

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction of the Manuscript of *Manafe-e-Afzaliye* Written by Ali Afzal ibn Mohammad Amin Qata'i-e-Qazvini

Introduction

Manuscripts are the precious treasures of every nation. Our country is very rich in this field due to its strong cultural support, and many manuscripts in the Persian language are kept in the libraries of Iran and around the world. These manuscripts cover various fields, with a significant portion related to medical and paramedical sciences. "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" is one of these valuable works, dating back to the 11th century of the Hijri calendar, specifically during the Safavid period.

The books from the Safavid period contain very little information about the author of "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" and his works. Most of our knowledge about him is derived from the review of his writings. Regarding the development and validity of medical science during this period, there are contradictory statements, such as: "The Safavid period is the golden age of pharmacology, and valuable books were writ-

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Citation:

Mehdizadeh, A., Boroumandi, N., 2025. Introduction of the Manuscript of *Manafe-e-Afzaliye* written by Ali Afzal ibn Mohammad Amin Qata'i-e-Qazvini. *Res Hist Med*, 14(2), pp. 165-172. doi: 10.30476/rhm.2025.50697.

Received: 1 Jan 2024; Accepted: 17 Sep 2024; Online published: 1 May 2025
Research on History of Medicine/ 2025 May; 14(2): 165-172.

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ten in this field” (Safa, 2005, p. 166) or conversely, that “the prescriptions of doctors during this time are the same.”

“They prescribe a universal remedy for all ailments and often arrive at diagnoses by asking a handful of meaningless questions” (Sarmadi, 2000, pp. 138-139). Conversely, “the development of medicine during the Safavid era is so remarkable and impressive that no medical historians can ignore it” (Mojabi, 2006, p. 135). The insights provided in “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” and its in-depth exploration of traditional medicine can serve as evidence supporting the claims of researchers such as Safa and Mojabi.

Ali Afzal Qata’i Qazvini wrote the book “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” in 1051 AH. He expanded the content of this book and, six years later, authored “*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*,” which is the most comprehensive and voluminous medical book of the Safavid era in the Persian language and is considered the primary medical source of that period. Unfortunately, there is scarce information about Qazvini and his works. Therefore, this research aims to answer the question of what features and characteristics the book “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” possesses that make it an important work in Safavid period medicine. While examining the life of Qazvini, this study analyzes the book and discusses its significance in the history of Safavid medicine.

Materials and Methods

The current research was conducted using a descriptive-analytical and library method. Since “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” has not yet been published, the study and references in the article are based on the most accurate and oldest available manuscript of this book, specifically the 1437 manuscript from the Marashi Library of Najafi in Qom. The pages of the manuscript were then numbered, with the numbers on the right side indicating the page number, while “A” and “B” denote the sides of the page.

Biography of Author

In the introduction to the book “*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*” and “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*”, as well as in all reliable sources, the author is identified as Ali Afzal al-Tabbikh ibn Mohammad Amin Qazvini (Qazvini, n.d., No. 1437; Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). The exact dates of his birth and death are not known; however, in the introduction to “*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*”, the author states that the book was written in 1057 AH during the time of Shah Abbas II. (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031) Based on this and considering that “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” was written in 1051 AH—when Ali Afzal was practicing medicine at Dar-al-Shafai in Qazvin—and that his other two books were written before this date, with his last book being completed in 1057 AH, it can be concluded that he lived during the 11th century, specifically during the reigns of Shah Safi (1038-1052 AH), Shah Abbas II (1052-1077 AH), and Shah Abbas I (996-1038 AH).

Since the contents of “*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*” result from years of experience in learning and practicing, it can be assumed that the author was born at least thirty to forty years before writing this work. Additionally, because Ali Afzal states in one verse that he spent forty years of his life accumulating knowledge while compiling the book, it can be inferred that his approximate birth year is in the early years of the 11th century. However, we must also consider that the numbers forty or fifty appear in poetry often signify a large quantity rather than an exact number. Qazvini devoted four decades of his life to pursuing his passions, which brought him sorrow and regret. (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031)



During the Safavid era, Shiism became the country's official religion, and like most people of that time, Qazvini was a Shiite (Mojabi, 2006, p. 360). He was raised in a scholarly family where medicine and excellent calligraphy were valued traditions. This family was renowned for its ability to create intricate decorations in various forms. Qazvini's father was a man of science, literature, and art (Jafari, 2014, p. 17), while his grandfather, Maulana Fazlullah Tabrizi, was a contemporary of Amir Timur Gorkani and had been given the title of Bu Ali the Second due to his proficiency in medicine. Ghiyasuddin Ali, the brother of Ali Afzal Qazvini, was also a skilled physician (Elgood, 1978, p. 45).

