

The Medical Theme in Mar Iṣḥāq of Nineveh in the Context of Late Antique Galenism

The emergence of asceticism as a religious and social phenomenon has long been a matter for religious historians. Syriac asceticism is a special case. It has developed as a highly theoretical discipline based on anthropology of a special kind¹ and evolved in close relation to different models, theological as well as social and behavioral. Scholarly and religious interpretations of asceticism – although different in positioning and purpose – were until very recently from a theological or historical viewpoint. Culturology and sociology provided important dimensions for the analysis. There is at least one more dimension that could give a boost to the understanding of the ascetic phenomenon. This is medicine, more specifically medical science, as its theoretical component. This area of knowledge has developed a technical language of its own and a special culture connected to it.

Medical science developed a theoretical base for medical care (ἰατρικὴ τέχνη) by Hippocrates in Greece and was then systematized mainly by Galenus. The core of it was a duality of health and disease (ὑγιότης - νόσος). The concept of natural health – or to put it in Platonic terms, the idea of health – became the most widespread. Hippocrates himself was persuaded that health is a natural state of balance of powers (he tended to identify them with ‘four liquids’)², but his main idea was that of natural (physical) health as the initial state and at the same time the objective of the cure as a complex of medical procedures. Its main component was regimen (δαιτῶν). While Hippocrates identified the problem of the human well-being, it was Aristotle who invented the language of medical asceticism. Aristotelian anthropology and medicine played an important role in the in the what? as it provided medicine with a complex picture of the human organism as a part of the world of Animalia (ζῷα). Stagirite was also a founder of the scientific method and syllogistic procedure, which greatly influenced medical discourse.

Galenism and the method of antique medicine

This particular type of medicine based on observation, prognosis, regimen and restriction was then formalized in the medical system of Claudius Galenus. Galenus was the Interpreter of Hippocratic medicine and Jouanna is right to call him a disciple. Galenus adapted medical treatment to conditions we could call secular, meaning that Hippocratic tradition was a sacred one³. Galenus used the language and method of Aristotle to make a mass profession out of the Hippocratic method. He has left an important corpus of works which were very popular and laid the foundation of the European medicine. Galenus was far from being a pious believer, and his links to heathen practices were even obvious. His Christian contemporaries, who were interested in developing a mystical approach to the religious, did not pay attention to his method. However, Christian belief in salvation as a convalescence from sin to a New Life in Christ rooted in Biblical anthropology was reminiscent of the Galenic theory of disease and care. The soteriological background of the idea of health was even clearer in the ascetic literature, where the disease has become not only a mean of divine punishment but also a means of perfection. Suffering has changed its place from the negative to a comparatively positive or at least neutral one. Ascetic theory has

¹ N. Russell *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. Oxford, 2004

² J. Jouanna *La notion de nature chez Galien // Galien et la philosophie. Entrétiens sur l'antiquité classique XLIX*. Vandoevres0Genève, 2003. 229-263

³ J. Irigoien, *Hippocrate, Galien et quelques autres médecins grecs // Annuaire du Collège de France 1988-89*, Paris, 1989

developed its own language, which borrowed extensively from medical practice and theory. Even in the Gospel we see a stressed parallelism between sinful behavior (sinful life) and disease. It has found its special Aramaic physiognomy in the archaic Greek proverb ἰατρὲ θεράπευσον σεαυτόν, in Syriac ܘܢܘܪܐ ܘܢܘܪܐ ܘܢܘܪܐ (Lc 4:23) where the Aramaic reflexive pronoun could also mean ‘soul’. Thus, the cure of the body has been completed at least metaphorically with the task of soul cure. Galenism, continues Nutton, had an effect so powerful that George of Pisidia in his *Hexaemeron* (1.1588) could, in a wonderful trope, refer to Christ as a second (and neglected) Galen. Darrel Amundsen has strongly argued that on the whole, Christianity looked upon medicine favorably, or at any rate, was not hostile.

