

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### An Introduction to “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*”, a Book by Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani

#### Abstract

Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani was one of the famous intellectuals and writers of the Qajar era. His extensive body of work covers various subjects, including medicine during his lifetime. He has also written several works drawing from his personal experiences and giving references to earlier medical and religious sources in medical science and pharmacy, as well as medicine. One notable example is his two-volume Arabic work, “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*”. This study examines the content, provisions, and medical advice offered in “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” to evaluate Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani’s understanding of medical sciences and disease treatment during the Qajar period. The findings of this research reveal Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani’s considerable knowledge and expertise in medical sciences and the treatment of diseases in the Qajar period. By analyzing the text, provisions, and content of this work, we aim to answer the primary question: What is the significance of “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” in the context of medicine and disease treatment during the Qajar era?

As a result of the analysis, it becomes clear that the book holds a unique place in the history of Qajar medicine due to the author’s profound knowledge of disease treatment.

**Key words:** Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani, *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, Medicine, Qajar period, Books, Humans

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### Introduction

Mohammad Karim Khan, a highly prolific writer during his time, authored 265 books and treatises across various disciplines, including Islamic and non-Islamic sciences. He wrote three books (*Jawame al-Alaaj*, *Haghayegh al-Teb*, and *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*) and a treatise entitled “The explanation of the Pulse Problem from Avicenna’s viewpoint in Qanon” in the field of medicine. These works reveal his extensive expertise and experience in medical science and pharmacology. The basis and foundation of how to diagnose the diseases and the related issues are described and analyzed in a simple, easy, and concise way in “*Jawame al-Alaaj*” book. The important and basic principles of medical science are discussed in the book “*Haghayegh al-Teb*”, using the verses of the Holy Quran and hadiths attributed to and received from the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and the Imams (peace be upon them). The book “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” is recognized as one of the important medical sources of the Qajar era in describing, explaining, and introducing diseases and medications. The author aims to write a book useful in curing diseases, drawing upon his expertise in medical sciences. This study initially introduces the author and then highlights the key topics of “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*.” Ultimately, it seeks to evaluate the book’s significance within the context of Qajar-era medicine. The findings of the research indicate that the “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” book held a special place in the understanding of drugs and diseases during this period. The author’s work not only offered guidance for physicians but also played a crucial role in nurturing the interest of the disciples of the Sheikhiya cult in the medical field.

Despite the importance of “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” as a rich medical resource during the Qajar period, no independent study has yet thoroughly examined its scientific content. Although some articles, such as Mohammad Khodavardi Tajabadi’s “Shaykhieh Karimkhani and the Economic and Social Developments of Kerman during the Qajar Period,” gave reference to Kerman medicine from the perspective of Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani, a comprehensive analysis of the book’s significance in Qajar-era medicine remains a scholarly gap.

### Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani Biography

Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani, the son of Ibrahim Khan Zahir al-Dawlah Qajar, was born in 1255 AH in Kerman. He migrated to Najaf to pursue his education before returning to his hometown, Kerman. There, he dedicated himself to teaching, preaching, speaking, and writing until the end of his life (1288 AH). Mohammad Karim Khan played a significant role in laying the intellectual and ideological foundations of the Sheikhiya perspective, working tirelessly to strengthen and promote it. His efforts led to the Kerman branch of Sheikhiyah being named Karim Khani in his honor. (Ebrahimi, no date, p. 74; Habibabadi, 2002, p. 789; Chahardehi, 1983, p. 108) He died in 1240 in Kerman. (Hosseini, and Kharazmi, 2021, p. 68) He has had a special place in various Islamic and non-Islamic sciences; even his name is significant in Islamic art and his opinion on the colors. (Kayani Ajerdi, and Shirnejadi, 2021, p. 91) Despite the recognition of his impact in these areas, this article specifically delves into Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani’s life and his contributions to the field of medicine during the Qajar era.

### Introducing *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*

Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani has many works in different disciplines with a notable focus on Tabieiyeh (medicine). His most renowned medical contributions are “*Haghayegh*



*al-Teb*” on general medicine, *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* on medicine, *Jawame al-Alaaj*, and several other treatises on medicine. His influence during the Qajar era in Kerman was significant because he sparked his disciples’ interest in medicine and the treatment of diseases (Khodavardi Tajabadi, 2016, p. 64). For this reason, it is important to introduce his works, including *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, which played a significant role in improving medical practices during the Qajar era. Mohammad Karim Khan, the author of the book, mentioned that *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* was written to complete his earlier book *Haghayegh al-Teb*. Mohammad Karim Khan organized “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*” into five articles and 18 chapters, drawing upon the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his family (peace be upon them), Greek, Iranian, and Muslim physicians, as well as his own experiences. The book systematically covers the principles of medicine and pharmacology, avoiding speculation and comparison. Each article and chapter are further divided into subtopics with specific titles. The following sections of this study will examine the contents and themes of these articles and chapters in greater detail.