Ali Afzal was originally from Tabriz and grew up in Qazvin (Jafari, 2014, p. 17). In the pages of his book, he discusses his personal experiences in the field of medicine in the cities of Herat, Isfahan, and Khorasan. He practiced medicine in 1032 in Herat (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031) and in 1051 at Dar-al-Shafai in Qazvin, which was one of the charitable contributions of the Safavid kings.

Little is known about Qazvini's educational background and mentors, as he does not provide specific details on the subject. He only shares that he has pursued knowledge since his early years. (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031) Given that "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*" appears to be the last extant work by this author, it can be deduced that he was alive until at least 1057, suggesting that his death occurred sometime after this year.

The children and descendants of Ali Afzal—Abdul Hadi, the doctor; Haj Mirza Hassan, the doctor; Mirza Abu Torab, the doctor; Mirza Abul Fazl, the doctor, and Haj Mirza Abdul Hussain, the doctor—were all renowned scholars of their time. In addition to their work in medicine, they were also involved in knowledge and practice and possessed skills in calligraphy (Golriz, 1958, p. 318).

Scientific Position of Author

An analysis of Qazvini's works reveals that he was highly regarded among his contemporaries in the fields of medicine and pharmacology. His accomplishments included effective treatment of severe and painful diseases, developing innovative potions and medicines, and mentoring students who became prominent Iranian physicians, such as Ghiyathuddin Ali and Abdul Hadi Tabib. An English doctor, Cyril Elgood, introduces "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" as one of the important and useful books of the Safavid era, emphasizing that he greatly benefited from it (Elgood, 1978, p. 42). He was skilled in the science of reading and calligraphy techniques (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031) and also wrote poetry; apparently, he had some of the best spells, several of which are recorded in his works. Like many scholars of his time, Ali Afzal was proficient in Arabic. In addition to the "Ketab Mofid" he composed parts of "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*" in Arabic. This book contains materials related to veterinary medicine, astronomy, mysticism, ethics, vocabulary, and history, demonstrating that Qazvini also had studies in these fields.

His scientific and inquisitive spirit is clearly evident in "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*" and "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*". In these works, he often references old medical texts and sources, such as "*Qanun*," "*Kamel-al-Sanaeh*," "*Havi*," and others.

Self-esteem and a tendency toward mysticism, along with intelligence, creativity, and discipline, are key indicators of Qazvini's personal and moral characteristics (Jafari, 2014, p. 18). Distinguishing him from many of his contemporaries, he chose not to dedicate his work "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" to the reigning monarch or government officials, which serves as a testament to his strong sense of independence and individuality.



Author's Works

In addition to "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" Qata'i Qazvini has written other books, which include:

1- "*Mofid*"

Ali Afzal wrote this book in Arabic, focusing on medicine and pharmacology (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). Although the precise date of its completion remains uncertain, since it is mentioned in "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*", it can be inferred that it was completed before 1051.

2- "*Javarish Afzali*" or "*Javarish Afzaliye*"

This book pertains to the field of pharmaceuticals. Some researchers have hesitated to attribute it to Qazvini; however, Elgood notes that this edition's first and last pages are missing, which is why its title is unknown. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this book belongs to him, as he identifies himself as the author of "*Javarish Afzaliye*" in one section of the book while also referring to himself by this name in "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" (Elgood, 1978, p. 45). Manzawi also confirmed Elgood's assertion, noting that Ali Afzal mentioned his "*Javarish Afzali*" in "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" (Manzavi, 2003, p. 603).

3- "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*"

Qata'i Qazvini wrote this book in 1057, at the beginning of the reign of Shah Abbas II. It encompasses ethics, Sufism, literature, astronomy, history, and commentary.

Introducing the "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*"

Ali Afzal Qata'i wrote this book in Persian in 1051 AH for his brother, Ghiyath-al-Din Ali, who was studying medicine at that time (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). Some sources refer to this person as the author's nephew, while others name him as the author's son. However, in the manuscript of "*Afzaliyah's Interests*", Ghiyathuddin is explicitly identified as the author's brother (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). According to Elgood, Ghiyathuddin Ali later became a skilled physician (Elgood, 1978, p. 45).