Galenus’ main deed was the creation of a special school of healing. To quote Vivian Nutton: *The most obvious difference between the medicine of the second and that of the sixth century a.d. can be summed up in one word, Galenism, in both its positive and its pejorative meanings. Instead of the variety of great names that can be cited for the second century—Galen, Rufus, Soranus, Antyllus, maybe even Aretaeus—and the evidence from both literary and epigraphic texts for new interests and ideas on surgery, the fourth and later centuries present us with a dull and narrow range of authors—the summarizes, the encyclopaedists—who have been studied not for themselves but for the earlier sources they happen to encapsulate. Oribasius, Aetius, Alexander, Paul are the medical refrigerators of antiquity. Galenus was later incorporated into Christian tradition as a kind of ‘pagan’ counterpart of Christ, who imitated God by treating those who were in pain. Galenism made an important contribution - the cultural adaptation of medical science - when he presented medicine as paideia and referred to a physician as πεπαιδευμέμος. Some principles of Galenism⁴ should be set out before we proceed.*

1. The idea of physis (*kyana* in Syriac), primordial force, which is the philosophical base for any cure. In Hippocratic medicine treatment is a reconstruction of the natural state. Physis acts as a triad, dynamis, energia, ergon. The consequence of that theory was a partition of all the phenomena into natural / non-natural / against nature;
2. Humoralism was a reflection of the famous principle of four elements, the consequence of which was a doctrine of four temperaments;
3. The idea of spontaneous movements (*aporoi dynameis*), which meant that the body has a power of its own
4. The idea of innate heat located in the heart (cf. Shem‘on description of the heart)
5. Pathology and nosology
 - a. Differentiation
 - i. Prodroms and indication (ἔνδειξις)
 - ii. Symptoms including natural (outer) causes
 - iii. Pathological condition
 - b. Causation
 - i. Causes recognizable by reason
 - ii. Causes recognizable by observation
 - iii. Dyskrasia or disbalance of the fundamental elements
 - iv. Age, habitus and customs
 - v. Place and climate
6. Case stories – παραδείγματα [histories / tashyatha] – clinical narratives (esp. those from Galen’s commentary to the 12-volume Epidemiai by Hippocrates);
7. Preservation of health

⁴ O. Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a medical Philosophy*, Cornell University Press, 1973; van der Eijk P. *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*. Cambridge University Press, 2005; Hankinson RJ (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*. Cambridge MA, 2008.

- a. Health is a natural state
 - b. Diagnosis and prognosis
 - c. Prophylactic or prevention of disease
 - d. Therapy as methodical application of medical knowledge
 - i. Natural care was the generally accepted method of treatment ‘*similis a simile*’, meaning that a physician should follow the nature (physis)
 - ii. Rational technics (restoration of accord, union of continuity)
 - iii. Crisis
 - iv. Λογιατρία
8. Agonism was an important principle of Galenic medicine implying the concurrence of medics as well as their methods (now it is called trial medicine).

To sum up: by the 2nd cent. Graeco-Roman medicine had elaborated its own method of bodily cure, its philosophy and terminology⁵. Galen was seriously preoccupied with methodology and its connection with *praxis* or practical training. Teun Tieleman formulated it in that way: Galen implemented his version of the rational method by drawing on the philosophical tradition⁶. That tradition was a peripatetic one and Galenism is a consequential application of Aristotelian logic and epideictic to healing practice. Once it was translated into Syriac, it interacted with the emerging Syriac ascetic and mystical tradition.

Syriac medical tradition

Biblical anthropological perspective in general provided a special, therapeutic point of view on human ethics and psychology. For the first time the human being was regarded as a complex organism that has to be healed (saved). His present status was called illness. The theme of Jesus the Healer was very popular in the Early Christian tradition, on Syriac soil especially in Mar Afrem (S. Brock has strongly contributed to this theme in describing healing and medicine as Christological and soteriological themes). In pre-ephremian patristic literature the language of asceticism was less technical, writers used the partly biblical and partly classical Greek language of ethics.

