

Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi

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A Persian physician, alchemist, philosopher, and polymath, Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi was born near current-day Tehran, Iran in 854 CE and died in around 925 CE. Credited with more than 200 manuscripts, he contributed to numerous disciplines and is still celebrated to this day.

He is particularly praised for his medical advances and observations. A successful physician, he encouraged the use of experimental medicine. Razi was known as a kind doctor, and was said to dedicate himself to the treatment of his patients, regardless of their social status. Having educated many doctors, his students came from a variety of backgrounds.

Razi made a number of discoveries as a physician in the cities of Baghdad and Ray. Among these discoveries was the use of humoral theory to diagnose disease. He also is credited with the discovery of various important compounds, such as kerosene and alcohol. Among his manuscripts was the clinical characterizations of the deadly smallpox and measles.

His legacy traveled far, as his medical advances were well known in medieval Europe and heavily influenced the study of medicine in the West. In fact, some of his writings were integrated into medical curriculum in Western universities. He is known as a pioneer of medicine, specifically, ophthalmology and pediatrics.