The "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" is a useful summary of "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*". This work stands as the largest and most detailed medical book of the Safavid era written in Persian (Jafari, 2014, p. 24). Additionally, "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" serves as a medical encyclopedia of the Safavid period, comprising all the necessary tips and instructions for those engaged in the medical field, thus underscoring the significance of *Manafe-e-Afzaliye*.

The content of the book "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" covers a wide range of topics, including general principles of medicine, patient care, travel health, the use of supplications for diseases, preventive measures and treatments for common ailments, and mistakes in maintaining health. The author composed the book for beginners in medical science, organizing it into one preface, thirty benefits, and one conclusion. One of Qata'i-e-Qazvini's key objectives in writing this book is to ensure that medical beginners do not need to consult multiple important medical sources (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). Elgood implicitly references "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*", emphasizing that he greatly benefited from it. He characterizes the book as more of a pharmaceutical guide rather than a traditional medical textbook (Elgood, 1978, p. 56).

In "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*," Qata'i-e-Qazvini brings together extracts from significant



medical texts of earlier times. He also introduces his contributions to the field, such as identifying new diseases prevalent during his era and presenting novel treatments he developed. Notably, the book also excels in its organization and structure. In the introduction, the author provides an overview of the topics covered and their respective page numbers, reflecting his meticulous approach to compiling the work. Furthermore, the book references doctors who are infrequently cited in other sources, such as Fazel Baghdadi, whose work “Sharh Kabir” is mentioned multiple times. Given the book’s intended audience of novice medical practitioners, the author employs simple and fluent language, featuring the common yet challenging terminology of the period.

According to researchers (Farhadipour, 2011, p. 23), medicine in India was highly advanced, and Hakim Ali Afzal, like other doctors of the Safavid era, benefited from their insights and ideas. For example, “Indian wise men say that if they eat a Mithqal (4.608 Grams) of dried Emblica after a meal, they can ward off its harm...” (Qazvini, n.d., No. 1437).

Another important aspect of this book is its rejection of magical and superstitious elements. It is noted in the book, “*History of the Sufis*”, that medical practitioners of this period believed that magic played a role in medical practices (Ajand, 2008, p. 309; Sarmadi, 2000, pp. 138 and 139). Ali Afzal regarded intellect as the most precious entity on earth (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). His emphasis on the importance of reason led him to exclude superstitious and unscientific content from his work, setting him apart from his contemporaries, such as Baha-al-Dawla and Noor-al-Din Mohammad Shirazi.

Qata’i-e-Qazvini utilized significant sources in writing “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*”, including “*Qanun*”, “*Kamel-al-Sanaeh*”, “*Tab-al-A’imah*,” and “*Al-Havi*”. Therefore, the significance of this book in the medical history of the Safavid era is equivalent to that of valuable sources in Iranian medicine from earlier periods. To provide further insight into the content of “*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*” an overview of its various parts is introduced below.

The treatise begins with “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his family.” Table 1 summarizes the structure of the treatise.

Table 1: The profile of the structure of the Treatise on *Manafe-e-Afzaliye*

Components	Number of contents
Introduction	Includes 15 things
Benefits	Includes 30 benefits
Termination	Contains 12 articles

As outlined in the index, the treatise is organized into distinct sections, specifically titled “Introduction”, “Benefits”, and “Termination”:

1- Introduction

This section includes 15 key points, as presented in Table 2, outlining the essential considerations for doctors before initiating treatment.



Table 2: Index of Different Parts of Introduction

Order	Content
1	Compliance with ethics in dealing with the patient
2	Type of disease
3	The cause of the disease
4	The strength of the patient
5	Examining the patient's mood during health days
6	Investigation of the gender of the patient
7	Patient age research
8	Patient habit research
9	Investigation of the patient's condition
10	Adherence to patient accommodation
11	Consideration of the season
12	Knowledge of quadruple times
13	Knowing the nature of the disease
14	Knowledge of disease comparisons
15	Scores are similar between diseases

2- Benefits

It is the main part of the treatise and includes thirty benefits, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Profiles of different parts of Benefits

