripts could not stand the devastation of natural disasters and wars or the climate of the Malay world. Hence most of the manuscripts in existence date back to the 18th century onwards. These manuscripts contain knowledge of anatomy, medicine, pharmacology and spiritual panacea which has been practised for centuries by the Malays. Anatomy, for example, was discussed in *Bustān al-Salaṭīn*, a medical text from Acheh (Figure 12.1).

Other Malay medical manuscripts are arranged in a systematic fashion, as medical conditions are discussed according to whether they involve a particular bodily system or are general conditions not confined to a specific area of the body. Pharmacological treatment usually entails polypharmacy or combination of several medicinal items – commonly roots, leaves, shoots or fruits of plants – to be concocted in a specific way. Different treatment adheres to specific regulations or prohibitions to ensure the effective delivery of the therapeutic formulations, much in common with the discipline of knowledge called pharmaceutical technology today. Some of the commonest plants used by the Malays are ginger, turmeric, camphor, agarwood and rice in addition to a long list of flowering, aromatic medicinal plants available across the Malay Archipelago. Some of these therapeutic formulations are used together with spiritual medicine in which prayers or recitation of certain Qur'ānic verses are recommended.



Figure 12.1: The 16th-century *Bustān al-Salaţīn* of Nuruddin ar-Raniri one of the earliest examples of Malay medical manuscripts.

Source: Personal collection.

The intense sea trade in the Malay Archipelago had exposed the Malays to the Arab, Persian, Indian and Chinese influences. Thus, a unique medical tradition – one which is akin to but different from the traditional theories and practices of the Greek, Arabs, Indian and Chinese – emerged from an amalgamation of local and foreign medical traditions characterised by:

- 1. A strong Islamic colour e.g. the use of *Tibb al-Nabawī*, Qur'ānic verses and prayers.
- 2. The rejection of superstitions.
- 3. A humoral theory in light of local healing theory, climate and resources.
- 4. A creative, contemplative use of local produce and techniques especially plant forms.
- A holistic approach and dichotomy-free (association of physical-nonphysical aspects) attitude to sickness and healing.

Many of the Malay medical manuscripts are written by unknown authors, but a few were the works of royal doctors, traders, religious scholars and state administrators (Table 12.1). *Tayyib al-Iḥsān*, for example, is an original work by Sheikh Ahmad al-Fatani who was a certified healer as well as a distinguished religious scholar whose advice was sought after by many Malay rulers (Mohd Shafri, 2015). *Ar-Raḥmah fī at-Tibb* on the other hand was the product of Sheikh Abbas Kuta Karang of Acheh, who was a jurist, tariqah murshid and minister in the

Sultanate of Aceh and a war commander during the Aceh-Dutch war (Mohd Shafri & Hermansyah, 2017). Rumah Ubat di Pulau Penyengat on the other hand was written by Raja Ahmad Tabib who was the royal healer to the Sultanate of Riau and owner of a pharmacy called Rumah Ubat (Mohd Shafri and Shahdan, 2018).

Hundreds of these manuscripts are kept in museums and private collections around the world. The largest collections are at the Malay Manuscript Centre of Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia and the JAKIM Collection at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Harun, 2015). Previous studies on Malay medical manuscripts were conducted by social scientists who studied them from the perspective of the social sciences i.e. civilisational, social, linguistic and religious phenomena. Malay scientists are yet to carry out research on them despite the medical and scientific nature of the contents, as there are misplaced challenges and mis-conceptions of what is known as Malay traditional medicine.

Table 12.1: List of transliterated and/or annotated research works on Malay medical manuscripts (up to 2019).

	Title	Original author	Transliterator	Publisher, place and date of publication
1.	Warisan Perubatan Melayu	Muḥammad Ṣāleh ibn Aḥmad Penambang	A Şamad Aḥmad	DBP, KL (1982)
2.	Asal Ilmu Țibb Melayu	Raja Daud Raja Aḥmad	Ellya Rosa	Museum Sang Nila Utama, Riau (2010)
3.	Ar-Raḥmah fī at-Ţibb	'Abbās Kuta Karang	TA Sakti Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri	Boebon Jaya, Banda Aceh (2014) Akademi Jawi, KL (2017)
4.	MSS2515	Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad Fabian	Hārūn Mat Piah	Penerbit UKM, Bangi (2014)
5.	Țayyib al-Iḥsān	Aḥmad al-Faṭānī	Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri	Khazanah Fathaniyah & Klasika Media, KL (2015)
6.	MSS2999	Unknown	'Abdul Ghanī Hussaīn	Institut Penyelidikan Perhutanan Malaysia, KL (2015)
7.	Rumah Ubat	Aḥmad Ṭabīb	Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri	Akademi Jawi, KL (2018)
8.	Sari Segala Ubat	Tama, the Royal Doctor to the Sultan of Pontianak	Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri	Akademi Jawi, KL (2019)
9.	MSS1292	Unknown	Harun Mat Piah and Nik Musa'adah	Institut Penyelidikan Perhutanan Malaysia, (2019)

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Spirituality and Sustainability EXPERIENCES OF

THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

The International Islamic University Malaysia has, since 2018, redoubled its struggle to restore its wisdom, strengths, and dignity and promote comprehensive excellence. Hence, the University adopted the United Nations' sustainable development agenda as a complement to the University's vision and mission of Islamisation, Integration, Internationalisation and Comprehensive Excellence.

The book explains the ways in which the SDGs will provide a new strategy to apply the concept of Islamisation, which has long been the foundation of the IIUM. Consequently, the university's operations and facilities have been adjusted so that they become mediums in applying and showcasing a lifestyle that is sustainable. Everything in the university i.e. the curricular and extra-curricular courses, the research activities, and everyday operations in administrative offices and other places are geared towards sustainable development in line with the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Elements of sustainability are integrated in every aspect of the university's administration and, indeed, in teaching, research and community engagement. Consequently, the IIUM has adopted "Humanising Higher Education through maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and SDGs" as its official strategic mission.

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