### **The most important topics in *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* in medical science**

#### **1- Professional ethics in medicine**

In “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*,” the author emphasizes the importance of carefully considering the causes of diseases before initiating treatment. If a person’s health status is strong enough, the disease may resolve itself without intervention. Therefore, hastily prescribing medicine - except in cases of known diseases like cholera – can be harmful and irreversible. Unnecessary and incorrect use of medication may cause additional health issues. However, treatment is necessary if the patient’s constitution is weak. The author further stresses the prescription and use of mild, simple, previously tested, and effective medications for patients. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 1, 4-8)

#### **2- The recognition and dissection of the human body**

After describing the importance of the doctor’s skill, the author of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* dissects the human body. He stated that the human body (consisting of water, fat, and salt) and its combination of the four humors (Yellow bile, Blood, Phlegm, and Black bile) have been discussed before. The root cause of diseases, according to the author, lies in the waste and harmful substances produced by these humors and their various combinations. He also mentions that doctors can effectively treat diseases if they have a deep and strong understanding of the four humors. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 10-11) He also discusses and reviews the causes of humor dominance (Yellow and Black bile, Phlegm, and blood) in the body, and offers insights on maintaining a healthy balance of each humor and preventing their mixing. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 38-42)

#### **3- Detoxifying the body**

Detoxifying the body is one of the other important topics in *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*. In this book, the author, drawing on a comprehensive understanding of the body’s natural state, the teachings of the Imams, and a thorough grasp of the principles and techniques of detoxification, delves into methods for eliminating excesses and sediments from the body. Furthermore, the text explores various detoxification techniques such as cupping, bloodletting, physical activity, and exercise as therapeutic approaches for certain ailments. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 12-17)



#### 4- Introducing medicine to patients

The author of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* gives several references to the critical role physicians play in prescribing medications. He warns that misdiagnosis and improper medication can lead to fatalities. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 17-18) According to the author, physicians should issue prescriptions only after a precise diagnosis of the cause(s) of the disease. If the cause remains unclear, it would be better not to intervene. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 21-22) The book refers to the teachings of renowned Iranian and non-Iranian physicians like Galen, Hippocrates, Baha'd Doulah Razi (the author of *Kholasat at-Tajarob*), Tahir Sanjari, and Nooraddin on disease types and their treatment via medicine and diet. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 23-25) Furthermore, the author of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* has mentioned the different effects of drugs on the body, strategies for preventing certain poisonings, and the preparation of necessary and effective medications. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 635-648).

#### 5- Preventing the return of the disease

The author of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* has discussed the relapse and return of the diseases before full recovery. Drawing on narrations from Ahl al-Bayts (peace be upon them), he highlights the physician's responsibility to continue treatment until the disease is completely eradicated. Some diseases (such as permanent headaches, liver, spleen, and kidney pain, eye damage, cough and shortness of breath, and blurred vision) which are more likely to return, are discussed at the end of the mentioned chapter. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 101-102)

#### 6- Sweating therapy

Chapter 20 of "*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*" discusses the effect of sweat therapy. The author claims that nearly a third of all diseases can be treated by making the body sweat, and provides an in-depth discussion of various methods for stimulating sweat production in the body. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 192-199)

#### 7- Recognition of the diseases

In *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, the author has paid special attention to understanding the diseases prevalent during his time. First, he discusses the types of diseases, their causes, critical symptoms, long-term complications, and potential fatalities. The author also highlights instances where a new ailment could potentially cure an existing one, citing influences of the moon and the role of pessimism in disease progression and mortality, supported by narrations from Ahl al-Bayts (peace be upon them) (Kermani, n.d., pp. 63-81). He also pointed out several symptoms that indicate the critical condition of the patient or impending death, providing examples and referencing Hippocrates' teachings on the subject. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 96-100). Chapter 18 delves into bloodletting techniques, such as cupping, leeching, and ear razor shaving, emphasizing the importance of controlling bleeding and suggesting effective medications. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 170-190) In general, in the review of the book, it can be said that *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* includes comprehensive coverage of numerous medical conditions, including heart, skin, digestive, epilepsy, ear, eye, headache, liver, neurological, pharynx and mouth, nasal, spleen, flu, urological and genital, lung and chest, pediatric, swelling and blisters, stroke, Jaundice, types of fever, colic, melancholia, poisoning, paralysis, shivering and fainting diseases.