Benefits	Content	Benefits	Content
1 st	Quality of treatment	16 th	Ojae medicine and...
2 nd	causes of blood birth and what belongs to Bloodletting	17 th	Cardiac and nasal spice
3 rd	Attributes of laxatives and order of Laxative spices	18 th	Liver spice
4 th	Causes of bile and signs of its dominance	19 th	Stomach spice
5 th	Causes of phlegm and signs of its dominance	20 th	Chest spices and breathing apparatus
6 th	Causes of soda and the signs of its abundance and its problems	21 st	Expired tonics
7 th	Laxatives that cause vomiting more than one phlegm	22 nd	Treatment of daily protection and Afnia
8 th	Killing and expulsion of all kinds of ascarids	23 rd	Expressing the symptoms that are difficult to present in support and preparing them
9 th	Preparation of the complications that are associated with the use of laxatives.	24 th	Naqehin's plan and...
10 th	Quality of discretion and the use of cheese water and its types	25 th	Treatment of swelling, rash, and injury
11 th	Causes of the birth of Riah and the sign of its dominance and its deduction and analysis	26 th	Quality, harmfulness, and modification of some spices and food
12 th	Causes of the century and the signs of its occurrence and expression of its key points	27 th	Knowledge of some spices is noble
13 th	Quality of diarrhea treatment and the distinction between hepatic diarrhea and...	28 th	Treatment of alcohol poisoning and venomous animal bites
14 th	Urine, menstruation, puerperium, and hemorrhoids blood	29 th	The expression of weights is famous
15 th	Urinary and menstrual cramps and hemorrhoids	30 th	Astrological benefits



Conclusion

The last part of *Manafe-e-Afzaliye*'s treatise, entitled "Termination", includes some miscellaneous benefits that, according to Qazvini, are necessary to pay attention to in order to maintain health. He has divided this part into twelve sections, which are displayed in Table 4. At the beginning of the treatise, the author asks doctors to start their conversation with the patient with "*Bismillah*," recites Surah "*Al-Fatiha*", and then study the patient's condition cheerfully and with happiness (Qazvini, n.d., No. 6031). At the Termination, appeals to God and the infallible imams are considered to benefit the treatment and healing of patients. These recommendations highlight the importance of ethics in medicine, which is rarely seen in the medical books of the author's era.

Table 4: Index of Termination

Benefits	Content
First	Explaining nurse errors and preparing them
Second	Expressing the changes of some natural affairs and conditions and preparing them
Third	Mentioning the symptoms and diseases that are the precursors of difficult diseases and their treatment
Fourth	Making travel arrangements
Fifth	Travel accessories
Sixth	Measures of hot weather and the effect of poisons
Seventh	Planning of harvest times and the effect of extreme cold
Eighth	Sea travel accessories
Ninth	Prayer related to travel
Tenth	The quality of compound protection and treatment of its frequent diseases
Eleventh	The statement of the spices stated by Imams (a.s.)
Twelfth	Reciting some supplications that have been passed down from Imams (a.s.)
Thirteenth	Stating some narrated prayers from Imams (a.s.)

From what has been discussed, it is clear that Ali Afzal Qata'i-e-Qazvini is one of the wise and ethical doctors of the Safavid period. Through his comprehensive and practical books, "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" and "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*," he shared his personal experiences in treating illnesses and the collective wisdom of earlier physicians. His moral guidance and instructions in these books significantly contribute to medical science research. For example, he advises doctors to speak openly and kindly with patients, give them hope for recovery, and avoid material and profit-seeking goals in treatment. Moreover, his consistent citation of previous doctors' works further underscores his commitment to upholding high standards within the medical profession. Since "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" was considered a textbook, it was necessary for the author to explain the medical content in simple and clear language, and Ali Afzal respected this point well. Another reason for the importance of "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" is that it served as the foundation for Qazvini's subsequent work, "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*". As mentioned earlier, "*Favaied-al-Afzaliye*" is the main medical source of the Safavid period and the most comprehensive book of that era. Therefore, recognizing and introducing "*Manafe-e-Afzaliye*" can pave the way for researchers and those interested in medicine to conduct a more detailed examination of the medical history of the Safavid era.



Authors' Contribution

The idea of the paper was proposed by Alireza Mehdizadeh, and investigation of the Manuscripts as well as other references was done by Alireza Mehdizadeh and Neda Boroumandi. The paper is read and approved as final by all the authors.

Funding

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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