Medicine in the Syrian milieu was based on translations from Greek developed by the 5-6th century. Patriarch Ignatios Barsaum in his *al-Lu'lu'* remarks: “The Syrians had special concern for the science of medicine, which they became famous for in the Orient and which they practiced for more than a thousand years. In his Syriac Chronography Bar Hebraeus mentioned the physicians Sergius of Rish‘ayna, Athanas (or Atanas) of Amid, Phylagrios, Simon Taybutha, Gregory and Theodosius, Patriarch of Antioch, and Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, who along with Simon Taybutha is Nestorian”⁷. All the medics named in that passage lived in the 6th c. or later. It is thus reasonable to assume that it was the famous Western Syrian physician and theologian Sergius who introduced medicine as a scientific discipline to Syriac culture. Syrians borrowed the theory of medicine in all its five main forms: physiology; pathology (theory of disease/epidemy); theory of diagnostic; theory of natural care (pharmacopeia); prophylactic theory. Scarce knowledge about the development of medical theory before Sergius of Resh‘aina is counterbalanced by the four main Syriac medical translations of Galenic Corpus. In his famous article Rainer Degen made a catalogue of the translations of Galen into Syriac⁸. Abū Zayd Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq al-

⁵ Frede, M. (1981) ‘On Galen’s epistemology; On the method of the so-called Methodical school of medicine // Essays in Ancient Philosophy (Oxford 1987), 261–78.

⁶ T. Tieleman. Methodology // The Cambridge Companion to Galen. / R. J. Hankinson. Cambridge, 2008, 50.

⁷ Ignatius Barsaum. [Al-lu’lu] The Scattered Pearls. 2nd ed. Piscataway, 2003. 153.

⁸ R. Degen. Ein Corpus Medicorum Syriacorum //Medizinhistorisches Journal 7 (1972) 114-122. Idem. Galen im Syrischen. Eine Übersicht über die syrische Überlieferung der Werke Galens // Galen : Problems and Prospects. V. Nutton (ed.), London, 1972. 131-166.

new knowledge stimulated appreciation of the human body as a living organism, and turned anthropological speculation aside from aiming at a Platonic $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ - $\sigma\tilde{\eta}\mu\alpha$ conclusion, to pursue optimistic idea of man as the destined king of the phenomenal universe”¹³. This was a major change. Asceticism as a constant teaching based on Christian anthropology has been formulated in a semi-scientific language by Basil and Gregory of Nyssa. Evagrius followed this path; the same could be said about influential Greek writers like Mark the Monk, Nilus of Ancyra or Diadochus of Photice¹⁴. In his study of interdependence of theology and medicine in Philoponus, Robert Todd wrote: “the use of medical ideas represents only a minor aspect of Philoponus' exegetical output, yet its importance in his commentary on the *De anima* lies in the fact, noted at the outset, that it has no equal in the ancient and Byzantine Aristotelian tradition, not even when commentaries were written on medically more suggestive Aristotelian treatises. ... this early Byzantine commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, whatever its precise antecedents, is a minor but noteworthy episode in the long history of the interaction between philosophy and medicine. My impression is that the decisive turn was performed even before Philoponus by so-called praying-monks (*mṣalyānē*) and their system of asceticism found in Macarian writings.”¹⁵ It expressed their belief in the importance of spiritual healing and above all their anthropology, often labelled as heretical because of the idea of a demon resident in the soul. They stressed the importance of body movements and the key role given to the heart (*lebḅā*) in the process of healing a person. A recent study of healing in the theology of Ephrem by Aho Shemunkasho¹⁶ has shown a certain continuity of the Syriac reasoning about the heart. Ephremian and Macarian ideas of the central role of the heart should be completed with a brilliant example of Šimṣōn de-Taybuṭeh's chapter ‘On the Heart’ from his ܟܕܘܘܪܝܢܐ ܟܥܕܐ or the Book of Medicine. Adam Becker¹⁷ has observed that the two traditions, scholarly and ascetic, were interrelated and even mingled on Syriac soil. His perspicacious observation was corroborated by Bruns, Reinink and Kessel.¹⁸

The next development can be observed in the mystical writers of the circle of Abraham and Rabban-Shapur. The main representative of this movement was the monk of Daira Rabban-Shapur Šimṣōn de-Taybuthe, or graceful, who probably made a study of medicine before entering the monastery. Luckily we possess now a very profound analysis of Šim'on and his writings by Paolo Bettiolo¹⁹, completed recently by Grigory Kessel's article with special attention to his medical competence²⁰. We may simply repeat Kessel's conclusion that in the case of Šim'on: *‘malgré sa maîtrise apparemment excellente de la science*

Chevetogne, [1987]; Brock S. *Spirituality in the Syriac tradition. Mōrān Eth'ō* 2. Baker Hill, Kottayam, 2005; *Les mystiques syriaques. Études syriaques* 8. / A. Desremaux (ed.). Paris, 2012.