#### 8- Making therapeutic poultices and drops

In chapter 17 of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, the author gives an overview of skin diseases and



discusses and investigates some of these diseases and their causes. He also introduces and prescribes various medicines and poultices for treating these ailments, providing detailed instructions for their preparation. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 620-635) In chapter 11, the author discusses spleen-related conditions, discussing their symptoms and complications in two chapters. The author recommends combined medications, including syrups and poultices, alongside instructions for their preparation, as potential treatments for these ailments. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 439-442)

Also, in chapter 28, he discusses the preparation and mixing of medicinal pastes for treating purulent glands and softening mixtures (Kermani, n.d., pp. 224-225) The author has also described various types and symptoms of ear diseases, offering guidance on their treatment through using effective medications and drops. In addition, he gives instructions for the preparation of these remedies. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 293-298)

### **9- Causes of insomnia and ways to treat it**

In *Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, the author has paid special attention to sleep-related disorders, especially the causes of insomnia. In chapter 32 of the book, along with an overview of insomnia’s causes and consequences, the writer recommends and prescribes some medications for its treatment. (Kermani, n.d., p. 258)

The book also addresses the causes of excessive napping and suggests methods to remedy this issue. The author discusses the complications and consequences of napping disorders, as well as effective treatments involving various medications. (Kermani, n.d., p. 259)

The author of the book introduces a comprehensive list of these medications, including painkillers and sleeping pills to alleviate insomnia and related sleep issues. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 221-222)

### **10- The effect of nutrition on the treatment of disease**

In the introduction of the second volume of “*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*,” the author begins by examining the impact and significance of food and medication on the body. Then, he proposes, introduces, and prescribes a wide range of medicines, syrups, and poultices accompanied by comprehensive instructions on their preparation and combination. These remedies are intended to treat a diverse array of prevalent ailments discussed in the first volume of the book. (Kermani, n.d., p. 2)

In chapter 29, he outlines the appropriate feeding regimen for recovering patients. The author advises against abruptly altering patients’ long-standing habits, emphasizing the importance of gradual dietary changes. In the continuation of the discussion, narratives narrated by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and Imam Sadigh (peace be upon him) are presented as examples and quoted to document the proposed guidelines. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 226-231)

In chapter 38, the author suggests and prescribes specific medicinal and dietary interventions for treating melancholia (a severe type of depression), while also explaining the causes, symptoms, effects, and consequences of this disease. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 264-269)

### **11- A critical look at the contemporary doctors**

While criticizing prevailing medical opinions on maintaining health and well-being, the author of *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* suggests and prescribes alternative guidance aligned with human nature and tendencies, and teachings from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), the imams, and two famous Iranian and Greek doctors. (Kermani, n.d., pp. 29-36)



### Conclusion

*Daghayegh al-Alaaj*, a largely overlooked work from the Qajar era, encompasses various medical, pharmacological, and pharmaceutical topics. The author has discussed and investigated tips, recommendations, and instructions related to human anatomy, personal health maintenance, detoxification, disease treatment, and the views of notable Iranian and non-Iranian physicians on health and illness. Focused on advanced medical sources, both Islamic and non-Islamic ones, as well as personal experiences, the author details common diseases of the time, their underlying causes, and symptoms. The text also recommends and prescribes appropriate medications, their preparation, and usage instructions for treating these ailments. It further suggests dietary guidelines for certain conditions.

Heart, skin, digestive, epilepsy, ear, eye, headache, liver, neurological, pharynx and mouth, nasal, spleen, flu, urological and genital, lung and chest, pediatric, swelling and blisters, stroke, Jaundice, types of fever, colic, melancholia, poisoning, paralysis, shivering and fainting diseases are among the many conditions discussed and their treatment explained in the book. In any case, *Daghayegh al-Alaaj* played an important role in personal health promotion and disease treatment in Kerman during the Qajar era. The expertise and skill of Mohammad Karim Khan Kermani in natural sciences make this work an important contribution to public health improvement from the founder of Sheikhiya Kerman.

### Authors' Contribution

Seyyed Mohammad Tayybi prepared the idea and data. Sina Mirshahi processed the data and analyzed them based on the final version. All authors read and approved the final version of the work.

### Conflict of Interest

None.

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