



Islamic Medicine: Evaluation of sources

Look at the two sources and the questions, which follow. Answer the questions in your book.

Source A: Parts of the Islamic holy book, the 'Hadith'

The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) said: Cleanliness is half of Faith. Keep your houses and yards tidy. God does not like dirt and untidiness. Brushing the teeth cleanses the mouth and pleases God. He who does not trim his nails and his moustache is not one of us. He who goes to sleep while his hands smell of food has only himself to blame if harm comes to him. Every Muslim must have a bath once a week, when he must wash his head and the whole of his body. Do not put up a sick man and a healthy one together. If you hear of the plague keep away from it. If the plague breaks out in the area where you are, do not leave.

Source B: From 'The Cultural side of Islam' by Muhammad Pickthall

The Muslims set out on their search for learning in the name of God at a time when Christians were destroying all the learning of the ancients in the name Christ. The Christians had destroyed the library at Alexandra. Learning for them was only for the devil and unbelievers. The priests publicly burnt the books of Greeks and Romans. However, the educated men of Islam set to work on translation of the ancient books. So the Muslims saved the ancient learning from destruction and passed its treasures down to modern times. The Greek contribution to medicine would have been lost without efforts of the Muslims.

Questions:

1. What did the prophet say about the plague and why do you think it was good advice?
2. Why were Arabic hospitals so clean? Quote evidence from source A to support your answer.
3. How reliable is source B (this asks can you trust the source. Remember to look for facts, things that can be contradicted or incomplete evidence. Finally judge the author, and whether there is any bias).