¹³ W. Tefler. *The birth of Christian Anthropology* // *JThS* 13 (1962) 347-354; esp. 349; G. J. Reinink, *Man as Microcosm : A Syriac Didactic Poem and its Prose Background* // *Calliope's Classroom : Studies in Didactic Poetry from Antiquity to the Renaissance* / A. Harder, A. A. MacDonald & G. J. Reinink (ed.), Leuven, 2007. 123-152;

¹⁴ Spidlik ΑΣΚΗΤΙΣΜΟΣ

¹⁵ Fitschen K. *Messalianismus und Antimesalianismus: ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*. Göttingen, 1996; Stewart C. *Working the Earth of the Heart». The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431*. Oxf. 1991

¹⁶ Shemunkasho A. *Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem*, Piscataway, NJ, 2002 (Gorgias Dissertations, Near Eastern Studies 1).

¹⁷ Becker A. *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia*, Philadelphia, 2006.

¹⁸ P. Bruns, *Von Bischöfen, Ärzten und Asketen—Schnittpunkte von Christentum und Medizin im spätantiken Sasanidenreich* // G. A. Kiraz (éd.), *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone. Studies in Honour of Sebastian P. Brock*, Piscataway, 2008. 29-42. P. Bruns. *Schnittpunkte zwischen Christentum und Medizin im spätantiken Sasanidenreich* // *Oriens Christianus* 93, 41-58; G. J. Reinink, *Theology and Medicine in Jundishapur. Cultural Change in the Nestorian School Tradition* // *Learned Antiquity : Scholarship and Society in the Near East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West* / A. A. MacDonald, G. J. Reinink, M. Twomey (ed.), Leuven, 2003. 163-174.

¹⁹ Bettiolo P. *Simone di taibuteh. Violenza e grazia. La coltura del cuore. Collana di testi patristici* 102. Roma, 1992.

²⁰ Kessel G. *La position de Simon de taibuteh dans l'éventail de la tradition mystique syriaque* // *Les mystiques syriaques*, 121-150

médicale, on ne peut guère trouver dans l'œuvre de Simon une synthèse élaborée et complète des connaissances médicales et de la doctrine ascétique. Cela peut en partie s'expliquer par le style d'écriture de Simon, qui aimait présenter ses matériaux de manière non démonstrative, sans aller d'un point à un autre suivant un plan donné, mais plutôt en composant des chapitres autonomes (ou des groupements de chapitres) couvrant certains aspects de la pensée de l'auteur²¹. However, the 'combinaison unique' of medical competence and ascetic practice seems to be not as local as Kessel seems to think. Different traces of that medical asceticism are to be found here and there in the Syriac tradition²².

Other ascetic writers like Dadišōf Qatraya, John of Dalyatā or Joseph Ḥazzayā and ?? are much less explicit on medical matters. We know that in the monasteries of the Church of the East medical knowledge was held in a high esteem. As we see from the ... medical procedures like blood-letting or the use of leeches were used for both medical and ascetic goals. Medical texts were probably copied by the Eastern Syriac monks together with the ascetics. The great library of Beth-ḤAwē (where mar Iṣḥaq spent quite a time while in Mosul (Nineveh)) most probably contained translations from the Galenic medical corpus as well as Alexandrian commentaries on Galen. Thus, medical as well as ascetic tradition was a translation of history and culture-building enterprise. I would like to stress that in both cases the Syriac original method was technological: knowledge about disease preceded healing. This made possible further transfer of medicine and asceticism to Arabic Islamic culture. Syriac asceticism had a technological method of purification (ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ - ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ - ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ). It used evagrian terms *teorya* and *praksis*, salvation was often called health (ḥullmānā). Ascetic techniques described by Syriac writers are rational. Syrians used case-stories from hagiography as diagnostic paradeigmata. Spiritual pathology was also a well-developed discipline. Ascetic writers used a lot of medical terms like ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ (affliction), ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ stupefaction, ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ (conduct, behaviour but also διατήρα, regimen), ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ (bodily force), they speak about senses (ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ - ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ - ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ) or even about *custodia sensum* (ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ) in the same manner as Galenic medics disserted on the perception. The same could be said about the usage of terms like ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ or ܠܘܬܡܐܘܠܐܘܬܐ standing for different levels of warmth.

