

JBIMA Editorial

Prof Sharif Kaf Al-Ghazal, Editor in Chief

Assalamo Alaikom all,

The history of medicine, like any field, is not linear, and its development over millennia has not always been well understood. Evidence based medicine is based on clinical observation, ethical responsibility, and crucially, cross-cultural intellectual transmission. Within this context, Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (936–c.1013 CE)—known to the Latin West as Albucasis - stands as a seminal figure. Working in tenth-century Córdoba, modern day Spain, al-Zahrawi transformed surgery into a disciplined medical specialty, bridging Islamic Golden Age scholarship with foundational principles of contemporary clinical practice, and he is a figure worth celebrating.

Al-Zahrawi's major achievement was his thirty-volume encyclopaedia, *Kitab al-Tasrif li-man 'ajiza 'an al-ta'lif* (*The Method of Medicine*). Its final volume (number 30) focused on surgery and featured detailed descriptions alongside illustrations of surgical instruments. Al-Zahrawi addressed a broad spectrum of clinical challenges, including trauma, fractures, dentistry, obstetrics, wound care, ophthalmology, ENT and general surgery.

His work emphasized that successful surgical practice requires deep anatomical knowledge, practical experience, technical competence, and disciplined preparation. These principles closely parallel modern surgical foundations, which rely on structured training, procedural precision, infection control, and systematic care. While modern operating theatres utilize far more sophisticated technology, the core requirement remains unchanged: technical interventions must be anchored in knowledge, skill, and rigorous observation.

The dissemination of *Kitab al-Tasrif* further highlights the interconnected nature of medical history. Translated into Latin during the twelfth century, the text circulated widely across Europe, shaping medical curricula and surgical techniques for a few centuries. This transmission challenges simplistic narratives framing modern medicine as an exclusively Western progression,

demonstrating that Islamic scholars played an essential role in preserving, synthesizing, critiquing, and advancing classical knowledge. In an era where Islam is misunderstood, and the Muslim world is still struggling to adjust to challenges created by a legacy of colonialism, there is a responsibility to highlight the eminent achievements of men like him which this journal has highlighted in this edition and many before it.

Al-Zahrawi's journey from the scholarly environment of al-Andalus to the pages of European medical texts demonstrates that medical knowledge transcends geographical, linguistic, and political boundaries. His writings became part of a wider chain of transmission that contributed to the development of later surgical traditions.

Today, as medicine enters an era of robotics, artificial intelligence, genomic medicine, and increasingly sophisticated surgical technologies, his legacy offers an important historical perspective.

The work of Al-Zahrawi work can all be linked back to the first verse of the Quran ; “Read” . His discoveries and that of his contemporaries would not have been possible had they not channeled the very principles the Quran is advocating for us.

As we celebrate the start of our trainees on their respective programmes, and prepare for the beginning of a new academic year for our medical students, the lessons of early Muslim physicians and surgeons are crucial to reflect on. It is a time for renewal, for a fresh start, for a new approach. Those who came before us set the foundations. Now it is up to the next generation.

We ask Allah for guidance and strength.

Wassalam.

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