The comparative study of both terminological vocabularies is still a desideratum, but at first glance a striking methodical similitude could not be a simple coincidence, rather it was the fruit of interdependence.

Isaac of Nineveh and medicine in his language

Now we turn to Iṣḥaq Ninwāyā, known in the Western world as Isaac of Nineveh or 'the Syrian' (ὁ Σύρος) who was a newcomer in the Nuhadra region, brought up in Qatar who learned the Abrahamic monastic tradition at the monastery Beṭ-ḤAwē²³. It is in the rich library of this monastery that he was reading theological and philosophical books. He certainly encountered healing practices used on Mount Izla when he was there, like hirudotherapy and blood-letting described in documents about Abraham's disciple Rabban Šahpūr.²⁴ His detailed knowledge of fasting and sleep, behavior of amputees, notes about the use of hypo- and hyperthermy show us a well-experienced observer of the capacities of the human body. My impression is that it was Abrahamic tradition that combined knowledge about human spiritual and bodily aspects for the profit of a monk (iḥidāyā) lead by Divine Grace on the way to perfection

²¹ Kessel 2012, 145-146

²² C. Pasquet. L'homme, lien de l'univers, dans la tradition syro-orientale // Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2007 / J. Baum, A. Cameron, M. Edwards & M. Vinzent (ed.), Louvain, 2010, 203-210.

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²⁴ Jibrīl b. Bakhtīšū in his treatise on pharmacology quoted by al-Bīrūnī (Said 1973, p. 78 [trad.], p. 100* [éd.]) provides some examples. Cf. Jullien 2008, p. 165-166; Kessel Simon, 141

(gmirutā). In the case of Isaac we do not deal with a physician like Šimṣōn but he possibly reflected in his treatises the climate of the Eastern Syriac monastic circles, **connected by many ties** to the Great schools tradition of Edessa and Nisibis. Isaac describes the practice of brotherly care at the monastery: “Once I went to the **cell** of a pure (ܩܘܕܫܐ) brother as I fell ill (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ) and I **lay** myself down on one part of his cell in order that he take care (ܩܘܕܫܐ) of me for God’s sake” (I, 18)²⁵.

In his treatises (mēm̄rē or λόγοι in Greek)²⁶, Isaac was approaching the human being not only from the spiritual or moral standpoint (which corresponds more or less to the Biblical one) but also from the healing perspective, which is somewhat more detailed than the Ephremian one. He used a very clear idea of the human being, which made possible a spiritual healing of its diseases. According to this idea, a human being is a complex construction of body (pagrā) and soul (napšā). Isaac’s conclusions on the capacities of the body and soul were based on close observation. It operated with a scheme of functionality of different parts of a man on the way to salvation (ḥayyē or parūqtā). The goal is accordingly to heal the diseases and imperfections of a man. The interesting point here is that Isaac deals with the spiritual diseases just like Galenic physician deals with the bodily.

Themes

- a. ([spiritual] disease) In the Greek ascetic literature, the physical disease is generally regarded from two different angles: as a means to spiritual progress and as a necessary condition of the physical body (φθορά, ܩܘܕܫܐ). Thus, Isaac says that until the soul does not feel drunkenness from the faith in God, it does not heal the disease of the senses (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ)²⁷. In the I, 2/24 Isaac describes the beginning of spiritual illness in a quite methodical way: “The beginning of the darkening of the intellect could be noticed in the following way... (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ, ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ) . In I, 55 Isaac says: One who avoids the medical care (asyūtā), won’t see the light [of perfection]. In I, 35 Isaac states that diseases and passions (kurhānē wa-haššē) are inevitable on the way to God. On another occasion Isaac states that it is impossible that health (ḥulmānā) and illness (kurhānā) coexist in one body without one taking over another (I, 51). I, 56. As a very ill body turns from rich meals, a mind occupied with wordly things cannot approach study of the divine...
- b. (indication) In the medical tradition words like ܩܘܕܫܐ, symptom, indication, were classical technical terms.
II,8.13 Just as a change of place (šunnāyā atrānāyā) for the body affects an alteration in the (balance of) its constitution to correspond to the new localities, so too a mental change effects alterations in the strength of the mind’s stirrings. (TR 29)
- c. (nature) In the treatise II,1.12 he gives a striking example of firmness of the heart coming from faith. It is such that even if hands and legs are amputated (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ) the firmness persists. This case suggests some experimental basis by showing the nervous system of an amputee. Isaac used it on other occasions. He found similar stories in the *paradeigmata* of medics during war. But then he comforts his readers in a quite medical manner saying that everyone who understands that he is ill will be healed (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ)²⁸. But convalescence (ܩܘܕܫܐ) is impossible without fierce bodily labour (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ : I, 2.22), says Isaac. Further he explains that this healing returns the soul to its physis (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ), which is highly reminiscent of the Galenic (Hippocratic in fact) idea of φύσις as the main

²⁵ Further all notes point to Bedjan’s edition of the Syriac text

²⁶ On the three collections (or volumes) of Isaac’s works, see Chialà 2002....

²⁷ I, 1.7

²⁸ I, 2.2

vital healing force. In the treatise I,5 Isaac says: ‘you should ask the nature (kyānā) [which is] the true witness’.

- d. (healing / purification) Imitates physicians who cure inflammatory diseases with cooling medicines and vice versa (I, 56)
Ministering to the body (pullhānā d-pagrā) when the mind is idle is useless (II, 24.1)
- e. (physical health, ܩܘܨܬܐ, ܩܘܨܬܐ / disease) For Isaac as well as other Syriac ascetic writers the status of physical health was somewhat undermined if not questioned. Isaac noted once that physical health is an obstacle to spiritual progress: (I, 41) *they bore with joy serious diseases that fell upon them, from which they could not stand on their feet.*
In I, 57 Iṣḥāq insists that ‘one should not despise ill and especially mentally ill people’ meaning that the very fact of the disease of a neighbor should point to a vulnerability of the human earthly condition.
- f. (bodily disease is useful) In I, 40 Iṣḥāq reminds of the ‘renewal of the diseases and illnesses that arise in your body’ as of a useful mean to stay vigilant. In I, 21 he asks: what should we do to the body (gušmā) when it is overtaken by illness and heaviness and the will for good things is weakened? Answer: It occurs often with some people that one part of them followed the Lord but another one remained in the world and their heart did not shun worldly things (sbawātā).
Likewise question in I, 57: For what reason does God send us illnesses?
- g. (Liquid in the soul): In the beginning of I,3 Isaac exposes the image of liquid penetrating the source of the soul (ܩܘܨܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ) and this image is also quite physiological.

There is still some uncertainty whether mar Iṣḥāq had some idea of medicinal method. His imagery seems to suggest a vague knowledge of how Galenic medicine works. Isaac followed his *ars medendi*, which closely paralleled that of the famous physician and medical pedagogue from Pergamon. This methodological clarity assured the success of both Greco-Syriac Galenism and asceticism through the centuries to come.

Appendix: ascetic terms used by Isaac with possible medical tones

- ܩܘܨܬܐ – manifestation (may be used as symptom)
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – body
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – behaviour, mores, diaita, regimen
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – ܩܘܨܬܐ – ܩܘܨܬܐ purity, purification, healing
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – movement,
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – calour, heat
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – capacity, force
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – sweetness
- ܩܘܨܬܐ

- ܩܘܨܬܐ – passion / suffering
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – ܩܘܨܬܐ – ܩܘܨܬܐ – discipline or regimen
- ܩܘܨܬܐ, ܩܘܨܬܐ – pain
- ܩܘܨܬܐ ܩܘܨܬܐ – spiritual disease
- ܩܘܨܬܐ \ ܩܘܨܬܐ – spiritual
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – tranquility
- ܩܘܨܬܐ – affection
- ܩܘܨܬܐ ܩܘܨܬܐ – labour
- ܩܘܨܬܐܐܝ – ܩܘܨܬܐܐܝ – ܩܘܨܬܐܐܝ – senses, perception
- ܩܘܨܬܐܐܝ – desiderium, wish
- ܩܘܨܬܐܐܝ fervour

ጽደቅ transformation

ጽደቅ variation, change

ጽደቅ ignition

ጽደቅ symptom, indication

ጽደቅ stupor

ጽደቅ progress (in the process of disease or convalescence)

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